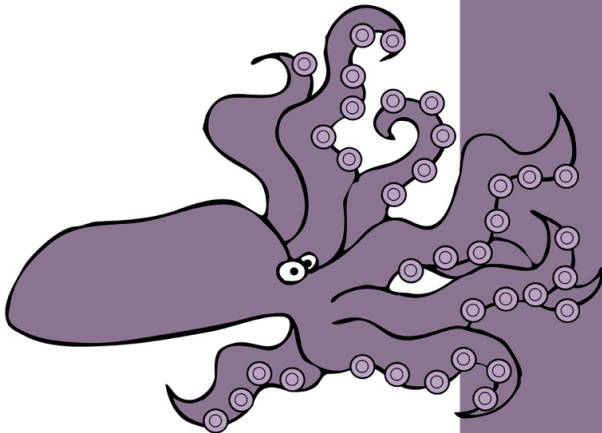


# Scenario-Based Learning



**Ray Jimenez** is an advocate of scenario-based learning, rapid application of knowledge and learning performance systems. His writing is based on first hand experience and on-going experimentations. He helps clients internationally in strategy development and e-Learning systems and innovative content design. He is CEO of Vignettes for Training, Inc. and leads an e-Learning virtual team of 75 people globally. Ray has a Ph.D. in Organization Development from St. Peter's College and Studies in Interactive Systems from University of California, Los Angeles.

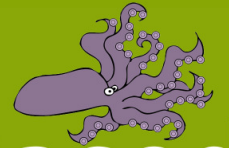
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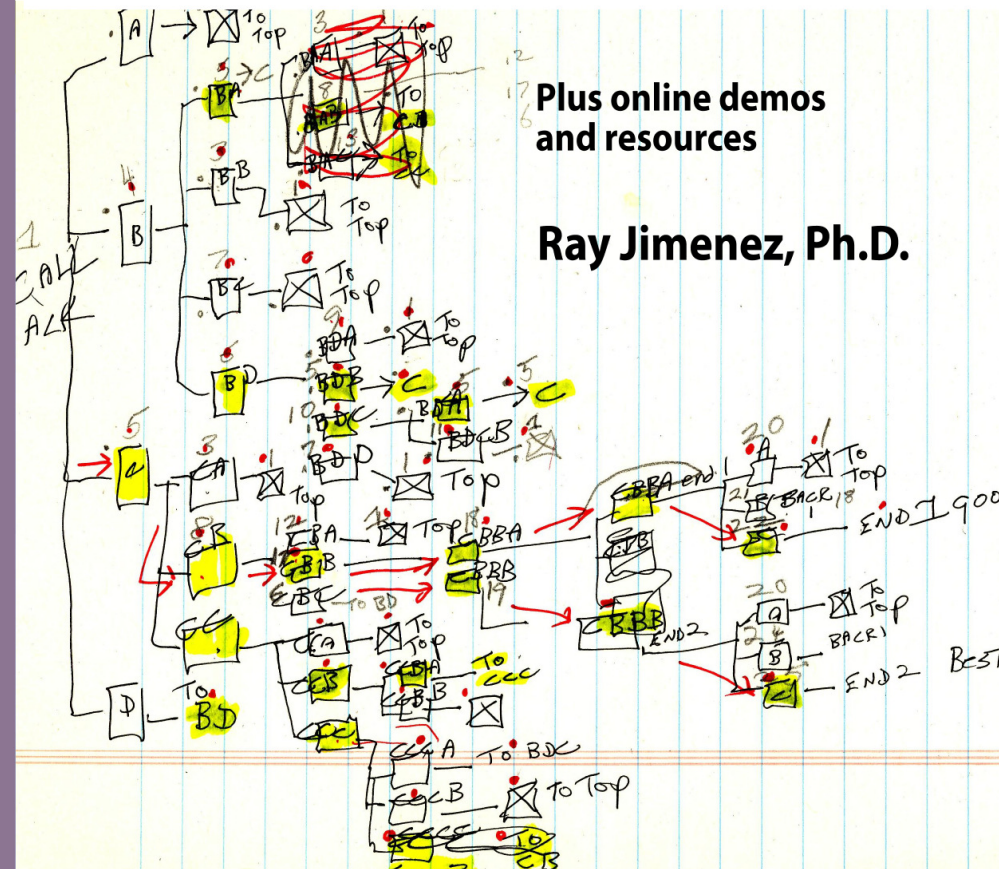
Scenario-Based Learning

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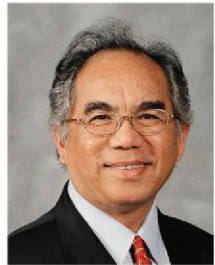
## Using Stories To Engage e-Learners



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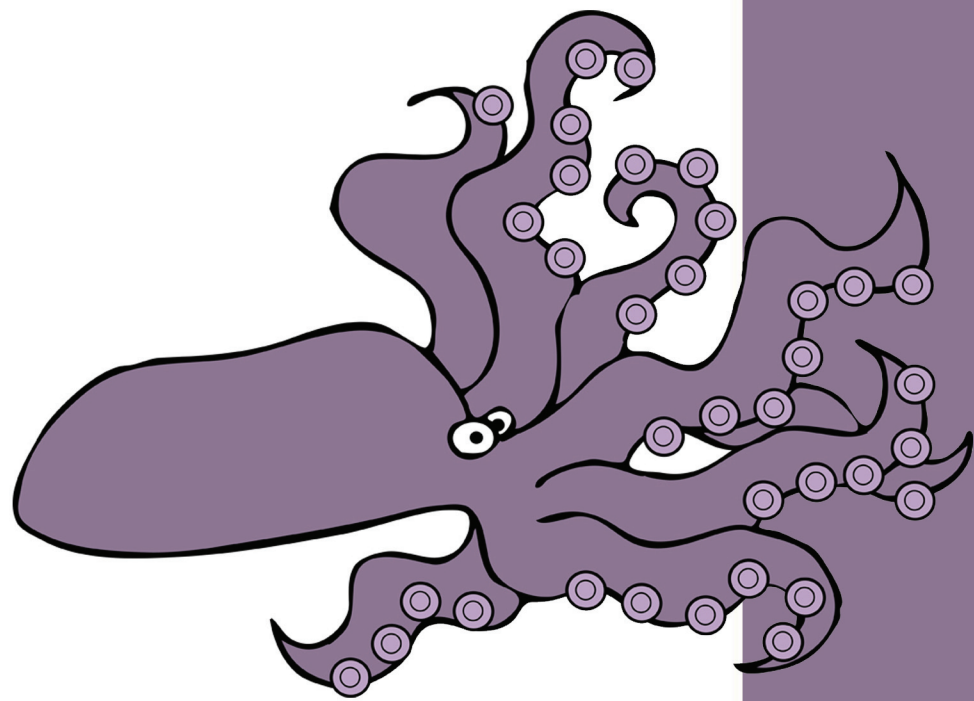
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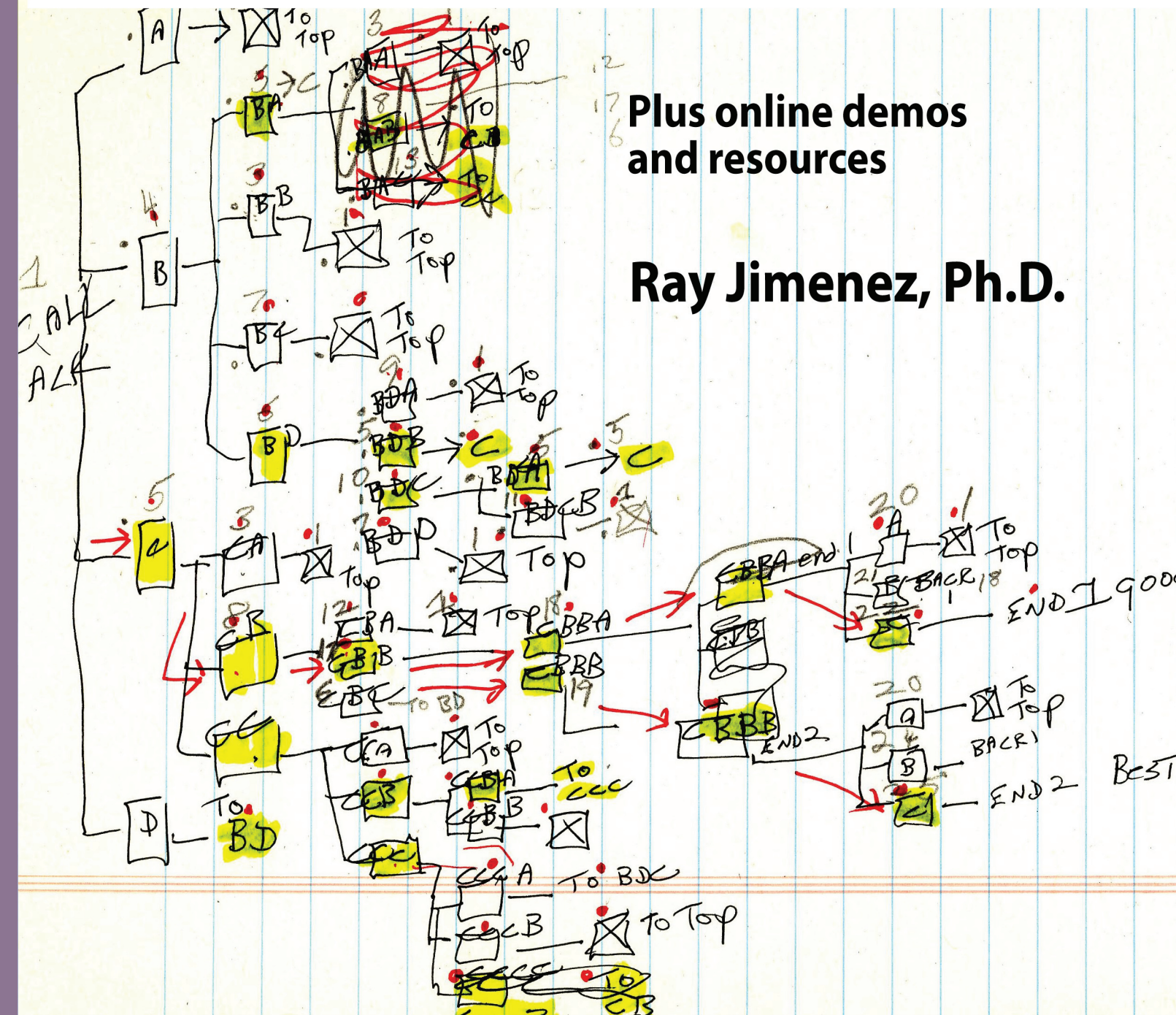
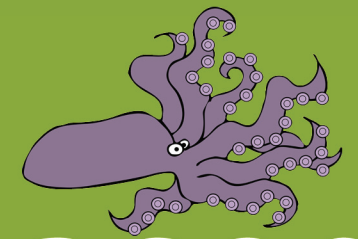


