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A version of figures with active links can be found here- https://tinyurl.com/pdsp-17-1-udl.

Digital Storytelling Workshop: A PDS Community Collaboration

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Introduction

Communication is a 21st century success skill (Thompson, 2020), a complex, essential literacy that has been transformed by the vast array of new technologies (Miller, 1996; National Education Association, 2010; Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015; Selber 2004). Many public school students struggle to develop critical literacy skills necessary for the demands of 21st century communication. Therefore, there is a definite need to enhance and support the development of these skills, which will boost their chances of success in school and in the future workplace. Communicators in the 21st century not only need to be able to read and write, but they must also decode a variety of images and develop proficiency with the tools of technology (Thompson, J., 2020, p. 6) used for communication purposes. Consequently, educators need to provide mixed-media learning environments in which students can develop and enhance their ability to communicate through digital platforms.

Such learning experiences allow teachers and students alike to construct knowledge—one of the pillars of a Professional Development School (PDS) community (Holmes Partnership, 2007)—while developing important communication literacy skills. Using a medium such as digital storytelling provides students a relevant, interactive, and engaging format to develop 21st Century success skills. Additionally, providing opportunities for students to connect with the local public library is critical because it familiarizes students with an invaluable community resource that can assist with lifelong learning and literacy (American Library Association, n.d.). With this in mind, a digital storytelling workshop was conceived as a way to strengthen university ties with the PDS and the local library, while providing an engaging, essential, skills-focused summer literacy workshop for under-served youth in the community.

Purpose

The purpose of this workshop was two-fold: one, to provide an opportunity to collaborate with the PDS and thereby strengthen our relationship, and two, serve the students in the PDS by providing them with an opportunity to participate in an engaging, skills-focused summer workshop that would be both fun and useful.) In collaboration with the local independent school district, the development of literacy skills was identified as an area of need.

The workshop focused on helping struggling public middle school students develop and enhance their communication skills by providing a summer digital storytelling workshop through a collaboration with the local state university, public library, and independent school district (NAPDS Essentials 1 & 9). Graduate students from the local state university led the workshop and collected and analyzed data based on the following inquiries to assess the efficacy of the workshop: Do students who participate in the creation of digital stories develop enhanced communications skills by learning to organize their ideas, ask questions, express opinions, and construct narratives? Do students benefit from digital storytelling to learn to create stories for an audience, and present their ideas and knowledge in an individual and meaningful way?

Literature Review

Storytelling is at the core of the human experience, a universal experience that ties all cultures past and present (Smith et al., 2017). As Boris (2017, Dec. 20) pointed out, effective "storytelling forges connections among people, and between people and ideas" while the stories themselves "convey the culture, history, and values that unite people." And in their retelling, storytellers perpetuate the ongoing process of story creation and the transfer of knowledge.

Constructing Knowledge

In a similar way, theories related to how learning occurs and how knowledge is transferred have been developed, shared, implemented, and revised. Educational learning theories grapple with the basic questions of how learning occurs and what educational process is most effective. Three of these theories, behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism demonstrate these different approaches and perspectives on the learning process. Behaviorism "views learning as a 'cause and effect' mechanism, in which external factors lead to a response, and over time, this response becomes a learnt behavior" (Duchesme et al., 2013, p. 160).

According to Ertmer and Newby (1993), "Cognitive theories emphasize making knowledge meaningful and helping learners organize and relate new information to existing knowledge in memory" (p. 54). Ertmer and Newby find the primary assumption

underlying both behavioral and cognitive theories is that "the world is real, external to the learner" (p. 54). In contrast, constructivism is based on the assumption that learners learn best when they are active participants in the construction of knowledge: "Humans create meaning as opposed to acquiring it" (Ertmer & Newby, p. 55). A goal, then, of constructivism is to design educational experiences that afford students the opportunity to construct their own knowledge, and one such experience is in the creation of personal stories, storytelling.

