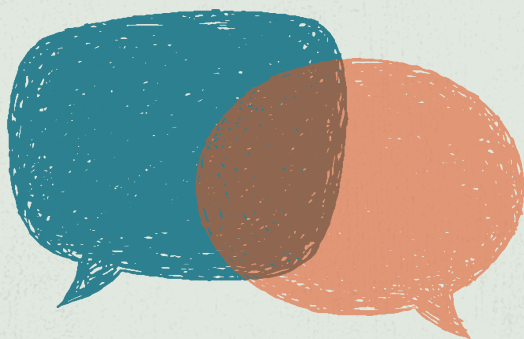


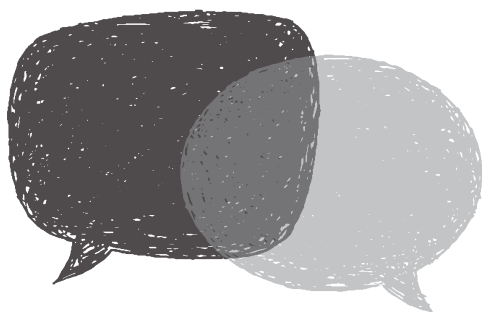
Instructional **STORY** **DESIGN**



Develop Stories That Train

Rance Greene

Instructional **STORY** **DESIGN**



Develop Stories That Train

atd
PRESS

Rance Greene

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Foreword

Sandi, a graduate student in Bloomsburg University's well-known Instructional Technology program, burst into her professor's office after her first class. "Dr. Kapp, I am very excited about using technology for learning. I think the latest and greatest technology makes learning stick. What a great time to be in the field."

"Sandi," Dr. Kapp responded, "while our program has the word 'technology' in its title, it's really the underlying instructional design that makes the difference between effective and ineffective instruction, not the technology. It's that difference that makes our students so sought after in the field of L&D."

But Sandi plowed right along, her eagerness reminding him of his own kids. "Virtual reality is just so cool; I want to create an environment where a learner wanders around a warehouse looking for safety violations or a volcano where kids explore the internal workings of the Earth. And augmented reality . . . think of the possibilities."

"Hold on a moment, Sandi, hold on. Why don't you take a seat? I think you and I need to explore what really is the heart of effective instruction. It's not technology." Dr. Kapp paused, trying to slow Sandi down. He appreciated her enthusiasm but wanted to make sure it was focused on the right area. This type of wild enthusiasm is what made his job rewarding and frustrating at the same time.

Sandi caught her breath and sat down in one of the chairs reserved for visiting students. They were not overly comfortable. She placed her backpack on the floor.

Dr. Kapp waited until she got settled. “Sandi, there are lots of methods for delivering instruction but, underneath it all, you need to have effective instructional design. You shouldn’t worry about the technology until after you’ve created the right design for the learning. In fact, one good design method is to use stories.”

Sandi shook her head. “Dr. Kapp, no offense, but I’ve been in undergraduate classes where the instructor tells these long, drawn-out war stories that don’t make any sense. I keep wondering, ‘What’s the point?’ I don’t think stories are a good way to teach.”

“Unfortunately, that’s a common occurrence both in academia and in many corporate training sessions, but that’s not the fault of the technique; it’s the fault of the design of that particular story. The instructor in those cases hasn’t used a systematic method to design the proper story. Instead, they winged it.”

“Yeah, those stories didn’t sound well planned at all. In fact, they were more like jumbled ramblings,” Sandi replied, now nodding her head.

“Stories have been used for centuries as tools for passing on knowledge. Think of the parables used in ancient times to teach morals or how parents pass lessons to their kids through stories or organizations pass on their culture through stories. The tradition of sharing knowledge through narrative is as old as humans themselves. Stories and training go hand in hand,” Dr. Kapp said, scanning his bookshelf for a certain book.

“Yes, but how do I create a story that has a point, that leads to learning? No offense again, but I don’t want to be like those boring trainers or faculty members who tell stories for no apparent reason. I’m determined to do it right.”

“While we are all capable of telling stories, where we need help is crafting a story to meet specific instructional goals. This is where the work of my friend and colleague Rance Greene comes into play.” Dr. Kapp located the book he was seeking and handed it to Sandi. It was called *Instructional Story Design* by Rance Greene.

“Rance Greene? Does he know storytelling?” Sandi raised an eyebrow as she began thumbing through the book. After a few moments, she was impressed by what she saw.