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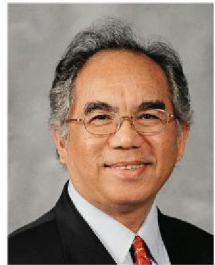
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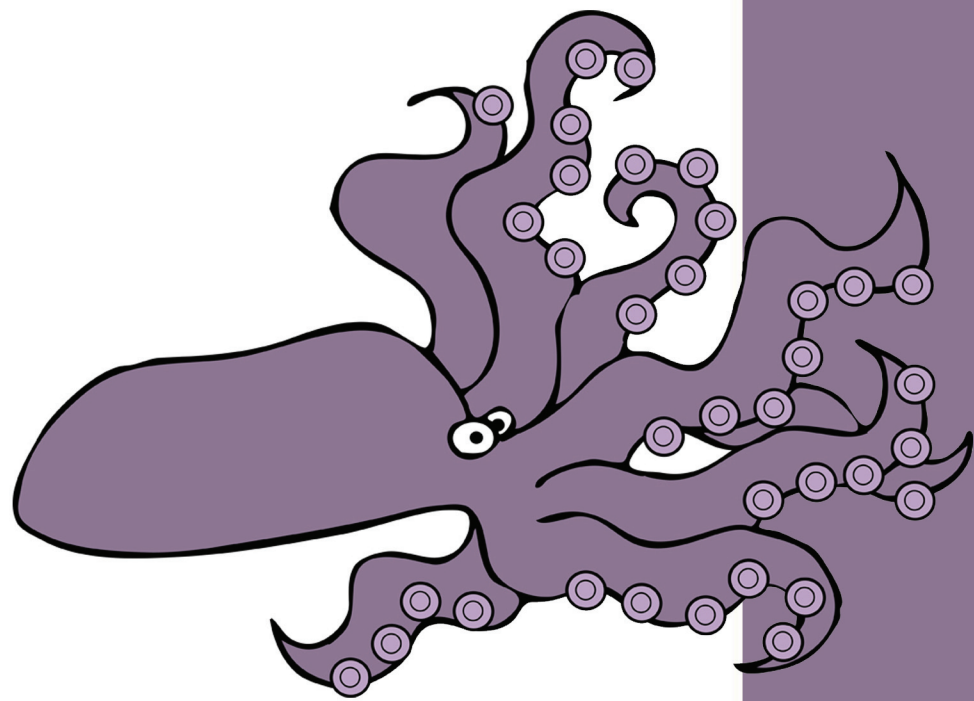
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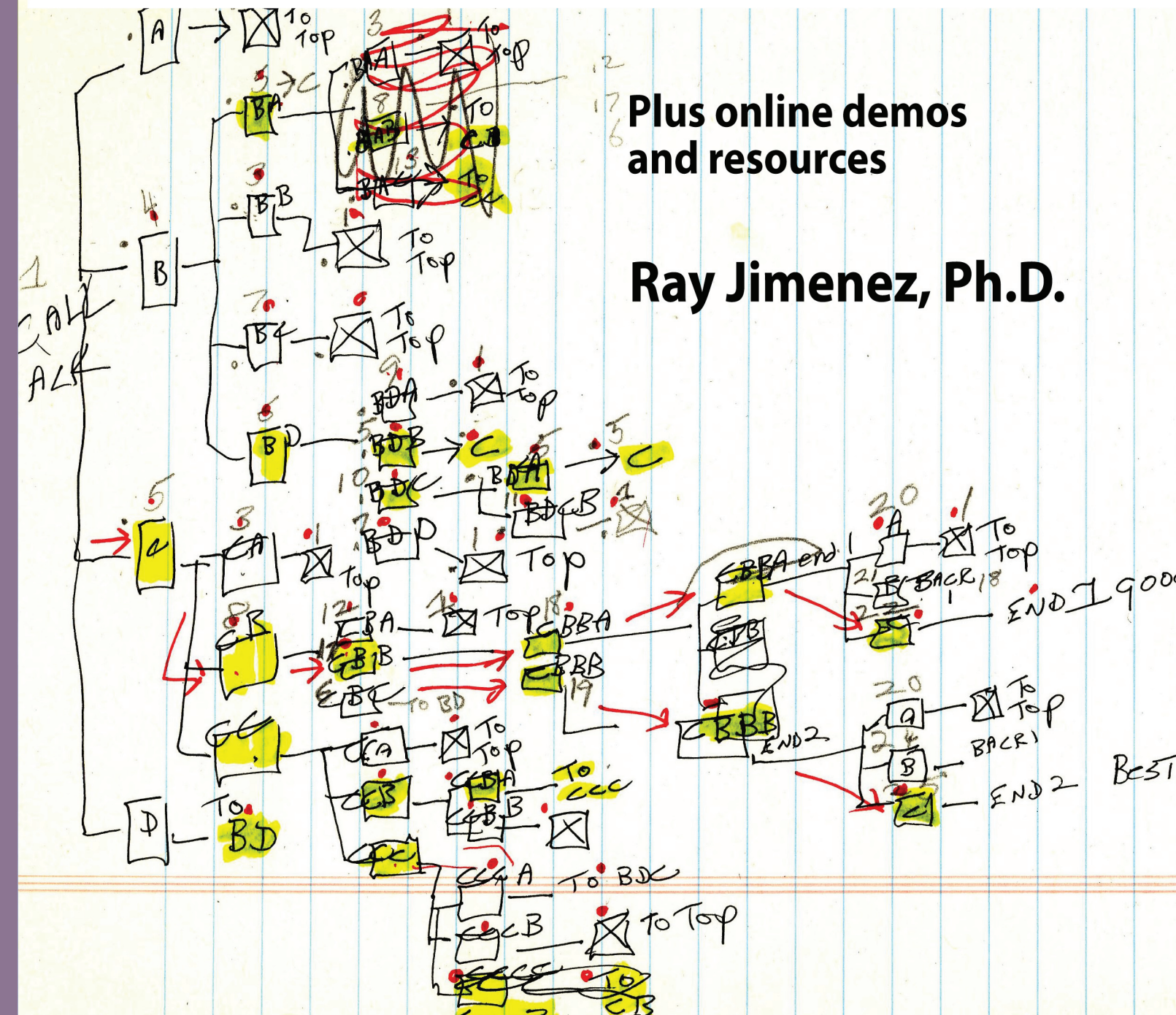
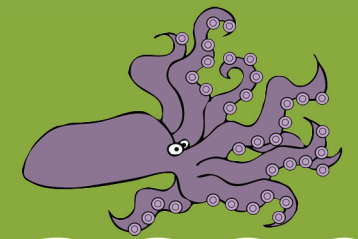


