Developing Communication Skills Through Art

Facilitators’ resource book
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INTRODUCTION

This resource book offers a set of practical activities, designed to foster cooperation, communication and conflict management skills for young people, especially those who are facing significant marginalisation and needing to improve their soft skills to interact with greater ease in formal and professional contexts.

We have focused on three different approaches to learning: cognitive, physical and behavioural. The objective of these activities is to improve the following skills among the participants and proposes activities that simulate moments from everyday situations in order to improve participants’ ability to interact with others, to exchange not only opinions and ideas, but also feelings and emotions, to learn to make decisions, to follow rules, to endorse responsibilities which might concern others, to overcome problems by looking for alternatives and to interact with each other with their bodies without using speech.

These tasks consist of observing, finding and sharing information. Formulating narratives or descriptions all take works of art as their starting resource. Works of art have the general property of being intelligible to anyone, regardless of their background or level of education. It goes without saying that the interpretations will be varied, and could even be totally different, at times. We believe that the polysemy of artworks is precisely what enables them to be such rich resources for organising interactions within groups of participants.

From our practical experience in the field, we have learnt that participants in art-based workshops recall recently acquired knowledge more efficiently when they engage actively with artworks, and works and relate to them with personal accounts, impressions or experiences. On the other hand, newly learned information and skills are far better imprinted if they are associated with a visual support or to a particular spatial context.

Pedagogical activities in which participants are placed in situations that mimic and model real-world contexts of formal and professional interactions, while engaging with artworks, can help to overcome fears or change mentalities on collaboration and reveal competencies the participants were unaware of.

The particular activities and tasks that we offer in this document go beyond verbal communication, and take into account the unique reaction of the body to the presence of artworks. Some exercises are designed to create a collaborative painting, inspired by real artworks. These creative sessions invite the public to experiment with art techniques and materials, while demonstrating models of cooperation and the ability to adapt one’s opinion. They are inspired from the narratives depicted in the paintings. They discuss themes and practices of representation; they try to encourage a new perception of teamwork and problem-solving and to teach respect for different ways of being or thinking.

The recognition that, either in formal education or in Western societies, the body – its perceptions, and its actions – is often dissociated from the mind, from intellectual or cognitive skills, has led us to choose to work on social skills via verbal and physical interactions, and to develop a deeper focus on the body: for example when observing artworks which feature characters in a particular situation. Cartesian dualism is the archetype of this type of perspective, which leads many individuals either to ignore their bodies or to think that bodily actions cannot be a resource for developing cognitive or social skills. However, trends in human sciences underline, on the contrary, the deep interconnection between communication skills and the body, which can be found in studies that look at the relationship between gestures and language, or forms of bodily intelligence. If we leave the western cultural area, we notice that the body/mind relationship is approached differently. In Japan, for example, body movements, in particular those proposed by the martial arts, are perceived as an integral part of the education process. The practice of certain martial arts is therefore compulsory in higher education.

The idea that body interactions can also help to develop a form of well-being and self-confidence through the investment of one’s own body and through contact with the body of a partner is increasingly recognised nowadays.

The COOBA activities include a module (Warming up with body interactions), based on movements and contacts between participants, which can be carried out at the museum, outdoors or in any suitable place. Other activities are oriented towards the observation of situations where bodies are represented in an interrelation, in order to help participants interpret, with their own logic, the specific social context at stake in the painting. In all cases, body presence and the interactions between bodies are considered as resources for developing social skills.

How to use this manual?

We have identified a series of eight skills that provide a focused approach to the general skills of communication, collaboration and conflict management. They are described at the beginning of the manual, followed by a list of activities that can be associated with them. One activity is often linked to several skills.

Facilitators, mediators and pedagogical teams can create a selection of activities for a particular workshop. It can be either based on one or more skills, or focused on the heterogeneousness of tasks and skills linked to them. Apart from the creative manual activities that require the use of specific materials, all other activities can be deployed either at the museum, in classrooms or in any educational space.

The facilitators can print the images or project them to a screen. They can also, whenever possible, use works of art exhibited at the museum or gallery. Images with the same characteristics as the images in the manual can be used to replace the ones proposed.
**TARGETED SKILLS**

1- ARGUMENTATION:
Developing skills of argumentation, deduction, negotiation and creativity

The main objective of the set of activities grouped under the label argumentation is to improve the quality of participants’ speech. Good argumentation requires being able to use abstraction in order to establish logical links between different propositions, ideas, or observable phenomena. The organisation of different ideas or notions into a coherent whole involves a form of creativity. For an argumentation intended to an interlocutor or group, it is essential to acquire the ability to introduce nuances into the discourse so as to make a sequence of ideas acceptable to others: for example, taking into account what partners may think, even if their position seems incompatible, at first. Argumentation consists precisely in finding bridges between diverging ideas. Therefore, it involves negotiation skills. The activities proposed under this heading, cover a wide variety of situations that will require arguing, deducing, recounting a fact, providing evidence during a debate, mobilising observable facts, taking the interlocutor’s point of view into account, and finding compromises. They promote, notably:

- developing abstract thinking, creativity and capacity of deduction
- participating in a debate, expressing ideas, and relying on narrative skills
- understanding expectations and requirements related to the work world
- listening to others and preparing arguments according to their reactions
- taking into account others’ arguments
- expressing opinions sustained by valid facts

2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION:
Developing multimodal communication skills in various situations

The diversity of communication situations implies many skills: being able to mobilise speech and linguistic resources, gestures, gaze, manipulation of objects, interpretation of images, understanding different conventions or styles (types of images, writing), complementarity between visual, linguistic, and gestural messages. The activities grouped under the label multimodality allow participants to develop the quality of their interpretation regarding different modalities (e.g., speech, body) and materials of communication (e.g., different styles of images) and their combination. The activities grouped in this competence involve notably:

- communicating with non-verbal means
- mastering blended communication with both verbal and visual means
- transforming visual information into verbal messages
- internalising different modes of expression and conventions of representation
- developing the sense of observation
- mobilising short-term memory
- awareness of non verbal aspects in a discussion
- understanding or interpreting body language

3- INTERPRETING BODY LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS:
Being able to interpret body language in specific social situations

This is an important element when it comes to individuals being able to adapt to social situations. To understand and act adequately in a social context, one needs to interpret accurately what others are doing at different stages of a specific situation. For this decoding process, being able to identify non-verbal cues is a key factor. The activities gathered here invite participants to observe paintings that depict persons interacting with each other in more or less formal situations, such as board games or weddings.

First, the participants are invited to analyse how the meaning of the scene is created through body positions, gestures, direction of the gazes. The second step requires participants to discuss how these situations relate to skills of communication, collaboration and conflict management. Role-play is then proposed to get participants to enact similar situations, experience their understanding of different social context, and understand the importance of non-verbal communication for these abilities.

4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION:
Developing the ability to adapt and anticipate to the needs of partners and the group

In daily life, individuals constantly need to anticipate and adapt to new information, standards or knowledge. This applies to institutional, professional or family situations. More generally, one has to adapt to a variety of socio-professional contexts, regardless of the asymmetry of the encounter (finding oneself in a situation where one has more, or less, knowledge than the interlocutor in a specific field).

The activities grouped under the label adaptation and anticipation allow participants to improve their skills for exchanging and sharing information with their interlocutor, guiding the other person, formulating adapted feedback, anticipating the needs of the interlocutor or the group during or before the encounter. We are looking at skills such as: empathy, ability to accept the offered help, organisation of common tasks, finding common solutions, adapting to the culture of the other (social or professional) and avoiding stigmatisation of opinions. The activities grouped in this set involve, notably:

- providing information and guiding others
- providing constructive feedback, anticipating others’ needs, being aware of coworkers’ expectations
- exercising empathy, listening and observing
- accepting assistance
- seeking solutions and making decisions collectively
- reflecting on group dynamism
- understanding power based situations
- understanding and fulfilling both personal and collective goals
- assigning tasks equally and preparing for a task in advance
- identifying and achieving common goals efficiently
5- COORDINATION: Developing the competence to coordinate with partners

The ability to coordinate one’s actions with others is crucial in social interactions. This implies the capacity to identify when it is the right moment to speak, to share a new piece of information, but also to understand the needs of the other person as he/she expresses them during the verbal exchange. The activities grouped under the label coordination are specifically aimed at this conversational sensitivity: developing such skills as adequate timing to speak, listening to what the other person has to say, organising one’s speech accordingly, anticipating the needs of the interlocutor. The coordination skill also involves asking questions appropriate to the situation, interacting with a group, and in particular managing to assign tasks to different members of the group and coordinating their actions. The set of activities grouped under this competence involves, notably:

• coordinating actions in a group with many participants
• guiding others with clear and brief descriptions
• talking in front of an audience
• listening carefully to others and using their suggestions to act
• anticipating others’ actions
• asking appropriate and concise questions and learning to direct the conversation with the use of questions

6- SYNTHESISING INFORMATION

Improving the ability to synthesise information (including with the multimodality of resources)

Today’s society is characterised by the mass of information to which individuals are constantly exposed. Whether as a citizen or a professional, it is crucial for the individual to handle a large amount of information and to retain the most important ones. The activities grouped under the label synthesis invites participants to exercise their ability to synthesise information in collaboration with partners, in order to accomplish a task. The activities grouped in this set involve, notably:

• ability to synthesise and summarise, in order to make understandable a mass of information
• formulating messages clearly and briefly
• creating homogenous wholes from disparate elements
• debriefing and formulating feedback in an appropriate way
• selecting and gathering useful information

7- CLARITY OF MESSAGES:

Developing the ability to formulate clear messages adapted to the situation

Being able to formulate intelligible messages is a basic skill for any collaboration. The activities grouped under the label clarity of messages allow participants to develop their vocabulary, to become aware of the style of their message, of the relationship between the form (or significant) and the meaning (or signified), to develop their ability to reformulate messages to increase their intelligibility, but also to speak in front of an audience. The activities grouped in this set involve, notably:

• clearly formulating and reformulating messages
• awareness of the importance of message style and of how details transform the meaning of messages
• awareness of the relationship and balance between form and content
• building new vocabulary
• practicing self presentation
• distinguishing and using appropriate language register
• extending knowledge and vocabulary of the workplace to behaviour and attitude
• speaking and communicating clearly in front of a broader audience
• finding the appropriate form to formulate a request

8- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:

Managing stressful, competitive and unknown situations

There are many cases when one must be able to communicate effectively, despite the constraints of the situation (latent conflict, stress, time constraints). This skill is crucial in the professional world. The activities grouped under the label conflict management allow participants to understand the reasons of a conflict, to work on their concentration, multitasking, stress management, time management and conflict anticipation in confrontational or competitive situations, while maintaining self-control and remaining courteous or polite. The activities grouped in this set involve, notably:

• remaining focused on the main activity while multitasking
• being calm, polite and efficient, even under pressure
• paying attention to both verbal and visual messages
• remaining focused for a longer period of time when given instructions
• adapting oneself to constraints
• being observant during the debate
• dealing with pressure due to one’s responsibility
• exchanging information efficiently in a competitive situation
• cooperating under pressure
• making decisions in a stressful situation
• collaborating, assigning and sharing tasks under pressure
• getting acquainted with non-familiar materials
• reacting rapidly
• coordinating tasks within a short time
• refocusing the debate, in order to avoid conflict
WARM UP ACTIVITIES

**WU.1. 10+10+10 list of words**

In front of an artwork have the participants write a list of ten descriptive words that relate to the painting/sculpture/etc. When they finish, ask them to add 10 more, and then repeat once again. At the end, compare or share the 30-word list.

This exercise helps to enhance the vocabulary, to concentrate on an object and observe it.

