Story First Design

Making Space for Story

Using AI Across the Learning Design Process

Mike Myers / Founder & Creative Director

WE BELIEVE

Learning is a process
of making meaning.

Stories are at the center of the learning experience.



Story First Design

My Path

- Interactive audio designer
- Blended learning/eLearning developer
- Facilitator and team lead
- Director of digital learning
- Founder and Creative Director









2025

2020

2015

2010

The power of story

How can stories help you create more effective learning experiences?

Share in chat

A SHARED FOUNDATION

Before we bring AI in.

Agree on the boundaries. Keep people accountable.

01 **Follow the policy.**

Use approved tools and follow your organization's—and your client's—AI policies.

02 **Be transparent.**

Agree on planned AI use with stakeholders, including what it will create or review.

03 **Protect the information.**

Keep personally identifiable and sensitive information out of unapproved tools.

04 **Own the outcome.**

Check accuracy, bias, rights, and quality. People remain responsible for the final work.

Using AI Across the Learning Design Process



01 **Analyze**

Identify the need

02 **Design**

Shape the experience

03 **Develop**

Bring the vision to life

04 **Test**

Verify and improve

Find the focus.
Ask better questions.

AI can help identify patterns, surface gaps, and prepare questions worth exploring.

AI prompt: “Compare these documents. Flag contradictions, assumptions, and unanswered questions. Cite the relevant passages and suggest questions to explore with stakeholders.”

Create a **safe space** for the real story to emerge.





Use AI to ask better questions at every step.

01	02	03	04	05
Measurable Goal	**Actions**	**Barriers**	**Practice**	**Information**
What needs to change and how will we measure success?	What do people need **to do** to reach the goal?	What gets in the way?	How can they practice those actions?	What essential information do they need to complete the practice?

