

Stories of Us – Promoting Positive Peer Relationships

Make-Your-Own-Film Resource

Teacher's Guide Preview Extracts

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The *Stories of Us* Films

Two films were produced for the P3R middle school program – *Film One* and *Film Two* (the latter is included with this resource). Each was developed and produced with a class of 8th Grade students, and tells the story of bullying **from the students’ perspective**.

Each *Stories of Us* film presents the story of two “students” (one boy and one girl) as they deal, in their own way, with a progressively problematic case of bullying. The films serve as a catalyst to explore the subtle dynamics in the development of bullying incidents, and help the students and educators develop an understanding of what happens and why.

If your students have previously worked with the Classroom Resource they will be familiar with one of these films.

The Make-Your-Own-Film Resource uses the example of *Film Two*, including interviews with the students involved in the production.

Competition

A national competition will be held for student films produced with the *Stories of Us* method. These films can be uploaded to the *Stories of Us* website along with their scripts and the data they collected in developing their films. Their projects will be judged on a combination of these areas. The website will be regularly updated with the latest information including guidelines, dates and procedures.

The website will be regularly updated with the latest competition information including guidelines, dates and procedures. Visit: www.storiesofus.com/myo

For a summary of the required submission materials refer, to *Competition Items* in the *Additional Resources* section of the binder.

Online Resources

There is also a dedicated section of the website (www.storiesofus.com/myo/docs) providing a number of resources for use in the lessons, including downloadable documents and charts.

Lesson Plans

The Make-Your-Own-Film Resource is designed with the flexibility to meet a number of needs. The Lesson Plans can be adapted by teachers to suit their teaching styles, their students’ learning styles and academic needs.

The Lesson Plans assume an average class time of between 40 and 50 minutes. The process has been presented as a series of steps (Step One, Step Two, etc) to simplify adapting the plans for longer periods – including use in after-school and community-based programs.

19-Lesson Plan

The recommended 19-Lesson Plan covers all stages of the process from collecting and analyzing data about the reality of bullying to converting this information into the raw content for their stories; building timelines and developing the scenes; rehearsing; filmmaking skills and pre-production activities. Four lessons are dedicated to the filming of their chosen scenes.

Numerous handouts are provided including charts and tables for building their story content, plus detailed examples from the development of *Film Two*, along with the full script.

The DVD includes examples supporting the written instructions for developing the script and planning the movement of the actors and extras on set, behind-the-scenes footage of the production of *Film Two* and interviews with the cast (offering advice to students embarking upon their own production).

10-Lesson Plan

This shorter lesson plan maintains the focus on collecting and analyzing data as the foundation for their storylines, then building timelines based on their collective experience. Due to limited class time some aspects of the writing and film production process are covered as homework exercises. One lesson is dedicated to basic filmmaking skills, however the rehearsals and filming must be handled by the students outside of class time, with the support of information provided as handouts. If possible, the students should also be offered the support of staff with technical knowledge of video cameras and editing equipment.

Both lesson plans conclude with viewing the students’ film and *Film Two*, followed by an exploration of how the characters might otherwise have dealt with the bullying and promoted more positive peer relationships.

Further information about these lesson plans is provided in the following *Overview of Steps* chart.

Competition Note: There will be separate categories for projects completed using the 19-Lesson Plan and the 10-Lesson Plan.

Overview of Steps

For reference, the following summarizes the Steps covered in each Lesson Plan.

		LESSON NUMBERS	
		19-LESSON	10-LESSON
Step 1	Introduction	1	1
Step 2	Research topic	2	2
Step 3	Collect Data	3	3
Step 4	Sort the Data		
Step 5	Decide Cast and Crew	4-5	4
Step 6	Apply Research Findings to Characters		
Step 7	Build Timelines	6	5
Step 8	Convert Timelines to Content Points	7-8	6-7
Step 9	Decide which parts to Film		
Step 10	Develop Scenes	9-10	—*
Step 11	Rehearse Scenes to Film		—**
Step 12	Basic Filmmaking Skills	11	8
Step 13	Weave Stories into One Script	12	—
Step 14	Crew Practice		—
Step 15	Final Pre-Production	13	—
Step 16	Filming	14-17	—
Step 17	Editing***	—	—
Step 18	Viewing	18	9
Step 19	A Better Way	19	10

*Covered as homework to Lesson Six.

