



## Troy A. Miller

### Creative Writing Portfolio

---

#### [Sample #1: Journalism: AOL City's Best](#)

[Page 2](#)

Two **articles** I wrote (out of over 100) for AOL City's Best, a web magazine devoted to spotlighting local culture and entertainment. Austin was one of 20 markets where the magazine was published. Site has since been discontinued by AOL/Huffington Post. Contracted by AOL.

#### [Sample #2: Marketing: Texas Gear Up Website](#)

[Page 6](#)

Two **career description write-ups** (from over 100) and two **news articles summaries** (from over 20) that I wrote for a revamp of a college-readiness website for middle school and high school students and teachers. Contracted by AMS Pictures.

#### [Sample #3: Marketing: CompassLearning Website](#)

[Page 11](#)

A **marketing page** (from over 20) that I wrote for CompassLearning's website while I was Editorial Director there. CompassLearning is a market leader in supplemental, computer-based curriculum for K-12 students. Employed by CompassLearning.

#### [Sample #4: Script Writing: CompassLearning Interactive Guided Tour](#)

[Page 13](#)

A **short script** I wrote for an animated, interactive online tour of CompassLearning's Odyssey program (computer-based training for K-12 students). Guided Tour was featured on the home page of the company's website from 2007 to 2012. Employed by CompassLearning.

#### [Sample #5: Instructional Design: HAZMAT Compliance Training](#)

[Page 20](#)

One slide from a **visual and technical storyboard** I created for the development of interactive, online compliance training for employees of Altria (William Morris). Contracted by Simply Interactive.



## Sample #1

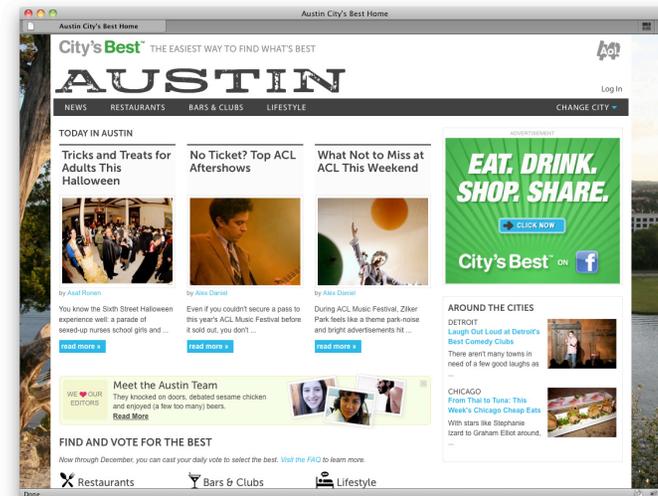
**Job:** AOL City's Best: local best-bets, interviews and reviews for online magazine

**Deliverable:** Articles

**Client:** AOL/Huffington Post

**Contracted through:** AOL/Huffington Post

**Reference:** Lauren Buck (Zinn), Regional Editor - yogathroughlauren@gmail.com



## 5 Best Moments During SXSW Film Festival (\*published March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011)

The SXSW Film Festival is gone but not forgotten. A great line up with very few duds, films this year were so strong that a handful of distribution deals went down -- and the ATX fest is not traditionally known for being a buyer's market. Here's our recap of some of the fest's best moments.

**1. "Attack the Block":** This sci-fi action thriller set in a London tenement was an absolute gas, and marked the directorial debut of Joe Cornish. The Q&A that followed was a film geek's heaven, as Cornish discussed his influences ("Ghostbusters," "E.T.") as well as his approach to the film's creature designs. Executive Producer Edgar Wright (Director of "Shaun of the Dead," "Scott Pilgrim vs The World") was on hand to keep the audience riveted and in stitches.

**2. "Fubar" Screening & Karaoke Party:** Canadian filmmaker Michael Douse's ("Take Me Home Tonight") follow up to his cult hit "Fubar" was wild, hilarious and full of heart. The after party at the

Highball featured heavy metal karaoke from cast and crew, as well as a very jovial Dave Foley sauntering about.

**3. "Sound of My Voice":** This was the first film I saw at the fest, and it remained one of the best. Beautifully lensed and intensely enigmatic, this examination of one couple's beguiling by a modern cult leader -- a woman who claims to be from the future -- was nothing short of mesmerizing.

**4. "Kill List":** Part of a handful of programming by Fantastic Fest, this British shocker was the best pure horror-thriller at the fest. It's a testament to the film's top-notch production and sucker-punch narrative that it was picked up for U.S. release by IFC Midnight.

