Background: WP3 T-STORYs Good Practices in the use of Storytelling and Digital Storytelling in training and education

**Diagnostic**: Storytelling is today an important technique in the process of learning and understanding. Individuals gain a better understanding of one another through the use of concrete examples rather than through vague abstractions and generalizations which have no relationship to life’s experiences, since the sharing of experiences through the device of storytelling enables individuals to build the bridge of understanding between one another. This facilitates commonality and the shared resonance of experiences. The story provides the framework and context for individuals to better understand others by providing the key to their own vast index of experiences. Thus, the listener is able to relate in a meaningful way to the teller's point of context by working through personal experiences that result in a more profound and lasting understanding than would have been possible with a generalization. The teller and the listener come together on a cognitive and emotional level that allows the listener to relate to the teller from his or her own personal framework and thus grasp the teller’s perception of the content at the same time. This represents a remarkable, and yet very common, interpersonal experience.

**Data analysis**: During the following months, all partners will do a research at national and global level to identify successful storytelling educational projects, especially those supported in Digital Storytelling and, through research analysis, it will present a compendium of information related to Storytelling as an educational methodology. The WP 3 leader, will compile all case studies in the need analysis report.

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**T-STORYs Template for good practice**

**Name/Title of the project good practice:**

**Digital Storytelling (DS) applied to Geography Education**

Elements that potentially qualify the case as “good practice”:
- X Scale of operation /impact
- X Available evaluation of results/impact
- X International/national reputation/visibility
- X Transferability (demonstrated or hypothetical)
- X Quality assurance in place
- X Degree of innovation
- □ ..... Other

**Provider/Coordinator Institution**

Minho University and Arq. Oliveira Ferreira Secondary School

**Identified Category (storytelling or digital storytelling)**

Digital Storytelling

**Provider Country + Countries involved in the collected project**

Portugal

**Specific Target Groups identified**

10th grade students

**Data contact person**

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Storytelling Approach *(describe if the practice of storytelling is embedded into a set of learning activities and processes, if it is used in formal learning contexts or in informal settings, if it is created under ICT instruments and which, etc)*

This practice of DS applied into a geography class was used as part of the national geography curriculum defined for 10th grade classes, in Languages and Humanities area. Thus, students had to construct two DS under two different and defined themes. For support, the teacher responsible for the class created a blog with suggestions, definitions, tutorials, examples and free applications which made easy for students the access to DS information.

Students were the key actors of this project once they had to create the DS and present into class for evaluation. For video edition, recording and special effects, they appealed to different free applications, suggested by teacher, such as *Windows Live Movie Maker*, *Audacity*, and *Pixlr*.

For the phase of storyboard creation, students followed the “Annotated Visual Portrait of a Story (VPS)” model which was replaced for the model available in [www.educationworld.com](http://www.educationworld.com).

**Background / Context**

This DS practice was implemented in order to explore and study the use of DS in education, specifically in the geography national curriculum for 10th grade classes, once there was no registration of this practice in Portuguese national public education.

The study results of a master theses and was presented in the II International Congress on ICT and Education.

The author continues applying this technique following the successful results of the first use.
Short description

The 10th grade students of a geography class were proposed to construct 2 DS related to 2 different themes. The class was composed by 21 students which were divided into groups with a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 elements, resulting into 8 groups. The 1st DS was related with the theme “The main socio demographic questions: an aging population” and the 2nd theme was related to “The use of the maritime coast and the maritime resources”.

In beginning, teacher introduced the theme of DS in class and gave a script / storyboard with the definition of each step to construct a story, based on the “Annotated Visual Portrait of a Story (VPS)” model. Following, teacher explained the seven elements of a DS according with the defined by the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS). Then, teacher showed how to use several applications for video edition and special effects, such as Windows Live Movie Maker, Audacity, Pixlr. This first step took 2 sessions of 45 minutes.

Thus, students initiated their work following different defined phases, namely those suggested by Bull & Kajder (2004):
1. write an initial script – each group wrote a story under each theme and presented to teacher who made some suggestions and corrections (took 2 sessions of 45 minutes);
2. plan an accompanying storyboard – students adapted the text into a storyboard beginning to search for the first images (took a session of 90 minutes);
3. discuss and revise the script – made in each group and under the attendance of the teacher;
4. Sequence the images in the video editor; add the narrative track; add special effects and transitions; add a soundtrack – students used the school library, a room and their own homes to tape the narrative and add music (took 2 sessions with a total of 135 minutes).

In the end, each group presented into class their DS, following a space for auto and hetero evaluation.

In the second DS theme, students changed the first storyboard model to the one available in www.educationworld.com, once they concluded that the first used wasn’t functional. Other change was the new creative use of images by students, such as self made illustrations and movies once the school is located next to the sea.

Elements that potentially qualify the case as “good practice”

There was quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the described DS practice using anonymous questionnaires and a focus group session through anonymous written records. As conclusions, students were very motivated working with this technique once they were responsible for search, select and organize all the information, making this learning process a different way for learn and explore a theme. They recognized that now they were aware of the importance of the themes as they acquire a set of different new competences.

It was also perceived that making students organize themselves in groups and explore unknown themes, from geography and ICT areas, improved teamwork in each and between the different groups, as enhanced their creativity and engagement.
Key points for effective practice

There was some points which conducted this first in class experience as a good practice, namely:
- The creation of a blog by the teacher - with suggestions, definitions, tutorials, examples and free applications which made easy for students the access to DS information;
- The final auto and hetero evaluation – from the groups and the teacher which made students responsible for their work and aware of the consequences, but also improved their teamwork and engagement making the class a learning community;
- The main role of the students – once the DS was created and presented by them and not by the teacher;
- The first phase of DS introduction – imperative for the knowledge and first contact with storytelling and DS from students and guidance through DS phases.

Web link(s)

Additional references

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