



**DIGIMI**

## Digital Storytelling for migrant integration

# METHODOLOGY AND GUIDELINES

## Digital Storytelling for Social Integration

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# Methodology and Guidelines: Digital Storytelling for Social Integration

## 1. Introduction

The DIGIMI project centers around making social impact, namely building stronger and more resilient communities by connecting different groups within those communities: newcomers and people living in these communities for a longer time already. We believe that social impact can only be achieved if you both pay attention to the individual and the connection between individuals. For that reason, we not only focus on the principles of creating social impact through storytelling but also on how storytelling can contribute to personal growth, empowerment and – as a result of that – resilience.

The Methodology includes a theoretical framework of storytelling for social integration and also practical tools that will help the practitioners to develop this kind of workshops.





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## 2. Theoretical foundation of Storytelling for Integration

### The social and personal impact of storytelling

According to the Irish philosopher Richard Kearney: “Storytelling is as fundamental to people as food. Actually, even more fundamental, because food keeps us alive, but stories give value to our lives. They make us human beings what we are”.

Social Impact is about social transformation and collective behavioral change. In other words, how can we connect the ‘who am I’, to ‘who are you as my friend’ and to ‘who are we as a society?’ As people tend to like their in-group members more than the out-group members, bias in favour of similar in-group members and bias against out-group members is created (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002). We create assumptions and labels to identify the other and meanwhile we are also reinforcing our own identity. Research has shown that the strength of ingroup identification is of influence (Kelly, 1993). Usually, there is an asymmetry between majority and minority groups, like in the case of newcomers and ‘indigenous people’. The strength of one's' ingroup identification and being part of a majority or minority group influences the potential conflict. This is exactly where the Storytelling projects project might come in. It encourages people to overcome their differences and possible conflicts, by connecting with each other through storytelling.

The social change that we are striving for using Storytelling, is aimed at encouraging people to respect others. Agreeing that you disagree with one another is an important step in living and interacting with one another. The moment you find yourself in that phase, is when you start relating to each other. You know each other's stories and you respect the telling of them. How different is this to many other situations, where stories are told about others instead of being shared with one another. People often quickly discover that they have more in common than they previously thought and might even discover that the conflict they seem to have is based on these similarities.

Using storytelling, which mankind has been practicing for between 50,000 and 135,000 years, we allow social groups to rediscover their story. We start by retrieving the past, working on memories through various exercises and methods. At first, the emphasis is on the beautiful memories, but soon there is also room for the less positive events, the setbacks





and resistance experienced. At a certain point, we bring these memories into the present. What do they mean for 'being' at this moment? What has dealing with these setbacks taught you, what has the help of others brought you? As we will describe further below, the *hero's journey* is a powerful tool in this process, because it maps and might give a very clear meaning to (part of) each person's life course (Barel, 2021, p. 62).

## i. Thinking in labels, having prejudices

Alain van Hiel of Ghent University (Department of Development and Social Psychology) and his colleagues argue that we are all racist. They describe this from the observation that everyone grows up in a certain group/environment - a so-called in-group - and learns norms and values from an early age. Instinctively, we are told that the 'unknown' or 'foreign' can mean danger, which often leads to discriminating thoughts. However, they also make it clear that the fact that we are all inherently racist, does not block us from healthy interaction, fruitful cooperation and even friendship with 'the other'. This can only happen though, if people meet under the following conditions:

- Groups meet in a context where all groups have the same status
- The Facilitator should allow personal interactions between all members of the groups
- Members of all groups should work together to achieve a common goal
- Social norms of the community should support this contact, and in general there should be a positive orientation towards this type of contact

## ii. Mental wellbeing and trauma

Mental wellbeing and resilience benefit from constantly replenishing the collection of stories. These do not always have to be big, exciting and adventurous stories. There is also value in small, seemingly insignificant stories. Just as it does not have to be all about positive stories. Even, and perhaps especially, stories about setbacks add luster. Past, present and future are brought back into line, as it were, providing a basis for taking action, small or large. If that story is subsequently listened to, it quickly gains in meaning and the narrator builds up





mental resilience<sup>1</sup>. The narrator is allowed to exist again and thus has the future back (Barel, 2021, p. 73).

