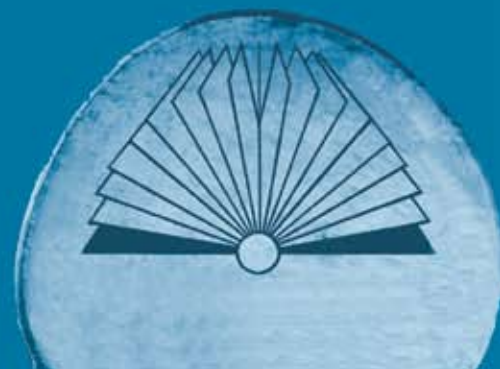


# Oral Projects



*I know I have had an unusual life,  
being born in a skin tent and living to hear on the  
radio that two men have landed on the moon.  
I think the new times started for Eskimos after the  
white people's war, when the white men began to  
make many houses in the Arctic. Eskimos began to  
move into the settlements and then the white people  
started helping us to get these houses.*

*That's why life changed.  
I don't think everybody was too fond of moving  
from the camps, but they still came anyway.  
...in some ways I like living in a warm house,  
but in the old days, before all these things happened,  
we were always healthy. I was never sick,  
not even with all the children I had.*

*...I have heard there is someone –  
not a human being, but a spirit – in the moon.  
When I heard that the two men had landed  
on the moon I wondered what the spirit thought  
of these two men landing on his land.*

*Pitseolak in Pitseolak: Pictures Out of My Life*

# Collecting Traditional Music

## Ideas for Collecting Songs, Aqausiit, Pisiit, Drumming, and Qiarvaag or Katajjaq (Throat Singing)

- Collect Inuktitut traditional music, create a recording and print the words to the songs so people can follow along.
- Collect aqausiit that people in your literacy group sing to their own children or aqausiit that their family members made up for them when they were small. Record these on a tape or CD with dedications to family members.
- Record Elders drumming and singing pisiit. Take pictures of the Elders and include the words to their pisiq, with their photograph, in the CD package.
- Make a video of people singing and drumming or throat singing.
- Collect traditional songs that people sing to children or used to sing to children and are now not so well known. Record these songs and include the words and an explanation of the purpose of each song in the tape or CD package. Find out about the stories of the songs – who composed them and for what purpose? Who was around when the song was composed?
- Hold a community event, a festival or a concert, where people sing traditional songs. Record the performers on video, collect the words to their songs and make the video tape and words available for people to borrow from the library or Community Learning Centre.
- The literacy group could learn the words for traditional songs and sing and record them themselves. Create a recording which includes the words of each song and photographs of the performers.

# Debates or Creative Controversy

## What is a Debate?

*A debate is an organized discussion between two groups of people about a controversial topic. Usually the debate happens in public with an audience of peers watching. Debates can be formal or informal.*

## What is Creative Controversy?

*Creative controversy allows learners to discuss an issue in small groups, instead of 'performing' in front of an audience. The goal is to present the best argument and to reach a group consensus, rather than 'winning' a debate.*

## Ideas for Discussing Controversial Issues

- After the research is complete and the literacy group has had a chance to think, discuss, read and write about the topic, consider holding a debate or creative controversy session. During your work, the group may have encountered an important issue about which people have differing views. Think about the views of the Elders you interviewed and your own views. How are they similar? How are they different?
- Debate only among literacy group members.

or...

- Invite guests from the community to be observers or participants.
- Hold a creative controversy session, an informal debate or a formal one.
- Hold a class discussion to choose the two sides of the question. Choose the exact wording that will be used for the two opposing statements. For example:
  - Drum dancing (or throat singing) should only be performed in its traditional form; altering the form or modernizing it is disrespectful and will cause the traditional form to be lost over time.
  - Young people should be able to express their individuality and their culture by changing and modernizing drum dancing (or throat singing); it will allow this cultural form to remain a vital part of our modern lives.

*Discussing controversial issues in Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun is a good way to strengthen oral language skills.*

## Creative Controversy

- Everyone should be aware that the goal of creative controversy is to reach a team consensus. In the beginning, pairs will argue forcefully for their side of a question. But teams eventually will have to agree on a common position that everyone can accept.
- First divide the group into teams of four; then divide the team into pairs. One pair takes one side of the question and one pair takes the other.
- The group or facilitator can have information ready to help teams prepare their arguments – recordings, writings, resource people that agree with either side of the question. The pairs use these resources and their current knowledge to prepare arguments for or against the issue.
- The pairs become familiar with the resources and discuss the question with their team of four – two on one side, two on the other side.
- Next, the teams switch pairs on the *same side* of the question meet in groups of four to prepare their arguments together.
- When the arguments are ready, the pairs go back to their original teams. The goal at this point is to argue forcefully for your side of the question.
- Next, the pairs exchange sides of the question and argue for the opposite point of view. Those who were for an issue in the beginning will now argue against it.
- Finally teams are asked to stop arguing forcefully and to reach a position that all team members can accept. If teams can't completely agree on one position, they should make a note of all the points they agree on and also note the areas where they don't agree.
- Teams can then write a group report on their final position.

