

DOCUMENT | STEAM & Dreams (Sueños)

Your culture has value. Your ideas have power.

Stories carry more than memories. They hold knowledge, creativity, dreams, traditions, problem-solving, and ways of seeing the world that can inspire what comes next.

This pathway invites you to document a story, voice, tradition, experience, dream, or piece of cultural wisdom that matters — and use creative technology to show why it deserves to be carried forward.

Innovation belongs to the people. You do not need a perfect film, polished archive, or finished production to begin. Start with something meaningful and build from there.

Innovation Insight

Culture is more than something we inherit. It is the source of knowledge, creativity, and lived experience that inspires innovation, creates opportunity, and shapes the future. By documenting culture as an innovation asset, we preserve the wisdom of the past while inspiring the innovators of tomorrow.

Essential Question

How can documenting our cultural wisdom, stories, dreams, and aspirations inspire innovation, uplift our families and communities, and create opportunities for future generations?

The Challenge

Document culture as an innovation asset.

Create a digital story that captures and uplifts cultural wisdom, lived experiences, traditions, creativity, dreams, or aspirations that have shaped you, your family, or your community. Use your story to show how culture can be a living source of knowledge, creativity, resilience, innovation, and future possibility.

There is no single right solution. Your project may look to the past, capture the present, imagine the future, or connect all three. What matters is that it centers an authentic story and makes clear why it matters.

Bring your cultural innovation. Build your idea.

STEP 1: EXPLORE

What will you create?

Guiding Questions

Develop your own guiding questions as you investigate your idea, or use the questions below to help you discover the story you want to tell, whose voice matters, and why the story is worth sharing. You do not need to answer every question.

Discover Cultural Wisdom

- What story, tradition, experience, dream, or piece of wisdom has shaped you, your family, or your community?
- Who carries this knowledge, and whose voice deserves to be heard?
- What should future generations understand, remember, or carry forward?

Recognize Culture as an Innovation Asset

- How has your culture inspired creativity, resilience, innovation, leadership, or problem-solving?
- Who are the storytellers, artists, elders, entrepreneurs, innovators, or culture keepers you can learn from?
- How could documenting these experiences help others recognize culture as a source of knowledge and innovation?

Imagine Your Impact & Legacy

- Who do you hope will experience your story, and what do you want them to understand or feel?
- How could your story uplift your family or community?
- How might your story inspire a new idea, a bigger dream, or a future opportunity?
- What message do you want future generations to remember?

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE

Use technology to bring your ideas to life.

Guiding Activities

Choose the activities that deepen your understanding and strengthen your story. Follow the path that fits your subject, your creative process, and the tools available to you.

Explore Your Cultural Story

- Reflect on the people, places, traditions, experiences, dreams, or aspirations that shaped you or your identity.
- Explore photographs, journals, recipes, artwork, music, keepsakes, public records, archives, or other cultural artifacts.
- Create a timeline or story map to identify the moments, voices, and ideas that matter most.
- Identify examples of cultural wisdom inspiring creativity, resilience, innovation, or problem-solving today.

Learn from People & Place

- Talk with family members, elders, artists, entrepreneurs, educators, culture keepers, or community leaders.
- Record oral histories, interviews, conversations, or reflections when appropriate and with permission.
- Visit meaningful neighborhoods, museums, cultural centers, businesses, archives, or community spaces and document what you discover.

Create & Experiment

- Experiment with video, photography, podcasts, spoken word, music, illustration, animation, or other creative formats.
- Explore how technology can help preserve, interpret, remix, or bring the story to life.
- Connect storytelling with STEAM, entrepreneurship, design, community knowledge, or future possibilities.
- Develop a vision inspired by your family's or community's stories, traditions, dreams, or aspirations.

Reflect & Refine

- Identify the voices, details, and moments that are essential to the story.
- Ask others for feedback on clarity, meaning, and representation.
- Refine the project so it represents people and experiences authentically and respectfully.

Guiding Resources

- Apple creative technologies for photography, film, audio, music, presentation, and digital storytelling
- Libraries, archives, museums, cultural centers, and community history resources
- Family members, elders, community historians, artists, filmmakers, musicians, storytellers, educators, and mentors
- Research, interview, storyboarding, editing, and media-production tools

STEP 3: ACT

From Story to Impact

Every culture holds knowledge, creativity, dreams, and lived experiences that can inspire innovation. Use what you discovered to create a digital story that preserves, interprets, or reimagines something meaningful and makes clear why it matters now and for the future.

There is no single way to tell the story. What matters most is that the project reflects authentic voices, communicates a meaningful message, and shows why the story deserves to be carried forward.