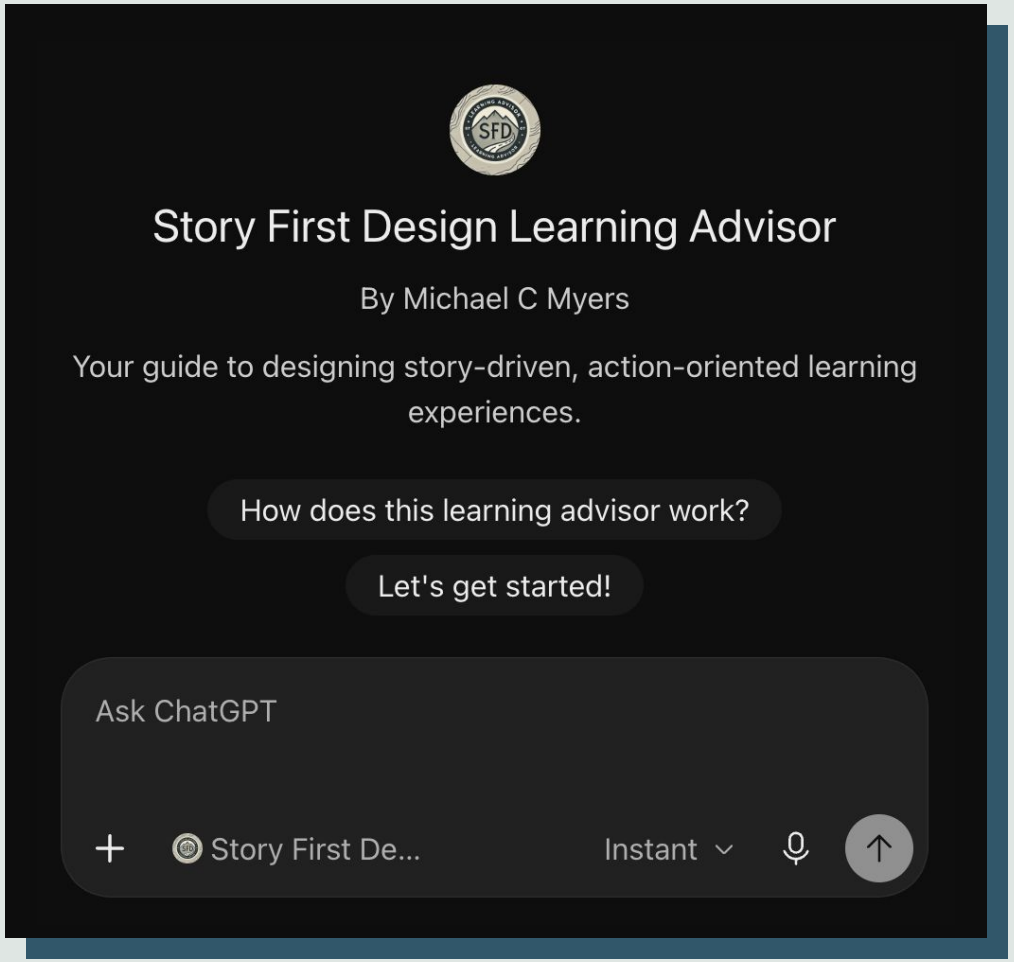
ASK AI

“Identify assumptions in this goal.”	“Suggest observable actions that support this goal.”	“Suggest possible reasons for this performance gap.”	“Suggest realistic practice scenarios.”	“Identify information needed for this practice.”
“What might this metric overlook?”	“Help prioritize these actions.”	“Draft questions to investigate these causes.”	“Propose choices and consequences.”	“Suggest what could become a job aid.”

An AI partner for the process

Define the action.

Frame the story.



Where are you in your AI journey?

In the chat, **share the number** that best represents how you most often use AI.

4. Automating

Repeat a workflow

3. Delegating

Work in documents & apps

2. Generating

Draft content & media

1. Chatting

Explore questions

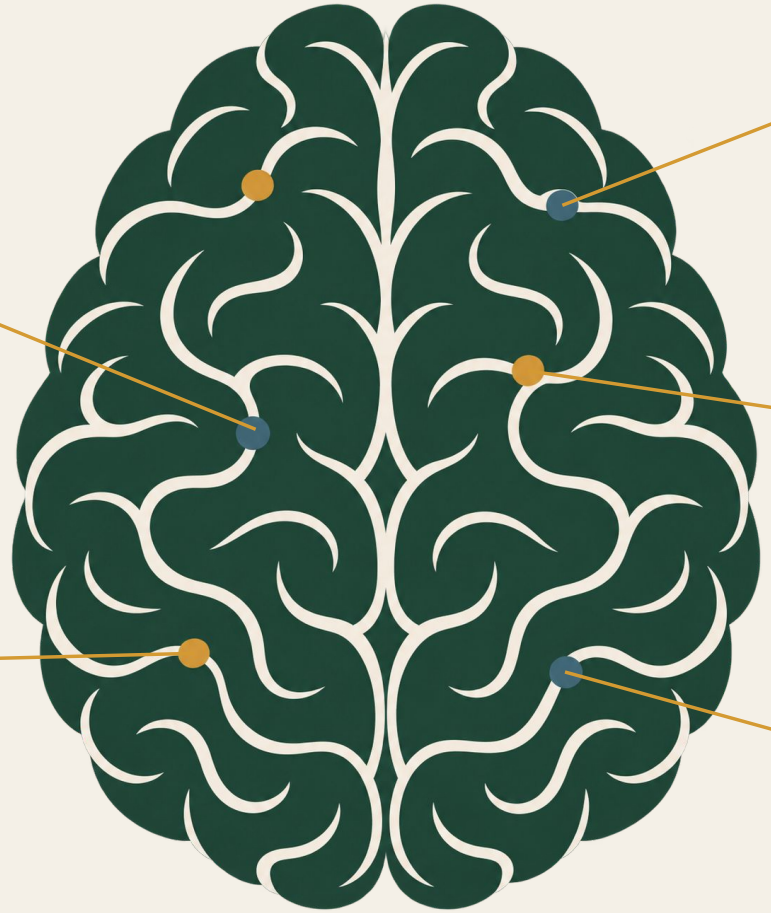
Grow your team's collective brain.

