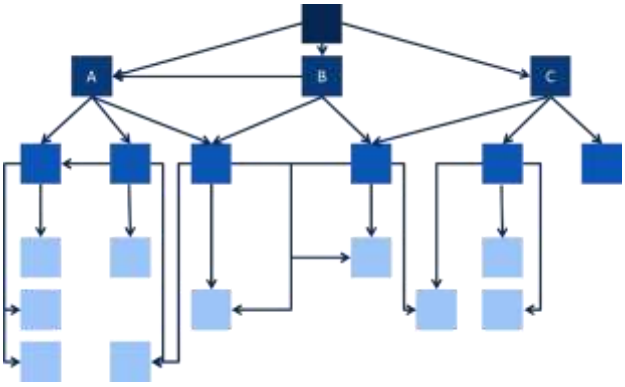
BRANCH SMARTER, NOT HARDER: NAMING, VARIABLES, AND BOTTLENECKS

Christy Tucker, Learning Experience Design Consultant at Syniad Learning, LLC

Tuesday, November 3, 2026

DevLearn 2026 Conference



©2026 Christy Tucker

Table of Contents

Practice Activity 1: Create and Set Variables 3
Track A Core Activity 1 3
Track A Table 3
Track B Stretch Activity 1 3
Track B Table 4
Troubleshooting 4
Practice Activity 2: Change States 5
Practice Activity 3: Bottleneck 5
Contact me 6

©2026 Christy Tucker

Practice Activity 1: Create and Set Variables

Track A Core Activity 1

1. **Create the variables:** In the Triggers panel, open the Variables manager (the *x* icon). Click +, enter the name **VerifiedID**, set the type to True/False, and set the value to False.
2. **Set a variable on a choice:** On 1Q, select btnB and add a trigger. Choose the action **Adjust variable**, the variable **VerifiedID**, the operator **= Assignment**, and the value **True**. The trigger fires when the user clicks btnB.
3. **Fix the order:** In the Triggers panel, move the Adjust variable trigger above btnB's jump trigger.
4. **Repeat** for every button listed in the Track A table.

Track A Table

Variable	Set to True when the learner clicks	Used on
VerifiedID	1Q btnB, 1Q btnC, 2bQ btnB	3C Portal Pass layer, END-Debrief
FollowedProcess	2aQ btnA, 2bQ btnB	END-Debrief

The ProtectedTimeline and LoggedFully variables have already been added for you.

Track B Stretch Activity 1

1. **Note:** The variable **TimelineStability** has already been created and assigned to the slider on the master slides.
2. **Change the default**: Change the default value of TimelineStability to 50.
3. **Score a choice:** On each choice button, add an **Adjust variable** trigger for TimelineStability. Use **+ Add** or **− Subtract** with the value from the Track B table. Move it above the jump trigger.
4. **Route the endings**: On 4A, 4B and 4C, replace the Continue button's jump to END-Debrief with 3 triggers:
    a. Jump to END-Stable if TimelineStability ≥ 70
    b. Jump to END-Wobbly if TimelineStability ≥ 40 AND TimelineStability < 70
    c. Jump to END-Paradox if TimelineStability < 40
5. **Mid-scenario paradox**: On 3B, give the Continue button 2 triggers: Jump to END-Paradox if TimelineStability ≤ 0, otherwise jump to 4Q. 3B is the only slide where the score can reach 0 or below.
6. **Test these paths:**
    a. B, A, C, C should end on Stable.
    b. B, B, A, A should end on Wobbly at 45.
    c. A, A, B should hit Paradox right after Decision 3.

©2026 Christy Tucker

Track B Table

Choice	Change	Why
1A Skipped verify	−15	Acting without data
1B Verified	+15	Followed protocol
1C Transferred	−5	Safe, but slow
2aA Script	+15	Approved fix
2aB Improvised	−10	Locals saw future tech
2bA Blind dispatch	−20	Portal opened in public
2bB Verified late	+10	Recovered
3A Rebooked	−5	Stranded traveler, small ripple
3B Told Eiffel	−30	Direct interference
3C Stairs	+20	Timeline protected
4A Brief note	−5	Thin record
4B Edited log	−15	Hidden deviation
4C Full report	+10	Complete record

Optional Stretch 1: On the slide master, cap the score: set TimelineStability to 100 whenever it changes, if it is greater than 100.