Technology's Impact on the Storytelling Process

Technology has had a constant influence on the medium and delivery of stories. The emerging digital technologies of the 1990's provided greater access to digital media. In response, a group of media artists and designers in the San Francisco Bay area formed the Center for Digital Media, a nonprofit, community arts organization, to explore how these tools could be used "to empower personal storytelling" through the creation of digital stories (i.e., usually short multimedia productions that can include text, graphics, audio narration, video clips, and music). Joe Lambert (2010), the co-founder of the organization, outlined the types of personal stories and the elements of a successful digital story. The Center for Digital Media later changed its name to the Center for Digital Storytelling and then to StoryCenter, but maintained its mission "to help build a just and healthy world" through digital storytelling workshops that provide participants "the skills and tools that support self-expression, creative practice, and community building" (StoryCenter). The previously named Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) often is cited for the seven elements to create an effective digital story, and these elements have been revised over the years: The University of Houston College Of Education modified the CDS's seven elements for use in educational settings; and in 2010, Lambert published a revision of the CDS's seven elements in the organization's *Digital Story Cookbook,* both renaming and reordering the elements (see Table 1).

Table 1: Evolving Elements of Digital Storytelling

CDS (StoryCenter)	U. Houston CoE	Digital Story Cookbook
1. Point of view	1. The Overall Purpose of the Story	1. Owning your insights
2. A dramatic question	2. The Narrator's Point of View	2. Owning your emotions
3. Emotion content	3. A Dramatic Question or Questions	3. Finding the moment
4. The gift of your voice	4. The Choice of Content	4. Seeing your story
5. Power of the soundtrack	5. Clarity of Voice	5. Hearing your story
6. Economy	6. Pacing of the Narrative	6. Assembling your story
7. Pacing	7. Use of a Meaningful Audio Soundtrack	7. Sharing your story
	8. Quality of the Images, Video & other Multimedia Elements	
	9. Economy of the Story Detail	
	10. Good Grammar and Language Usage	

For the purpose of the digital literacy summer for local ISD students, we triangulated these three sets of elements and steps and adapted our approach and process to the needs and demographics of the students enrolling into the workshops.

Storytelling: Essential Skills

McAdam (2019) extended the work of Delgado (1989) and argued that stories "provide ways to respond to oppression and marginalization by providing a voice that can be healing and transformational" as the storytelling creation and sharing process provides all participants an opportunity "to question and reflect on the expressed needs and concerns of individuals and their communities as expressed through story" (p. 295) (NAPDS Essential 4) For the digital literacy summer workshop, we adopted Delgado's (1998) and McAdam's (2019) call to create an opportunity for students that aligns with NAPDS's mission "to advance equity, antiracism, and social justice within and among schools, colleges/universities, and their respective community and professional partners" (NAPDS Essential 1). During the workshop, participants composed a personal story related to their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop provided an experience—an educational space—in which the learners created, constructed knowledge: filtering information they have taken from their personal experiences over the past year to produce their own unique representations of reality. In addition, the workshop provided participants an opportunity to develop new technology skills. As Banaszewski (2005) argued, "digital storytelling provides students an opportunity to represent their voices in a manner rarely addressed by state and district curriculum while practicing the digital literacy skills that will be important to their 21st century futures" (p. viii).

Methodology

To examine the efficacy of the workshop and to determine whether participants gained valuable skills, researchers examined the following questions:

1. *Do students who participate in the creation of digital stories develop enhanced communications skills by learning to organize their ideas, ask questions, express opinions, and construct narra*tives?
2. *Do students benefit from digital storytelling to learn to create stories for an audience, and present their ideas and knowledge in an individual and meaningfu*l way?

Workshop Format

The format of the workshop that was offered to the public school students focused on building collaboration between the University, PDS, and the Public Library through equitable contributions. While the University provided the curriculum delivery and food, the workshop would not have been possible without the technology and students from the PDS and the space, Wi-Fi, and media attention from the Public Library. With all working parts together, the workshop was able to take shape and support student digital literacy growth.