Dr. Kapp interrupted her thoughts. “He has the perfect background to teach you, and others, about instructional story design. He seamlessly meshes training and storytelling because he has been an actor, choreographer, visual artist, playwright, teacher, and speaker. Plus, because he currently works in learning and development, he knows a great deal about the convergence of learning and storytelling. He’s been doing it for years.”

Sandi closed the book and looked up at Dr. Kapp. He continued, “Rance has created what is called the Story Design model, which provides a step-by-step process for creating effective instructional stories. It’s a wonderful and effective methodology that can help designers of instruction like you create effective, impactful learning through stories.”

“Wow, this looks like a great book and that Mr. Greene sounds awesome!” Sandi replied. “He does have a great balance of training knowledge and storytelling chops. Was he really an actor? Was he on *Game of Thrones*?”

“Ah, yes, Mr. Greene was an actor but no, he wasn’t on *Game of Thrones*. But more importantly for you, he is a gifted teacher. He’s conducted workshops on instructional story design, developed presentations on the topic, incorporated stories into his design of instruction, and was even named by *Training* magazine as an emerging training leader. He definitely has storytelling *and* instructional design chops, as you say. And he’s boiled all that knowledge down into this great book.”

Enthusiastically, Sandi asks, “Hey, Dr. Kapp, can I borrow this book? I promise to give it back when I’m done.”

“Keep it. Just pay it forward.”

Sandi doesn’t know it yet, but her approach to instructional design is about to become more memorable, actionable, and emotional.

Instructional Story Design can do the same for you. Take the advice, guidance, and information contained in this book and use the Instructional Story Design Plan to create meaningful instruction that resonates with

learners and helps change behavior. In short, this book will help you create brilliant instructional stories.

—Karl M. Kapp
Professor of Instructional Technology
Bloomsburg University

INTRODUCTION

Story Design's Story

It was a cold, wet February day. I had been asked to present examples of story-designed learning solutions at a lunch & learn for ATD Dallas, and I wasn't sure how many people would actually show up. But after a few stressful minutes, fellow talent development professionals began to arrive. The room filled to capacity. Their genuine interest in seeing how stories can work for training programs was palpable, filling the room. As I demonstrated each story, the crowd seemed to recognize the teaching opportunities in store for them. As the session concluded, one of them hit me with the question that all of them were thinking: "How do you do that? How do you create stories for talent development?" I didn't have a complete answer for the question, but it stayed with me.

How *do* I write stories that teach? Coming to instructional design from theater made writing stories second nature. I loved playwriting and I loved equipping people with new skills. It was a good match. Designing instruction with stories center stage was intuitive. I hadn't had to think much about my process—until then.

That's where the journey of Story Design began. I'd already read books and articles, attended webinars, and pored over research papers that lauded the power of stories to influence and change behaviors. The psychology, the brain science, the learning theories all aligned: Stories are great for learning! The problem was that almost none of these resources offered practical advice on how to write or produce a story that trains.

The interest in storytelling for instruction that I witnessed that day in February, many years ago, inspired a mission to equip fellow talent developers with a story-building model they could easily translate into practice. It needed to be a methodology in alignment with instructional design. It needed to be simple and flexible to meet any training need. Most of all, instructional designers needed to feel empowered to take a creative leap from a foundation of sound analysis.

With these guideposts in mind, I took a critical look at my own story-making process. Patterns emerged and formed the Story Design model I present in this book. I began sharing the model with others in the field—among my peers, through online webinars, and at learning conferences. I wanted to put the model to the test. Particularly, I wanted to know if others could take the model and use it for their own training, so I developed a live online workshop. The first of such workshops attracted 22 talent development and HR professionals. The outcome was remarkable! Not only were the stories that they created during the workshop sound material for instruction, but most participants went on to apply Story Design to their own training programs. One of these first participants later contacted me with this testimonial: “After taking the Story Design Workshop, it’s become second nature to use stories in nearly everything we design.” I’ve now delivered this workshop for several years, and the results continue to prove that Story Design can be mastered . . . and it works!

The success of the workshops convinced me that Story Design is worth sharing. In these pages, you’ll encounter the methodology that has worked for many others. You’ll learn from stories. You’ll watch stories unfold. You’ll craft stories of your own. Ultimately, I hope you’ll gain a new way of connecting with your learners. Because if you connect with your learners, you can train them to do anything.

