

## The Online Learning Journey

Designers of online and blended programs benefit enormously from visualizing the learners' online journey. You may sketch the journey before you've decided on platform(s) or after. But, it's a good idea to draft one before you go too far in your design work; it will help get you and your team on the same page – and will help you see things from the perspective of your learners. The sketch will shift as you continue to refine your design – but you'll be doing so within a framework you've already established and that helps a lot!

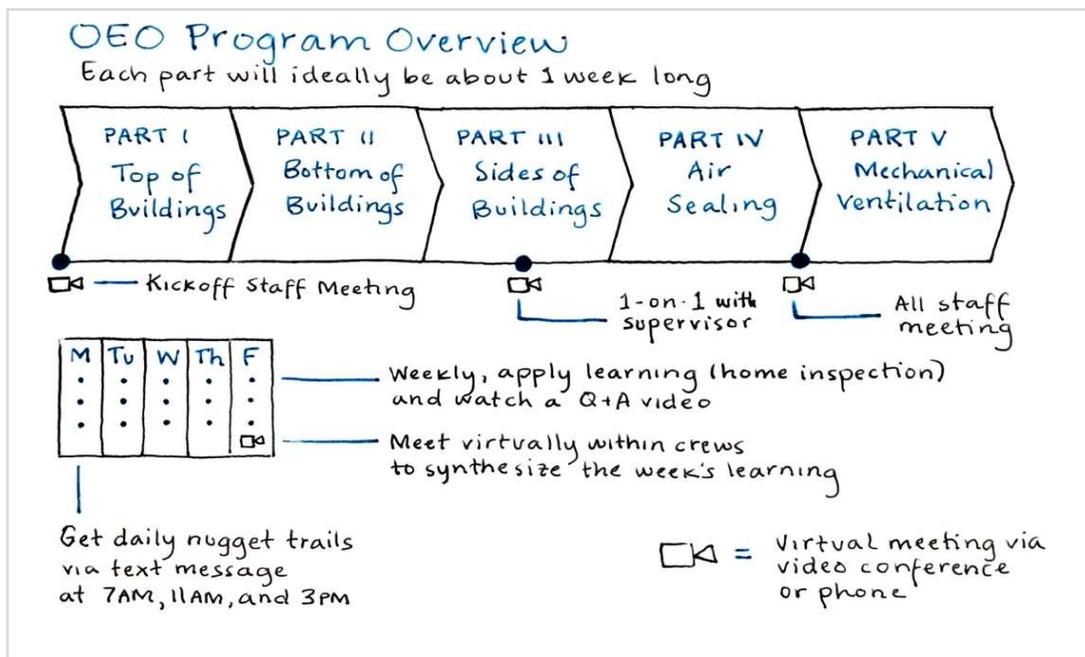
Here are a few tips for your visualized learning journey.

- Show a start and an end to the journey (even if the length of each “leg” of the journey is fluid).
- Depict all the components of your program.
- Indicate the general frequency and duration of each component.
- Show important milestones as well as any kick-off or culminating events.
- Include self-guided components and interactive components (if you are planning on any).

### Example #1

Below is a sketch of the online learning journey travelled by staff of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) in Vermont as they built their skills in weatherization and energy efficiency. You have the full Eight Steps for this design in your resource packet, and you can read more about the fascinating OEO program [here](#). This example illustrates many features of an effective learning journey visual. For example, it works to:

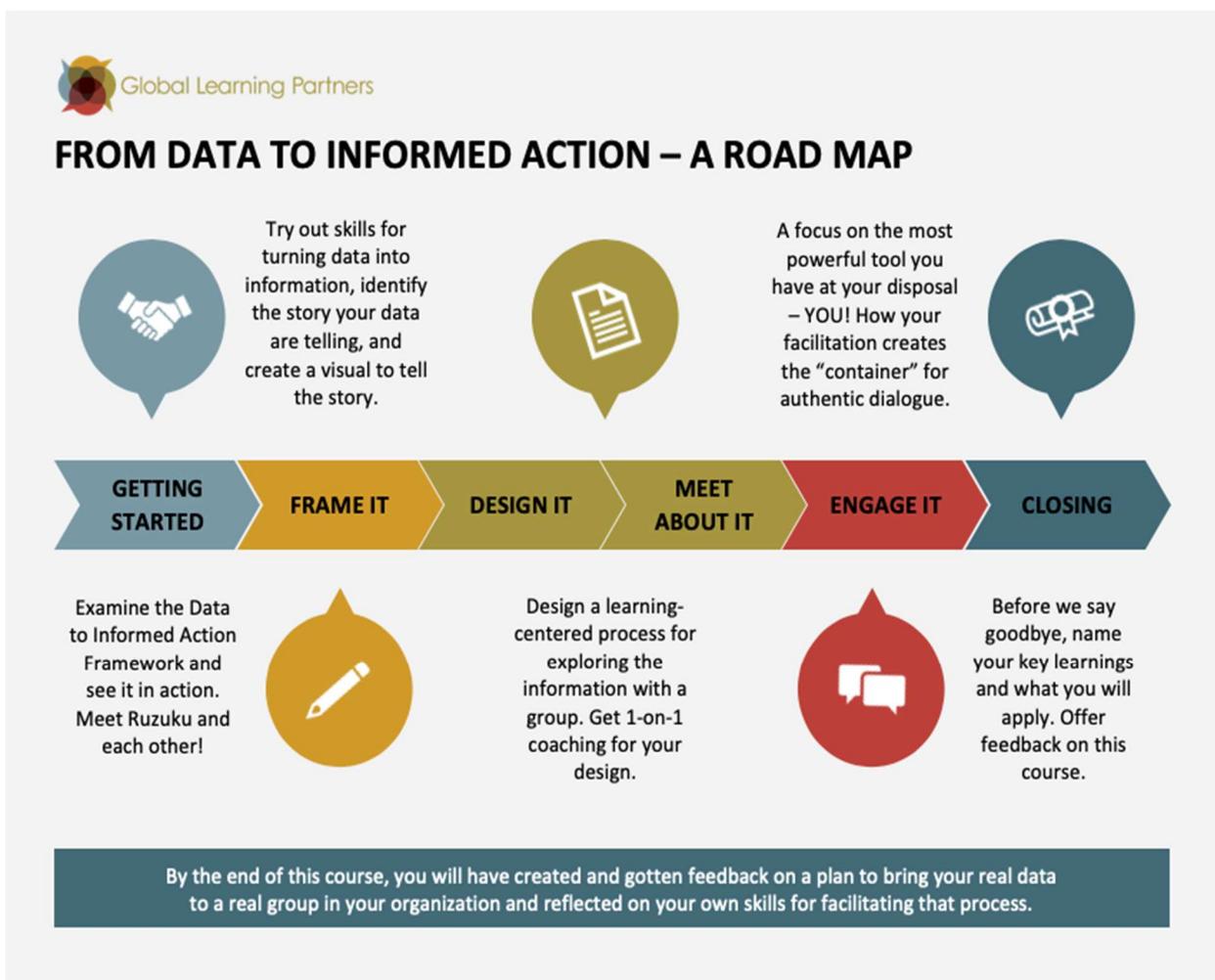
- Provide the design team with a map for their work;
- Convey the logical flow – and the intensity – of the program to staff; and
- Energize staff by depicting periodic events that provide learners with support and encouragement (in this case supervisor phone calls).



Your sketch of the learners’ online journey will evolve as you design so there’s no need to make it pretty at the start. When you’re done designing, you may decide to polish it into something that you can show your learners. This can help people clarify their expectations and see what they are embarking on before they begin.

## Example #2

Below is an example of the learning journey we crafted for participants of GLP’s online course “From Data to Informed Action.” You have the full Eight Steps for this design in your resource packet, and you can read more about this online course [here](#). This visual journey was incorporated into the course overview and helped learners track their progress through the course.



### Example 3

In this new GLP product, we incorporated four key components that reinforce each other and make for a more complete learning experience. Here's an overview of the different components and the purpose of each.

COMPONENT	PURPOSE
<b>Self-paced learning modules</b> within Ruzuku	Allow learners to read and reflect on their own, at times convenient to them. Introduce new concepts, ideas, and information. Provide brief instructions for learning tasks.
<b>Downloadable resources</b> (PDFs and Word documents)	Make it easy for learners to look back at key concepts that they may want to use again-and-again. Allow learners to easily share their discoveries with team members.
<b>"Ask GLP" buttons</b>	Provide easy access to GLP's experienced designers via email. Encourage learners to reach out for guidance and/or a thinking partner, as they see fit.
<b>One virtual design review</b> (via email or phone)	Build in a safe challenge for participants -- and provide them with a goal that inspires them as they move through the Guide. Celebrate their work, strengthen it, and learn from it.

Below is a quick, informal sketch of this self-paced learning program. It's a bit messy but you can see the value of a visualized learning journey; sketches like this one help us keep the learners' experience top-of-mind as we design.

