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EDUC 590 Curriculum Integration of Technology

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# **Digital Storytelling Activity for Students**

1. **Planning**
2. **Context & Conception**

In U.S. History II, this would be a concluding submission of a unit on the Great Depression. It would be assigned early in the unit so that students could begin thinking about it and have the time to work on it. The general idea is that students will choose a photo of a person or people from the Great Depression and create a digital story about that person. I have selected a set of photos from the collections available on the websites of the Library of Congress and the National Archives.

1. **Standards**
2. **DC Social Studies Standards**

In the DC Social Studies standards for U.S. History II, there are 6 standards under *Driving Concept 4: “Prosperity and Progress” to Depression.* I included 3 of them given their overlap and my effort to curate representative pictures. (If there are Latinx students in the class, I would expand the photographs used and add Standard US2.41.)

* **US2.39** – Analyze the reasons for the Great Depression, including the impact of underlying economic and social conditions of the 1920s, and evaluate its impact on different groups of people in the United States, with special attention to race, ethnicity, religion, gender and class.
* **US2.40** – Analyze conditions the causes and consequences of the Dust Bowl, comparing it to other natural disasters and its impact on Americans across race, ethnicity, gender and class groups.
* **US2.42** – Evaluate the domestic response to the Great Depression, including the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, assessing the impact of and resistance to New Deal programming, including its impact on the economy and different groups of people.

Office of the State Superintendent of Education. (2023, June). *Washington, DC K-12 social studies standards: 2023 standards*. Government of the District of Columbia. <https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Standards%20in%20English.pdf>

1. **ISTE Standards: For Students & Educators**
* **1.3 Knowledge Constructor.** Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.

*Connection: Telling a story that includes insight on the Great Depression will help them construct knowledge about the era.*

* **1.4 Innovative Designer.** Students use a variety of technologies within a design process to identify and solve problems by creating new, useful or imaginative solutions.

*Connection: Students have their choice of tools to use and are given free reign to use their imagination based on only a photo.*

* **1.6 Creative Communicator.** Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals.

*Connection: What’s more creative communication than digital storytelling.*

International Society for Technology in Education. (2024). ISTE standards: For students [Version 4.01]. <https://iste.org/standards/students>

1. **Project Assignment Guide & Rubric**

The project assignment guide is available here: <https://www.mcarltonh.com/services>. Here are a few notes, but otherwise the guide has all the info.

* Cribbing from a similar tool on the Library of Congress website, I created a form to have the students answer questions about the photo to get them thinking.
* I adapted your Storybook Planning Sheet for the assignment, and I used the 7 major plots video.
* I curated pictures from the Library of Congress.
* Rather than reinvent the wheel I linked to EDUC 590’s storytelling tools page.
* Rubric (also acceptable through the guide): <https://www.mcarltonh.com/_files/ugd/714b7f_a155022107744f1895532d7d7ad75c00.pdf>

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# **My** **Digital Storytelling Reflection on EDUC 590 Curriculum Integration of Technology**

1. **Planning**
2. **Identify & Explain your Plot**

My story will be a journey of discovery, which is a variation on the voyage-and-return plot. I was doing well as a seasoned veteran trial attorney at the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, but when offered early retirement, I jumped at it. I willingly made myself uncomfortable by retiring and enrolling in UDC’s teacher prep program. Coming into the *Curriculum Integration of Technology* class, I felt pretty confident. I’m an early adopter of technology and had been doing investigations in the tech and telecom industries fr the last 25 years, which required me to understand their products. TPACK and SAMR were straightforward conceptual ways to approach technology in the classroom, but then I had to make my first infographic ever. It’s pretty sorry looking.

Then we did our digital replacement for the letter home. I felt pretty good about mine. We came into class and shared out projects with each other and that immediately changed. I saw Rachel Venator’s project and realized I had completely failed to take advantage of technology. She had interactive parts where written or spoken messages could be sent back to her by students and parents. That alone put her simpler, but more useful, project head and shoulders above mine. My project was a perfectly fine replacement for the letter home, but other than adding video it provided nothing more than the analog letter home. I had really done nothing more than the letter home did. My project was gray and firmly inside the box, but Rachel’s and others’ letter replacements took advantage of technology in a way I had not. So I had an epiphany that I needed to reset and approach technology from a completely different perspective.

Then we did the T.E.W.L.S. project where we focused on understanding a digital tool which allowed me the time to digest that first project and the opportunities that I had missed. T.E.W.L.S. also allowed me to better understand all the options a digital tool might offer. This rest and time to reflect put me in a much better position to tackle the WebQuest. Without the epiphany, I would have focused on written assessments and not seen the opportunity that graphic assessments and a spoke reflection would offer. I feel like I had leveraged technology much better in my WebQuest, but I could have been more creative. So there is more to do, and I will keep working on maximizing the use of technology to support meaningful learning. I’m sure it will be a never ending journey, but I have seen the light.

1. **Storyboard**

Link to my storyboard on Google Drive: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d-6aK9uTNvGkO519mRexs9ZYi5ZGT_5S/view?usp=sharing>.

1. **Outline**

Opening:

I was very happy at the Department of Justice. I had been there 25 years and had a lot of responsibility. I was enjoying my work. In fact, I'd just finished a great case, finishing our trial. Life was good.

Call to Action/Pushed out of my comfortable life

Then the department offered early retirement. I didn't know what I was going to do, but I knew I couldn't hang out on the beach all the time. That just isn't me. It was time to turn a new page. My office gave me a nice party, a cool bobblehead, and I took a leap of faith.

