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Introduction

“Technology has forever changed not only what we need to learn, but the way we learn.”

—*National Educational Technology Standards, International Society for Technology in Education.*

For a brief moment, take yourself back in time to ancient Mesopotamia, around 3500 BCE. Imagine you are a merchant who has just carried your heavy wares to the city center to sell at the market. You have walked a long way, weighed down with several baskets and a sack thrown over your shoulder, and the sun is beating down on you. Suddenly, you notice another vendor with triple the amount of merchandise piled on top of a wooden device. As the vendor pushes past you with seemingly little effort, you stop him. You have a brief conversation and find out he is using something called a “wheel” to help him transport his goods to the city center. This wheel has rounded edges; it appears to glide effortlessly over the ground.

The vendor offers to help you make your own wheeled device. He claims it has made his life so much easier. You respond, “No, thanks! I like trudging with my goods on foot to and from the city center and have no need for this thing you call a wheel. I like walking with all of my wares over my shoulder and in baskets. I love the heat! It does not matter that this new device could make my life easier or my work more profitable. I like things just the way they are!”

Clearly, this doesn’t sound like a logical response. Why would someone resist change when it can make life easier or provide more opportunities for success? Like the wheel, technology is a tool with the power to transform education. We—Jamie and Meg—often ask ourselves why so many educators resist using technology in their classrooms. Imagine how different life would be if our ancestors had not been willing to embrace change. As educators, it is our

responsibility to future generations to use the best teaching techniques and tools available. We need to prepare our students to meet the challenges of this ever-changing world. If teachers take the position of the person unwilling to accept the wheel, where does that leave our students? Where does that leave our society?

Teachers are entrusted to prepare students for jobs that do not exist yet, so we must constantly consider the future of our students as we plan our lessons and learning activities. In fact, while out shopping one afternoon, we spotted the perfect embodiment of rapid change plastered across a Lululemon Athletica shopping bag: “The world is changing at such a rapid rate that waiting to implement changes will leave you two steps behind. Do it now! Do it now! Do it now!”

This has become our mantra as we have embarked upon our journey to infuse technology into literacy activities across all curricular areas. For the sake of our students, educators must change with the times to provide students with the skills they need to be successful adults.

A brief video posted on YouTube titled “Shift Happens” reinforces this point by providing a plethora of statistics related to population and the influence of technology on our global society. It has been updated several times over the years to keep up with our rapidly changing world. We recommend this video for both you and your students.

THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are also transforming public education in America. For a long time, it was solely the English teacher’s responsibility to teach reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, but these days, all content-area teachers must incorporate literacy activities into their curriculum. Additionally, the CCSS emphasize developing students’ ability to easily adapt to technological advances and utilize technology meaningfully and strategically. This emphasis on technological versatility coincides with fostering an atmosphere in which students are encouraged to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. Students must possess the ingenuity to know how to gather, analyze, and communicate information effectively. This point is articulated in the CCSS for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

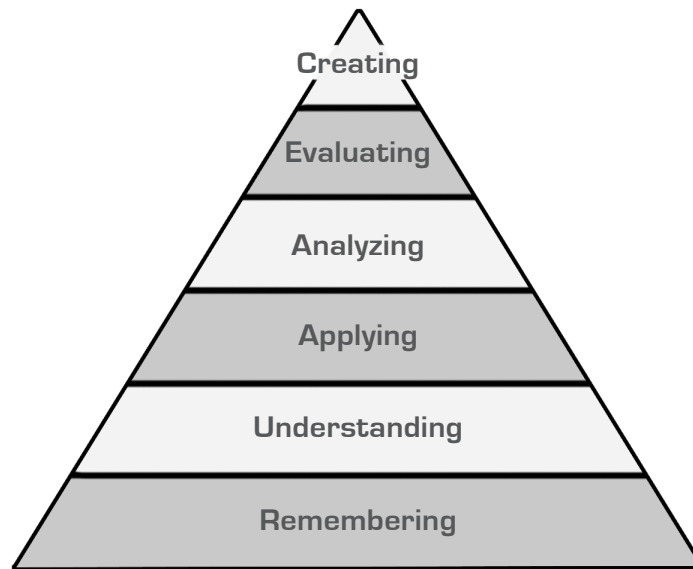
“To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new.” (p. 4)



You'll find an abbreviated correlation to the CCSS for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technology, and Mathematical Practices 1–8 for Grades 5–12 with each lesson. A complete correlation chart appears on the CD.

Bloom's Taxonomy

To further demonstrate this shift in thought, we must likewise reflect on Bloom's Taxonomy, a framework to help teachers understand a range of thinking tasks (Bloom, 1956). The revised version shown below, updated to reflect 21st-century values, eliminates the word *synthesizing* and replaces it with *creating* at the pinnacle of the triangle (Anderson et al., 2000).