**WU.2. Guesser/leader**

A volunteer is asked to leave the room for a short moment (i.e., a couple of minutes), he/she will be the ‘guesser’. All the other participants form a circle. They choose a ‘leader’. When the ‘guesser’ returns, he/she is invited to stay at the center of the circle. The ‘leader’ of the group initiates movements imitating gestures and postures from a particular picture (the same one during the game); others must coordinate with each other and replicate these movements. The ‘guesser’ must identify who is the ‘leader’ of the group.

**WU.3. Voting the favourite**

Participants receive a piece of paper with a small photo showing all the artworks on display in the specific museum room. They vote (draw a circle around the selected picture) for the team’s favourite artwork (or what they consider to be the unanimous opinion of the group). Then they receive another sheet of paper where they are asked to select their own preference. The votes are counted for each category (the team’s and personal preferences). A discussion will be initiated to see whether the two votes differ considerably, and if so: why? What can be the reason for this difference?

**WU.4. Introducing repetition and register**

Facilitators show different representations based on a similar theme. If these are related to mythological or religious subjects, the story is explained beforehand. To begin with, participants are asked to find similarities and differences among the representations. Then, they are invited to define notions like ‘repetition’, ‘reformulation’, through the example of the artworks.

A further discussion can be held, based on how the style and visual forms influence one’s interpretation of the original story.

At the end of the activity, the group may be asked to find contemporary/everyday life examples where a specific style determines the meaning of the message.

**WU.5. Seeing with your Nose**

*Description:*

Facilitators prepare scent samples and a reproduction of a painting with contour lines only and numbered sections (see illustration below). Participants are invited to smell a scent sample (one at a time), and to associate it with a specific colour. They then match the number of the scent container with the section which has the same number, and paint the area with the colour they have in mind.

Participants work individually or in small groups; at the end, the different coloured versions are compared and discussed.

*Materials needed:*

- contoured lines of a painting, sections numbered 1 to 10 on an A/4 sheet of paper
- watercolour, brush
- various scent samples numbered 1 to 10.

*Important note:* scent containers should be opaque, so that the smell’s origin can’t be identified.
WU. 6. Black and White

Description:

Participants (in pairs or small groups) start to copy the original graphic artwork with a black needle tip pen on a piece of tracing paper. After five minutes, they pass it on to the next group, which has a few minutes to prepare a positive comment. One of the groups presents its positive evaluation, and then everyone continues to work on the collected copy. This process is repeated several times; ideally until each group does an assessment.

This activity helps to learn how to formulate positive feedback, while participants experience meticulous work in an artistic context.

Materials needed:

Reproduction of a detail or the whole print (A/5 paper format), tracing paper (A/5 paper format), white cardboard (A/5 paper format), black needle tip pen.

WU. 7. Sequences in time and space

PRE-EXERCISE

Start with the exercise "Who says"

Use an art image with several characters. Participants study the image as a group, and try to imagine what each person in the painting is saying. Each member of the group chooses one character from the picture and tries to imagine what that person could be saying.
C. MIXING SEQUENCE

Discuss these art images on the left and share your interpretation of the images with the group. Try to make several different stories/comic strips by varying the sequence with the three images. If you like, add speech bubbles where you find it suitable.


A. ART & COLOUR CIRCLE

W.U.8. Colour circle

Participants use a colour circle and a number of squares in different colours. They discuss with each other how they perceive colours. They have to start by placing the squares with yellow tones next to the yellow part in the colour circle. The purpose of this exercise is to understand how a specific colour, yellow for example, can shift to different nuances: more green-yellow or more red-yellow. The same can be applied with red, blue and green squares.


Bembo, Giovanni Francesco. *Saints Lawrence, George and John the Baptist*. First half of the 16th century, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.

The facilitator chooses a couple of art images with a dominant colour. Participants use the same colour circle. They put the circle at the centre of a large sheet of paper, then work together placing the images so that each one corresponds to the right colour in the colour circle.

**B. THE COLOUR STAIRCASE**

The facilitator chooses three art images with one dominant colour, draws a simple staircase, and adds two colour samples: for example green colour at the bottom and yellow on the top of the staircase.

Participants work together and place the art images on the staircase, the one with dominant green at the bottom and the one with dominant yellow on the top.

**C. CHANGE COLOUR**

The facilitator chooses one art image with a dominant colour, makes a black and white copy of the image (this copy works best if it's a copy with low opacity) and puts the two images beside each other to study.

The main goal in this workshop is to understand how each person perceives colours.

The challenge is to paint the black & white copy in a new different dominant colour.

The first step: study the original image together in the group, and try to find out where the darkest and the lightest areas appear in the painting.

The second step: now, it’s about agreeing and taking common decision as a group. The group should choose one of the main colours - yellow, red, blue or green – to use in the third step.

The third step: at this step, participants paint with the main colour in different nuances – from the lightest to the darkest on the black & white copy.
MEETING IN BODY INTERACTION

The following activities are based solely on movement and contact between bodies. They can be carried out in the museum, outdoors or in any other appropriate place, independently or in combination with the other activities in the manual.

Preliminary remarks on meeting through body interactions

The framework we have chosen is that of an interaction accomplished in pairs according to a simple principle: one is the ‘leader’ of a movement and the other the ‘follower’, in a similar way that martial arts organise kata, or the way tango dancers divide up the roles to coordinate themselves.

Communication, cooperation and conflict management correspond to the different participations in these roles: communication is about the ‘leader’; cooperation is about the ‘follower’; and conflict management is about the mutual relationship established between the two practitioners.

The communication of the leader

During the physical interaction, the leader’s general task will be to give directions to his partner either by pushing or pulling, always being careful to adopt a measured and adapted way of doing so. It is crucial that the intensity and speed of the movements be adapted to the situation and always done in a measured and flexible way. A direction given too abruptly can lead the partner to contract or misinterpret the direction, and create a confusing situation. A direction given without energy does not induce any response or movement from the partner. The accuracy of the message depends on a good balance between firmness and adaptation to the partner.

The proposed exercises allow practitioners who take on the role of leader to become aware of these differences, of the appropriate amount of pressure, of the way a message is produced. The leader must decide and communicate on a clear direction to go, which also implies to be aware of his/her own body movements, of the position of his/her weight on the legs, of the centring of his/her arms in relation to the chest, etc. The objective is to move his/her whole body in a coordinated way (vs. having his body twisted, pushing only with his shoulders, etc.)

The cooperation of the follower

The follower works on his ability to adapt to the body messages, to the movements or directions, suggested by the leader. When receiving a push from the leader, he/she will work on his/her capacity of absorption by the relaxation of certain muscles (according to the various movements of push) and by a movement of the legs. For the follower, a task to be accomplished is to coordinate the upper and lower body, keeping its balance in the movement. In so doing the participants will work on their ability to change direction, without going too fast or too slow. Here again, the ability to adapt is required: adapting to the tension given by the leader implies interpreting in the present moment what the other is doing.

Conflict management, the mutual relationship established between the two practitioners.

Conflict management is deepened in the interaction between leader and follower, and in particular in the adaptation that each one must constantly carry out to coordinate with the other one each step of the interaction in physical contact and in movements of the whole body.

During these bodily interactions, it is important that each participant be very attentive to what the partner is doing.

For all of the activities suggested below, participants should be encouraged to invert roles regularly. It should not happen that some persons end up being only leaders or followers.

These activities can be used independently from each other to allow members of a group to get to know each other before activities at the museum, in the classroom or in any other place. They can also be used sequentially as stand-alone activities.

1. Guiding the other - two partners

Partners pair up.

The leader stands behind the follower, hands on shoulders.

The follower walks slowly, eyes closed without looking. The leader guides the follower by pushing him very slightly and makes him change directions, ensuring that his partner does not bump into the other groups or into furniture.

Communication is ensured only via contact of the hands on the shoulders - partners do not speak.

Tip: Let the follower take a few steps straight ahead before changing direction.

After a few minutes, partners switch roles.

2. Guiding the other - three partners

Partners are grouped in threes. There is one ‘follower’ and two ‘leaders’, who must team up to lead their partner.

The leaders stand behind the follower, each placing a hand on the follower’s shoulders.

The follower walks slowly, eyes closed, without looking. The leaders guide the follower and make him/her change direction, ensuring that the follower does not bump into others or furniture. Communication is ensured only by the touch of hands on shoulders - partners do not speak.
Leaders choose directions by using gesture, without speaking.  

**Tip**: Let the follower take a few steps straight ahead before changing direction.  

After a few minutes, the partners switch roles.

4. One partner leads two, face-to-face configuration

In this exercise, there are two ‘followers’ and one ‘leader’. As in Activity 3, the partners make contact, either by hands or by hands-on-shoulders.

In this case, the leader can either pull the two partners to guide them, or push them in various directions.

In the first instance, the followers move forward; in the second instance, they move backwards.

During this exercise, the leader can change his/her action and alternate pulling and pushing, but also change the speed of his/her movement. The partners try to maintain contact without interruption.

3. Direct the other one face to face

Both partners have their eyes open. They can make contact either at the level of the palms; the follower places his hands on the shoulders of the leader, or the opposite (it is important to vary the contact). Whichever form of contact is chosen, the leader is guiding, by pushing the follower, who then walks backwards.

Once the partners have repeated the exercise for a few minutes, a new task consists of the follower “letting go” of the leader. This means that the follower has to take a step aside, possibly pivoting, so that the leader can no longer direct him/her, like when one avoids someone in a crowd.

It is advisable to work in a gentle way, without using too strong pressure.
5. Experiencing opposition and release (different configurations)

For this exercise, partners are divided into pairs.

They make hand or shoulder/hand contact, and push towards each other to create a pressure that they maintain for at least ten seconds.

Partners vary the points of contact to create different types of opposition (e.g., left hand against left shoulder; then, against right shoulder; then, shoulder against shoulder; etc.).

In the second part of the exercise, the partners resume to the contact pressure, but this time the follower relaxes and lets the leader pass by, while moving his/her legs.

6. Alternating movement and immobility:

The leader makes the follower move and then stops him before making him/her change direction (alternating forward, backward, turning right, left)

For this exercise, partners alternate moments of contact in opposition (exercise 5) and moments of movement (exercise 4). They move, stop, and then move again in another direction.

7. Feedback in plenary session on communication, collaboration and conflict management

7.1 How did the participants experience these exercises, what difficulties did they encounter? What did they find easy?

Participants can be asked to express how they experienced physical contact (are they used to this form of contact with others?), how they managed to coordinate with their partner in the movement, how they felt the opposing pressure and the actions of letting their partner pass. Did they experience any new perceptions? What connections do they see with other situations in everyday life?

7.2 What conclusions do they draw in terms of communication, cooperation and conflict management?

The different activities correspond to ways of communicating, cooperating and simulating conflicts. Participants can be asked to verbally and explicitly make connections between the actions they took as leaders/followers, and their representations of communication, cooperation, and conflict management. Participants are asked to define these three concepts based on their experience during the activities they have just completed. Did these exercises change their understanding of communication, collaboration and conflict management?

Details for facilitators:

During the discussion, points of reference may be: how important it is to have a clear message for communication, the importance of being sensitive to what partners are doing during collaboration, and the importance of adapting to the other when it comes to solving conflicts. For example, a good physical contact should not be done with excessive force, but not be too soft either. The participants can then look for correlations in everyday life, family or work situations. See these principles in the COOBA manual “Communication, Collaboration and Conflict Management in Social Interaction”.
MAIN ACTIVITIES

Activity 1:
Fictional map based on painterly elements

Skills targeted in this activity:
1- ARGUMENTATION
2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION

Description:
Participants are divided into two groups, each group works in a different museum room. Have the participants choose one painting/artwork individually. On a large paper, they will imagine and draw a (semi fictional) top view map based on the interiors, landscapes and other scenes they can see on the pictures. Then, the participants from group A form pairs with those of group B, and have to identify the painting from their partner’s map.

