

Session 2

Description and Point of View

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Prior to Session 2

- Ensure that the following equipment/supplies are available and in working condition:
 - Sufficient number of handouts and worksheets ready for distribution (*Point of View, Show vs Tell, OMOD Peer Performance Questions, Photographic Stories: Learning to Describe*)
- Ensure scribes, writing coaches, or audio recording devices are available for participants who require assistance.
- Read Detailed Activity Instructions at the end of Session 2.

Learning Objectives

- *Participants will continue to develop the stories written in the first class with a goal of reaching a minimum of three potential stories.*
- *Participants will learn ways to add description to their stories.*
- *Participants will learn how to tell a story from the first-person point of view.*

Session 2 Schedule

- **Warm-Up Activity** (10 minutes)
- **Writing Exercise 1: *First Impressions*** (25 minutes)
- **Read to Your Peers: *First Impressions*** (20-30 minutes)
- **Lecture on *Description* and *Point of View*** (10 minutes)
- **Writing Exercise 2: *Description*** (30 minutes)
- **Break** (5 minutes)
- **Energizer** (5 minutes)
- **Read to Your Peers: *Description*** (30-45 minutes)
- **Lesson Review** (5 minutes)
- **PARTICIPANT Homework Assignment** (5 minutes)

Session 2

Workshop Activities

Warm-Up Activity*(10 minutes)*

Invite participants to verbally respond to the prompt: "I am... I feel... I want... I offer..." This is not meant to be a long or complicated activity, just as a way to check in. (Example: "I am Joe" or "I am a human being, I feel happy today, I want to write about my new puppy, I offer my friendship to everyone in the class.")

Writing Exercise 1: *First Impressions**(25 minutes)*

Instruct participants to respond to the following two prompts and spend at least 10 minutes on each:

1. **Respond to the prompt:** "When you first meet someone, what is their first impression of you?"
2. Write about something that's important to you as a person. It could be a "thing" or a relationship, an activity you do or want to do, anything that's important.

Read to Your Peers: *First Impressions**(20-30 minutes)***Lecture on *Description and Point of View****(10 minutes)*

Distribute the *Point of View and Show vs. Tell* handouts, then provide a brief introduction to useful storytelling tips of description and point of view. Give examples of how using description and point of view gives life to stories.

- **Description:** Details make your story believable and help captivate your audience. When writing your stories, consider the specific details (e.g., Were you in a city or a town? Was it day or night? Was it hot or cold?) as well as the senses (sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch). Which details are most effective in transporting your audience to the world of your story? (Give an example or two or elicit input from the participants to ensure that this concept is understood.)
- **Point of View:** This is your story, so it is 1st person point of view, not 3rd person (he, she, they). Look at the world through your eyes and tell your story.

Writing Exercise 2: *Description**(30 minutes)*

Instruct the participants to add more details to any story they have written in the workshop.

- Describe the place, the people, the weather, how you felt, and whatever else helps to make your story feel more “alive.” A writing coach may assist with identifying sections of your story that would benefit from added description.

~ Or ~

- Focus on the point of view and review your story in a way that alters the impact of the story by changing the point of view.

Break*(15 minutes)***Energizer***(5 minutes)*

Lead the class in a few new stretching and vocal exercises.

Read to Your Peers: *First Impressions**(30-45 minutes)*

- Review the *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* worksheet and ask participants to note the behaviors identified in it.
- Emphasize that they **will not** share critiques with each other at this time. This is an exercise for writers to begin to become aware of vocal clarity, projection, eye contact, etc.
- Invite the participants to share a story with the class
- *It is not necessary for everyone to read through their whole story at this point, it is more important that each participant has a chance to practice with the microphone.*
- (See *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* worksheet)

Lesson Review:*(5 minutes)*

- **First, taking another person’s point-of-view helps you to understand your “reader” or “audience.”** Whenever you speak in public, you have to consider who’s listening to you. You would present your story differently at a conference on healthcare than you would for parents of children with disabilities. So, you must always consider point-of-view.
- **Second, describing, or adding meaningful details, is also important because it brings your story to life.** The best way to be effective in writing and speaking is to “show” someone what happened and not to just “tell” the story.

Participant Homework:*(5 minutes)*

Invite a participant to read through the Session 2 “**Photographic Stories: Learning to Describe**” assignment instructions, then offer an example of a personal story inspired by a photo.

Instructions for writers: Find a photo, or memory, of something that creates an emotion in you and write about it. It may be a photograph of a family member, a favorite vocation, or a photo of a national park from a magazine.

