

Web 2.0 and Graduate Research
Storybird

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Introduction for Web 2.0 Technology

Storybird, describes itself as “collaborative storytelling”, is a social media service that allows users to create a story to connect with users regardless of ages and places. “Two people author a Storybird—one with words, one with pictures—and then share it with their network. The final product can be printed, watched on screen, played with like a toy, or shared through a worldwide library.” (Storybird, 2009)

Technology Needs in Education

The main development method for human society before the invention of writing was storytelling; storytelling is virtually encoded in human genes and cannot be separated from human cognitive learning. “John Debes, one of the most important figures in the history of the International Visual Literacy Association, first coined the term visual literacy in 1969 as “a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences” (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Storytelling is also a common practice shared in every culture and society as a means of entertainment, education and even is used for moral education at times, such as Aesop’s fables.

According to Cohen & Riel, most writing happened in the classroom has two physical audiences: the writer and the teacher; yet when students write for a larger audience, they are much more motivated to write and tend to do their best work (1989). Also, teachers report an increase in student motivation to write when they know their writing will be published on the Internet (Karchmer, 2001).

The birth of Storybird gives people the power to create their own story and share it with many potential viewers through the internet. Also, Storybird’s service provides users the power of turning their own ideas and values into permanent objects is a desired shared by many.

Using This Technology in Learning

“Digital storytelling does not need to be an additional task or more homework for students; it teaches skills that fit well within common learning guidelines set forth by many school districts. By working with students (and librarians), teachers can use digital storytelling as a fun and engaging learning activity for students. Of course, in order for teachers to be able to implement these programs, they must have the skills to create a digital story themselves” (Czarnecki, 2009) and implementing Storybird in a lesson is easy, as it is painless and fun for both the teacher and students to learn how to use Storybird to create your own stories.

One special function is the Storybird can develop students’ cooperative learning skills. One group of students can create, elaborate, and work with each other to finish a story. And different groups of students can provide their own stories and use as a jigsaw to support the whole learning of a chapter or a subject.

A teacher can also use Storybird as a formative assignment to help student organize key concepts of the learned materials, or use as informal assessment that will gather student’s learning information to evaluate students’ learning progress (Woolfolk, p. 511), with these collected information, a teacher can reflect on students’ learning and adjust lesson planning.

Also, the unique feature of Storybird is allowing a teacher to combine text with images, a good story will provide learning opportunity not only for students with adequate reading skills, but also with students who have are better served by alternative forms of learning.

Students perform best when they are self-regulated and motivated to learn. Storybird can further expand the audiences because it was delivered on the internet, so the students are self-motivated to provide quality work as their stories can be viewed by many.

Special Considerations for Using This Technology

“Teachers should verify their districts' policy regarding publishing student work on the Internet” (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009) before using Storybird. Also, Storybird is not meant to be used as major teaching method; it should be used as supplementary improvement only. Because even a good story is going to lose students' engagement if:

- There is too much text on a page. The amount of text should be in proper length and collaborate with the image.
- The length of story is too long. Every student has different length of attention span, if a story gets too long, the teacher could lose the engagement with some of his/her students.
- The story is repeating the same thing over and over again. Maintenance rehearsal, which is repeating the information in your mind (Woolfolk, p. 242), is the most common practice for students to hold their working memory. However, if a teacher could not present the story in an interesting way, the students will lose their interests relatively fast if they decide this is a repeating story.

Assessable Learning Outcomes

After a teacher implements Storybird, a student should be able to:

- Extend learning time. Students who have internet access at home can review or preview materials anytime they want; the students without internet access can have the same printed material to bring home with them.
- Rehearse learned concepts as key points as the schemes are already established.

- Hold working memory more effectively and connect working memory with long-term memory.
- Share their achievements. If Storybird is used as assignments, students could share their results not only with their peers but also with their family members.

Conclusion

If the Storybird is used in a class, it will help students develop creativity, innovation, and also will help students to learn effective communication and collaboration. Students will also have fun in cooperative learning and their meaningful contribution will help them develop self-concepts and social developments. In Czarnecki's research, it stated the students use "critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources" (2009) when they are creating a digital story. A teacher must find different ways to motivate his/her students to learn, and the usage of Storybird can encourage students' creative thinking and bring more fun into his/her classroom.

References

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Requirements for Web 2.0 and Graduate Research

What tool did you investigate?

Why there is a need for this technology?

How does this technology specifically address the unique learning/developmental needs of the intended population?

What are the specific considerations a educator should take into account in terms of the implementation of this material?

What learning outcomes could be assessed for students using this tool?

Your research should support a reader's understanding of the following:

- Is there a demonstrated need for this technology? (evidence from studies on society, test scores, post-secondary enrollment data etc.)

- How does this technology specifically address what we know about the specific learning needs of the intended population? (research on social-emotional or cognitive development)

- What are the specific considerations a educator should take into account in terms of the implementation of this material? (research on learning theories, brain development, motivation)

Do you have concerns about using this with some students? What standard of effective practice does this tool help you do better? Name it and describe how it helps.

- What learning outcomes could be assessed for students using this tool? Offer some specific criteria for what should be assessed and what this assessment data would demonstrate. You may need to do this in an applied context, e.g. imagine students using this in your content area.

Describe the assignment and assessment. (alignment of academic standards, school curriculum, and assessment)

You will answer each of these four questions, separately, on the discussion board area for grad students. I would encourage you to assemble your work along the way into APA style papers that you could use at conferences or submit for review and inclusion in digital learning repositories like [MERLOT](#), [Curriki](#), or [SERC](#) (for science based materials).

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Assessment 100 pts

Your posts will be worth 60 points total and assessed on the following (20 pts each for each of three posts)

1. Content: (15)
 - a. Demonstrated evidence that Web2.0 tool being described is understood and explained clearly to a layperson
 - b. Reflection on tool is grounded in established research base
 - c. Appropriate, informed, and accurate responses to questions posed with multiple means of support for conclusions offered

2. Well-written (5)
 - a. Compelling--but does not overstate claims
 - b. Clear, grammatically correct and logical in organization
 - c. APA format on citations

3. Not plagiarized! (0 points for assignment if this qualification is not met--and possible additional consequences)