



Digital Storytelling



Storytelling can be a powerful tool to enhance teaching and learning and has been used as such throughout millennia. It is the oldest form of teaching and probably the best way to learn.

Storytelling in the 21st century is made richer and more effective through the use of digital media such as images, videos, and audio files, a method known as **Digital Storytelling**.

This unit will help you:

- ❖ Develop your understanding of the use of narrative and storytelling in promoting Learning and Development
- ❖ Learn how to write stories that are memorable, entertaining and engaging for your learners
- ❖ Create a draft plan for your own digital storytelling project,
- ❖ Write and produce a digital story based on your own personal or professional experiences
- ❖ Use digital tools to create and share stories
- ❖ Facilitate your own collaborative storytelling projects

What is Digital Storytelling?

- ◆ In its simplest form, digital storytelling refers to the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories or present ideas. Digital stories have also been defined as multimedia presentations that combine a variety of digital elements within a narrative structure.
- ◆ As opposed to traditional storytelling that uses materials on physical media such as paper, tapes or discs, and film, a digital story uses material that exists on electronic files. Digital stories may include not only text, images, video, and audio, but also interactive elements like maps and social media elements like tweets.
- ◆ The concept also covers a range of digital narratives, including digital web-based stories, interactive stories, and hypertext stories. In hypertext fiction, for instance, readers can use hypertext links to move from one piece of text to the next.
- ◆ Digital storytelling shares individuals' lived experiences in ways that traditional storytelling (i.e., oral, written stories) cannot. Individuals can archive, retrieve, and review digital stories offline, as well as distribute them online to infinite audiences through Learning Management Systems (LMS), websites or social media.
- ◆ With the inclusion of multimedia, digital stories can also effectively set and preserve the scenes, cultures and moods of individuals' narratives.



Why Digital Stories? How do they support learning?

They:

- ◆ Teach us about life, about ourselves and about others
- ◆ Enable us to empathise with unfamiliar situations
- ◆ Help us consider new ideas
- ◆ Increase our willingness to share similar life experiences
- ◆ Link learning to the prior experiences of the learner
- ◆ Enhance interpersonal relationships and self-knowledge
- ◆ Develop Critical Digital Literacy skills

Stories reshape knowledge into something meaningful!

- ◆ Whatever the method of delivery, the principles of story writing remain the same. A good story should:
 - *captivate the audience,*
 - *help content resonate, and*
 - *make learning stick*



Digital Storytelling as an effective Learning Tool for C-VET Professionals

- ◆ There are numerous ways that Digital Storytelling can be used to support Learning and Development.
- ◆ One of the first decisions to be made when using this tool in a learning programme is whether you will create the Digital Stories or have your learners do it.
- ◆ You may decide to create your own stories and show them to learners as a way of presenting new material. An engaging, multimedia-rich digital story can serve as a hook to capture the attention of learners and increase their interest in exploring new ideas.
- ◆ Digital stories can also be used to enhance a learning intervention, as a way of facilitating discussion about the topics presented in a story and as a way of making abstract or conceptual content more understandable.
- ◆ Research has shown that the use of multimedia in teaching/training helps learners retain new information as well as aiding the comprehension of difficult material.
- ◆ It is a particularly useful approach to use with adult learners when it draws on and builds on their experience.



Through stories we move people, we convince them to support our ideas, we encourage them to spread our message.

Stories have the potential to elevate learning into something everyone can relate to.

Tools and Media Used in Digital Storytelling



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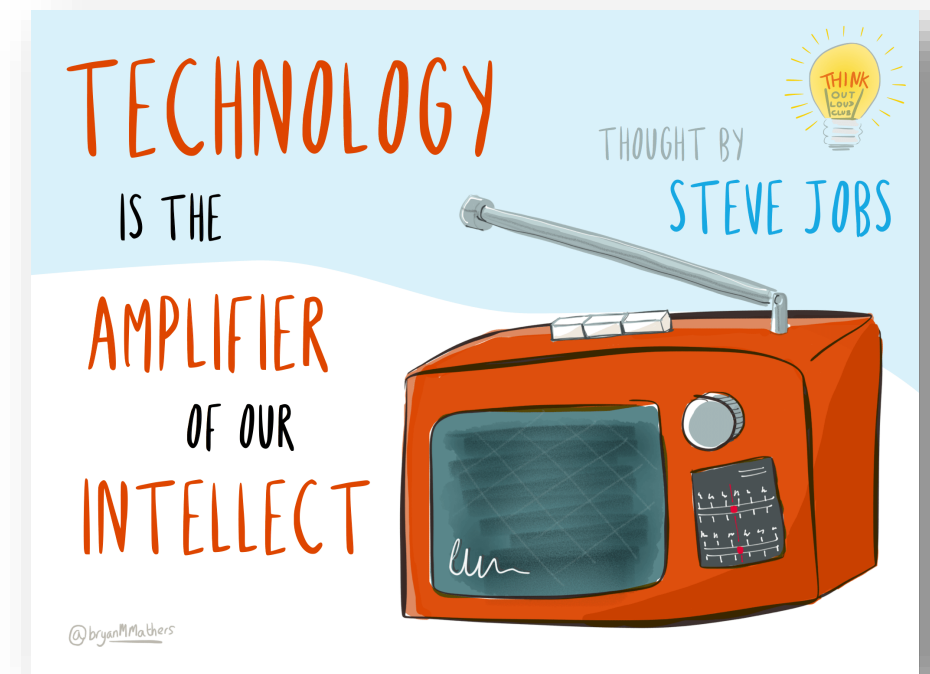
In hypertext fiction, for instance, readers can use hypertext links to move from one piece of text to the next.