Each day at the workshop always included a hot breakfast, snacks, and a sack lunch. Students were also able to take sack lunches home to share with their families. This food was paid for by a grant through the University. Many of the students were on the free or reduced lunch program and because the workshop was in the summer, students were not getting the benefit of free and/or reduced price meals through school so including meals was critical to support the students' attendance.

Curricular components of the workshop included a workshop theme of "Our Covid Experience," including daily read alouds, discussions about the writing process, writing, and discussing progress. These components were organized and guided through Google Classroom using Chromebooks loaned from the PDS. As well, the PDS had on-call technology support for our university faculty throughout the entire workshop. This was a tremendous support and allowed for PDS students to work on a platform they knew from school so that the focus was the workshop and not learning how to use technology.

In addition to providing space and media attention, the public library also allowed use of their Wi-Fi and included outreach to families. The last day of the workshop, the Public Library invited all the families of participants to come for a tour, helped people get signed up for library cards, and taught basic library skills.

Participants

This case study consisted of a small focus data set of one male and five female middle school participants between the ages of 11 and 14 years

from a local ISD. Participants were recruited from Title 1 Schools, which qualify for free or reduced lunch. Faculty at the state university applied for and received a grant to fund the workshop. Local ISD student participants engaged in a four-day digital literacy workshop free of charge at the local public library in a space with 300 square feet suitable to accommodate COVID-19 protocol. State university faculty and graduate participants provided instruction for the workshop.

All references to student participants are under pseudonyms. Upon enrollment in the study, participants were given an anonymous identifier used when coding responses and reporting results. All electronic documents (data coding/ analysis) are stored on the faculty member's office computer which is password protected and only accessible to the principal investigators. This research poses no additional risks to participants.

Description of Case Study

Researchers collected data through mixed methods of detailed data approaches. A descriptive and exploratory inquiry of a group of participants from a local ISD was developed using a case study method of analyzing participants' digital storytelling abilities. Within the case study an action research method was conducted with a focus on participants' growth and development of enhanced communication (digital literacy) skills over a four-day period.

The case study consisted of a small focus data set of six middle school participants. Local ISD provided one-to-one devices (Google Chromebooks) for participants to complete workshop assignments. Graduate students created a Google Classroom for participants to join to view assignments, submit coursework, and collect data. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected by graduate students throughout the four-day digital literacy workshop. Pre- and post-surveys were conducted on the first and fourth day of the workshop. The surveys were posted to the Google Classroom and consisted of Likert scale and open-ended questions. Each survey consisted of eighteen questions. Participants had twenty minutes to complete the pre- and post-surveys. The two surveys were completed by all participants. The surveys provided graduate students the opportunity to evaluate participants' growth and observe participants' confidence/ voice. A qualitative participant quick check was assigned through Google Classroom on the third day of the workshop. The quick check consisted of five open-ended questions for participants to self-reflect on their personal narrative story status and development. The quick check data were used to observe participants' understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic personal story assignment. To gain better insight, graduate students gathered descriptive data on participants from day one to day four of the workshop through handwritten and typed reflections of participants' development in the creation of digital stories and technology skills. Lastly, participants uploaded their personal narratives to Google Classroom, which were used by the graduate students to complete a discourse analysis. This process involved graduate students' analysis of participants' published personal narratives focusing on participants' creativity, self-expression, voice, and use of technology skills.

The case study method was the best choice to analyze the effectiveness of this project due to the small focus set of participants. Having a small, focused data set provided the graduate students an opportunity to analyze descriptive data and gain insight into participants' digital literacy storytelling narratives.

Data Collection

On the first day of the workshop, graduate students handed out Chromebooks for participants to use during the workshop. Participants were required to join the Digital Literacy Google Classroom that would be used to access all the digital workshop content. On the first day before any skills were taught, participants were given a 17- question online pre-survey created through Google Forms. The questions were a combination of open-ended and Likert type statements. On day two of the workshop, graduate students observed participants planning their stories using circle maps and flee maps and took notes on participants' proper usage and overall understanding of the strategy and related communication skills. On day three of the workshop, participants worked on assembling their stories. Graduate students observed participants' finalizing their narratives and held individual conversations with all participants. At the end of day three, participants were required to complete a "quick check" which was created in Google Forms and posted in the Google Classroom. Participants were given ten minutes to answer five open-ended questions concerning individual progress in their narratives before publishing day.