### iii. Remembering

The word remembering refers to a re-experience. The moment you remember a story from your past, you relive that moment. In line with what we described above about past, present and future, remembering is actually the process of bringing the past into the present. The nice thing is that you can make your own choice in which memories you give place in the collection with which you pave the path to the future. The English word remembering offers an immediate insight based on a thought that has been developed within Narrative Therapy. By remembering, we decide for ourselves which memories we take with us. The reflection on it can lead to countless new insights and perspectives. It contributes to the development of a polyphonic sense of identity - which is diametrically opposed to the single story- and lays the foundation for giving meaning to one's own existence and creating coherence by ordering life. By *re-membering* we can give life a form that extends to the past and the future<sup>2</sup>.

### iv. Dramaturge of your own life

Our working method is based on the assumption that everyone can extract meaning from his or her own life and thereby increase the grip on life, like a dramaturge. This makes it easier to deal with unpredictability. Living is learning to deal constructively with change and uncertainties, things we have no influence over. The use of stories to give meaning, to facilitate that handling of change, is called engaging in the dramaturgy of life. This is opposite to taking full charge.

The stories of the past are the real research material when you want to map the journey of your life to gather ammunition for future development. Those stories consist of a very large collection of memories. Not all of them have equal value and many are almost forgotten. But there are also memories that keep surfacing, because they are linked to precious or, on the contrary, very unpleasant moments. Usually these are moments of great change, for

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<sup>1</sup> In narrative therapy, this is also called the definitional ceremony. Such ceremonies are rituals that acknowledge and enhance people's lives (White, p 135). Michael White writes extensively about this in his book *Narrative Therapy in Practice*.

<sup>2</sup> Myerhoff, B. Life history amongst the Elderly, Performance Visibility and remembering. In Ruby, j. (red.) A Crack in the Mirror: Reflexive perspective in Anthropology, Philadelphia 182, P111





example moving houses, birth, marriage or loss. Events that mark transitional periods. Sometimes they are also memories of very small things.

When we start working with storytelling, we begin by bringing back memories, step by step, of beautiful events but also of setbacks and difficult moments. We map these out and bring them into the present. We do this by naming the meaning of those memories - often by writing them down - and by translating them into the present position and situation of the teller. The narrators start to realize how they have been shaped by those stories and how they can learn from them for the present. We train them to become dramaturges of their own lives. Having a voice is related to demonstrating agency over their own self, their own experience. Therefore providing the platform for storytellers enables them to control the way their experiences are portrayed and interpreted and finally claim their space in society (Barel, 2021, p. 54).

#### v. The danger of a single story

In line with this basic idea of deciding yourself what is part of your identity and what's not and the influence of narratives on that process, it is important to talk about one key aspect that might endanger someone's wellbeing on the long run. We are referring to the so-called single story. With single story we mean putting the full focus on just one story (Barel, 2020, p.60).

The single story can both come from the inside and from the outside, though it always manifests itself from the inside, coming from the 'self'. The drive however can be an internal or an external one. The first might seem clear and is further explained below. But we shouldn't forget that people often internalize something that is imposed on them by society. In many ways. When one is constantly marginalized by others, the chances are there that someone starts believing it and behaving accordingly. This can happen on both an individual and a collective level (Barel, 2020, p. 60). It is easy to put this in the context of the DIGIMI project. Newcomers are constantly labelled as newcomers, in almost everything they do. Sometimes it is just in the questions that are constantly asked to them: where are you from? When this question is asked several times a day to you, it is difficult to escape from identifying just with that story you are frequently forced to tell.



### 3. Practical Toolkit for hosting a workshop on Digital Storytelling for Social Integration

#### i. Creating a safe environment for sharing

It is of great importance to create a safe space (physically and mentally) for everyone to share their stories. The goals and steps of the storytelling process should be transparently elaborated, as well as allowing for tellers to have control over their own narrative and how it is portrayed.

