



Factory floor Reporting constructively



Training suggestions



Learning outcomes

At the end of this chapter, trainees...

- ... can identify which stories can be told constructively.
- ...can list where to look for CJ stories.
- ...can develop constructive story ideas.
- ...can discuss how to conduct both desk and field research using a constructive approach.
- ...can describe the potential of audience engagement in CJ story finding and research and vetting.
- ...are able to identify and develop the main elements of their CJ stories.
- ...can list ways that constructive reporting/production techniques can be used in every step of the story process.
- ...can discuss constructive interviewing techniques.
- ...can identify ways to add constructive elements to their reporting even if working on a deadline.



Training schedule

Buzz groups / 30 minutes

Constructive story ideas (fundamental)

Trainees reflect on good constructive story ideas.

Quiz and mindmapping / 1 hour

Stimulating creativity

A solution-oriented approach to stories often demands thinking outside of the box. Trainees are introduced to different creative techniques that could be fruitful for constructive story development.

Group work, presentation and discussion/ 1 hour

Researching constructive stories (fundamental)

Groups of trainees collectively do desk research on a given topic. They reflect on the arguments for and the pushback against the concepts of constructive journalism.

Group work in tandems / 1 hour

Developing main constructive story elements (fundamental)

Trainees concretize the main elements of their constructive stories - problem, solution, evidence, lessons/insights, limitations.

Role play / 1 hour

Constructive interviewing (fundamental)

Trainees are introduced to constructive interview techniques and interview each other in groups of two where they apply active listening and the looping technique.

Group work / 1 hour

Staying constructive throughout the story process (fundamental)

Trainees reflect on how they use a constructive approach throughout the idea development, research, production and publication phases of their constructive stories. (Can be homework if time is limited)



What's your creative type?

Trainees reflect on their creative strengths and weaknesses and find out what creative type they are. Can be discussed on the next workshop day.



See Handout 8: What type of creative person are you?

Find your constructive story idea

Each trainee comes up with one idea for a constructive story to be written/produced (or at least planned if time is limited) during the training. Can be emailed to the trainer or discussed on the next workshop day.

Desk research for your CJ story

Trainees draft individual research plans, send them to the trainers for feedback. When they have done the research, they could also share their research protocols with the trainer.

Staying constructive throughout the story process

Trainees list ideas of how they can use constructive approaches throughout the research, production and publication phases of their constructive stories.



Requirements

Technology

Internet

Face-to-face: laptop, boxes, projector / video screen (trainer), laptop, smartphones (trainees)

Online: laptops and smartphones (trainer + trainees), headsets

Materials (face-to-face)

Board/whiteboard, flipchart stand and paper, cards (if available), markers.

Tools (online)

Video conference: Zoom (Back up: WhatsApp)

Visualization: Miroboard, JamBoard (Zoom offers digital whiteboards as well)

Quizzes: Slido, Mentimeter

Communication: WhatsApp, Email

Documentation, shared documents: Google Drive folder



Session Details

• Constructive story ideas (fundamental)

Objectives

Trainees can identify which stories can be told constructively and can list where to look for constructive story ideas.

Duration

Group brainstorming: 20 min.

Presentation and discussion: 20 min.

Input presentation, Q & A and discussion: 20 min.

Preparation

Prepare task and (virtual) board for 2-4 groups. Columns: Story ideas, where to look (sources)



40 min., Buzz groups

In groups, trainees brainstorm together on at least three good ways to find CJ story ideas. The time here is calculated for three groups.

If trainees have not come up with a constructive story before this session, each group brainstorms on ways to find constructive stories and reflects on challenges and potential.

If trainees have chosen a topic for a constructive story before this session, participants share their story ideas and the way they came up with it. Then the group selects three ways to find a constructive story idea and reflects on challenges and potential.

In both cases, the groups visualize their findings on a (digital) whiteboard. Limitations should also be discussed: Are there stories that cannot be told constructively?



20 min., Input / discussion

Constructive story finding, selecting and sources

Presentation: PPT Reporting constructively, slides 2-9

- **Stimulating creativity**

Objectives

Trainees are introduced to different creative techniques such as associative and lateral thinking. They create a mind map on a given story topic.

Duration

Quizzes: 10 min.

Group brainstorming: 20 min.

Presentation of group work, clustering and discussion: 20 min.

Trainer input and discussion: 10 min

Preparation

Get familiar with creative techniques and prepare quiz questions. Prepare (digital) boards for mind maps.



15 min., Quiz

One option is to start with a game on associative thinking. Invite trainees to make suggestions for the preparation of a “birthday party”. You start for instance with: “I’ll have a birthday party, and I’ll have a swimming pool.” Next one: “and I’ll have ... The trainees add things they associate with the terms that are mentioned by the others.

Then you could ask a couple of questions that enhance lateral thinking, thinking out of the box. There are a lot of websites offering quiz questions on lateral thinking, for instance: <https://www.rd.com/article/lateral-thinking-puzzles/> or <https://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/story.php?title=super-lateral-thinking-quiz>



30 min., Group work

Divide into groups. Each group picks one member’s story idea and creates a mind map around that idea using associative thinking. Emphasize the task to create chains of associations without judging or structuring the ideas. Any idea is allowed and welcome. More info on mind mapping is at:

<https://www.wrike.com/blog/what-is-a-mind-map-how-to-create/>

One group could also use the so-called “Disney Method” where each trainee takes on a different role and explores the topic from that perspective – for instance: (1) the dreamer, (2) the realist /doer, (3) the critic, (4) the neutral. More info at:

<https://www.toolshero.com/creativity/walt-disney-method/>

Each group presents its mind map, and all together trainees reflect on how to cluster the collected ideas.