Inspiration to Get You Started

Your project may take many forms. Start with the story, then choose the format that serves it best.

Possible Solutions

- **Preserve Cultural Wisdom:** Document traditions, language, recipes, craftsmanship, music, art, beliefs, memories, or knowledge passed from one generation to the next.
- **Amplify Community Voices & Aspirations:** Center the voices, experiences, dreams, and aspirations of individuals, families, culture keepers, or communities.
- **Explore Culture as an Innovation Asset:** Document how cultural knowledge shapes creativity, problem-solving, technology, design, entrepreneurship, leadership, or scientific discovery.

- **Imagine Cultural Futures:** Use cultural wisdom and creativity to imagine how culture could shape the future of technology, education, health, design, sustainability, the arts, entrepreneurship, or community life.

Prepare Your Possible Solution

Choose the digital format that best communicates your story and inspires others.

- **Documentary, Short Film, or Video Story:** Use film, interviews, archival material, narration, or visual storytelling.
- **Podcast, Audio Story, or Oral History:** Build the story through voice, sound, conversation, and reflection.
- **Photo Essay, Digital Exhibit, or Cultural Archive:** Curate images, artifacts, text, and context into an experience people can explore.
- **Animation, Music, or Spoken Word:** Use an expressive format to interpret cultural knowledge, identity, dreams, or future possibilities.
- **Interactive Digital Experience:** Create a website, interactive presentation, digital map, prototype, or other multimedia experience.
- **A Creative Format of Your Own:** Use another format if it communicates the story more powerfully.

STEP 4: REFLECT, INSPIRE & SHARE

Own what you build. Share what you learn. Strengthen your community.

Reflect on Your Journey

- How has this experience changed the way you think about culture as a source of innovation?
- What did you learn about the power of stories, culture, and lived experience?
- What voices or perspectives became more visible because of your work?
- How might your story inspire someone to dream, create, solve a problem, or imagine a new possibility?
- What lesson or message do you hope future generations will carry forward?

Prepare to Share Your Innovation

Use technology to communicate your story in a way that is clear, creative, and meaningful. Apple tools such as Camera and Photos, Clips, iMovie, Keynote, Pages, Freeform, GarageBand, Final Cut Pro, and Logic Pro may be used; equivalent creative and digital tools are also welcome.

Regardless of format, help your audience understand:

- the cultural wisdom, story, tradition, dream, community voice, or lived experience you chose to document
- who or what inspired the story and why it matters
- what you created and how you chose to tell it
- how the project preserves, uplifts, or amplifies culture as an innovation asset
- what you would do next to continue telling, sharing, preserving, or building on the story

What to Submit

1. **The Discovery** — What cultural wisdom, story, tradition, or lived experience did you choose to document, and why is it worth telling?

2. **The Approach** — How did you tell the story? What creative, research, or technology choices did you make?
3. **The Meaning** — How does the story preserve cultural wisdom, strengthen family or community, or inspire innovation for future generations?
4. **The Next Legacy** — How could this story continue creating value? If you had access to mentors, creative professionals, technology, or a microgrant, how would you preserve, expand, or share it?

Inspire Others

Challenge-Based Learning is about taking meaningful action. Stories can preserve cultural wisdom, strengthen identity, amplify community voices, and inspire new ideas. By sharing yours, you can help others recognize culture as a powerful source of knowledge, creativity, and innovation.

Ready to Share Your Innovation?

Complete the final step by visiting the Culture Is Currency Challenge Platform to sign up, submit your solution, and share what you created.

SIGN UP & SUBMIT YOUR INNOVATION →

Why Join

Outstanding submissions may receive:

- National Culture Is Currency recognition
- Innovation Pathway badges
- Innovation microgrants or seed funding to help advance an idea
- Mentorship and access to creative professionals, industry experts, and community leaders
- Apple technology and creative-learning experiences
- Featured storytelling through the Global HSI Equity Innovation Hub and partners
- National showcase opportunities and Innovation Launch Award consideration

Who Can Participate?

The Challenge is designed for current college students, recent college graduates within the published eligibility window, and eligible adult learners participating through the HSI Innovation Hub ecosystem, including programs serving families and justice-impacted communities. Participants may enter individually or as part of a team.

No previous experience is required. Start where you are. Build from what you know. Create what matters.

Challenge Timeline

SEPTEMBER 2026	Challenge opens • workshops and build support begin
FALL 2026	Mentorship • technology support • project development
DECEMBER 18, 2026	Submission deadline
2027	Finalist recognition • national showcase • Innovation Launch Awards

For your family, your community, your future.

Recognize value. Build from assets. Develop skills. Create opportunity. Connect generations.