Hints and adaptability:
In classroom situations, facilitators can either project a selection of 20-30 photos or – if possible – distribute fine art albums or catalogues.

Obviously, landscapes and narrative paintings are more adapted to this activity.

Activity 2:
Imaginary map using elements of different paintings

Skills targeted in this activity:
1- ARGUMENTATION
2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
6- SYNTHESISING INFORMATION

Description:
This is a variant of the previous activity, tailored more specifically to group work. In small groups, participants draw an imaginary map with some features in landscape mode. They have to make a direct or indirect reference to each (or a certain number) of the paintings hanging on the walls of the museum room.

For example, an indirect reference for a portrait can be the façade of a house, where the model of a portrait may live, the style of the house should somehow suit the social status conveyed by the painting. The reproductions of the paintings on display can be printed as two columns on the left and right sides of the paper (in black and white, only details), in order to imitate tourist maps. With this arrangement, participants are able to show direct links between the map and pictures.

Hints and adaptability:
In classroom sessions, facilitators can select pictures around a previously discussed topic, or a historic time. Portraits of people, interiors, cityscapes, scientific or everyday objects from a historical period would be a great opportunity to learn more about the time and everyday life. Or, from a completely opposite perspective, we can offer a very heterogeneous selection, with one picture of each participants’ country of origin, or representative of their cultural background.

Activity 3: True or false

Skills targeted in this activity:
1- ARGUMENTATION
2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
6- SYNTHESISING INFORMATION
7- CLARITY OF MESSAGES

Description:
The participants have to write 5 sentences related to the artworks exhibited in the museum room where the workshop is held. Some of these sentences are true, while others are false. The statements can be prepared with the help of the description of the pictures or on the labels. Attendees can even use their cell phones to search for information. Facilitators can also give more details to each participant.

Then, one by one, participants read aloud their sentences, while the rest of the group has to guess which ones are true or false.

Hints and adaptability:
A preliminary discussion may be useful: the goal is not to create statements that no one can question, for example, “this painting was made in 1534 / in Berlin / etc.”. Nor are we looking for statements to check prior knowledge of participants. The exercise should be fun, with hard-to-believe truths and plausible untruths.
Activity 4. Guiding busy groups

Skills targeted in this activity:

1. ARGUMENTATION
4. ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION

Description:

In pair, participants play the role of museum guides. They are preparing the visit of a group of children / bank directors / restaurant owners / etc. who will be in a hurry and will only have time to see one picture from the room.

Both ‘guides’ choose a picture individually, which probably won’t be the same. They have to come up with an agreement, and engage in a discussion on what kind of picture would be interesting for children, for a specific profession, etc.

This activity shows that it is important to prepare a meeting, to adjust our vocabulary to the profile of the audience / the target group.

Hints and adaptability:

For ‘imaginary visitors’, facilitators can choose the occupations or professions targeted by the participants or the different jobs in a sector in which participants are likely to seek work. Each pair can also have as ‘imaginary visitors’ representatives of the different stages of a career within the same profession: this will allow them to compare the specificities of each hierarchical stage.

Activity 5. Picture Frame

Skills targeted in this activity:

6. SYNTHESISING INFORMATION
7. CLARITY OF MESSAGES

Description:

Individually, or in small groups, participants are asked to make a frame to accommodate this early twentieth century painting (see below) or any other artwork chosen by the facilitator. Participants have to try to replicate some elements of the picture in order to create harmony and continuity between the frame and the painting.

Materials needed:

Reproduction of one or several painting(s), A/4 and A/3 paper format white sheets of paper, watercolour, brush, pencil, glue, scissors.

Hints and adaptability:

If each group works on a painting stemming from a different historical period, during the activity the groups are not allowed to see each other’s work. When everyone has finished, in a plenary session, each frame can be matched to its artwork. A discussion may follow to see whether a frame enhances or ‘dominates’ the picture.

Activity 6. Playing and cheating

Skills targeted in this activity:

2. MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
3. INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS


In the following series of activities, the focus is on body communication. Some of the questions overlap, and it is possible to group the answers. The answers are always elaborated in sub-groups (2-3 people max) followed by a pooling of the results. When divergent interpretations appear, each group presents its arguments, without it being necessary to determine that only a single answer is correct. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on an explanation argued with visible elements on the represented bodies: positions, gaze directions, manipulation of objects, gestures, pointing at things, contact between bodies, touch, etc.

1. The situation

Describe the situation in groups of two or three:

- Start by describing the objects and the environment.
- What are the characters doing? Describe their activity, focusing on their positions and postures in the scene.

2. Communicate through gaze

- Look more closely at the gaze directions. In which direction is each character looking? Do you think some of them are communicating with each other through their gaze? Who is communicating with whom through the gaze? Which message is being transmitted?
- Where did or will everyone look at, and for how long? Is there coordination between the actions of some of the characters and their gaze? Describe this coordination and its purpose(s).

3. Body actions, gestures

- For each character, describe what he/she has just done and what he/she is going to do, according to you.
- Who has just played cards? Who will play next? Argue by describing the gestures and postures of each character.
- Looking for body clues, do you think there are teams (e.g., two players working together against one another)? Or does everyone play for themselves? Justify your answers by using observable elements.

4. Social relationships

- Using body language, try to describe the intentions of each character. Do you think any of them know each other well?
- Are the characters in a tense or relaxed situation? Argue by observing their faces and expressions.
- Do you think the relationship between the characters may change at the end of the game? Explain why.

5. Understanding a social situation

Based on everything you said earlier, define the action of cheating.

Is the definition you developed close to the concept of conflict? Cooperation? Communication? Explain the similarities and differences.

Have you ever cheated or seen someone cheat? What happened? If you have never cheated or seen someone cheat, try to imagine what it feels like to cheat or to be cheated on.

6. Your turn to perform the scene

Form groups of three or four. Each person takes on the role of one of the characters in the painting. In the situation you are about to play, the character on the right realises that the man on the left has cheated.

Play the conversation just before the man on the right realises that the other is cheating.

Everyone tries to participate in the conversation while avoiding a conflict, including the man on the right.

You can prepare for this situation. Each subgroup acts out the scene in front of the group.

Once a subgroup has finished, discuss in a plenary session what happened. Identify the different moments of the discussion: when the conflict was seen, the explanations, the apology, the acceptance of apology, or other moments.

Try to determine rules for dealing with conflicts before they occur.


Activity 7: Revelations

Skills targeted in this activity:

2. MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
3. INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS

In the following series of activities, the focus is on body communication. Some of the questions overlap, and it is possible to group the answers. The answers are always elaborated in sub-groups (2-3 people max) followed by a pooling of the results. When divergent interpretations appear, each group presents its arguments, without it being necessary to determine that only a single answer is correct. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on an explanation argued with visible elements on the represented bodies: positions, gaze directions, manipulation of objects, gestures, pointing at things, contact between bodies, touch, etc.

1. The situation
Observe the characters’ clothes and try to guess their era and social status.
Describe their position in space.

2. Simultaneous communications
From the postures and orientation of the bodies, can you tell who is talking to whom? What are the tones of conversations (low? light? other?) What might be the level of voices in each group? Explain your answers based on body cues (body position and orientation)
Observe the pointing gesture of the character in the center. What is he showing? What is he saying? Explain your answers based on each person’s body position and your previous answers.

3. Social relationships and interactions
Do you think that all these characters know each other well and in the same way? What might their relationship be? Do you think there is a hierarchy among them? What kind of hierarchy (political? professional? family?)
Revealing information to someone is telling them something they didn’t know. In pairs, think about the consequences of revealing something. Consequences can be positive or negative. Find some examples of cases that have happened to you or that you have heard about. Do you think that in the scene depicted here, one of the characters makes a revelation? Or shares information of great importance? Which one? Explain what makes you think so.
If you have identified a conversation group, imagine the exchange (at least two turns per character). If you have identified two conversation groups, do you think the two groups are talking about the same thing?
Imagine both exchanges (minimum two turns per character).
The two men on the right seem to be talking to each other: how can you tell? Do you think they are talking with the same voice level as the other two? Does their behaviour seem rude to you? Do you think either of the other two other characters can hear their conversation?
Imagine what happened just before this scene: look at the body positions of characters and if they were saying something. Same question for what is going to happen next.
Do you think the relationship between the characters will change after this scene?

4. Your turn to perform the scene:
We now know that the emperor, on the bed, reproaches his son for wanting, or having intended to kill him. For the son, it is a revelation. Imagine a situation where the son apologises and gives an explanation. It is up to you to imagine this apology. Imagine what the father might say to accept his son’s explanation. At the end of the dialogue, the father and son make up (sincerely or hypocritically).
Another option: play the same scene with four people. One of the two characters (in the middle and on the left) addresses the two on the right, reproaching them to talk at the same time as him and asking what is their conversation about. Each pair prepares a short dialogue on their own (based on previous answers).

5. Your experience with simultaneous conversations
Have you ever experienced or observed situations where two lines of communication occur at the same time (for trainers: one main conversation happening out loud while another one happens almost whispering)? What do you think of these situations? Can the behaviour of those who speak in a low voice be perceived as impolite? For those who decide to whisper, what might be their motivation?

Additional information for trainers
Before you begin point 4, explain that the emperor is on the bed talking to his son who tried to kill him.
The Emperor Severus reproaches to his son Caracalla having planned to assassinate him; he says: “If you wish my death, order Papinian to give it to me with this sword”.
The man on the bed is the emperor, who points to a sword. His son is placed at the left of the painting.

Activity 8: the wedding and physical contact
Skills targeted in this activity:

2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
3. INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS

In the following series of activities, the focus is on body communication. Some of the questions overlap, and it is possible to group the answers. The answers are always elaborated in sub-groups (2-3 people max) followed by a pooling of the results. When divergent interpretations appear, each group presents its arguments, without it being necessary to determine that only a single answer is correct. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on an explanation argued with visible elements on the represented bodies: positions, gaze directions, manipulation of objects, gestures, pointing at things, contact between bodies, touch, etc.
1. A first look at the situation

Count the number of characters and classify them by age. How many generations can you distinguish?

Try to deduce the time period and the social environment represented, do you think it is more likely to be in a city or at the countryside? Find elements to support your answers.

2. The body posture as communication

By observing the positions and orientations of the bodies, explain who the characters are talking to. What are the others doing? Again, justify your answers by interpreting body positions, gaze directions and gestures.

Pay particular attention to the characters who are touching each other. Describe their relationship.

3. Social Relationships

Try to describe the relationships between the different characters. Is it a business relationship, a family relationship, a professional relationship?

What is in the bag that the young man is carrying in his hand in the center? Is he going to give it to someone? Did he receive it from someone? Is he carrying it for a particular reason?

Is the communication serene? Do you see a conflict emerging anywhere? Explain.

Is this a routine, everyday interaction? Or is it an interaction during a special occasion? Justify your answer based on the information visible from the bodies and their positions.

What actions have happened before this scene, and what will happen next?

Will the relationships between the characters change as a result of this interaction? In what ways?

4. Your turn to act out the situation

Choose a few characters and imagine either their conversation during this scene, or before, or after. If you choose characters who do not appear to be talking, imagine what they are thinking about during the scene, before and after.

Optional: participants can be invited to narrate their wedding, what they think of marriage, if they wish to get married, or, if they come from different countries, explain how a wedding is celebrated in their country. In any case, participants can discuss the difference between the scene depicted in this painting and weddings as they are organised nowadays or in another country.

Additional information for facilitators/trainers:

in old French, “Accordée” is an old-fashioned synonym for “fiancée”. The painting depicts a scene where the groom comes to receive, and holds in his left hand, the dowry that his father has just given him. The bride-to-be is in the center, in white. The other characters are members of the bride’s family: her mother, brothers and sisters.

This information can be shared at the beginning of the activity, but it is best to complete the activity focusing only on interpretations of body positions and movements, gaze directions, or facial expressions.