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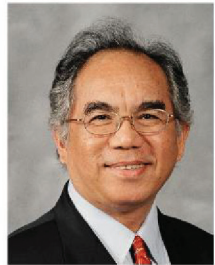
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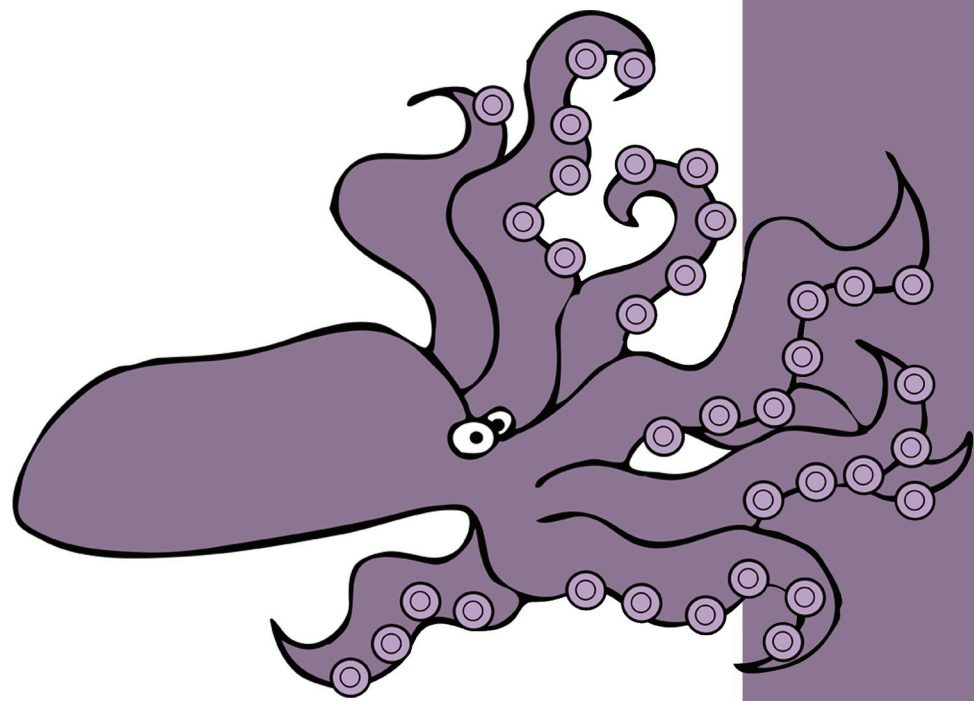
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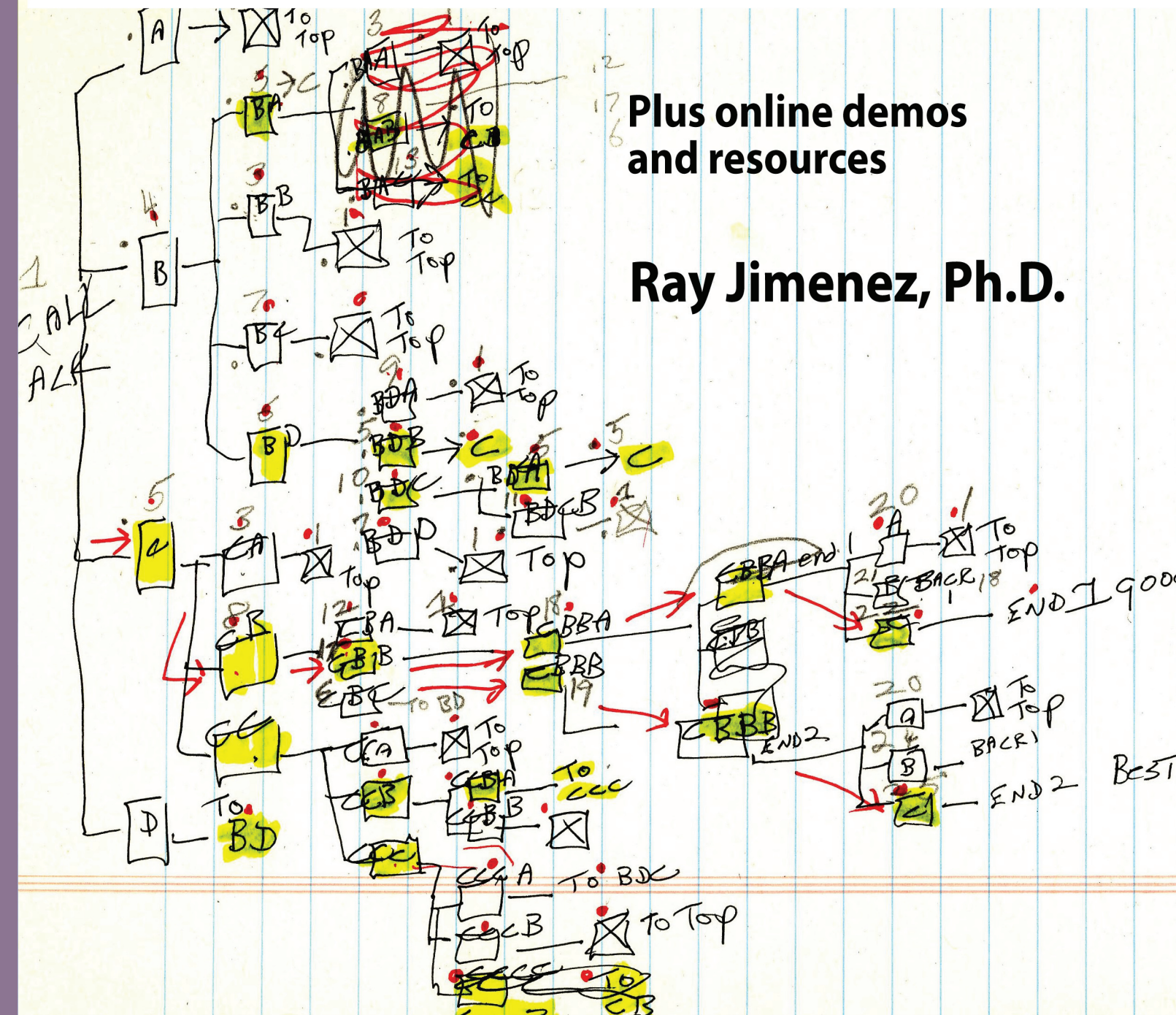
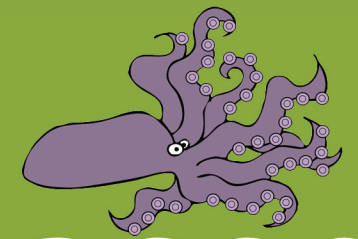


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Plus dozens of online demos, examples,  
resources

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To ask questions about the book, contact the author, or report a mistake in the text, please write to Ray Jimenez, at [rjimenez@vignettestraining.com](mailto:rjimenez@vignettestraining.com).

