

A 'day-in-the-life' scenario



Comments to the facilitator: Storytelling is an opportunity for the participants involved in change efforts to bring their right brains, their emotional selves, to the task. A scenario is a description of the future based on goals or planned actions. It is a way of making intentions visible in a detailed way.

Use this activity with groups that are setting goals or stymied as they try to find solutions to specific problems. The facilitator may already know what questions the group is trying to answer or each group might have different problems to address.

Scenarios can be useful and actionable if focused on a particular issue or question. An example: What will our school look like when more students in our 4th-grade classes are scoring at grade level in reading?

Time: 2+ hours

Supplies: Chart paper, markers, handouts with questions for writing scenarios.

Directions

1. Distribute the handout, p. 12. Separate the larger group into smaller groups of three to five people.
2. Have each small group create a "day-in-the-life" scenario. You can have groups write about the same specific issue or question or have each address a different issue, depending on the group's needs. Invite each group to select a spokesperson who will share the scenario with the larger group. *Time: 30-45 minutes.*
3. Invite all groups to share scenarios. Next, ask the larger group to list assumptions or ideas that are unusual or thought provoking. Write those assumptions on chart paper so everyone can view them. *Time: 60 minutes.*
4. Ask the group, "What actions do the themes and scenarios suggest?" Have the group generate a list of specific actions to take to achieve the desired outcomes. Write those actions on chart paper so everyone can view them. *Time: 30 minutes.*

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

— Alan Kay

"The universal love of stories is not a coincidence; our brains function by constructing narratives. Adults and children alike live, learn, and relate to others through stories. Unlike other forms of writing, stories engage our emotions and imagination in the process of learning."

— Editors of *American Educator*

A ‘day-in-the-life’ scenario

Write a detailed scenario describing what you will see in your classroom or school on one day when you have achieved your desired outcome. Consider the following questions as you write:

- What details of learning will you see in the room and school?
- What will students be doing?
- What will teachers, other staff members, and parents be doing?
- What interactions will be significant?
- What materials will be evident?
- What emotions are detectable in the room?
- What will students and teachers remember about the day?

“The telling of stories leads to shared meaning and emotional experience that changes something profoundly.”
— John Kao



“We are defined by our stories, which continually form us and make us vital and give us hope.”
— Max DePree

Adapted from “Chapter 24: Visual Dialogue,” *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*, edited by Lois Brown Easton. NSDC, 2004.