



Empowering Modern Storytellers through Media Literacy and Digital Storytelling

Role of Mosaic Film Experience

Mosaic Film Experience gives teachers and students the opportunity to share in their educational journey in Media Literacy and Digital Storytelling. Through media arts and storytelling, we aim to level the playing field for students across barriers created by economic status, race, gender, disability or geographic location. Being an organization that utilizes digital content, we understand that interactive media can have many positive effects on furthering a student's education. But we also strongly believe that digital devices need to be used intentionally to support learning.

Our programs are facilitated by professional content creators, artists, media teachers, and seasoned storytellers. Concepts and questions are analyzed, discussed, developed and outlined into takeaways for in and outside classroom practices.

Literacy in Media Arts and Digital Storytelling:

It is important for teachers and mentors to know how they should apply media literacy into a student's life and for students to know how media literacy impacts their educational experience.

Digital media content and tools provide educators and students with tremendous opportunities to be media creators as well as media consumers. How do we best help students understand the ethics and etiquette of this landscape? How savvy are educators about integrating media production projects into their work with students?

What is Media Literacy:

Media Literacy Education is a way to improve critical thinking, reading and writing and effective communication when used appropriately and intentionally for learning. Effective media literacy is the ability to identify different types of media and understand the messages they're sending.

Students take in a large amount of information from a wide array of sources daily, far beyond the traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines) of most teachers' youth. There are text messages, memes, viral videos, social media, video games, advertising, and more. But all media shares one thing: Someone created it. And it was created for a reason. Understanding that reason is the basis of media literacy.

Why It Is Important:

Educating students in media literacy helps them become wiser consumers of media as well as responsible producers of their own media. In a larger context, media literacy also fosters the skills that helps students work together in collaboration because it encourages respectful discourse and builds communication skills.

Role of Media Literacy Education:

With television, gaming, and movies to YouTube, Tik Tok, and Snapchat, students have a rich media diet that can have both a positive and negative effect on healthy development. Not only does media play a huge role in a student's life at home, but technology has reshaped education making it absolutely necessary for teachers to consider the effects of applying media into coursework.

Outcomes: Effects of Media Literacy Education

1. **Meets the needs of students to be wise consumers of media**, managers of information and responsible producers of their ideas using the powerful multimedia tools of a global media culture.
2. **Engages students** - bringing the world of media into the classroom connects learning with "real life" and validates their media culture as a rich environment for learning.
3. **Gives students and teachers alike a common approach to critical thinking** that, when internalized, becomes second nature for life.
4. **Provides an opportunity for integrating all subject areas** and creating a common vocabulary that applies across all disciplines.
5. **Helps meet state standards** while, at the same time using fresh contemporary media content, which students love.
6. **Increases the ability and proficiency of students** to communicate (express) and disseminate their thoughts and ideas in a wide (and growing) range of print and electronic media forms - and even international venues.
7. **Media literacy's "inquiry process" transforms teaching** and frees the teacher to learn along with students -- becoming a "guide on the side" rather than a "sage on the stage."
8. **By focusing on process skills rather than content knowledge**, students gain the ability to analyze *any* message in *any* media and thus are empowered for living their lives in a media-saturated culture.
9. **By using a replicable model for implementation**, such as the Center for Media Literacy's *Five Key Questions*, media literacy avoids becoming a "fad" and, instead, becomes sustainable over time because students are able to build a platform with a consistent framework that goes with them from school to school, grade to grade, teacher to teacher and class to class.
10. **Not only benefits individual students but benefits society** by providing tools and methods that encourage respectful discourse that leads to mutual understanding and builds the citizenship skills needed to participate in and contribute to the public debate.

National Core Arts Standards:

- **MA:Cr2.1.III** Integrate a sophisticated personal aesthetic and knowledge of systems processes in forming, testing, and proposing original artistic ideas, prototypes, and production frameworks, considering complex constraints of goals, time, resources, and personal limitations.

Integrated Standards:

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussion (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.d** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation of complete the task.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1c** Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

Media literacy, Access, Critical Thinking/Viewing, Collaboration, Community, Content Creation, Content Consumerism

- Point of View
- What is the main point of the story and what is the perspective of the author?

- A Dramatic Question
 - A key question that keeps the viewer's attention and will be answered by the end of the story.
- Emotional Content
 - Serious issues that come alive in a personal and powerful way and connect the audience to the story.
 - A form of Social Emotional Learning (SEL), a process that has been proven to promote positive social behaviors as well as improve academic achievements in the classroom.
 - See Personal Narratives under **Building Literacy Through Digital Storytelling**
- The Gift of Your Voice
 - A way to personalize the story to help the audience understand the context.
- The Power of the Soundtrack
 - Music or other sounds that support and embellish the story.
- Economy
 - Using just enough content to tell the story without overloading the viewer.
- Pacing
 - The rhythm of the story and how slowly or quickly it progresses.