Develop Your Storytelling Capability

The goal of this book is to thoroughly equip you to design stories for any training initiative on any timeline. You’ll develop an ability to take full advan-

tage of story's power and build training that connects with your audience intellectually and emotionally. Best of all, your training will prepare and motivate your audience for action.

The book is a blend of stories, theory, and practice. Each chapter begins with a narrative that follows Dayna, a young instructional designer who is struggling to meet a challenge posed to her by a stakeholder: Tell a story for training. The second section of each chapter is devoted to learning from the story, with occasional exercises. I encourage you to take these pauses in the reading to reflect on the story and complete the activities, which will prepare you for the third section of each chapter: practice! You'll be introduced to a client for whom you will design a story, applying the principles from that chapter. By the end, you will have a fully written story ready to be produced and delivered.

Chapter 1 outlines the Story Design model and why it's effective. It illustrates how Story Design seamlessly blends with the instructional design process through discovery, design, and delivery, the three phases of Story Design and the three main parts of this book.

In Part 1, discover the story through analysis of who your audience is and what you want them to do. Chapters 2 through 4 will help you successfully engage with stakeholders and subject matter experts to unearth the best story for instruction. You'll spend some time analyzing actual stakeholder conversations. You'll work with a subject matter expert to structure an action list. And you'll learn how to use some tools and templates to master similar conversations in your own work. In my workshops, I've observed that this is the most challenging phase for most participants to complete. But it is vital to master discovery before moving on to design. The foundation you lay here will determine the success of the story you build.

Next, you'll use the information you've gathered in the discovery phase to advance to part 2, where you will develop relatable characters (chapter 5) and strong conflict (chapter 6). These two chapters culminate in a final written story in chapter 7 (Build the Story). Part 2 contains practical guideposts, simple tools, and fun exercises that, with practice, will develop your own

storytelling capability. Use these resources as a reference throughout your design career when you feel stuck or need a refresher.

After you've discovered and designed the story, the next logical question is, "How do I deliver this story?" Part 3 answers this question. Chapter 8 walks you through a simple process of storyboarding and some simple ways to present the story using tools that are readily available to you. Chapter 9 offers more complex ways to produce the story with many examples. More story demonstrations, plus editable versions of the tools in the book, can be accessed at needastory.com/book-resources. Once the story is fully produced, it's important to maximize its use for training. Chapter 10 shows you how to do that with a simple, effective method that encourages your learners to self-discover. This method will also open your mind to new ways of engaging your audience that would never have been possible without the story.

The last part of the book is devoted to helping you overcome common barriers to implementing Story Design. Chapter 11 begins part 4 with some inspirational case studies from companies like Southwest Airlines, Pizza Hut, and PepsiCo, who have used stories for training. You'll learn best practices and identify the Story Design principles in each case study. What may be the most inspiring part of this chapter is how different each case study is. You'll see examples of virtual training, in-person training, e-learning, and blended learning for training initiatives from new hire onboarding to leadership development. If you face resistance to stories for training, you must read chapter 12, which provides strategies and research for winning stakeholders over. As we look toward the future of our industry and the digital disruption of business, it's important to remember that stories are still, and will always be, powerful and relevant. Chapter 13 provides best practices for integrating stories into new and current training techniques and technologies. No matter how advanced the technology is, story can make the training experience even more powerful.

Every story for training needs a good designer. That's you. This book is just the beginning. I can't wait to hear how you use it.

CHAPTER ONE

Storytelling at Warp Speed

Easy Assignment

Dayna gets a call from Fayette to meet her in her office. As Dayna enters, Fayette is looking at her phone.

"Hi Fayette." Dayna sits across the desk from her.

"Look at this, Dayna." Fayette holds up her phone to show Dayna a picture of a young woman, a little younger than Dayna, with a cap and robe. Next to her is Fayette. "My baby girl."

"That's right! Her college graduation was this weekend!" Dayna smiles.

"Time goes so fast." She puts her phone down. "How's your day going?"

"Busy." Dayna brushes a piece of hair from her face and straightens her glasses.

"I'll let you get back to work. But I wanted to let you know that I just heard from Susan Chambers, a new director over in compliance. She wants training on privacy, regulations, that sort of thing. I'd like for you to take this one."

Dayna lets out a breath. "I'm already swamped."