Adapted from: Metaphors We Live By

However:

- ◆ No technology or special effects can overcome a weak, uninteresting story.
- ◆ The principles behind effective digital storytelling are the same as those for oral or written stories.
- ◆ So first, we will look briefly at how to create a good story – in any format!

“All technology is an amplifier... and what happens when you give a bad guitar player a bigger amplifier?” Jason Ohler (2008)



[Technology is the amplifier of our intellect](#)
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Good Stories are:

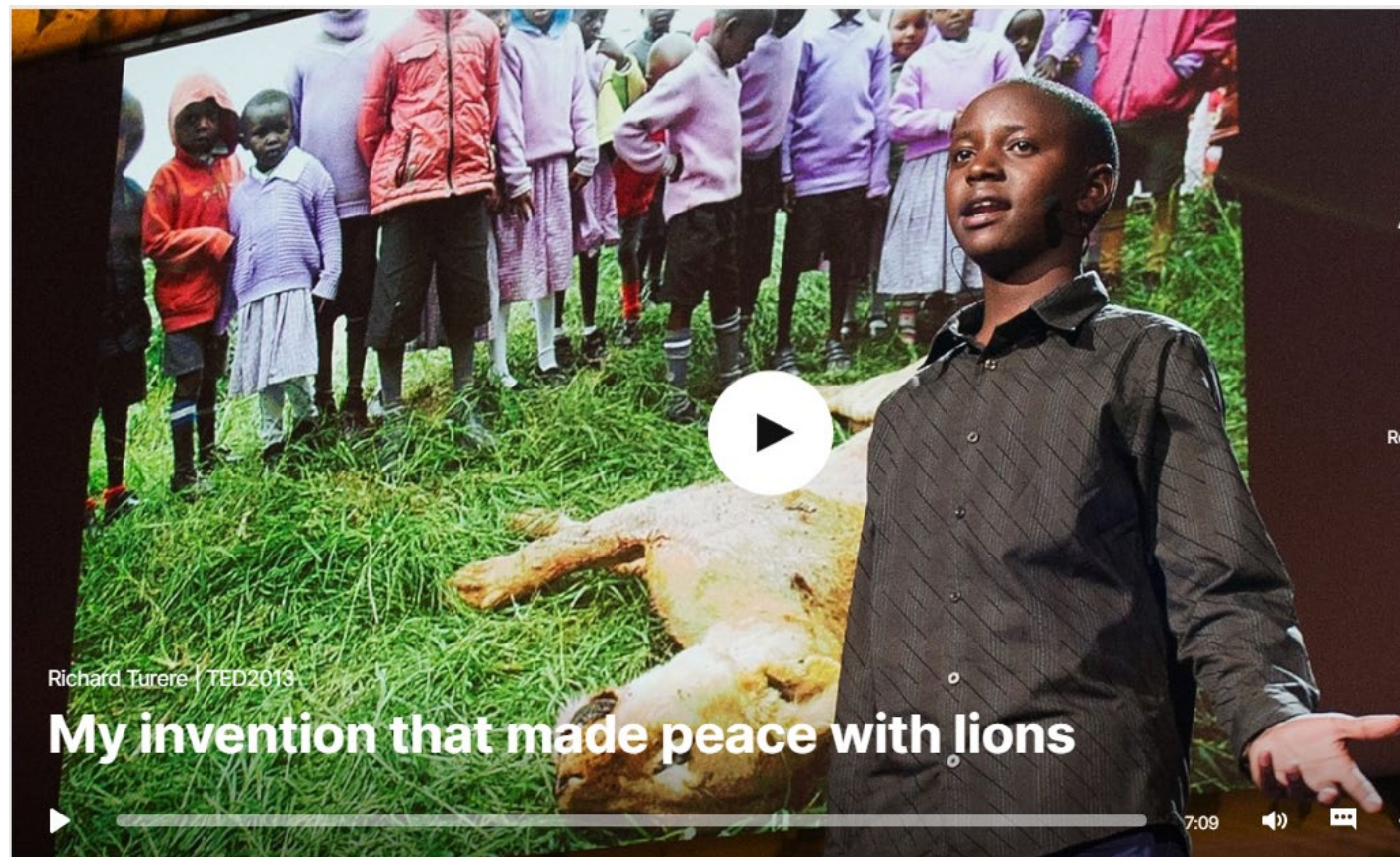
- ◆ Engaging
- ◆ Relatable
- ◆ Conversational
- ◆ Personal
- ◆ Memorable
- ◆ Simple!
- ◆ Fun

- ◆ **ACTIVATE OUR IMAGINATION**





Activity 1. View this digital story...



Did you find it Engaging, Relatable, Conversational, Personal, Memorable, Simple and Fun?
If so, consider how this was achieved ...and what did you learn from it?