**5. "The Beaver":** Not the best film of the fest, but it was surprisingly affecting, in large part to star Mel Gibson's strong performance and Jodi Foster's assured direction. Foster was nothing but class at the film's Q&A, in which all present were wondering what she would say about Gibson's personal meltdown. Clearly truthful, Foster had nothing but praise for the actor, and watching him disappear into character on screen makes a strong case for the notion that the art and artist should be judged separately.



"Fubar" star David Lawrence  
Photo by Troy A. Miller

**Outdoor Adventures to Make You Feel Like a Super Hero** (\*published February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011)

Time to get off the couch, guys. Sure, it's fun watching "Point Break" on a flat screen with a few brewskies. But why not get out of your dreams and into your car, so to speak? Here are some ways to let your inner action hero spring to life.

**Into the wild:** Wants some "127 Hours"-type biking adventure without the, uh, unpleasantness? Join the Austin Ridge Riders, who organize excursions, teach bike safety and maintenance, and even have opportunities for you to join the Austin Mountain Bike Patrol.

*One time membership fee: \$15  
arrclubnews@yahoo.com  
<http://www.austinridgeriders.com/>*

**It's a cliffhanger:** Start out at Austin Rock Gym with the indoor wall, have your own super cool training montage, then sign up for one of their outdoor climbing excursions.

*Fees: monthly, \$65; day use, \$15; add'l fees for equipment rental  
4401 Freidrich Lane, Suite 300; 512.416.9299  
<http://www.austinrockgym.com/>*

**Tarzan, anyone?:** Just 45 minutes outside of Austin you can discover the ultra-fun sport of zip lining. Harness yourself in and control your own speed as you woosh through breathtaking forest locales. Completing the standard "tour" allows you to sign up for the "challenge": faster lines, more complex navigation.

*Canopy Tour, \$75; Canopy challenge, \$85  
1223 Paleface RR, Spicewood TX; 512.264.8880  
<http://cypressvalleycanopytours.com/>*

**Prepare for battle:** Grab some friends (?) and go to war, paintball style. Xtreme Paintball will suit you up, give you the gear and assign you a team. The rest is up to you, soldier.

*Admission \$15 (includes gun, goggles, 100 rounds of ammo); prices vary for add'l rounds  
7415 Burlison-Manor Rd, Manor, TX; 512.796.9760*

<http://www.xtremepb.net/index.html>

**Make my day, punk:** Embrace your inner Dirty Harry and fire off both pistols and shotguns at the Eagle Peak Shooting Range in Leander. They may be just paper targets, but the streets are safer without 'em.

*Range fee, \$10 for a lifetime card, plus \$10 per day admission; Gun rentals \$12 (plus ammo)  
20026 Lindeman Lane, Leander, TX; 512.267.1400  
<http://eaglepeakshootingrange.com/epsr.htm>*

**Jump, Mr. Bond:** For ultimate spy-grade adrenaline, we recommend taking to the skies... then falling from them. Texas Sky Diving Center will have you jumping in 2-3 hours, with no previous experience. You may end up pleasantly shaken and stirred, but isn't that the point?

*1st tandem jump \$199; solo freefall (with class) \$265  
1055 PR 7022 (Rt. 696), Lexington, TX; 979.773.9100  
<https://www.texasskydiving.com/>*



Photo courtesy of Cypress Valley Canopy Tours



## Sample #2

**Job:** Texas Gear Up website (a college-readiness website for high school students)

**Deliverable:** Marketing write-ups (career descriptions, summary of news articles)

**Client:** Texas Education Agency

**Contracted through:** AMS Pictures

**Reference:** Breanne Hull, Account Director - bhull@amspictures.com

CAREER DESCRIPTIONS (for High School students)



*Splash screen for the Biological Technician entry on the Texas Gear Up website.*

*Career profile page to follow.*

## THE SCOOP

It's CSI without the crime (or the endless supply of sunglasses). That's right—biological technicians are the cool kids in the laboratory, setting up and using things like microscopes, test tubes, and centrifuges (the things you put blood samples in that spin really fast) to conduct all kinds of tests and experiments. Then they analyze the data and write reports on what they discovered. As a bio tech, you've got to be on your game, because you may be working with weird and dangerous substances. But you just might find cures for diseases while you're at it! If you like science, math, helping the world, or all three, then this job may have your name written all over it.