Fayette rests her chin on her hands. "When you came on board six months ago, I knew, 'This girl is sharp!'" Dayna smiles and looks down. Fayette continues, "You're doing a great job, Dayna, and I think you can handle this one." Fayette hands Dayna a stack of papers. "Here are the policies Susan wants training on. I know you're juggling a lot of projects right now, but compliance has always made it clear that they just need to check their boxes. It'll be a fairly easy assignment."

Dayna looks at the stack of policies. "Can't we recycle last year's course?"

"Apparently Susan wants a refresh. Don't worry, it's pretty straightforward." Fayette smiles and shrugs. "It's compliance."

Dayna doesn't know it yet, but her entire world of instructional design knowledge is about to be turned upside down. Dayna spent three years out of college teaching in a middle school. She enjoyed lesson planning but felt like she wasn't cut out for the daily disciplining of her students. Her college friend, James, who is supporting his acting career as a corporate trainer, got her interested in talent development. She took a certification course in instructional design and found her calling. Dayna felt lucky to land a corporate instructional design job during the summer, just before the new school year started. She still has much to learn in applying her instructional design education to the fast-paced world of business.

And to make things even more interesting, she's going to come face-to-face with storytelling in training, something she feels very inadequate to do. Her response to the challenge will make all the difference for those required to take the course she designs. It could be a predictable "easy" course, or it could be an action-driven learning experience that resonates emotionally.

What's Your Assignment?

You may not design training for compliance. You may design safety training or leadership development programs or new hire onboarding. No matter what the content is, you care about making people better at what they do. That's why you are in this industry. But often, you are asked to churn out courses at lightning speed to keep up with the pace of business. And you find yourself checking boxes.

Who has time to write a story that makes people stop and think and immerse themselves in learning something new? The creative process can be a long and thoughtful one for those who are sculpting a marble statue or writing a novel. That's not you, though. You're developing talent. But believe it or not, you already have everything you need to start writing the best story for your audience.

We Like Stories

Your training initiatives take many forms—instructor-led, microlearning, gamification, branching scenarios, virtual reality—and underneath all of it is

a solid foundation of instructional design. So why do you need stories? There are three great answers to that question.

Stories Are Memorable

When you hear the words, “So, the other day I saw this girl . . .” or “You won’t believe what just happened to me!” or “Once upon a time . . .”, your mind is programed to listen for a story. It knows the patterns of conflict and resolution. It pictures the characters. It puts you right in the middle of the action, as if it were your own story. You feel what the people in the story feel when they encounter something that makes them frustrated or content. And all of this happens beginning with the very first words of a story. Then, after you’ve heard the story, you are able to repeat it, recalling details with accuracy. Generations of oral history, teaching, and skill building can be attributed to the tradition of repeating stories.

But there’s a tendency to avoid the language of stories when it comes to training. Somewhere along the way, we strayed from the tried and true. We abandoned storytelling as an instructional design skill. One of the repercussions of moving away from stories is that people remember less of what they are trained to do. With the memorable framework of stories and the brain’s recognition of story patterns, instructional designers can significantly increase immediate engagement and lasting retention.

In her book, *Design for How People Learn*, Julie Dirksen puts it succinctly: “We like stories. We learn a lot from them. A well-told story can stick with us for years, even if we’ve only heard it once.”

Stories Are Actionable



“A story is powerful because it provides the context missing from abstract prose . . . putting knowledge into a framework that is more lifelike, more true to our day-to-day existence. More like a flight simulator. Being the audience for a story isn’t so passive, after all. Inside, we’re getting ready to act.”

—Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Made to Stick*

Flight simulation is among one of the most powerful training tools in existence. Simulator training qualifies a pilot to fly a new airplane for the first time on a revenue flight. Undoubtedly, it is the most affordable and effective way to train pilots without having to be in the air. Why does this work? They aren't in a real airplane that's really hurtling towards the earth in an ice storm over the ocean. So, how does sitting in a machine that simulates this situation prepare them for the real deal? The pilot is living out the situation as if it were real. All of the controls that would be in the plane are there, responding to the pilot's actions. If those actions are performed accurately in the correct order, he saves the plane. If they aren't, he crashes.

Stories have a similar effect. Studies of the brain and the body have made the connection between storytelling and the chemical phenomena happening inside of us. One of the most fascinating responses is that of mirror neurons, in which the brain activity of the story-listener begins to align with the story. These neurons fire not only when you perform an action, but when you observe someone else perform it. Fictional things in the story become real in your body. As the plot unfolds, you put yourself in the shoes of the characters, living out their experiences in your mind as if they were your own. Watching the story prepares you to act. Think of the goal of training: to take action on new skills, new knowledge, and new attitudes. Stories are the flight simulator to make this happen.