## Informal Debate

- Choose someone as a recorder – perhaps the facilitator. Have two flip charts available. The recorder writes the points made on either side of the question.
- Post the questions on flip chart paper, one on each side of the room.
- People sit on the side of the room where the statement is posted that they most closely agree with.
- It may be necessary to choose a time limit for the debate.
- People from each side take turns giving reasons with proof why they agree with that side of the question. The recorder writes their points on the flip chart.
- As the debate progresses, people move to the opposite side of the room if they change their minds. People may move back and forth as many times as they want as the debate progresses.
- When the time is up, someone reads the points on either side of the question. Note how many people are sitting on each side of the room. As a whole group, discuss how group members felt the debate went and what they learned from it.
- Each member of the literacy group can write a short essay or opinion piece about how they feel about the issue. Use the points made during the debate to stimulate the writing.
- The facilitator teaches mini-lessons on the writing process, essay writing, grammar and any other topics as they come up.

## Formal Debate<sup>1</sup>

It is possible to find detailed rules for formal debates. But here are some brief guidelines:

- A formal debate has strict rules about the time that each person can speak.
- Choose the question for debate. It should have a *for* side and an *against* side.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from 'Debating' by Theresa Holowatuik in *Best Practices in Language Arts*, published by Kivalliq School Services, Baker Lake, 1997



- For example:
  - *For*: Life was easier in traditional times; communities worked together and shared what they had; people knew their roles and were happier then.
  - *Against*: People's lives were harder in traditional times; there were often food shortages; now people have more resources and more choices and are happier.
- Several topics and teams could be chosen. Debates may be spread over a period of time or held all in one day.
- Choose two teams, a timekeeper, a chair and judges. The rest of the literacy group is the audience.
- The teams meet together before the debate to plan and write up the arguments for their team. They should make sure they have proof for their arguments – examples, specific situations or people that prove the point.
- *The chair* introduces the topic and the speakers on each team, states the time limits and announces the judges' decisions. It is the chair's responsibility to maintain order and help the audience participate in an orderly manner if questions are allowed at the end of the debate.
- *The time-keeper* makes sure that the speakers keep to the time limit and warns them when their time is up.
- *Judges* might be members of the literacy group or include invited guests as well. They decide how clear and convincing each argument is. At the end of the debate they decide which team had the best arguments.
- *First speaker on the 'for' team* introduces the topic, explains any unfamiliar ideas, and states the arguments for their team clearly and briefly. (time limit: four minutes maximum)
- *First speaker on the 'against' team* states in what ways their team agrees and disagrees with the explanation of the topic by the 'for' team. She or he gives the arguments for their side and argues against the points of the other team with proof. (time limit: four minutes maximum)
- *Second speaker on the 'for' team* argues against the points of the 'against' team, states the arguments of the 'for' team and their proof. (three minutes maximum)

- *Second speaker on the 'against' team* argues against any new points from the 'for' team, makes new points for the 'against' team with proof. (three minutes maximum)
- *First speaker on the 'for' team* doesn't make any new arguments; argues against arguments already made and summarizes the 'for' team's points. (one minute maximum)
- *The judges meet* to discuss which team has the most convincing arguments. Or the audience could vote on which team they felt had the best points.
- Again, the literacy group could write opinion pieces based on what they heard in the debates.
- *Hint for the facilitator!* The excitement and emotion of a discussion causes people to forget about their inhibitions and to try to use a language in which they are not perfectly comfortable. Take opportunities to hold discussions in Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun or whichever language the group wants to develop. As facilitator, you should not correct people while they are speaking; let them speak freely to express their ideas – even if they are not speaking correctly. Help them only if others don't understand what they are trying to say. But make a note of vocabulary and grammar mistakes that come up during discussions and teach these points as mini-lessons later.
- *Idea!* Encourage group members to keep vocabulary lists of unfamiliar words that come up during discussions. You can use them later in personal dictionaries or mini-lessons on vocabulary or spelling.



