## Teaching Technique 01

**Digital Story**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY TYPE</th>
<th>TEACHING PROBLEM ADDRESSED</th>
<th>LEARNING TAXONOMIC LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Cheating</td>
<td>Application: Creative Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Learning</td>
<td>Low Motivation/Engagement</td>
<td>Caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting</td>
<td>Surface Learning</td>
<td>Human Dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integration &amp; Synthesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Digital Story

Students use computer-based tools, such as video, audio, graphics, and Web publishing, to tell personal or academic stories about life experiences relevant to course themes.

1. Clarify your teaching purpose and learning goals for the Digital Story

2. Create a prompt that establishes the content or topic area of the story

3. Set assignment parameters (media, length, etc.)

4. Develop a plan for learning assessment or grading

5. Communicate assignment instructions to students

6. Allow students time to create their Digital Story

7. Reflect upon the activity and evaluate its effectiveness
Step-By-Step Instructions

In this section we provide you with guidance on each of the seven steps involved as you consider this technique.

**STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS**

*Digital Story* is a project and reflection-based technique that can address multiple teaching problems, so think through exactly what you hope to get from this exercise in your class. Because students typically tell their own stories, they find the assignment engaging and are motivated to invest considerable effort. The project also challenges students to move beyond surface learning, and its individualized, personal focus reduces both the inclination to cheat and the feasibility of cheating. This technique also provides teachers with rich data through multimedia from which to assess student learning and development.

*Digital Story* may be used to support a variety of learning goals, depending upon your prompt. For example, use *Digital Story* when you want to provide students with a creative outlet for self-authorship and for curating their lived experiences. Or you can use this technique to help students learn about the lives and experiences of others. As students situate themselves within the context of the course subject area, they can use the digital stories to make connections between course content and other realms of life. Because *Digital Story* often taps into a student’s emotions, you can also use this assignment to help improve students’ caring about a given topic.

**STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK’S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT**

Create an assignment prompt that establishes the content or topic area of the story.

For example:

- “Create a *Digital Story* that documents your connection with an environmental pollution issue.”
- “Create a *Digital Story* that documents your journey as a student in higher education.”

**STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS**

As you set parameters, consider aspects such as:

- Media (video or audio), length, timeframe for completion
- Where students can go for technical support
- Whether students will post their digital stories online or present them in class
Many students already know how to use technical tools such as iMovie, and your institution’s media center may also be able to support students working on the project. Alternatively, you can either provide that support yourself or allow students to do a “spoken word” real time presentation of their stories without technology.

**STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING**

*Digital Story* is a time-intensive project for students, and they will most likely want it to count toward their course grade. Therefore, you will likely want to assess it, and hence will need to determine who will be involved in the assessment and why. For example, in addition to your own assessment, you may also want to incorporate self-assessment or peer assessment. Sanders (2009, p. 18) identifies three main approaches for assessing digital stories that may be useful for rubric creation:

I. **The Storytelling Approach**, which focuses on elements such as Story Finding, Story Telling, Story Expanding, Story Processing, and Story Reconstructing.

II. **The “Levels of Reflection” Approach**, which draws upon Moon’s Model of Reflective Learning (Moon, 1999) and focuses on aspects such as Noticing, Making Sense, Meaning Making, Working with Meaning, and Transformative Learning.

III. **The Use of Multimedia in Reflective Learning Approach**, which focuses on student facility with technological tools for story telling, such as Continuity Editing, Audio Editing, Lighting, Graphics, Animation.

We have included additional assessment approaches as well as sample rubrics in the **Support Materials** section of this document.

**STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS**

*Digital Story* is a complex project for which it is best to develop an assignment handout. In your handout, include not only standard elements such as instructions and assessment criteria, but you also may want to include guidance about how students should proceed, such as the following suggestions adapted from Lambert (2010):

- **Own your insights.** Storytellers should find and clarify what their stories are about. We start with the question: “What’s the story you want to tell?” and then as a follow-up, “What do you think your story means?”

- **Own your emotions.** Consider the emotions in the story and determine how to convey these to an audience.
Step-By-Step Instructions (CON’T)

• **Find the moment in the story.** Identify a single moment that can illustrate your insight. What was the moment things changed? When were you aware of the change?

• **See the story.** How do visuals and sound bring things to life for the audience? How can you use them as part of the story?

• **Hear your story.** The recorded voice of the storyteller is what makes a project a “digital story,” but you can add music or other sounds. Both those other sounds are an excellent way to convey tone. Consider whether the story would be enhanced by additional layers of sound.