Stories Are Emotional

The reason stories are memorable and actionable is because they touch our emotions. This is also the at the root of much of the resistance against stories for training. Business stakeholders who shirk at emotional language would rather appeal to the learner's intellect.

Jonathan Haidt wrote a book called *The Happiness Hypothesis*, in which the brain is compared to a rider on an elephant. The rider is rational and the elephant is emotional. Both of them influence behavior. So, when it comes to training, the rider may say, "I really should read this screen of text so I can learn something in this course." But the elephant is saying,

“Are you kidding me? Order pizza!” If you only speak to the intellect and ignore the emotions of a person in training, you are missing an enormous opportunity to fully engage them. But when you speak to the rider and the elephant, you help both of them to stay on course, and they learn together.

Once, I was asked to design a live training experience for a group of employees who were struggling with effective teamwork. The problems this team had included an array of issues like favoritism, gossip, bickering, and withholding information, stemming from a root of misunderstanding. Individuals were becoming entrenched in their cliques. It resulted in low productivity and poor decision making. The department became a hotbed of compliance issues. Appealing to this group’s intellect wasn’t going to change anything. Instead, I designed a story that formed the centerpiece of the hour-long session. It was developed simply, in PowerPoint with stick figure characters. This story of four coffeeshop employees followed the repercussions of a careless remark and a misunderstanding that resulted in a fallout between the characters. It ended unresolved. But afterward, attendees were asked a series of open-ended questions to identify some solutions for the characters. Then they participated in activities that were designed to flesh out these solutions. Each activity referred back to the story. Because the training was closely tied to the story’s emotional attributes, the learning objectives became memorable and actionable.

We know that the training was memorable and actionable because behaviors on the team changed drastically and productivity increased. We found out later that the team had adopted an easy way to remind one another when behaviors started to creep back to the way things had been before. They simply said, “Remember the coffeeshop!” They did not say, “Remember point number five on the list of healthy teamwork behaviors.” They didn’t need to do that because remembering the story was enough to recall everything they had learned. Why? The story touched them emotionally and made them think. It made their elephant *and* rider happy.

Our Common Language

Your brain is constantly making sense of the world around you, both intellectually and emotionally. It is processing life and forming stories. Think back on your week. How many times did you encounter a story? You read a news article, watched a video, saw a commercial. A co-worker told you about his harrowing commute and the lady who cut him off. Your kids told you about their day. The number of times you encounter stories throughout the week are innumerable.

Now think about the times you've created a story this week. Yes, created one. Perhaps you thought ahead to a difficult conversation you were going to have with someone and rehearsed it in your mind. You just created dialogue. What about the homeless person you saw on the street? You wondered how they got there in life. In a nanosecond, your brain created a mini backstory for that person. You just created a character. Someone you care about was supposed to meet you and they didn't arrive on time. You thought of every possible scenario that could be delaying them, including some far-fetched awful ones. You just created conflict. We are wired to the core for stories! It's our common language.

Stories in Talent Development

Here's what stories in talent development may look like for your learners. Your audience comes into the classroom, joins the virtual session, or opens the e-learning module. They are immediately engaged by a story involving characters they completely relate to. Your audience may laugh at something a character says or furrow their brow as a character takes action that seems inappropriate or out of place. But the entire time they are listening to the story, they are right there with the characters, living out their story vicariously, wading through conflict and thinking of how to solve their problems. Then the story ends. There are conflicts left unresolved. There's a feeling that change needs to take place. Each learner feels an instinctive desire to resolve and repair. They want to know how the story ends.

That's when the instruction takes the learners seamlessly into activities that give them a chance to explore possible solutions or offer their own solutions, followed by feedback that gives them clear guidance. On-the-job resources are available for them to consult as they make choices that advance the instruction and the story. When the training is done, they are still thinking about it, not because of the attractive bullet points but because of the story. And when they go to do their job and encounter a situation where they were trained to perform differently, they remember the story. They remember the consequences of doing things the wrong way. They remember how they felt. And they change.