FACILITATOR HOMEWORK

Get copies of everything that was written today before participants leave. If any participants are behind in the writing, determine what supports they need and attempt to provide them

Session 2

Detailed Activity Instructions

Session 2: How to Conduct **Warm-Up Activity**

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Make sure everyone, including participants, volunteers, and staff members, is seated in a circle before starting this activity.
2. Write the following four phrases on a flipchart or whiteboard/chalkboard and make sure they are visible to the entire class:
 - a. I am...
 - b. I feel...
 - c. I want...
 - d. I offer...
3. Tell the class that everyone will verbally respond to these four prompts. Offer a personal example to demonstrate a complete response and kick off the activity:

Example: "I am a great guy, I feel happy today, I want to help you all write stories you can be proud of, I offer my friendship to everyone in the class."

4. Then, moving around the circle, ask each person in the circle to also verbally respond to the four prompts.

As facilitator of this activity:

- This is meant to be a quick and easy way to check in with each other at the beginning of the class. Keep it playful if possible.
- If anyone gets stuck or does not know how to respond, encourage them to say the first thing that comes to mind. If they still can't think of anything, offer to come back to them after moving around the circle.
- Listen to each person's response. Sometimes you will hear cues about what you might do to help a participant have a good day in the workshop.

NOTE: "Warming up" or "checking in" can help people feel at ease with each other, which makes for a much better workshop experience.

Session 2: Conducting Writing Exercise: *First Impressions*

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. As with the writing exercise in Session 1, participants can use any method available for producing a story (written, dictated, scribed, etc.)
2. Provide all participants with the accommodations they will need (including the adjustments made above) before assigning the prompt. This includes:
 - a. Accommodations needed in order to fully participate in the writing process (scribes, assistive technology devices, visual aids, etc.)
 - For people who need a scribe, create a list of possible writing partners so every participant knows who they will be working with before they begin the assignment.
 - b. Locate/create quiet work spaces or use available rooms in the same building for participants who request them, especially for those utilizing scribes or dictation.
3. Write the “First Impressions” prompt on a flip chart or whiteboard and ask each of them participants to respond:

Prompt: “When you meet someone new, what is their first impression of you?”

Alternate prompts: Offer 2 alternatives for those who aren’t successful with, or don’t enjoy, the “First Impressions” prompt. **Add these prompts to the flip chart.** (Make sure that any participants with visual impairment understand each of the prompts.)

 - “Write about something that’s important to you as a person.” It could be a “thing” or a relationship, an activity you do or want to do, anything that’s important.
 - “Write about a powerful memory.”
4. Give the participants 10 minutes to write and notify everyone when there are only two minutes left.
5. After 10 minutes, ask the participants to stop and then choose one of the other prompts to write about. Give them 10 minutes to work on this second prompt and notify them when the time is almost up.

As facilitator of this activity:

- As always, you are responsible for keeping the activity within the time allotted.
- **Accommodations:** If any participants struggled with the first session's writing exercise, brainstorm with those participants to identify accommodations and supports.
 - For example, if a participant felt confident they would be able to write or type independently but realized through doing the activity that they tire too easily or need help coming up with what to write, you may need to assign a scribe to this participant.
 - If a participant was able to write independently during the first writing exercise but feels they would work better in a quieter environment, investigate a possible alternative space for them to work.
 - Frequently participants may not know why they struggled with an exercise. There is always a solution, and usually through talking it out with a participant, the solution will present itself. **Ask:** What was the easy part of the writing exercise? What was hard? What have you done at other times when you felt like you weren't sure you could do what's being asked of you? How can I help you get started?
- **For participants who want to use the "Write about a powerful memory" prompt,** be careful not to give much more information than the prompt itself. This prompt can elicit many interesting stories if writer/participants are free to interpret the prompt in their own ways.
- It is okay if the participants are not able to completely flesh out both stories. Most important is that they identify 1-2 additional options for their showcase story. Even if they experience a total block with one of the prompts, that would at least help them to eliminate a potentially difficult story to pursue.

NOTE: "First Impressions" is a creative exercise that most participants enjoy. These stories lend themselves to being integrated into an ensemble piece for the Showcase because they highlight similarities and differences of each participant.

Session 2: Read to Your Peers: *First Impressions***Here are the basic instructions for this activity:**

1. Once participants are finished writing and back in the classroom, encourage everyone to sit in a circle again to share what they wrote.
2. Ask if any participant would like to read their story first. If there are no volunteers, choose someone to read first and then go around the circle. People can stand if they want and are able to, but standing is not required.
3. As this is only the second sharing activity of the class, you may want to reiterate that writing and sharing a personal story sometimes requires bravery and that it's easier for each person to succeed if everyone in the class supports them each step of the way. Remind participants to keep their feedback constructive and focus on the positive aspects of each presentation.