To my family of storytellers, Marisu, Raymond and Francesca  
for the dinner talks, never ending stories, and life  
discoveries - bonding at Kinko's, Russian spaceships,  
Mr. Froggy, blue Capri, and great movies ...  
"and then he fell into a deep hole."

## **Acknowledgment**

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“For those who help others to learn, storytelling is in your heart. If you somehow lost it, I hope this book will help you discover your roots.”

– Ray Jimenez

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## 3 Introduction

This book is meant to help e-Learning designers create better Scenario Based Learning, what we call an SBL. Just to be on the same page, or in this case the same screen, an SBL is a type of learning that places the learner in a scene or situation. Rather than simply telling learners information, SBLs embed learning in order to engage the learner to think and react. Because SBLs are interactive, they ask the learner to respond to the scene in a way that is engaging and help him/her understand and apply concepts. SBLs are good for applying knowledge, exploring issues, and problem-solving, making judgments and decision-making.<sup>1</sup>

Constructing an e-Learning SBL is like eating an artichoke. Before we can enjoy the heart of the artichoke, we need to peel away the petals.

Many SBLs serve the petals and fail to serve the heart of the SBL. The heart of an SBL is about experience. It is about sharing stories. Finding the heart should be a self-discovery. Poorly constructed SBLs deprive learners of the fun of eating the artichoke heart.

The skill required for building SBLs is figuring out how to help the learners discover the heart of the story and learn the hidden treasures of wisdom. That is the purpose of this book.





## 4 Visit to the monastery

Every now and then I take a pilgrimage. I visit my guru.

My guru is the inventor and patent holder of several technologies related to ultrasound applications in testing metals for space shuttles, airplanes and nuclear submarines. He has built and sold a few companies in the areas of defense and medical devices. At the height of his career, he was a science adviser to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Defense. He was a faculty member in management at a leading university. He was also a management consultant and an investment banker.

A trip to my guru, which I take frequently, means breakfast at a Denny's Restaurant. The visit always energizes me. Whenever I ask a question, he answers with a story relating to his personal experience.

I once asked him about what I should look for in hiring an executive to run the day-to-day operations of my business.

"Integrity," he said. That was the idea he wanted to convey. But then he related a story.

"I once had a friend who asked me to help raise capital for his business. I asked him why he needed capital. He said, 'I need money to grow the business and hire good scientists.' So, I found the capital, and he was very thankful. Weeks later, I visited his office. As I drove onto the parking lot, my friend was getting out of his brand new Rolls Royce. I commented, 'I love your life style.' He said, 'Now that we have the funding, I can reward myself.' I yanked the funding the next day."

That story is one of the best lessons I've ever had about integrity.

I often wonder why some people can tell stories as a way of communicating a message. Is it because of their experiences? Their style? A skill? Do more interesting things happen to them than the rest of us?

I believe it has more to do with their desire and ability to share their experiences or "aha" moments through storytelling.

These are the type of stories we need to have in our scenario-based e-Learning – a conversation with our learners.



SBLs and storytelling give us another opportunity to improve our learning programs. As Jeremy Hsu<sup>2</sup> wrote in *Scientific American* ([www.sciam.com](http://www.sciam.com)), “Our love of telling tales reveals the workings of the mind . . . research on stories has only just begun. It has already turned up a wealth of information about the social roots of the human mind.” SBLs and storytelling are more than “fluff” or a “feel-good” method. They are rooted in our learning fabric.

One of the challenges of implementing technology-based learning is that we have become more impersonal in our designs and programs. They tend to be mechanistic rather than real and natural. There is even software to help us plot SBLs, but it is only a tool for organizing and saving time. It doesn’t help make the content rich and memorable.<sup>3</sup>

“Sharing stories and experiences makes our lives richer. We give away a part of ourselves,” my guru says.

In most cases you have your own gurus who have stories to tell. Seek them out. Relish their wisdom and learn from them. We are not alone in our quest to use stories in business and organizational performance. I reach out to the works of John Seely Brown, Steve Denning, Roger Schank, Seth Kahan, Clark Quinn and Clark Aldrich for inspiration and guidance.<sup>4</sup>

I look forward to my pilgrimages. They make me a better person. If you don’t have one, find a guru.

### Exercise 1

(NOTE: If you do all the exercises along the way, it will help you apply and build your SBL in the latter chapters. If you don’t, oh well. You will learn the hard way – maybe the best way for you, as for most of us.)

*If you have a guru, what stories does your guru tell you? Why are they memorable?*



## Online Examples 1



(**Note:** To access a secure server and preview the examples, please send an email to <http://www.vignettestraining.com/preview-main-contact.htm> and request for the access to the SBL references. Please allow 24 hours for a response.)

## Examples of Stories

Father Guido  
Fair Housing Compliance  
Crisis Management  
General interest web sites on storytelling  
NPR This American Life







## 5 Movies and Stories

*“When was the last time you watched a really good movie, enjoyed it, and at the end, someone came out of the big screen and interpreted the movie for you?”*

– Pete, the storyteller

Scenario-based learning (SBL) is the technique. The story is the heart and soul.

A few years back, Steve Nun, a client, engaged my firm to develop an SBL project. Excited with the assignment and not knowing any better, I assembled my team of trainers, instructional designers, and Flash and graphic developers.

I asked the team leader, Jan, if the group could handle the project. She said, “yes.” I asked how.

“An SBL is a discovery process where the learner is presented with scenarios and asked to make decisions based on the best options offered. Along the way, the learner learns by discovering the answers. It uses the constructivist theory, mirroring the way children learn best,” Jan explained.

Convinced by this highfalutin’ and scientific-sounding explanation (excuse my sarcasm since I was ignorant of what an SBL was), I said, “Okay, let’s go ahead and do it.”

Little did I know that I would embark on a horrible experience, which eventually led to extremely valuable insights.

After a couple of weeks, Jan and the team presented their skeleton idea. This SBL is a selling scenario. At a certain point, it comes to this cross-road.

I didn’t know how to tell Jan and her team, but I was unimpressed and unmoved.

“I don’t get this. It does not grab me. It is like a multiple-choice question,” I said. “Why do you provide feedback for every action?”

“We want to make sure the learner learns the content whether she is right or wrong,” Jan said in her usual animated way.