Activity 9: Preventing a conflict

Skills targeted in this activity:

2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
3- INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS
8- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

In the following series of activities the focus is on body communication. Some of the questions overlap, and it is possible to group the answers. The answers are always elaborated in sub-groups (2-3 people max) followed by a pooling of the results. When divergent interpretations appear, each group presents its arguments, without it being necessary to determine that only a single answer is correct. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on an explanation argued with visible elements on the represented bodies: positions, gaze directions, manipulation of objects, gestures, pointing at things, contact between bodies, touch, etc.

1. A first look at the situation

Define one or more groups on the canvas. Propose a first description of the physical actions of each group, without trying to identify the causes of the conflict.

Observe the faces of the girls on the right of the painting and suggest expressions and emotions that correspond (fear, joy, etc.) to what you observe.

2. The link between body attitude and conflict

The two men on the left are obviously in physical conflict. Describe the body postures of each, in particular the dominant posture and the dominated posture. These postures are very pronounced and easily interpreted. In situations where the conflict is mostly verbal, the relationships of power are sometimes less easy to make out. Can you describe, and if possible mimic, dominant and dominated body postures, attitudes in situations of verbal conflict? If possible, try to find common traits of body postures in most types of dominant and dominated position.

3. Participating in a conflict as an observer

Based on the previous observations, do you think there is a connection between the conflict of these two men and the group of women? Try to imagine the cause of the fight/conflict between the men. From the expression on women’s face, do you think they are siding with one of the two men? Which one? Justify your answer based on your previous remarks.
4. Causes of conflict: mediating to prevent conflict

To finish this activity, try to reconstruct the facts that led to this scene. What were the men doing? What were the women doing? Imagine what will happen in the next few minutes. Go back to the scene before the conflict, as a mediator, what could you have suggested to avoid the conflict?

5. It’s up to you to act in the situation

In groups of three or four (or more), re-create the different groups (two men and several women) in this scene, then perform it in a version where the conflict is avoided. You can prepare the scene or try to perform spontaneously, without planning the actions.

6. Once the scene has been played out, try to determine general rules of conflict avoidance.

Additional information for facilitators/trainers:

This painting represents a biblical scene from the book of Exodus (II, 15-21; for another representation of the scene, see the link below). Moses, in red, defends the daughters of Jethro, which some shepherds wanted to stop from drawing water from the well where they were feeding their flock. Moses will marry one of the daughters, Sephora.

This information can be shared at the beginning of the activity, but it is best to do the activity focusing only on interpretations of body positions and movements, gaze directions and facial expressions.

Activity 10: Acting in a formal situation

Skills targeted in this activity:

2. Multimodal Communication
3. Interpreting Body Actions and Social Situations

In the following series of activities the focus is on body communication. Some of the questions overlap, and it is possible to group the answers. The answers are always elaborated in sub-groups (2-3 people max) followed by a pooling of the results. When divergent interpretations appear, each group presents its arguments, without it being necessary to determine that only a single answer is correct. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on an explanation argued with visible elements on the represented bodies: positions, gaze directions, manipulation of objects, gestures, pointing at things, contact between bodies, touch, etc.


1. The Situation

Begin by describing the environment, the building and the objects.

What are the characters doing? Describe their postures, the position of their bodies in relation to each other and their actions.

How are the different groups of characters connected by their eyes and body postures?

Look at the faces of the characters in the painting (e.g., the main characters) and assign them expressions, emotions, and feelings that correspond (happy, sad, curious, serious, etc.). Justify your answers.

Based on the observations you have just made, identify the different groups by giving them a name (e.g., “those who are watching”). Explain who is interacting with whom in these groups.

2. Communication through eye contact

Take a closer look at the direction of the gaze. In what direction is each character looking? Who is communicating with whom through their gaze? Imagine what the characters might say as they look at each other.

3. Actions, gestures and body positions

Identify the main characters, argue by describing their body positions, gestures. Describe what they are doing.

Identify groups of peripheral characters, argue by describing their gestures and postures, describe what they are doing and possibly what they are saying.

Justify your answers with observable evidence.

4. Social relationships

Using the previous observations, try to describe the intentions of the main characters. Do you think any of the characters know each other well?

Are the characters interacting in a tense or relaxed manner? Argue by observing their faces and expressions.

Do you think the relationship between the characters may change as the main activity progresses? Explain why.

Finally, what ceremony are they performing? What physical actions are they doing or are about to do?

5. Understanding a social action

Based on everything you said earlier about body postures, define the action of getting married. How does the definition you developed relate to the concept of cooperation? communication? Possible conflict?

When two people marry, they commit themselves to living together, and therefore to communicating and cooperating. They will also certainly face conflicts. Reflect on what getting married entails in terms of communication, cooperation, and conflict management after one year, three years, or ten years of marriage.
6. Your turn to perform the situation

Form groups of four people. Each person plays the role of one main character in the painting and, if possible, some of the figures in the peripheral group in the painting. In the situation you are about to act out, the two main characters are about to get married. Act out the conversation and actions that characterise this ceremony. Also act out the characters watching, and imagine the type of comments they would make.

You can prepare for the situation. Each subgroup acts out the scene in front of the group.

Once a subgroup has finished, discuss in a plenary session what happened: identify the different moments of the discussion.

From this discussion, try to draw rules regarding cooperation and communication in formal situations: what does each person need to do in order to ensure the event go well? When can go wrong? What do you conclude from this? Consider other formal interactions: at the doctor’s practice, with a teacher, a co-worker, etc.

7. Additional information for facilitators/trainers:

Please refer to the COOBA manual on “Communication, Collaboration and Conflict Management in Social Interaction”, sections on cooperation and collaboration from p.31. The scene depicts a biblical scene in which Moses is about to marry Sephora. This information can be shared at the beginning of the activity, but it is best to do the activity focusing only on interpretations of body positions and movements, gaze directions and facial expressions.

If, by the time you get to activity #5 no participant has mentioned the idea that this could be a wedding, the trainer can refer to this ceremony, possibly by asking participants about their image of marriage, and in the case of multicultural audiences, how marriage is conducted in their own culture of origin.

**Activity 11: Defending an accused person**

**Skills targeted in this activity:**

2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
3. INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS
8-CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. The situation

Begin by describing the general atmosphere, particularly through the colours, the settings, and the clothing of the characters.

Examine the faces of the characters in the painting (for example, those of the main characters) and suggest expressions, emotions and feelings that correspond (joy, sadness, curiosity, seriousness, etc.) to what you observe.


Do you see a match between the general mood and the characters’ expressions? Would you say that the characters are in a situation of communication? collaboration? conflict? Justify your answers for each of these three skills (whether you answered yes or no).

2. The role of eye contact in communication

Take a closer look at the direction of the gaze. In what direction is each character looking? Based on these observations, indicate who is communicating with whom.

3. Actions, gestures and body positions

Based on the looks and body positions, identify groups. Describe their arrangement and how each group interacts with the other group(s).

Identify the main characters: argue by describing their body positions, their orientation to others, their gestures, and describe what they do.

How are their emotions related to their body actions?

Identify the peripheral groups of characters, argue by describing their gestures and postures, describe what they do. How are their emotions connected to their bodily actions?

Observe the hand gestures. Choose one or two and explain their meaning or function in this situation.

4. Social relationships

Do you think any of the characters know each other well?

Considering body language, try to describe the intentions of the main characters. What actions are they doing or preparing to do? Are they in conflict or are they collaborating? What might be the purpose of their communication? Explain why you think so.

Are the characters in a tense or relaxed situation? Make your case by observing their faces and expressions. Describe the emotions of the main characters based on their facial expressions and movements.

Do you think the relationship between the characters may change as the main activity progresses? Explain why.

What do the characters do? - Describe their activity, focusing on their body position and postures, relative to each other.

5. Understanding a social action

Based on everything you have said above and taking note of the title, identify in the painting who the woman accused of adultery is.

Define the action of defending an accused person in a tensed situation: what do you have to say to get others to forgive her? Should everyone’s point of view be taken into account? Explain why. You can use examples from your own experience, or stories or facts you know.
In this case, Christ said, “Let the one who has never sinned cast the first stone”. How would you interpret this phrase? How would you phrase it today? In what cases do you think this type of excuse is valid, in what cases do you think this type of excuse is not valid?

6. Your turn

Form groups of four people. Each person plays the role of the main characters: Christ, the accused woman, an accuser, possibly the lover of the accused woman and her lawful wife. You can also choose a more peripheral character to act as an observer. Play the conversation in a situation where the protagonists find a solution where the conflict is resolved in a way that is acceptable to all.

You can prepare the situation. Each subgroup plays the scene in front of the group.

7. Group Reflection

Once a subgroup has finished, discuss in plenary session what happened: identify the different moments of the discussion. How did participants resolve the conflict? Try to draw some general principles about communication, cooperation and conflict management.

What is the function of apologies and consideration of the other’s point of view in this context? Is it necessary to take the other person’s point of view into account when apologising?

For the discussion, you may also want to consider the phrase ‘saving face’ (for more information on this, refer to the COOBA manual). What does it mean? Can it be used in this context?

8. Additional information for facilitators/trainers:

For questions about the role of the body in communication, refer to the COOBA manual, section on conflict and collaboration.

The questions in the “situation” section are designed to get participants to make an initial observation of the painting. The answers do not need to be too long at this stage, and there may be unanswered questions that will be addressed in the rest of the activity.

On the other hand, it is best not to reveal the title of the painting too soon and let participants get an idea of the situation, to look for an interpretation. It is possible that they will come up with quite different interpretations. The discovery of the title may lead them to completely change their interpretations. This is not a problem at all. The objective of the activity is to make them aware of the importance of the body in communication, collaboration and conflict management.

The scene depicts a biblical scene in which Jesus Christ defends an adulterous woman who is facing stoning. He saves the woman by reminding her accusers that all humans commit sins with his famous phrase: “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone”. This information can be shared as you begin Activity 5, “Understanding a Social Action.”

Activity 12. Complementary infos

Skills targeted in this activity:

4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
5- COORDINATION
6- SYNTHESISING INFORMATION
7- CLARITY OF MESSAGES

Description:

In front of an artwork, in groups of 2-3, participants receive short texts they have to read and then explain to the others. The papers can be about the artist, the subject matter, the technique, the time period when the artwork was created, the commission, the successive owners, interesting stories around the creation, etc. Then in turn, each group has to sum up their texts and make a presentation, while the remaining participants may take notes. Then the audience explains briefly the elements learned.

Hints and adaptability:

The different groups can work on complementary subjects, gathering information together on a topic as the presentations progress. For example, they can learn about prominent figures (possibly portrayed in the room where they are standing), customs, artists and patrons, pictorial techniques and materials, organisation of old masters’ studios, etc., from the same historical period.

The same activity can be organised with a more pyramidal structure. The groups do not present their topic directly to the plenary, but to another group or person, who then passes the information gathered to a new person, who summarises the data or stories in front of everyone at the end. This process can be summarised as follows (see illustration): groups 1 and 2 sum up their texts to participant A, Group 3 to participant B. In turn, participant A and B sum up their pieces of information to participant C, who presents to everybody the brief summary of the 3 original texts. Then, in a plenary session, they check out together if all the important points of the papers could be transferred to the top of the pyramid.
Activity 13. Five-item tour

Skills targeted in this activity:

2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
6- SYNTHESISING INFORMATION

Description:

In small groups, participants have to design a mini tour including five items displayed in adjacent museum rooms. They have to find logic or a common thread among the five items (e.g., five portraits or five Greek vessels from the domestic sphere...). Groups have to draw a map to guide the others and give a 1-2 sentence explanation (details or interesting features, which are worth focusing on) between each step of the tour.

After this, groups exchange their annotated maps and go on to explore the others’ designed tour(s). At the end, they give feedback and explain whether the map was clear and easy to follow.

