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# *three-scene storyboarding*

narratives-for-learning & research  
the overview

*The* Career-learning CAFÉ

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Three-scene storyboarding is a narrative technique, enabling students and clients to find out 'what's going on?', and to work out 'what can I do about it?'

It engages a narrative process - where students and clients set down a significant episode in their work-related experience. It is useful in offering face-to-face help, but its most far-reaching potential needs curriculum space.

Storyboarding is, then, both a personalised form of learning and a gateway to wide-ranging cross-curricular possibilities.

Its distinctive features are:

- > linking useful reflective talk to significant real-life experience
- > interweaving thought and feeling
- > setting learning in both individual and social contexts
- > enabling learning which students can straight-away use
- > enriching our understanding of student-and-client progress

It focuses on a turning-point - an episode in a person's life when a possible change-of-direction comes into view. A turning-point is also, therefore, a place when people need to call on their capacity for flexibility.

Working on turning-point flexibility is critical to any programme which seriously addresses the challenges of raising aspirations in a changing world.

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## quick start

Three-scene storyboarding is a technique for setting down significant episodes in a life. It enables people usefully to reflect on that experience. You would use it when your students and clients need something more dynamic than a worksheet and more subtle than a checklist.

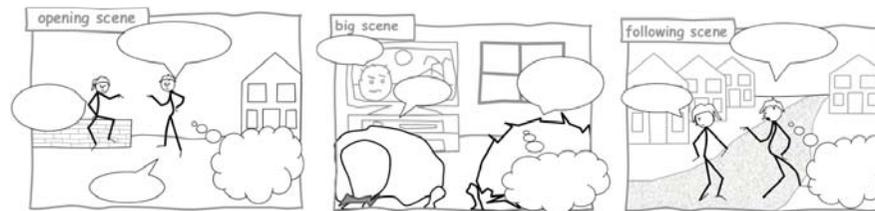
The episode can be any especially remembered turning-point in a person's life. That episode might have been played out at home, on the street, or in a curriculum project. The process sorts the episode into three-scenes. The middle scene is the time when a person sees that things could be different - pointing to a possible a change-of-direction. It can show, then, how the future need not be like the past. That often comes as a surprise. In storyboarding this is the 'big scene' - the middle scene - in a three-scene episode.

The scenes are worked out in the format set out, left-to-right, below. The process works in three areas - moving down the page.

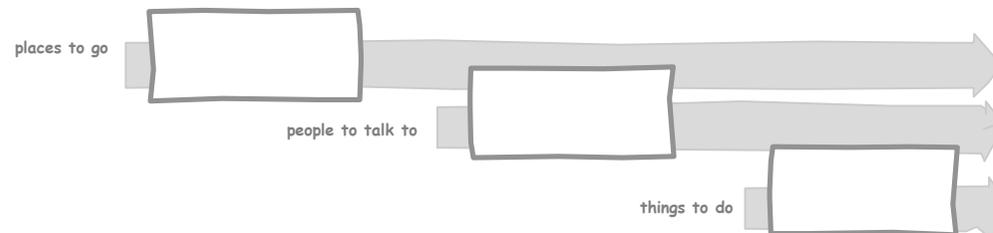
**area one - remembering:** gathering memories and sorting them into what was the turning point (the 'big scene'), and scenes showing what was going on before (the 'opening scene') and what it was like after (the 'following scene').



**area two - showing:** assembling the most important thoughts-and-feelings into a words-and-pictures account of the three scenes - with people, in locations, engaging in talk, and experiencing inner thoughts and feelings.



**area three - futuring:** saying what this person can now do about this.



blank format - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthreesceneformat.jpg](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthreesceneformat.jpg)  
worked example - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthreescenescenes.jpg](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthreescenescenes.jpg)

## key features of three-scene storyboarding

Each of the following pages briefly sets the key features in three-scene storyboarding. Understanding the underlying ideas will help you to make good use of the practice. To help with finding your way the **ideas** are emphasised.

### what is storyboarding?

Three-scene storyboarding is a narrative technique - students and clients set down a words-and-pictures **episode** in their lives. They work on an episode which has especially influenced how they see things, and what they want to do about them.

The three scenes are:



Versions of the process can be used with nine-year-olds. But narrative is deeply layered - so developments of storyboarding can feature throughout any learning-for-life programme. It should certainly be part of work with 16-19 year olds - especially if they have not used it before.