As facilitator of this activity:

- When offering your own feedback, focus on the strengths of each piece and what each person does well in reading. Tell each participant what's powerful about their story and what a future audience might learn more about.
- If you have a class group that quickly gets the hang of giving constructive feedback you can spend less time reviewing the feedback guidelines.
- Similarly, if you have a class group that is persistently overly negative or critical, you may need to spend even more time covering these guidelines.

Session 2: Lecture on *Description* and *Point of View***Here are the basic instructions for this activity:**

1. Distribute the *Show vs Tell* handout to everyone and ask one of the participants to read it out loud to the group. (See sample discussion script below.)
2. Ask if there are any questions. If not, move on to *Point of View*.
3. Distribute the *Point of View (POV)* handout to everyone and ask one of the participants to read it out loud to the group. (See sample discussion script below.)
4. Ask if there are any questions. If not, provide instructions for the next writing exercise.

As facilitator of this activity

- Here is a sample script of what you might say to reiterate the points made on the *Show versus Tell* handout:
 - “Details make your story believable and help captivate your audience.”
 - “When writing your stories, consider the specific details: Were you in a city or a town? Was it day or night? Was it hot or cold?” Mention the senses - sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch – as additional information that completes a reader’s experience.
 - Which details are most effective in transporting your audience to the world of your story?
- Here is a sample script of what you might say to reiterate the points made on the *Point of View* handout:
 - This is your story, so it is 1st person (I, me, my) point of view, not 3rd person (he, she, they). Look at the world through your eyes and tell us your story.
 - Ask if anyone can imagine an OMOD story that might call for using either 2nd or 3rd person. Discuss how this may be possible, or even useful, while still maintaining the autobiographical element of the OMOD process.
 - **Example:** Writing about what someone else feels, or lives, can help you understand your own life better. Could you write a story about an event in your life that you write from your parent’s point of view? Your church pastor’s? The neighbor who makes too much noise? What could you/did you learn?

Note: It’s worth your time to go back and check for understanding of the difference between “show” and “tell.” (Refer back to handout)

Session 2: Conducting Writing Exercise 2: *Description***Here are the basic instructions for this activity:**

1. Providing the same writing partners and writing methods the participant used in previous writing assignments, ask participants to add more description (specific details) to any story they have written in the workshop thus far. These options should include:
 - a. Session 1 Writing Exercise 1: Free-Writing
 - b. Session 1 Homework Assignment: Listen to Your World
 - c. Session 2 Writing Exercise 1: First Impressions
2. Everyone will have 30 minutes to complete this writing exercise. Be sure to notify the participants when there are only five minutes remaining in the activity.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- You may need to help participants understand what it means to “add description” and detail to a story.
 - Add words that better convey a sense of an object, a situation, or a desire, etc.
 - Instead of “cardboard box wasn’t good enough,” try “The box, with its well-worn brown cardboard flaps, wasn’t up to the task.”
 - Instead of “she was scared,” try, “Her suddenly wide eyes, and the way she turned quickly on her heel and darted away from him, said everything.”
 - Instead of “I was proud,” try “The table was perfect. The height, the hand-finished surface of the wood, the stable legs, it all made me proud.”
- **You may need to review several ways to add description.**
 - Using the handwritten or typed draft of the piece to which they would like to add description, the participants can add description by writing or having a scribe write for them, by hand, in the margins on either side of the existing text.
 - Opening a word document file on a computer and typing the additional description directly into the story.
 - Rewriting the entire story or select passages and adding description in the rewritten piece.
 - Any of the above options work. Most important is that participants begin to think about what descriptions may be effective in transporting their audiences to the world of their stories.

- If any participants finish early, you and/or a volunteer or other helper can review what they have written.
 - Can you identify the most important part(s) of the story? If yes, discuss this with the writer.
 - Can the writer identify the “meaning” of the story? (What he or she is trying to tell the reader/audience.)
 - Is there anything they could add to what they wrote? Review for parts of the story that seem to need more development.
 - Ask: “What does this part mean?” Or, “Can you give me an example of this? I’m not sure what you are saying here.”
 - ASK: Is there anything you want to add to this story?

NOTE: Description adds to a story when it provides information that helps a reader know what is happening, or sense the environment of the story, or when it adds depth to a character. If added description doesn’t enrich the story, it’s best left out of the text.

