

Communicating Economics - Tutorial Plan 5 'Storyboarding the Nobel Prize'

Duration: 50 minutes



Tutorial description

Persuading others of your opinion is a vital skill which will be used repeatedly throughout your academic and professional careers. Design a storyboard for the delivery of a short item for a TV report using the selection of material on the 2019 Nobel Prize winners made available on Canvas. This TV report should be targeted at one of the following audiences:

- i. General public
- ii. Policymakers
- iii. Professional economists who support the winners
- iv. Professional economists who disagree with the winners

There is a lot of material, so you will need to narrow down what you decide to cover! Upload your storyboard to the tutorial discussion on Canvas, and be prepared to present this to the class, including a justification of your choice of what to include and exclude in your TV report.

Material on the 2019 Nobel Prize winners

- The Nobel Prize - The Prize in Economic Sciences 2019
<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2019/press-release/>
- MIT press conference - MIT economists Esther Duflo and Abhijit Banerjee win Nobel Prize (video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBGrYxWbyhg>
- FT.com - Nobel Prize in economics won by trio for work on easing poverty
<https://www.ft.com/content/c456b6e2-ee62-11e9-ad1e-4367d8281195?syn-25a6b1a6=1>
- Esther Duflo - Representation for women in India (video)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rqi4dd7_B4
- TED Talk - Esther Duflo: Social experiments to fight poverty (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zvrGiPkVcs>
- Angus Deaton - The problems with Randomised Controlled Trials (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB1A62u9fBE>
- Deaton & Cartwright - The limitations of randomised controlled trials (VoxEU, 2016)
<https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/limitations-randomised-controlled-trials>
- Stephen Ziliak - Balanced versus Randomized Field Experiments in Economics (journal article, 2014) <https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.roosevelt.edu/dist/b/153/files/2014/01/Final-Balanced-vs-Randomized-Field-Experiments--Ziliak-Rev-Behavioral-Economics-2014.pdf>
- Philip Mader, Richard Jolly, Maren Duvendack and Solene Morvant-Roux - 2019 Nobel prize reveals the poverty of economics <https://www.ids.ac.uk/opinions/2019-nobel-prize-reveals-the-poverty-of-economics/>
- Deirdre McCloskey - Statement on the 2019 Nobel Prize
https://deirdremccloskey.org/docs/pdf/McCloskey_2019Nobel.pdf

Learning outcomes

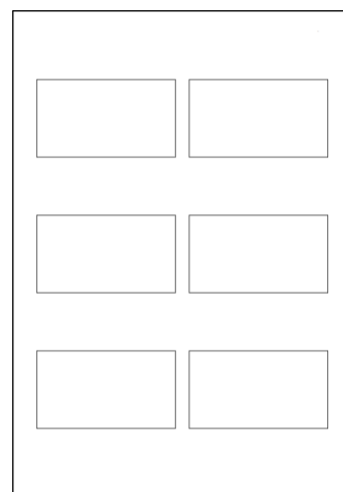
By the end of the tutorial students should be able to:

1. Select and organise information for a non-specialist audience.
2. Explain and justify editorial decisions about what to include and exclude from a news report.
3. Design a coherent storyboard that communicates a clear narrative.
4. Critically evaluate the communication choices made by peers.
5. Reflect on the challenges of communicating complex economic research through mass media and to different audiences.

Student preparation before the tutorial

Students should have:

- Reviewed the selection of Canvas resources on the 2019 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, including the Nobel Prize press release, news coverage, videos and commentary.
- Selected one target audience and designed a storyboard (right) consisting of 5–6 PowerPoint slides for a short television news report:
 - Each slide has a theme.
 - Can include text, images, graphs etc. to provide a narrative.
 - Slides can be saved as a one-page pdf.
- Uploaded their storyboard to the Canvas discussion board.
- Prepared a 4-minute presentation explaining both their storyboard and the rationale behind their editorial choices.



