



A spotlight on...

Digital Storytelling

Centre for Innovation in Education

Overview

Storytelling is a powerful tool for learning: humans are hardwired to make sense of their lives and their surroundings through stories (Gottschall, 2012). In educational contexts, the storyteller engages more deeply with the subject (Salpeter, 2005).

Digital storytelling is the practice of using digital technology to tell stories that have a purpose and present a particular point of view. Unlike traditional stories, digital stories are presented through a mix of modes: text, visuals, audio and video.

Benefits

Students gain skills in five different literacies (Robin, 2008, p.224):

- Digital. Discuss issues, gather information, and seek help with a community.
- Global. Read, interpret, respond, and contextualise messages from a global perspective.
- Technology. Use technology to improve learning, productivity, and performance.
- Visual. Understand, produce, and communicate through visual images.
- Information. Find, evaluate, and synthesize information.



Putting it into practice

The following steps describe the process of digital story creation:

- Decide on the purpose and point of view.
- Develop a script
- Storyboard
- Record the story
- Combine audio and visual elements
- Add a credits screen
- Incorporate music, titles, transitions, and effects
- Publish final version

Digital storytelling can be implemented as a formative or summative assessment (Jenkins and Gravestock, 2013). For example, in a 12-week period of teaching, a formative task could be embedded half way through the module as a 'story circle', a type of group work to facilitate group discussion. The benefits of 'story circles' include peer feedback and sharing and reflection on research and resources (e.g. texts and images). At the end of the 12-week teaching period, students would be tasked with the submission of a final digital story, in which they make use of the resources and ideas shared during their 'story circle' session.



To truly put digital storytelling into practice, consider Lambert's (2013) seven elements framework for developing an engaging learning experience for students. This framework involves:



Point of view

The core message communicated in the story.

A dramatic question

Creates suspense and grabs the attention of the viewer or listener.

Emotional content

People like stories that are “real” and that make use of attractive language.

The gift of your voice

Reach out to the people through the sound of your voice.

Soundtrack

Not essential, but when done right, it can have a powerful impact.

Economy of words

Great stories are often just 200 to 300 words.

Pacing

Use the natural variations of a regular speaking voice, but varied in tempo and tone.

Challenges

- **Assessment.** Make sure the assessment is constructively aligned with the learning outcomes of your module, and that rubrics assess disciplinary knowledge over other aspects of the final product (e.g. media).
- **Purpose.** When creating a digital story, it is important to have a clear idea of its purpose. Stories that inform or instruct are the most frequently used type of stories for the purposes of the HE education context (Robin, 2006).
- **Script writing.** Creating a digital story is not about the technology, but about how well the elements of the digital story are applied, and the quality of the written story (Robin and McNeil, 2012).
- **Technology.** Choose a technology that you and your students feel comfortable with. There is a wide variety of video creation tools such as Adobe Spark video, iMovie maker and Powtoon.

Additional resources & references

Can you help us improve this resource or suggest a future one? Do you need this resource in an alternative format? Please contact us at cie@liverpool.ac.uk



www.liverpool.ac.uk/centre-for-innovation-in-education/resources/all-resources/digital-storytelling.html