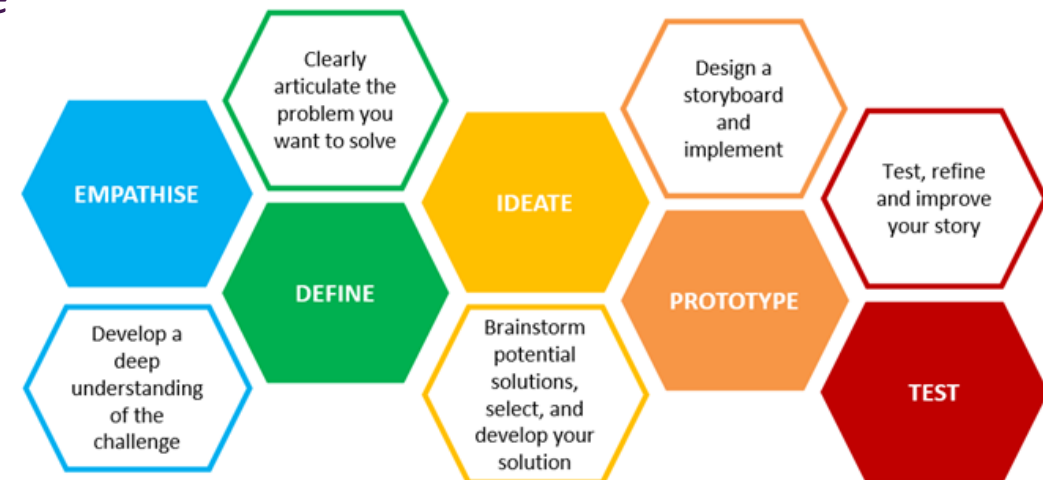


Using Design Thinking for Digital Storytelling

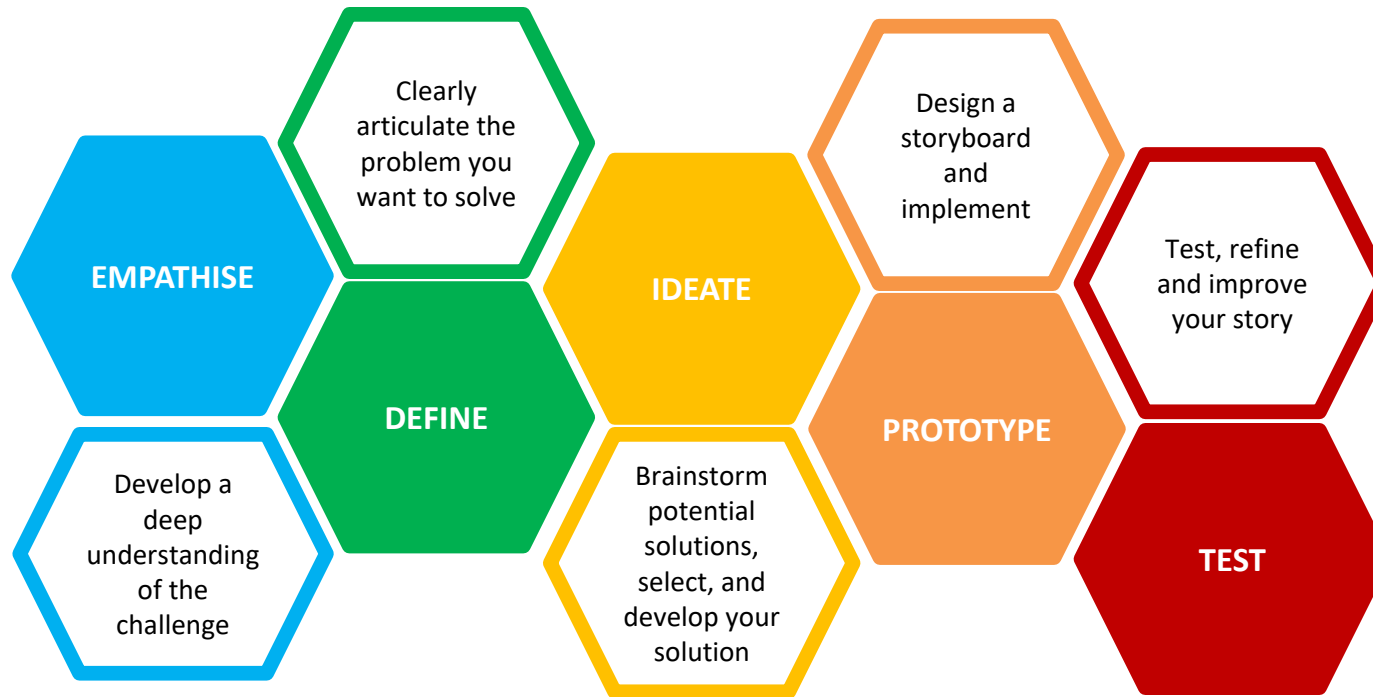
Design Thinking is a methodology that helps to solve complex problems and find desirable solutions. It can offer a structured framework for understanding and pursuing innovative and effective solutions for your digital story.

The design thinking cycle involves:

- ◆ utilising observation and empathy to understand ‘the challenge’ and the needs of your audience
- ◆ framing an opportunity or defining the scope of a challenge
- ◆ generating creative ideas
- ◆ Building and testing a prototype of your story (e.g. through a storyboard)
- ◆ testing and refining solutions before you ‘go live’ with it



