The Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling

The Center for Digital Storytelling has defined seven elements for creating effective and interesting multimedia stories. Constructing a story is not a simple process that follows a recipe or prescribed formula. These elements require consideration for every story and determining the balance each element occupies in the story can take a lot of thinking and re-thinking.

① A Point (of View)
Stories are told to make a point and should not be presented as a recitation of mere facts. Define the premise of your story so that all parts can serve to make the point. Consider your audience and direct the point to them.

② A Dramatic Question
You want to capture your audience's attention at the beginning of the piece and hold their interest throughout. Typically you want to pose the dramatic question in the opening lines and resolve it in the closing lines.

③ Emotional Content
Emotional content can help hold your audiences attention. The images, effects, music, and tone of voice all lend to contributing emotion to the piece. Try to keep the elements
consistent with the emotion of the moment.

④ The Gift of Your Voice
Most likely the first you heard your recorded voice you couldn't stand the way it sounded. And you still can't. Suggestion… get over it! Your voice is a great gift and even thought you don't like to hear it, others do.

If you "read" your script your audience will not know how to react. Take time to learn and practice your script so you can speak in a conversational voice. Record several takes and select the best one. Trust that your audience will think it is perfect.

⑤ The Power of the Soundtrack
Music is a big plus to a digital story. The right music can set the story in time and can convey emotion. Play music behind an image and a specific emotion is generated. Change the music behind the same image and an entirely different emotion is experienced. Sound effects can add tension and excitement to a piece, but be careful; they can be a distraction, too.

⑥ Economy
Plan to leave some of your work on the "cutting room floor". A compact, fast moving digital story will contain only those elements necessary to move the audience from beginning to end. We know that our brains are constantly fillin in (from our won experiences) details from suggestions made by sights and sounds. Don't five every minute detail to clarify your story, let your audience fill in some of the blanks.

⑦ Pacing
The rhythm of the piece is what keeps your audience's interest in the story. Changing pace within the story can facilitate moving the audience from one emotion to another. Music tempo, speech rate, image duration, and panning and zooming speed all work to establish pace. Generally pace wll be consistent, but once in a while it will pause, accelerate, decelerate, stop or blast-off. Trust your own senses, we all move at our own pace.

Educational Goals of Digital Storytelling for Teachers

Educators at all levels can use Digital Storytelling in many ways, from introducing new material to helping students learn to conduct research, synthesize large amounts of content and gain expertise in the use of digital communication and authoring tools. It also can help students organize these ideas as they learn to create stories for an audience, and present their ideas and knowledge in individual and meaningful ways.

• Appeal to the diverse learning styles of the students by using Digital Storytelling as a presentation media
• Generate interest, attention and motivation for the "digital generation" kids in our classrooms.
• Capitalize on the creative talents of your own students as they begin to research and tell stories of their own.
• Publish student work on the Internet for viewing and critiquing by others.

Students
• Learn to use the Internet to research rich, deep content while analyzing and synthesizing a wide range of content.
• Develop communications skills by learning to ask questions, express opinions, construct narratives and write for an audience.
• Increase computer skills using software that combines a variety of multimedia including: text, still images, audio, video, web publishing.

http://www.coe.uh.edu/digitalstorytelling/default.htm

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