

Storytelling: **Designing and delivering for maximum engagement**

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Overview – Once upon a time..



Me, Australia and storytelling.



Research shows us

- Storytelling makes learning relevant, interactive and memorable (Bhatti et al., 2022)
- Increases cognitive engagement and motivation (Lohr et al., 2021)
- Stories help personalise learning experiences (Wills, 1992, Abrahamson, 1998)



My focus

As Manager of Multimedia Production; *looking for opportunities to create and embed stories in curriculum to enhance student learning and engagement.*



Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) research centre

- Storytelling is an ideal way to deliver sensitive content with impact
- Our work with ACCP uses a multimodal approach to help learners understand different perspectives.
- Animation is used to tell the authentic stories of children and educators.



**Activities reflect
and encourage
cultural
diversity and
safety**



**Educators help
children get
involved in play
and ensure
everyone is
included**

ACCP using Actors to tell the stories and Academics to bridge the learning

Actors bring to life scripted role plays with authenticity while protecting the confidentiality and vulnerability of those who have shared their lived experiences

Educators balance the stories through direct to camera engagement with the learner, scaffolded throughout the course/s



Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) National modules

Training launched at the beginning of 2026!

263 389k educators have completed the first 2 courses

Course 3 & 4 now in development: including filming 3 Case Studies (14 Actors x 10 scenes) and 3 x Animations

Feedback:

"The educator reflections were so relatable. They helped me really see how the information applied to me in my work role"

&

"The educator videos helped balance out the information written in text. They made the training more interesting to engage in"

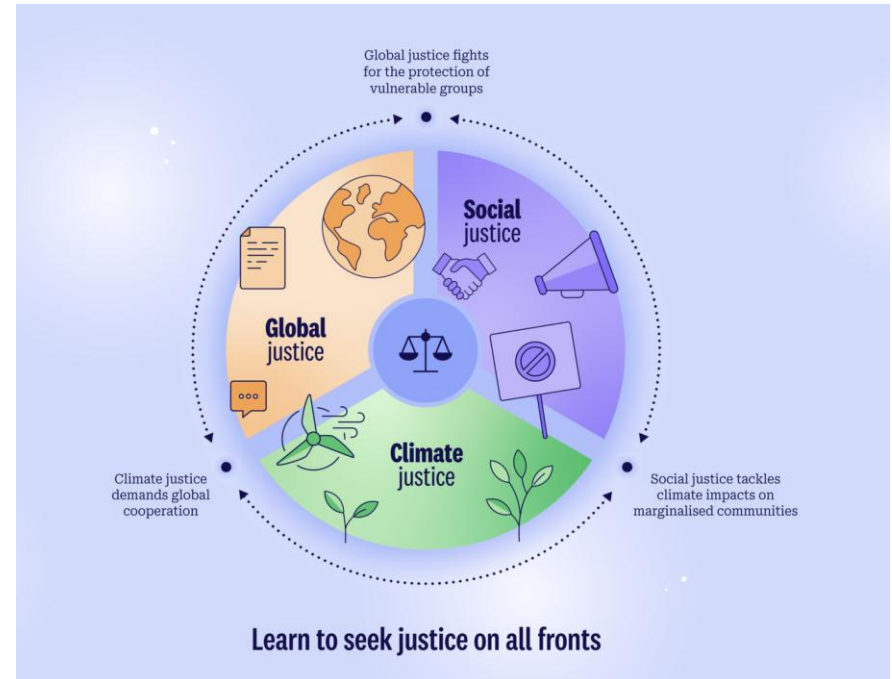


Programmatic approach to Law

Adelaide University Course Development - Academic saw our previous programmatic storytelling for Criminal Justice and decided 'Yes! That's what we need for LAW!'

Obstacles: How can you weave a narrative through a Program when you are in 10 week cycles, with varying course writers, and development scheduled at different times?

Anchoring: Law underpinned by 3 Justices – all learning content would anchor to one or more of the : Global, Climate or Social Justice



Programmatic approach to storytelling

Developed characters and businesses from case studies used in Foundational law course 'How Law Works'.

* To be reused by future Course Writers to explore other key learning throughout the program.

