

## Dixit: Communication development using picture cards

<b>Short description</b>	<p>Illustrated picture cards represent an accessible and flexible visual tool for supporting communication and socio-emotional expression. In our intervention, we use the <i>Dixit</i> card set, which contains metaphorical and imaginative illustrations that naturally stimulate storytelling, interpretation, and dialogue. Unlike structured pictograms, these open-ended images encourage participants to verbalise personal meanings, emotions, and experiences. The visual ambiguity of the images enables multiple interpretations, supporting emotional expression, symbolic thinking, and collaborative meaning-making. This approach is particularly effective for discussing abstract social topics and for engaging participants with diverse communicative abilities.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To stimulate verbal expression through visual prompts</li> <li>• To support reflective thinking about abstract social topics (e.g., inclusion, rules, cooperation, expectations)</li> <li>• To foster emotional awareness and perspective-taking</li> <li>• To encourage collaborative dialogue and peer learning</li> <li>• To create a safe and inclusive space for sharing personal meanings</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-group discussion: approximately 10 minutes</li> <li>• Whole-group sharing: 10 – 20 minutes</li> <li>• Total session time: 30 – 45 minutes</li> </ul>
<b>Social form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups of three to four are recommended when the total number of participants exceeds eight.</li> <li>• Whole-group circle discussion</li> <li>• Facilitator-led reflection</li> </ul> <p>This combination supports both intimate peer interaction and collective meaning-making. Can be used either as an introductory or closing activity</p>
<b>Materials and organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dixit</i> or comparable illustrated cards.</li> <li>• Tables or floor space where the cards can be spread face up.</li> <li>• Chairs arranged in circles (small-group circles + one large circle)</li> <li>• Optional: flipchart or notes for summarising group ideas</li> </ul> <p>Everyone receives several randomly selected cards to ensure spontaneity and diverse interpretations.</p>
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the theme of the session (e.g., inclusion, classroom rules, expectations, cooperation)</li> <li>• Prepare guiding prompts or sentence starters</li> <li>• Organise participants into small groups</li> <li>• Establish basic discussion norms (respect, listening, no right/wrong answers)</li> <li>• The facilitator models the activity first by demonstrating how to interpret a card.</li> </ul>

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## Step-by-step description



1. **Introduction of the theme**  
The facilitator introduces the discussion topic (e.g., inclusion or shared expectations).
2. **Card selection**  
Participants draw one or more illustrated cards at random.
3. **Small-group discussion (approx. 10 minutes)**  
Using the card as a visual stimulus, participants discuss how the image relates to the theme.  
**Prompts may include:**
  - What do I see in the picture?
  - What colours or details stand out?
  - How does the image make me feel?
  - How could this relate to today's topic?
  - Beginners may focus on simple description, while more advanced participants are encouraged to interpret symbolic or emotional meanings.
4. **Whole-group sharing**  
Groups return to the circle and summarise their discussion and shared interpretations.
5. **Reflection and closure**  
The activity can also be repeated at the end of the session to reflect on whether participants' expectations were met.

## Variations and differentiation

To accommodate diverse ages, language levels, and communicative needs, the activity can be flexibly adapted in terms of task complexity, social structure, and facilitation support.

### Variations of activities

#### Warm-up association

Participants choose a card that represents their current mood or expectations for the session.

#### Story chain

Each participant adds one sentence to build a collective story.

#### Emotion matching

Select a card that best illustrates a specific emotion or social situation.

#### Perspective-taking

Participants interpret the same card from different viewpoints (e.g., child, teacher, outsider).

#### Problem-solving

Cards are used to visualise solutions to a given challenge (e.g., "How can we make our classroom more inclusive?").

#### Closing reflection

At the end of the session, participants reselect cards to evaluate whether their expectations were met.

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### Differentiation by social form

- individual reflection (personal meaning-making)
- pair discussion (safe space for shy participants)
- small groups (collaborative interpretation)
- whole-group sharing (collective synthesis)

Grouping can be adjusted to balance participation and confidence.

## Practical notes

The use of metaphorical illustrated cards as discussion prompts functions as a projective and dialogic tool that lowers communicative barriers and stimulates spontaneous verbalisation.

### Facilitation notes

- The facilitator speaks first and models the process by explaining their own card and interpretation.
- Emphasis is placed on personal meaning rather than “correct” answers.
- The ambiguous and metaphorical nature of the images encourages projection, imagination, and deeper reflection.
- With trained facilitation, the method may draw on principles of symbolic or projective interpretation inspired by **Carl Gustav Jung**, although effective discussion can also be achieved through simple visual description and emotional associations.

## References | Sources

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Harvard University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1964). *Man and his symbols*. Doubleday.

Murphy, P. K., Wilkinson, I. A. G., Soter, A. O., Hennessey, M. N., & Alexander, J. F. (2009). Examining the effects of classroom discussion on students' comprehension of text: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(3), 740–764. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015576>

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