Art-based lesson on Problem Solving

Coaching session guide for Adult Educators

Theme: Problem Solving

Activity: Coaching session

Objective: This guide will serve as a coaching session model for educators to build their own art-based creative lesson on problem solving skills.

Learning objectives and outcomes of this lesson:

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
To train on how to approach problems in a creative way through and ispired by the observation and analysis of a piece of art/literature.	Learners will be more able to face a new and apparently unmanageable situation according to the usual ways she/he has learned and known, by implementing a "creative effort" aimed at identifying new strategies capable of directing them to the best.
To train on the "problem solving" process: identify a problem and establish a goal, analyse the obstacles, formulate hypotheses, evaluate solutions and act.	Learners will be more to approach and solve a problem by applying a strategic process.
To provide learners with the skill of changing their way of behaving, seeing and feeling things to ease the achievement of an objective.	Learners will have understood how to use a "think out of the box" strategy in order to analyse and find solution to a problem looking at it under a different light and from different perspectives.

Applying Arts for Education, Creativity and Innovativeness

Methods used during the session:

Short intros to the topic and the artworks;

Observation;

Self-reflection and self-learning;

Guided discussions.

Coaching Session

Plan:

Duration: 1 hour

Necessary equipment and materials:

- A laptop and a projector

- Paper handouts with the works of art and literature to be examined

- Sheets of paper, pens and coloured pencils

Coaching session structure and materials

Selected topic : Problem solving

STRUCTURE

1. Brainstorming introduction to the discussion on the topic.
2. Introduction to problem solving: what is this skill about and how do we acquire and use it?
3. Introduction to the selected piece of art/literature and analysis of the related information materials.
4. Guided discussion:
    1. Interpretation of the piece of art/literature
    2. Analysis of the piece of art/literature's elements
    3. The topic through the lens of the piece of art/literature
5. Conclusions
6. Problem Solving skill recap

MATERIALS

1. Coaching lesson guide
2. Database of pieces of art/literature
3. Links to sources and additional information materials about the piece of art/literature
4. Methodology how to apply arts and literature for education, creativity and innovativeness

Suggested timetable for the session

N.	Activities	Dedicate time
1	Brainstorming introduction to the discussion on the topic.	5 minutes
2	Introduction to problem solving: what is this skill about and how do we acquire and use it?	10 minutes
3	Introduction to the selected piece of art/literature and analysis of the related information materials.	5 minutes
4	Guided discussion: 1. Interpretation of the piece of art/literature 2. Analysis of the piece of art/literature's elements 3. The topic through the lens of the piece of art/literature	20 minutes
5	Conclusions	15 minutes
6	Problem Solving skill recap	5 minutes
	COMPLETE SESSION PLAN	1 hour

1. Brainstorming introduction to the discussion on the topic

The educator will lead the conversation towards the "problem solving" topic. The learners will be asked questions to share their point of view, their experience and knowledge about the topic:

a. When you meet a challenge or you have to find a solution to a problem, how do you approach the situation?

b. Do you know about "problem solving" skill?

c. Have you had experience of applying "problem solving" to complex situation?

2.
Introduction to the topic

PROBLEM SOLVING

The educator will briefly introduce the topic to the learners:

In problem solving the person is faced with a situation that is new and unmanageable according to the usual ways she/he has learned and known. What is therefore required in these situations is to implement a real "creative effort" aimed at identifying new strategies capable of directing us to the best.

To come to a solution, a change in our way of seeing and feeling things or in our behaviour is necessary, in order to allows us to achieve the objectives.

"Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb trees, it will spend its whole life believing that it is stupid.
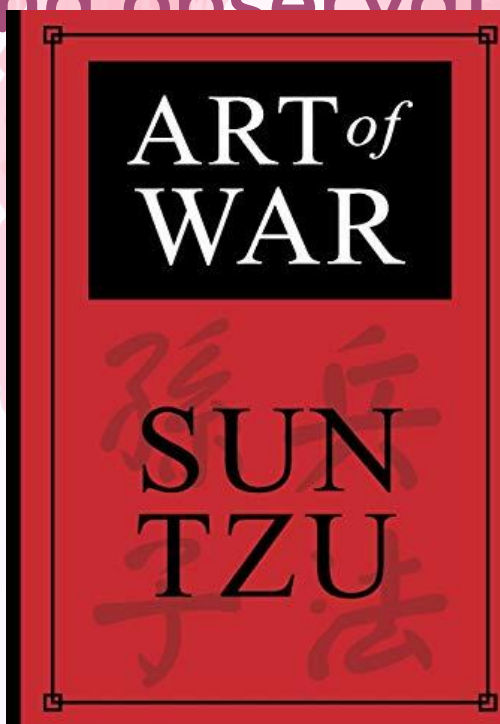*We cannot expect things to change if we keep doing the same things*
Creativity is contagious. Pass it on".
(Cit. Albert Eisten)

What is the process of the problem solving skill?

1. Define the problem

2. Establish our goal

3. Analyze the obstacles

4. Formulate hypotheses for solving the problem

5. Evaluate the solutions

6. Taking a decision

7. Act

3.1 Brief introduction to the artwork and observation

ARTWORK: Literature
TITLE: The Art of War
WRITER: Sun Tzu (5th century BC)

The Art of War is an ancient Chinese military treatise. It remains the most influential strategy text in East Asian warfare and has influenced both Eastern and Western military thinking, business tactics, legal strategy, lifestyles and beyond.

The book contains a detailed explanation and analysis of the Chinese military, from weapons and strategy to rank and discipline. Sun also stressed the importance of intelligence operatives and espionage to the war effort.

The treatise goes through all the necessary steps and elements the warrior have to take into account when facing a battle:

- Strategic goal to pursue

- Strategic analysis

- Strategic set-up

- Best choice analysis

- Detailed execution of the plan

- Adaptability

4.1 Guided discussion: Interpretation

How to interpret artworks

You should ask learners to describe what they see / feel / understand from the selected piece(s) of art/literature.

The focus of the discussion is on sharing personal views, feelings and thoughts of participants about the piece(s) of art/literature. The purpose is to encourage participants to share their opinion by pointing out that there are no wrong answers.

Possible questions to be chosen and developed according to the chosen of art/literature chosen:

a. What does this piece of art makes you think and feel?

b. What do you think the artwork wants to communicate?

c. What in your opinion is the focus of the artist's attention?

d. Which are the challanges you thin the artists faced in the realization of the piece of art/literature?

4.2 Guided discussion: Analysis

How to analyze artworks

You should guide the analysis of the elements that compose and/or are represented in the piece of art/literature. You will then guided learners in a discussion leading to the entrepreneurial topic under discussion through the analysed elements.

Possible questions for *Guided discussion on the observed/introduced works:*

1. Is there something in this piece of art that makes you think of some of the characteristics of the problem solving skill?
2. Are there elements in this piece of art which you can relate to the problem solving process? Which are they and how/where can you find them?
3. Would you able to describe the problem solving process through this piece of art?

Support tools

Optionally you could research and provide the learners with the support analysis tools chosen according to the topic and the piece of art/literature under observation.
Those will be combined with the additional information materials about the pieces of art/literature in the database.

ART and LITERATURE TOOLS

How to analyze a piece of art/literature?
Primarily
- Self relflection through a piece of art/literature
- Color and shapes symbolism related according to the context (in art)
- Plot structure or writing techniques (in literature)

Secondarily
- Historical and environmental context
- Art piece and/or artist history

BUSINESS TOPICS ANALYSIS TOOLS (theoretical framework)
How to analyze the topic?

Key points of business and marketing strategy entrepreneurial skill processes and practical examples.

4.3 Guided discussion: Problem solving through the lens of the piece of art

You should guide learners in a discussion about the topic through the lenses of the art works.

Opening question: Where can we find the problem solving characteristics or processes in this piece of art ?

