

Media literacy program and material for adult educators

@ Apricot Stories



Project APRICOT:

Attentive parental education for wise being and co-
being in changing times

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Month/ Year: November 2021

Chapter 7: @ APRICOT Stories

(for distance teaching & learning)



“Tell me a fact and I’ll learn. Tell me the truth and I’ll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.”

Indian Proverb

Introduction into Stories

During online learning you may want to create your own group/ team story (-ies) on the things you found out and experienced. Therefore Program developers present here information, recommendations, tips and platforms which help to create good stories of your own.

The objective of this learning activity is to practice and reflect on the value of stories in engaging, motivating and inspiring learners.

AE will learn how to:

- recognise why stories are an important tool for teaching and learning
- recognise what makes a good story in a learning context
- the relationship between storytelling and critical thinking
- use a Design Thinking and Collaborative approach to developing stories
- apply design structures and performance techniques to storytelling that are engaging and empowering;
- identify software programmes for the creation of digital stories

How it works:

- The learning is based on CEA approach and ERR framework (evocation/realization of meaning/reflection);
- The learning employs presentations of rudimentary theory, experiential and collaborative learning via Design-thinking and utilisation of Miro software, examples, videos, individual and group activities, and practical case studies ;
- The duration of delivery of this theme is 1.5 hours (+ individual research and study time)

Part I Presentation of a Model Activity

Evocation

A. Presentation and Discussion: Why Stories?

Telling stories is one of the most powerful means that Adult Educators have to influence, teach, and inspire. What makes storytelling so effective for learning? For starters, storytelling forges connections among people, and between people and ideas. Stories convey the culture, history, and values that unite people. When it comes to our countries, our communities, and our families, we understand intuitively that the stories we hold in common are an important part of the ties that bind us.

Connecting learners

Good stories do more than create a sense of connection. They build familiarity and trust and allow the listener to enter the story where they are, making them more open to learning. Good stories can contain multiple meanings so they are surprisingly economical in conveying complex ideas in graspable ways. And stories are more engaging than a dry recitation of data points or a discussion of abstract ideas.

Group discussion for a maximum of 10 minutes. Followed by a plenary session to summarise

“Why Stories”:

- 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
- **Stories reshape knowledge into something meaningful!**
- A good story should:
 - captivate the audience,
 - help content resonate, and
 - make learning stick
 - Activate our imagination

Realisation

B. Short presentation on “Good Stories are...”

Task 1. Watch the video “My invention that made peace with lions” (TED talk- Richard Turere)

https://www.ted.com/talks/richard_turere_my_invention_that_made_peace_with_lions

Discuss what makes this story so powerful and summarise the key features that ‘draw you in’ and make the story memorable. (15 minutes)

C. Input/presentation on “Storytelling and Critical Thinking”.

D. Input/presentation: An Introduction to Design Thinking and its application in storytelling and the delivery of Evocation, Realisation and Reflection processes through experiential learning.

Task 2. (Group exercise for max group size of 10) Using a Miro platform (see more below in *How to use Miro*) frame structure combined with the Design Thinking process to facilitate online experiential and collaborative learning , *create a ‘prototype’ story.*

(30 minutes)

E. Input/presentation: on ‘Structuring a Story’:

- Story concept
- Generate a plot
- Create a storyboard
- Develop the content
- Author the presentation by realizing the story plot with multimedia element

F. Input/presentation: on “Performance techniques”

G. Input/presentation: on “Software Programmes for Digital Stories”

Summary, Review and Reflection

You can use a Padlet platform to gather all learning/ teaching material and outcomes. See more below in *Use of Padlet*.

Part II. Analysis of the Process

1. Recalling all steps of a model activity/lesson using Storytelling and Design Thinking.
2. Analysis of a model activity/lesson from learner’s perspective.
3. Analysis of a model activity/lesson from adult educator’s perspective.
4. Discussions: how did we learn? /what did we learn?