## Resources

Dominion Institute's *Great Canadian Questions Online* – [www.greatquestions.com](http://www.greatquestions.com)

*Creative Controversy: Intellectual Challenge in the Classroom* by David Johnson and Roger T. Johnson. Interaction Book Company, 1995. ISBN: 0939603233

*How to Construct an Argument*, “A Writing Centre Handout”, from Wilfred Laurier University Writing Centre. [www.wlu.ca/writing/handouts/argument.htm](http://www.wlu.ca/writing/handouts/argument.htm)

*The Basic Principles of Persuasive Writing*, from University of British Columbia Writing Centre's Writers' Workshop. [www.writingcentre.ubc.ca/workshop/tools/argument.htm](http://www.writingcentre.ubc.ca/workshop/tools/argument.htm)



# Radio Plays

## Ideas for Creating a Radio Play

- The literacy group could write and produce a radio play based on stories they listened to when they were doing research.
- If you listened to several recordings or Elders' stories, decide first as a group which one you would like to base your radio play on.
- Listen to the story again to refresh your memory.
- You could write the play together as a group.

## Steps in Creating a Radio Play<sup>1</sup>

- Start by describing the characters.
  - ☒ Working on flip chart paper, brainstorm all the characters you will need for your play. Write one character's name on the top of each flip chart page and add information about each character as you brainstorm.
  - ☒ Brainstorm the physical characteristics of the character. What does she look like?
  - ☒ Brainstorm the personality traits of the character. How does she act and feel?
  - ☒ Brainstorm the relationships between characters.
- In point form, write the plot line. What happens first, second, next in the story? How does the story end?
  - ☒ You could draw a long line on the blackboard or put a long sheet of paper on the wall and draw a line on it – to show the progress of the story.
  - ☒ People write events that happened in the story on sticky notes or pieces of scrap paper and stick them on the line in the order they happened. With this method, the order can be easily changed as the group thinks of more events and ideas.
  - ☒ Talk about whether you would like to add more details that the storyteller didn't mention. Or would you like to add fictional events to the story? If you decide to do that, brainstorm ideas, write them on sticky notes or scrap paper and stick them on the plot line in the order that fits with the original events.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Radio Plays by Scot Bishop in *Best Practices in Language Arts*, Nunavut High School Project, published by Kivalliq School Services, Baker Lake, 1997

- ☒ As the discussion continues, you can edit your plot line – move the papers around to change the order of the events, add events or take some events away.
  - Divide the radio play into sections. People can divide into small groups or pairs and write the dialogue for one section of the play.
  - ☒ Dialogue is what the characters say to each other.  
 For example: Arnatsiak: Aapak, Look out! Rocks are falling!  
 Aapak: (screams) Aaiiii!! (and runs)
- Place the character sheets and plot line where everyone can see them or type up character and plot handouts on the computer. The groups will need to keep this information in mind as they write the dialogue.
- Go back to listen to the original recorded story. Notice vocabulary that is not commonly used today. List the vocabulary with meanings and try to use these words in your dialogue.
  - The facilitator teaches mini-lessons on the writing process, writing a play, syllabic keyboarding, grammar and any other topics as they come up.
  - Groups can type their dialogue directly onto the computer or write it by hand.
  - As well as dialogue and action, groups can be thinking of sound effects or music that they would add to their section and how these sound effects would be done.
  - When everyone has completed their sections of dialogue, action and sound effects, come together and read all the sections of the play.
  - Give everyone copies of all the sections and edit the play as needed. It will take some time to do the editing. Be prepared to be patient and not rush.
  - Decide if you would like music in your radio play.
  - Choose who will play which roles, who will do the sound effects and music, who will be in charge of recording.
  - Hold several practice sessions.
  - Record the radio play on good quality sound equipment, if possible, or ask for help or equipment loans from CBC or IBC.
  - Create copies of the play for all the group members.
  - Ask the local radio or CBC to broadcast the play.

CBC North radio in Iqaluit produced a series of excellent radio plays in Inuktitut and English based on legends. Copies of *Inuit Legends* are available through the CBC office in Iqaluit or Rankin Inlet. ISBN: 0-660-18983-6

*Traditional Storytelling, a skill possessed by most Inuit adults a generation ago, has graphically eroded. It is no longer the central source of passing down Inuit oral traditions, and no part of wondrous modern technology has accommodated any equivalent substitute.*

*Zebedee Nungak in Inuktitut 93, 2003*



# Radio Shows

## Ideas for Creating a Radio Show

- The purpose of the radio show could be to get people's ideas on a theme or topic, such as family histories of community members, child rearing methods, traditional beliefs and values, or what life was like when people first started moving into your community. Or the purpose of the show could be to collect songs, pisiit, aqausiit or stories or information about how to do a specific skill.
- The show could be a one-time event or part of a series of radio shows to collect ideas and information on different topics or themes.
- Your group may have already done a lot of research on a topic or theme and want to share it with the community.

or...