CONTEXT

Know who and why.

LESSONS LEARNED

Capture what experience teaches.



EXAMPLES

Show strong work.

CRITERIA

Define quality.

PROCESS

Capture how it happens.

Budget from experience.

Use what projects actually took to inform what comes next.

ACTUAL HOURS

Analyze
Design
Develop
Implement
Evaluate

→

AI compares

Similar scope
Hours by phase
Estimate vs. actual

→

Next project's LOE estimate

You adjust for what's different.

Make hours usable: log them by project + phase in a source your AI can access.

Design

01 **Analyze**

Identify the need

02 **Design**

Shape the experience

03 **Develop**

Bring the vision to life

04 **Test**

Verify and improve

When you teach this to others,

how do you explain the concept?

A story becomes a hook, and a world to explore.

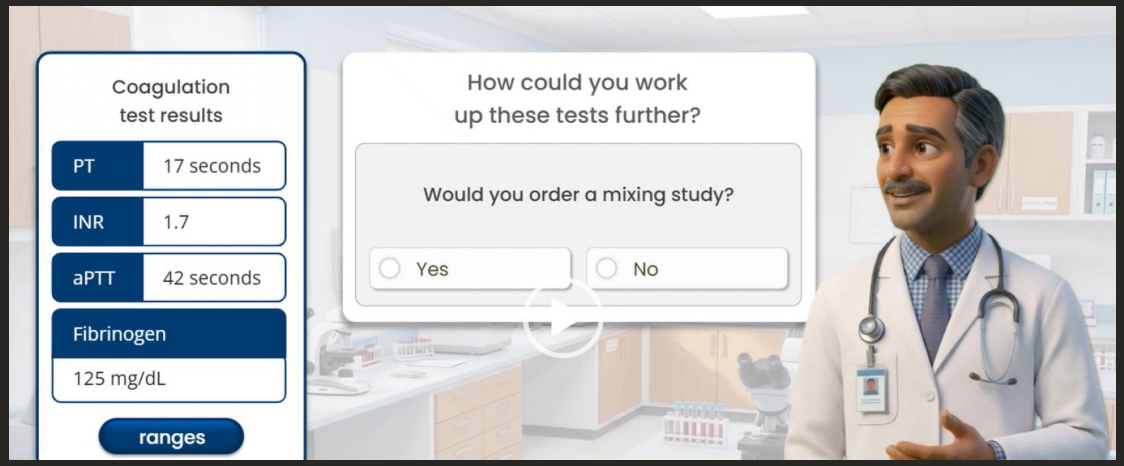




Metaphorical



Literal



AI supports story structure and elements

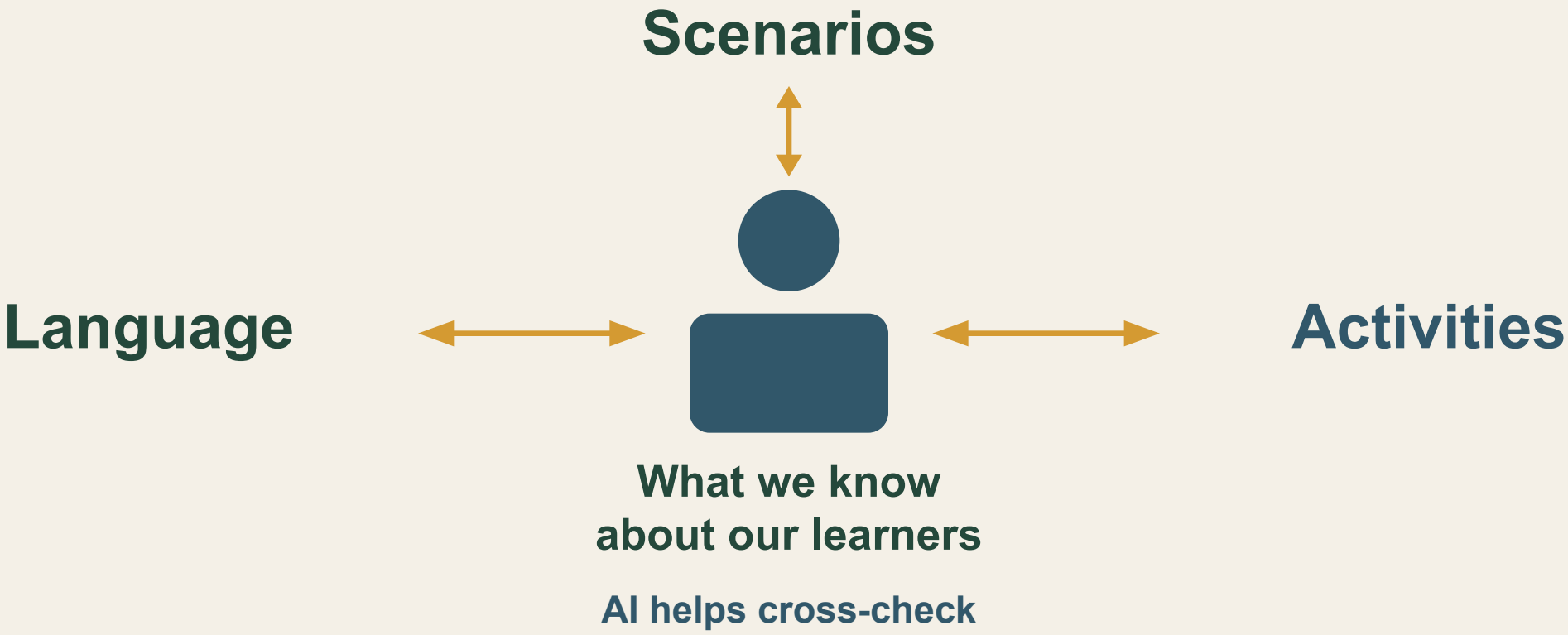
- Characters and motivations
- Central challenge and stakes
- Story's arc and turning points
- Choices and consequences
- Change as a result of action

Ask for feedback, not a first draft.

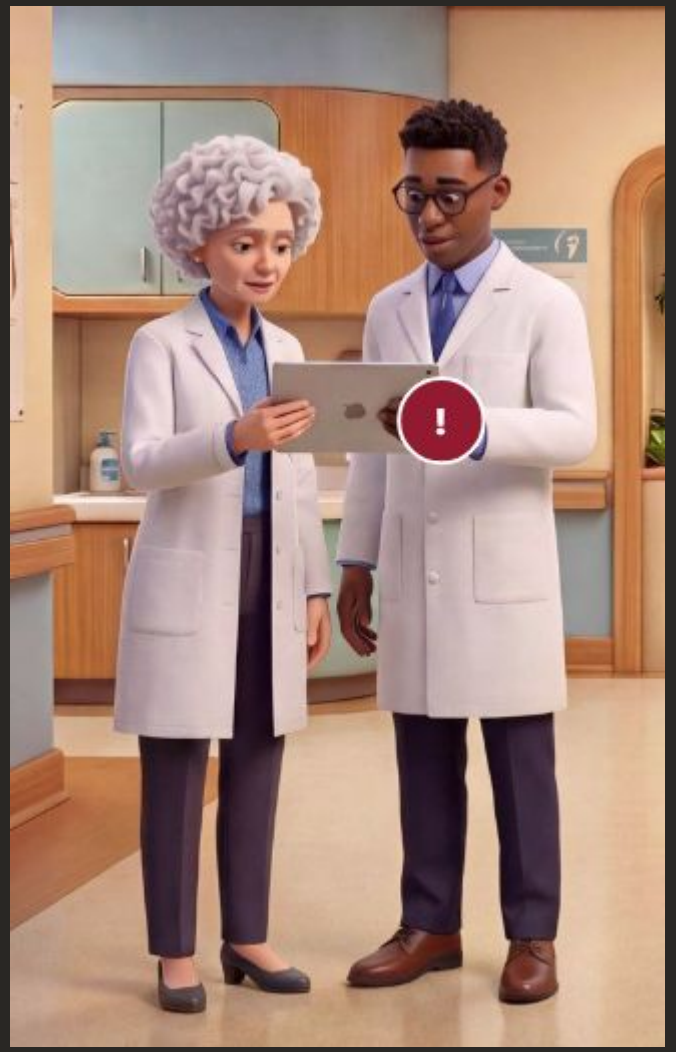
Give AI your storyboard, audience, and goals. Ask for feedback on both:

Story	Instruction
Story logic	Alignment to goals
Voice & dialogue	Accuracy & clarity
Pacing & emphasis	Decisions & feedback

Keep learner insights in every design decision.



Designing the Practice



ASH Chart Teaching EHR (simulated) × Close chart

Mr. Richards 50 y · M

Notes

Lab Results NEW

Imaging

Pathology

Hematology NEW

TEST	RESULT	NORMAL RANGE
CBC Results		
WBC	75,000/µL	4,000–10,000/µL
Hgb	14 g/dL	14–16.5 g/dL
Hct	42%	42%–50%
MCV	88 fL	80–96 fL
Platelets	550,000/µL	150,000–400,000/µL
Differential:		
Segmented neutrophils	33,000/µL	1,800–7,000/µL
Bands	1,500/µL	0–700/µL
Metamyelocytes	11,000/µL	0
Myelocytes	7,500/µL	0
Basophils	3,750/µL	0–200/µL
Eosinophils	1,100/µL	0–500/µL
Lymphocytes	3,000/µL	1,000–4,800/µL
Monocytes	750/µL	0–800/µL

By the end of Design

A shared direction. Something concrete to build.

OUR COMPASS

Design document

Purpose & audience
Learning objectives
Success criteria

Story hook

The concept that connects it all.

Prototype

A tangible idea to pressure-test.

Macro design

The experience, mapped end to end.

Storyboard

Scenes, script, visuals & interactions.

Develop



01 **Analyze**

Identify the need

02 **Design**

Shape the experience

03 **Develop**

Bring the vision to life

04 **Test**

Verify and improve

More creative possibilities.





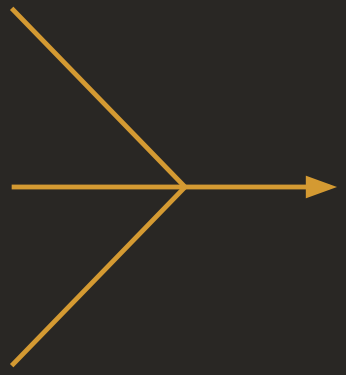
DEVELOPMENT / PRODUCTION

One experience. Multiple tools.