Part III. Planning for Implementation

1. Discussions about how & to whom this lesson/activity can be applied at local contexts.
2. Discussions about online collaborative learning.
3. Development of a draft plan for implementation.

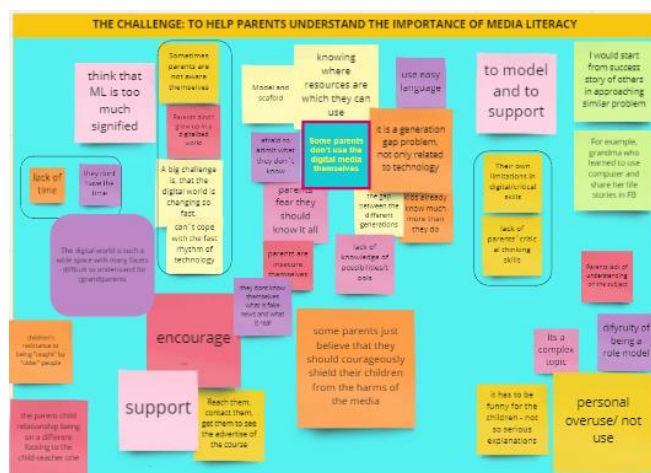
References

- British Council and the BBC:
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/storytelling-benefits-tips>
- “My invention that made peace with lions” (TED talk- Richard Turere)
https://www.ted.com/talks/richard_turere_my_invention_that_made_peace_with_lions
- [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.

How to use Miro

Tips for Adult Educators: Using an online whiteboard for remote classes and training.

Miro is an online collaborative whiteboard that can be used by Adult Educators, or anyone who wants an open canvas to organise their thoughts and ideas.



Miro:

- allows a group of people to brainstorm and exchange ideas, using a visual interface.
- In one view, it provides a full picture of a problem and possible solutions.
- It includes methodologies like mind maps, story maps, timelines, fishbone diagrams etc.

Using Miro for remote and collaborative education

To start using Miro doesn't require a lot of preparation; here are the initial steps.

1. Sign up using an educational email account

Miro has excellent benefits for educational purposes. [Get a lifetime free educator's account](#) to get access to all of the most useful and popular features for your class.

2. Keep separate boards for different classes

Once you have an Educator plan, you can have more than three active boards at the same time. You can also maintain different "projects," which are like folders for your boards.

3. Encourage parents to sign up

Learners who have an educational email account can get two years of Miro for free. However, you can collaborate with anyone on your board, even if they don't have an educational account. Parents can just use their normal email address.

4. Start playing with Miro right away

It's easier to understand all the features once you start using it. So, dive in and/or watch this popular [Getting Started With Miro webinar](#) to get a grasp on the basics.

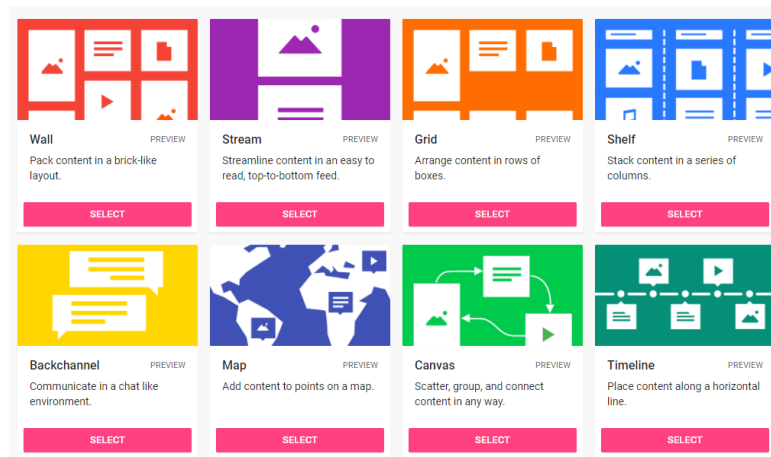
5. Integrate some apps

There are a lot of handy add-ons that can make your Miro experience richer. Go through the [app directory](#) and choose ones that make sense for your needs. Some to consider: Voting, chat, Google Images, Icon Finder.