Digital storytelling can be used to implement media literacy education/coursework, reinforce subject matter, to share an experience or present some new information in a creative and interesting way.

Building Literacy Through Digital Storytelling

Telling our story is an essential part of our humanness. It allows us to take part of our communities, it fosters empathy for those that surround us, and it creates opportunities to embrace our own agency. Story is a powerful force in shaping mental models, motivating and persuading others, and teaching the lessons of life. Telling a story extends back to a time when oral history dominated the tools of communicating. Modern storytelling is found in every medium, creative writing, poetry, photography, filmmaking, music, and performance art.

Digital storytelling encompasses many digital mediums and digitized content found online. This can include text, audio, video, and graphics. This means content from a streaming platform, social media, newspaper, magazine, etc. that is presented online or can fall into this category.

Forms of Digital Storytelling:

- Film / Digital Media / Streaming Content
- Social Media / Blogging
- Podcasting
- Video Games
- Music Videos
- News / Broadcasting
- Online Newspapers / Magazines
- Commercials / PSA

Digital storytelling can encourage creativity as well as give students a voice as they use their stories to share their ideas and feelings with others. A particular strength of the digital storytelling process is that it can be used to facilitate writing.

Digital stories, now both easy to produce and simple to publish, are an ideal way to energize learning and engage students at a deeper level.

Digital storytelling creates space for students to pursue topics about which they are passionate, grows their learning around assigned topics, and showcases their learning for peers, teachers, and audiences beyond the schoolhouse, all of whom are able to interact with the storyteller.

To allow the power of story to blossom in learning spaces, it is necessary to focus on a few factors that can maximize its effect.

Create Space for Listening

The everyday noise of digital information can be overwhelming. It can create a numbness to the outside/offline world and limit the ability to retain and reflect on essential learning. Because of this, places of learning must be places of listening that allow time and space for the hectic lives of students to be digested in an impactful way. How have you practiced listening to a story as a teacher, and how have you created this space for students? The power of digital storytelling comes from the power of the audience that is genuinely engaged in listening to its message.

Lead with the Narrative

Great digital stories are rooted in their narrative. The beauty of digital story is that the narrative follows the same story arc that has always been a part of oral and written story. Helping kids become great presenters and great writers will support their proficiency as storytellers.

Embrace Personal Narratives

Designing and communicating information requires students to deepen their understanding of content while increasing visual, sound, oral language, and creative thinking skills. Creating meaning out of an experience deepens the communication for both the author and their audience. The storyteller's narrative voice is the center of all digital storytelling decisions.

Embracing and facilitating the use of personal narratives fosters Social Emotional Learning in students and promotes digital citizenship. Giving them more impactful experiences empowering them to think critically, actively listen, and participate in the digital world they inhabit.

Amplify with Imagery

A thousand words can't match the true power of an image. Great images link story elements, humanize the abstract, and force the audience to see invisible people and places. Images are a gateway into the soul of stories. Digital storytellers need to select each image with the same intentionality that each word is chosen for the narrative. Beautiful images allow digital stories to be remembered by more people in a deeper way.

Nurturing the Process

Classrooms, schools, and communities that are rich in story will better support the learning of students who are already actively living in a culture of digital storytelling. Teachers, students, and members of the community need to feel an environment for learning that promotes voice, shares best practices, and celebrates the best of learning. In addition, the best of digital storytelling comes from the art of iteration.

Success comes from publishing, revising, editing, and analyzing the content. Allow time students to be a part of this powerful practice.

Benefits of Implementing Digital Storytelling into Coursework

Leadership and Digital Storytelling Go Hand in Hand

Strong leaders of tomorrow start their journey today in classrooms. Students cultivate leadership qualities by being able to take charge: learning about themselves, their passions, directing their learning towards their interests, and developing initiative. Students who take initiatives make decisions based on a willingness or desire to act, and use both creative and analytical thinking skills. Initiative demonstrates leadership skills, confidence in one's self and one's potential, and a willingness to do more or to start something.

Good leaders listen to their audience and consider its concerns and reactions. Digital storytelling is also very audience-driven because of the necessity to help your audience understand your story through various media. Digital storytelling is both an individual and group endeavor, helping students learn to collaborate, communicate and listen to criticism and ideas. By taking part in various digital storytelling activities, students can reflect on their own stories and of those of their peers. Being a member of an audience is an important step on the road to leadership.

