Using digital storytelling to unlock student potential

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Students are scattered throughout the classroom in pairs. Stretched out on the floor or sitting next to each other at their desks, these second graders pour over their partner’s writing with one purpose in mind: to provide each other with feedback. Only a day ago the students were writing personal narratives, but today they practice reading their work to their partner making sure to read with good expression, emphasis, volume, and tempo to prepare for their final storytelling presentation to the class. Through the process of practicing, these students “hear” any awkward sections that perhaps need tweaking or lack detail, and then work with their partner to revise their writing. Working in these partnerships students begin to see themselves as “writers” that have a greater audience than simply themselves and their teacher. They are acknowledged for their writing successes and are given support to get through the rough patches that are inherent in writing.

This is one of several lessons in which Ashley’s second grade students participate in order to meet Ashley’s objective to enrich their literacy development beyond reading and writing printed text. During her unit on storytelling, Ashley engages her students in performance literacy (Dillingham, 2005) by leading the students through the process of writing their own stories and then using sound, expression, movement, pictures or a combination of any or all of these to share the stories with others. By providing students with the opportunity to not only write but also tell their stories, Ashleys’ students become more motivated and are dedicated to writing their story and exploring the sharing of it through different modes and venues.

Though an ancient art form, storytelling has evolved over time and has been utilized by all cultures to pass down stories from one generation to the next. As part of classroom instruction, storytelling has the potential to inspire and develop imagination and oral fluency (Reed, 1987), encourage visualization (Sylvester & Greenridge, 2009/2010), improve public speaking skills (Dillingham, 2005), enhance listening skills (Rooks, 1998), and, ultimately, inspire students to write (Dillingham, 2005). Because we learn so much through telling stories, several classrooms have embraced its use (Daniel, 2007; Reed, 1987; Rooks, 1998). However, many educators continue to be hesitant to use storytelling in the classroom. One reason is that storytelling is not a scripted practice and requires time and rehearsal to ensure a story is delivered seamlessly. Often teachers do not want to invest the time or feel uncomfortable with the process of performing.

The purpose of this column is to present one particular mode of telling stories, digital storytelling, and offer step-by-step instructions on how to use a particular technology to facilitate this type of storytelling. While the focus of the column is digital storytelling, a short overview of traditional storytelling is also presented in order to highlight the overlap and differences between the traditional and digital forms. Further, the column describes broadly how a digital storytelling unit was taught in a second grade classroom so that it can be adapted for older students, as well.
Traditional and digital storytelling: An overview

Storytelling has traditionally focused on the telling of folktales, fairy tales, myths, legends, and other familiar tales, which have been passed down over generations. These time-honored stories introduce students to a multitude of genres and help develop an appreciation for other cultures and traditions, while exposing students to important lessons, values, and universal truths. Because the stories are quite familiar, they are highly motivating and easier for students to retell; familiarity also allows students to modify the stories and create their own versions.

Wright, Bacigalupa, Black, and Burton (2008) believe that the ability to dramatize stories allows students to utilize higher-order thinking skills. Dramatization imitates play and, according to Vygotsky, play is the perfect medium for students to remember, imagine, and recreate images and ideas from past experiences, even though “these same mental operations might be too difficult if the same children were to simply try to think about or discuss them” (as cited in Wright et al., 2008, p. 363). It is necessary then for students to not only generate ideas, but also determine the best way to convert these thoughts into physical representations.

Having a teacher who takes on the role of “principal storyteller” in the classroom provides students with the modeling they need to become successful storytellers themselves, as well as learn the narrative structure they must utilize when speaking and writing stories. However, many researchers believe that teachers must feel outfitted with the tools to be storytellers in the classroom, otherwise, as Daniel (2007) argues, “…the activity of classroom storytelling delivered by an adult will remain the preserve of the professional teller of tales instead of its being regarded as a general teaching method, rich in potential for assisting children to become effective learners” (p. 735).

Beyond modeling storytelling in front of their students, teachers also need to learn how to design several different lessons that will help students turn their written stories or other authors’ stories into storytelling. For example, there are lessons in which students learn to add expression to the reading of their stories by rereading their stories several times and putting emphasis on selected words, phrases, or both. Further, students participate in diaphragnostic exercises and practice changing the volume of their voice, as well as the speed of their reading and the insertion of appropriate silences. Table 1 presents a list of possible lessons/objectives and activities in preparation for storytelling that Hamilton and Weiss (1990) share in their book, Children Tell Stories: A Teaching Guide.

