

# Lead a Digital Storytelling Workshop for Your School

Everyone loves a great story. Stories are an effective way of engaging students and promoting literacy by emphasizing personal expression and creativity. At the same time, helping students translate ideas into good stories while also incorporating technology can be intimidating. Add learning a new technology such as PowerPoint, video or the web, and we may forget that the content of the story is the most important aspect of the lesson. Digital storytelling is a powerful tool for promoting literacy when used effectively. Don't let the technology drive your lesson!

## I. Introduction — 15 to 20 minutes

**Directions:** *in small groups create ideas for the following parts of the workshop:*

### A. Introduce presenters and participants

#### Activities here:

#### Example: **The Candy Game**

*Provide members with five pieces of different colored candy and ask them to describe different aspects of themselves, Have members share candy while providing the information related to the specific color of candy they are offering.*

Red= Favorite place on earth

Blue = Most admired person

Yellow = What you do for fun

Orange = Favorite food

Green = wildcard

### B. Warm-up activity possibilities:

1. a told story as warm up (choose one to tell and describe why it is appropriate for your workshop)
2. demonstrating the creation of a new story using narrative structure
3. creating and building characters and settings
4. games and exercises to develop creativity
5. individual, team and class exercises

### C. Define the most important aspects of a **Digital Story:**

1. Point of View – what is the perspective of the author?
2. A Dramatic Question – a question that will be answered by the end of the story.
3. Emotional Content – serious issues that speak to us in a personal and powerful way.
4. The Gift of your Voice – a way to personalize the story to help the audience understand the context.
5. The Power of the soundtrack, narration, or other sounds that support the storyline.
6. Economy – simply put, using just enough content to tell the story without overloading the viewer with too much information.
7. Pacing – related to Economy, but specifically deals with slowly or quickly the story progresses.

#### Goals:

- Create "community" among presenters and participants
- Establish interactive nature of workshop from the outset

#### For ideas:

- Develop warm-up activities

#### Ask yourself:

- a. Does the warm-up activity address any of the technology standards for teachers?
- b. Does the warm-up activity address any of the top academic technology integration misconceptions?

Excerpt from Michael Zimmer's blog:

#### **The Pursuit of Technology Integration Happiness**

1. Technology integration is THE ANSWER to improving test scores.
2. New teachers have a better understanding of how to integrate technology integration in schools.
3. Current teachers have no desire to learn how to integrate technology in their classrooms.
4. Integrating technology is too expensive for my school to afford.
5. I don't have time to learn how to integrate technology in the classroom.
6. There can't possibly be any technology to integrate in the subject matter that I teach.
7. I have to know EVERYTHING about the technology before I can integrate it.
8. My students have a better understanding of the technology, and that is embarrassing.

## II. Introduction to the Lesson — 30 minutes

- A. Introduce the lesson/directions
- B. Show the work of previous students
- C. Ask if there are any questions before getting started
- D. Find potential speakers to share their digital storytelling projects with others

### Goals:

- Convey excitement for digital storytelling applications within your field (find specific examples to show)
- Present new research findings related to the benefits of digital storytelling on student learning (locate and link to specific research)

### Caveats:

- Keep it short!
- Emphasize the importance of content, good writing, editing and revision.
- Identify the problems that this research addresses and why it is important to solve them.

### Ask yourself:

- Can this speaker limit his/her presentation to 30 minutes?
- Is he/she a dynamic speaker?
- Will the presentation address any of the technology standards for teachers?
- Will the presentation address any of the top academic technology misconceptions?

## III. Activities — 1 Hour

- A. Research an idea within small groups and develop an alternative lesson plan designed for your specific needs
- B. Create an example book to share with students
- C. Upload example books to wiki
- D. Presentations (if time permits):

### Goals:

- Provide teachers with several activities they can use to teach concepts related to storytelling
- Continue interactive nature of the workshop

### Format:

- Each set should take 40 to 60 minutes total
- Each set should include a brief presentation of concepts, directions, and doing the hands-on activity
- Provide handouts and/or references for activity that teachers can take home

### For ideas:

- Plan and create a digital storytelling activity collection

### Caveats:

- Don't forget to include a lunch break!
- Most activities will require advance preparation of materials
- Teachers will vary in their need for background information—some may have used a particular activity in classroom already; others will never have heard of underlying ideas
- Majority of the time should be spent with participants doing activity
- Where possible and appropriate, use cooperative groups for completing the activities

### Ask yourself:

- Which of the technology standards does each activity address?
- Which of the top misconceptions does each activity address?

## IV. Concluding discussion — 10 to 15 minutes

Format possibilities:

### Were the Goals of the workshop met?

- Expose teachers to the power of web 2.0 tools for developing literacy and effective teaching
- Discuss frequently encountered challenges in the teaching of literacy and technology
- Share strategies for dealing effectively with these challenges

### Did you create an effective lesson and an example to share with others?

- See concluding discussion tips

**Caveats:**

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- Elementary, Middle School and High School instructors encounter different challenges
- Assume the facilitator role in this discussion to allow teachers the opportunity to share frustrations and successes

**Ask yourself:**

- Will this part of the workshop address any of the technology standards for teachers?
- Will this part of the workshop address any of the top misconceptions?

**V. Evaluation — 10 minutes**

- A. Distribute evaluation form to workshop participants
- B. Collect completed evaluation forms

**Goals:**

- Collect feedback from workshop participants on the most and least valuable aspects of the workshop
- Develop information for refining the workshop available while the experience is still fresh in your mind

**For ideas:**

- See [Workshop Evaluations](#)

**Create a new wiki with the following elements**

1. Research on storytelling and education / techniques/how to's/ caveats/ samples
2. Why stories are important
3. Storytelling basics
4. Links to media organizations and resources that promote digital storytelling
5. A questionnaire/evaluation of workshop effectiveness (one for students one for teachers)
6. Sample stories to illustrate
7. Best practices/ what works
8. Cross-curricular ideas
9. Academic technology misconceptions and fears
10. Helpful tips on preparing for a technology lesson
11. Lessons and activities for students