**Information provided as handout

***Instruction provided as handout

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out copies of *Chart One* (see below) – one for each group – and ask the groups to generate a list of examples of bullying.

- Each group has to come up with 10-12 examples. They do not need to provide multiple examples within each type. For example “name calling” is sufficient, they don’t need to list the specific names they may call each other. However there are sub-groups worth listing – such as racial slurs, criticizing appearance (weight, clothes, hair), intelligence, and so on.
- Give them a few minutes to get started then visit each group to make sure they are being serious and providing realistic examples.
- Once they have listed the most obvious examples, probe deeper. For example, the boys may only list physical bullying and may need gentle prompting to consider such things as social exclusion. With both groups: **if they don’t think of it themselves**, ask them to consider the use of technology (Internet, cell-phones, etc) in bullying – but avoid being too prescriptive, just sow the seed and let them generate the examples based on their experience.

Note: you will need to collect the completed Chart One sheets at the end of the lesson (see further instructions below).

Chart One (Sample only)

Download the MS Word document from www.storiesofus.com/myo/docs or refer to Additional Resources section (page 24) for copy-friendly version of this Chart.

Student Names:
EXAMPLES OF BULLYING
ETC...



ACTIVITY

(Allow 10 minutes)

Next, generate two lists prompted by the following questions and write them up on the board (in this instance the questions are directed at both boys and girls):

- Why do people bully?
- Where does bullying happen? And with each location, when does it happen?

Note: do not erase until you have made a record of the lists on Chart Two (below) as they will be required for later lessons.

Chart Two (Sample only)

Download the MS Word document from www.storiesofus.com/myo/docs or refer to Additional Resources section (page 25) for copy-friendly version of this Chart.

WHY STUDENTS BULLY OTHERS	
ETC...	
WHERE DOES BULLYING HAPPEN?	WHEN DOES BULLYING HAPPEN?
ETC...	

Competition Note: this (completed) chart must be included if submitting their project for the competition.

Preparation

FOR THE NEXT LESSON:

- Using *Chart Three* (below), combine the students' completed *Chart One* sheets (their list of bullying examples) into two documents (one for the boys, one for the girls). They will use these sheets to collect data about each example. In combining the examples of bullying you will need to use some judgment in blending similar examples, however try to maintain their wording so as not to undermine their sense of ownership.
- Produce one overhead transparency of each (boys' and girls') *Chart Three* for use on the projector.

FOR A LATER LESSON:

- Enter the details from the board – the reasons students bully others, where and when bullying occurs – in *Chart Two* for use in Lesson Five and Six.

Chart Three (Sample only)

Download the MS Word document from www.storiesofus.com/myo/docs or refer to Additional Resources section (page 26) for copy-friendly version of this Chart.

Student Names: [students to enter names here...]											
BOYS <input type="checkbox"/> GIRLS <input type="checkbox"/> [check one]		How Important					How Common				
	EXAMPLES OF BULLYING	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	[enter examples here...]										
	ETC...										
		1=Not at all important 2=Somewhat important 3=Neutral 4=Important 5=Very important					1=Not at all common 2=Somewhat common 3=Neutral 4=Common 5=Very common				

Lesson Three

Objectives

- To gather data about bullying by surveying the students in class.
- To sort data using charts, and draw conclusions.

Resources

- An overhead transparency of each combined *Chart Three* list of bullying examples (boys' and girls').
- Overhead projector and two pens for writing on the transparency.

Commence Lesson

Step 3: Collect Data



ACTIVITY

(Allow approximately half the lesson time, or 20 minutes)

- Have the students break into two large same-gender groups.
- Provide one blank overhead-projector copy of the girls' list of bullying examples (*Chart Three*) for the girls and one copy of the boys' chart to the boys – asking each group to decide who will be their scribe.
- Each group is to collect their data on how important and how common they feel each example of bullying to be. They will do this by holding up their hand to rate each of the examples of bullying when they are read out, on a scale of one to five where five is the most important – so before holding up their hand they need to decide on a rating. For example, the first example of bullying will be read out, then those who think it's a "1" (not at all important) will hold up their hands. Then those who think it's a "2" will hold up their hands, and so on. They will then go through the examples again, this time asking them to rate how common each type of bullying is, with one as the most common. (Refer to the example sheet below).