- The radio show could be another research technique – another way that your group collects information.
- You could ask Elders to be on a panel – to be the experts – either at the radio station or ready to phone in from home. People can phone in to ask them questions or contribute information
- The literacy group could make a presentation on what they already know about the topic. Then people in the community could phone in to add information or to ask questions.
- Or the show could be a discussion between a group of Elders and some members of the literacy group.

## Planning the Radio Show

- Find out from the Radio Committee when the group could schedule a phone in show.
- Decide what questions your group wants to ask. Write the questions on cards or type them on the computer.
- Decide who will ask which questions. The work could be divided up so everyone gets a chance to speak. People who feel less comfortable speaking in public could take smaller parts.

- Plan an introduction for the show, a description of your project and the work you have done so far. If the literacy group has already produced writing or collected songs, you might share your work during the radio show.
- Have a practice session of the radio show. Someone can be the host; some people can pose questions; some can phone in replies, others can be in charge of the recording equipment.
- As you were doing your research, you will have been noting traditional vocabulary and meanings. Try to use these words in your own writing and speaking.
- Go and see the radio station before the show. Ask for a demonstration of how to work the equipment. Make sure everyone is comfortable and knows what their job is when the time comes to do the show.
- During the show someone in your group can be in charge of making sure Elders have comfortable chairs, tea and water and an available washroom at the radio station.
- Record the radio show to make sure valuable information is not lost.
- Write up the transcripts from the show later.
- After the show everyone in the group can write a summary. Or divide into groups and each group can write a summary of one part of the show.
- The facilitator teaches mini-lessons on the writing process, syllabic keyboarding, grammar and any other topics as they come up.



# Storytelling Events

## Ideas for Hosting a Storytelling Event

- As part of your oral history project, your group could plan, coordinate and host an event in which people tell their stories and the community comes to listen and learn.
- Plan a good time to host the event. It could be part of a spring festival, Hamlet Days or Nunavut Day.
- Or it could be a small event at the Community Learning Centre, library or school as part of the literacy group's program.
- Your group can act as the hosts and organizers for the storytelling event. This work will build the skills and confidence of the literacy group members.
- As a group, brainstorm all the tasks necessary to organize the event: identifying storytellers, arranging the location, advertising, organizing the schedule for the performance, writing introductions for the storytellers, and so on. Decide if you will need a budget for the event. Will you pay storytellers? Will you charge admission? Do you have to pay to rent space? List your expenses and make a budget. Make a work plan with dates when the tasks should be completed. Divide up the tasks. Post the work plan where everyone can see it and be sure of their jobs.
- Break into groups to write introductions for each storyteller. Ask the storytellers for brief information about their lives and about the stories they plan to tell. Write the information on cards. You can use these cards to introduce each storyteller to the audience. Each literacy group member could be prepared to make at least one introduction during the event.
- The facilitator teaches mini-lessons on the writing process, syllabic keyboarding, grammar and any other topics as they come up.
- Create an attractive program to hand out during the event; you could consider adding digital photographs of the storytellers or artwork from the literacy group members.
- Hold several practice sessions without the storytellers so everyone becomes comfortable and knows their roles and the order of the program.
- You could hold the event in a large room with one storyteller telling at a time.

or...



- If you have many storytellers, you could set up the event like a conference. Each storyteller could work in a small room (perhaps in school classrooms), with several people telling stories at the same time. The audience would have a choice to hear one storyteller during each session. Perhaps there could be three or four sessions, each one half an hour or an hour long. Ask the storytellers how long they would like for their session.
- You could have sessions about the importance of storytelling and sessions where the audience learns how to tell stories.
- You could hold the event outside in tents.
- The group members have the responsibility of making sure storytellers are aware of the schedule, are comfortable while they are waiting, don't have to wait too long and have something to drink during their performance.
- Be sure to get permission from the storytellers to record the stories that they tell at the event and later write up the transcripts of the stories.
- The process of planning an event like this involves working together as a group and has many opportunities for developing organizational and language skills.



