Ruch School
Digital Storytelling Project

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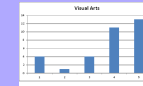**Department of Education, Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Oregon**

INTRODUCTION

Our world is moving towards a more technologically based society. An integration of writing and technology will benefit students as they strive to build connections both in the classroom and in their community.

Comfort with Writing

At the start of the project we passed out a survey to assess the students' comfort with writing. We are hoping that through this project we will find that all students have grown with their comfort in writing.

Why Digital Stories?

Digital storytelling provides a unique learning opportunity to teach technical and literacy skills in an integrated fashion, while emphasizing the connections among students, school, and community. The first objective of this program is thus to offer students an engaging supplement to their classroom curriculum, and help them meet the Common Core State standards at their grade level.

Common Core State Standards

W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

W.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

Writing

Students spent time creating a positive community where they could feel comfortable sharing personal stories. They were also encouraged to create an "artist name" in order to feel more comfortable in this creative process. The theme of the unit was *change*: students analyzed a change that occurred in their own life.

Students spent two days writing and developing their personal stories. Mini-lessons allowed students to incorporate metaphors, descriptive details, and dialogue into their stories. Researchers edited papers to give constructive feedback and articulated the best strategies to help students transform their ideas/thoughts into reflective writing.

Comments about the writing
"...express my feelings until I got it down on paper then I was able to relax."-Syrup
"I liked learning about other people's backgrounds and how they've changed." –Cajun Horse
"I enjoyed being able to express my feelings" -Waffles

Technology

Students are creating a short film to accompany their story using Windows Movie Maker. They will record their voice and select images that will enhance the story. Students actively participate in editing the short film.

Quotes from the students:

"On my third recording I wasn't laughing so hard." –Bubble Brownie
"Technology makes it easier for me to write" – Minecraft
"This class is legit!" - Donkeyboy

Presentation

Students submitted their writing for publication in the *Jacksonville Review* and the *Applegater*.

Students will share their completed digital story with their school and the community at the **Art and Curriculum Fair on May 29** at Ruch K-8 Community School, 156 Upper Applegate Rd Jacksonville, OR

Comfort with Visual Media

At the start of the project we passed out a survey to assess students' comfort with visual media. This is where we saw a severe lack in confidence. We are hoping that through this project we will find that all students have grown with their comfort in using digital media to express ideas and stories.

CONCLUSION

Students will enhance their writing skills and gain confidence in technology and themselves. They will produce a digital story that they are confident in sharing with the community. Students enhanced their perspectives throughout the six week experience.
It is our hope that this project will continue in Cindy McDonald's classroom for years to come, yet also receive funding to encourage other schools to participate and incorporate projects like this into standard curriculum.

REFERENCES/WORKS CITED

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Align, A., & Bainbridge, K. (2011). *The common core: clarifying expectations for teachers & students : English language arts grade 7*. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill Education.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact Margaret Perrow of the Oregon Writing Project at SOU

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