Using Design Thinking for Collaborative Digital Storytelling



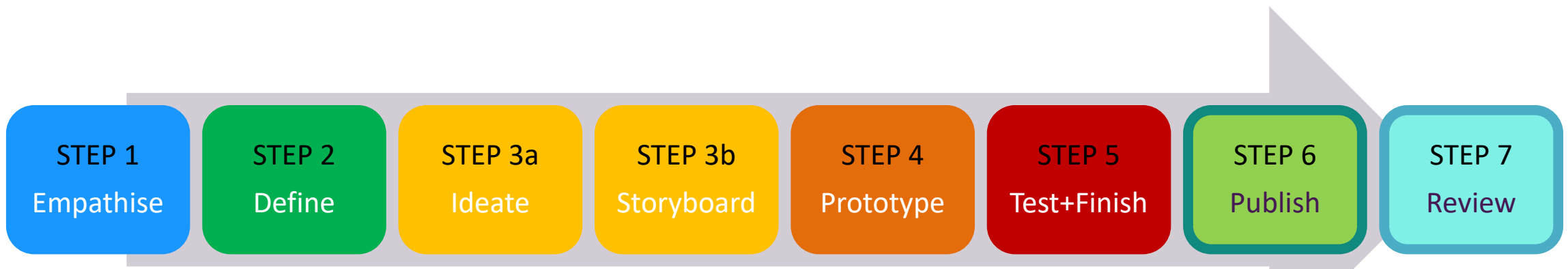
As a **Collaborative Learning approach with a group of learners**, it creates a structured framework for:

- identifying challenges,
- gathering information,
- generating potential solutions,
- refining ideas,
- and testing solutions.

Design Thinking exercises our creativity!

Creating a Digital Story using the Design Thinking Process

1. EMPATHISE with your potential audience
2. DEFINE what you hope to achieve - The story concept
3. IDEATE: Brainstorm ideas; Plan and generate the plot; create a Storyboard
4. PROTOTYPE: Realise/film/record/curate compile the story with multimedia elements
5. TEST: refine and finish
6. Publish and Share
7. Review



Step 1: EMPATHISE

Who is your Audience?

- ◆ What do you know about them, their needs or what will engage them?

Storytelling should create an emotional connection between you and your audience; they need to relate to it!



Recognising some common components of stories that underpin all stories makes it much easier.

Through sparkol.com (storytelling software VideoScribe and StoryPoint), have a look at two components that can help us shape and tell our stories better.

Plots that Engage

- ◆ In *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*, Christopher Booker explains how some of our best-loved stories throughout history fall into only SEVEN distinct story types: [Universal Story Plots That Still Entrance Audiences](#)

Structures That Engage

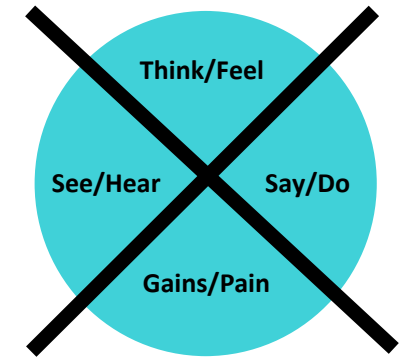
- ◆ Telling a story takes your audience on a journey. What kind of experience they have depends a lot on how you move them through the story. That's called structure - and this blog post from sparkol.com will help you understand eight common structures you could choose from to build your story: [Eight Classic Storytelling Techniques for Engaging Presentation](#)





Activity 2: Create an Empathy Map

- ◆ **Task:** Interviewing (or by asking yourself) and creating an Empathy Map (15 minutes)
- ◆ **Topic:** “What stories mean to me”
- ◆ **How:** Write answers to the following questions in short phrases e.g on Post-it Notes



Think/Feel

- ◆ What do you think about when you hear the phrase “digital storytelling”?
- ◆ What feelings or memories do you recall when talking about stories and storytelling?
- ◆ What makes a “good story” for you personally.

Say/Do

- ◆ Who is a storyteller you admire?
- ◆ What, When, Where or Who have you always wanted to tell a story about?
- ◆ If you were asked to tell a story at your next meeting, event, family get-together, how would you go about it?

Gains/Pains

- ◆ Why do you like particular types of stories?
- ◆ What kinds of skills might you need to brush up on to be a better storyteller?
- ◆ Where might you run into challenges? What kinds of challenges?
- ◆ What might get in your way of telling more stories in your work?

See/Hear

- ◆ What was the last good story that you read or listened to?



STEP 2 and 3: DEFINE and IDEATE

A. DEFINE the Purpose of the Story

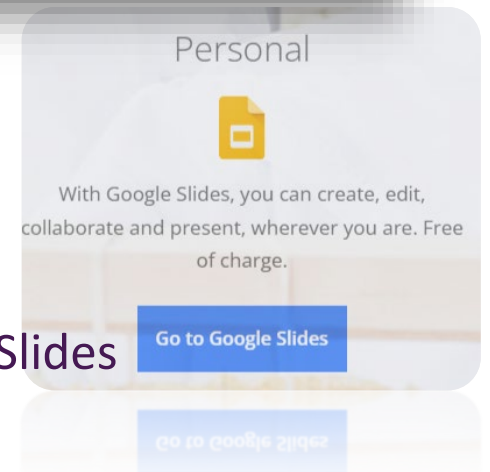
- *What is the message?*

B. IDEATE:

- *What is your story?*
- *How do you want your audience to react?*

Ways to do this include:

- ◆ Brainstorming ideas using traditional methods or all digital means like Google Slides
- ◆ Listening, searching and reading for topics
- ◆ Thinking about your personal knowledge, experience and journey





Activity 3: Creative Idea Generation (30 minutes)

◆ Task:

1. Define the message you want to put across to your audience
2. Take 15 minutes with your group to brainstorm story ideas – get creative – be imaginative – don't hold back ideas (however crazy they may seem)
3. Stand back and cluster the ideas into similar fields (if possible!)
4. Chose an idea (or cluster of ideas) that you feel will best serve in putting the message across and with the potential to be:
 - Engaging
 - Relatable
 - Memorable



STEP 2b: Create a Framework/Plan for your Digital Story

Content

Why

What are the key issues/messages you want to get across?

What

What are the things that need to be done/must be changed?