## 5 Scenario-Based Learning: Using Stories to Engage e-Learners

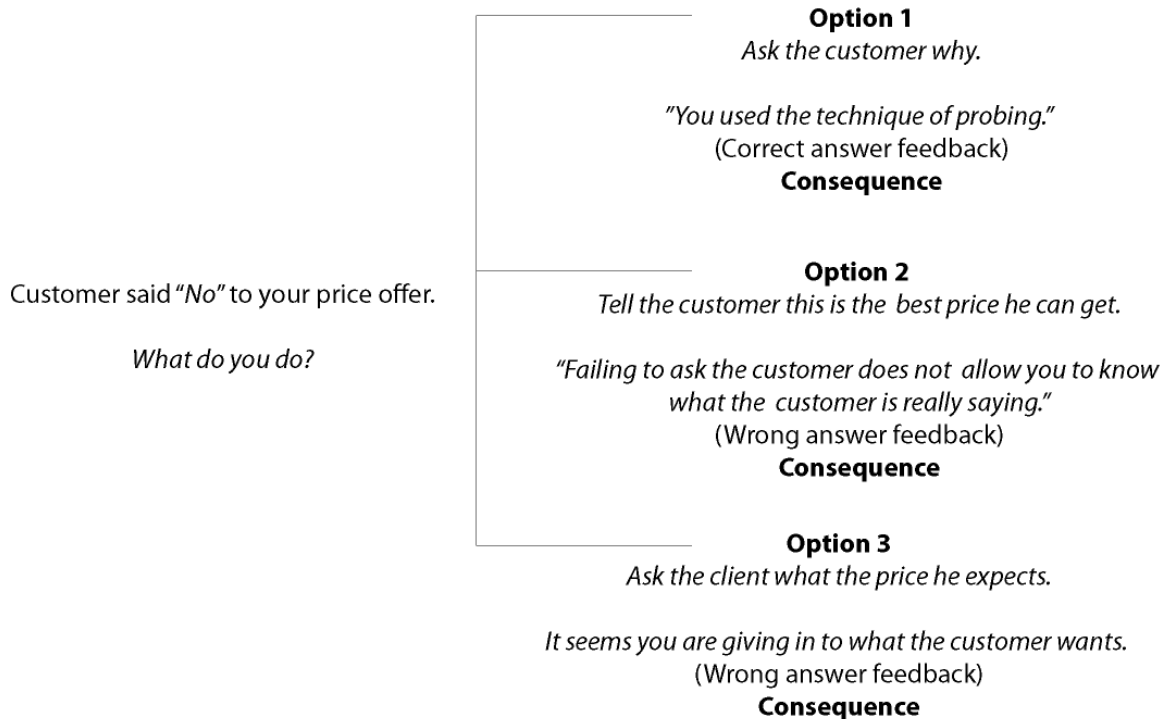


Illustration No. 1 – Jan's initial SBL diagram

I was unconvinced, but I wanted to see further where Jan's ideas would bring us. "Jan, do more, and let's see."

After two more meetings, Jan and her team expanded the scenarios to include more branching. The more scenarios, branching and options, the more I felt it was not going to get to where I could confidently say that we had a good product.

It was frustrating on my part, and I'm sure Jan and her team felt the same way. Something was wrong and I could not pinpoint what it was. I was about to throw in the towel when a thought came to me out of desperation:

"Scenarios are about stories, right? Why not get a movie script writer to write the scenarios?"

So I did. I hired a starving scriptwriter. We have plenty of them in Hollywood, where they work as waiters or bartenders at night to pursue their Hollywood dreams in the daytime. Jan, always gracious, agreed to work with the scriptwriter. Pete was his name.



After two weeks Jan and Pete could not agree on how to develop the SBL. Water did not mix with oil, I thought. Jan insisted that the feedback answers should be provided at the end of each branch or decision points. Pete disagreed, insisting that feedback kills the story. I called them to a meeting, which I felt was the make-or-break point of the SBL project. I was very unhappy with the progress and had decided to tell the client we couldn't deliver the project on time.

When I told Jan and Pete of my decision, both were disappointed. Pete was adamant that we needed more time to develop a good plan.

"Before you end the project, can I illustrate a point to you?" Pete asked.

"When was the last time you watched a really good movie, enjoyed it, and at the end, someone came out of the big screen and interpreted the movie for you?"

Jan and I looked at each other. "Never, right?" Pete challenged.

I agreed. "This guy is saying something," I thought to myself. But I still did not understand.

"Tell us more," I said. Then, I kept quiet.

Pete hammered home a key point I will not forget:

"Scenario-based learning is the technique, while the story is the soul. When you use storytelling, it has to be organic, real and authentic. The story allows the reader, audience or learner to learn from it. Injecting feedback is interpreting the story for the audience. Feedback diminishes the power, flow and emotional effect of the story."

"Whoa," I thought. We are so concerned with the mechanics of using an SBL; we forgot it is all about the story. The story is the heart and soul.<sup>4</sup>

Today, this insight sticks with me like bubble gum under my shoe. I can't shake it off.

"I think I understand what you are saying, but how do we make this happen?" I asked.



## Online Examples 2



For the purposes of illustrating our points in the book, we will refer to the following SBL examples and demos. See the online reference access to view the SBLs.

The Negotiator  
Can You Work with this Customer  
Too Much Downtime

## Exercise 2



Choose a single learning objective or goal you want learners to understand that could be developed as an SBL. Now, I really mean small, tiny, miniscule, granular – one single idea. There is a strong temptation here to take on too much at once. Avoid it.

*What is your small segment of content? (Choose carefully because this is a learning goal you will develop through the exercises in the book. If you work through them, you will have something good you can use!)*

*To convey an idea or learning point, have you used stories in your learning design before?*

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

*If so, what have the results been?*



## 6 Bucket List

*“people find it gratifying to exercise control – not just for the futures it buys them, but for the exercise itself.”*

– Daniel Gilbert, author of *Stumbling on Happiness*

Our lives are made up of incomplete stories, which perpetually drive us to search for more stories.

In the movie *The Bucket List*, Morgan Freeman and Jack Nicholson are both sick and could die at any time. Freeman keeps a wish list on a yellow pad, a bucket list, of the things he wants to do in his lifetime, but the reality of death overshadows the wishes. Freeman throws the list into the wastebasket, but he misses.

Nicholson finds the list. Being an adventurous character, he urges that both of them do what is on the list. Thus, they go skydiving, eat lunch on the top of a pyramid, race in a Shelby super-charged Ford Mustang, drive a Harley on the Great Wall of China, and many other things. Their friendship grows.

We all have a bucket list. In the movie, it is a vivid focal point since both characters are running out of time to make their wishes come true.

Our own bucket lists have things we want to do, whether written or not. We may not be fully aware of them, but we have many wishes that we want to discover, pursue and fulfill. This is our nature. We all have something we want to do; we are all perpetually engaged in completing something.

Daniel Gilbert in *Stumbling on Happiness* (2007) says that people want to control the circumstances in their lives because the ability to control is one of the most satisfying acts people can have.

In *The Bucket List*, Freeman’s wife complains that he is being irresponsible by running around the globe doing what young teenagers do. “I spent 45 years of my life doing things for other people. I am entitled to do things for myself,” he replies to his wife.



## 6 Scenario-Based Learning: Using Stories to Engage e-Learners

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Freeman has many stories in his life that he wants to complete. He feels, however, there is one wish that the stubborn Nicholson ought to fulfill. Reconnect with his daughter, whom he has not seen since she was a child. Nicholson violently rejects the notion. Spoiler alert: by the end, however, he finally meets her and his granddaughter, putting aside his fears.

In designing SBLs, how do we help learners meet learning objectives while respecting the nature of learners to be driven or engaged by their own interests? We *embed the goals* of the content in the story.<sup>5</sup>

Let's assume for a moment that *The Bucket List* is an extended SBL, and that the learning goal is the same as one of the themes of the story: a deeper happiness in life comes from connecting with family. The typical learning objective of a traditional training design states the learning objective at the very beginning. However, this approach does not work for SBLs. As we learned from Pete, our storyteller, this is one of those killers of SBLs. In the movie, Nicholson has to discover the lesson or objective himself. It has to be a natural part of the story.

To *embed the goals* of the content in the story is to write events or scenes in the story that allow the main characters to discover and choose the appropriate patterns of behaviors.



Different Bucket Lists



The following are illustrations of *embedding the learning goals* of the content.