On the last day of the workshop, participants completed 17- question the post-survey. It should be noted that observations occurred throughout the workshop when participants opened up and shared their background knowledge in digital literacy. These observations were gathered through handwritten notes and typed reflections by the graduate students that conducted the workshop.

Data Analysis

In the pre-survey responses, participants were asked to rate confidence levels in communication skills, their ability to tell a story, their ability to create and tell a story through various media, and the use of digital media in a responsible manner. They were also asked to respond to their confidence in using the various media, synthesizing various sources, and whether or not they thought the workshop was helpful in teaching them how to tell a story in a digital format.

When compared with the results of the post-survey every participant but one indicated improvement in all areas. As the PDS had identified literacy skills as an area of need, the focus of the workshop was to develop literacy skills and the data collection and analysis centered on those skills. Specifically, when asked if they felt they had developed confidence in their ability to communicate, 90% of the participants indicated improvement in this area compared with their feelings prior to the workshop. Additionally, when asked about their ability to use various media to tell a story, 40% indicated very good and 40% indicated excellent.

Notes and observations recorded by the researchers indicated that the participants became more confident in their communication skills as the workshop progressed. For instance, in the small group open sharing, after a discussion about how "their Covid experience" would form the basis of the digital narratives, Participant One exclaimed, "I want to hear the teacher's perspective first, because I don't feel like our teachers were being completely honest with us about their feelings." Graduate student A (a fourth-grade teacher) took this opportunity to share her COVID-19 story with the workshop participants. At the end of sharing her COVID-19 story, participants began making instant personal connections in the small group discussion such as, "That's how I felt too!"; "Yeah so many of my friends went on vacation and just turned their screen off when they joined in."; and "No wonder my teacher looked so grumpy all the time, she must have been just as tired as I was." Students began to formulate ideas for their stories and to feel confident about discussing ideas.

The graduate students then conducted a mini lesson over the writing process. One of the most telling pieces in the development of the participants' narratives was having them organize a digital rough draft. To begin a rough draft, participants organized all thoughts and ideas written on their circle maps into three groupings, a beginning, middle, and end. A Googledoc was created by each participant, and the timer was set for ten minutes: the only noise you could hear was the tapping of keyboards. Drafting ended up taking almost thirty minutes rather than ten. Participants were observed working diligently, utilizing the writing process to compose, and they wanted to share the stories they were writing.

The assembling of participants' stories into an online platform (Google Slides) was the most arduous part of the digital literacy project for participants. When asked on the pre-survey through a Likert scale of 1 to 4 (one being not confident and four being very confident) "I am able to use digital media to create my own texts," 60% of participants selected a scale answer of 2 or "somewhat confident." In response to participants' lack in confidence with digital media from the pre-survey, Graduate student A created a Google Slides story template for participants to use when assembling their narratives. The template consisted of brief instructions for transferring participants' rough drafts into digital stories through using the beginning, middle, and end of the story in their rough draft into a slide presentation format. Participant 5 expressed, "it helped me put my story in order" while participant 2 vocalized,

"I feel the slides were most helpful, it helped our stories come together in a way that we don't normally use." Participants were given two days to assemble their personal narratives and collect any digital media needed for their presentations. Digital media could include student digital Avatars that were created through digital storytelling software, pictures taken on personal devices, and digital drawings. At the end of the workshop, when asked the same question regarding using digital media to create new text, there was a significant increase in participants' confidence with 40% selecting a level 3 (confident) and level 4 (very confident) and only 20% remaining at a level 2 (somewhat confident). The increase in confidence each day of the workshop was observed by graduate students in all participants. Having a structured template helped participants in assembling stories, gathering media, vocalizing opinions, and sharing perspectives.