Storytelling broke into education in the early 1980s and 1990s. As it gained popularity, teachers began to modify its basic principles to cultivate motivation and meet the needs of all students. Teachers also began to study how storytelling could be used in different ways to further develop literacy skills. Rooks (1998), for instance, conducted an action research project to see if there was any link between story writing and storytelling. During her study, she found that when students shared their oral stories they were willing to try something new. “There was evidence to show that in oral stories children were more likely to try new openings, use connectives more frequently, experiment with dialogue and attempt to use different tenses” (Rooks, 1998, p. 25). She also found that students enjoyed working cooperatively and that sharing stories with each other often provided inspiration and immediate feedback. Students reported finding it much easier to write their stories when they already told the story many times, and enjoyed the opportunity to tell their stories because the audience listened attentively and provided meaningful feedback. While the students did not participate in telling traditional stories, Rooks allowed students to tell their own stories, which ultimately helped them to transcribe these stories onto paper with success.

Moving beyond the language arts classroom, storytelling can also be integrated into the other content areas. According to Harris (2007), “Stories give social studies content personal meaning and make facts come alive for students” (p. 114). After studying a specific time period, for example, students can create and perform stories, instead of responding to the more traditional content specific questions. The creation of these narratives allows students to demonstrate their understanding of events in the past, or highlights the gaps or misunderstandings students may have in their learning, while integrating their own personality and personal experiences into the project (Harris, 2007). Sharing this story with peers then allows students to take ownership for what they have learned and develop pride in their work.

Further, Eldredge (2009) argues that integrating storytelling elements into science is equally beneficial believing that “stories lie in the eye and mind of the beholder, whether in three-dimensional ‘real’ time, a teacher’s verbal account, or the lines on a printed page” (p. 83). Consequently, storytelling can help students develop a direct connection to science making it more significant and applicable to their own lives. When storytelling is incorporated into the science curriculum, “we instantly humanize science, make it relevant to the random child, and automatically make it seem more inviting, less hard” (Eldredge, 2009, p. 84).

As technology has evolved, educators began to experiment with digital storytelling, building on many aspects of traditional storytelling while incorporating new technologies. After a story is written, for example, one can narrate the story using a voice recorder, and then create a slideshow of pictures or illustrations to accompany this narration. A video is created and

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Table 1

Activities to Support Lessons on Traditional Storytelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini Lessons on Traditional Storytelling</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is traditional storytelling?</td>
<td>Watch video of storytellers at <a href="http://www.beautyandthebeaststorytellers.com/movies/clip3.mov">http://www.beautyandthebeaststorytellers.com/movies/clip3.mov</a> and discuss as whole class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting expression into your voice</td>
<td>Teacher models; Students practice phrases using different emotions (sad, happy, frustrated, angry, etc.); Students practice reading their writing with expression with partner; Students make revisions to their writing as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word emphasis</td>
<td>Teacher models; Students practice phrases putting emphasis on different words in sentence; Students practice emphasizing words in their writing with partner; Students make revisions to their writing as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of voice/pitch</td>
<td>Diaphragmatic exercise; Teacher models; Students practice story using appropriate volume/pitch with partner; Students make revisions to their writing as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Rate/Silences</td>
<td>Teacher models; Students practice phrases using different tempos and silences; Students practice reading story with appropriate tempos/silences with partner; Students make revisions to their writing as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial expressions/eye contact</td>
<td>Pass the face game; Teacher models; Students practice reading story with appropriate facial expressions with partner; Students make revisions to their writing as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestures/Movements</td>
<td>Pantomiming; Teacher models; Students practice reading story with subtle gestures with partner; Students make revisions to their writing as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing it all together</td>
<td>Students pair up and complete performance rubric with partner to make final changes to presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling presentations</td>
<td>Students present their stories in traditional storytelling format.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from M. Hamilton & M. Weiss (1990).

Background music can be used to complement the production. Like traditional storytelling, one uses voice inflection to draw in the audience, but with digital storytelling one engages viewers with music and pictures or illustrations instead of physical movement. “Digital stories derive their power by weaving images, music, narrative and voice together, thereby giving deep dimension and vivid color to characters, situations, experiences, and insights” (Rule, as cited in Digital Storytelling, 2009). Miller (2007) attests,

Digital stories start with text but then marry the words to images-video and still- and voice-over narration and music. Some call this multimedia storytelling, while others say it’s filmmaking. None of the labels captures the magic of a speaker talking, as the poetry of the words and the power of photographs come together in a moving, shared experience (p. 173).