The physical space must be carefully selected according to the criteria of accessibility, convenience, ventilation, etc. When the participants arrive, they should be warmly welcomed. Some ice-breaking activities or catch up chats can improve group communication. Make sure that the group composition is inclusive and diverse gender, age, race, religion, political views and whatever else (Axtell, 2019).

Firstly, a good starting point is setting boundaries and expectations/ guidelines and ground rules together about the mode of mutual interaction and communication, the way in which information is shared outside the group (particularly the understanding of confidentiality), practical aspects which will ensure an effective meeting, and the rules for decision-making (Lal, Donnelly and Shin, 2014). GDPR ethics codes and videography during digital storytelling workshops should be discussed and agreed, including negotiation of how stories will be used (Lal, Donnelly and Shin, 2014). The scope is to minimize risk and maximize benefits for participants, by ensuring confidentiality.

As a facilitator, be aware of your own posture and approach to facilitation, recognizing and respecting challenges participants may face in being here and telling their stories. Ask your team permission to keep the conversation on track when it diverges or gets repetitive, call on people who have not yet spoken, hold people back if they are dominating the conversation, ask clarifying questions when you need someone to elaborate. Moreover, empower your team by reminding them that they have permission to: ask questions at any time, invite colleagues into the conversation if they have not spoken, ask to spend extra time on a topic, ask other people to say more about where they stand on an issue, express concerns that haven't been fully addressed, and ask permission before making a comment (Axtell, 2019).



Empathy is required in instances like these, but not at the expense of the interviewer interfering unnecessarily with the emotions displayed.

A good preparation of the session can lead to a more successful result. Have an idea beforehand or ask and include as an activity how a meeting would take place in their countries/culture of origin: history, religions, cultural details, stereotypes (Cox and Albert, 2003, p. 148). Warming up activities would help get people together and offer a relaxing environment. Breaks would also boost the energy of the group. In general, using inclusive language; would make it easier to understand explanations on purpose (avoid project-talk) and benefit participants; (avoid technical terms, rhetorical challenges), visualization of important messages, agreed principles etc. with pictograms, images. avoid acting like a therapist - the process of storytelling is an intimate process but it is not a therapy.

Listen without judgment; Respect that narrators even sometimes express opinions opposed to your beliefs. By reacting to their opinions, they are going to be less likely to open up; Let the narrator know you are empathizing with them; Use verbal and nonverbal acknowledgments that are culturally appropriate, e.g., nodding, making eye contact; Being warm and present makes a big difference (Voice of Witness, 2019). Also, make sure that you provide enough time to participants to express themselves.

Different personalities may require more or less encouragement and prodding to open up and share their story (Voice of Witness, 2019). Closed-ended questions are useful for extracting particular information and can help a shy interviewee get started. In some cases, showing an example and sharing a story yourself to build trust and encourage others to share (Cox and Albert, 2003, p. 146). This can put the interviewee at ease enough to answer a more open-ended question (Cox and Albert, 2003, p. 138). However, an interview is not a dialogue; It's important to remember that your role as an interviewer is to help your narrator maintain the flow of their storytelling and not to be tempted to interrupt. So, try to practice active listening.

It would be also helpful if you keep the groups small and have at least two experienced facilitators experts in the following fields; story-telling, systemic work, trauma-sensitive, inter-cultural work, conflict management. Finally, remind participants that their presence is voluntary.





## ii. Handling emergency situations

A facilitator may face situations of crisis, conflict and trauma whilst conducting a workshop and it's important to distinguish them. According to Lesny the solution-oriented approach can address these issues, as it is based on a respectful assumption that individuals and groups have internal resources to build effective individual and group solutions to the problems they bring or arise in or between them (2020). The general objectives of the intervention are the following:

1. Provide stabilization and relief of symptoms that arise from or are related to conflict, crisis or trauma.
2. Alter the feelings associated with the memories of conflict, crisis or trauma, so that these are no longer more intrusive or painfully prevalent in the process of the group.
3. Develop a positive, healthy and practical orientation towards the future.