First leg of the journey

I dove right in. I enrolled in UDC’s Masters in Arts and Teaching program. In the tech class, I encounterd the SAMR model, and then the TPACK model. I really like the Venn diagram for TPACK. But I also was having to deal with new vocabulary, like Bloom's Taxonomy. But this is where it is getting fun, because it was new things that I didn't know before. I was having to catch up with the people who had some education background, and it was really I had to work hard. But that's why I came here.

Project 1 – a challenge

The first big project was a replacement for the analog letter home. I spent a lot of time on it and thought it looked pretty good. Then in class, we shared our projects with each other—some collaborative learning. We could see how others did things and what their projects were like. First, I'll give you sense of what mine was like, and then I'll show you was better.

[my Prezi]

This is my digital letter home. It has lots of information. I have a nice flag background for U.S. History II. But it's too busy and the Prezi jumps around too much. Of course, this in retrospect. I was proud of it at the time.

[Rachel’s Prezi]

Let's compare this to Rachel's project. When I looked at Rachel's project. It was very simple and plain, but very direct and effective. And it’s interactive. She set it up so students could leave her message. It’s not static like mine. And she also made it possible for families to leave a spoken message for her. Very simple, but it that really made a difference.

Dismay & introspection

After looking at the other projects, I realized I could not have been thinking inside a smaller box. I took a static letter home and turned it into a static electronic letter home. I needed to rethink what I was doing. I needed to restart. I decided to let myself reset and come back with new energy.

[Eilish]

Project 2 – recovery/regain a little confidence

The TEWLS project was great to have come after my disappointing letter-home replacement. It let me focus on a tool, how it works, and digest the other things that I learned.

Project 3 - reinvigorated

Next up was the WebQuest. I had a lot of fun with it, but it also was a lot of work. I felt like I was willing to try different things that I hadn't really been open to before on my first project. But I still have a lot to do.

Conclusion (return home)

I'm not about to start doing cartwheels, but I think I’m doing better and I hope to continue to improve. I think I'll let Nick Lowe take us out on a little bit of meaningful learning leading to understanding. Hopefully that's where I'm going.

[Lowe]

1. **Product**

Link to my projects page with my digital storytelling reflection as the first project: <https://www.mcarltonh.com/projects-8>.

1. **Reflection on Digital Storytelling Assignment**

**Creating the digital story**

Doing the digital storytelling reflection was fairly hard for me. Not so much the technical execution, coming up with a story is the hard part. I feel that I can competently tell a story, but creating one is where I have a mental block. Luckily, social studies is full of ready-made stories. I thought I might have to do something like my poem in high school about why I should not have to write a poem.

I experimented with a few different plots, but it kept falling apart before I could get to the end. I settled on a journey of enlightenment, a variation on voyage and return, but I couldn't identify the crisis or turning point. I accepted it might be an uneventful travelog. As I reviewed the coursework, I realized I did have an epiphany of sorts that I could use. After the first project—the replacement for the letter home—we shared our projects with each other in class. In moments I found my project wanting. It was a static digital replacement for a static analog letter home. Other than offering video, the digital nature of it added nothing, and I had felt pretty good about it.

My aha moment came as Rachel shared her replacement for the letter home. Her Prezi was simpler, less busy, and more importantly, interactive. She had added an opportunity for students to send her a written note and an opportunity for the family—parent or student—to leave a spoken message using VoiceThreads. Just those two simple things put her Prezi head and shoulders above mine.

So now I had my epiphany, but I still needed a way to end it. That came this last Sunday, when I attended a concert (Nick Lowe and Los Straightjackets) with a friend of mine. One of my favorite songs of his is *(What's So Funny ‘Bout) Peace, Love and Understanding*, which was a hit for Elvis Costello. I usually don't film concerts with my phone, but my son had sent me a clip from the Billie Eilish concert he went to the week before. I thought I would take a clip of the concert to share, showing a little bit calmer vibe. Luckily, I was taping Nick Lowe repeated *understanding* multiple times. I now had my endpoint to aim for.

I still had low expectations, but it turned out better than I expected. I expected to be able to recognize a story, but not that it would come across as well as it did. I was happy with how it looked and that it wasn't too long (which I need to work on). The nicest thing about this project reaching out to Rachel to get access to her Prezi. When I explained why I wanted access, it clearly made her feel good her colleagues recognized her work.

**ISTE Standards**

In creating my digital storytelling reflection, I experienced the *ISTE Standards: For Students* referenced above in relation to my Great Depression digital storytelling product guide as noted above. In relation to the *ISTE Standards: For Educators*, I was fulfilling the following standards:

* **2.1 Learner.** Educators continually improve their practice by learning from and with others, and exploring proven and promising practices that leverage technology to boost student learning.

*Connection: Learning. Learning. Learning.*

* **2.5 Designer.** Educators design authentic, learner-driven activities and environments that recognize and accommodate learner variability.

*Connection: Post-creation of my reflection and am convinced that digital storytelling has value and can drive meaningful learning.*

International Society for Technology in Education. (2024). ISTE standards: For educators [Version 4.01]. <https://iste.org/standards/educators>

**Final Word**

Curriculum Integration of Technology was a lot of work and very time consuming, but I believe it was well worth it. I have expanded the scope of viable formative and summative activities, especially those that will reach creative students, which would not have been able to do as well before the class.