Tutorial structure

Time	Activity	Purpose
0-5 min	Introduction and overview	Set expectations
5-10 min	Warm-up discussion	What makes a good TV news report?
10-35 min	Student presentations and peer feedback	Evaluate communication and editorial decisions
35-45 min	Whole-class discussion	How audience changes the story
45-50 min	Summary and reflection	Consolidate learning

0-5 minutes

Introduction and overview

- Display the opening slide with the tutorial description and briefly remind students of the exercise.
- Introduce the session by explaining that today's tutorial focuses on storytelling rather than simply summarising.
- Emphasise that professional communicators rarely have the luxury of including everything. Their challenge is deciding what to leave out.
- Refer students to the storyboard concept from the tutorial slides. Explain that a storyboard:
 - Plans the structure of a report
 - Organises material into a sequence

- Allows each scene to communicate one key idea
- Is essentially the same principle used when planning presentations

5-10 minutes

Warm-up discussion

- Ask students: "Imagine you have just three minutes on the BBC News at Ten to explain why the Nobel Prize matters. What absolutely must be included?"
- Invite several suggestions. Likely responses include:
 - Who won the prize?
 - What did they discover?
 - Why is it important?
 - How might it affect people's lives?
 - Why was the research recognised now?
- Then ask: "What would you leave out?"
- Use this to introduce the idea that communication always involves selection and prioritisation. Communicating with different audiences may require different choices about what to include.

10-40 minutes

Student presentations and peer feedback

- Invite 6-8 students (depending on class size) to present their storyboard.
- Each student should have a maximum of 4 minutes to present their storyboard. They should explain:
 - Who their intended audience is and the central story they want to tell them
 - Why they selected particular material to persuade this audience
 - What they deliberately chose to omit
- Each presenter is assigned another student as a discussant, who is to provide feedback at the end of the presentation on two aspects:
 - What worked well in the presentation? For example:
 - Clear narrative and structure of material to support this?
 - Would the targeted audience understand the report?
 - Were the most important aspects included?
 - Were the slides visually clear and engaging?
 - Is there one slide which could be dropped from the presentation without altering the story being told?

35-45 minutes

Whole-class discussion

- Move beyond individual presentations and compare the different editorial approaches to communicate with different audiences.
- Ask: "Did everyone tell the same story?". Students should recognise that although everyone worked from the same source material, the resulting reports are likely to differ considerably.
- Guide discussion around the four broad audiences and what matters most to each:
- **General public:**
 - What the Nobel Prize is
 - Who won

- Why the research matters
- Real-world examples
- Minimal technical language
- **Policymakers:**
 - Evidence for policy effectiveness
 - Practical implications
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - Measurable outcomes, such as poverty reduction
- **Economists supportive of the winners:**
 - Randomised controlled trials
 - Methodological innovation
 - Development economics
 - Research impact
- **Economists critical of the winners:**
 - Methodological limitations
 - External validity
 - Ethical criticism
 - Alternative approaches
 - Critiques from Angus Deaton, Deirdre McCloskey, Stephen Ziliak and others

45-50 minutes

Summary and reflection

Finish by highlighting four key messages:

1. Good communication begins with a clear audience and a clear purpose. Every editorial decision should support those two aims.
2. Communicating economics requires selection. Including everything usually weakens rather than strengthens a report.
3. A good storyboard tells a coherent story rather than presenting unrelated facts. Each slide should move the audience naturally from one idea to the next.
4. Complex economic research can be communicated effectively without sacrificing accuracy. The challenge is simplifying ideas while remaining faithful to the evidence.

Finish with an exit question:

"What was the most difficult editorial decision you made when designing your storyboard?"

Invite two or three students to respond before ending the session.

Tutor notes

During presentations if discussion slows, use prompts such as:

- Why did you choose this opening?
- Why did you include this source but not another?
- Could your audience follow the argument without prior economics knowledge?
- How did you decide between explaining the Nobel-winning research and discussing criticisms?
- What single message should viewers remember after watching your report?
- How would your report differ if it were for the *Financial Times* rather than *BBC News*?
- What would viewers remember after watching your report?
- What role should visuals play in a television report?
- How much technical economics should be included for your chosen audience?

- Would you present the controversy surrounding randomised controlled trials to the general public?
- How much methodological detail should policymakers receive?
- Should economists who disagree with the Nobel winners receive a balanced report, or should you actively try to persuade them?
- Is it possible to produce a completely neutral television report?
- Can the same evidence legitimately support different narratives?