

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Tens of thousands of years ago, when the human mind was young and our numbers were few, we were telling one another stories. And now, tens of thousands of years later, when our species teems across the globe, most of us still hew strongly to myths about the origins of things, and we still thrill to an astonishing multitude of fictions on pages, on stages, and on screens—murder stories, sex stories, war stories, conspiracy stories, true stories and false. We are, as a species, addicted to story. Even when the body goes to sleep, the mind stays up all night, telling itself stories.

–Jonathan Gottschall

Introduction

Because storytelling is such a natural and necessary way to communicate, it is a powerful tool for the classroom. For example, you can use stories to introduce new material in entertaining and interesting ways, or to share personal experiences which demonstrate key teaching points. Even more possibilities present themselves when students become the storytellers...

Instead of telling you about these possibilities, I will let you explore them for yourselves. By the end of the Adventure Learning workshop you will have created your own digital story, progressing through the same stages of learning that await your students. A digital story is basically a short and simple video. The act of digital storytelling is a form of technology-driven storytelling: Computer users recreate the traditional processes of selecting a topic, conducting research, writing a script, and developing an interesting story. The result is very different from the standard presentation of facts that you might see in, say, a textbook. The narrative structure of a digital story helps our brains organize and remember information, and the different elements of a digital story, from the voiceover to the visuals, engage multiple parts of the brain.

We will learn more about the details of digital storytelling in the week to come. For the pre-workshop, your assignment is simple:

Write a short story (maximum 200 words) that answers the question, “Which ecosystem service are you most afraid of losing?”

It is very important that you bring a hard copy of your story script to the first day of the workshop on Monday, June 5th. You will be working in groups to read and revise your scripts. If you are unsure what the finished product should look like, I have written an example that follows the basic narrative structure of:

____ AND _____, BUT _____, THEREFORE _____.

“Which ecosystem service are you most afraid of losing?”

I didn't understand my parents when I was young. Every Saturday, at the unreasonable time of 5:00 am, my Mom would throw open the bedroom door and yell “time to get up!” My brother and I had to rub the sleep out of our eyes and stumble out to the car. Dad turned the engine over and off we went, a 4-hour drive from Edmonton, Alberta, to Banff National Park. I complained about every hiking, camping, and skiing trip. Every mountain peak and icy trail.

But then I grew up. And went off to university. And left behind the one thing that, it turns out, makes me who I am. The Great Outdoors. My time as an undergraduate student was the worst three years of my life (yes, only three, because it really was that bad).

That's why spending time in natural places is so much more important to me now. That's why I will do everything I can to protect our cultural ecosystem services, and the recreational and spiritual benefits they endow. I want to wake up at an unreasonable hour and drag my own kids off on an adventure—they'll appreciate it when they're older...

_____ **AND** _____,

-all the introductory details

BUT _____,

-introduce a *problem*

THEREFORE _____.

-provide a solution to the problem