*Storytelling tent created by the May Hakongak Community Library and Cultural Centre in Cambridge Bay.*

# Storytelling on the Radio

## Ideas for Storytelling on the Radio

- As part of your oral history project, the literacy group could plan and coordinate a weekly or monthly storytelling session on the radio.
- The group could create written copies of the stories that will be read during each radio show. Distribute the written copies to the stores, post office or other locations where people can pick them up before the show. Families will be able to listen to the story together on the radio, while following the text on the printed copy. Make plenty of copies, so everyone who is interested can have their own copy to follow. This is a great way to strengthen oral and written Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun skills within families in your community.

## Planning the Storytelling Radio Show

- Talk to the radio committee to arrange a regular time for the show.
- Group members may want to search for different people who are willing to tell stories weekly or monthly – for the regular show.

or...

- You could use stories from oral history recordings that already exist in your community. These recordings may be available in your library, cultural centre or through CBC.
- In your literacy group, listen to the story first for enjoyment.
- Spend some time discussing the story. Have people heard it before? Does the story have a message? How do they feel about the story?
- Then listen carefully and transcribe the story. Transcribing is hard work, so you could do this as group work, with each group working on transcribing a small part of the story.
- If you are working with people who will tell the story on air, ask them to come to meet with your group first and tell the story so you can record and transcribe it. You can use this recording for the radio show or the storyteller can go to the radio station at the time of the show and tell the story live on air.

- Print the transcriptions in large, clear type. You may want to include illustrations, pictures or graphics. You could create a logo for your radio show and use it on each story, so people in the community will come to recognize the stories and look forward to the show. Another way to help people recognize your stories is to use the same coloured paper each time.
- Distribute copies of the printed story in the community where people can pick them up – stores, school, library, post office, arena.
- Make announcements on the radio several days before the show, so people will know to watch for the printed stories and to listen to the show.
- Members of your group can act as the hosts for the radio show, introducing your program and the storytellers and winding up the show. Perhaps small groups can be responsible for one show each – picking up the storyteller and making her or him comfortable, or getting the recording ready, hosting the show, introducing the program and the storyteller and operating the equipment.
- Before each show, the group acting as hosts should write down on cards the information they need to introduce the show and the storyteller and to wind up the show.
- The hosts for each show should practice in front of the whole literacy group before the show – to make sure they have all the information and feel confident and comfortable. The other group members can help by giving feedback and making suggestions.
- The facilitator teaches mini-lessons on the writing process, syllabic keyboarding, grammar and other topics as they come up.

# Oral Projects

Talking Books are a great way to strengthen reading skills in any language. Create sets of story texts and audio recordings so literacy group members, children and others can listen to stories while following the written word. These talking books can be available for people to borrow to practice reading at home. Literacy group members and high school students with higher level literacy skills could be involved in creating the talking books. Or you could look for funding or volunteers and have the talking books done professionally.

- Choose an oral history recording – perhaps one your group has recorded, or one done by another organization such as CBC.
- Listen carefully to the recording and type the exact words spoken by the speaker. This is called a transcript. Typing transcripts is very difficult and detailed work, so work in pairs or small groups. Each pair or small group can work on a small part of the transcript. Type the transcript in clear large print. (See *Transcribing Interviews* in *The Process of Collecting Oral Histories* section).
- The group may decide to laminate the written transcript. Have the talking book set (recording and transcript) available in plastic library bags for people to borrow.

- Photocopy Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun stories from books, newspapers or magazines, such as *Inuit Cultural Institute* publications or *Inuktitut* magazine. A good reader reads and records the story. (See *Recording Equipment* in the *Planning Your Project* section for information about recording equipment.)
- Laminate the photocopied story and have the talking book set available in plastic library bags for people to borrow.
- Keep a list or personal dictionary of new words as you read and listen. The facilitator can use these words to teach mini-lessons on vocabulary, spelling or grammar. Group members could test each other to help remember the new words.

## Children's Talking Books

- Adults or older children can read and record Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun children's books. This would be an excellent project for a literacy group.
- The literacy group could create a library of talking books to keep at the local library or Community Learning Centre for families to borrow and listen to together.
- Each group member chooses a book they would like to read.
- The facilitator models expressive reading, adding humour and sound effects to the story.
- The group members practice reading the story, using lots of expression and adding sounds and animal noises for special effects. Practice in pairs or small groups to give each other encouragement, ideas and feedback. Read the story as many times as you need to feel comfortable and confident.
- When individuals in the group feel ready, they can read to the whole group and then record the story. Take as much time as needed to record and re-record in order to get it the way each group member wants it.
- Put the recording and book together in a plastic library bag ready to be borrowed by families.

### *Source for Plastic Library Bags*

Bro-dart

109 Roy Blvd., Braneida Industrial Park

Brantford, Ontario N3R 7K1

Telephone: 519-759-4350