Example Digital Storytelling Assignment: Leda Nath

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Overview

Learning Objective

The objective of this assignment is to tell a personal story related to you as a college student today. In your story, you will explain why you think you ended up going to college, why you want to attend, or what you hope to become. This assignment will help you to develop your identity as a college student and your place in college.

Format

- 2-3 minutes long
- Succinct: no more than 15 still images, 200-300 words.
- Well-written and well crafted (more like poetry than prose).
- In the first-person, and non-fiction.

Steps

There will be six steps to complete throughout the semester, each with its own due date. See the syllabus for due dates.

1. Narrative Draft
2. Narrative Final
3. Storyboard It
4. Edit/Scan Photos
5. Record Final Narrative
6. Assembly

The last days of class will be spent viewing each others' stories.

Examples of Digital Stories

http://telr.osu.edu/storytelling/movies/dassler-w.html
http://www.uww.edu/icit/instructional/showcase/2097_DigitalStorytellingVideos.html
https://academictech.doit.wisc.edu/ideas/digitalstorytelling/examples

Other Resources

- Creative Commons Search (http://search.creativecommons.org)
Learn more about the Creative Commons licensing system, and search multiple sites (a “meta search”) for content that is freely reusable in education, and sometimes commercial, uses.

- **Flickr** ([http://www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com))
  User-contributed image service. Many images are licensed as Creative Commons. Wide variety of pictures in many topic areas, as well as quality.

- **FindSounds** ([http://www.findsounds.com](http://www.findsounds.com))
  A general purpose search engine to find audio of any nature on the internet.

- **The Internet Archive** ([http://www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org))
  A very large collection of video and audio in the public domain or licensed in various ways which allow for reuse and remixing.

- **Blip.tv** ([http://blip.tv](http://blip.tv))
  Public domain or creative common’s public video repository, primarily of TV episodes and creative works.

- **Stock.xchng** ([http://www.sxc.hu](http://www.sxc.hu))
  An online repository of user contributed content licensed in various forms. Statements clearly provided on usage rights and need for citation.

- **Free play** ([http://www.freeplaymusic.com](http://www.freeplaymusic.com))
  Broadcast and free Mp3 music downloads.

- **Soundsnap sound effects** ([http://www.soundsnap.com](http://www.soundsnap.com))
  Sound effects and loops from the best Hollywood sound designers and cutting edge music producers.

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**Step 1: Narrative Draft**

Start this step by picking a topic for your story from this list:

1. How I got to college (I don’t mean transportation here) or how did I know I’d go to college.
2. Why I want to be in college/Why I’m in college.
3. What I want to become through the college experience (think broader than “an accountant”).

You’ll notice that the answers to those topic questions are personal and can have endless answers. They can be simplified as well. For example, the answer to (a) may be “to get away from home” for some, “a tradition in my family” for others or “it was something my brother said to me.” It could be anything. Be sure and pick the question that you feel most attachment for, one you can be truthful with, one that is most important for you. Select one reason (of the many that may apply), and use that reason to write your digital story for.

Write a draft of your narrative for the 2-3 minute story in the first person (e.g., “I came from a family…”). **Limit it to 400 words.** What is the most important thing that you want to communicate with your story. It does not have to be an explicit moral. Think of major events or memories you have that are linked to your story. Emphasis is on the story. Only tell a story that has meaning for you; one you are in love with.

**Story format:**

**Q: What is a good story?**

A: This will vary from culture to culture, from time to time, from person to person. A traditional story is one that resonated enough so that retelling it is easy and it is remembered over time.

**Q: What might a traditional story format look like?**

A: Think of “three”: the protagonist (1) seeks to accomplish a task or goes on a quest. (2) S/he encounters and then overcomes obstacles. (3) S/he accomplishes the mission and returns home. There may be some change or learning experience—a transformation in the end.

**Q: How many parts might a story have?**

A: Stories usually, but not always, have that three-part structure as described above:

1. Problem (e.g., I wanted to join the Peace Corps or go to college).
2. Considering ideas for solutions (the main part of your digital story). (e.g., I noticed my uncle who worked first and went to the Peace Corps later in life. He …)
3. Solution (e.g., I decided to go to college now. UWW accepted me.)

What to turn in:

300-400 words of narrative in the first person for your digital story. Type in single space, 12-point font. Use paragraphs. Turn it in to the D2L dropbox by the due date specified on the syllabus.

Step 2: Narrative Final

This step is for you to rewrite your first attempt at your narrative, and condense it down to 200-300 words. Please deposit your final version into the dropbox by midnight on the due date specified on your syllabus.

What to do:

1. Review your professor feedback on your narrative draft in your D2L dropbox.
2. Ask for feedback on your narrative from friends, family, others.
3. Rewrite down to 200-300 words.
4. Turn it in.

If you want, tell those you asked for feedback that you don't want criticism, but instead ask them what they liked about your narrative. Or ask them to finish the sentence, “If it were my story, I would…” Ask them if they had any unanswered questions when you finished.