Even though conflict is important in storytelling, please keep in mind to stay away from severe conflict bordering on trauma. To avoid this happening, it might be good to actually say to the participants conflict and drama are important in theatre and storytelling. This however doesn't always need to be based on 100% truth, facts and reality. You can add some fiction and don't need to tell everything, if this is still too painful. It is also advised not to dive into traumatic experiences for creative outputs when you are still 'living' it and were not able to process the experiences.

### Crisis

A crisis is the serious and decisive situation that endangers the development of an issue or process. It's a short-lived difficult situation for a person/group. It is a universal experience, sometimes lived alone (Lesny, 2020). The situation is an opportunity to identify issues and provide solutions (maybe afterwards). On the spot, you can best respond by being supportive, for example; Asking if there is anything you can do to help, Checking if there is a point that can be clarified; Conducting a relevant exercise; Calling for a break (Dufresne, 2011).

### Trauma

Very intense shock or emotional impression caused by some negative event or event that produces in the subconscious of a person a lasting imprint that cannot or does not take to





overcome. They last longer. It is an individual experience. They are negative situations for the person. Trauma is an event that evokes social roles: "victim", "hero", "relief staff", etc (Lesny, 2020).

Sharing stories honestly and actively exploring memories can also touch and revive traumas. Perhaps the sharing of stories can subsequently also contribute to processing or giving the trauma a place, but that is really the work of specialists. If they feel that the story that they are sharing brings up traumatic experiences, bad feelings suggest a brief timeout or to stop or restart or restart another time.

What is clear is that trauma makes a journey to the past impossible for some. Memories linked to it can be too painful, which can even lead to an entire personal history being contaminated, either because it is reduced to the traumatic event(s) and other memories are suppressed, or because any confrontation with the past is avoided. In these cases, forced storytelling is counterproductive and can even be harmful. Avoid people sharing their stories immediately after the strong event of their life. A wound has to be healed before sharing it for the broader audience.

During a flashback or a panic attack, people often feel a sense of disassociation, as if they're detached from their own body. Anything you can do to "ground" them will help. Encourage them to take deep, slow breaths (hyperventilating will increase feelings of panic). Tell them even the flashback feels real, the event is not actually happening again. Help remind them of their surroundings (for example, ask them to look around the room and describe out loud what they see). Avoid sudden movements or anything that might startle them. Ask before you touch them. Touching or putting your arms around the person might make them feel trapped, which can lead to greater agitation and even violence (Smith and Robinson, 2018).

Additional material:

[Helping Someone with PTSD - HelpGuide.org](https://www.helpguide.org/mental/trauma.htm)

[How do I help someone with PTSD? \(Post-traumatic stress disorder\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Trauma and the Nervous System: A Polyvagal Perspective - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Conflict

A conflict is an opposition or disagreement between people. They will seek to impose their domain or criteria on a particular object in dispute. Punctual, an object matter of discord. The





duration of the process will depend on the subjective value assigned to those involved in the thing in dispute and the existing mechanisms for negotiation. More than one person is involved. It can lead to a different or new paradigm, in case that permanent mechanisms are established to solve it (Lesny, 2020).

One of the elements that can be important to take into consideration is language. If you are working with two groups that do not speak the same language, it is wise not to choose one of the two languages, but to work in a third, neutral language. In this way you prevent one of the groups from gaining an advantage and becoming dominant (Barel, 2020, p.95).

If you work with traditional tales, you should be very aware of their origin. Do not use them if they are rooted in only one of the cultures you are working with. On the other hand many tales exist across different cultures and regions, so they might be helpful in bridge building as well (Barel, 2020, p.119).

The composition of the team of facilitators is also an aspect to take a good look at. When the facilitators belong to one group, this can lead to a problem in workshops aimed at bringing together conflicting groups. In these cases, it is better to work with a facilitator who does not belong to any of the groups and who cannot in any way be associated with any of those groups. Or you can work with a larger team, with representatives from all participating groups. This can also set a good example for the participants (Barel, 2020, p. 95).