The final step in the digital literacy narrative project was for participants to record and share narratives with each other. In the workshop pre-survey participants were asked, "How confident are you in expressing your student voice (interest, views, concerns, ideas) through technology presentations?" Participants' responses included, "I am kind of confident about a thing like that," "I am unsure," and "a little confident." Through anecdotal observation and participant discussions, graduate students made note of distaste from participants when having to complete narrative self-recordings. "I think my voice sounds weird, so I don't talk as loud so that no one else can hear it either," expressed participant two. To help with student confidence, graduate students let participants choose a secluded spot in the room to practice solely reading their narrative aloud, then asked participants for volunteers to read their narrative aloud to all workshop participants before pressing the red recording button. "I feel more confident, because I got used to it," stated participant one, when asked in the post-survey if participants felt more confident in expressing their voice through technology presentations. Becoming familiar with each other through relationship building games and small group discussions helped participants gain self-confidence. "I observed the most growth in participant four," says graduate student B, "at the beginning of the workshop he was timid, but as the week went on, he was more open to visiting and sharing with the group."

Through participants' published personal narratives, graduate students made note of participants' increase in creativity, self-expression, voice, and use of technology skills. "I know how to put a story together and make the slides look really good by adding pictures and using screencastify," participant five shared, "I never knew I could do that." In the post-survey when asked, "How would you rate your digital literacy skills after the workshop?" participants' average registered responses increased by an overall 30%. "Overall, I feel as though this workshop was extremely beneficial," graduate B shares, "As teachers we were able to see how COVID-19 affected each of them in a different way."

Discussion and Implications

From the data presented above, it is evident that the participants greatly benefitted from the workshop; however, that was not the only success resulting from the workshop. The collaboration between the university, the PDS and the library was a resounding success and has laid the foundation for many more successful collaborations in the future. Many of the NAPDS Second Edition of the Nine Essentials (2021) were evident in the planning and implementation of the workshop.

In a collaboration with the local school district, literacy skill development was identified as an area of need for underprivileged students in the district. The university worked closely with the district to identify a target group and then faculty at the university received a grant to fund a four-day, summer, digital literacy workshop. The school district advertised the summer event and recruited students at schools with a high percentage of free and reduced lunch participants. The university provided the curriculum, the faculty, and the graduate students who served as facilitators. The university, through the grant awarded to the faculty, also provided two high quality, health-conscious meals a day including snacks complete with fresh fruit and vegetables. The ISD provided the use of the student Chromebooks and the university provided technical support and Google accounts for the Google classroom platform that was utilized. The local library provided the physical space, which included a large room with tables that allowed for students to have ample space to work together or independently in addition to Wi-Fi and resources for the students to use when researching. The library also contacted the news station who conducted interviews and advertised the workshop on the evening news.

On the last day, the students shared digital stories with their family members and the library was able to register several family members to be library patrons. The workshop experience helped prepare graduate student education though clinical practice (Essential 2) and it provided a professional learning and leading experience for all participants (Essential 3). The collaborative study generated knowledge both practical and theoretical that "recognizes the influence of context and culture" (Essential 4), the results of which we are sharing with the public (Essential 5) through a variety of outlets (NAPDS, 2021, 15-16).

In terms of a mutually beneficial partnership, we feel that the PDS partner districts benefited from having a high quality and engaging instructional opportunity to provide their students. The participants benefited from learning to create stories for an audience and present their ideas and knowledge in an individual and meaningful way as observed through participants' statements such as, "I learned how to record on Screencastify", and "It was fun pulling all my information together to create a story in (Google Slides), a way that we don't normally use." Additionally, the university benefitted from working closely with the PDS staff and students, building a working relationship with the library, and providing graduate students with a hands-on opportunity to work with students.

As a result of this workshop and the data collected, we plan to continue the collaboration with the PDS to continue building and strengthening a mutually beneficial relationship. For future workshops we will look to include longer times for partner districts to recruit and reach out to more students.