• **Assemble the story.** What structure will you use? Chronological? Most important to least important? Vice versa? Consider what the necessary parts of the story are and how to order those pieces to engage the audience.

• **Share the story.** Ask: “Who is your audience? What was your purpose in creating the story? Has the purpose shifted during the process of creating the piece? In what presentation format will the story be viewed? Will the story continue to have life after its presentation?”

We provide further guidance on assessment in the **Support Materials** section of this document.

**STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE**

• Announce the activity, distributing your handout and allowing time for questions.

• Provide students with time to work.

• Have students present their digital stories either in class or posted online.

• Collect and assess the digital stories.

**STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS**

If you are interested in determining course level learning outcomes, use your rubric and add up the total for each rubric trait and enter it in a table or chart. For example, using our adaptation of the AAC&U VALUE rubric provided in the Support Materials section below, we created the following “Sample Display Chart of Assessment Results.” It shows the total number of students who were assessed at the different standards (excellent, very good, good, acceptable) for the various criteria (organization, language, delivery, central message, reflection & self-assessment). You can also add up the individual scores on each trait and determine a class average. These results can then be displayed in a variety of formats, such as the “Sample Graph of Assessment Results” on the following page.
1. SAMPLE DISPLAY CHART OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>EXCELLENT</th>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGUAGE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELIVERY</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL MESSAGE</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTION &amp; SELF-ASSESSMENT</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. SAMPLE GRAPH OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Consider what worked. Consider what could have been better and why and how. Consider whether the activity is something you would like to use in the future. Record your responses so that you can revisit them, when you consider implementing the activity in the future.
Support Materials

The materials in this section are intended to help you with the process of implementing this technique. Because Digital Story yields rich data about student learning, for this technique, we provide additional guidance on assessment.

ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

The Learning Artifact for the technique—the means by which the student’s learning becomes visible and hence assessable—is the Digital Story students create. These stories can be a rich source of assessment data. They can provide evidence of a student’s knowledge of course content, ability to reflect upon their learning, multimedia literacy, and engagement. Moreover, through sharing their own stories with an audience, this technique provides strong evidence of student learning in the Human Dimension of the Significant Learning Taxonomy. Rubrics can be a useful assessment tool, and graphs and charts can be effective for displaying results.

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

The University of Wisconsin Stout (nd) provides a great example of a rubric for assessing student video projects. We also include one that is a hybrid of two of the VALUE rubrics (rubrics developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities as part of their Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education initiative.)
**VIDEO PROJECT RUBRIC**
Adapted From The University of Wisconsin Stout (nd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>EXEMPLARY</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>PARTIALLY PROFICIENT</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Resources and Citations During Research and Note Taking</td>
<td>12 points</td>
<td>8 points</td>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>____/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note cards indicate research questions, sources of information and graphics, and identify relevant pro and con arguments (if appropriate to the topic). Sources of information and graphics are properly cited using citations.</td>
<td>Note cards show research questions, relevant information from multiple sources of information and evaluate alternative points of view (if appropriate for the topic). All sources of information are clearly identified and credited using citations.</td>
<td>Note cards show a few research questions from a few sources of information and fail to identify relevant counter-arguments (if appropriate for the topic). Most sources of information are identified using proper citation.</td>
<td>Note cards do not include research questions, sources of information and ignore alternative points of view. No citations are included.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storyboard</th>
<th>6 points</th>
<th>4 points</th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>0 points</th>
<th>____/6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The storyboard illustrates the video presentation structure with thumbnail sketches of each scene. Notes of proposed transition, special effects, sound and title tracks include: text, background color, placement &amp; size of graphic, fonts - color, size, type for text and headings. Notes about proposed dialogue/narration text are included. All sketches are numbered, and there is a logical sequence to the presentation.</td>
<td>The storyboard includes thumbnail sketches of each video scene and includes: text for each segment of the presentation, descriptions of background audio for each scene, and notes about proposed shots and dialogue. All sketches are organized and numbered in a logical sequence.</td>
<td>The thumbnail sketches on the storyboard are not in a logical sequence and do not provide complete descriptions of the video scenes, audio background, or notes about the dialogue.</td>
<td>There is no evidence of a storyboard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name ___________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>EXEMPLARY</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>PARTIALLY PROFICIENT</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content &amp; Organization</strong></td>
<td>18 points&lt;br&gt;The content includes a clear statement of purpose or theme and is creative, compelling and clearly written. A rich variety of supporting information in the video contributes to understanding the project’s main idea. The project includes motivating questions and advanced organizers that provide the audience with a sense of the presentation’s main idea. Events and messages are presented in a logical order.</td>
<td>12 points&lt;br&gt;Information is presented as a connected theme with accurate, current supporting information that contributes to understanding the project’s main idea.</td>
<td>6 points&lt;br&gt;The content does not present a clearly stated theme, is vague, and some of the supporting information does not seem to fit the main idea or appears as a disconnected series of scenes with no unifying main idea.</td>
<td>0 points&lt;br&gt;The content lacks a central theme, clear point of view and logical sequence of information. Much of the supporting information in the video is irrelevant to the overall message. The viewer is unsure what the message is because there is little persuasive information and only one or two facts about the topic. Information is incomplete, out of date and/or incorrect.</td>
<td><strong>____/18</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>6 points&lt;br&gt;The introduction is compelling and provides motivating content that hooks the viewer from the beginning of the video and keeps the audience’s attention.</td>
<td>4 points&lt;br&gt;The introduction is clear and coherent and evokes interest in the topic.</td>
<td>2 points&lt;br&gt;The introduction does not create a strong sense of what is to follow.</td>
<td>0 points&lt;br&gt;The introduction does not orient the audience to what will follow.</td>
<td><strong>____/6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VIDEO PRODUCTION QUALITY**