While traditional storytelling has been used by all cultures throughout history and has had time to establish itself in the classroom, digital storytelling is still in its infancy in the educational setting. One reason for this might be the assumption that digital storytelling is very different from traditional storytelling. As Table 2, however, indicates, several of the lessons and objectives involved in digital storytelling are the same as in traditional storytelling (i.e., expression in voice, word emphasis, and tempo/rate/silences). A comparison of Tables 1 and 2 makes it clear that the two types of storytelling have a lot in common and what makes them different is the way the narrated story is presented to an audience (with or without the use of new technologies).

Another possible reason digital storytelling is quite uncommon in classrooms is the assumption that the technology required for digital storytelling is complicated or that there is not enough technology support at the school for those cases when “technology does not cooperate.” In a study by Mullen and Wedwick (2008), for instance, one teacher/participant recorded the difficulty she had with helping her students share microphones, scanners, and other equipment, and manage the difficulties that technology can often present. However, for some teachers, the benefits of storytelling seem to outweigh the challenges. “The computers did not always work. The work did not always save. But in the end, hearing the students’ voices in the collection of stories was an invaluable experience” (Mullen & Wedwick, 2008, p. 68). This
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini Lessons on Digital Storytelling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Putting expression into your voice</td>
<td>Teacher models; Students practice phrases using different emotions (sad, happy, frustrated, angry, etc); Students practice reading story with expression; Revise story as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word emphasis</td>
<td>Teacher models; Students practice phrases putting emphasis on different words in sentence; Students practice emphasizing words in story; Revise story as necessary.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tempo/Rate/Silences</td>
<td>Teacher models; Students practice phrases using different tempos and silences; Students practice reading story with appropriate tempos/silences; Revise story as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Students narrate their stories using recording software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a storyboard</td>
<td>Students create storyboard of digital story creating quick sketch of 8 illustrations and corresponding narration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating the illustrations</td>
<td>Students illustrate the 8 pictures from the storyboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting it all together</td>
<td>Students will choose a song to accompany story and arrange digital illustrations using Photo Story 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling presentations</td>
<td>Students present their stories in digital storytelling format.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

老师的反思同样鼓舞人心。学生报告说，数字故事使他们能够更批判性地思考，使用和自定义软件，从而创造出独特的产品，而这个产品使一个学生从另一个学生（Mullen & Wedwick, 2008）分离出来。


虽然数字故事可能看似外语，甚至可能有点预兆，创造一个数字故事可以从简单的多媒体中实现。在过去的专栏（Saine & Kara-Soteriou, 2010）中，我们描述了如何使用 Windows Movie Maker（适用于 PC 用户）和 iMovie（适用于 Mac 用户）进行数字故事叙述。因此在本文中，我们将描述另一个软件选项，PhotoStory3。然而，如果你尝试 PhotoStory3 或者不同的技术来创建一个数字故事，我们建议你访问几个网站来了解更多关于故事叙述和数字故事，这些数字故事他人已经创建和分享在互联网上。表 3 包括一些具有数字故事叙述信息的网站，你可以访问。

### Table 3
#### Digital Storytelling Informational Websites

- Digital Storytelling at [http://www.annapolishigh.org/~media/DStories/digitalstorytelling1.html](http://www.annapolishigh.org/~media/DStories/digitalstorytelling1.html)
- Telling Lives: Your Digital Stories (from the BBC website) at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/tellinglives](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tellinglives)
- DigiTales at [http://www.digitales.us/](http://www.digitales.us/)
How to use PhotoStory3
PhotoStory3 is a free software program that can be downloaded from Microsoft’s website (www.microsoft.com) and can be used with Windows XP computers. Like other software, PhotoStory3 is easier to use if the teachers/students decide ahead of time what images (and audio files) they would like to insert in their digital storytelling project and they organize them and other files for easy access. Therefore, we recommend that students first create a folder on their computer where they can save all their images and PhotoStory3 files. If students already have personal images on their computer it is easy to simply copy them from one folder/program to the newly created folder on their desktop. If students are looking for online images/audios, we recommend that they begin from the website Copyright Free and Public Domain Media Sources at http://people.uwec.edu/koroghen/ public_domain.htm where they can search through thousands of images for their project. Scanning photos and using hand drawn illustrations and/or digital illustrations created in programs like KidPix or Microsoft Paint are also options that work well with PhotoStory3.