Here are some of the features which engage your students and clients in the process:

- > **graphic** storytelling
- > using **words and images**
- > setting down work-related **experience**
- > for **other people's** stories and **my own**
- > helping me to see myself as an **individual** and **with others**
- > interweaving my **thoughts** and **feelings**
- > as a **basis for action**

The formats are designed to take words-and-images portrayals of what is going on. It is also possible to use the formats in a words-only mode - as if people are writing a scene-by-scene screenplay.

All of these feature are useful for enabling people in effective **learning-for-life**. They are also useful to related **research**.

*examples of storyboards - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbtwelve.pdf](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbtwelve.pdf)  
children storyboarding will feature in [www.hihohiho.com](http://www.hihohiho.com) in due course  
storyboarding as research - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbresearch.pdf](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbresearch.pdf)*

## why use narrative?

Giving accounts of experience comes naturally. Diaries, 'chat' and social-networking all take narrative form. Movies, novels and soaps can be compelling. We enjoy keeping an eye on the 'who?', 'what?', 'where?', 'how?', when? and 'why?' of a well-told tale.

In narrative terms these are **characters, dialogue, location, plot, sequence** and **motivation**. All are critical features in career-management. And, in story-form they draw us in, keep us curious, and - most of all - call up hopes and fears about how things will come out.

All of that thought-and-feeling is memorable - we want to go over it, tell others, wonder how else it might go. So stories can inspire, but they can also warn. It means that other peoples' stories can give us each a clue to our own. It also means that by reflecting on our own stories we can find other **ways-of-seeing**.

It is surprising to find, then, that some of the most commonly-used careers-work material has few, if any, of these features. We really cannot afford to ignore them. And so you might choose to use storyboarding where a conventional worksheet, checklist, inventory or data-base don't help enough. Sometimes you need a process which calls up the subtlety and dynamics of what is going on in and around your student's and client's life. Whatever else working life is, it is experience. And experience can only be set down as narrative. Indeed, we make sense of experience through narrative.

A key concept in storyboarding is **turning-point** - that is an episode when a **change-of-direction** is possible. It is when people do something, talk to somebody, or go somewhere which opens their eyes to some other possible self in some unforeseen possible future. It comes as a **surprise**. It provokes **curiosity**.

In storyboarding it is this process of **questioning** discovery which is critical. It is about firing-up people concerning what else might be possible - enabling them to take command of their own journey.

In view of all this, you will know that storyboarding is helping your clients and students when you see that it...

- > **draws them in**
- > **keeps them curious**
- > **calls up 'what next?' hopes and fears**
- > **is memorable - they want go over it and tell others**
- > **can be both an inspiration and an alert**
- > **helps them to identify a turning-point in their own lives**

Storyboarding is evidence based. There is no shortage of underpinning thinking - in **behavioural research** and **literary theory** - demonstrating these realities. Bringing this new thinking into our work makes the help we offer accessible to more of the people who need our help - not least to those who most need it.