### Embedding Learning Goals

Learning Goal	Patterns of behavior	Explanation
Use probing techniques. Ask questions to discover customer needs.	"Mr. customer, why do you need this particular feature?" "If you get this feature, what problem will you be able to solve?" "When would you want this problem solved?"	The learning goal is embedded in the patterns of behaviors in the form of questions. There is no need to state a goal as in traditional learning.
Alert others that you do not approve of unethical practices.	"John, you may have a good reason for divulging the private information, but I am uncomfortable with this." "It is not in the best interest of everyone involved."	The character expresses the goal of the content. The goal is embedded in this scene.
Receiving performance feedback. Learning from your mistakes.	Choice 1: "I don't deserve this. You only mention this problem now. But I have been doing this for the past few months." Choice 2: "Let me see. What could I have done differently?"	If the learner chooses 2, it is the appropriate behavior that reflects the embedded content: "To learn from your mistakes, ask what you could have done differently."

Table no. 1 - Embedding Learning Goals

Many of us in the business of teaching, learning and training believe it is our role to engage learners. We become frustrated during these occasions when we can't achieve this. We can only set the stage for learners to become engaged themselves. There's a difference. Learners are perpetually engaged by their own stories. They complete their own stories, their bucket lists. Trainers and designers merely help by facilitating the process.<sup>6</sup>

The power of SBLs is to allow learners to complete their stories and discover the embedded learning ideas, not to force them to participate in stories that don't resonate. They may go through the motions, but they won't be engaged.<sup>7</sup>





### Online Examples 3

Preview the online example, “The Negotiator”, in the section “Bucket List.”

- To discover the learning goals, find out what the win-win approach is in negotiation. This occurs when you receive a “Congratulations” message.
- After the SBL, ask yourself what you learned from the SBL about negotiation.
- Write down your answers and compare them to the endnote number<sup>8</sup>.

As an option, you may wish to ask your peers and other people to view “The Negotiator” and ask the question to find out the win-win approach in negotiation.

**NOTE: STOP YOURSELF.** In this example and exercise you will be tempted to analyze the SBL as a designer and developer. Don’t do it. Play the SBL first as a learner so you will have the opportunity to discover the embedded content.

#### “The Negotiator”

### Exercise 3

*State again the learning objective or goal of the small content segment for your SBL project (from Exercise 2).*

*Now describe behaviors that you feel could illustrate or portray your learning objective.*

*Think of a story that will transform these behaviors into characters involved in events, scenes or choices that have to be made. This is what will make your learning point come alive and be memorable.*



## 7 True Chatter

*"My movies are low budget. I don't do a lot of retakes. I take them as is and say cut."*

– Woody Allen,  
movie producer, actor

When Woody Allen was interviewed by Terry Gross on National Public Radio's *Fresh Air*<sup>9</sup>, she asked him how he was able to produce low budget films. His response was simple. "I capture what is natural, and let the actors go with the flow. Then I say, "Cut. No retakes. "

If you pause for a moment and listen to the emotional chatter in your work environment, you will likely hear real events and stories that are good material for an SBL. You need not edit, invent or retake them. Listen to the chatter of stories and use it:

"She is so anal."

"I pity the guy. After 15 years, he is fired without a penny."

"My health is deteriorating, and I am worried if I can keep up."

"As the elevator began to close, he started singing!"

"Meetings, meetings, meetings, oh my (sigh)! Am I really needed here?"

"I know your vacation starts tomorrow, but I really need this done."

"I couldn't remember if I left the iron on."

"His people skills, let's say, s...ks."

"I am on disability leave. I was hit by a forklift."

"So, I had to decide: meet up with her or stay with my friends."

"The boss is furious. We just lost our major account, worth \$20 million."

In a larger sense, chatter is also what we witness, not just hear, around us.







## 7 Scenario-Based Learning: Using Stories to Engage e-Learners

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What are common elements of a good story? Listen to the chatter and you will find:

- Events
- Set-ups
- Characters
- Conversations
- Emotions
- Conflicts
- Choices
- Consequences
- Resolutions
- Discoveries

We need to harness these basic elements of good stories to build good SBLs.

The right combination of the elements and their chatter will help build effective SBLs. But inventing chatter is difficult to do. The challenge is learning to listen, capture and combine chatter that supports the natural flow of the story, what Woody Allen calls “No retakes.”

I once saw a great quotation hanging on a wall in a scientist’s lab at MIT:

*“Scientists study and report what is happening in nature; they don’t invent or discover anything.”*

In the same way, good storytellers capture the natural chatter of stories. They preserve and present the stories for the audience to relish.

What happens when we try to invent stories that are artificial, their only merit being to point out a lesson? Or when we manufacture chatter that is disconnected from life? Our SBLs become sterile, adulterated, watered down or stale. Boring!

Which of the statements below is true chatter? In the heat of the moment someone says:

“\*&%\$ you!! You intentionally ran over my foot (with the forklift.) You must be on drugs!” OR “Why did you run over my foot? I am very upset.”

Well, what do you think? Which one is real chatter? Which is invented?



## Exercise 4



*What emotional chatter have you witnessed that could relate to your small segment of the content (from Exercises 2 and 3)? Try to make it sound real, the way people talk.*

*Write down the chatter so you can use it for building your SBL. Say it out loud to hear if sounds authentic.*

## Online Examples 4



In the following examples, pay attention to the chatter.

Intimidating Manager  
Production Line Pressures  
Flirtations in Customer Service  
HealthCare Service - Is He Dead?





## 8 Emotional Bursts and Starbucks

*"It was a perfect moment."*

—Jim Whittaker, first American to ascend Mt. Everest

In the summer of 2006, my family and I took a trip to Seattle. We made a special effort to visit Pike Place Market, a local "must see," where fish vendors sing and throw the fish to buyers.

In the market is Starbucks' first store, which opened in 1976. That day it was the store's anniversary, and they had some promotional activities.

We noticed that a distinguished looking elderly gentleman was signing autographs. My daughter Franny was curious and asked one of the "baristas" about him. The gentleman was Jim Whittaker, the first American to climb Mt. Everest. Starbucks engaged him to welcome guests during the anniversary. First store, first American to climb Everest - it was very fitting.<sup>10</sup>

We bought coffee, Grande Soy Chai for me, and asked Mr. Whittaker to autograph our poster and pose for a couple of group photos. Me being me, I had to pop a question to Mr. Whittaker: "How was it when you were at the peak of Mt. Everest?"

Like a small boy, I waited for his answer.

*"It was a perfect moment."*

That was exactly the kind of answer I was hoping for. I wanted to be inspired and touched, and I was. "What was that like?" I pushed further.

*"It was an emotional burst,"* he said.

This experience reminded me of a basic design principle for stories and SBLs - they should consist of emotional bursts.

What makes us feel emotional bursts? *Responding to and focusing on events that create an emotion.* Discovering or creating these events is a good first step toward creating effective scenarios.





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Ask the question that triggers *events* in our lives. What has been your . . .

Happiest moment?  
Greatest insight?  
Most fulfilling moment?  
Most inspiring experience?  
Funniest experience?  
Smartest decision?  
Biggest fantasy?  
Greatest hope?  
Greatest joy?

We also learned that the opposite can also evoke emotional bursts, but a different type. What has been your . . .

Greatest frustration?  
Most embarrassing moment?  
Most discouraging experience?  
Biggest failing?  
Biggest challenge?  
Deepest secret?  
Deepest fear?  
Greatest pain?

Pete, our starving writer, highlighted this point.

“People respond well to emotional bursts, whether these are positive or negative experiences. The more intense the emotional bursts and experiences, the more they are engaged with the events of the story in the SBL.” The deeper the emotions, the more people are engaged.<sup>11</sup>

“Furthermore,” he said, “The more the event, the story and the SBL contain the emotional bursts, the more the story and SBL offer a continuous flow that helps them deliver organic, real and authentic experiences.”

