

---

**I want to tell you a story...**

**Phil Gravestock**  
**([pgravestock@glos.ac.uk](mailto:pgravestock@glos.ac.uk))**

**University of Gloucestershire**

---

# Storytelling

---

**We use narrative to:**

- **communicate with others**
  - **represent and understand ourselves**
  - **make sense of our experience**
  - **make sense of the world around us**
-

# Storytelling

---

**storytelling is a way for storytellers to give meaning to their experiences**

(Nygren & Blom, 2001: 372)

**[story] construction process judgments and inferences are required at two levels: about discrete items of information and the adequacy of the unfolding story. Selecting, comparing, inferring, arranging and revising are activities which we regard as cognitive strategies**

(Robinson & Hawpe, 1986)

---

# What is a story?

---

no single structural representation of a story.  
However the prototypical story identifies:

- a protagonist
- a predicament
- attempts to resolve the predicament
- the outcomes of such attempts and
- the reactions of the protagonists.

Creating an effective story is therefore a matter of  
**‘effective causal thinking’**  
(Robinson & Hawpe, 1986)

---

# Storytelling

---

- Oral presentation is more personal – the personal voice – connection

**Writing introduces division and alienation. Writing is consciousness-raising**

(Nygren & Blom, 2001)

**a narrative written down by the storyteller is a more reflected expression**

(Nygren & Blom, 2001)

---

# Storytelling

---

- If educators support students to share and process practical experiences, storytelling can:
  - Encourage cooperative activity
  - Value emotional realities
  - Link theory to practice
  - Stimulate students' critical thinking skills
  - Make sense of experience
  - Encourage self review
  - Construct new knowledge

(McDrury & Alterio, 2003)

---

# Storytelling

---

- Reflection can be enhanced as a social process

**it does seem that sharing stories encourages a reflective process, especially when storytelling is accompanied by dialogue and occurs in formalised settings**

(McDrury & Alterio, 2003, p.111)

---

# Storytelling

---

- Storytelling threatened by technological era of impersonal information?
  - **New technologies of virtualised and digitalised imagining, far from eradicating narrative, may actually open up novel modes of storytelling...**  
(Kearney, 2002)
  - Through the use of social networking sites students are posting their own short stories, digital stories, video diaries
  - <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=bc9QjaBS1GE>: a simple example of a digital story made by a student on their mobile phone
-

# Digital storytelling

---

Digital storytelling provides a means of combining elements of these oral and written traditions:

**the modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling (in which) stories derive their power by weaving images, music, narrative and voice together, giving deep dimension and vivid colour to characters, situations, experiences and insights**  
(Leslie Rule, cited in Crow, 2006)

---

# Digital storytelling

---

- Builds on traditional storytelling
  - Combines with digital technology
  - Can be both a process and a product
  - Relatively low tech
  - Requires minimal training
  - Accessible
  - Can be user-generated / learner centred
  - Wide application
-

# Digital storytelling at UoG

---

**Our interpretation of digital stories:**

- **Media artifacts combining still images and mp3 files**
- **The heart of digital storytelling is the development of the story, the narrative**

**Combines narrative and collaboration as learning strategies with technology to enable a fresh approach to student engagement and reflection**

**See Capture Wales for examples of professional digital stories:**

**<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales/>**

---

# Digital storytelling at UoG

---

- **Protocols or guidelines need to be provided**
    - **2-3 minutes maximum**
    - **300 words**
    - **Number of pictures**
    - **Use of music?**
    - **Provide students with prompts**
-

# Range of uses - UoG

---

- Induction
  - Reflections on design developments
  - Reflections on personal development
    - Personal journeys
    - Critical incidents
  - Group presentations
-

# Student induction

---

- Digital storytelling piloted (2006-07) as a reflective tool for active learning in the first year
  - Recognition that reflection can be improved when others are involved (McDrury & Alterio, 2002)
  - Acknowledges that many new students now learn differently and seeks to use new technologies
  - Use of technology and images to provide stimulating ways to engage and reflect
-

# Analysis of use ...

---

Feedback from staff and students has been generally positive

- But does digital storytelling work as a technique?
  - Can we find a workable means of evaluation and assessment?
  - Product vs process?
-

# Framework for evaluation

<b>Project planning</b>	Evidence of storyboard, critical evaluation ...
<b>Story</b>	The success of the story; Map of Learning
<b>Media application</b>	Appropriate use of media, image selection ...
<b>Literacies</b>	Blend of different literacies
<b>Technical delivery</b>	Length of story, sound, music ... a base level
<b>Flow, organisation and pacing</b>	Was the story well organised?
<b>Creativity</b>	Evidence of originality (to the student)
<b>Emotional impact</b>	Evidence of personal engagement with the story
<b>Citations, permissions</b>	Proper credit assigned, permissions obtained, correct citations
<b>Academic understanding</b>	How well it meets the academic goals

# References

---

Crow, C. (2006) *Digital storytelling connects youth across cultural divides* [Online] <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/prophoto/bridges.mspx>

Kearney, R. (2002) *On Stories* (Abingdon: Routledge)

McDrury, J. & Alterio, M. (2003) *Learning through Storytelling in Higher Education Using Reflection and Experience to Improve Learning* (London: Kogan Page)

Nygren, L. & Blom, B. (2001) Analysis of short reflective narratives: a method for the study of knowledge in social workers actions, *Qualitative Research*, Vol 1. pp369-384

Robinson, J. & Hawpe, L. (1986) Narrative thinking as a Heuristic process, in Sarbin, T.R. (ed) *Narrative psychology: the storied nature of human conduct* (Praeger Publ)

---