Flora
Character creation

ElevenLabs
Narration

HeyGen
Character animation



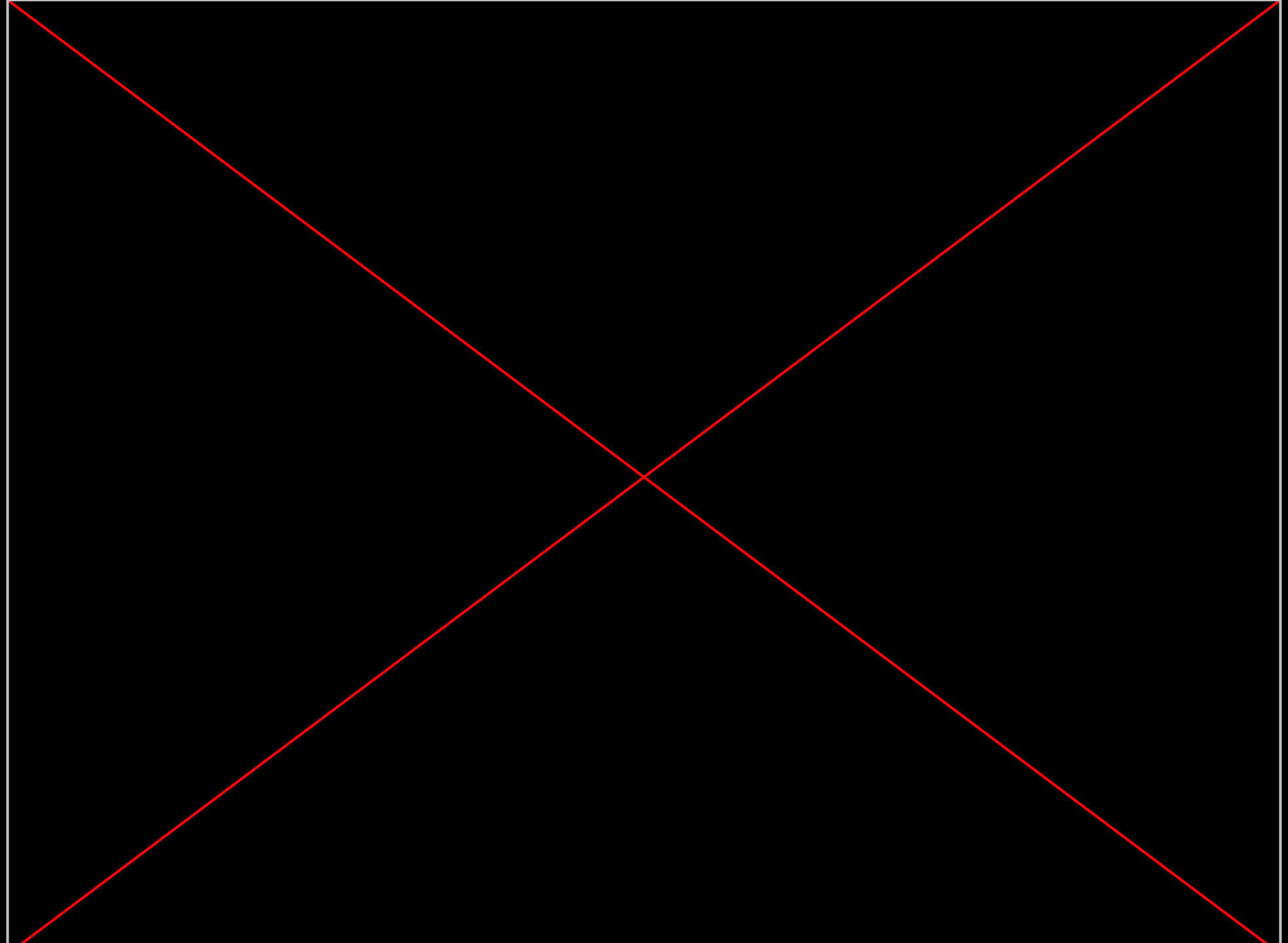
Premiere
Editing + assembly

Articulate
Storyline
Interactive learning

PRODUCTION TIME / OUR PROJECT EXPERIENCE



Hours of work per finished minute of media. Scope and complexity differ.



A checklist to keep AI slop out.