Hints and adaptability:

In a classroom context, groups receive a pack of cards with reproductions of artworks or simply art books to create a selection.

Participants with good language skills can invent a story around the five selected items. Obviously, they aren’t supposed to know or rely on real / historical elements concerning the artworks.

Activity 14. Collected/forgotten items

Skills targeted in this activity:

2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
5- COORDINATION

Description:

In a museum room, by way of an introduction, a traditional guided tour seems to take place. The facilitator shows some paintings, sharing stories about them. Among the artworks, one should have an outdoor setting, preferably a meeting, picnic, or still life with lots of elements. Then in another room, suddenly, the facilitator tells the group that a storm is coming [in that painting] and the group has to make a quick (written) plan to pick up all the objects left out [in the picnic painting] and put them on a shelter. The group has to coordinate the process and try to “gather” as many items as possible – everybody has to participate (one person takes the plates, two others the chairs, etc.).

At the end, they can go back and see the painting and list how many items they’ve forgotten to take.

In this activity, participants are not asked directly to memorise elements of a picture. They have to recall more or less the items seen previously or to put together the memorised elements they have collectively gathered.

Hints and adaptability:

The group can be split into two units, with this activity transformed into a competition to find out which team lists up most elements.

Activity 15. Collages within a collage

Skills targeted in this activity:

4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
5- COORDINATION

Description:

The participants are divided into small groups. Each group has to make a collage. These collages are then assembled into a coherent image: the junctions between the pieces, as well as the general atmosphere, must be harmonious. Models can be provided for the participants; they can recreate, reinterpret an existing painting or copy or use the patterns, colours, etc. Groups can only communicate with each other before they get to work in smaller units, and at the time of assembly. While developing their pieces, the participants cannot see what other groups are doing. It is up to the groups to agree beforehand on the protocol.

Once the large collage is assembled, a discussion can be organised:

- Were the protocols decided in a democratic or consensual way?
- Is the result successful? If the whole piece is not harmonious or when there are junctions that don’t work, how do they discuss the reasons for such a problem: are they looking for a ‘guilty party’ or trying to review their group’s decision process?
- What lessons have they learnt from the activity? Note: this question can be answered in individual writing first, and discussed collectively after.

Materials needed:

A4 sheets of white paper, scissors, glue, tape, design or pattern paper, reproduction of artworks, watercolour, brush.

Hints and adaptability:

The first collages can be done individually if you have small groups. Otherwise, with many participants, the activity can be organised in a pyramidal structure: small groups create collages to be assembled into medium collages, which, in turn, will be assembled into one big collage.
Activity 16. Text & Image

Skills targeted in this activity:

1. ARGUMENTATION
7. CLARITY OF MESSAGES

Description:

Choose five artworks from a museum room and five sentences or short texts (they can be extracts from a novel or from a newspaper depending on the profile of the group). Have the participants match the texts with the artworks and then trigger a debate on their choices.

Participants will be asked to select adjectives/verbs/etc., from the text they like most, and then to find synonyms and antonyms for each of them. After this task, the original adjectives will be replaced by their antonyms in the sentences. Participants should note how the transformation can affect meaning, and assess whether the text still fits the picture.

Hints and adaptability:

According to the profiles of the participants, the facilitator can choose artworks and/or texts related to professions targeted by the attendees. In a more playful perspective, thematic selections can be made, for example with five portraits and five literary descriptions of figures and their personality traits.

Vaszary, János. In the Park. 1936, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

Five sentences:

“You don’t have to be in a place in order to know everything about it.”

“John is ready to try again; for this reason it’s worth going to find him and forming an alliance with him.”

“A sailor, Sindbad, was shipwrecked one day on an island, along the line of the equinox, where both day and night last exactly twelve hours.”

“We knew the hills and the woods as well as the birds knew them; for we were always roaming them when we had leisure.”

“I was so astonished I couldn’t speak; for I had not said anything.”

Activity 17. Describing artworks

Skills targeted in this activity:

2. MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
5. COORDINATION
7. CLARITY OF MESSAGES

Description:

Divide the participants into two groups: one in (museum) room A, the other in room B. Individually, they prepare a short description of one of the artworks. Participants A form pairs with participants B. They present their descriptions to each other, and try to find out which is the partner’s chosen picture.

Hints and adaptability:

Participants with good language skills or native speakers can have restrictions: for example, only use nouns, verbs, adjectives, words of colours, etc.

If the number of artworks available is limited in the room, participants can be invited to focus on a small detail of a painting.

Activity 18. One word – Three pictures

Skills targeted in this activity:

1. ARGUMENTATION
2. MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
6. SYNTHESISING INFORMATION

Description:

Participants work in pairs or in small groups.

The facilitator shows the participants a set of 3-4 (maybe more) pictures representing a similar subject matter, like Rebecca and Eliezer at the well, Supper at Emmaus, The Rest on the Flight into Egypt.

Individually, participants select one of the artworks, and find one descriptive word which describes best their chosen picture, in order to help others guess it. Then, every participant shares his/her word, while the partner or group tries to find out the picture.

Hints and adaptability:

Depending on the time available for this activity, facilitators can choose biblical, mythological subjects where the original story has to be explained, or (if time is limited) simple portraits or landscapes, to get participants to focus on visual and formal elements only, without paying much attention to the narrative part.
**Activity 19. Condensing artworks**

**Skills targeted in this activity:**

2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION  
6 - SYNTHESISING INFORMATION  
7 - CLARITY OF MESSAGES

**Description:**

In a plenary session, an artwork, ideally a painting with many details, is discussed. Then, in small groups, participants are asked to make a copy of the painting on tracing paper. They are asked to copy just enough elements for the original painting to be identifiable, while omitting some key elements which transform the original meaning of the art work. At the end, groups present and compare their version.

This activity aims at demonstrating the narrow boundary between simplification that makes the message clearer and simplification that alters or transforms the original message.

**Materials needed:**

Reproductions of a work of art, tracing paper, pencils, coloured pencils, markers, scissors.

**Hints and adaptability:**

Participants can get black and white reproductions of the artworks and use felt-tip pens of black or white colour, or scissors to change the picture. It is important to make it clear that they do not have to add any drawing, they only can replace or remove elements of the picture.

**Activity 20: Synthesising: Pictures reduced to main colours**

**Skills targeted in this activity:**

1 - ARGUMENTATION  
2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION

**Description:**

Attendees work in pairs. One person in each pair goes to room A, the other to room B. Every participant chooses a picture that he/she has to “translate” with 3-5 colours that characterise it, and use them in a simple, non-figurative way (for example, with linear brush strokes). The partner then has to find out which artwork these colours refer to.

**Materials needed:**

Paper, clip board, large range of colour pencils or crayons.

**Hints and adaptability:**

It’s more convenient if room A and B are near each other. Rooms displaying enough artworks (approximately 15 to 20 paintings) are preferable.

Using figurative artworks (rather than abstract), makes this activity more challenging and interesting.

This activity can also be done with a figurative painting translated into geometric shapes that participants arrange into a different composition.

**Activity 21: Music/painting**

**Skills targeted in this activity:**

1 - ARGUMENTATION  
2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION

**Description:**

In a museum room dedicated to a particular period and school, the facilitator plays to participants two pieces of music, one produced in the same geographic area as the paintings, the other produced in the same period, but not in the same country. Then the attendees are asked to tell which of the two pieces suits the paintings best. They have to justify their choice.

In this activity, there is no ‘wrong’ answer, as both pieces of music are somehow linked to the paintings.

**Hints and adaptability:**

Listening to music in a museum room helps to create a multi-sensorial experience and may help to trigger a conversation on artworks. However, it is not easy to talk about music; we can select two very different pieces of music, in terms of rhythm, atmosphere, or the number of musical instruments used, etc. Before the exercise, facilitators can also offer a list of adjectives and vocabulary items to describe music and pictures, or trigger a discussion on how and what to compare between multimedia resources.

**Activity 22: Top view maps**

**Skills targeted in this activity:**

1 - ARGUMENTATION  
2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION  
6 - SYNTHESISING INFORMATION
Description:

In small groups, in different rooms, have the participants draw a two-dimensional map of a painting where a wide space (landscape, garden, interior, etc.) is represented. The others have to try to identify the painting from the map.

Hints and adaptability:

According to the profile of the group, an easier activity can take place: participants have to draw a top view map of a museum room referencing all the artworks, and each person can imagine an ideal itinerary in the room. In a plenary discussion these itineraries will be compared, with each participant explaining why he/she suggests this particular order to discover the artworks displayed in the room.

Activity 23: Geometric abstraction

Skills targeted in this activity:

1 - ARGUMENTATION  
6 - SYNTHESISING INFORMATION

Description:

Participants are invited to represent the painting (below) using geometric shapes and colours of the original painting.

Afterwards, when the different versions are presented to the group in a plenary session, a short assessment of the process can be initiated (how decisions were made, if everybody is satisfied with the result, etc.).

This exercise helps participants to extract key elements in a complex composition.

Materials needed:

Reproduction of the painting, A/4 paper sheets, white paper, watercolour, brush.

Hints and adaptability:

It is also possible to have them work in small groups, with each member selecting a set of colours for the abstract reproduction on his/her own. As a group, they then decide on the best and closest version to the original.

Activity 24: One out of Three

Skills targeted in this activity:

1 - ARGUMENTATION  
5 - COORDINATION  
6 - SYNTHESISING INFORMATION

Description:

Participants are invited to create a new picture combining elements of three paintings.

There is one big sheet of paper in the middle of the room (c. 1 m x 1 m) but several reproductions of the three selected paintings are available. Everyone works together to create a new composition.

Materials needed:

A reproduction of each painting, A/4 paper sheets, white paper, A/3 paper sheets, pairs of scissors, glue, colour pencils, felt tip pens, crayons, etc.

Hints and adaptability:

For a more advanced level, facilitators can introduce restrictions, for example: an element of the artwork is only to be used once, but each detail has to be selected before the outset of the composition as a collage. All participants should contribute.

Velázquez, Diego Rodríguez de Silva y. Tavern Scene with Two Men and a Girl. ca. 1618–1619, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.


Fényes, Adolf. Poppy Seed Cake. 1910, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

Activity 25: Memory strategy I - drawing

Skills targeted in this activity:

4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:

Participants work in pairs. The task is to memorise and then to draw from memory a vase (ancient Greek / Etruscan / modern / etc.). They are presented with a picture of the object quickly, for 2 or 3 seconds, and then each pair comes up with a strategy to be as efficient as possible to remember as many details as possible. After this, the vase is presented to the group (or they enter the museum room where it is on display). Participants now have between 30 sec and 1 min (or more) to observe it, before turning their backs to make a sketch of the vase. Finally, every pair shows its version and explains the strategy that they used to complete the task.

At the end of the activity, participants may have a discussion that covers two things: the form, decoration and the function on the one hand; comparing the advantages and disadvantages of their different strategies, on the other hand.

Hint and adaptability:

It is advisable to choose a vase sample with not too many figurative patterns.

Otherwise, an abstract painting can be a good alternative. In this case, it is best to opt for a composition where forms and colours are organised into relatively distinct or easily distinguished units.

Picture suggestions for classroom workshop:

![Etrusco-Geometric urn. Late 8th century – early 7th century B.C. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.](image)

Activity 26: Memory strategy II - word list

Skills targeted in this activity:

2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
5 - COORDINATION
7 - CLARITY OF MESSAGES
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:

Choose a painting with many details and first show it from a great distance to the participants. They have to work in small groups of 2-3 persons, and find out a strategy to memorise as many details as possible in one minute. They then have to turn their backs to the picture and produce together a long list of descriptive words. The goal is to make the longest list possible among groups. Finally, in a discussion with everyone, the strategies can be analysed and compared.