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Homework (Required)

Only when the class has finished their Timeline: handout the copies of the script for *Film Two* and ask that the students all read the script as homework – then bring it with them to the next lesson. [Refer to *Additional Resources* section (page 44) for a copy-friendly version of this script. The document can also be downloaded from www.storiesofus.com/myo/docs]

INFORMATION

- Explain that the format of the script is different from normal film scripts because there is no written dialogue. Also, because of the *Stories of Us* method, it is formatted differently – in two columns, one for the boys’ story and one for the girls’. Time travels down the page, so when they read they weave back and forth between the girls’ and boys’ scenes.
- The numbers down the left side are the scene numbers.
- The heading for each scene identifies the location and if the scene is set inside or outside. “INT” means Interior and “EXT” means Exterior.
- Ask the students to take note of the amount of detail in each scene – as this is approximately the amount of detail they will need in writing their script. Provide a couple of examples of what is meant by “detail”. Draw their attention to a scene and point out that it only mentions who is in the scene, the main action and the subject of their conversation – the essential details we need to know to follow the story. There is no dialogue, and much is left to the imagination.
- When reading, notice that not all the scenes have bullying incidents. Some scenes function to familiarize viewers with the characters and others communicate information we need to know before an incident so that it makes sense. Some are a reaction after an incident. Notice also that every scene is important – there is no wasted time.

Preparation

FOR THE NEXT LESSON:

- Ideally, type up each group’s final list of incidents, and reproduce finalized copies of *Chart Five* for the next lesson. Alternatively, you can photocopy their hand-written list. You will need a copy of each list, male and female, for each student.
- Produce an overhead transparency of the **first page** of *Chart Six* (the girls’ Content Points from *Film Two*)*.
- Also download *Chart Seven** (see next lesson) and enter the bullying incidents in the timeline were indicated. Alternatively print blank sheets and have the students enter the incidents manually during the lesson – but this will reduce the time they have for the activity. Make sufficient photocopies of the boys’ and girls’ charts for group work.

[*Download the document from www.storiesofus.com/myo/docs or refer to *Additional Resources* section (page 29, 32) for copy-friendly versions.]

Lesson Seven

Note: the next step will take more than one lesson.

Objectives

- To continue to develop the plots of the stories.
- To begin writing the content points needed to develop the storylines.

Resources

- Copies of the finalized *Chart Five* (for all students) from the previous lesson.
- An overhead transparency of the first page of *Chart Six*.
- Copies of *Chart Seven* (see Preparation note at the end of the previous lesson).
- Overhead Projector.
- DVD and television.

Commence Lesson

Confirm that all students have read the *Film Two* scripts that they received in the last lesson. If not, ensure they do so before the next lesson. It is not critical that they have done so, but will help as they proceed.

Hand out copies of each Timeline (boys’ and girls’ versions of the consensus *Chart Five* list of bullying incidents) to every student. Allow the class a few minutes to look at the Timelines as this will be the first time the boys see what the girls have generated, and visa versa.

Step 8: Convert Timelines to Content Points

In preparation, load the DVD.

INFORMATION

- Explain that the next step is to convert the timelines – the ordered bullying incidents – into a series of “content points”. Content points are the facts that the audience needs to know to follow the story. They unfold over time, connecting step by step from the start to the end of the story.
- Two examples of content points from *Film Two* are: Jake stops to help Dinah and flirts; and Dinah moved from New York two weeks ago. We need to know both these points to follow her story.
- A content point is not a scene, although it may be the basis of a scene. Sometimes several content points can occur in one scene. Sometimes they take the whole scene.

With the previous example, we learned that Jake stops to help Dinah and flirts; and Dinah moved from New York two weeks ago in one scene.