### THE IMPACT

Bio techs get to do some of the greatest good of all by helping scientists develop medicine that fights illnesses or cures diseases.



### THE FACT

These technicians get to be where all the latest, mind-blowing scientific developments are—from nanotechnology (molecule-sized machines that could repair cells) to printers that actually print new skin for burn victims.

## SHARE



## THE DETAILS

**DEGREE REQUIRED** → **BACHELOR'S DEGREE**

**4 YEARS OF COLLEGE**

**AVERAGE SALARY**  
**\$39,020**

**FUTURE JOB GROWTH**  
**AVERAGE**

**HOT SPOTS FOR THIS JOB**

*Additional career profile that is viewed in the same format as the Biological Technician page from above on the Texas Gear Up website:*

## **Economist**

### **Career Overview**

Dollar bills, yo. That's what's on an economist's mind, all day, everyday. Economists are essentially financial advisors—they often work for private consulting firms, and their clients could range from individuals and small businesses all the way up to the federal government. They rock some serious math skills, and have a keen eye for examining history and trends to predict what will happen in the future—like what a company's profits might be, or if the stock market will go up, and so on. These are important jobs, so you've got to get pretty schooled to get them (a Bachelor's and a Master's degree)—but if you're fascinated by finance, then this is a career you can bank on.

**Career Fact:** One of the top jobs an economist can get is to be Chairman of the Federal Reserve—probably the most famous man to have had this job is Alan Greenspan, who was appointed by President Reagan in 1987 and kept the job all the way to 2006.

**Social Good:** Economists study not just money, but products that are sold and how they are distributed—they may be able find ways to cut the costs of producers, which in turn would lower prices for consumers.

AUG  
1

## DIGITAL DIPLOMAS: THE REAL DEAL?



Since today's students are online all the time, it would make sense to find ways to legitimately educate them in their natural habitat (so to speak). With Internet speeds fast enough to stream multiplayer 3-D games and live HD-quality video and audio, creating a virtual classroom and teaching a college-level course over the web should be a walk in the park.

The real challenge for online courses thus far seems to have been one of legitimacy. Now, a new program that offers a three-year, online master's degree in computer science at the University of Georgia seeks to change all that. The innovative program will cost \$7,000 and will culminate in an accredited university degree. *TIME* investigates how such a venture could really take off, what its challenges are, and what this might mean for the future of affordable college education for everyone.

[Read the article...](#)

*You can read the article  
at:*  
[business.time.com/2013/05/  
21/the-7000-computer-  
science-degree-and-the-  
future-of-higher-education/](http://business.time.com/2013/05/21/the-7000-computer-science-degree-and-the-future-of-higher-education/)

*Additional news article summary that is viewed in the same format as the Digital Diplomas page from above on the Texas Gear Up website:*

### **Careers on Fire**

Knowing where the jobs are can influence decisions students make about what colleges to attend and what fields to study. It can also help them determine how to best use their free time right now—could working on music, art, computer, or construction projects give them skills that are or will be in demand? Or would it behoove them to cultivate the simple yet vital skill of conversation?

An important question to ask is what kinds of jobs have seen a growth spurt since the recession. Most likely, these jobs are key to rebuilding a company's infrastructure or contributing directly to its bottom line. The following infographic shines a spotlight on just what those jobs are and, equally importantly, what skills are needed for the most in-demand ones on the list. You and your students will want to take note of the greater emphasis on soft skills over those more technical in nature.

View the infographic: <http://www.rasmussen.edu/images/blogs/1361464609-hotskills.JPG>



CompassLearning®

### **Sample #3**

**Job:** CompassLearning website (public-facing site for e-learning company)

**Deliverable:** Marketing copy

**Client:** CompassLearning

**Contracted through:** N/A (was Editorial Director, staff position)

**Reference:** Mark Hammer, Vice President of Marketing - mmhammer@gmail.com

### **CompassLearning High School**

The challenges of educating high school students are varied and complex. When compounded with the reality that schools and teachers are being asked to do more with less, they can become quite daunting.

Your mission as an educator, however, is to set a foundation of academic achievement that your students can build upon, empowering them with the skills they need for success in the greater world outside the classroom.

It's here that CompassLearning can help. Our web-based course offerings provide curriculum that is rich and engaging, entertaining and enlightening, and can stimulate a student's interest in and retention of course content in unique ways that have been proven effective. Schools and districts across the nation are using data from leading assessments (such as NWEA MAP) in conjunction with CompassLearning's rigorous and interactive curriculum to provide unparalleled personalized learning experiences for their students.