How to use Padlet

What is a Padlet?

Padlet is an online notice board tool that can help digitise the classroom and support online collaborative learning.



A digital notice board, it is able to feature images, links, videos, and documents, all collated on a "wall" that can be made public or private. This means that not only can teachers post on the wall but so too can children and parents.

The interactive space is easy to use and easily accessible from nearly any web browser-capable device including smartphones and tablets. It's a great resource for supporting collaborative online learning.

Padlet can be used by parents, children and teachers. With Padlet you can create an online post-it board that you can share with anyone you want just by giving them the unique Padlet link or using a QR code. Padlet allows you to insert ideas anonymously or with your name.

Whoever has the Padlet board opened on his/her smartphone or computer, can see what's on it and what everyone is writing. Contributors just have to take a device and start adding little sticky notes online. They can see all the ideas gathered on the teacher board immediately.

How to use a Padlet?

Using a Padlet in the classroom is easy. You can install the Padlet app [for Apple](#) or [for Android](#) on your phone or just go to the Padlet [website](#) and create an account.

Let your students insert the link in the browser or in the Padlet app. They can 'continue as guests' so they just have to scan the qr code with the Padlet app or type in the URL, without creating an account. Shortly after, they will be directed to your first Padlet board.

To get posting, double click anywhere on the board. Then you can drag files, you can paste files, or even use the Save As bookmark with Padlet mini. Or simply click the plus icon in the lower right corner and add that way. This can be images, videos, audio files, links, or documents.

Using Padlet for communication with students

Use the Padlet stream layout and communicate assignments and important lesson

material to your students by adding posts to the communication stream. You can even add some fun [BookWidgets](#) exercises in the stream

Using Padlet for parent communication

Use the same stream layout to communicate with parents. You can enable email notifications so you receive an email whenever parents post on the Padlet wall. Use the stream for interesting updates on topics.

Posting examples on Internet Security, 'Fake News', Moral dilemmas etc

To speak about current events, encourage parents to share articles or stories on the Padlet board. A fun way to keep up to date and current on the issues.

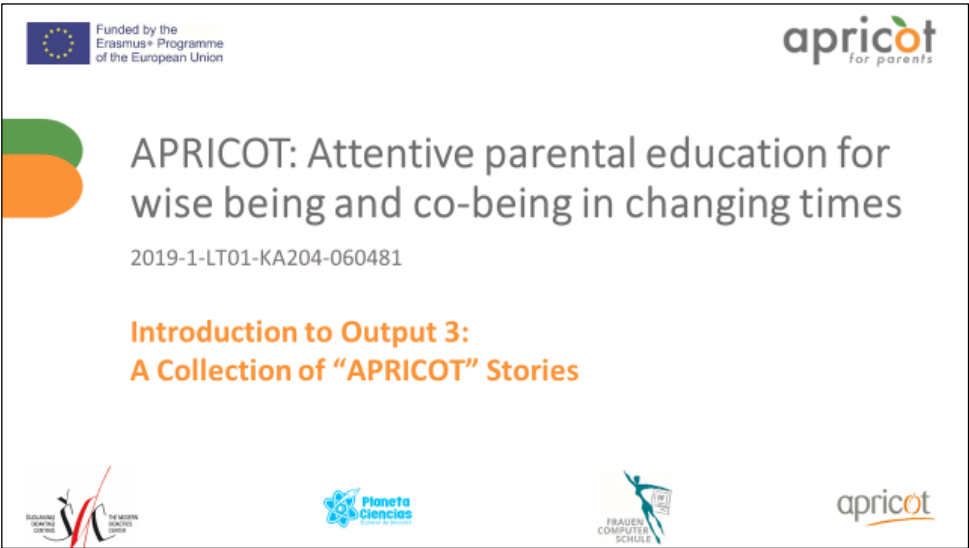
Use [Padlet mini](#) to bookmark interesting articles on the internet.