Bloom's Taxonomy, revised

Education today has shifted away from students simply acquiring knowledge to manipulating information for a productive purpose. To have basic knowledge of subject-specific information only requires memorization and the regurgitation of facts. In actuality, with the abundance of information available online, memorization of facts is hardly necessary anymore. Students demonstrate true understanding by moving up the pyramid and working with the information to create a new product or point of view based on this knowledge. Technology can be a vehicle through which students amass this information. More important, technology can be used to enable students to communicate conclusions and demonstrate critical thinking.

Another shift in the way classrooms operate is that students are now expected to take more ownership for their learning. To be truly invested, they must be interested in what they are learning. Luckily, technology is engaging, as the popularity of video games, social-media

Web sites, and cell phone apps proves. Teachers can and should avail themselves of this key motivator, which is easy to integrate into numerous classroom activities.

We realize using technology may be intimidating to some teachers. Fortunately, our students typically do not feel the same way. “Digital native” versus “digital immigrant” is an analogy often used to compare the generation born within the era of digital technologies to those born prior to this time. Author Marc Prensky first used these terms in his 2001 article “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants.”

Our students have grown up in a world where technology is embedded in everyday activities, so for them, using it is often second nature. As teachers, we need to take advantage of our students’ innate ability to use and adapt to new technologies. You may find the best part of trying any technology-based project with your students is that they are not afraid to take risks.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK AND THE CD

A different technology is featured in each chapter, but the chapters share the same format.

- ➔ **Launching Lesson:** Detailed information on how to set up and incorporate the technology into your classroom precedes a launching lesson centered on a project in an English Language Arts classroom. This step-by-step lesson is scripted to show how Jamie introduces the project and technology to her class.
- ➔ **Cross-Curricular Connection:** In the next scripted lesson, Meg demonstrates how she uses the featured technology on a project with a science or a math class.
- ➔ **More Lesson Ideas:** These lessons feature a variety of curricular activities that can be completed using the technology. Less detailed than the Launching Lesson and the Cross-Curricular Connection lesson, these lessons are still stepped out.
- ➔ **Additional Ideas:** Brief descriptions of more curricular activities end the chapter. You’ll also find ideas here for using the technology to promote professional development and communication with your colleagues.



This icon indicates material you’ll find on the CD, including the following:

- ➔ Reproducibles for the lessons in this book
- ➔ Sample digital stories
- ➔ Sample podcasts
- ➔ CCSS Correlation Chart

A Note About Software for the Technologies:

Our school has PCs, but yours may have Macs. Because of this, and the fact that software programs change so rapidly, we haven't included instructions for using the specific software mentioned in the text. We do suggest the following:

- ➔ Consult with your school's technology guru about downloading the best software for your computers.
- ➔ Do a search using the keywords "help" followed by the software and technology you're using; for example, "help Audacity podcast."
- ➔ View tutorial videos on YouTube.
- ➔ Create step-by-step directions, including screen shots of each step, for using the software for each technology. Detailed sample directions and simplified tips for using Photo Story 3 on a PC appear on the CD.

Q Student Access to Computers Outside the Classroom

As we discuss in the book, one of the beauties of using these technologies is that they foster student collaboration inside and outside the classroom. Many projects require students to have access to computers with Internet access outside the classroom. Give them options, such as setting up time to use school computers before or after class or using computers at the public library.



Our aim is to provide you with step-by-step lessons for integrating technology across the curriculum to strengthen essential Common Core skills in reading fiction and informative texts, writing, listening and speaking, and language. Pick one idea, give it a try, and see what happens. When students use technology, they are not only more motivated and engaged in learning, but they are also gaining the skills necessary for life beyond the confines of school. It is, after all, a digital world.

CHAPTER 1

Digital Storytelling

When you think of literacy, one of the first things to pop into your head is probably reading and/or writing stories. Oral storytelling is a tradition that predates the creation of a system of writing. One of the first written stories is the Epic of Gilgamesh, the great priest-king, which dates back to Mesopotamia, circa 1700 BCE. Today, people continue to value a good story—only now, we can enjoy a good story in a variety of media. Technology has arguably made storytelling more exciting than it ever has been before!

So, what better way to begin our journey of rethinking literacy than by using digital storytelling? One of the easiest ways to infuse technology into the curriculum is using technology to help tell the stories of our human experiences. Think of a digital story as a simple way to update the art of storytelling. The computer enables students to combine the written word, images, their voices, music, and other auditory aspects into a final product that others can enjoy.

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Although the original purpose of digital storytelling was for narrative writing, it is a powerful tool to utilize for any genre, in any classroom. Digital storytelling can communicate any type of information, and this sharing of knowledge becomes richer when paired with visual images. Now, with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), it is imperative that all teachers begin to infuse meaningful writing tasks into their curriculum. This can be especially useful in mathematics, where it can be difficult to add a writing component to the curriculum.