Session 2: Read to Your Peers: *Description***Here are the basic instructions for this activity:**

1. Make sure the classroom is arranged so that all of the students and staff are oriented, or facing, a "stage" area with a microphone. This is where participants will go to present their stories to the class.
2. Distribute the *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* handout to everyone and ask one of the participants to read it aloud to the group.
 - a. You may want to repeat or review each point on the handout so that everyone fully understands.
 - b. Emphasize that they will not share their critiques with each other today, but they should start to pay attention to:
 - vocal clarity
 - projection
 - eye contact
 - and body language
 - and what these performance elements may communicate to their audiences.
3. Invite the participants to come up and present their stories using the microphone. If no one volunteers to present first, simply call one person at a time to come up and present.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- Keep track of the time. You have 30-45 minutes for reading the stories.
 - If you notice this activity is taking longer than you anticipated, suggest that each participant read an excerpt of their story, such as the first paragraph of their story, a paragraph that they considerably altered or expanded using description,
 - or ask them to paraphrase what they did, instead of reading through their whole story.
- When offering your own feedback, focus on the strengths of each piece and what each person does well in reading. Tell each participant what you like about their story and what you want to learn more about in future drafts of their story.
- Remind the class that nobody is expected to give a perfect presentation today or even during the final showcase, and if they struggle with any of the performative aspects of their presentations, that is okay.

NOTE: The *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* handout is simply meant to be helpful and to identify aspects of their presentations they should consider more carefully as they move forward in the class. Try to keep this positive and constructive

Session 2

HANDOUTS

Session 2 Handout

POINT OF VIEW (POV)

Imagine: You are sitting in a park, on a bench, under a large tree. From where you sit, from your “point of view,” the park is shady and cool. Someone sitting in a bench on the other side of the park might be looking out onto a sunny playground and would describe the park as hot and dusty. He sees it from a different “point of view.”

“Point of view” is the way a writer allows a reader (or an audience member) to “see” and “hear” what’s going on in a story. IN OMOD, most of the individual stories are written in “first person” point of view. This means that the story you are writing is about YOU.

We use First Person Point of View in OMOD because we want YOU to tell your own story.

- Your reader, and the people who hear you speak, will know the story is about you because of the words you choose - words like “I, me, my, mine.”

Example: “I woke up this morning and the cool breeze, which is unusual in Texas on a July morning, made *me* feel...”

Example: “The lights were flickering on and off and I was worried the lights would go out, so I got my flashlight next to my bed. I felt a little nervous because I thought there could be a tornado.”

That’s exactly what we want in OMOD!

Your story, told in your words, from *your point of view*.

Session 2 Handout

SHOW VS. TELL

In order to invite your audience into the experience of your story you need to engage them emotionally. Your language should show the reader or listener what it is like to be in the situation you're describing.

Telling a story:

"I get up in the morning and drink orange juice."

"Telling" a story can be dry and mechanical, and boring.

"Showing" the same story:

Imagine "showing" the experience:

I wake up to the light of the early morning sun as I listen to the ripple of the wind dancing through my bedroom blinds. I'm alive and thirsty. In that moment of peace, I make my way down the hall, toward the kitchen, an oasis of comfort, family, food, and, Oh yes, orange juice!

Use the Five Senses to illustrate your picture:

Sight – Sound – Taste – Touch – Smell

Session 2 Handout

OMOD Peer Performance Questions

Voice

- ❖ Were you able to hear the speaker?
- ❖ Did the speaker's voice seem friendly and calm?
- ❖ Did you understand most of the words? Do you understand the story?
- ❖ Did their voice keep you interested?
- ❖ How many times did the speaker use fillers, like "um," "uh," "you know."

Eye Contact, Posture & Body Language

- ✓ **Speaker's body language**
Confident and happy?
Nervous? Excited?
- ✓ **Eye contact** – Did the speaker pay attention to people in the audience?
- ✓ **Posture** – What did the person's body posture tell you? ("I'm glad to be here," "I'm scared to death," "I'm not sure what to do now." Something else.)

Session 2

Participant Homework

Session 2 Participant Homework Assignment

Photographic Stories: Learning to *Describe*

STEP 1: FIND a photograph that is important or special to you. If you don't have any photographs, or if your visual skills make working with photographs difficult or impossible, just *remember* a moment, or place, or person that is important to you.

The photo, or memory, might be:

- Yourself, or someone in your family
- A pet or a friend
- An event (like a wedding, a conference, a birthday party)
- Someone who has inspired or influenced you
- A landscape, a place you have been
- Or an object or possession that holds significance for you.

STEP 2: Once you know exactly the image you want to share, IMAGINE describing it to someone who has never seen the photo, or who was not there in the moment that you are remembering. How would you tell a friend about this over the phone? Answer the following questions to help you describe:

- Who or what is in the photo or the memory? Who took the photo?
- Why do you remember this moment? (Why is there a photo?)
- What do the clothes, eyes, hair, facial expression, posture of the people in this photo/memory tell you about what they were feeling?
- Where was the photo taken? When? What time of the day?
- What strikes you as the most important part of the picture/memory?

STEP 3: WRITE two paragraphs (minimum) to *practice describing*

- **First paragraph: Write your description of the scene, photo, or memory.** (Write down the description you came up with in Step 2.)
- **Second paragraph: Tell us why you chose this photo and why it is important or special to you.**
- **You can write more if you want to!**