How

What are the activities that must be done for change to happen?

What if...

What will the future be like if we do this?
What will happen if there is no change?

Audience

Who

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?

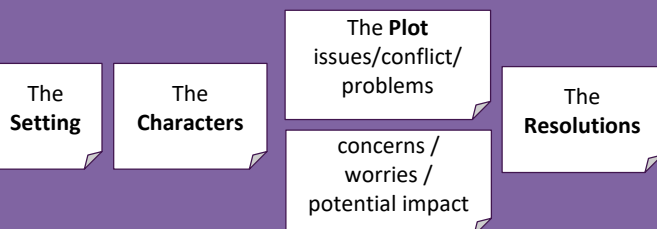
Learning

What are the main lessons that you hope will be learnt?
How does this vary for different learners?

Story

Structure

What is the framework for the story?



Characters

Who or what are the key characters?

What are the factors that will allow the audience to empathise with the characters?

Sense of urgency

Why should the 'audience' make a choice to support the change/suggested solution – and when...now?

Delivery Plan

What is the sequence of people, places and events to tell the story for the audience?

Tell

Design

What are the relevant formats for the visual content?

Which digital tools?

Are there cultural, organisational or personal expectations from the audience?

Testing/getting feedback

Who should be included in the testing of the story before it goes live?

How will you get feedback on its use/value?



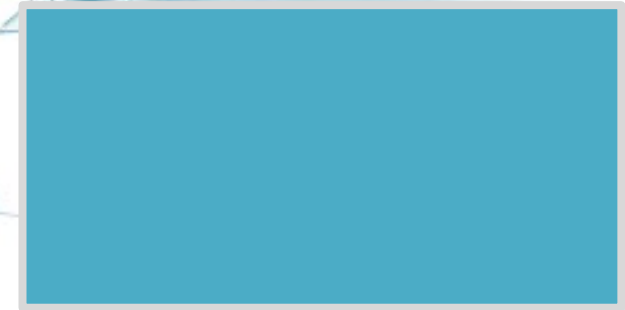
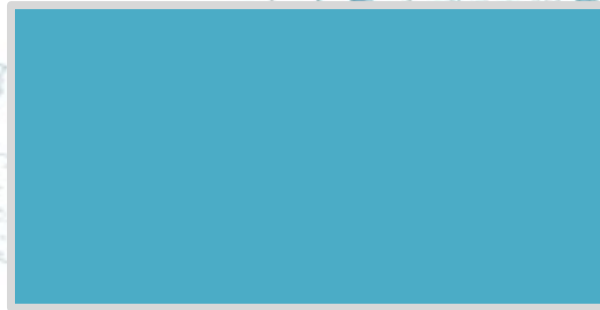
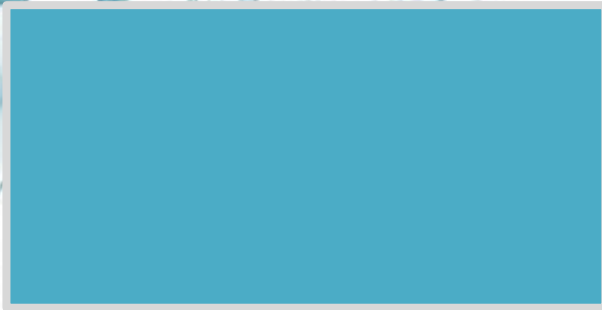
Step 2c: Create a Storyboard



Activity 4: Create a Storyboard (30 minutes)

◆ Task:

1. Using a simple Storyboard Template, outline the first few scenes of your story on paper.



2. Or transfer your ideas into a digital storyboard.



Step 4: PROTOTYPE

- ◆ The next step is to create a digital Prototype of your story.
- ◆ This is where you **create, curate materials, compile, shoot, record and assemble** your story in its digital format.
- ◆ **There are many Digital Tools you can use to do this.**
- ◆ Top Tips:
 - *Keep the focus on your message*
 - *Aim to show instead of tell*
 - *Less is more when it comes to visual effects*
 - *Keep it short and succinct – ideally less than 5 minutes*



Apps and Tools for Digital Storytelling

There are many digital tools available to help you create the content for your digital stories - and many YouTube videos to show you how to use them!



- [Book Creator](#)
- [Cloud Stop Motion](#)
- [Elementari](#)
- [Explain Everything](#)
- [Imagine Forest](#)
- [Imagistory — Creative Make Beliefs](#)
- [Comix](#)
- [PicLits](#)
- [Pixton](#)
- [Plotagon](#)
- [Powtoon](#)
- [Slidestory](#)
- [Speech Journal](#)
- [Storyboard That](#)
- [Story Creator](#)
- [Story Dice](#)
- [Story Jumper](#)
- [Strip Designer](#)
- [Tell About This](#)
- [ThingLink](#)
- [Toontastic](#)
- [Voice Thread](#)
- [Vyond](#)
- [WriteComics](#)
- [Write-on Video](#)



STEPS 5, 6 AND 7

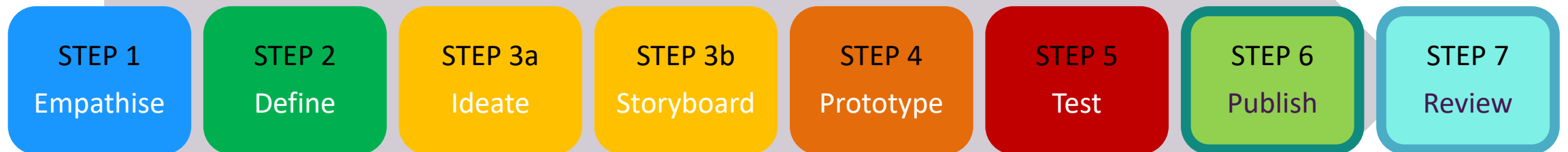
- ◆ **STEP 5: TEST** Preview, share, review, reflect, assess and refine your work before finalising it. Again there are a range of digital tools that can support this e.g. [Google Sites](#), [Google Slides](#) or [Flipgrid](#).