20 min., Input / discussion

Stimulating creativity

Presentation: PPT Reporting constructively, slides 10-18



10 min., Input / discussion

What makes a constructive story compelling

Presentation: PPT Reporting constructively, slides 37-39

- **Researching constructive stories (fundamental)**

Objectives

Trainees review research techniques and requirements for constructive stories. They search for data on a given problem (size, impact) and on potential solutions (evidence, limitations).

Duration

Group work: 30 min.

Presentation and discussion: 20 min.

Trainer input and discussion: 10 min.

Preparation

Choose a constructive story where some research could be done by trainees. For instance “How banana waste is turned into rugs, fabric and hair extension”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ust6Bh1D3GY>

Prepare (digital) whiteboard for group work.



40 min., group work

Invite trainees to brainstorm on the kind of data needed to research constructive story ideas and review sources. Give them key information of an existing constructive story, for instance: “A company in Uganda transforms banana stems and leaves into fiber and turns them into fabric.”

Task: Do enough research for a 3-minute piece for television, radio or online. **Extra:** Give reasons why this story is worth being told constructively (or not).

Divide trainees into two groups. One group collects research questions about the problem and tries to find sufficient data via desk research. The other group formulates research questions about the solution and does desk research to know how it works and where it does not work. Findings are visualized on a (digital) whiteboard.

Both groups briefly present their research and explain whether they found the story worth being told constructively. Trainees then watch the film the way it was produced

(For example, if the banana example was chosen: “How banana waste is turned into rugs, fabric and hair extensions”, 5:23, the following applies:

Problem: Bananas are one of the world’s most wasteful crops (only one harvest per plant, 1 ton fruit=2 tons of waste). Bananas are produced worldwide (the size of the problem). Farmers typically burn them but (environmental damage).

Solution: One company in Uganda pulverizes the banana stems and leaves into fiber. Is the solution new? (No, it has been used in the Philippines long before). Are there other, eventually better solutions for how to use the banana by-products, in this part of the country, in Uganda or elsewhere in the world?

Trainees compare and discuss: What research did the “real” piece include that they didn’t include? What research is missing that they thought of?



20 min., Input / discussion

Researching a constructive story

Presentation: PPT Reporting constructively, slides 19-26

• **Developing solutions story elements (fundamental)**

Objectives

Trainees look at research plans for a solutions story and discuss them with other trainees. They know how to frame solutions story ideas and are able to design a work strategy for their own ideas.

Duration

Group work in tandems: 30 min.
Presentation and discussion in 2 groups: 30 min.

Preparation/Requirements

Trainees must have thought of a solutions story idea.



30 min., Group work

Trainees work in pairs on research plans for a solutions story, ideally on a (digital) whiteboard. They reflect on the size and impact of the problem and who is concerned. They look at a response and how it works. They consider how to get insights on whether the solution could be

applied in other contexts and who could evaluate the evidence of this response. How to find out about any limitations for the solution.



30 min., discussion

Trainees share their research plans and get feedback and inspiration from the group members. If time allows, the group could explore further story strategy development. Main elements should be reviewed: topic, context, setting, main character, theme... Guide a short discussion on the different elements, ask questions like “What makes your choice of the character constructive?”

If time is limited and it is not possible to get to all groups, trainees can send their research plans and story elements to the trainer, who gives individual feedback.

• Constructive interviews (fundamental)

Objectives

Trainees reflect on how to guide interviews in a constructive way. They are able to listen and ask questions in a way that will build trust with interviewees and improve the flow, thereby improving the quality of the information obtained.

Duration

Discussion in plenary: 30 Min.

Trainer presentation and discussion: 30 Min.

Preparation

Find videos that you think show attempts to get beyond stereotypes or clichés, or interviews that you think are conducted constructively, especially regarding highly controversial or sensitive subjects. The interviews do not need to be perfect and might include elements that could have been done differently.



30 Min., videos / discussion in plenary

Example: Amnesty International Video “Look beyond borders”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Z68P9Gc77A>

Question: Why did we watch this video? How can this be applied to constructive journalism?

(Empathy, trying to understand who the other person really is, trying to connect with other person, etc.)

Example: ITV video on child rape survivor

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWfmg_eRkQo

(Comfort zone, timing, awareness)

What did the interviewer do and what would you do differently as a constructive reporter?



20 min., Input, discussion

Conducting constructive interviews

Presentation: PPT Reporting constructively, slides 27-36

- **Staying constructive throughout the story process**
(fundamental)

Objectives

Trainees list how to stay constructive in the stages after idea development and research. They can discuss strategies, advantages and challenges.

Duration

Individual brainstorming: 10 min.

Group work: 10 min.

Presentation and discussion: 20 min.

Presentation of examples: 20 min.

Preparation

Prepare boards for group work, choose examples of constructive stories where the audience has been involved.



10 min., individual exercise (Crazy 8)

You invite the trainees to brainstorm – by the help of an associative thinking game called Crazy 8. Trainees are asked to quickly write down in eight minutes eight creative ways to stay constructive in the writing/filming, editing and publication stages. The goal is to push beyond first ideas, frequently the least innovative, and to generate a wider variety of possibilities.



20 min., group work

Trainees are divided into 3 groups. Each group chooses their best ideas and discusses them in the group (challenges and advantages). Each group presents its results and discusses them with all trainees.



20 min., Input and discussion

Staying constructive throughout the story process.

Presentation: PPT Reporting constructively, slides 40-46