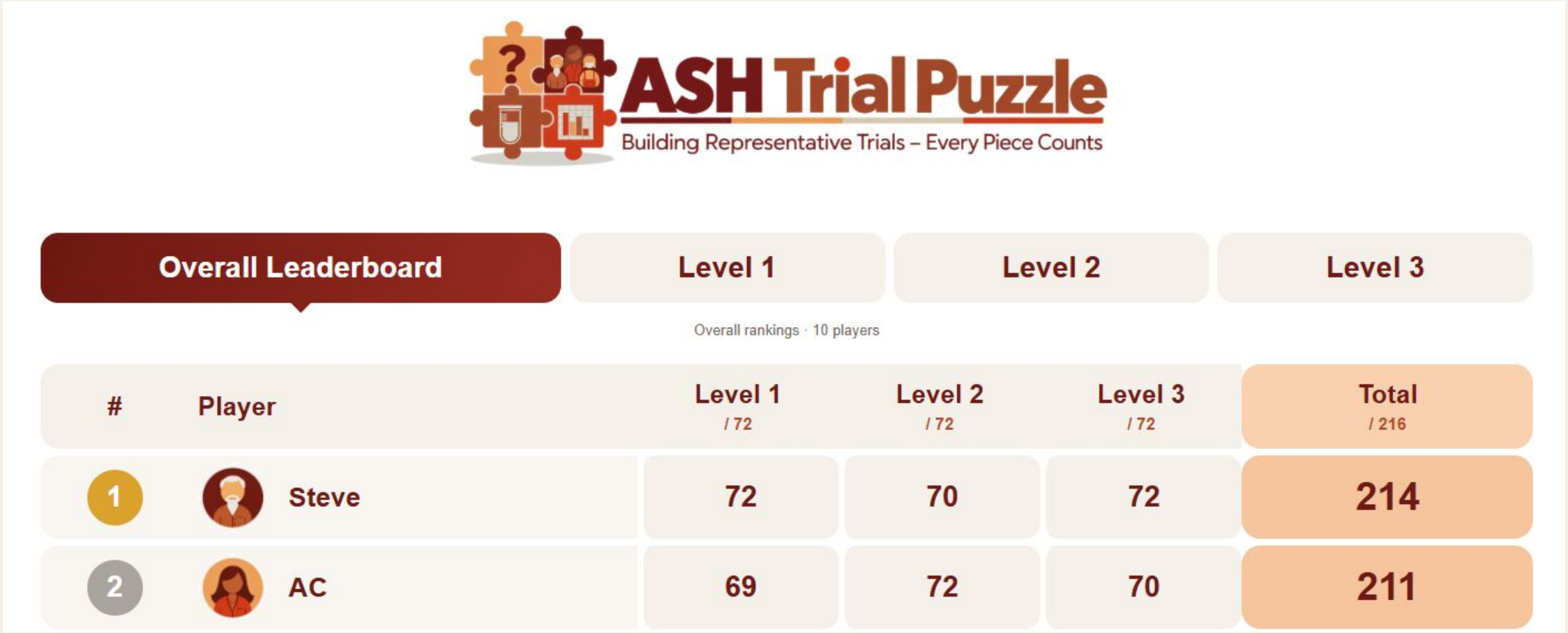
- ☐ **Visual details**
  Hands, eyes, anatomy, objects
- ☐ **Text + accuracy**
  Spelling, gibberish, facts, clinical details
- ☐ **Motion + continuity**
  Pupil movement, lip sync, disappearing objects
- ☐ **Voice + sound**
  Changing accents in non-English voiceovers
- ☐ **Representation**
  Stereotypes, context, missing voices
- ☐ **Access + permissions**
  Captions, transcripts, rights, consent



If it’s unnatural and you wouldn’t intentionally choose it, fix it.

Build custom features with the team you have.

Basic code knowledge + AI support can put custom features within reach.