VIEWING

Play the DVD – **Step 8**
(23 seconds)

QUESTION

- What other content points were included in the scene? [Nicole bumps Dinah; Nicole sees Jake flirt with Dinah, which makes her angry; Jamie and Rosaline do nothing; Jimmy seems to like Nicole]. Note that all of these points are important for the story.

INFORMATION

- At the next stage we will explore how to communicate these content points in a scene or scenes, but we first need to create a list of content points in the order in which they will be communicated to the audience so they can follow the story.
- Show the students the overhead transparency of the first page of *Chart Six* (the girls' Content Points from *Film Two*).

Chart Six (Sample only)

Download the document from www.storiesofus.com/myo/docs or refer to Additional Resources section (page 29) for copy-friendly version of this Chart.

	GIRLS' BULLYING INCIDENTS	CONTENT POINTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicole is friends with Kaylin and Lexi. • Nicole recently broke up with Jake, and is unhappy. • Dinah is new to the school. • Dinah is interested in Japanese comic books. • Dinah misses her old friends. • Dinah is becoming a friend of Jamie and Rosaline.
1	Nicole bumps Dinah so she dropped her books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicole bumps Dinah. • Jake stops to help Dinah and flirts. • Dinah moved from New York two weeks ago. • Nicole see Jake flirt with Dinah, which makes her angry. • Jamie and Rosaline do nothing to support Dinah. • Jimmy seems to like Nicole.

2	Nicole threatened Dinah at her locker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicole threatens Dinah when she is alone. • Dinah doesn't defend herself. • Dinah tells Jamie and Rosaline what happened. They say Nicole is just mean.
	ETC...	

- Explain that the overhead transparency lists the Content Points from the girls' storyline in *Film Two*.
- Note that there are many more content points than bullying incidents.
- Each content point is distinct. For example, "Nicole bumps Dinah" is followed by "Jake stops to help Dinah and flirts". They are two points. We don't put them together as one and write, "Nicole bumps Dinah and Jake stops to help Dinah and flirts". By keeping them separate it helps us remember the different things we have to communicate to the audience as we progress. It also leaves open the option to have the points covered in different scenes – which can prove useful.
- Notice also that there are several Content Points before the first bullying incident. These are the things we need to know before the first incident – so that it makes sense. We call this part of the story the "set-up". We need to know who the main characters are, who are friends, and any other points that are relevant to the first bullying incident – for example, that Dinah is new to the school.

ACTIVITY

(For remaining lesson time, and continued in Lesson Eight)

- Now the students will start to create their own charts, building on the bullying incident timelines they created in the last lesson.
- Have the students break into same-gender groups of 4-5.
- Explain that this activity will take more than one lesson.
- Leave the overhead on as a reference while they get started.
- Hand out the prepared copies of *Chart Seven* (below) – one per group. (If required, have the students quickly fill in their bullying incidents.)

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- Here is an example of poorly recorded sound:

▶ VIEWING

Play the DVD – **Step 12 (Segment A)**
(1 minute 16 seconds)

|| PAUSE THE FILM AT THE PROMPT

i INFORMATION

- Throughout the sound seems quiet and distant, and near the end of the scene when the actors are talking quietly you cannot even hear what they are saying. It is not just a question of volume. If you turn up the volume it still sounds distant and you still will not hear what the actors are saying at times – because they were not recorded properly. When you turn up the volume you also amplify the background noise.
- The trick is to keep the microphone close to the actors. The actors need to speak clearly (not mumble) and to speak at about the same volume. Even if they whisper, they should whisper somewhat louder than normal.
- Each actor in the scene should also speak at about the same volume (otherwise we will only hear the louder actor).
- Here is the same scene again, this time with the microphone held closer to the actors.

▶ VIEWING

Continue playing the DVD – **Step 12 (Segment B)**
(1 minute 24 seconds)

|| PAUSE THE FILM AT THE PROMPT

i INFORMATION

- In this next example the microphone is first held next to the camera. Because the actors are far from the camera we can barely hear them. Because of this distance the background noise is also loud, making it even harder to hear them.
- This is followed by the same scene again, this time with a microphone (on a long lead) held much closer to the actors.