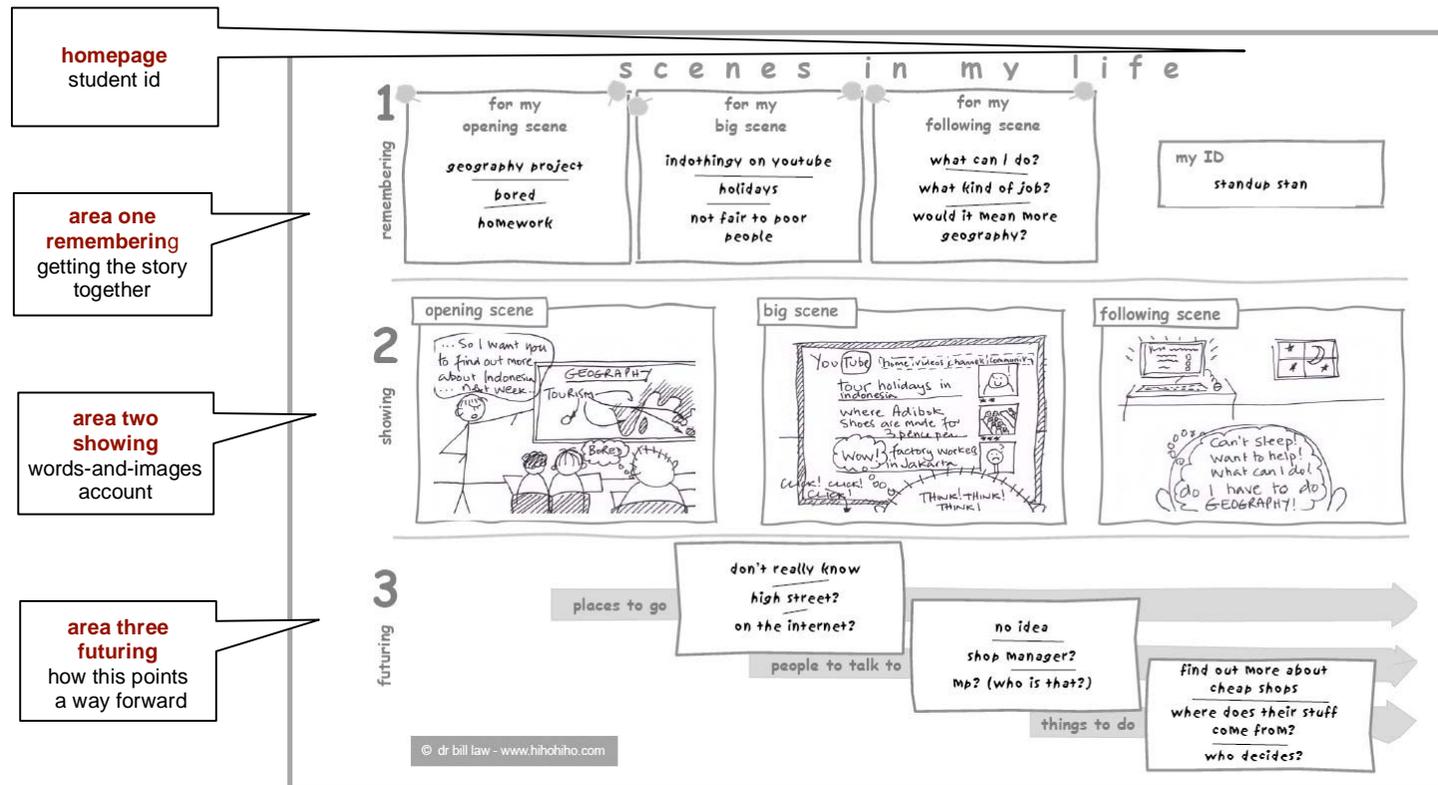
Working on turning-points enables students to probe their own capacity for **flexibility**. There has never been a time when it has been more critical that people can find out what is going on, and work out what they can usefully do about it.

*background thinking & research applications - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthinking.html](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthinking.html)*

## format

Storyboarding is worked through by clients and students on a three-area format - top-to-bottom on the image. They use the format to developed the three scenes - left-to-right in areas one and two. The loose-and-inviting format is designed to resemble a web-page.

For reasons you'll appreciate, it's a good idea first to engage students with **other people's stories**. But this picture shows a later stage in learning, where 'stand-up-stan' has storyboarded an episode from his own life. That episode's opening scene is at school, but an episode could as easily be set at home, on the street, in spare time, at work - wherever a person knows something 'big' is happening.



The storyboard is at area-2 - in **showing**. The turning-point is the 'big scene' - in the middle. It is where a door opens to a change-of-direction. The other areas - above and below - set it up and follow it through. Area-1 - **remembering** - is preparation, while area-3 - **futuring** - turns the story into action. (Incidentally, the three 'futuring' panels are not meant to correspond with the three scenes.)