Hints and adaptation:

According to the participants’ background and the picture to be described, it might be useful to prepare the vocabulary. Here are some options:

in anticipation of the task, another picture with a similar theme is discussed. Participants will be asked, for example, to prepare a list of ten descriptive words, then add ten more, and ten more again. Next, everybody shares his/her lists, or participants exchange their list in pairs, and they the list of the partner. Facilitators can distribute word cards: everyone takes one and has to put it in a sentence related to the image, a very detailed written description of the picture can be distributed: participants should, for example, underline all the nouns, or make thematic categories of nouns, etc.

Picture suggestions for classroom workshop:

![Horst, Jan van. Market Scene. 1569, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.](image)

![Beuckelaer, Joachim. Market Scene. c. 1570–1574, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.](image)
Activity 27: Going over the Frame

Skills targeted in this activity:

- 5 - COORDINATION
- 6 - SYNTHESISING INFORMATION
- 7 - CLARITY OF MESSAGES
- 8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:

Part I.

Participants work in groups of 4-5 people. Only one person of the group should draw, while the others give him/her instructions. The ‘drawer’ has to go over the frame of the original painting by adding imaginary details. The ‘advisers’ are asked to coordinate themselves according to the logical order of suggestions. For example, instructions about the extent of background elements might come before the addition of new figures.

Prior to the activity, ‘advisers’ can get one or more theme for instructions. For example: “ask for more vegetation, please give details on what kind of plants should be added, and where”, “ask for fruit baskets according to the season”, etc. Complementary themes prompt the participants to coordinate their instructions.

The facilitator can add a tight timeframe to the activity in order to increase the pressure on the collaborative work.

Part II.

When the drawing activity ends, each group discusses the experience, according to the following questions:

- how did the team set the order of instructions?
- were all partners involved in the decision?
- did everyone successfully get their instructions executed?
- did the ‘advisers’ manage to avoid stress for the ‘drawer’?
- how did the ‘drawer’ feel during the activity? Was he/she given instructions politely?
- etc.

These questions can be discussed in each group, and the recurring problems addressed in a plenary session.

Materials needed:

A reproduction of the painting placed in the middle of a white sheet of paper, A/3 size.

Colour pencils, felt tips, crayons, etc.

Hint and adaptability:

The more precise and figurative the image is, the more difficult it is to sketch for someone who does not have any artistic practice. If, however, you prefer these kinds of images, mention during the instructions that only simple elements need to be drawn: clouds, landscape, elements of nature, simple shapes, like distant houses, etc.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:

Raphael, Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist (The Esterházy Madonna), c. 1508, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.


Activity 28: Classifying artworks

Skills targeted in this activity:

- 4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
- 8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:

In small groups, participants are asked to find four criteria (the number may vary) to classify all the artworks in a museum room. The facilitator may set a time limit. At the end, each team presents its classification and explains how it established it. They might evaluate their own collaboration to assess whether decisions were made collectively. A plenary discussion will compare the different solutions which were presented by each group.

Under the pressure of a time limit, participants have to cooperate and find a creative solution quickly. To seek common solutions within a restricted timeframe may help the group find solutions through different situations, which can involve conflict. Last, but not least, they are prompted to take a closer look at the artworks.

The following questionnaire helps to make a self evaluation of the joint effort within the group. An assigned person can sum up and comment the answers, as objectively as possible. If problems are clearly revealed, or if
major differences appear among the answers, the group will be invited to suggest lessons learnt and to write down propositions that will foster cooperation.

Use the scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Categories resulted from a collective effort

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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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All the partners were encouraged to make suggestions

Sometimes, partners were cut off during their talk

The timeframe restriction reduced dialogue among partners

Due to increasing pressure, one member took over the selection and decisions.

Sudden pressure caused a change in style and tone of the talks.

**Hint and adaptability:**

The purpose of this activity is to focus on the interpersonal communication, and participants are by no means supposed to identify iconographic themes, painting styles or schools, etc.

The facilitator might introduce time restrictions suddenly, in the middle of an ongoing group work, in order to increase pressure and simulate a stressful situation.

The activity can be easily adapted to a classroom or a remote/virtual session, by projecting/distributing artwork reproductions.

**Activity 29: Eyes of the teams**

**Skills targeted in this activity:**

6 - SYNTHESISING INFORMATION
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

**Description:**

Participants are divided into two groups. Each group delegates a person, the ‘Eye’. Only the two ‘Eyes’ can enter the museum room where they have to gather information, the others are waiting in an adjacent room. The ‘Eyes’ have to analyse the paintings and remember as many details as possible. In the meanwhile, the groups prepare questions to ask the ‘Eye’ when he/she returns.

In a second step, the facilitator asks five questions related to the paintings that the ‘Eyes’ have seen. This time, only other team members can answer according to the testimonies received previously. The goal is to find out which group can answer most accurately the five questions. At the end, everybody is invited to enter the room and look at the paintings.

**Hint and adaptability:**

According to the profile, the timeframe available and the number of the participants, restrictions can be brought by limiting the number of artworks that need to be memorised, by choosing thematic selections (only portraits/narrative paintings, etc.), or by introducing specific restrictions to the questions (for example: investigate colours/human figures/buildings represented).

The activity can easily be adapted to a classroom or a remote/virtual session, by projecting or distributing pictures you can find below. If you use those images, here are some suggestions for facilitator’s questions:

- Are there pictures representing nature?
- Are there pictures where red is a dominant colour?
- Are there portraits?
- Are there pictures depicting scenes with large groups of people?
- Are there dogs depicted?

**Picture suggestions for classroom activity:**

- **Amerling, Friedrich von. Portrait of Countess Nákhó. 1855, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.**
- **Courselles-Dumont, Henri. Eros. 1902, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.**
- **Dahl, Hans. Sharp through the Waves. ca. 1900, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.**
Activity 30. Secret requirement

Skills targeted in this activity:

1 - ARGUMENTATION
4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
7 - CLARITY OF MESSAGES
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:
Participants form a small group of 4-5 people take on the role of a curatorial committee, which has been asked to select one single artwork for a new exhibition. They are asked to agree on what to send; however, each curator has a secret requirement (for example: “for me it is important to send a picture with a landscape”), distributed in cards. None of them can tell the others openly, but everybody has to guide the discussion towards his/her own aim. The goal is to find a picture which meets all the (secret) requirements.

This activity shows how to guide a conversation and cooperate in order to fulfil every need.

Hint and adaptability:
It is worth running this activity in a quite small museum room or with a selection of no more than 10-15 pictures.

If you wish to design this activity with your own pictures, it is more convenient to first choose a picture and describe its features. Then, find other images that correspond to one of the characteristics of the first image, without meeting them all. Ensure that there is only one possible solution when you design the game.

Here are the secret requirements to be distributed on cards for the following pictures:

- my picture should represent an interior
- on my painting, a woman is depicted
- we can see at least one window in my picture
- the sun shines on the scene represented
- there is a picture within the picture

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:
Activity 31. Stone to Life

Skills targeted in this activity:

4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
5 - COORDINATION
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:
Participants work in small groups of 4–5 people; they have to create a new composition with a positive spin by retaining only two elements of the painting. Only the starting and the points are set in advance.

Each participant has to collaborate similarly, with one specific colour and shape/pattern, which cannot be used by the others. They have to find ways to collaborate, including the order and the elements to add, in order to reach the end point harmoniously.

Materials needed:
A reproduction of the painting altered by Photoshop, an A/4 size sheet of paper: only the stone and one of the figures’ head are needed.

Pairs of scissors, glue, colour pencils, felt tip pens, crayons, etc.; materials of different colour and texture (e.g., paper, textile, pearls, feather, foam sheets); magazines.

Hint and adaptability:
If your group has no prior drawing skills, you may opt instead for an abstract picture or one with less figurative elements.
Activity 32. Five words

Skills targeted in this activity:

1- ARGUMENTATION
4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
7- CLARITY OF MESSAGES
8- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:

In small groups, participants describe a painting individually. On paper cards, they write down five words that describe the picture. Once this is done, each person puts down a card with one of their words, in turns. They aren’t allowed to use the same word twice. The goal of the activity is to remain in the game as long as possible and to achieve a detailed description of the artwork as a group.

In the next step, participants sum up the description of the painting by using all the collected words in a short written abstract, or someone can read it in front of the whole group.

Variant for this activity: a text describing the chosen picture is distributed to all participants, who then have to select five words from it, in order to use them during the game.

Hint and adaptability:

For a more dynamic activity — or with native participants — restrictions can be brought from the start: they can only use words that describe colours, clothes, textures, etc.

The least narrative the picture is, the more difficult and interesting the exercise is. Therefore, we can choose still life scenes, non figurative paintings, etc., for those who have a good level of language.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:


Csontváry Kosztka, Tivadar. Riding at New Moon in Athens. 1904, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.
Activity 33. Words in phrases to be repeated

Skills targeted in this activity:
1. ARGUMENTATION
2. MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
5. COORDINATION

Description:
In front of an artwork or in a museum room, each participant gets a word in a card that he/she has to put in a sentence. One of them reads this sentence aloud, the next participant has to repeat it with his own words and add his phrase in line with the previous one using the word received in a card. In turn, everyone repeats and reformulates the previous participant’s sentence before sharing their own, adapting the word they are given to the discussion’s context. Participants can also build a story together, which would obviously be imaginary, as no prior knowledge should be required from the attendees. In this case, words on the cards help them prepare the story by providing verbs, adjectives, nouns, or elements of the plot that create suspense.

Word suggestions for the picture above:
Return, suddenly, ice, magician, maps, lost, declare...

Hint and adaptability:
Participants with good linguistic skills can be invited to repeat all the sentences previously created: the more rounds they make, the more difficult the game will become.

Another variant would be to ask the participants not to repeat, but to sum up the previous sentences.

Ideally, this activity runs with groups of 4-5 people.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:

Activity 34. Ways to join in a conversation

Skills targeted in this activity:
1. ARGUMENTATION
2. MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
5. COORDINATION

Descriptions:
In a museum room, two participants are talking about an artwork without making explicit reference to it (artist’s name, title, key features). A third participant joins the conversation 1 or 2 minutes later: he/she has to identify the topic of their conversation (the artwork they are talking about), and find a way to join their discussion.

Preparation phase:
1. the two participants who start the dialogue have to prepare notes first:
   • they have to agree on the artwork they will discuss
   • make a descriptive and detailed list of items depicted/represented
   • describe the atmosphere of the picture (find at least 5 adjectives)
   • imagine a broader context from the scene represented (the room, the house, the town, the time of the day, the historical period, etc.)
   • list 5 dominant colours and find symmetries/asymmetries in the composition, make note of the picture size
   • try to establish a link between a personal story and this picture
2. in the meanwhile, the 3rd person is asked to come up with strategies when they join the conversation with a delay:
   • prepare comments, like: “Oh, you are talking about pictures...”
   • prepare indirect questions according to what they hear: “So, you like historical costumes, don’t you?...”
   • ask for examples and clarifications
   • prepare themselves to listen carefully and note key words that might be repeated to reformulate in a sentence
   • prepare a (personal) story about the context (in this case, in the museum, something like: “I’ve always wanted to visit a museum, once I heard that secret codes are hidden in paintings...”)
   • have positive a attitude in relation to the context (“I am curious about...”) - at least 3 items
   • imagine a strategy to invite the other members to take a tour of the room looking together at all the artworks (with the aim of identifying the specific one on which their conversation is based);
   • prepare questions and remarks, even movements (when he/she invites the others to start the tour, he/she should encourage the other two to take a step towards the chosen painting, indirectly, without explicitly verbalising it, in order to get clues)
   • if possible, bring humour to the conversation

The scene:
- act out a discussion in which other team members have to follow and give positive (!) feedback at the end
- several scenarios are possible:
• the attitude of the first two persons can be supportive (they can unveil quickly the artwork in question, but the 3rd person has to lead the conversation) — or deterrent (they don’t give much info)
• the attitude of the 3rd can be attentive, curious, enthusiastic or dominant (monopolise the conversation, ask many questions, in order to get info), etc.
• The group can decide in advance which scenarios they act out or choose different attitudes.