### iii. Engaging people to participate in digital storytelling for social integration

Encouraging individuals to shape their heterogeneous experiences into stories of personal reflection can improve their personal and communication skills, enhance community building and understanding. Using a digital format allows us to share a story in a powerful way with a wider community online. Digital Storytelling (DS) is a democratic and inclusive tool for everyone. For example, it helps to reduce negative attitudes and stereotypes, It may encourage others to seek help, and It can be a healing and empowering experience, too.

In personal development, the brain and the heart are both persuaded by digital storytelling. We can learn the significance of emotional rhetoric through digital stories, which allow us to experiment with new ways of acting and thinking. These stories have the potential to trigger emotional responses and urge them to pursue areas that they are interested in (Bouchrika, 2021).





Digital storytelling becomes an effective means of communication because narration is enhanced by visual aids, still images, music, and the authors' voice which expresses emotions. By digitally telling stories of different genres, learners may learn from, about, and through stories, and learn by reflecting on the experience of narrating and the narrating of experience (Cortazzi & Jin, 2007; Wang and Zhan, 2010) and present their ideas and knowledge in a personalised manner. According to Robin, participating in the digital stories creation process can help developing enhanced communications skills by learning to organize ideas, asking questions, expressing opinions, and constructing narratives (Smeda, Dakich and Sharda, 2012).

The long-term consequences of digital storytelling could be the wider social and cultural formations, even for democracy itself (Couldry, 2008). "Digital storytelling is part of a wider democratization, a reshaping of the hierarchies of voice and agency that characterize mediated democracies" (Couldry, 2008). The narration becomes a 'mediation' for communication. According to John Hartley digital storytelling needs to be able to be used for more than the communication of personal experience to reach its potential of raising the voice of otherwise excluded (or neglected) people into the "freedom of the internet" so that meaningfully challenge the way of how knowledge is constituted, understood and disseminated through the media (2009; Poletti, 2011).

Additionally, life oral storytelling can be authentic, powerful and dealing with universal themes that unite the community. It is offered as a technique for increasing understanding across generations, ethnicities and other divides, and as a tool in activist organizing, education, professional reflection and corporate communication (Lambert, 2006; Couldry, 2008). By engaging in respectfully listening to each other's stories with perhaps can lead to sort out new solutions, planning and decision making. Exchanging and collecting digital stories could work as the practice of reading (book culture), with consequences for the wider distribution of power in intensely mediated, but also often increasingly unequal, societies (Couldry, 2008).

More practically, during a storytelling process that will be disseminated digitally, the narrator; has plenty of preparation time; can re-do a video and refine the result; don't 'have to' face the crowd and can still reach a large audience. Moreover it's easily accessible and usable, at least the introduction and instruction can be translated into relevant languages, there is possibility for more reactions and longer lasting interaction with people and create connections worldwide.





## 4. Storytelling Principles

A narrative is a semiotic representation of a series of events connected in a temporal and causal way. Films, plays, comic strips, novels, newsreels, chronicles and treatises of geological history are all narratives in this widest sense. Narratives can therefore be constructed using a wide variety of semiotic media: written or spoken language, images, gestures and acting (Garcia Landa, 2005). Narration principles in writing fiction: point of view, characterization, plot, and conflict can be exercised in many different ways. How you choose to exercise them is what will make your story distinctively different from anyone else's (Welcker, n.d.). It also contributes to the meaning making process.

### The Hero's Journey as told by Barel (2020, p. 17)

Once upon a time in a land far, far away. Now, isn't that how every good story should begin? While this may be slightly facetious, there is some truth and value to that classic story framework. They all have a beginning, a middle and an end, but a good story needs more than that. Let's take *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) by Joseph Campbell as a starting point. This American literary scholar analysed countless Fairy Tales, Folk Tales, and Legends to describe the archetypal Narrative Structure found within them. He considers every good story to be a hero's journey, where the hero is the story's protagonist. In our own personal stories the theory is similar, it is a journey, as is so much of our lives. A journey of emotional movement, sometimes also physical - but always swaying and subject to change.