Gather teacher feedback

Once in a while, you should ask your parents for feedback. Create a Padlet wall just for that and make sure to let them comment anonymously.

THE SLIDES

THE SLIDES



Slide 1 content: The slide features the European Union flag logo with the text 'Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union' and the 'apricot for parents' logo. The main title is 'APRICOT: Attentive parental education for wise being and co-being in changing times' with the project ID '2019-1-LT01-KA204-060481'. Below this is the subtitle 'Introduction to Output 3: A Collection of "APRICOT" Stories'. At the bottom, there are logos for 'ERASMUS+ EUROPEAN COMMISSION', 'THE MEDITERRANEAN CENTRE', 'Planeta Ciencias', 'FRAUEN COMPUTER SCHULE', and 'apricot'.

SLIDE 1



Our intentions



- Digital testimonies
- Real situations: the personal experiences of teachers, parents and grandparent
- Bring the real world into the theory
- To be engaging and empowering



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SLIDE 2



Why Stories?



- 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
- **Stories reshape knowledge into something meaningful!**
- A good story should:
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SLIDE 3



Good Stories are:



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




- **ACTIVATE OUR IMAGINATION**



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SLIDE 4



Richard Turek | TED2015

My invention that made peace with lions

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SLIDE 5

6 Storytelling and Critical Thinking

- Storytelling can teach by imparting truths.
- It can invite people to think for themselves and create their own truths.
- When they come up with interpretations and support them with reasons – that's critical thinking!
- They can:
 - Pose questions
 - Contain moral dilemmas that invite exploration
 - Engage people in complex issues

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SLIDE 6

Design Thinking and Storytelling



ERR
EVOCATION
Realisation of Meaning/Comprehension
Reflection -

A Collaborative Learning approach, it creates a structured framework for:

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


Design Thinking exercises our creativity!

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SLIDE 7



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

Stories elevate a project deliverable into something everyone can relate to.

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SLIDE 8



Structure

- Story concept
- Generate a plot
- Create a storyboard
- Develop the content
- Author the presentation by realizing the story plot with multimedia elements

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SLIDE 9



10

Performance techniques

Remembering and retelling the plot:

- 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

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SLIDE 10



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.)
- [Bunce](#) - 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.
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SLIDE 11

Additional Information re Online session

WHY STORIES (Slide 3)

- **Good Stories are Engaging**

Scenarios and animations are two favourite ways of using storytelling in adult learning.

- **Good Stories are Relatable**

Tailor your story to your audience members by creating characters that are relatable. When a learner can relate to a character, they will feel better connected and develop an understanding of the experience of your character.

- **Good Stories are Conversational**

Write dialogues that are conversational in tone, using language that your learners would actually use with each other and their children. Consider using 'slang' to help make the conversation more authentic. Avoid acronyms. Read your dialogues out loud to confirm they sound like natural conversation.

- **Good Stories are Personal**

Do not be afraid to share personal stories that include failures and lessons learned. Personal stories that come from the heart tend to resonate with learners and give them a safe space to learn what to do (or not to do). After all, it is safer—and much more fun—to learn from the mistakes of others than it is to fail by yourself.

- **Good Stories are Memorable**

Start by coming up with a strong hook and ending, then focus on storyboarding the various elements that will help make your story memorable. Add conflict to make your

characters human. Think about how you will visually depict your story. Determine whether you will tell your story all at once or weave it throughout the learning deliverable.

- **Good Stories are Simple**

Read and reread the story, editing yourself along the way. Ask others to review your story and help tweak it to make it simple yet engaging, relatable, conversational, personal, and memorable.

- **Good Stories are Fun**

If you are using animations, for example, consider focusing your story around a theme, such as superheroes. Have fun creating learning activities that tie back to your theme. For example, use villains to ‘misbehave’. When you have fun telling your story, learners will enjoy learning much more.