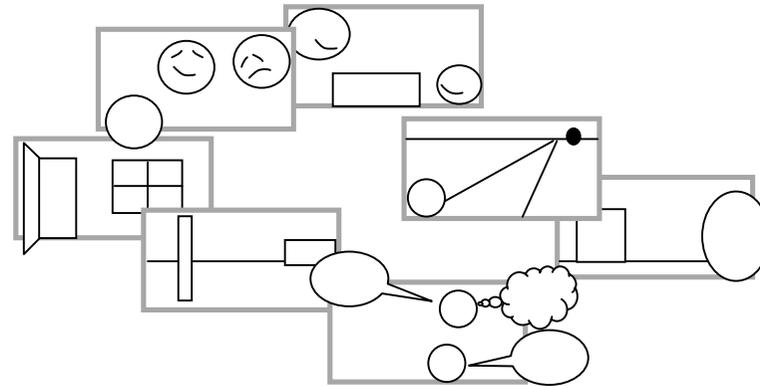
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worked example - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthreescenen.jpg](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthreescenen.jpg)

## how storyboarding works

Storyboarding is a **filmic** technique. It draws attention to how any story comes across to other people. The look of a scene makes a difference to how people interpret it. Whether showing their own lives, or understanding somebody else's, your clients and students can usefully think about how - in area two - they...

- > position things in the frames
- > angle-the-shots and show width-of-field
- > notice details that set a location
- > think about movement and gesture
- > select and voice what people say
- > sift dialogue to what counts
- > 'voice-over' the lead character's thoughts and feelings
- > organise the scenes into a then-and-next sequence



These are more than just graphic tricks - they belong to a process of reflecting on meaning. How they are used gives each scene a **way of seeing**. They show what needs to be appreciated if this person's story is to be properly understood.

This is **personal** learning - different people will see scenes in different ways. It is also student **voice** - students and clients find their own way of showing it.

Much of it will readily be taken-in, without labouring things. Something can be done in **forty-minutes-or-so**. But there are a lot of **talking-points**. And they link this process of reflection to real experience. This is necessary to any understanding of how to take control of your own real-time story. But it needs **time-and-space**.

Storyboarding works through what people need to be clear about when they come to tell others what they are finding - and what they mean to do about it. That is essential for looking good in **recruitment-and-selection** procedures. The hardest part of that procedure is where people need to be able to say something interesting and distinctive about themselves.

But, before then, it can be absolutely critical in telling **friends-and-family** what a person has in mind - and, sometimes, to help them stay on on-board with his or her plans. There is more to career management than just impressing employers.

*underpinning ideas - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthinking.html](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbthinking.html)*

## involving students and clients

### creating your storyboard

**what is it?** It's a way of setting out an episode in your life - in three scenes. The episode can be from a course - but it can be from any aspect of your wider life.

The middle scene is a turning-point - when you...

- > make up your mind about what to do, or
- > change your mind, or
- > know you might - but don't.

It's your 'big scene'. Before and after are your 'opening', and 'following scenes'.

**what is it for?** It helps you to sort things out. Remembering can come in bits-and-pieces - it usually needs sorting. There might be something about...

- > where you are at the time,
- > who else is around,
- > what happens,
- > what people say,
- > how you think-and-and feel about it all.

There could be different points-of-view - disagreements are interesting.

The turning-point - for sorting into the big scene - is where you can see a direction you can take. Perhaps a new direction. This is your big scene.

**how does it work?** Remembering your big scene is a good place to start. It might be a surprise. It might be sparked by somebody you talk with, somewhere you go, or something you do. Getting this sorted is the first step.

Then, in the 'opening scene', you can sort out how things are before that. And, in the 'following scene', how things become different - maybe more hopeful.

**what do I do?** Use the 'scenes in my life' sheet. The 'id panel' is how you want to be known.

Use the '1,2,3' levels for...

1. 'remembering' - sorting jumbled memories into the three scenes;
2. 'showing' - putting what is important to you into a word-and-pictures account, this is what people need to know if they are really to understand you;
3. 'futuring' - saying what you mean to do about it - now and soon.

Take as long as you need. Try out versions - 'til you get it the way you see it.

**if you want to share 'scenes in my life'  
do it with people who care about you and want the best for you**

**handout:** This handout is designed to draw people into the process. It provides a **scaffolding** for how storyboarding works and why it is useful. It therefore needs to fire-up interest and engage the use of helpful words and images. And it must allow for a range of **learning styles** - admitting everyone into the process.

**introduction:** Some do not need to be taken through the process in detail. Once they have seen a couple of worked examples they will know what to do - or they'll soon find out, by **trial-and-error**. This can be the best way to learn how to do it. It might, then, be possible to produce a useful storyboard in less than an hour. It could be a **take-away task** - a kind of 'homework'.