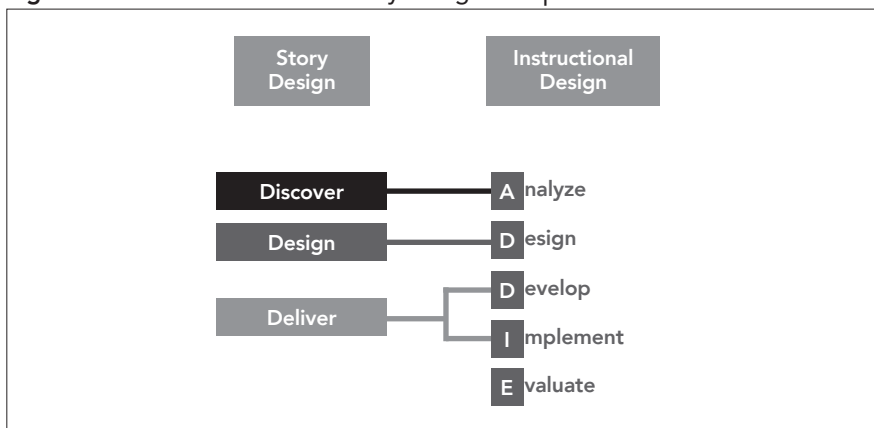
Wouldn't you like to create an experience like that? There's good news! You aren't starting with a blank canvas. As a talent development professional, you are already collecting the right information. Think of the essentials you need to create training. Once you've determined that training is the best solution, there are two questions you need to answer:

- Who is my audience?
- What do they need to do as a result of training?

The answers to these questions provide the structure of your learning solution. This is also the heart of your story. This is Story Design.

Where Instructional Design and Story Design Meet

Before plunging into the Story Design model that will form the backbone of this book, it's important to emphasize that what you are already doing during the instructional design process directly supports Story Design. Let's continue the comparison between instructional design and Story Design using the ADDIE model as a frame of reference. The instructional design process involves analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (ADDIE). Used iteratively or sequentially, ADDIE is a methodology for creating effective training. There is a mirror process of Story Design that is equally methodical and effective (Figure 1-1).

Figure 1-1. ADDIE Model and Story Design Comparison

Discover

When a stakeholder comes to you or your team requesting training, you ask them questions to figure out what the root problem is and identify what the business outcome will be as a result of training. If training is the right solution, you interview subject matter experts (SMEs) to flesh out the actions learners need to take in order to meet that business outcome and alleviate the root problem. Every training initiative begins with questions, followed by analysis of the answers. Everything you design and evaluate hinges on proper analysis. You wouldn't think of designing a course if you didn't know who the audience was or what they needed to do.

As you form an audience profile and develop an action list for them, you are discovering material for characters and conflict, the essentials for storytelling and for Story Design. The intelligence you gather that is good for instruction is also good for stories.

Design

Think about how you approach the design of a course. Once you've done the analysis—you know who you are designing this course for and you know what they need to do as a result of training—what is your go-to for starting the design of instruction? Do you start a development list? Do you jump into an authoring tool? Do you storyboard? Do you write a script? Do you spend

hours crafting formal learning objectives? Whether your approach to design is strictly academic, somewhat haphazard, or somewhere in between, Story Design asks you to begin your design by thinking immediately about story. In this phase, you design the characters and the conflict based on the information you've collected during the analysis and discovery phase. You write the script and determine how the story will be produced. For training, you will, of course, apply sound instructional design, including definitions, descriptions, examples, demonstrations, and practice as needed, but the story itself will set the stage for even more powerful instruction and open up innovative options for interacting with your audience.

Deliver

You've designed the course and now it's time to develop it. If you're creating training for a live audience, you may start building a slide deck based on the script and a look-and-feel you've designed. If you're developing an e-learning course, you're probably going to use an authoring tool that contains branching capabilities and built-in interactions. But hold on just a moment. You also have a story, and that needs to be developed as well. It needs to be compatible with the development and implementation of instruction. It needs to be integrated in a way that seamlessly leads the learner through the instruction. Stories are powerful no matter how they are delivered to their audience. From simple text to professional videos, a well-crafted story evokes the memorable, actionable, and emotional response you're looking for.

Evaluate

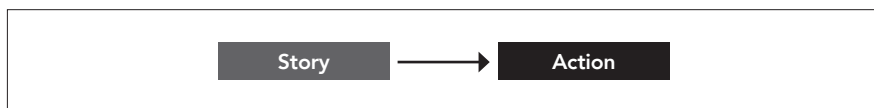
Story Design does not differ from instructional design in the realm of evaluation and, other than this paragraph, evaluating effectiveness won't be addressed in this book for the following reasons: We already know that stories have the impact we need for training. It's an established best practice, as you've read in this chapter. Implement Story Design, and skills, knowledge, and attitudes will be enhanced. Your evaluations will prove it. Business objectives will be met, and root problems conquered.