DESIGN THINKING and STORYTELLING (Slide 7)

1. **Empathize:** Empathy is the centrepiece of human-centred design thinking. In order to create an innovative solution to a problem, it is essential to observe people—what they do, how they live, and their stories. Observing people builds an understanding of how they think and feel, what they value and how they see the world. Empathy almost always includes some sort of engagement with people. Engagement may be a conversation or a step-by-step explanation on how things are done.

2. **Define:** Defining a question or challenge based on empathy often changes the original problem you thought you understood how to solve. Defining a problem or challenge based on the needs of users provides focus, frames the issue, inspires and empowers, informs criteria for evaluating competing ideas and keeps the question in the realm of “actionable.”

3. **Ideate:** Celebrate the power of possibility! Ideate is the space to imagine without judgment a variety of “wild, darling and practical” ideas. Ideation discourages linear thinking and helps people step beyond obvious solutions.

4. **Prototype:** Once you have ideas, it is time to experiment with prototypes. A prototype is a possible solution that allows time for feedback. Prototypes are simple — storyboards, hand-made models, posters, or role-playing. It is important to create something very quickly in order to see if the original question has been answered. Perhaps the question itself was wrong and it is time to go back to the drawing board. Better to fail quickly and cheaply before moving on to formal assessments.

5. **Test:** Testing is the culmination of the empathize-define-ideate-prototype spaces of design thinking. Problems have been framed and reframed. Now it is time to engage in real-life, real-time testing in which the users are involved. It is only when we allow

ourselves, our teams, our students to experience spaces of design thinking that we can implement authentic assessments.

Design thinking is active and inclusive. And kids are embracing design thinking with gusto. Schools around the world are embracing design thinking as a new way of learning and a way to increase student engagement.

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE STORY (Slides 9, 10)

- **Focus on one main concept at a time**

Keep it simple! When you begin to compose a storyline it is important to focus on just one main concept at a time. You don't need to convey all of the information you would in class or in a text, but you need to isolate the key points you want the students to remember. What is the most important point for your students to walk away with? Let's say you are trying to help students understand the concept of positive correlations. Your tale must focus only on positive correlations and not anything else but positive correlations. Think through what the concept actually needs to convey as a message. Write out the message and keep it simple.

- **Plan with a script**

It is recommended that you script, if not word for word, then at the very least with a detailed and strong outline.

Some key things to remember before you dive in are:

Accuracy – check your facts. Even if you know your content intimately, double check dates, locations and facts in general. Is your data up-to-date? And if you do use data be mindful that it should not be too time sensitive if you want your video to have a lifespan.

Length – Research and our own anecdotal experiences show that attention spans are short. We try to keep our videos/animations under 7 minutes and even better under 4. You don't need to pack all the information into your video. It's one story. Your other content can be presented in the form of readings, other kinds of videos, text & graphics, and student focused activities.

Audience – Is your story for undergraduates? Graduates? Professional students? Do they have context for the story and is jargon familiar to them? Are they global? If you're mentioning a geographic location in the United States, is that a town or city known by students in Abu Dhabi? Be sure you are speaking globally – both geographically and culturally.

- **Analyse the content and set goals**

To begin, look at your own content as it currently exists. Your lectures in person may be an hour and a half long, and they probably contain several different modalities of

teaching. Many people begin with the assumption that they will record all of their lectures as they currently exist, but video or animation cannot replace lectures. It has real limits that need to be accounted for:

- It is linear
- It moves at its own pace, not the students' pace
- It is not interactive
- The video frame cannot hold dense graphs, diagrams, or text well.

Think about the full structure of your lesson, and the full toolset of technologies you have available. We find that the biggest determinant of whether a video or animation is successful or not happens before you ever record or script, when you select what content you will record in the first place.

Telling good stories means having good stories, and most of us have good stories within our lectures, even if the lecture as a whole cannot fit that structure. Look for the following: Anecdotes, historical narratives, case studies, allegories, thought experiments— these are all great places to start. Don't underestimate the importance of personally relating to a story. If there is something in your work or research that moves you, it's all the more likely that it will move your students.