The same scenario can be carried out without preparation first, and done with preparation later on.

Hint and adaptability:

For this activity, participants may need preparation; they might be asked to work together on lists of typical supportive and deterrent attitude, to work on verbal and non verbal elements. Likewise, with small groups, participants may determine things like: a keyword for the conversation, opportune moments to interrupt the conversation, polite ways to jump in a dialogue, negative behaviour that should be avoided.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:

Activity 35. Comics

Skills targeted in this activity:

1- ARGUMENTATION
4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
5- COORDINATION

Description:

In small groups, participants make comic strips about the life of Hercules. Before discovering the story represented in the picture (below), participants are invited to imagine a three-step conversation among characters. Each team receives a specific instruction: some conversations must lead to a tension, suspense, a misunderstanding; others bring an agreement, a funny outcome, or a surprise. Some groups can focus on a conversation that ‘follows’ the moment represented; others engage in a conversation that leads to the depicted situation. At the end, the mythological story can be revealed. This activity makes it possible to identify precisely which elements lead to cooperation, and which ones lead to conflict.

Hint and adaptability:

You may choose paintings that represent everyday-life scenes, with crowds and groups of people if the gap between our times and the mythological context seems too wide and foreign to the participants. You can also impose the use of words, like didascalia, at a key moment in the narration, for example for the image below: “I forgot to tell you something”, from the woman’s mouth in the middle box, or ask participants to make vocabulary lists that refers to a feeling, a situation, a conflict, jealousy, betrayal, etc.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:

Activity 36 “Budybuilding”

Skills targeted in this activity:

5- COORDINATION
8- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:
Participants work in pairs. Only one member of the pair sees the picture (see illustration). The participant who doesn’t see it, has to draw the body of Salome and asks ‘yes or no’ questions to the other member making the description. The objective is to come up with an outlined drawing where posture, gesture, clothes, colours, identify the original painting — but, obviously, it is not required to produce high quality drawings.

Facilitators can put pressure on the participants, and therefore prompt them to find ways to collaborate together. Each pair gets different tools and materials, so that group members need to go to other pairs to get the whole information.

Materials needed:
A reproduction of the painting altered by Photoshop, A/4 size sheets of paper (only the head of the figure is needed); pairs of scissors, glue, colour pencils, felt tips, crayons, etc.

Materials with different colour or texture (e.g., paper, fabric, pearls, feather, foam), magazines.

Hint and adaptability:
The main activity can be done with abstract or geometrical paintings if participants are too concerned by the reproduction of figurative paintings.

If the task with yes/no questions seems too difficult, participants may ask WH-questions to get detailed answers.

This activity might be followed by a discussion or by a new workshop where participants imagine biblical characters in a secular environment. They can re-contextualise historical events and characters (like Salome) in present days: modernise them, using a detailed description in words, or a photo collage, a sketch, etc.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:

Cranach the Elder, Lucas. Salome with the Head of Saint John the Baptist. 1530s, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.

Activity 37: Gallery owner welcomes a client

Skills targeted in this activity:

4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
5- COORDINATION
7- CLARITY OF MESSAGES
8- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:
For this activity, we imagine that we are in a gallery selling antiques (instead of a museum room). Participants work in pairs, one of them is the ‘gallery owner’, the other is the ‘customer’ who wants to buy a painting/sculpture and gives a series of criteria that have to be fulfilled. The ‘gallery owner’ helps him/her to find the most suitable artwork. During the performance, participants have to adjust their language style to the context. At the end, the ‘customer’ evaluates if the ‘gallery owner’ fulfilled the demands he or she had made. In turn, the ‘gallery owner’ checks if the requests were clear enough or not.

Hints and adaptability:
The ‘customers’ will need time to prepare their part: they have to imagine at length how and where the artwork will be displayed (which place? A living room, a country house, above a window, etc.; and also: size, colours of preference, artist of choice, price they can afford, etc.). It is recommended that they sum up all the elements in a note which the ‘gallery owner’ won’t be allowed to see.

According to the level of difficulty desired, either facilitators provide participants with a list of vocabulary, sentences, polite forms of address, or they can create this list by themselves, as a group, before (or after) the activity.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:

Cézanne, Paul. The Buffet. 1877, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

Barabás, Miklós. Sunset in Venice. 1834, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.
Activity 38 Words leading the blind

Skills targeted in this activity:

4. ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION

5. COORDINATION

6. SYNTHESISING INFORMATION

Description:

Participants work in pairs in a museum room. Participant A wears a blindfold. They work together to find participant A’s ‘favourite’ artwork, guided by descriptions made by participant B, who asks questions and provides helps with appropriate words to describe the paintings around them. The goal is to have a rich and detailed dialogue between them. At the end, participant A, still blindfolded presents his/her ‘favourite’ artwork to everybody, before finally discovering it with his/her eyes.

Hints and adaptability:

Participant B can receive a secret instruction at the beginning of the activity. He/she can be asked to choose an artwork on display in the room and to try to influence participant A in his/her choice by indirect (verbal and non-verbal) means. The other participants can follow the dialogue and note the moments when the neutrality of the description or the support seems to be compromised. After the exercise, participant A will be asked whether he/she felt manipulated. During the activity, only participant A is unaware of a secret instruction.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:
Activity 39 Painter/title
Skills targeted in this activity:

5- COORDINATION
9- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:
The facilitator prepares cards in pairs, one with the name of the artist, the other with the title of the artwork. All artworks should be displayed in the same museum room with, preferably, no more than one piece from the same artist.

The facilitator tapes one card on each participant’s back. They have to figure out the text on their back, but they can only use yes or no questions in the communication with other members (those with a good language level are not allowed to make questions about the letters composing the artist’s names or artwork titles.) Once they figure out the name on their backs, they need to find the other half of their pair. With their matching pair, they will go to examine the artwork, and find three elements or characteristics they both like about it.

Hints and adaptability:
With native participants, instead of artist names and artwork titles, two details of the same artwork can be written on the cards, and the attendees have to make them match.
This activity is ideally played with approximately ten participants. With greater numbers, it is advised to make two separate groups, or to form trios instead of pairs, providing three different details of the artwork to each group.

Activity 40 Seeking a new colleague
Skills targeted in this activity:

1- ARGUMENTATION
4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
7- CLARITY OF MESSAGES

Description:
Participants in plenary or in small groups imagine that they are colleagues who have to recruit a new employee. In a museum room (or from a set of reproductions), participants have to choose individually a depicted or sculpted person, and imagine the character’s life story. In turns, they will present the character to the group, as if he/she were a new colleague at work. During the presentation, everybody takes notes on positive and negative impressions they felt about the candidate. Then, they vote for the best one, and justify their choice. The facilitator or the team can decide in advance for which work field they are ‘recruiting’.
This exercise helps to practice self-presentation, and to identify qualities that are valued when a team seeks a new associate to work with. It also helps to understand which aspects have to be changed or presented differently.

When the decision is made, each participant fills out the questionnaire below. Then they compare the answers. A plenary discussion may follow, where the process of selection is summed up and the questionnaire results are analysed.

Use the scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The decision is made collectively
All partners could argue and explain their position
Sometimes, partners are cut off during their reasoning
The choice is approved by all partners
The decision is made based on objective qualities
During the debate, arguments are based on facts and professional qualities
During the debate, some arguments are racist, sexist or discriminative in other ways
Physical characteristics were considered more important than personal qualities
I am satisfied with the decision

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:

- Gyárfás, Jenő. Head of a Woman with Kerchief. 1880s, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.
- Painted mummy portrait of a young man. Roman Imperial Period, with modern overpainting, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.

**Hints and adaptability:**

Here are two variants of the activity, focusing on preferred qualities and attitudes in workplace situations. They are complementary to the previous activity, therefore they can be used before or after the main exercise.
Option 1

Skills targeted in this activity:

1- ARGUMENTATION
2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
7- CLARITY OF MESSAGES

Description:

A group comes up with or receives a list of positive and negative traits regarding a colleague: what makes it easy or difficult to work with this person. The items are organised in four sections, and the middle of the paper is empty. Individually, participants place some or all the paintings presented below, and mark characteristics matching the figures. After this, they compare and discuss, in small groups, the answers.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:
Sample for the list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good qualities:</th>
<th>Bad attitudes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- patient</td>
<td>- selfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- motivated</td>
<td>- competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- self-aware</td>
<td>- negative personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- cares about people</td>
<td>- disrespectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- flexible</td>
<td>- backstabbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- initiative</td>
<td>- love gossip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Easy to work with, because:

- he/she doesn’t take things personally
- humble
- asks questions to understand others’ viewpoint
- consult with colleagues before making decisions
- prepares conversation, plans what and how to say
- says thank you
- listen to other people’s verbal and non verbal communication
- good time management

Difficult to work with, because:

- he/she often cries, doesn’t temper his/her emotions
- doesn’t share all the information
- doesn’t take responsibility when things don’t go well
- poor work ethic
- uses peer pressure to hold other people back
- comments on someone’s appearance
- criticising first
- focusing only on his/her needs and desires

Option 2

Skills targeted in this activity:

1- ARGUMENTATION
2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION

Description:

The facilitator chooses a painting (or sculpture) with several figures. In small groups, participants choose two figures: the one they would like to work with the most and the one they would not like to have as a colleague. They have to give arguments for their choices.

In a second step, they modify the meaning of the painting, by changing the power balance or the relationship among characters. Easy manipulations can be performed, like adding or blurring one element of the picture.

Picture suggestions for classroom activity:

Derkovits, Gyula. Rabodimunkások a Dunán. 1927, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

Deák Ébner, Lajos. Market Scene. 1890s, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.
Activity 41. Like/dislike exchange

Skills targeted in this activity:

1- ARGUMENTATION
8- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:

In front of a picture, the facilitator chooses two participants from the group: one who likes and one who dislikes the artwork. They have to make a written list of 3-5 objective arguments explaining why they like/dislike the painting. Then, they exchange the lists and use the other person’s arguments to defend their opinion, as if it was their own.

The next step brings in a third person to sum up the discussion, using the arguments used by both sides, and giving a convincing story about the artwork (which should not match any professional criteria obviously).

Hints and adaptability:

This scene can take place in front of the whole group, followed by a discussion, or all members can take part in the activity by forming pairs.

In a debate, it is important to consider the other party’s points of view and to understand the importance of using objective arguments. By changing roles and visions, the participants are invited to be more open-minded to others’ positions, and to experience how useful it is to focus the debate on non-subjective elements.

Hints and adaptability:

This scene can take place in front of the whole group, followed by a discussion, or all members can take part in the activity by forming pairs.

Activity 42. Expressive Colours

Skills targeted in this activity:

2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
6 - SYNTHESISING INFORMATION
7 - CLARITY OF MESSAGES

Description:

Participants use carbon paper to make an impression of the outlines of the forms of Mattis Teutsch’s landscape. The facilitator then reads (or narrates) a mythological/biblical story involving a conflict. Each participant chooses a figure and describes the story from his/her point of view. The next activity involves colouring the copy of the landscape using colours which reflect the emotions and the point of view of their chosen figure. At the end, the whole group works together to identify every chosen viewpoint, and figure out who did what by observing the landscape’s colours.

Materials needed:

All at A4 size: reproduction of the painting, carbon paper, white sheets of paper. Pencil, watercolour, brush.