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Pandemic, partnerships and practicums: Learning to teach virtually

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Introduction

The field of education is no stranger to finding opportunity within adversity. Recent constraints due to the coronavirus pandemic created a need for extreme health protocols while maintaining accountability for the critical tasks of teaching and learning. This was a predicament regardless of student age or grade placement. Teacher education programs quickly faced dilemmas connecting matriculating undergraduates to PK-12 schools to satisfy clinical or practicum experiences, which aligns to Essential 2 of the Second Edition of the NAPDS Nine Essentials (National Association for Professional Development Schools, 2021). Similarly, PK-12 public school districts faced challenging decisions regarding student learning options ranging from completely virtual or completely in-person to hybrid learning environments. If in-person PK-12 learning was offered, outside visitors including higher education partners were not allowed inside the buildings per pandemic health and safety protocols.

A large Midwestern urban district bordering the Kansas City, Missouri metropolitan area has been a clinical partner with a Midwestern University teacher education program for six years to meet NAPDS Essential 2. During the coronavirus pandemic, partnership participants and stakeholders felt it was a priority to co-develop innovative and responsive solutions for student learning including undergraduate clinical preparation experiences (National Association for Professional Development Schools Essential 4: Reflection and Innovation [NAPDS Essential 4]). Questions central to this collaboration focused on how to co-create viable, meaningful clinical experiences while satisfying health and safety expectations for both the university and the public school district.

District leadership and university-based teacher educators (UBTEs) met to discuss opportunities for the AY 20-21 clinical experience. Meetings in/during March of 2020 with representatives from the urban district and the university resulted in creating new plans for clinical preparation to be implemented during AY 20-21. Plans detailed learning access via virtual teaching (one-on-one) sessions between each clinical undergraduate teacher candidate (TC) and a pre-selected 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grader learning in person who could benefit from additional experiences with core content. The new design required detailed scheduling and communication documents to guide principals, classroom teachers, UBTEs and TCs facilitating these distance learning opportunities. Virtual teaching sessions occurred during the school day to minimize access and technology barriers with young learners and to maintain the specific relationship between the clinical TC and each primary grade student during the semester. Each tutoring session resulted in prompt UBTE feedback, self-reflection for the clinical TC and ongoing generative learning between the university partner and PK-12 school district.

This responsive innovation in partnership thought was designed to support essential teacher preparation experiences using lesson design, instructing live learning, formatively assessing student learning, and a shared commitment to ongoing reflective teaching practice [NAPDS Essentials 2 and 4]. However, a sequence of essential steps was required before launching the plan in order to prepare both entities in the partnership.

Move Towards Virtual Teaching

Teacher Candidate Experience

Traditionally, TCs are placed for twelve clinical days in a primary grade classroom for one semester. They are expected to teach three lessons to small groups of four students during the first quarter with peer coaching support. Second quarter they teach three lessons observed by UBTEs who facilitate reflection and provide feedback. Due to the coronavirus restrictions and required protocols for video conference lessons, each virtual lesson taught under the new plan was observed by a UBTE and a public school employee. Scheduling with all participants and observers inhibited the number of times TCs could teach each student virtually. UBTEs prioritized three opportunities for the TC to work with the students. The first meeting was a getting to know you session to meet the student, complete a written conversation between the TC and the student, review sight words and conduct a math skills check. The data would be used to develop and teach two lessons, rather than the six typically taught face to face: one ELA decoding lesson, and one math strategies lesson. Under this plan UBTEs provided immediate reflection, coaching, and feedback to TCs after each of the three meetings. Fall 2020 TCs emailed teachers a welcome and introduction to share with their public school student prior to the first online meeting. In response to teacher and administration feedback, the Spring 2021 TCs sent classroom teachers a video to introduce themselves to their new student. Teachers shared the videos with the assigned student and in some instances the whole class.

Response to Coronavirus

In March 2020, the leadership team in the Midwestern urban district also determined that for the remaining quarter of the school year the district would provide online learning resources to students while simultaneously ramping up