To guide this discussion you could use the support of one or more of the following activities selected by the educator:

Q&A sessions – about the topic and about the pieces of art/literature
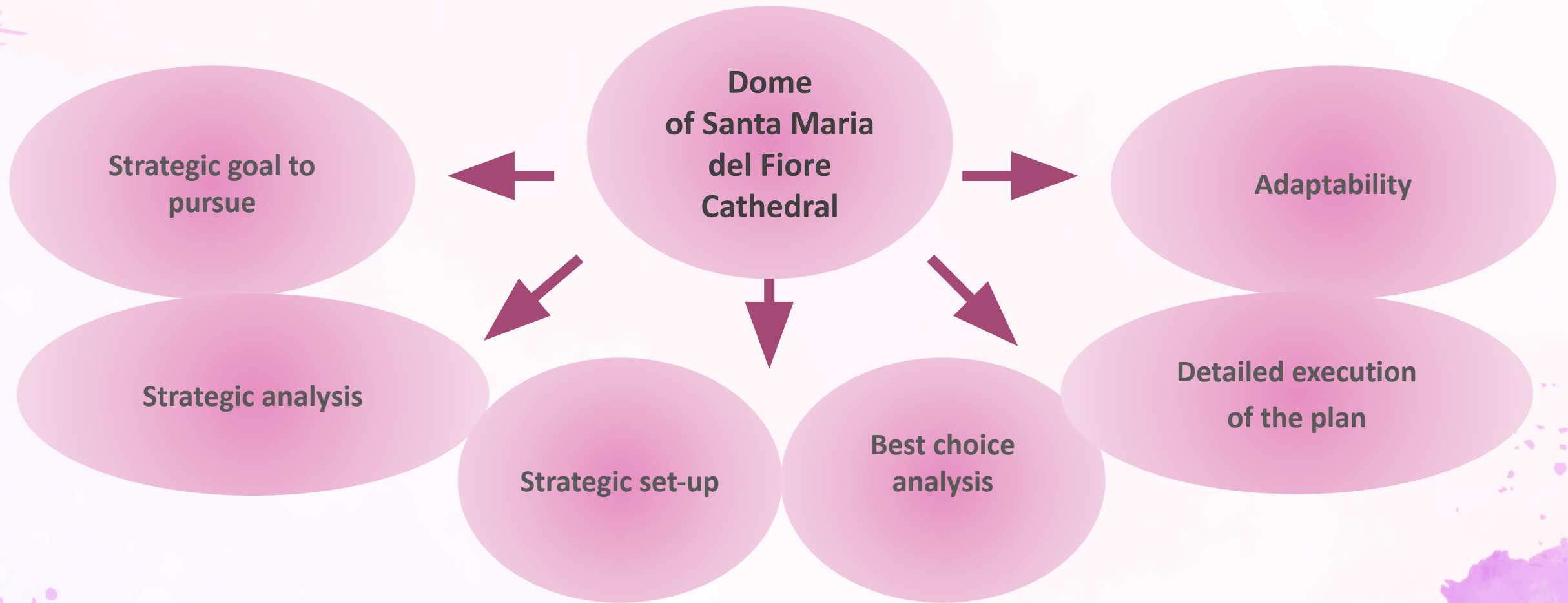Mind maps on the topic of the activity
Questions cards about the pieces of art/literature
Quizzes on the topic of the activity and on the pieces of art/literature
Practical exercise to draw/write their own version of artwork on the topic of the activity.

You should collect answers from the learners and listen to their different analysis and elaborations.

Mind map reference

Dome of Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral

Strategic goal to pursue

Adaptability

Strategic analysis

Strategic set-up

Best choice analysis

Detailed execution of the plan

5. Conclusions

At the end of the activity you should start guiding the group into his/her interpretation of the artwork, explaining how he/she sees the topic through the lenses of the art/literature under observation.

Why did we chose this piece of literature? (The interpretation in the database is optional to use, and can be substituted by the educator's interpretation).

The treatise widely reflects the problem-solving process which have been applied in several fields:

- Strategic goal to pursue

- Strategic analysis

- Strategic set-up

- Best choice analysis

- Detailed execution of the plan

- Adaptability

6. Problem Solving skill recap

Problem Solving skill recap: it is an entirely rational and linear process, like a kind of "thought assembly line". The ability of Problem Solving consists in integrating our resources, the logical ones with the creative ones, in the best possible way, which is essential to come to the solution.

Creativity and intuition are the heart of Problem Solving. After identifying the problem, our goals and the real obstacles, we need to tap into what we know and know how to do, but then we need to let our minds free to make connections and generate ideas.