What this book will tackle is evaluating the design of the story itself. How do you know when you've got a winner? What are the red flags of ineffective stories? There are some key indicators that will help you determine the answers to these questions and ensure that your story has the maximum impact on your audience.

The Story Design Model

This book is structured to help you discover, design, and deliver stories for training, with a closing section on how to overcome common barriers to implementing Story Design. Throughout each of these sections, the Story Design model is fleshed out in detail, giving you practice with each step. To see all the parts in context, let's take a look at the Story Design model, the heart of this book. Appendix 1 contains an at-a-glance version of the Story Design model. (Visit needastory.com/book-resources to download a copy of the Story Design model and many other resources and tools used in this book.)

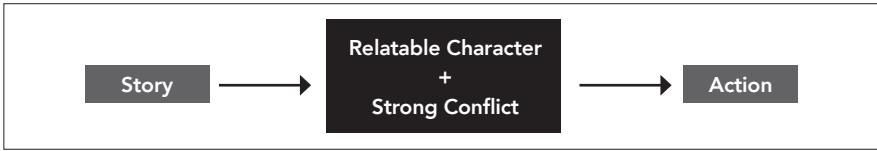
Figure 1-2. Story Design Model: Story > Action



Connecting Story to Action

Figure 1-2 shows where you stand right now. You know you want to include stories in training to equip and empower your audience to take action. There's a business outcome at stake and there's a root problem getting in the way. You want to fill the gap between telling a story for training that leads to action. Let's fill that gap.

Figure 1-3. Story Design Model: Story > Relatable Character + Strong Conflict > Action

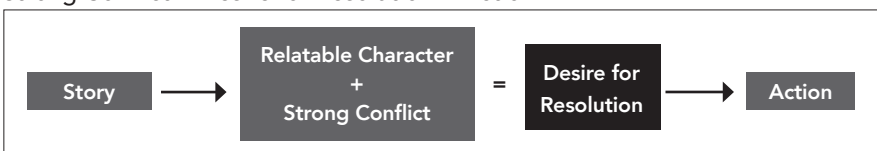


Relatable Characters in Strong Conflict

There are two essential story elements that must be present in order to tell a powerful story for training. You need characters and conflict (Figure 1-3). Not just any characters and not just any conflict. First, you need characters that your audience is going to relate to, connect with, identify with. Think of a course you recently designed. Can you think of a character that the audience of that course could relate to? If you can, you know your audience well. If you struggled to do that, you will need to collect more information on your audience. This book will show you how to do that more effectively.

The second element of the story is strong conflict. The word “strong” is used to indicate that the conflict needs to be intense enough to trigger a significant emotional response. If you think back to stories you’ve watched or read or listened to, the ones with the strongest conflict rise to the top as the most memorable. Think about lessons you’ve learned in your personal life. In which of those experiences did everything go right? Most likely, you made some mistakes when you learned those lessons. And mistakes create conflict. But where does conflict come from for stories in training? Take a look at the list of actions you’re asking learners to do. Put your relatable characters in strong conflict with those actions and you have a tailormade plot for your audience.

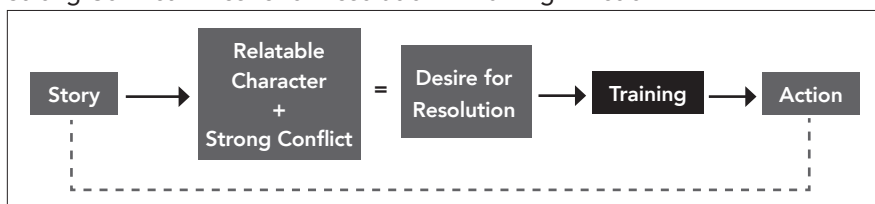
Figure 1-4. Story Design Model: Story > Relatable Character + Strong Conflict = Desire for Resolution > Action



Desire for Resolution

There is a wonderful by-product of combining relatable characters with strong conflict—learners want resolution! Their natural response is to figure out how to fix the problem (Figure 1-4). Whether or not they have a solution, they are hooked. You have their full attention. And that leads to the last piece of the model that completes the gap between story and action.