Our powerful CompassLearning management system allows teachers to easily and automatically configure individualized learning paths for every student, ensuring that instruction is tailored to a student's particular learning needs. Personalized learning provides the key to greater achievement

for students not only in standardized assessment, but in all of high school and future academic and professional pursuits.

**CompassLearning Odyssey offers:**

- Rigorous content in every subject aligned with State and Common Core State Standards
- A humorous, conversational style, appropriate for teens, designed to capture and hold students' attention
- Direct instruction delivered through interactive labs, videos, reading passages, and animations
- Interactive activities that not only instruct but provide review of concepts
- Reporting tools to track and measure individual, classroom, school, and district performance
- Supplemental online electives in a variety of subjects
- Glossaries of terms that are pronounced, defined, and illustrated
- Credit and grade recovery in the event students fall behind in a subject
- Advanced Placements courses (College Board-approved)
- ACT and GED test-prep tools



CompassLearning®

**Sample #4**

**Job:** Interactive guided tour of CompassLearning's Odyssey program (for company website)

**Deliverable:** Script

**Client:** CompassLearning

**Contracted through:** N/A (was Editorial Director, staff position)

**Reference:** Ricardo Latorre, Creative Director - rlatorre@compasslearning.com

GUIDED TOUR

**INTRODUCTION**

VOICE

Hey. How's it going? Welcome to the CompassLearning Guided Tour. I'm Steve and, well, I'm gonna be your guide.

(pause)

So, what is it we do here? Well, I'll tell you what-- let me grab a little coffee first before we get going...

**SOUND** of coffee pouring.

VOICE (CONT.)

(sips the coffee)

Oh yeah-- good stuff, my friend.

(beat)  
Hey, you know, that's kind of  
like CompassLearning. Yeah--  
yeah, you see, we provide schools  
with a, a hearty brew of software  
programs to stimulate kids' minds  
and improve education.

**GRAPHICS/ANIMATION** of K thru 12, information poured into kids'  
brains, excitement, learning, etc.

VOICE  
And, you know, we like to call  
this premium blend of web-based  
curriculum "CompassLearning  
Odyssey".

**GRAPHICS/TEXT** of Odyssey programs.

VOICE  
Okay, so, before we go any  
further, I'd kind of like to know  
a little more about why you're  
here. So, you know... why are you  
here?

**DECISION POINT INTRO**

TEXT APPEARS: (A) I'm a school administrator. (B) I'm a teacher.  
(C) I'm a parent. (D) I was just in the neighborhood. (E) I need  
a hug.

\*\*\*\*\*

(A) USER CHOOSES "I'm a school administrator."

VOICE

So, you're-- you're an administrator, huh? The "Big Cheese", so to speak.

Appropriate GRAPHIC/ANIMATION here.

VOICE

I mean, of course, you know, a quality cheese-- perhaps a smoked gouda, or maybe a nice brie...

Appropriate GRAPHIC/ANIMATION here.

VOICE

Anyway, I think I know what you're interested in...

TEXT APPEARS: Adequate Yearly Progress. Perhaps FANFARE accompanies it.

VOICE

Guess it's a tough job making sure you hit those state standards every year, right?

#### **DECISION POINT A**

TEXT APPEARS: (A1) You better believe it! (A2) Actually, we do pretty well. (A3) Let's go back to the home page.

\*\*\*\*\*

(A1) USER CHOOSES "You better believe it!"

VOICE

Hey, I feel your pain. Not as

much as you do, I'm sure, since,  
you know, it is your pain.

**MAIN CONTENT POINT A1**

VOICE

So, here's the deal: remember  
when I mentioned Odyssey? Yeah,  
well, it's web-based curriculum,  
it's got your math and reading in  
there-- along with a lot of other  
stuff-- and it's all about  
engaging kids in new ways so  
they'll do better in school.

Appropriate GRAPHIC/ANIMATION here.

VOICE

Now, on your end of things,  
Odyssey's gonna let you generate  
reports so you can track student  
achievement.

SCREEN SHOTS and/or appropriate graphics.

VOICE

You can get really specific, too.  
Say you wanted to see Algebra  
scores from every 4th grade in  
your district. Well, presto-- you  
could see that.

SCREEN SHOTS and/or appropriate graphics.