In addition to choosing and organizing images before using PhotoStory 3, we also recommend that the teachers/students get a microphone that can be used to narrate the story for the digital storytelling project. A USB microphone is not particularly expensive and works well because no software needs to be installed. This microphone allows users to simply plug it in and use it right away.

With the microphone available and the organizing of images/audios in a folder on their computer, students, who have already prepared a story to be used for storytelling, are ready to start using PhotoStory3. Below are simple steps to follow:

Step 1: Create a new story (or edit a story)
1. Open PhotoStory3 and select “Begin a new story.” Once a story has started, this window will also allow you to edit a project or play a story.
2. Click “Next” along the bottom of the window.

Step 2: Import and arrange pictures
1. Click “Import Pictures.”
2. Locate the images you would like to use in the file you created. Highlight the image or images you would like to use and select “Okay.” The images will automatically import into the PhotoStory3 software. If the images do not import in the order in which you would like them to appear, click the image you would like to rearrange and drag it into the desired position.
3. OPTIONAL: Photos can be edited if you choose. Click on the image you would like to edit. Under the image are small buttons that allow you to change the color level, remove red eye, rotate images, add effects, and remove any black borders that may surround the images.

Step 3: Add a title to your pictures
1. Click on the image you would like to add text to and type the text in the text box. Click on the small “A” above the text box to change the font style and size. The additional boxes above the text box allow you to change the positioning of the text.
2. Below the image is also a drop-down box that allows you to change how the images look. Click on the drop-down box next to the word “Effect” to make these changes.
3. Click “Next” to move on to the next step.

Step 4: Narrate your pictures and customize motion
1. Plug your microphone into your computer. To configure the microphone and set the recording volume click on the small circular button with the microphone on it. Follow the prompts until you return to the original screen.
2. Select the image on which you would like to record sound.
3. Click the record narration button that has a small red dot on it.
4. Click the stop button with the small square when you are done recording.
5. To listen to the narration you just recorded click the “Preview” button. If the narration was acceptable, repeat the above steps for all of the images you would like to record over. If the narration needs to be recorded again, click the “Delete Narration” button and rerecord.
6. It is also possible to customize how the images are displayed. Select the image you would like to customize and click “Customize Motion” below the image. The window that opens will display two tabs, which include a “Motion and Duration” and “Transition” tab.
7. Select the “Motion and Duration” tab and click on “Specify start and end position of motion.” Now you can adjust the starting position and end position of the image by using the arrows to zoom in and out. This feature allows you to focus in on a specific part of the image that you may want to highlight or make stand out when the digital story is playing.
8. Make sure the “Set duration automatically” bubble is selected at the bottom of the window. PhotoStory3 automatically matches the length of the narration to how long it takes for the image to either pan in or zoom out. This ensures
that the slideshow does not move on to the next image before the narration is complete.

9. Select the “Transition” tab to adjust how the images will transition from one to another.

10. Select the “Preview” button to ensure both the transitions and starting and end position of the image are to your liking. Click “Save” and then “Close.”

11. Repeat items 2-10 (under step 4) for the rest of your images.

12. Select “Next.”

**Step 5: Add background music**

1. There are two buttons you can select when adding background music: “Select Music...” or “Create Music...”. When using the ‘select’ button you are able to choose an mp3 file you have created or downloaded from another source, such as freeplaymusic.com which allows you to download music royalty free. When using the ‘create’ button you are able to use music of various genres that automatically comes with PhotoStory3. In this case use the drop-down menus next to the words “genre” and “style” to choose the type of music you think would compliment your story. Select the instrument you would like to play your music under “Bands” and select the mood that compliments your story by selecting the appropriate emotion under “Moods.” At any time you may click the “Play” button to preview the music. Click “OK” when you are done with your customization.

2. You can adjust the volume of the music by clicking the arrow under the word “Volume.” Click “Preview” to ensure that the volume of the music does not overwhelm the volume of the narration.

3. To add another music selection select the image that you would like the second track to begin on in the image timeline along the bottom of the window and repeat the directions above. The software will automatically transition from one track to the next.

4. Select “Next.”

**Step 6: Save your story**

1. Decide how you would like to save your story under the “Activities” section. Most people select the “Save your story for playback on your computer” option.

2. Click the “Browse” button to select the location in which you would like to save your story.

3. For the best playback on most computers make sure you render the movie as a 640x480 file, but if you are going to post the movie online you may wish to render it as a 320x240 file. You can change your settings by clicking on the “Settings” button.

