

Life Reflection: A Storyboard Activity

by

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Introduction

The introduction to an online learning community (OLC) can overwhelm and intimidate first-time participants of any new cohort. Effective instructional design specialists are traditionally empathic to the learner's first time experience (Mattelmäki, Vaajakallio, & Koskinen, 2014). The primary introductory activity of any OLC should promote active engagement, create a sense of inclusion within the cohort, and foster intellectual risk-taking. This paper will provide the outline of a participatory prototype activity entitled Life Reflection: A Storyboard Activity. This storyboard activity is designed to be implemented within an online integrated program for both educational and corporate training resources. The design of the activity was parsed using the framework of the ICARE model, which includes the components of introduction, connect, apply, reflect and extend (Hoffman and Ritchie, 1998).

A storyboard is a tool to help in the process of telling a story, create a narrative of a process, or share experiences with other people (Lillyman & Bennett, 2012). Storyboards make use of a combination of visual imagery accompanied by descriptive text. Storyboarding is an effective pedagogical tool to help learners express their thoughts and ideas through a cathartic method to share with others and develop inner self-reflection (Harrington, 1994). The subject of the storyboard activity, preparing a favorite meal, will give the learner the ability of self-reflection, to share with their peers, and to help create a sense of inclusion (Harrington, 1994). The activity can be completed by any learner regardless of age, background or educational level.

The overall storyboard activity will give each learner the opportunity to explore the online learning community through the process of active engagement. This storyboard learning module is designed to be flexible enough to fit within any style of OLC, which could include a learning management system or social networking site. Other styles of OLCs will be addressed

in the future. Upon their first visit to the OLC, the learner is presented with a welcome screen that consists of a step-by-step process of the Life Reflection: A Storyboard Activity. Each step in this storyboard activity is set up to empower the learner (Harrington, 1994) to help self-direct themselves throughout the process, thus allowing the learner to open themselves to the potential of intellectual risk-taking. The primary step will include material to help educate the learner on the topic of storyboards. The outlined process will recommend formats, online apps, digital or manual tools, and methods of submission of the learner's storyboard. The allowance for a wide variety of suggested variables enhances the empathic design of the storyboard prototype (Mattelmäki, Vaajakallio, & Koskinen; 2014). Upon completion of this activity, the learner will have demonstrated principles that revolve around problem-based learning, which include personal inquiry, self-directed learning and the use of critical-thinking skills (Thomas, 2010). The final step will instruct the learner to openly share their storyboard with the cohort and provide feedback on other students' storyboard submissions within the OLC environment.

Over the past few decades, storyboards have been effectively used as an education tool, which engage the learner, promotes intellectual risk-taking and create a sense of inclusion (Harrington, 1994). The use of a storyboard also allows the learner to engage in deep self-reflection (Lillyman & Bennett, 2012) while sharing their experiences with others in an online learning environment. While the activity has many benefits moving forward, some challenges and options may remain, such as language, time allotment and ease of OLC installation. Future prototype testing will be implemented in an OLC by OLC basis.

References

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