<p>| Video Continuity/Editing | 12 points&lt;br&gt;The tape is edited with only high quality shots remaining. Video moves smoothly from shot to shot. A variety of transitions are used to assist in communicating the main idea and smooth the flow from one scene to the next. Shots and scenes flow seamlessly. Digital effects are used appropriately for emphasis. | 8 points&lt;br&gt;The tape is edited throughout with only quality shots remaining. A variety of transitions are used. Good pacing and timing. | 4 points&lt;br&gt;The tape is edited in few spots. Several poor shots remain. Transitions from shot to shot are choppy, and the types of wipes and fades selected are not always | 0 points&lt;br&gt;The tape is unedited and many poor shots remain. No transitions between clips are used. Raw clips run back to back in the final video. | <strong>____/12</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>EXEMPLARY</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>PARTIALLY PROFICIENT</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio Editing</td>
<td>12 points</td>
<td>8 points</td>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>____/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The audio is clear and effectively assists in communicating the main idea. Background audio is kept in balance.</td>
<td>The audio is clear and assists in communicating the main idea.</td>
<td>The audio is inconsistent in clarity (too loud/too soft/ garbled) at times and/or the background audio overpowers the primary audio.</td>
<td>The audio is cut-off and inconsistent or overpowering.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>1 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>____/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional lighting is used to eliminate shadows and glares. All scenes have sufficient lighting for viewer to easily see action.</td>
<td>Additional lighting is used. Few shadows or glares are apparent.</td>
<td>Some scenes are too dark or too light to determine what is happening.</td>
<td>Only ambient (available) light is used. Most scenes are too dark or too light to determine what is happening.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera Techniques (Exposure/Focus)</td>
<td>12 points</td>
<td>8 points</td>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>____/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All shots are clearly focused and well framed. The camera is held steady with few pans and zooms. Close-ups are used to focus attention.</td>
<td>Most shots are clearly focused and well framed.</td>
<td>Some shots are unfocused or poorly framed.</td>
<td>Many shots are unfocused and poorly framed. Excessive panning and zooming distracts the viewer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphics</td>
<td>6 points</td>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>____/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The graphics and/or animation assist in presenting an overall theme that appeals to the audience and enhances concepts with a high impact message. Graphics explain and reinforce key points during the presentation.</td>
<td>The graphics or animation visually depict material and assist the audience in understanding the flow of information or content.</td>
<td>Some of the graphics and/or animations seem unrelated to the topic/theme and do not enhance concepts.</td>
<td>The graphics and/or animations are unrelated to the content. Graphics do not enhance understanding the content, or are distracting decorations that detract from the content.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright</td>
<td>6 points</td>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>____/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copyrighted information for photos, graphics and music is clearly identified by source and nature of permission to reproduce.</td>
<td>Every photo, graphic or music is either original or permission for its use is documented.</td>
<td>Some sources of photos, graphics, and music are not clearly identified with references, and permission to reproduce is missing.</td>
<td>There is no reference to copyright information for photos, graphics, and music.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>EXEMPLARY</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>PARTIALLY PROFICIENT</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>POINTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Images</td>
<td>3 points Motion scenes are planned and purposeful, adding impact to the story line. “Talking heads” scenes are used when crucial to telling the story.</td>
<td>2 points The video includes some “talking heads,” and backgrounds and video effects add interest. Most motion scenes make the story clearer or give it more impact.</td>
<td>1 points The video includes “talking heads” and a few motion scenes are added but do not improve understanding of the story line.</td>
<td>0 points The video features “talking heads” with little or no action to add interest or the video uses action excessively.</td>
<td>____/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>3 points Video clips show no slack time. “Three beat” timing (three actions per clip or three clips per event) is evident.</td>
<td>2 points Most video clips are edited to remove slack time and to emphasize action.</td>
<td>1 points Some video clips need to be edited to remove slack time and increase action.</td>
<td>0 points Video clips begin and end with slack time or no action.</td>
<td>____/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL POINTS</td>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>1 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>____/99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A—EXEMPLARY: 86–99 points  
B—PROFICIENT: 76–85 points  
C—PARTIALLY PROFICIENT OR UNSATISFACTORY: Needs to be resubmitted—fewer than 75 points
DIGITAL STORY ASSESSMENT RUBRIC
Adapted From The AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubrics

This rubric combines elements of the Oral Communication and the Skills for Lifelong Learning VALUE Rubrics created by faculty working with AAC&U. Oral communication is defined as “prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners’ attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.” Lifelong learning is defined as any “purposeful activity undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence.” Evaluators will assign a zero to any assignment that does not meet benchmark/acceptable (cell one) level performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>EXCELLENT 61–80</th>
<th>VERY GOOD 41–60</th>
<th>GOOD 21–40</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE 1–20</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the story, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the digital story cohesive.</td>
<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the story, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the digital story.</td>
<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the story, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the digital story.</td>
<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the story, and transitions) is not observable.</td>
<td>___ / 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>EXCELLENT 61–80</th>
<th>VERY GOOD 41–60</th>
<th>GOOD 21–40</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE 1–20</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language choices for the story are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the story. Language is appropriate to the audience.</td>
<td>Language choices for the story are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the story. Language is appropriate to the audience.</td>
<td>Language choices for the story are commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the story. Language is appropriate to the audience.</td>
<td>Language choices for the story are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the story. Language is not appropriate to the audience.</td>
<td>___ / 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DELIVERY</th>
<th>EXCELLENT 61–80</th>
<th>VERY GOOD 41–60</th>
<th>GOOD 21–40</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE 1–20</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery techniques (visuals, vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and the speaker appears polished and confident.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques (visuals, vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and the speaker appears comfortable.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques (visuals, vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and the speaker appears tentative.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques (visuals, vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and the speaker appears uncomfortable.</td>
<td>___ / 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CENTRAL MESSAGE</th>
<th>EXCELLENT 61–80</th>
<th>VERY GOOD 41–60</th>
<th>GOOD 21–40</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE 1–20</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported).</td>
<td>The central message of the story is clear and consistent.</td>
<td>The central message of the story is basically understandable, but is not particularly memorable.</td>
<td>The central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly conveyed in the presentation.</td>
<td>___ / 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFLECTION &amp; SELF-ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>EXCELLENT 61–80</th>
<th>VERY GOOD 41–60</th>
<th>GOOD 21–40</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE 1–20</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Name ___________________________________________  Total Points __________ /400 (Potential)

Online Adaptation

This section is intended to help you with the process of implementing Digital Story in your online class.

HOW TO START

• Choose the course topic you want to focus on and decide whether students will tell their own story or interview others and tell their story.

• Stories can be personal or academic, so long as they link back to the topic.

• Establish assignment parameters such as video length and timeframe to complete the project, as well as evaluation criteria. Support materials, including sample assessment rubrics, are included in this download (see pages 7–12).

• Finally, determine the manner in which students will submit their videos.

• If students will be sharing personal stories, consider having them submit the link as an assignment with a reflection essay.

• If stories explore topics that students would likely feel comfortable sharing with peers, have them post the link to their video in a discussion forum along with explanatory comments.