We explain Campbell's structure in bird's-eye view in order to extract the key points that can be applied in working with Storytelling. Campbell describes the hero's journey in seventeen steps, divided into three main phases:

- Departure
- Initiation
- Return

In the departure phase of the story, the hero finds themselves in the ordinary world and receives a call to go on an adventure. The hero doubts whether they should answer the call, but a mentor helps them along their way.





The initiation is when the hero crosses the threshold of the unknown and enters a 'special world', where they encounter assignments and challenges, which they must solve alone or with the assistance of helpers.

In the end, the hero reaches the innermost cave or the ultimate crisis in their adventure, where they must endure an ordeal and defeat the main obstacle or their greatest enemy. They undergo an apothecic epiphany and are rewarded, usually with a treasure or an elixir.

With their reward, the hero must return to their old world. Sometimes they don't want to, and then they may be forced to do so by an outside intervention.

In the return phase, the hero again crosses the threshold between the two worlds and returns to the ordinary world with the reward they have received. A reward they can now use for their fellow humans. The hero has changed through their journey, gaining wisdom and spiritual power (Campbell, 1948).

This last sentence, is the basis of the application of stories in communities, as well as the creation of personal growth and social impact. It's about undergoing a metamorphosis by making a physical or mental journey. In fact, the hero's journey is the perfect metaphor for the classic human crisis. It describes the process along with everything that goes with it: a challenge, losing control, regaining control and self-realisation. Using a process that is so much a part of our everyday is important, it allows the narrator to be aware of the flow (the so-called red thread) and also gives the listener the chance to recognise and mirror their own experiences within the story.

Every phase of life, no matter how long or short, can be seen as a journey with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The difference between the beginning and the end is that there has been a change. The main character has become wiser because of what they have come across along the way. Challenges and opponents can stand in our way but there are also helpers and mentors who smooth the path. These are the same forces that make a story attractive.

To illustrate this, we often ask workshop participants to tell the Fairy Tale of Little Red Riding Hood, without the wolf (opponent) or the hunter (helper). Often the attempt is quickly stopped, as it is concluded that without these forces there is really no story, let alone any wisdom or insight gained.





## The Simplified Story Structure from Barel (2020, p. 20)

Let's break this down even further and see what we can find. A reduced five point story structure could look like the following:

- Situation A - initial situation
- Situation B - final situation
- Trigger
- Helpers
- Opponents

Situation A is the starting situation, the humdrum daily routine, where our protagonist is living a carefree life, at least with regard to what they are about to go through.

Situation B is the final situation, the destination, in which the main character has gained new insights, due to what they have experienced along the way. Examples of these lessons can be: that you always have to obey your parents (as in Little Red Riding Hood), that good behaviour always triumphs (Lion King), that greed is always punished (the Chinese Fairy Tale of the Master of the Crane Followers) or that whoever is good to their friends is good to themselves (several Folk Tales, such as the one about the cunning spider Anansi).

There must always be a reason to travel, to set upon this journey. As people, we can get used to staying stagnant, passivity can become our default state, something needs to happen for us to change this. That's what we call the trigger, the call or the motor moment. Often the main character gets an inspiration or an assignment, such as Little Red Riding Hood who is asked by her mother to bring a basket of cookies to her sick grandmother. The trigger in a Personal Story can be, 'I hadn't heard from Siobhan for months, even though we had bumped into each other every week before that. So one day I decided to go to her house and ring the bell'.