Digital Storytelling Promotes Continued Competency with Technology

Exposing students to the benefits of creating and uploading their own ideas give them the chance to interact with the digital world and make their own mark while still using the internet in a safe environment. By searching, critiquing, and producing for various media, students improve their research skills, evaluate the credibility and quality of sources, and learn about copyrights and the proper citing of sources.

In addition to creating a story or message, digital storytelling gives students the ability and flexibility to work with different programs that they interact with regularly. Word processors, image editors, music, and more all come together. Check out [How Learning Is Improved By Using Social Media In Education](#).

The Process Mirrors the Traditional Writing Process

Digital storytelling actively involves writing. Whether it is a multi-day project or in ten minutes, the process for digital storytelling is the same as any other project:

- Brainstorm
- Plan
- Create
- Revise
- Edit
- Publish
- Reflect

Students should be involved with every step, including the publishing stage, if possible. The process logistics of planning and creating may cause students to rethink more ambitious ideas in favor of more

manageable and practical ones. Digital storytelling is also the perfect platform for project-based learning.

Critical Thinking and Making Decisions Drives Digital Storytelling

When creating a digital project, students are naturally directed to think about their project's purpose / goal. There are multiple aspects to any digital storytelling piece. While all pieces will not include images, video, audio, and text, incorporating all four enriches the story or presentation.

Possible questions to motivate critical thinking and decision-making:

- Why are we doing this? / What is the reason behind the message?
- Who is the audience? / How do I want them to feel?
- What is that person thinking?
- What kind of words work best for the purpose?
- There is a limited amount of time, where should I spend most of my time?
- I need to make this shorter/longer, what can I add/take out?

Digital Storytelling is Perfect for Sharing and Collaboration

One of the greatest strengths of digital storytelling is the ability to share it with others instantly. Sharing might consist of showcasing student creations, or sending a message out to their community. Students can also easily work together remotely on a project or to get feedback from their peers/teacher.

Social Media as a means to distribute digital storytelling can facilitate:

- Teaching an Academic Concept
- Teaching a Specific Skill
- Telling a Story
- Bringing Awareness to an Issue or Cause

Keep the internet and privacy policies of your school in mind as you share student work.

Digital Storytelling is a Creative Means of Assessment

Big or small, digital storytelling projects can demonstrate a student's understanding and completion of goals. There are many instances when classic paper and pencil tests are still necessary. Using alternative assessments allows students to create without realizing their progress is being evaluated.

These could be:

- Screenplay/Short Story focused on specific coursework
- Public Service Announcement Posters
- Documentary of Science Experiment
- Movie Trailer for a class assigned Book or Historical Event
- Choose Your Own Adventure Podcast

Digital storytelling facilitates opportunities for both student initiative and student agency. Students can create amazing projects with a greater range of creativity without being a stellar artist or wordsmith;

they can tell stories or impart information in their own way and on their terms. All students need a vehicle for self-expression, to show what they have learned, to see new-found knowledge and skills in a practical light, to take risks, and to take learning into their own hands.

Sources Utilized

Media Literacy / Digital Storytelling

- National Association for Media Literacy Education; <https://namle.net/>
- Creative Educator; <https://creativeeducator.tech4learning.com/>
- education world; <https://www.educationworld.com/>
- Edutopia (George Lucas Foundation); <https://www.edutopia.org/>
- Classtime blog; <https://www.classtime.com/blog/>

Resources for Development / Curriculum

Social Emotional Learning (SEL):

- [Digital Citizenship & Social and Emotional Learning](#)
- [Using Digital Tools to Promote Social and Emotional Learning](#)
- [Reclaiming Digital Futures: Home](#)
 - [Lessons to Help Youth Thrive Through Informal Learning with Technology](#)
- [3 Approaches to foster Social Emotional Learning \(SEL\) in the classroom](#)
- [The power of personal narratives in the classroom](#)

Digital Storytelling:

- [How to Use Digital Storytelling in Your Classroom](#)
- [Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21 Century](#)
- [Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling](#)
- [Learning Through Arts and Technology Digital Storytelling](#)
- [Six ways to implement digital storytelling | Creative Educator](#)

PBL/Collaboration:

Digital Equity/Equity through Media Literacy:

- [Resources: Race, Equity, and Social Justice](#)
- [Lit Tip of the Week #11: Media Literacy — Equity Through Literacy](#)
- [Media Literacy Isn't Coming to Save Us \(But We Can Make It Better\)](#)
- [Taking Action in Your Classroom \(because good intentions, social media posts, and emoticons aren't enough\)](#)



- [Developing Digital Citizens: Media Literacy Education for All Students](#)