Finally, when you are happy...

- ◆ **STEP 6: PUBLISH!** If you have used an authoring platform/App you will be able to 'go live' there. Alternatively you may wish to upload your story onto a learning platform, website or digital publishing platform etc.
- ◆ **STEP 7: REVIEW and evaluate impact**

Is your digital story:

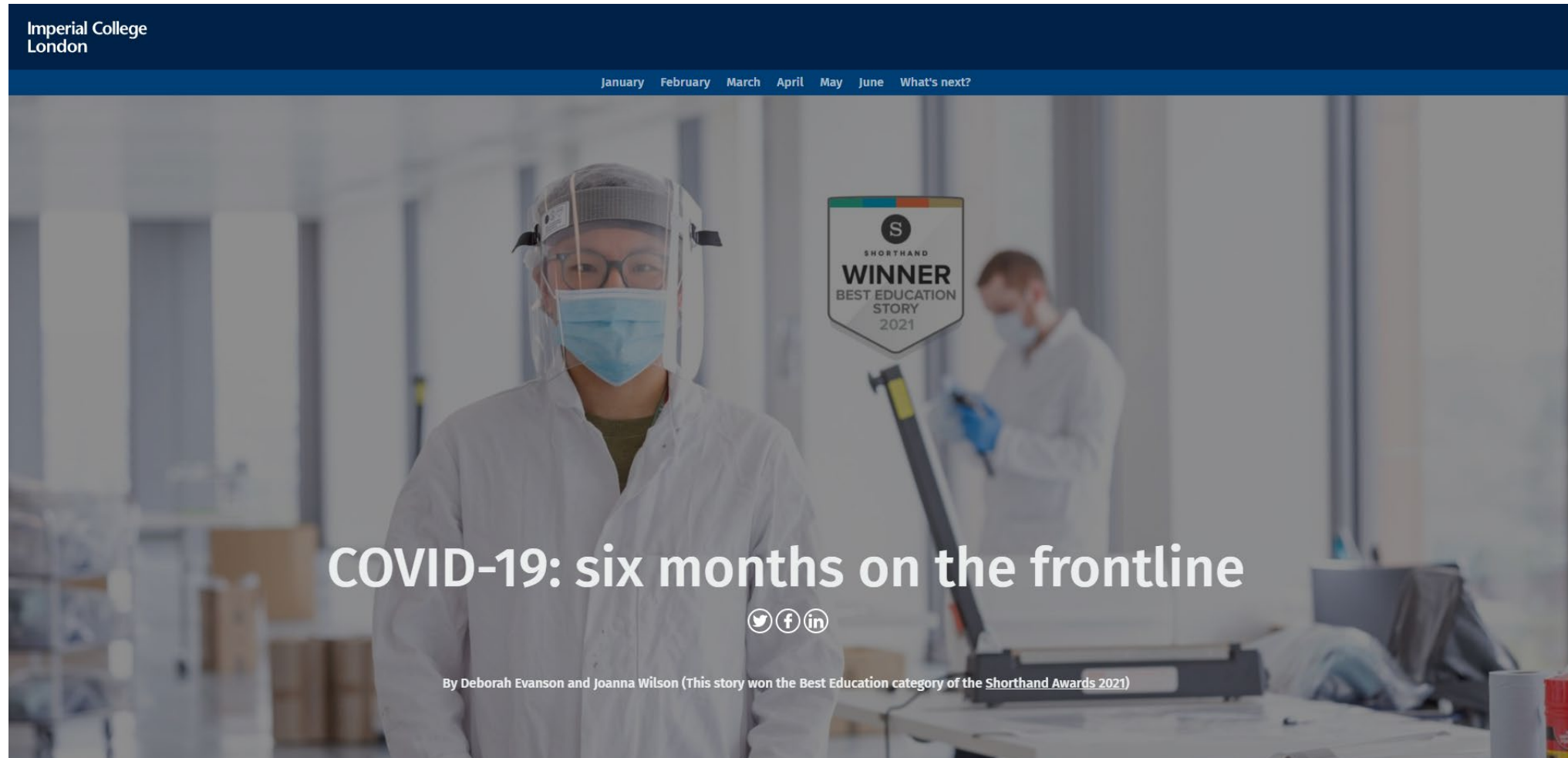
- ◆ Engaging?
- ◆ Relatable?
- ◆ Conversational?
- ◆ Personal?
- ◆ Memorable?
- ◆ Simple!
- ◆ (Fun?)