▶ VIEWING

Continue playing the DVD – **Step 12 (Segment C)**
(46 seconds)

i INFORMATION

- If you are using the microphone built in to the camera then the camera operator has to **always** face the actor who is speaking as we won't hear what is said by a person

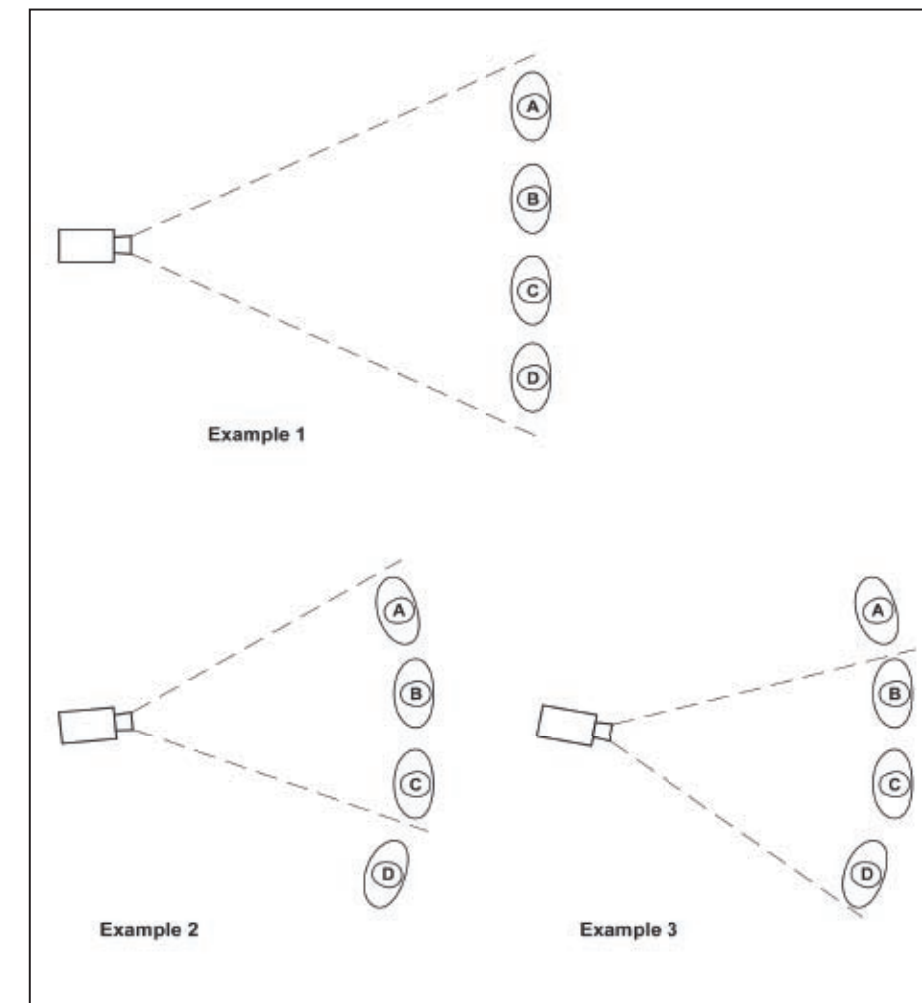
“off-camera” (not seen in the camera-frame) – because they are away from the microphone. Try to imagine that what is seen in the camera frame is that same as the sound that is recorded. If you can't see them, you can't hear them.

- If using the camera microphone the camera operator needs to have the camera lens on wide-angle (zoomed out as much as possible), stand no more than six feet away from the actors and have no more than 3 people who are talking in the camera frame. If you have more than 3 people you will have to stand back further to capture them in the frame, and will therefore be too far away to hear them clearly.

Place *Figure 1* on the overhead projector.

Figure 1 (Sample only)

Refer to the Additional Resources section (page 39) for copy-friendly version of this figure.



- In *Figure 1*, Example 1 there are four people within the range of the camera lens, but they are too far from the camera microphone to be clearly heard. In Example 2 the people are closer to the camera, but only person A, B and C will be heard clearly