Step 3: Story Board

In this step, you will break your story down into parts, and begin to think about what images, music, and/or sound effects you want to appear while the narrative occurs. Collect pictures, music, and sound effects in this step, and match them to your narrative.

Keep it simple. In some places, an image will appear without narrative for a few seconds. Maybe in other places, you will notice that when you match up words with a picture, you don’t need all the words anymore.

For a 2-3 minute story, you shouldn’t need more than 10-15 images. It is okay if your story changes directions as you begin this process. This project is “alive,” and may metamorphos into something very different in the end. But keep it true to the original topic you picked. Visit home, write to home, take pictures, visit websites (e.g., www.flickr.com and others listed below) that provide free images.

Use the storyboard template file on D2L to write up this step (Step 3 Storyboard Template.rtf). Turn it in by the due date specified on your syllabus.

Image:Storyboard Template for digital storytelling.doc

Step 4: Edit & Scan

In Step 3, you gathered photos and/or music to include in your final digital story, and organized them in your storyboards. In this step, you will get your non-digital photos into a digital format.

Gather your photos and visit the Student Media Lab in the General Access Computing Lab in Anderson (for more information: http://www.uww.edu/icit/labs/galabs/gaps/index.html). In the Media Lab are scanners. Scan each photo and save it as a digital image. Give each new digital photo a name that helps you remember what it represents.

Media Lab hours can be found at: Lab Hours
Complete this step by the due date listed on your syllabus.

**Step 5: Record Narrative**

The Student Media Lab in the General Access Computing Lab in Anderson (for more information: http://www.uww.edu/icit/labs/galabs/gaps/index.html) has a sound recording booth. There are lab assistants there who help with using the equipment in the booth. Considering the Media Lab hours listed below, request a reservation to use the Sound Booth with via medialab@uww.edu. Ask for confirmation of your appointment.

Consider these points before you go into the booth to record:

1. **Economy:** Less is more. Let the visual and sound carry the story. It does not need to be narrated throughout. Before you go into the booth, review your storyboard with your narrative. As you line up your photos/video with your story, you may find that you do not need all the words. Let the viewer fill in some of the narrative, so to speak. Ask the question, does my image compete with the music or my narrative? Make adjustments to your final narrative.

2. **Pacing:** Stories may speed up and slow down—using your voice, or the change times of images, or the soundtrack (if applicable). Keep your pace steady. Include pauses. You do not need to be consistently talking. Sometimes, the image speaks for itself.

3. **Voice:** Use your voice. Do not ask another person to record your narrative. This is your story. Practice your narrative and think about your tone—What meaning does it imply? Change the volume and pitch for effects if you want. Think about pausing. PRACTICE before recording—it may take a few takes.

Media Lab hours can be found at: [Lab Hours](http://www.uww.edu/icit/labs/galabs/gaps/index.html)

Complete this step by the due date listed on your syllabus.

**Step 6: Assembly**

Steps 1-5 has prepared you for this final step; the assembly of your final digital story. You may use any software program you are comfortable with to assemble your digital story. In campus labs, you have Sony Vegas and Movie Maker available for you. All of you received training on Sony Vegas.

In this final step, and using your storyboard as a guide, you will assemble your final Digital Story. Here are some things to consider as you put your story together:

1. **Time:** Try to keep your final Digital Story under 3 minutes, but more than 2 minutes.
2. **Title:** Will you open with your title, or show a few images then insert your title? Which format do you think your story calls for? You decide.
3. **Transitions:** There are different options to choose from when changing from one image to another in your story. Will you use fades? Instant changes? Be consistent in your choice.
4. **Text blocks:** Sometimes, no image on the screen makes sense. In these instances, text blocks of the narrative may help.
5. **Panning:** Some software programs allow you to pan across images (e.g., moving from a broad view of a group of people down to the lower corner where there is a person of interest). These options add more movement in your digital story. Use them sparingly.
6. **Sound effects:** This is not available on all programs. If your program allows for them, they may include, rain, traffic, a train passing, etc. They can add to a story, but too much can be a distraction.
7. **Music:** Remember to consider copyright issues. Consider this site: [http://www.freeplaymusic.com](http://www.freeplaymusic.com). It provides free Mp3 music downloads.
8. **Ending:** At the end of your story, it may be clear that it is the end, but you still may need to have appear on the screen, “The End.” This is a style question. You decide which fits for you. After your story ends, include a dedication if you want (e.g., “This story is dedicated to …”). Include your name (e.g., “Created by …”). Include a date (e.g., November 24, 2009) and reference to the assignment (e.g., “This digital story was created as part of New Student Seminar course at UW Whitewater”). Any other credits you wish to at the end of your story.
9. **OTHER:** Check the “other resources” section below for websites that provide photos, sound effects, music, and more for your Digital Story, if you need. See examples of Digital Stories at the sites below, for inspiration and ideas.

Media Lab hours can be found at: [Lab Hours](http://www.uww.edu/icit/labs/galabs/gaps/index.html)