VOICE

And then, if you wanted, you  
could break out a report that

showed just the scores of all the  
4<sup>th</sup> grade boys from low-income  
families who have red hair.

BILLY, the red haired kid, appears.

VOICE  
Okay, maybe not the red hair  
part.

His HAIR disappears, and he grabs his head and runs SCREAMING  
from the screen.

VOICE  
But you get the picture. So,  
anyway, there you have it.  
Improving and tracking student  
achievement. That's what  
CompassLearning's all about. So,  
what would you like to do now?

#### **DECISION POINT A1**

TEXT APPEARS: (A1.1) I should probably get going. (A1.2) I'd like  
to learn more.

\*\*\*\*\*

USER CHOOSES (A1.1) "I should probably get going."

VOICE  
Hey, of course-- you're a mover  
and a shaker. I understand.

Appropriate GRAPHIC/ANIMATION here.

VOICE

So, you know, thanks for checking  
out the CompassLearning guided  
tour. Come back anytime.

WINDOW CLOSES automatically.

\*\*\*\*\*

USER CHOOSES (A1.2) "I'd like to learn more."

VOICE

Okay, no problem. Let's go back  
to the beginning, and you can put  
yourself in someone else's shoes  
to watch more of the tour.

Appropriate SHOE GRAPHIC/ANIMATION as we

JUMP TO the home page.

\*\*\*\*\*

(A2) USER CHOOSES "Actually, we do pretty well."

VOICE

Ah, I see. Wish I'd been one of  
your students. Clearly, you've  
got great programs and pretty  
smart kids. Well, what if I told  
you that CompassLearning can not  
only keep you on track, but we  
can provide you with management  
tools to make your job easier.

TEXT APPEARS: (A2.1) Guess I'd like to hear more. (A2.2) Thanks,  
but I'm ready to go.

\*\*\*\*\*

(A2.1) USER CHOOSES "Guess I'd like to hear more."

VOICE

Great! Let me just get a little  
more coffee, and, you know, we'll  
keep on going here...

SOUND of coffee pouring. Appropriate ANIMATION gets us back to

**MAIN CONTENT POINT A1**

\*\*\*\*\*

(A2.2) USER CHOOSES "Thanks, but I'm ready to go."

VOICE

Hey, I hear you. Got places to go  
and people to see. Well, come  
back anytime if you want to learn  
about all the great things that  
CompassLearning can do for you  
and your students. Catch you  
later!

WINDOW CLOSES automatically.

\*\*\*\*\*

(A3) USER CHOOSES "Let's go back to the home page."

VOICE

Want to start over, eh? Sure -  
let me get you back to the home  
page...

JUMP TO the home page.

**END**



**Sample #5**

**Job:** Interactive web-based HAZMAT training

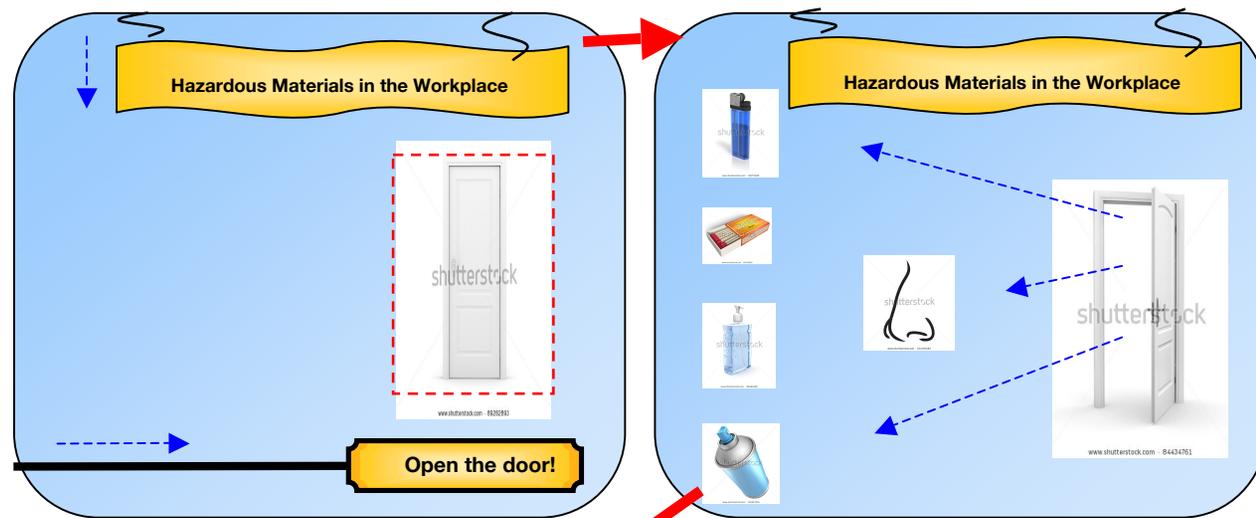
**Deliverable:** Visual and technical storyboards

