

STORYTELLING BASED LEARNING

Tell/Make/Engage: A Design Methods Course

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Motivation

Finding personal stories is critical for teams to discover yet-to-be satisfied user needs in order to achieve their mission. This is particularly powerful in situations where a start-up team, or even a research group, has to respond to quickly changing circumstances. Teams can unknowingly misunderstand the meaning and intent of a story. This work considers the relationship between *active storytelling concepts* and individual response.

Tell refers to speaking, listening, and narrative writing. **Make** refers to both the creation of the story and an engineering design project or start-up work. And **Engage** is defined and evaluated by variations in response to an ineffective or effective story delivery. The culmination of these components is to inform the impact of Storytelling Based Learning.

Results

Preliminary results show that four core “rules” (also known as emotional and communication messages for success) may lead to misinterpretations and can sidetrack productive engagement for creation and collaboration:

- Repeating for perfection:** in fact, people report that they do not find flawless storytelling believable;
- Interacting one-on-one within a large audience:** the opposite may be true when you apply a “planned spontaneous” and personally unique leadership approach in storytelling;
- Applying a template** to tell and memorize one story: in contrast, there are reasons to start in the middle of the story to find a new and powerful beginning;
- Describing a generic user story** so as to only present a limiting stereotype of a persona: both young and well established entrepreneurs prefer hearing a personal and emotional story that invites them to step directly into the storyteller’s shoes.

Accurate storytelling techniques allow start-up teams to communicate the meaning and intent of their mission while being comfortable feeling uncomfortable. We find that genuinely expressed vulnerability in start-up storytelling amplifies engagement.

Method and Class Environment

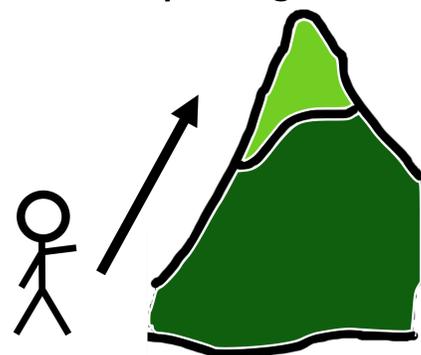
To facilitate student responses, each class “episode” included organizing questions, prompts, readings, practice exercises, surprises, and storytelling design challenges. While the course has an extensive, planned syllabus, the evolving developments and dynamics in the group impact the curriculum. Mixed methods of socio-cognitive psychology and art frame an active storytelling and participant response environment. The students are encouraged to embark on a purposeful mental time travel (episodic memory) and recall the emotions and sensation details of events they have previously encountered within the frame of a current goal. Reflection on the past helps students imagine the future.

Applicability / Takeaways

Effective storytelling techniques allows start-up teams to communicate the intent of their mission.

- Finding an effective story requires self-reflective observation and genuine in-the-moment attention and active response to audience engagement.
- Replacing misinterpreted rules offer an opportunity for understanding intangible story cues, and a new direction for concrete results.
- Storytelling Based Learning proposes a model that fills the gap between deductive and inductive reasoning by constructing intuition.

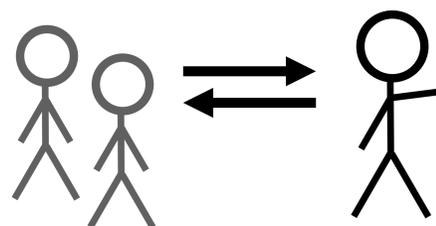
Active Storytelling Concepts



Self-motivated

Ability and routine commitment to strive for reasons that go beyond time and money

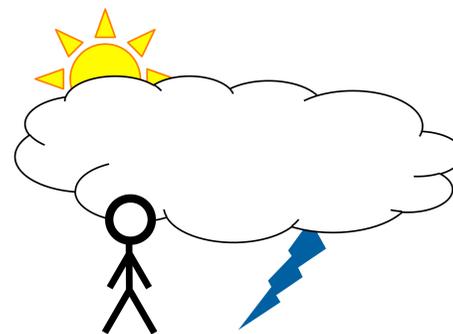
[Goleman 2004; McClelland 1964, 1987]



Social Connection

Expressing an interest and intrigue in artfully but not perfectly connecting

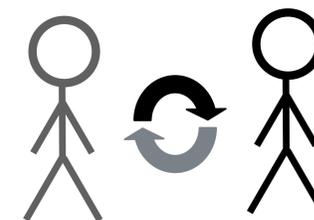
[Cialdini 1984; Kaptein 2012; Taylor & Karanian 2008]



Vulnerability

Comfortable being uncomfortable and willing to risk emotional exposure

[Brown 2011; Eskandari 2013]

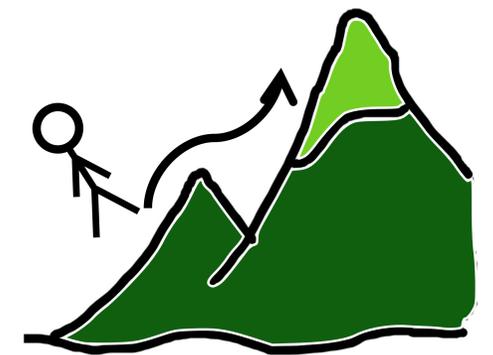


Empathy

Capable of relating to another person and experiencing what they feel

To feel with someone; in their shoes

[Beckman & Barry 2007; Kelley & Kelley 2013]



Ambiguity Readiness

A person's ease with not knowing what is next along a developmental continuum. Comfortable with an incomplete story

[Leifer 2011; Mabugunje 1997; Stefik & Stefik 2006]