Created in different formats
to provide flexibility

Wendy



- Roving reporter
- Takes the narration to the scene



Taylor



- Brother of Tai,
- son of Alex and Bella
- Pronouns he/him,
- 21 years old,
- Corporate look, Marketing student at the A University. All kinds of ideas about how to 'improve' their brand but no real experience



Tai

[they / them]



- Child of Alex and Bella, sibling of Taylor,
- Pronouns they/them,
- Flawed but earnest and heart-in-the-right-place main character, Aspiring law student and newly passionate environmental activist



Businesses included a
Law firm where Tai
was an intern

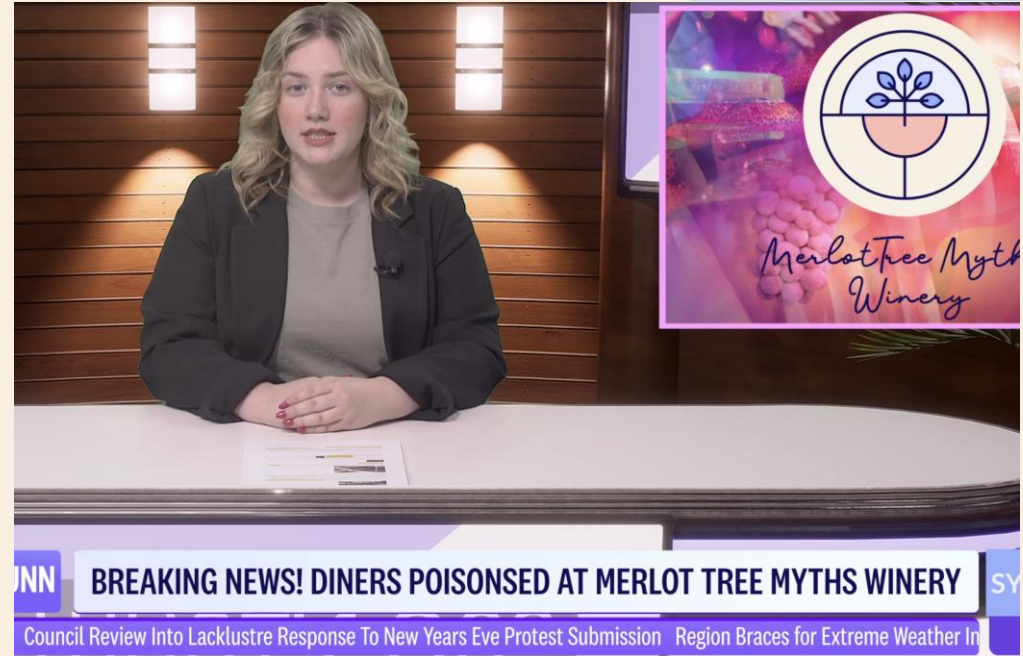


Chang, Romanoff
& Rogers

Creating 'News Anchor' role & 'Judicial Times news site'

Simple way to empower Academics on any course to think creatively. Instead of text dump with the help of the media team they could create a news stories that prompted reflection and explored learning and topics in their course.

Tracey Watson



Westside Justice – Bachelor of Criminal Justice

Reverse engineered - feature film

Anchored to 1st year Criminal Justice course.
Opens with a crime and students follow 4 detectives as they try to solve it.

- Brand new online program
- Script in collaboration with Industry and Academics
- Filmed over 11 days
- Post-production
- Scaffolded into 22 episodes across 7 courses
- Learning activities and assessments



Westside Justice – Bachelor of Criminal Justice

Winner of 2019 ANZSOC award for
excellence in teaching



Challenges

Can be labour intensive

- For both Academics and T&L staff
- Resourcing & budget
- Requires Academic enthusiasm and support from the Unit to see the value in what you are creating

Ensuring longevity

- Thinking creatively about how you change assessments and learning activities each year

Problem solving

- Expanding beyond the preconceived constraints of online teaching for maximum engagement

Successes

Student/Staff feedback

- Students report feeling more engaged with their learning
- Academics see a noticeable improvement in course engagement and assessment results
- Students understand their discipline through a real world context
- Creates opportunity for Interprofessional Collaborations (Thomas Hurtle)



University of
South Australia

Teaching
Innovation Unit

Westside

Acknowledgements

Teaching and Learning Innovation Unit

TLI Media team

Multimedia Designer Liliana Carletti

Media Resource & Production Coordinator Kristie Bills

Criminal Justice: Bec Medhurst

ACCP: Amanda Paton and Sian Burgess

Law Program: Dr Kylie Covark

Academic Developer: Dr Stuart Dinmore

Actors from AAA talent agency and RMT management



Australian University Provider Number PRV14404 / CRICOS Provider Number 04249J