Digital Storytelling in C-VET

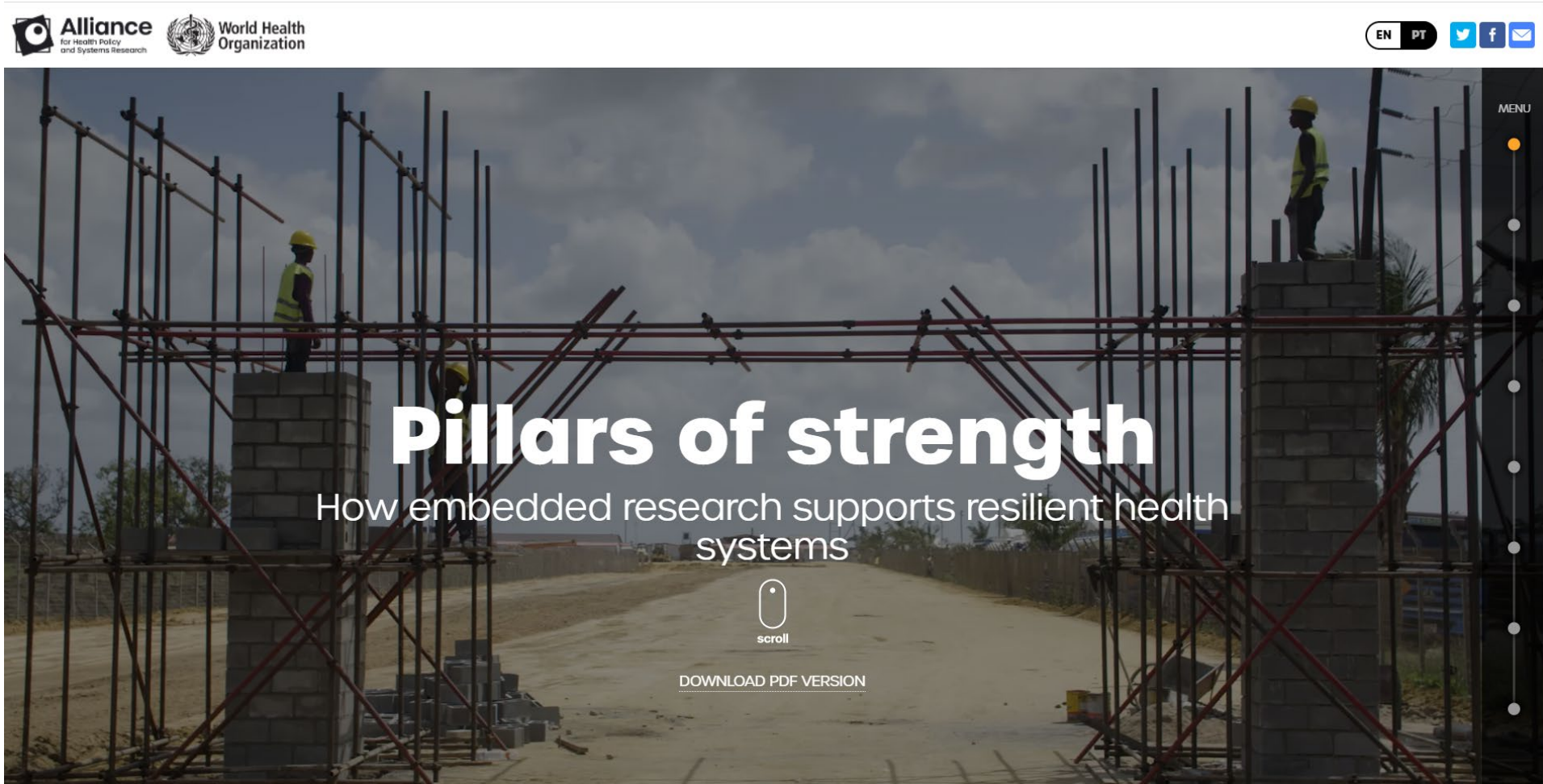
- ◆ Advances in technology increase the potential use of digital storytelling in C-VET/Updating and Upskilling.
 - ◆ For example: those training and working across health sectors and disciplines, including individuals with minimal technological expertise, can create digital stories to support learning. The creation and use of these stories can promote creative and reflective learning across health professions. It can expose health professionals to others' experiences, cultures, and viewpoints. It can also bring patients' experiences and authentic voices into healthcare education and thus, potentially improve clinician-patient interactions as well as promote empathy in healthcare.
1. In what contexts and for what purposes could digital storytelling be used in the updating of Healthcare Professionals?
 2. What impact could digital storytelling potentially have on their learning and behaviours?

Good Practice Example of Digital Story Telling for Education



<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/stories/covid-19-first-six-months>

Good Practice Example of Digital Story Telling explaining Research



<https://www.ahpsr.org/stories/pillars-of-strength-embedded-research-resilience-mozambique>

Done well, digital story telling engages employees/learners and enriches the experiential values of stories within organisations:



- ◆ Digital stories have a high degree of resonance when produced through a **Collaborative or Participatory** process, in which participants and facilitators strive together to employ innovative forms of creative communication and expression.
- ◆ Video is a popular form of collaborative storytelling, which is often used to drive social change by giving a voice to those with the most significant stake in the envisioned transformation.