4. Click “Next” and the PhotoStory3 software will begin to create your movie. This process may take awhile so be patient!

5. Once the movie is created, click view to watch your story on Windows Media Player!

If you would like even more detailed instructions about each step of the process of using PhotoStory3, on each new window of the software there is a “Learn more about...” tab that opens a Windows help menu with Content, Index, and Search tabs. Further, there are several other websites that provide tutorials on PhotoStory3 and some are listed in Table 4.

**Table 4**

**PhotoStory3 Tutorials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Websites with screenshots or videos</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://millie.furman.edu/ml/tutorials/photosstory3/index.htm">http://millie.furman.edu/ml/tutorials/photosstory3/index.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0oH9qE9qEY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0oH9qE9qEY</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photosstory/tips/firststory.mspx">http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photosstory/tips/firststory.mspx</a></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Documents you can download</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.jakesonline.org/photosstory.pdf">http://www.jakesonline.org/photosstory.pdf</a></td>
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**Digital storytelling in the classroom:**

A unit of instruction in second grade

Even though only in second grade, Ashley's students used the PhotoStory3 software to create digital stories. The unit of instruction lasted two weeks and concluded with each student creating a digital story and Ashley compiling the stories into a digital anthology on a CD for her students to take home and share with family and friends. Another option for sharing the digital stories outside the classroom is to post on the classroom's or school's website or other websites like SchoolTube.com (http://www.schooltube.com/).

While many students in Ashley's classroom enjoyed writing, there were still several who were hesitant to write. The objective of this project was to unlock the potential of this group of students, as well, by providing a more authentic purpose for writing and an audience beyond their teacher and classmates. With the introduction of technology into the writing process, Ashley hoped that her students would also be intrigued by the process and that writing would become more meaningful and more attractive to them. Not only would students benefit from the introduction of a new technological tool, but they
would also learn the value of revision and acquire the tools they need to become more successful storytellers and public speakers.

Before students began their project, they were introduced to digital storytelling by viewing digital stories created by other students. Ashley selected digital stories from Kentucky's Scott County Schools' website at http://www.dtc.scott.k12.ky.us/technology/digitalstorytelling/studentstories.html and other websites, such as schooltube.com, teachertube.com, and youtube.com. Students were also given a quick walk through of the PhotoStory3 software so they would be aware of the elements they would be expected to include at the conclusion of the project. Following this initial lesson, Ashley taught a minilesson on different aspects of story writing and storytelling and asked students to begin to create their digital stories in small stages so the project would be more manageable. The first week's focus of instruction was on the writing and revision of the students' stories, whereas the second week's focus was on the development of the digital story. What follows is a brief description of the unit's lessons:

Days 1-2: Students dedicated two full days to learning about digital storytelling, previewing PhotoStory3 as a class and writing their narrative. Students were asked to choose a small moment in their lives that was significant and write a short narrative describing this moment. (Prior to this unit, students were introduced to the elements of personal narrative, so once students chose their topic, they were able to begin writing.)

Day 3: Once the rough draft of the story was written, the focus shifted from story writing to storytelling by teaching students how to put expression into their voices. Students were presented with the phrase "Where are you going?" and were asked to practice saying it using different emotions (sad, happy, frustrated, angry, etc.). Students were then placed with a partner and practiced reading rough drafts of their narratives with their peer. Students read each other's work and provided feedback when a section sounded awkward or lacked detail. Students were given ten minutes to revise their work based on their partner's feedback.

Day 4: Students continued to apply what they learned from the previous day, but were now shown how to emphasize words to draw the audience in further. Students were presented with the phrase, "What happened to your homework?" and this time Ashley emphasized certain words in the phrase and students were asked to determine what was implied. For example, emphasizing the word your in the phrase implies that one student handed in his homework but the teacher is unsure where another student's work is. However, if the word happened is emphasized, it is implied that the homework was damaged in some way and the teacher is inquiring what happened. Once other examples were given, students again read their personal narrative with a new partner, provided feedback, and revised their drafts.

Day 5: This day's lesson focused on tempo, rate, and silences. Students were shown how to increase the rate of their reading to express excitement; slow down their reading to show sadness; and add in silences to build suspense or show hesitancy. Students were given familiar books used in the classroom and asked to practice with a partner and then read to the group. Both the students and teacher commented on the performances. Students then took what they learned and applied it to their own story. Again students practiced reading their stories with another student and revised their work.