Optional Stretch 2: Give the meter's track a Danger state in red. On each slide with the meter, change the track shape's state to Danger when the timeline starts, if TimelineStability is under 40.

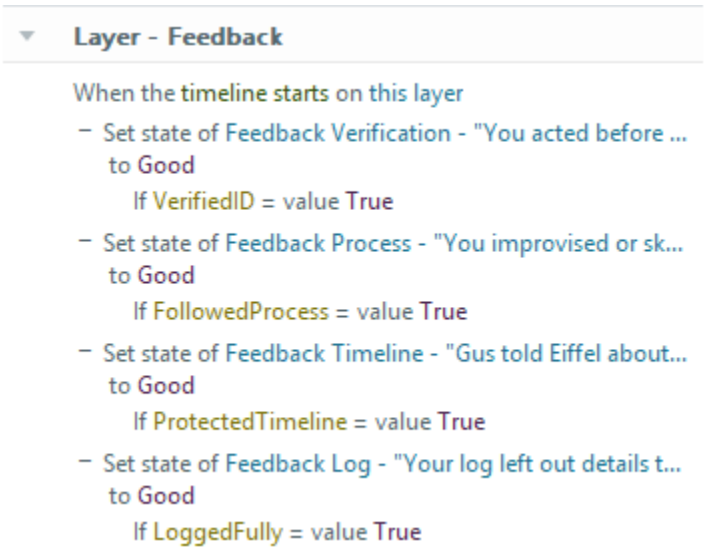
Troubleshooting

- **Trigger order:** If the jump trigger fires before the Adjust variable trigger, the score never changes. This is the most common bug, so show it on purpose.
- **Preview from the start:** Previewing a single slide starts every variable at its default. Test the full branching with Preview > Entire Project.
- **Debug text box:** While building, put a small text box on each slide that shows %VerifiedID% or %TimelineStability%. Delete it before publishing.
- **Conditions use exact values:** "≥ 70" and "> 70" give different endings at exactly 70. Test the threshold values.

©2026 Christy Tucker

Practice Activity 2: Change States

1. **Ending Slides: Track A**: Add triggers to the END-Debrief slide. **Track B**: Add triggers to the Feedback layer on all three END slides.
2. **Feedback states:** On each feedback text box, set the initial state to Normal. Then add the trigger **Change state of Feedback [Verification] to Good when the timeline starts on this slide, if [VerifiedID] is equal to True.**
3. Repeat for the other 3 feedback messages.



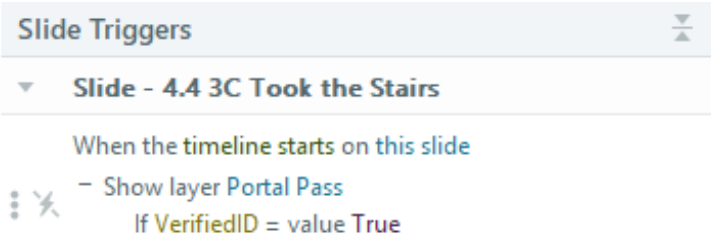
Practice Activity 3: Bottleneck

Maintain story continuity with variables and states/layers/triggers

Did you verify the voyager ID?

- Yes: Priority Pass
- No: No Priority Pass

3C layers: Add the trigger **Show layer Portal Pass when the timeline starts on this slide, if VerifiedID is equal to True.**



The Close Call feedback is the default on the base layer.

©2026 Christy Tucker

Contact me

Email: christy@christytuckerlearning.com

Blog: https://christytuckerlearning.com

LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/christytucker/

Bluesky: https://bsky.app/profile/christytucker.bsky.social

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@christytucker

©2026 Christy Tucker