Hints and adaptability:

Facilitators can choose an artwork depicting the story (mythological or biblical), and invite participants to colour the black and white copy, without showing the original version. When the task is finished, the group will compare each of their works with the original, focusing on the connection between one’s emotions and the use of colours.
Activity 43. Arguments and attitudes

Skills targeted in this activity:

1 - ARGUMENTATION
3 - INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:
Facilitators choose an artwork representing a conflict. For example: Jesus and the adulterous woman, in which a crowd surrounds the main characters, represented with various gestures and positions. In small groups, participants are invited to list the arguments of each of the persons in the crowd. Why are they here? What are their motivations? What are they thinking about the situation? How are they going to react to Christ’s words? How will they later narrate the story to those who weren’t there? In the next step, participants transfer the story to our times. What kind of people would compose the crowd? What would happen and how would they react?

Hint and adaptability:
Facilitators may choose a scene depicting a more formal situation, for example a political or historical conflict. Participants may draw cartoon bubbles above the characters on a reproduction, or create a sort of a mind map where they identify the link between gestures, attitudes, reactions and positions. They may also list arguments for each point of view.

Activity 44. An Order of Chivalry

Skills targeted in this activity:

1 - ARGUMENTATION
2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
3 - INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS

Description:
Starting point, look at the Portrait of Emperor Charles V. Participants are invited to observe the details of the painting, discover the cultural and historical points of interest. What is it like to be part of a tight-knit community? Can we identify important moral values in society?

In small groups, participants are asked to list the advantages and the disadvantages of belonging to an order of chivalry. What are the similarities and differences with today’s political leaders’ responsibilities or duties?

Hint and adaptability:
This activity may lead participants to explore roles and lives of people represented in artworks, stemming from different social classes. Have hierarchy, power dynamics and communication methods changed?
Activity 45. Painter/commissioner

Skills targeted in this activity:

1 - ARGUMENTATION
4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:

In pairs, participants take the role of a painter and a rich person. The latter commissioned his/her portrait to the artist. In front of the finished artwork, they are arguing: the painter presents his/her work, but the commissioner doesn't like the result. Have the participants imagine and act out the discussion.

After this (first) debate, the facilitator may trigger a conversation on what makes good/successful argumentation. The spectators (the rest of the group) analyse the discussion, with the aim to list appropriate arguments and elements that lead to more tensions. Then they elaborate and suggest another scenario for the debate.

Hint and adaptation:

All participants can work in pairs simultaneously. One of the team members may get instructions on a card, which should not be revealed until the interaction is finished.

Here are some ideas for the commissioner’s instructions:

- “focus on unsatisfying aspects of the painting and the incompetence of the painter”
- “list what you wanted to see represented in the painting”
- “ask for specific modifications in the artwork”, etc.
- Pairs act out the scene in front of the group. A plenary discussion follows in which they try to identify the argumentative strategies and analyse the outcomes.

Activity 46. Polite opposition

Skills targeted in this activity:

1 - ARGUMENTATION
4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
5 - COORDINATION

Description:

Participants work in pairs. They have to imagine and act out a situation where they are colleagues. The pairs are mandated to choose an artwork in the museum and buy a copy of it. The artwork is to be displayed in the main meeting room of their workplace. They choose two different paintings, and start a conversation to convince the other party. They have to remain polite, gather at least five arguments and listen to the colleague’s reasoning. They are expected to defend their position, but also to find a solution which is satisfying for both. A short strategic preparation of their arguments can precede the dialogue.

Hint and adaptability:

In pairs or in a plenary session, an assessment of the conversation is carried out: how the ‘colleagues’ felt, and how the group found the interaction? Was it polite enough, how the disagreement was delayed, were the arguments objective, etc.?

At first, the instructions can leave open the possibility to choose a third and ‘neutral’ artwork, instead of the two defended by the pair. In the next step, participants can be asked to choose between the two suggested pictures/sculptures only.

This activity can be run outdoors as well: in this case, participants select a building, a street furniture, an element of the cityscape, etc.

Activity 47. Yes/no questions

Skills targeted in this activity:

1 - ARGUMENTATION
4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
5 - COORDINATION
7 - CLARITY OF MESSAGE

Description:

Participants work in pairs, in small groups or even in a plenary session. In a museum room, one of the participants (or member of a pair) selects a picture. The other(s) have to find out which is his/her choice by asking yes/no question. The person who made the selection can not answer with simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers; instead, he/she has to find more elaborate expressions, using periphrases, like:

- question: “Is red, the main colour in the picture?”
- answer: “Green and black are more representative…”

The activity will end when the partner(s) finds out the correct picture or when the person who answers uses the banned words ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Roles are then changed. This exercise demonstrates that there are many possibilities in answering indirectly to a direct question.

Hints and adaptability:

If the participants guess the answer too quickly, facilitators can choose a painting with many details, from which participants are invited to pick one small element for the others to find, using the same process.
**Activity 48. Unpleasant important guest**

Skills targeted in this activity:

1 - ARGUMENTATION  
4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION  
5 - COORDINATION  
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

**Description**

The following activity can be run in a plenary session, in smaller groups or in pairs.

Participants play the role of staff members in a museum. They have to welcome an unpleasant but extremely important guest, who would like to buy an artwork in the collection — which is obviously impossible. Staff can’t say no directly, but they have to find arguments, decline the request politely and engage in a discussion to make the cumbersome guest change his/her mind.

This is an activity that will teach how to remain polite, while avoiding to say 'no' directly.

**Hints and adaptability:**

The activity can be changed to a more common situation, closer to everyday conflicts in the workplace: colleagues discover that an important and expensive and essential object (the artwork, in this case), is damaged. They should have a conversation to decide how this embarrassing fact will be presented to their boss, how tensions can be reduced or avoided.

**Activity 49. Moods**

Skills targeted in this activity:

2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION  
3 - INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS  
7 - CLARITY OF MESSAGES  
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

**Description:**

In front of a picture representing, for example, a biblical or a historical story, the attendees – after having read or heard the story – write it down in the form of a short dialogue. Two (or more) participants start to act it out, and in turn receive stage directions regarding the style with which they are expected to play (surprised, sneaky, melancholic, etc.). Several rounds can be carried out, in order to transform the original story with different styles. A discussion may follow to see how style can impact the interpretation and the meaning of a message.

At the end of the task, facilitators show artworks depicting the same story, and participants have to find precise adjectives describing the emotions that the style of the representation evokes for them.

**Hints and adaptability:**

The exercise can be based on portraits as well: participants have to imagine a potential conflict, and act it out according to the personality the portraits evoke to them.

For a better assessment of the situation, the scene will be prepared in advance, in writing. Participants get all the instruction cards at the beginning. After acting out the scenario in front of the group, the steps that lead to a conflict or avoid it can be analysed in detail.

**Activity 50. vocabulary describing emotions**

Skills targeted in this activity:

2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION  
3 - INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS  
4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION  
7 - CLARITY OF MESSAGES  
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

**Description:**

Participants are invited to walk around the museum room, and make a detailed description of gestures, postures in the artworks. They make a list of the emotions that come to their minds regarding these gestures and postures. In pairs, they compare the lists and discuss the cases where emotions were different or opposed.

In a second step, pairs select the most equivocal gesture/posture, and try to come up with three very different situations where the same gesture/posture would be appropriate/conflictual/surprising, etc.

**Hint and adaptability**

If time available allows it, the same exercise can be adapted to different contexts: in the family, in formal/informal professional situations. Attendees assess how the same gesture should be adapted to different circumstances.

**Activity 51. Pop-up Picture**

Skills targeted in this activity:

4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION  
5 - COORDINATION  
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
Description:
In small groups, participants are invited to build a cityscape with pop-up buildings, imitating roughly the reproduction of a landscape painting (see illustration). Facilitators will not provide sufficient pairs of scissors and glue, so that groups have to find ways to cooperate to be able to accomplish the task. When the works are finished, an assessment session is organised:
- did the cooperation work?
- were there tensions and if so, how did they happen?
- were there strategies to avoid or reduce conflict?
- is everybody satisfied with their team work?
- if the same situation occurs again, what would the participants do differently, etc.?

Materials needed:
A reproduction of the painting, white sheet of paper in A/4 format, coloured paper, pencil, colour pencils, felt tip pens, crayons, pairs of scissors, glue.

Hint and adaptability:
In order to increase pressure, a very strict time frame can be set.
Participants may also work individually, but facilitators should be aware of the fact that it may result in sharper tensions within the group.

Activity 52. Proverbs and Paintings

Skills targeted in this activity:
2 - MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
3 - INTERPRETING BODY ACTIONS AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS
4 - ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
8 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:
This activity requires dictionaries of proverbs and/or lists of proverbs (possibly on tablets).
Participants make a selection of proverbs related to conflict, opposition, tension, misunderstanding, etc. A set of painting reproductions is distributed, which participants have to match with proverbs, in pairs or small groups. After that, they are invited to create a collage with the selected proverbs.

Material needed:
Reproduction of paintings, postcards, A/4 white paper sheets, pairs of scissors, glue, colour pencils, felt tip pens, crayons, etc.

Dictionaries of proverbs or lists of proverbs should be available.

Hints and adaptability:
If the classroom is well equipped, or if the session is organised online, participants can create collages with online tools or softwares (e.g., Jamboard).
Activity 53. Painting with People and Animals

Skills targeted in this activity:

2- MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION
4- ADAPTATION-ANTICIPATION
5- COORDINATION

Description:

Participants are invited to make a collage. Their task is to assemble a new image (on a landscape background) from cut-out reproductions of artworks representing various people and animals. The picture created should have many figures (people or animals) doing different activities. Participants can work in small groups. Facilitators may add further instructions, such as: each member is responsible for placing three figures onto the picture.

Materials needed:

Reproductions of landscape painting, A/4 sheets of paper, several artwork reproductions depicting human and animal figures in small-scale format (A/8 size or similar), pairs of scissors, glue, colour pencils, felt tip pens, crayons, coloured or hand-made paper, etc.

Hint and adaptability:

The aim of this exercise is to manipulate many small-scale figures with accuracy and patience. The more complex and longer the activity is, the more tensions can appear in the groups. How do they deal with it? How do they coordinate their actions?

This activity can be run in a three dimensional setting: modelling dough or clay could also be used for participants to make small figures (1 to 2 cm high), placing them on a board.

Markó the Elder, Károly. Visegrád, c. 1830, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

Activity 54. Keep Things in Perspective

Skills targeted in this activity:

5- COORDINATION
6- SYNTHESISING INFORMATION
8- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Description:

Participants are invited to enlarge the pictorial space of the artwork stemming from the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio (see illustration) by adding more of the same tile floor patterns. They have to work in small groups, only one person per group can work at a time. The members of the group have to take turns constantly; one person draws as much as he/she can without lifting the pen/brush from the paper.

Materials needed:

A/4 size reproduction of the painting, A/3 size white paper, pencil, coloured pencils, ruler.

Hints and adaptability:

The facilitator can set a very tight time frame; participants will not only be required to work together under pressure, but also to perform meticulous and painstaking tasks rapidly. It is a good idea to plan a collective evaluation of the quality of the work done by the group.

Activity 55. Yearning for Yarns

Skills targeted in this activity:

1- ARGUMENTATION
5- COORDINATION
7- CLARITY OF MESSAGES

Description:

Participants are invited to reproduce the painting of a landscape (see illustration) by covering the A/4 copy with coloured yarns. Participants work in small groups. Before covering the picture with yarns (and sticking them on it), each group has to come up with a different strategy that they share with all the participants. At the end, the different strategies are analysed.

After the discussion, an assessment task may follow: how did the different strategies compare? Were the participants looking for competition or helping each other? Was there positive help or criticism?

Materials needed:

Several reproductions of the chosen painting in A/4 paper format, pairs of scissors, glue, coloured yarns.

Hints and adaptability:

In order to make the task more complex and encourage participants to cooperate, the original image can be cut into as many pieces as there are groups. Teams work independently, but the edges of the pieces should fit harmoniously in the final composition.

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