Time and space to practice is key to learning - no less-so for your students and clients working on storyboarding. It can start with other people's stories: people **they've met**, others they feel **they know** and can **admire** - yet others you usefully **introduce** to them.

But, for some, it is helpful to work through it with them, an-area-at-a-time. You can then check how they get on with it, and whether they want to take another shot at any area, before moving on. Looking at worked examples will help. People need space and material for making notes and sketches. An A3 print-up offers more space.

This ten-page overview is not a schedule for telling clients and students what to do. It is for you to understand the ideas. But the ideas are best dealt with as-and-when they seem to you to be worth signposting - your skill in noticing how people are getting on with it. It is not always helpful to try to say everything. Leaving room for finding things out is often more effective.

In all cases it will help students and clients to be able to make rough versions first. You'll need spare three-scene formats. And, whether in face-to-face work or curriculum, the format can usefully be taken away for completion - and brought back for further reflection.

Some might also want to **share with others** - at home and elsewhere.

*the handout - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbhandout.pdf](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbhandout.pdf)*

## enriching your programme

There is an account on page 1 of how people are drawn towards narrative. This page examines what narrative brings to your work.

**distinctiveness:** It joins together what academic methods put asunder. It sets down experience both as an **individual** and with **other people**. It attends to both **thought** and **feeling** in learning. It starts where, too often, we stop - looking for **usefulness** in **knowledge**, and linking **what we know** to **what they find**.

**processes:** That distinctiveness leads to students being able to ...

- > sort out life's natural **muddle**
- > face up to **uncertainties**
- > become more **questioning**
- > see turning-points as calling for **flexibility**
- > unify thoughts and feelings in **inner life**
- > set that self in a **social context**
- > recognise **new things to do**

These are not performance indicators - like targets and quality standards. They are bases for reflection. They suggest what you can find in your students and clients. And they link your clients' and students' reflection to their lives

**programme links:** But none of this supplants **worksheets**, **checklists**, **inventories** and **date-bases**. It supplements them - bringing to your programme what they leave out.

For example, students and clients may want to keep completed formats in a **portfolio** - with view to discussing it with their **friends and family**. It would be useful to use storyboards in **helping interviews** and **mentoring**. It leads naturally into **action planning**. And it gives people ideas about what to include in a **cv**, an **application procedure**, or what to say during a **selection interview**.

**expansion:** A **forty-minute** version of storyboarding is possible. But it is more usefully set up in a developmental sequence. In **preparation**: before they make their own storyboard people can usefully work on other peoples' stories. It is a way to practice the process. But it can also engage them in mind-broadening accounts of unconsidered possibilities. And in **follow-through**: people need to interrogate narrative. They need to do this to be clear about what really goes on. But, more importantly, they need to scrutinise things at a deeper level - wondering why things work out like this, and imagining in what other ways situations like this could work out.

These features of expanded storyboarding are most important where you seek to raise **aspirations**. They are useful to people who have come to believe that there are few options open to them. That is where finding **new ways-of-seeing** and embracing **flexibility** will prove most critical in your work.

*curriculum expanding storyboarding processes - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbcurriculum.html](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbcurriculum.html)*

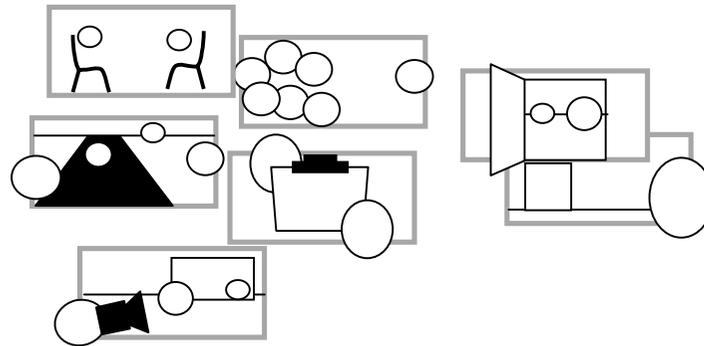
## reaching out

Storyboarding links **reflection in learning** to **experience in life**. It brings into this **here-and-now** a direct-and-personal account of that **there-and-then**. The possibilities for developing these links are pretty-well limitless.

**programme links.** In all **face-to-face** work storyboarding links talk to experience. For example: in **counselling** it works on the subtleties and confusions of what is going on; in **mentoring** it represents the authority of working people's experience; in **guidance** it gives living form to what inventories and psychometrics signpost.