• Consider also implementing a discussion framework that encourages students to view and comment on each other’s videos.
Following are two templates to assist you as you think through how you might implement this technique in your own class. The first is a completed template, providing an example of how Elizabeth Barkley adapted *Digital Story* in her course, *Music of Multicultural America*. The second is a blank template for you to fill out to tailor this technique for your course.
Technique Template

Sample Digital Story Completed Technique Template:
Content from Elizabeth Barkley

Music of Multicultural America

Course Name

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS
What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

My course is an on campus, Honors Institute section of a lower division General Education course. The course meets my institution’s United States Cultures & Communities requirement and also the Humanities requirement. It enrolls about 25-30 students. A significant number are international students and we are trying to recruit more first generation students. As Honors students, they typically have good academic skills and are highly motivated.

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS
Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

I am looking for an activity that will increase student engagement as well as help students move beyond a surface understanding of the challenges faced by immigrants in the United States. I am also looking for a way to increase students’ self-reflection skills, both in terms of their connections to course content and their insights and understanding of how they learn.
STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK’S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

What is the question you want learners to address, or problem you want them to solve?

Create a digital story that documents the experience of becoming “American.” The story can be that of your own (if you are an immigrant), of someone else’s such as a friend’s, family member’s, co-worker’s, neighbor’s, and so forth.

STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

What are the assignment logistics? For example, will this be assigned individually or is it group work? How long will the assignment take? Will students be submitting a product? What materials, resources, or additional information do you anticipate needing?

This will be an individual project. I will give students 6 weeks to create a video with a maximum of 5 minutes. They will upload them to a Drop Box folder I’ll create. I am also going to incorporate a short post-project reflection essay and ask students to describe what they learned about themselves in the process. I also need to create an assessment rubric and the assignment handout.
STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

If you decide to assess learning, how will you determine that learning has occurred? For example, will you use a simple +/- check/- grading system? If you use a rubric, will you use an existing one or create one? What will be your criteria and standards?

I will adapt the AAC&U VALUE rubrics for Oral Communication and also The Skills for Lifelong Learning, and use the criteria of organization, language, delivery, central message, and reflection/self-assessment. My standards will include Excellent, Very Good, Good, Acceptable, and the potential of a "0" if the Digital Story does not meet the acceptable benchmark.

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

How will you communicate assignment parameters to students? For example, through a handout? A prompt on a presentation slide? Assignment instructions in your online course?

I will create a handout that I will distribute in class and also post in the course’s Learning Management System. I will also set aside some time in class to discuss the project with students and answer questions.
STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE
How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?

I need to determine how much technical help students will be able to get from our Media Center should they need it. Or maybe I can choose to set up peer help, since most students now know video skills. I also need to figure out an alternative if students can’t upload to Drop Box, such as having them bring the file in on a flashdrive.

STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS
Note: This step will be completed after you have implemented the technique.
Did this technique help you accomplish your goals? What worked well? What could have been improved? What might you change if you decide to implement the activity again?

After I implemented this technique and evaluated student learning outcomes, I decided it was a very good addition to course activities. I also decided that some of the stories were quite powerful and other students would learn from them. I therefore decided to encourage students to share their stories and I reserved one class day for these presentations.
Technique Template

This template is intended for use when planning to implement Digital Story in your class. Fill in the blanks below, and use the information provided elsewhere in the Instructor’s Guide to assist you in your thinking.

Course Name

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS
What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS
Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?
STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK’S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

What is the question you want learners to address, or problem you want them to solve?

STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

What are the assignment logistics? For example, will this be assigned individually or is it group work? How long will the assignment take? Will students be submitting a product? What materials, resources, or additional information do you anticipate needing?
STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

If you decide to assess learning, how will you determine that learning has occurred? For example, will you use a simple +/-check/- grading system? If you use a rubric, will you use an existing one or create one? What will be your criteria and standards?

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

How will you communicate assignment parameters to students? For example, through a handout? A prompt on a presentation slide? Assignment instructions in your online course?
STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE
How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?

STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS
Note: This step will be completed after you have implemented the technique.
Did this technique help you accomplish your goals? What worked well? What could have been improved? What might you change if you decide to implement the activity again?
References and Resources

PRIMARY SOURCE
Content for this download was drawn primarily from “Learning Assessment Technique 36: Digital Story” in Learning Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty (Barkley & Major, 2016), pp. 303–311. It includes material that was adapted or reproduced with permission. For further information about this technique, including examples in both on campus and online courses, see the primary source:


CITATIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- University of Wisconsin Stout (nd) Video project rubric: https://www2.uwstout.edu/content/profdev/rubrics/videorubric.html

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