Days 6-10: Students used these days to put together the digital story. First, students were asked to create a storyboard by breaking their story into eight sections and working with a partner to highlight (on the paper) the different sections. (Longer stories can be broken into more sections.) Students then created eight quick pencil drawings that corresponded with each section and, as they completed the storyboard, they moved on to developing their illustrations. For this project, students used colored pencils and crayons to illustrate. However, using photographs or allowing students to create illustrations on software programs like KidPix would also work. For this project, due to the limited number of scanners in the school, several students volunteered to help the teacher scan the illustrations at different times during the school day. Parents could also be asked to help in order to expedite the process. Each student's scanned illustrations were saved into a separate computer file so it would be easier to find them later. Students were shown how to add their images to the PhotoStory3 software and recorded each section of their story using a USB microphone. Some students chose to work on the project before or after school, or during recess time, when it was quieter and their recordings would be "perfect" (i.e., without the unwanted background noise). Finally students put it all together by adding customized motion to the story and choosing music right from the PhotoStory3 software that matched the tone of their story.

Once the digital stories were finalized, students were invited to attend a "movie premiere" complete with popcorn. Students watched each other's stories on a large screen wide eyed and engrossed, laughing together, quietly complimenting each other on their use of pictures and the inflection in their voices, and clapping and cheering at the conclusion of each narrative. Following this project, students continuously asked to digitalize all of their writing. Students expressed how the process of creating this story helped them not only with the process of revising their writing, but also with becoming more confident storytellers.

Conclusion
To be literate, students must do more than simply read and write; they must comprehend, apply, analyze,
synthesize, evaluate, and create in order to maneuver through increasingly complex information. This has led to the development of multiple literacies and the focus on preparing students to successfully work with texts of all kinds, including traditional texts, visuals, and hypertexts.

Digital storytelling allows educators to integrate these new literacies into the classroom while motivating and captivating students' attention. However, many researchers find that schools not only rarely use digital storytelling, but also continue to heavily use print-based literacies in the classroom at a time when students gravitate to new literacies at home (O’Brien & Scharber, 2008). Nowadays, many students are comfortable with technology and are not afraid to explore new software and tools. Introducing students to digital storytelling provides them with tools they can use both in and outside of school, and helps bridge the connection between what they do at home and in the classroom.

Many believe it is the responsibility, not the choice, of teachers to expose students to technological opportunities, and digital stories are the perfect mediums for providing this exposure. As Mullen and Wedwick (2008) state, “The literate of the twenty-first century must be able to download, upload, rip, burn, chat, save, blog, Skype, IM, and share” (p.66) and “School must become a place in which students can acquire the necessary skills for technological success” (p.69). Further, as Miller (2007) argues, “Students need to be visually literate … and, if they are going to be active citizens of the world, they need to be able to tell their own stories using writing, visuals, and technology” (p. 174).

Teachers need to be exposed to the benefits of digital storytelling and must be willing to take the risk of using it in their teaching. While it can be a daunting process that requires practice, patience, spirit, and technological prowess, digital storytelling has many benefits for both the teller and the listener that far outweigh the effort.

References
Daniel, A. (2007). From folktales to algorithms: Developing the teacher's role as principal storyteller in the classroom. Early Childhood Development and Care, 177, 735-750.
with a focus on classrooms, students and teachers. Visit her website at <www.u.arizona.edu/~kgoodman>.

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STEPHEN KRASHEK is best known for developing the first comprehensive theory of second language acquisition, introducing the concept of sheltered subject matter teaching, and as the co-inventor of the Natural Approach. He has also contributed to theory and application in the areas of bilingual education, and reading. He was the 1977 Incline Bench Press champion of Venice Beach and holds a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. His current books are Summer Reading: Program and Evidence (with Fay Shin, published by Allyn and Bacon), and English Learners in American Classrooms (with Jim Crawford, published by Scholastic).

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DAVID A. MONTI is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Reading and Language Arts at Central Connecticut State University. He continues working at the University as doctoral dissertation advisor in the Educational Leadership program. He has been active in the International Reading Association and served two terms as President of LEADER, a special interest council of the International Reading Association; he served two terms as state coordinator and has been the past-president of the state, local and special interest council in Connecticut. He holds the distinction of being named the “Connecticut Educator of the Year” by the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English as well as “Scholar in Residence” in New York City. Currently he serves as literacy consultant to the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt StoryTown program and is co-author of Think Aloud Reading Assessment (TARA).

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