During the journey, the hero encounters all kinds of situations as well as people, helpers, and opponents. Some help the hero on the journey and others work against them. It's not just about living beings. For example, a large lake that you encounter while trying to escape an evil witch can be quite an obstacle. Your own character can also be a helper or an opponent. The fact that you are a go-getter can be the reason that you reach the final goal,

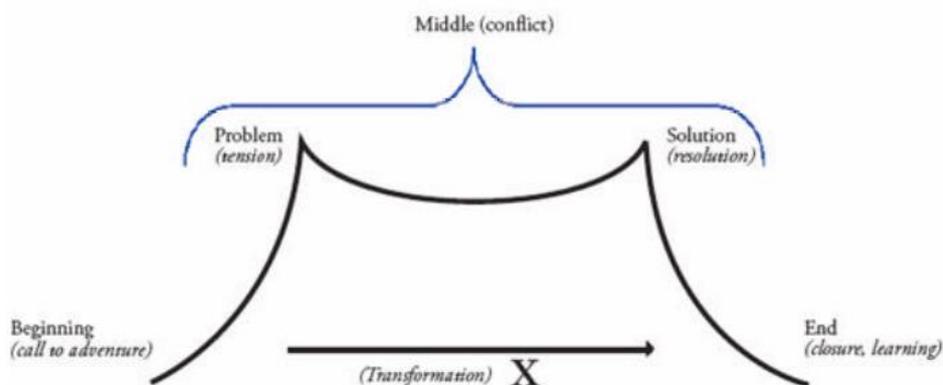




but fear can make you wonder whether you will actually finish the journey. Of course you deal with that fear in the end, with that process of overcoming, contributing to your understanding of the final situation.

This simplified structure allows everyone to create a story quickly, because the elements are easy to explain and clearly identifiable. It often works best to apply the reverse method. Someone is invited, not to build a story according to this structure, but is given the opportunity to tell their story as they choose. Once they do so, we then ask them how the structure is relevant to their story. Nine times out of ten, the structure already forms the backbone of the shared story. Usually unconsciously, which also indicates how much this story structure is in our DNA and determines our thinking (as we mentioned previously). This is an important lesson for Storytelling work. We are not reinventing the wheel. We are only choosing to highlight ideas and concepts that already exist.

Another relevant simple graphic depiction is the Ohler Story Map below, (2006; Gakhar and Thompson, 2007) which is connected to what Aristoteles presented in his Poetica:



**Figure 1.** Visual Portrait of a Story or Story Map  
Source: Ohler (in press)

Additional material:

[Storytelling Techniques for Engaging Your Audience \(motivationgrid.com\)](https://www.motivationgrid.com/storytelling-techniques-for-engaging-your-audience/)

[How to Tell a Story Effectively: 7 Storytelling Tips](#)

The Principles of Narration: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsttpN0YzGA>





## Digital Storytelling

The term 'Digital Storytelling' means using ICT tools to manipulate content – audio, text, still images or film – to tell stories. Digital Storytelling began in California in the 1990s with Dana Atchley, Joe Lambert and Nina Mullen. This group of performers wanted to provide individuals and communities with the computer tools and skills needed so that they were able to tell their own stories using a digital format (Lambert, 2002; Sandra P. M. Ribeiro, 2016).

The Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling according to the Center for Digital Storytelling are:

1. Point of view: Define the main point and perspective trying to communicate in the story.
2. A dramatic question: A key question that keeps the audience engaged and will be answered by the end of the story. The story needs to have structure and clear intention.
3. Emotional content: Serious issues that come alive in a personal and powerful way and connect the story to the audience and hold their attention.
4. The gift of your voice: A voiceover is a way to personalize the story to help the audience understand the context. It does much of the work of engendering the identification between viewer and author, where effect is used to communicate similarity and foster empathy.
5. The power of the soundtrack: Music or other sounds that support and embellish the storyline, by creating atmosphere.
6. Economy: Using the proper content to tell the story without overloading the viewer.
7. Pacing: The rhythm of the story and how slowly or quickly it progresses. Juxtaposition and closure are concepts used to introduce storytellers to the role of symbolism and metaphor in storytelling, with a clear preference in digital storytelling for 'implicit' meaning, which is related to the element of point of view. Like economy, pacing brings attention to the editing process, and the importance of considering how the story works as a whole. Lambert instructs digital storytellers that 'Good stories breathe' and again an emphasis on creating space for reverie and consideration by the audience is given.

Additional material:



[Share Your Story: A How-to Guide for Digital Storytelling \(samhsa.gov\)](#)

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