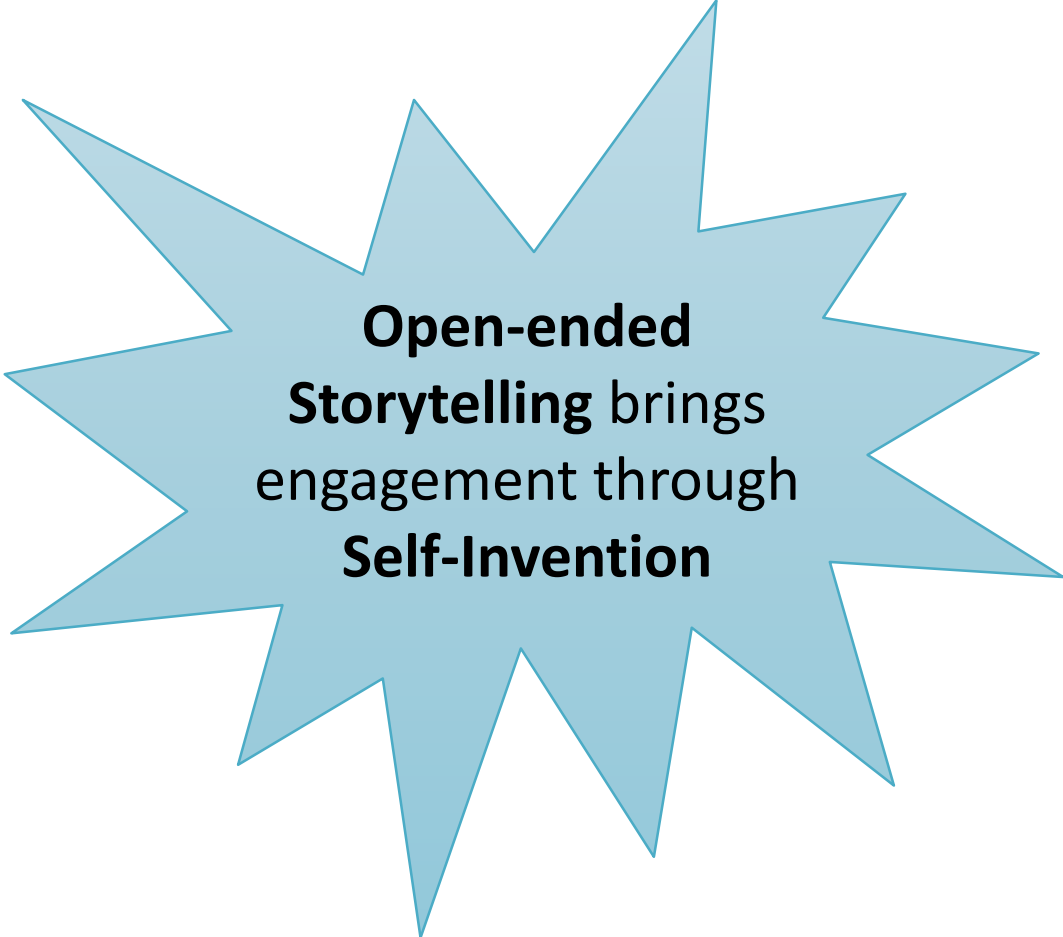
Done well, digital story telling engages employees/learners and enriches the experiential values of stories within organisations:



- ◆ Immersive storytelling takes collaborative stories to the next level. This type of digital storytelling invites the reader directly into the narrative space by blending the physical world with virtual or augmented reality. It allows them to participate in the unfolding story.
- ◆ If you want to capture and hold your audience's attention, immersive storytelling is a powerful approach.
- ◆ For example, when building customer relationships, the employee experience is enriched by exposure to immersive, customer-focused digital stories. Charts and graphs from a customer survey are helpful, but stories reveal the human desires, pain points, and aspirations behind the data.
- ◆ The empathy elicited by customer stories leads to a deeper understanding of customer needs, which translates into meaningful process improvement and product innovation.



Done well, digital story telling engages employees/learners and enriches the experiential values of stories within organisations:



**Open-ended
Storytelling** brings
engagement through
Self-Invention

- ◆ Employee/ Learner experience is an open-ended narrative made up of the stories we tell about ourselves and about our possible future(s).
- ◆ Behind these personal narratives is a drive for self-invention, which inspires skills development. Effective employee engagement means eliciting, developing and sharing these open-ended stories.
- ◆ Digital storytelling builds upon the open-endedness of employee experience in powerful ways beyond what is possible in traditional storytelling media. The participatory and immersive possibilities of digital technology enable employees to decide how their stories unfold in real-time.
- ◆ What better way to motivate value-creating behaviours and internalise the case for change?

Just in case, here are some performance techniques for a spoken story

Remembering and retelling the elements:

- ◆ map the plot as a memory technique
- ◆ use story skeletons to help you remember the key events
- ◆ think of the plot as a film or a series of connected images
- ◆ tell yourself the story in your own words
- ◆ create your own version of the story (adapt and improvise)
- ◆ retell it numerous times until it feels like a story



Software programmes for Digital Stories

- ◆ [Animaker Class](#) - A drag-and-drop tool that offers features such as group management, an in-app messenger, and task tracking.
- ◆ [Book Creator](#) - A mobile (iOS/Chrome) app for putting together stunning eBooks and digital stories with text, audio, images, and video.
- ◆ [BoomWriter](#) - A safe site to create digital stories. (Once a story is published online, an actual book can be ordered.)
- ◆ [Buncee](#) - A digital canvas that includes an educational portal that allows educators to track and monitor student progress, create assignments, share an "Ideas Lab," and more.
- ◆ [Cloud Stop Motion](#) - Create stop-motion video projects from any browser or device that can be used for digital storytelling or project-based learning.
- ◆ [Comic Life](#) - A fun and easy-to-use iOS app for telling a story by creating a customized digital comic.
- ◆ [Elementari](#) - Read, write, code, share, and remix interactive digital stories, portfolios, choose-your-own adventures, and more using professional illustrations and sounds.
- ◆ [HeadUP](#) - Allows students to create beautiful-looking stories in various subject areas in only a matter of seconds.



Useful References and Resources

- ◆ A Guide to Digital Storytelling (BBC):
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/audiovideo/sites/yourvideo/pdf/aguidetodigitalstorytelling-bbc.pdf>



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