In **curriculum** there is space for what storyboarding brings in - for getting feedback, finding focus and trying-out. But its full potential needs more space than can be squeezed into edge-of-timetable **careers education**. And so **cross-curricular** possibilities are the future - offering all helpers ways of showing how learning is useful in life. And where this draws on **community-links** it brings local, credible, and authentic experience into the curriculum.

- > family-talk
- > face-to-face help
- > group-work
- > visits-in and -out
- > community projects
- > enquiries
- > role-plays
- > media-productions



All of this expands conventional ideas about careers-work partnerships. It moves on, from limited **bilateral partnerships** between 'guidance' and 'careers education'. Storyboarding opens doors to **multilateral partnerships**.

**life-long links:** A pervasive value of storyboarding is the help it offers in seeing how learning is useful in life. Once people become accustomed to its processes, they will use them life-long. There is no more important element in any programme of **life-long learning**.

**re-connecting the disconnected:** The detachment of too many of our clients and students is explained by a breakdown in links between **what we say** and **what they experience**. What happens in family and neighbourhood does not correspond to the terms in which they are required to learn. The special needs of some may be entirely neglected. But, for many, professional talk speaks of no world that they can recognise as their own. This sense of disconnection explains how bright people settle for dull work, and how good people get caught up in bad moves.

Storyboarding restores the missing links. It must, if **motivation** is to be fired-up and **aspiration** raised. It brings student and client **voice** into a much needed conversation - engaging helper and person each in asking the other...

*'why do you say...?', 'what makes you feel...?', 'what about if...?'*

*storyboarding in curriculum - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbcurriculum.html](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbcurriculum.html)  
face-to-face uses of storyboarding will feature in [www.hihohiho.com](http://www.hihohiho.com) in due course*

## other people's stories

A critical feature in learning from experience is finding how to recount experience in interesting and convincing ways. That ability establishes a person as a distinctive individual in any family. It is how we make our claim to membership of any group. It is also part of any recruitment or selection procedure. Savvy managers recognise the difference between contrived and authentic responses to their questions. Storyboarding's processes are for **remembering, showing and futuring** - enabling people to say what is going on, why it is important and what they mean to do about it.

It is not quick-and-easy learning, it is learned over time. Storyboarding works best when it moves people, stage-by-stage, towards that kind of grasp of their own story. It means students and clients working on stories...

- > first that are **recognisable** in local experience
- > then moving on in **unexpected** directions
- > and experience **different** from anything they've yet seen
- > taking on board where **things go badly**
- > looking at making **good use of bad news**
- > dealing constructively with **challenging experience**
- > where people **hold on**, but also **let go**, so that they can **move on**

In guidance this may be called **decision-making**. In curriculum it's called **progression** - a stage-by-stage deepening of the bases for action. It moves from the familiar, through the unexpected, into the surprising, through the challenging and on to the hopeful. It is essential to being able to say anything that is interesting and convincing to anybody.

**in the curriculum:** Any curriculum has all of these stories. They crop up in **communication**, through **drama**, in **history** and **religious education**, for **citizenship**, and in **media studies**. Storyboarding can place students in roles as **researcher, director, interviewer, audience** and **technician** - all in pursuit of such stories. Furthermore, the web-page look-and-feel of storyboarding's formats can attract the interested attention of **creative arts** and **ict** people.

**in the community:** There are authentic stories in the lives of your **community contacts**: in **family** and **neighbourhood**, as **visitors-in** and on **visits-out** - including **mentors**. It is not that these sources have **expertise** on career development, their authority is their **experience** of career management. What they know is best engaged in **conversation**, rather than formal presentation. People can then pose their own **questions**. Underlying this work is the reality that for some people - and, commonly, for young people - the day-to-day realities of work-life are a well-kept secret.

**in the media:** The most readily-available media are what you can put on dvd, photocopy, audio-record or podcast. That includes episodes from **soaps**, scenes from **movies**, reports in **newspapers**, and events in **newscasts**. Recordings can be paused at turning-points - for questioning, and for comparing points-of-view on how that episode will play out.