Digital storytelling also addresses the CCSS College and Career Readiness Standards for Speaking and Listening. As noted in the CCSS, “New technologies have broadened and

expanded the role that speaking and listening play in acquiring and sharing knowledge and have tightened their link to other forms of communication” (p. 22). Digital storytelling is one avenue through which students can acquire and share knowledge. Plus, publishing digital stories online—on a class Web site or blog, for example—provides a global audience for students, serving as a natural motivator for students to produce higher-quality work.

INCORPORATING DIGITAL STORYTELLING INTO YOUR CLASSROOM

Perhaps you’re an English teacher working on personal narratives with your students, or a history or science teacher giving a research assignment. Whatever the case may be, it’s time to rethink the traditional paper-and-pencil assignment or typed report and begin combining the power of words, audio, and illustrations to reinvigorate written assignments. The steps for creating a digital story remain consistent:

- ➔ Brainstorming
- ➔ Drafting
- ➔ Editing/Revising
- ➔ Creating a final storyboard/script
- ➔ Collecting images
- ➔ Creating the digital story
- ➔ Publishing

Q What you need to start digital storytelling


For each lesson in this chapter, you’ll need:


- ➔ Computers with access to digital storytelling software like iMovie (Macs) or PhotoStory3 (PCs) (for you and each student)
- ➔ Headphones with microphones (one per student)
- ➔ LCD projector for introducing and modeling the project
- ➔ Digital storytelling software
- ➔ Digital media player
- ➔ Scanner (optional)
- ➔ Storage device for media such as a USB flash drive (optional)

Also, keep best practices in mind. Be sure to include teacher modeling and gradual release of responsibility to students. Technology does not replace good teaching methods; it merely enhances them to create a richer learning experience for students.

Getting Started

- 1. Build background knowledge.** Regardless of which digital storytelling software you choose, before you begin you may want to visit The Center for Digital Storytelling (storycenter.org), a site that provides examples of digital storytelling ranging from touching personal narratives to beautiful poetry. You may even find examples to share with your students. The Center for Digital Storytelling uses the Microsoft-compatible program Photo Story 3 for Windows. For the purposes of this book, we reference Microsoft programs. We have found Photo Story 3 for Windows to be an extremely user-friendly option for students and teachers alike. Download it at microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=11132. If your computer is a Mac, you would instead use iMovie, which comes installed on all Mac computers. It also offers extensive directions and help menus. For more information on digital storytelling, also visit www.microsoft.com/education/en-us/teachers/guides/Pages/digital_storytelling.aspx.

 **CD Resources**

 The CD contains the following materials for this chapter:

- ➔ Personal Narrative: “No More Training Wheels” [video]
- ➔ Personal Narrative: “Meet Ms. Gaier” [video]
- ➔ Digital Storytelling Assessment Rubric
- ➔ Photo Story 3 Sample Directions
- ➔ Photo Story 3 Quick Tips

Also see the Materials list in each lesson for other resources on the CD.

- 2. Familiarize yourself with the software.** After you have explored some digital stories, it's time to acquaint yourself with the digital storytelling software of your choice. This decision may be largely based on your school's computer platform. Regardless of which program you use, we recommend making a digital story of your own first, to experience the process firsthand. This will help you anticipate areas where students may have questions.

- 3. Determine the purpose for using digital storytelling in your classroom.** Are you going to be using digital storytelling in the traditional sense, to write a personal narrative paired with visual images? Or are you going to use it for presenting research? Perhaps, instead, you will use it as a means for students to convey content-specific knowledge. Digital storytelling needs to meaningfully enhance your current curriculum. It is not suited for lengthy writing pieces. A digital story should be concise.
- 4. Create digital stories!** Once you become comfortable with the software, you are ready to implement digital storytelling. Remember to use best practices, model the process, and gradually release responsibility to students: brainstorm, draft, edit/revise, create a final storyboard/script, collect images, create the digital story, and publish it.

Tech Tip

- ➔ When you download Photo Story 3, you'll be asked whether your computer has the Windows Microsoft Media Player. If you need to download the media player, the link to do so will be readily available.
- ➔ Ask your school or district technology coordinator to include the software on all school computers from the beginning of the school year to avoid having to download it yourself.

Introducing and Reviewing the Technology

You can introduce students to digital storytelling in any of the lessons in this chapter by using the procedures outlined in the Launching Lesson below. After that, simply review the procedures before having students create their digital stories in other lessons.

Teacher Tip

It's important for students to understand that photos they find on the Internet belong to people, and they can't simply pull them off a Web site. If digital stories are for classroom use only, students can use images from sites such as Flickr, Photobucket, and Google Images. If, however, digital stories will be available outside of class—for example, at a student film competition—then images must come from a stock house. Credit must be given to the person who holds the copyright to the photo. You might consider subscribing to stock houses such as Thinkstock or Getty Images that charge small fees for royalty-free images.