Test

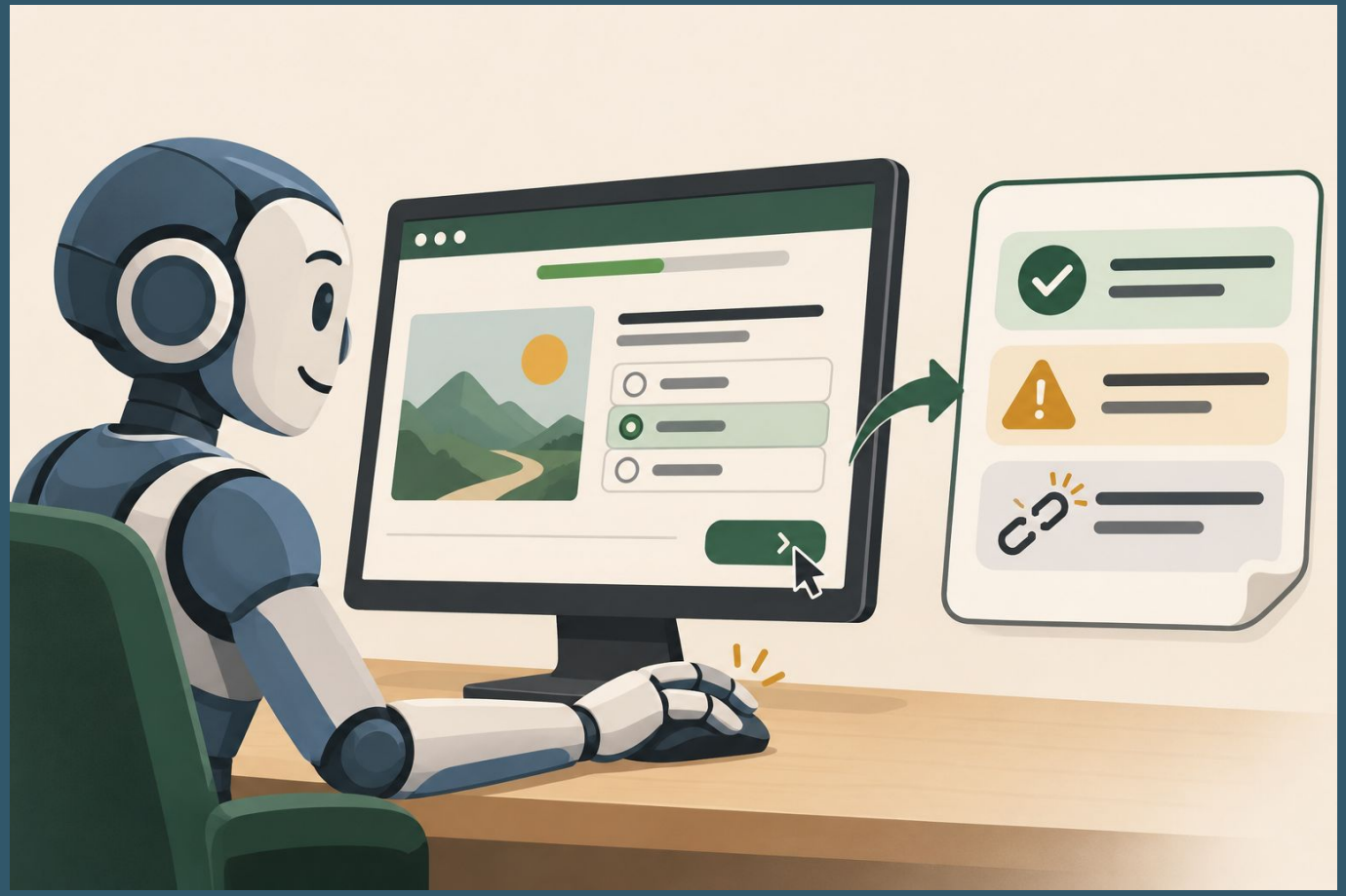
01 **Analyze**
Identify the need

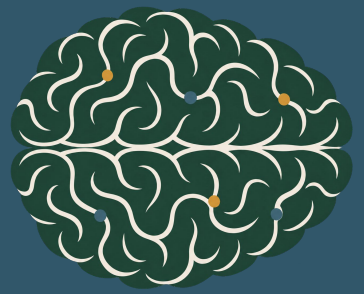
02 **Design**
Shape the experience

03 **Develop**
Bring the vision to life

04 **Test**
Verify and improve

Walk the experience.





Course Review Checklist

- ❑ Back buttons
- ❑ Broken links
- ❑ Misalignments with storyboard

SCORM package review checklist

Find code issues

Inspect scripts and dependencies.

Simplify the code

Flag redundant or inefficient logic.

Improve load speed

Identify heavy or duplicate assets.



Keep exploring.

01 **The power of stories**

Story in learning experience design

02 **Story First Design Learning Advisor**

A structured discovery partner

03 **Lessons from building a custom GPT**

Design, test, and iterate

What will you make space for?

What AI and/or story practice will you experiment with after this session?

LET’S TALK

Q&A

Thank you.

Let’s keep the conversation going.

storyfirstdesign.com

Mike Myers / Founder and Creative Director