**Client:** Altria (William Morris)

**Contracted through:** Simply Interactive

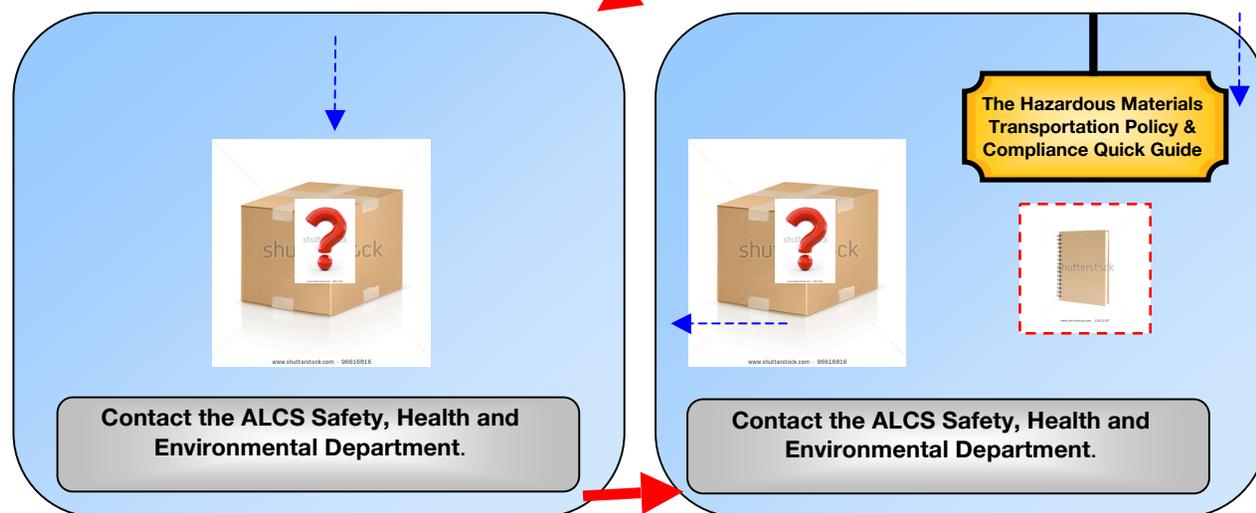
**Reference:** Aimee Lantzy, Lead Instructional Designer - [aimee@simplyinteractive.net](mailto:aimee@simplyinteractive.net)

Visual



VO

1. Remember that many common materials we find in our workplace are considered hazardous materials  
*(PAUSE TIL USER CLICKS ICON)*
2. This includes lighters, matches, hand sanitizers and aerosols. Additionally, materials that have a strong odor may also be considered hazardous for transportation by airplane.



3. If you have any doubts about the contents of a package you need to ship, contact the ALCS Safety, Health and Environmental Department.
4. Their experts will help you understand the Hazardous Materials Transportation Policy and Compliance Quick Guide and they can provide hazardous materials shipping services for you.  
*(PAUSE TIL USER CLICKS ICON)*

Flash Notes	Additional Notes for the Developer:	Branching and Feedback Notes:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear screen</li> <li>2. Bring in door image</li> <li>3. Play VO1</li> <li>4. Drop banner in sync</li> <li>5. Bring in signpost from left</li> <li>6. Make door a hotspot (clickable)</li> <li>7. Pause til user clicks door</li> <li>8. Retract signpost and animate door opening</li> <li>9. Animate images coming out of door in sync</li> <li>10. Clear screen</li> <li>11. Drop package down (no strings)</li> <li>12. Play VO3</li> <li>13. Overly question mark on package in sync with "doubts"</li> <li>14. Bring in bottom text box in sync</li> <li>15. Play VO4</li> <li>16. Animate package moving to left, and then bring in handbook icon</li> <li>17. Lower signpost in sync</li> <li>18. After VO4 plays, make handbook icon clickable - on click, user will download pdf or open handbook inside training app?</li> </ol>		