- **Open with a hook**

It is important to open your story with a hook that catches the attention of your audience. A hook is an interesting incident, question, or problem that encourages the student to keep listening. For example, if you are teaching the concept of positive correlations, start your story with an incident, mystery, or problem that the story will eventually solve.

- **Make your main characters likeable and relatable**

Your main character/s need to be relatable to your students to the point that your students care about the main character/s. In some cases, if you are scripting a fable or allegory, the characters do not have to be real people or even human. They can be animals, aliens, or inanimate objects. But they must feel real in the sense that they are not perfect but have strengths and weaknesses like everyone else.

- **Develop a theme, setting, & well-defined character/s**

What is the theme of your story? Where does it take place? And who is the main person or character in the story and who are the supporting characters?

- **Start with the end and work backwards**

Know where the end is from the start so that you resist going down rabbit holes that confuse or distract the listener from understanding the central theme or message. Create a timeline by working backwards from the end to start. Then think about what comes

right before the end and so on. Keep working backwards until you arrive at the beginning of your story.

- **Transition to the middle**

From your hook, transition to address the question or problem stated in the hook. Develop the central theme, characters, and setting that leads the listener/viewer down the path towards a resolution.

- **Bring the message home with an ah-ha moment**

Make your ending the ah-ha moment that brings home the central theme of your story. The ending should allude to the truth, moral of the story, resolution, or big meaning.

- **Be comfortable with creating drafts and storyboards**

Start with a draft of your story to get all the points down that you need to cover. Then put the story down, walk away, and pick it up again in a day or two. When you pick up the story again - read it for clarity and coherence. Rework the story to develop the theme, details, and flow. Make sure there is a beginning, middle, and end with a clear arc to the story.

- **Consider the use of visuals and movement**

Sometimes you can carry your story without any visuals at all and rely completely on the audience to use their imagination. In other cases, visuals are essential to understanding and driving home the message. Visuals can take the form of photographs, drawings, or animations. Visuals, especially animated ones, can help bring the story to life. You can use your body to enact the story or develop drawings. This will help keep their attention focused on the message you are communicating.

If you're using images you don't need to explain each image and similarly images can replace words. In fact, some of the most effective images are shot outside of the studio or classroom. We encourage you to think about getting out into the field – into the city to show your students samples of your story, or to interview other experts.

You don't have to be an artist to create visuals to accompany your story, but if you don't feel comfortable doing the visuals, see if you can find a motion graphic artist or graphic artist to help you storyboard and build out your story. Students in the visual arts can be very helpful in this area and they are eager to build out their portfolio with real work. Put your story into a 3-column script (see example) and develop the visuals or work with your visual artist. The storyboard process will help refine the story further.

If you do fully script, remember that writing for the screen is more succinct and conversational.

IF YOU ARE DOING THE STORYTELLING:**Invite interaction & align with your learning objectives**

Here are some strategies:

- Follow up with questions and discussion prompts after your story.
 - Ask learners to retell the story in a one minute paper.
 - Ask learners to solve new problems (demonstrate learning and transference).
 - Have your learners create their own stories about the concepts they are learning.
 - Employ good principles of media design
 - Don't add too much visual detail that confuses the learner.
 - Keep a pace with audio and visuals that allows the learner to process the message.
 - Don't use music and audio narration at the same time.
 - Don't use text and narration at the same time.
 - Use techniques such as zooms and pans appropriately.
 - Edit, edit, edit.
- **Feedback and revisions**

Once you've completed a draft of your script and you're pleased with it, show it to a colleague – someone who is familiar with the content or better yet, someone who is a novice and might be more apt to read it as one of your students would. Find out if there are any areas of confusion, and if the story is conveying what you intend. Be mindful of the voice in which you are writing, as well– again the screen requires a more conversational tone than the page. Don't assume all terminology is clear to your audience.