Reflecting on Jan’s project, how could she have improved the scenarios she worked on? Specifically, how could she transform an ordinary event into an emotional burst?<sup>12</sup> By asking questions:

*What is the risk for the person in the story? What is important to be gained from the story?*<sup>13</sup>

*What is the best (most positive) and worst (most negative) thing that could happen?*



Let's apply this to Jan's SBL. If you recall, it stated: "The customer said 'no' to your price offer. *What do you do?*"

Now, it became a burst:

"You told your boss that the contract is in the bag and you will make your monthly quota. You have missed the quota for the previous three months, and you were relying heavily on this contract to bounce back. Unexpectedly, the customer said 'no' to your price offer. *What do you do?*"

### Exercise 5

Using the small content segment you will use to build your SBL (Exercises 2, 3 and 4), answer these questions:

*What event, and the emotional burst (negative or positive) that goes with it, can you employ to move, impact or affect the learner of your content idea?*

*If you have thought of an event and it doesn't have an emotional burst, how can you change it to contain have one?*

### Online Examples 5

In the online samples, view these examples of emotional bursts.

#### Too Much Scrap

Too Much Scrap  
Misunderstood Customer  
Frustrated Programmer  
Furious Customer





## 9 Fluff and Superfluous Absurdities

Francesca, my fifteen-year-old daughter, started writing short stories and poems when she was ten years old (<http://www.lulu.com/content/4375370>). At the time, she showed me her drawing and a poem, "Mirror Land." This is an imaginary land where dogs are the masters and people are the pets. In the sketch below, the dog is walking a pet girl.



Francesca Jimenez, 2006

Absurd? Yes. But it caught my attention. I asked Francesca, "What is going on in Mirror Land?"

"This is an inverted world. I thought it might be interesting to see people as dogs. How does it feel to be a dog? What would a dog do if its master is unkind? What if the dog is really loved as a friend? How does it feel to eat dog food? How does it feel to poo openly in the playground? I wonder if it will be embarrassing. Will a dog as a master treat people differently? It is bizarre to even imagine. But bizarre ideas call people's atten-



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tion and get reactions.”

“Mirror Land” is what we call a set-up, or to use movie parlance, a premise for a plot. A premise often suggests a plot, but it should be interesting and engaging to keep the learner intrigued.

“In literary and dramatic works, the **plot** is the primary sequence of events experienced by the protagonist(s). Aristotle wrote in *Poetics* that mythos (plot) is the most important element of storytelling. Thus, a story must have a plausible chain of events for it to evoke the desired emotional or artistic response from an audience.”<sup>14</sup>

Going back to Jan’s initial attempts at the SBL, recall what she had written:

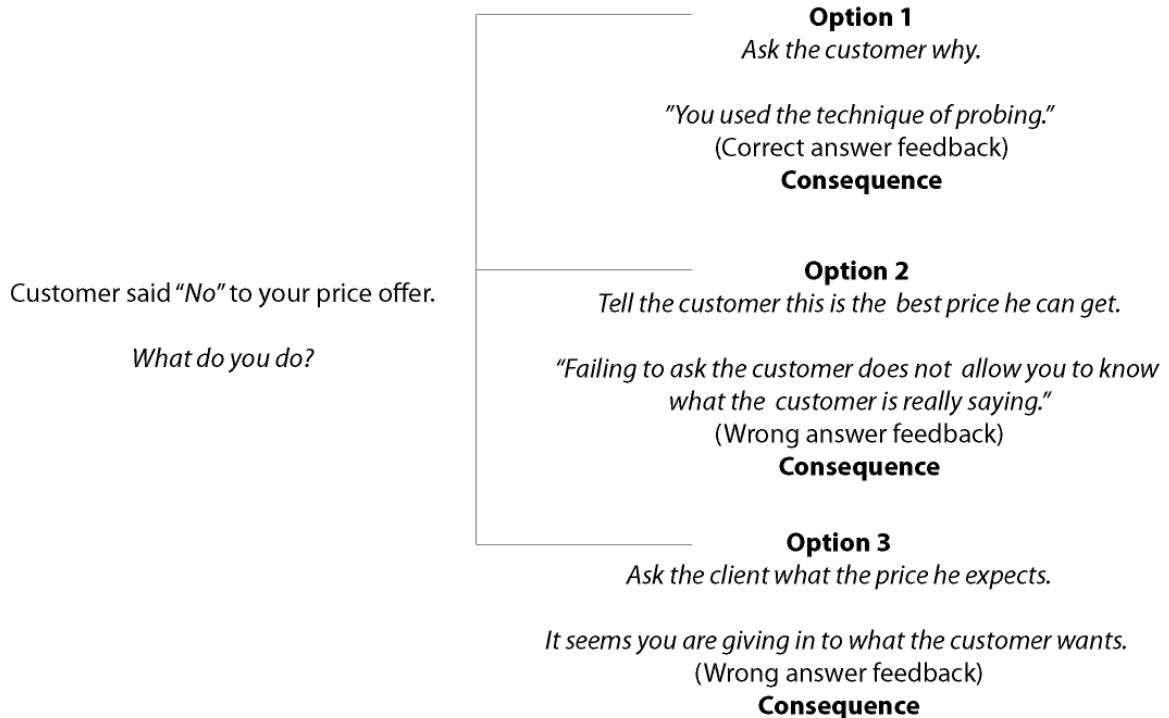


Illustration No. 1 – Jan’s initial SBL diagram

What does this remind you of? It looks like a multiple-choice test. It fails to generate the reaction we want to see from learners. We want them to be engaged in our SBLs. That is why Jan’s first design did not grab me. I knew something was missing.



How about if we add a set-up?

**An Event**

**A Set-up**

- Scene 1 Sandy, a long time customer, called you to discuss your proposal. In her voicemail, she sounded distressed and complained about your pricing.
- Scene 2 *"This is completely unexpected. Why did you not warn me about this?"* Sandy says.
- Scene 3 Upon checking Sandy's past purchases, you realized her purchases are about 40% of your sales. And she always wanted to negotiate to lower the price.
- Scene 4 Sometimes, Sandy can be pushy and difficult to work with. You checked with your boss and he said, *"Be gentle with her, but do not lower the price."*
- Scene 5 When you arrived in Sandy's office, the first words out of her mouth are *"NO! We don't like your price."*

What do you do?

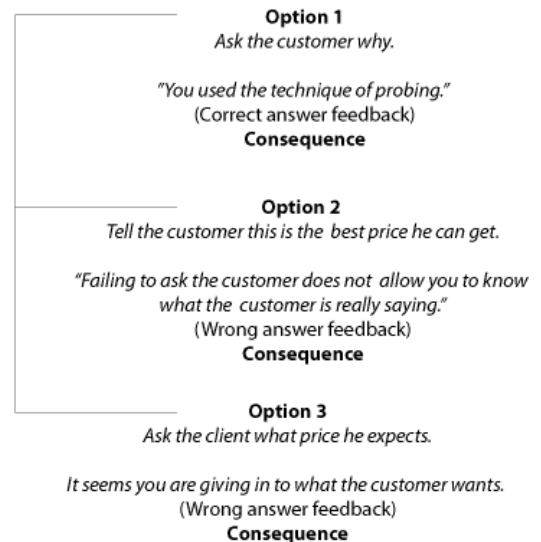


Illustration No. 2 – Jan's revised SBL diagram

Scenes 1 to 5 help in building the set-up of the event to draw learners into the story. The set-up helps them to understand the context of the story. It raises their curiosity and elicits emotional reactions. If we wish learners to pay attention to this part of the scenario, we should build stronger set-up scenes (maybe longer or more scenes). We can also do the opposite for events that may have less significance in the SBL (maybe fewer or no scenes).<sup>15</sup>

To illustrate how a strong set-up can grab the learner, the great director Alfred Hitchcock once tried to explain what makes a scene suspenseful. He said a film might show two men in an office sit down at a desk and discuss baseball for five minutes. Then, there's a big explosion. This would shock the audience for a few seconds. Now, go back and change the set-up, starting the scene by showing that there's a bomb under the desk. The two men sit down and discuss baseball for five minutes. The audience becomes nervous and agitated. They want to shout, "Get out of there!" The five minutes of tension seems unbearable. The set-up can rivet the learner.