**on websites:** There are websites setting out career stories. Some of the narratives are rich in the kind of detail that storyboarding needs. Almost all have some potential for engaging users in **interrogating** the stories. Yet, none is yet as **interactive** as storyboarding can make it.

*storyboarding in curriculum - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbcurriculum.html](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbcurriculum.html)  
narrative websites - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbwebsites.html](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbwebsites.html)*

## learning verbs

Career stories are **anecdotes**. We can learn a lot from them, but we cannot safely **generalise** from them. What works out in a particular way for one person will not necessarily work out in the same way for somebody else. By contrast, much careers **expertise** is widely researched, and that makes general statements possible. Expertise can point to the **facts, factors** and **trends** that influence everybody in much the same way.

But **experience** can tell us things that expertise can't. It carries a sense of what it is like *'to be there, doing this, with these people'*. In that way accounts of **labour-market experience** (lme) give us a feel for what is going on - up-close-and-personal. It can't lead anyone to say, *'because it happens to him, it can happen to me'*. But it can provoke questions about why it worked out that way - with those people and in that situation.

And this is to wonder how a person might do something like that, but in a different way - in another location and with other people. It might also cause a person to wonder how a bad experience can be avoided. Asking *'who?', 'what?', 'where?', 'how?', 'when?', and 'why?'* are at the heart of this process. But analyses of **labour-market information** (lmi) rarely answer these questions in narrative form. They therefore miss too much.

Seeing how things happen in other people's lives offers the most important clue to our own lives that any of us is likely to find. People can be enabled to learn this way - by taking their own control of four cluster of **learning verbs**:

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**for finding out**  
*noticing events, thoughts and feelings*

**for sorting out**  
*organising things into useful order*

**for checking out**  
*pointing to what most counts*

**for working out**  
*grasping causes and their effects*

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Learning verbs pose the kind of questions that a helper or friend might naturally ask - and the kind that we all need to ask ourselves. They are open question - there are no 'right answers'. They invite disclosure.



Learning verbs probe who and what is trustworthy... worth paying attention to... likely to be helpful. Learning ways of posing such questions are the most **transferable skills** of all. For once people have learned to scrutinise any story, they have learned to interrogate their own, wherever they take it - **life-wide**. And once they have learned for the present, that learning can be re-used into the indefinite future - **life-long**.

*learning verbs in curriculum - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbcurriculum.html](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbcurriculum.html)*

## learning for what?

**learning outcomes:** A learning outcome is some fact that people now know, some idea they now understand, or some task that they can now take on. Three-scene storyboarding enables all three kinds of gain. It is particularly strong on what policy calls **personal learning-and-thinking skills**. Students will be able to show that they have learned to take on:

personal learning and thinking skills	storyboarding enables people to
> independent enquiry	ask useful questions;
> self-management	take control of their own story
> reflective learning	link thoughts-and-feelings to action
> effective participation	see action in a social as well as an individual setting
> creative thinking	develop their own distinctive narrative
> team working	make a shared account of how things work

These abilities can be set down in a **profile** or **assessment**, while in a consulting room or classroom. They are, then, evidence of **learning outcomes**. But careers work requires that what is learned in that setting is used in life. In learning-for-life the learning must come out of its setting.

**outcomes of learning:** This is **transfer-of-learning** - learned here, used somewhere else. In learning-for-life what people acquire must be more than a learning outcome, it needs to be an **outcome-of-learning**. If that transfer does not occur, no matter what the tests and grades say, what we are doing is not working.

In the nature of things an outcome-of-learning will not be observable in the learning setting. But in the successful use of storyboarding you will be able to see in your students and clients a readiness to...

- > **check-out** any move already in mind;
- > **get clear** about the influences of other people;
- > **consider** options that are against-the-grain of family, friends and background;
- > **work out** what they will say to friends and family about making their move;
- > **rehearse** what they will then say to recruitment people;
- > **anticipate** what any move they make means for future planning.

All of these outcomes-of-learning are predicated on a learning verb. They link that process to an intention. These are not tick-box items. In order to know that any of this has happened it needs to be narrated - saying how what is learned will be used in what storyboarding calls **futuring**. Storyboarding ensure that what they learn with us reminds them of their lives, so that their lives remind them of what they learn with us.

*storyboarding for action-planning - [www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbnarrative.pdf](http://www.hihohiho.com/storyboarding/sbnarrative.pdf)*