Figure 1-5. Story Design Model: Story > Relatable Character + Strong Conflict = Desire for Resolution > Training > Action



Training

Now that you have their attention and their desire to resolve, train them (Figure 1-5). The story has opened your audience up to receive new ideas, new ways of doing things, and new perspectives. Now share that new knowledge and those new skills and use the power of the story to motivate them to carry it through at work. We will spend a good deal of time in this book exploring how to integrate your story with training after you’ve gone through the Story Design process.

Storytelling Is a Competency

The Story Design model is simple enough to comprehend quickly because we all speak in stories. Storytelling for training has its specific challenges, but you’re starting on the right foot. Like any skill, it requires the kind of in-depth study and practice you will receive in this book. Start applying the methodology for projects at work right away. Immediately, you will begin to see instructional design in a completely different light, using creative venues you’ve never thought of before. You’ll start thinking like an Instructional Story Designer!

Training trends come and go, but storytelling has always been and will always be. Storytelling is a competency. It is foundational to the human experience and, therefore, should be a foundational skill for anyone who trains people. The more solidly you can craft a story, the better equipped you will be to adapt to the high demands placed on talent development in a world and a workforce that is constantly changing. Once you've seen Story Design's power, you'll use it everywhere. Business isn't slowing down any time soon. Don't worry, Story Design can keep up. Master the principles in this book and you'll be storytelling at warp speed.

Dayna's Story, and Yours

You'll continue to follow Dayna's journey at the top of each chapter. You'll learn from Dayna's experiences and have a chance to help her along the way. Starting with chapter 2, you will have the opportunity to put the principles you learn about to work in the closing section. In these practice sections, you are the designer. You'll meet the owner of a chiropractic clinic and use the chapter's tools and resources to discover, design, and develop a story for training his staff. The tools used in the practice sessions are compiled in a comprehensive toolkit in the appendix, including a collection of worksheets that support each stage of the Story Design process (appendix 1), an Instructional Story Design Plan Template (appendix 2), and a completed Instructional Story Design Plan with suggested outcomes for the chiropractic clinic practice sessions (appendix 3). The Instructional Story Design Plan and worksheets are also available as downloadable tools at needastory.com/book-resources; you can also view sample story solutions on the website.

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About the Author



Photo Credit: Jonathan Crawford

Rance Greene consults companies who need business solutions that harness the power of stories to connect with people emotionally and equip them for action. He designs stories to communicate value propositions, manage change, and teach new skills. His training solutions have been recognized by ATD, The eLearning Guild, *Training* magazine, and the Telly Awards. Follow Rance at needastory.com or connect with him on LinkedIn to stay in touch with the latest on Story Design. He'd love to hear how you've used the principles in this book to connect with your audience and achieve greater business outcomes.

Buy This Book

Once Upon a Time, Storytelling Met Instructional Design

Instructional Story Design is a practical guide to writing and developing stories for training. It takes what you already know about a story's power to connect with people and offers a clear methodology for the otherwise daunting process of creating a compelling story.

Master story designer Rance Greene shares his powerful yet familiar process to discover, design, and deliver instructional stories. This book offers advice for unearthing the root of the performance problem, creating action lists for learners, and convincing stakeholders of the effectiveness of stories. Case studies from household companies such as Pizza Hut, Southwest Airlines, and PepsiCo show story design in action. Job aids and resources include an audience profile questionnaire, character description worksheet, storyboard template, and tips for developing stories using graphics, audio, and video.

With this book, you'll:

- Sharpen your analysis skills to discover potential training stories.
- Design relatable stories that concretely connect with learning objectives.
- Easily develop captivating stories with tools you already own.
- Plan your next steps to implement your instructional story.

Praise for This Book

"Whether you're a novice instructional designer or a talent development professional with plenty of notches in your training belt, read this book. Rance Greene has captured not only the importance of stories to influence, but also a design-centered approach on how to go about it in today's fast-paced workplace environments."

—BONNIE ENDICOTT, Director, Talent Management, Southwest Airlines

"This book is a treasure. An elegant melding of learning design with story basics, it gives you a systematic process to develop learning experiences that are engaging, relevant, and effective."

—CLARK QUINN, Author, *Millennials, Goldfish & Other Training Misconceptions*

"Stop staring at a blank screen and pick up this book. You'll learn how to write memorable stories that help people learn."

—CONNIE MALAMED, Publisher, the eLearning Coach