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Even though we judge a movie or a book as bad when the plot is poorly handled, in our SBLs we often shy away from introducing a strong set-up, even though it would strengthen the plot. We go right to the branching exercises because they offer quick interactivity. Also, many traditional instructional designers and developers feel the set-up is “fluff” or “superfluous” stuff. So, we have a lukewarm feeling about taking time to develop set-ups, and we avoid them.

This is a mistake. What would happen if we remove all the fluff from our lives?<sup>16</sup>

I would rather live in Francesca’s Mirror Land. Maybe dogs have a better life with all the gourmet chow we provide them. And maybe they don’t have pressures in their lives – like people do. Hmmm... interesting thought.

### Online Examples 5

#### “The Raise”

Preview “The Raise” and see the three pages below as part of the set-up.

You are about to speak to your boss about getting a raise.

You have been working for just over a year as a copywriter for a medium sized public- relations company. Your principal task has been to write text for annual reports, which you hate. Recently you've also been asked to write text for web site pages.

Your best experience over the year was writing a humorous speech for a CEO at an annual stockholders' meeting.

Your worst experience was a press release you wrote that had the client confronted with a libel suit. It wasn't entirely your fault though; you relied on confidential information provided by the client which you assumed was accurate.

Continue



Overall you believe your performance has been above average. You work longer hours than the other two writers, James and Sharon.

James has been with the company three years and gets the plum accounts and makes twice as much as you.



Sharon has been with the company only six months but makes more than you because of her previous awards as a newspaper columnist.

Continue

Last month, you maxed out your credit with the purchase of a new car, and your loan payments eat up all of your discretionary income. You need a raise simply to maintain your current standard of living.



Two days ago your financial situation hit a crisis because you discovered a tumour growing on your beloved cat "Mr. Whiskers". He requires a six hundred dollar operation to have it removed. You need a 20% raise in pay!!!

Continue



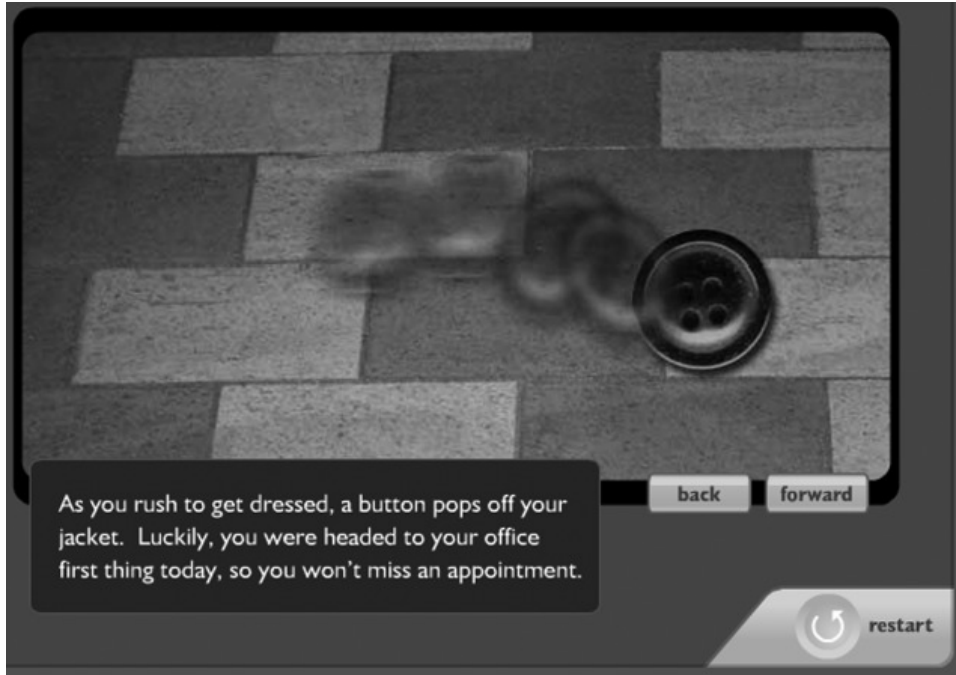


### **“Can You Work with This Prospect?”**

Preview “Can You Work with This Prospect?” and see the pages below as part of the set-up.

Although the set-up involves more scenes, the three images below give you the idea.







## 9 Scenario-Based Learning: Using Stories to Engage e-Learners

Review the SBL “Crisis In a Restaurant.”



Crisis Management for Chipotle Mexican Grill<sup>19</sup>



**Exercise 5** 

Using the small content segment selected earlier for the previous exercises, create an event with a set-up and series of scenes. Keep it simple. Use the form below, up to four scenes. While creating your event, try to use the realistic chatter and emotional bursts you have developed in other exercises. If they don't work, change them to work for this event and set-up. Effective SBLs evolve.

**An Event**

**A Set-up**

Scene 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Scene 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Scene 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Scene 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Option 1**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Option 2**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Option 3**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Form No. 1 – Event development





## 10 Bullying Bastard

*“What is the matter with you? Can’t you get anything right?”*

– Bullying Manager

People respond to heroes and villains. I think it’s because in our own lives we want to be a hero and want to avoid becoming a villain.<sup>20</sup>

In my case, I am a hero in my own small and miserable world, unlike the worlds of Tom Cruise (Ethan in *Mission Impossible*), Daniel Craig (James Bond), Emily Deschanel (in the TV series *Bones*) and Dilbert (hero to us all).

I am a hero when I reach my ideal weight. I am a hero if I finish this book. I am a villain when I miss my daughter’s concert. I am a villain when I fail to mow the lawn on schedule.

At work, I am a hero when my direct reports respect and admire me. I am a villain when I fail to coach and mentor a direct report in the moment of greatest need.

In the world of work, a hero might be a successful person, and a villain the person who fails to meet performance expectations, exhibits poor teamwork skills or doesn’t meet other standards. We use different labels, but the meanings are the same – hero and villain, winner and loser, success and failure.

In SBLs we use characters who are heroes and villains to accomplish our goals. Study the images below and, then, answer the questions.





With permission from Goodwill of Southern California.<sup>21</sup>





Write down your answers.

Who are the characters?

What is going on?

Is there a hero or villain in this scene? What tells you the answer?

At what point would the scene have a hero? Is there a way to make the learner the hero, who is observing this scene?

Aside from being the bullying bastard that he is, what is the purpose of the manager in the story?

And what is the purpose of the employee in the story?

The bullying manager and the employee are the characters. The manager is the villain while the employee is potentially the hero. They are having a tense conversation. The purpose of the manager and employee in the story is to represent different points of view.<sup>22</sup>

Does the bullying manager do a good job of representing a point of view by being intimidating?

How would you feel if you were the employee? What elements of the scene make the SBL a more effective learning device than a description in print?



## Online Examples 6

### “The Negotiator”

Preview the “The Negotiator” and characters.

In studying “The Negotiator,” who are the characters in the story?

What points of view do they take?

Write down your answers and compare them to endnote number 23.

## Exercise 6

*In your small content segment for your SBL, do you have vivid characters? If not, what would make them memorable?*

*Do your characters have points of view? If so, what are they? If not, what purpose do the characters serve?*

*What conveys points of view to the learner?*



## Demos and examples of SBLs

1. The Negotiator
2. Asking for a Raise
3. Can You Work With This Customer?
4. Can You Handle This Customer?
5. Too Much Scrap
6. Lacking in Clarify

And other storytelling examples

### Production Phase (references available online)

1. Implementation Checklist
2. SBL Wireframe
3. Constructing Storyboarding
4. Preparing Creative Briefs
5. Selecting Characters
6. Selecting Voiceovers
7. Planning for Photo Shoots and Production Checklist
8. Producing Audio and Video, Multimedia
9. Produce Photos and Images
10. Assembling in software



Delivery Phase (references available online)

1. Adding tracking
2. Testing the SBLs
3. Delivering the SBLs

Suggested List of Software



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