

Teaching Powerful Storytelling

Today's technology allows students and faculty to tell stories in powerful ways. The digital camera, editing software, and media outlets means that anyone can tell their story. Not only can learners of all ages tell their story, but they can share a curricular concept, help in professional learning, and/or create publicity for the school. With all of this capacity to create powerful stories, we need to remember what makes great stories for audiences. We should think about how story telling helps audiences learn.

Students' brains absorb a lot of stories through electronic media. TV commercials probably make up more of the 'contents' of a child's mental diet than we care to know. We need to give the same tools of 'digital storytelling' to students and combine it with great teaching methods to help students tell their own powerful stories. They must learn storyboarding, collaboration, elements of a story, videography, video editing, and publishing techniques to be digital storytellers. Like writing it's nearly impossible to create digital stories without thinking. Students become producers of digital stories and thought.

Digital tools give students and teachers powerful ways to tell their stories for a range of audiences. Powerful storytelling comes from storytellers sharing knowledge, feelings, and experiences within a community of learners. Powerful stories teach diverse view points, help shape school culture, and allow students to actively share knowledge using today's media. Learning these digital tools comes quickly to students. This Book of Questions is designed to help educators focus on the thoughts and collaborations behind teaching powerful storytelling.

The Question is the Answer

What is our story (our brand)?

How can we improve at creating and telling our story?

What are some ways we can use digital tools to express ourselves?

What are assumptions our school and community make about education?

Who is telling our story now?

Notes:



Our Learning Community

Who are the members of our learning community?

How are the relationships between students and teachers, and other members of the learning community valued in our story?

How do all members of our community contribute to everyone's learning?

How do we gather feedback about our stories to improve effectiveness and promote sustainability?

How are we building the culture of professional development for all staff?

Notes:



When a Child Learns, Who Knows?

How has our story given wings to a child's mind?

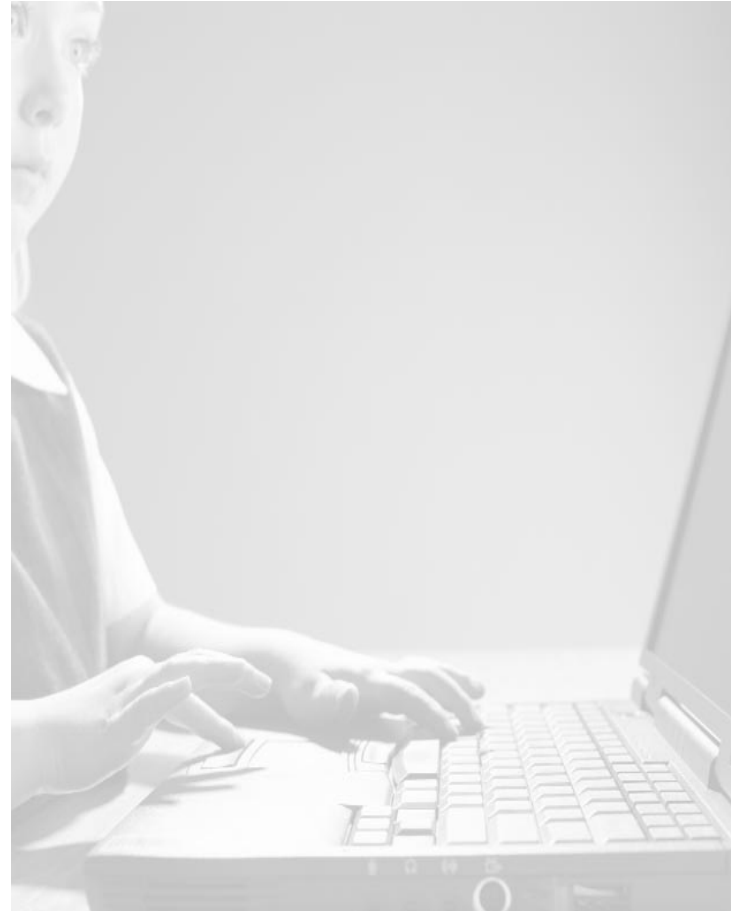
Who is the audience for our story? How do they normally get information?

How does the story reflect the relationship between learners and knowledge?

How are our commitments ("moral purpose") reflected in our story?

How is our story taking risks and "breaking trail" for our learning community?

Notes:



Curriculum, Standards, Best Practices

How can all learners share concepts or essential learning through this story?

How is our story based on achieving standards?

How are our teachers and students sharing best practices?

What parts of our school's learning culture or outcomes should our story reflect?

How does our story contribute to the emotional intelligence of our learners?

Notes:



Elements of Storytelling

How have we built our story by using all aspects of the storyboarding process?

How has each team member contributed to the storytelling process?

Have we incorporated all seven elements of storytelling*?

- Pacing
- Economy
- Gift of Voice
- Sound Track
- Dramatic Question
- Emotional Content
- Point of View

How will we use an assessment rubric to improve our craft and story impact?

* www.storycenter.org

Notes:



Sharing Our Stories

How are we building and sharing our brand with the world?

What makes people notice our school?

Who is telling our story? (Currently, what's on the media's radar?)

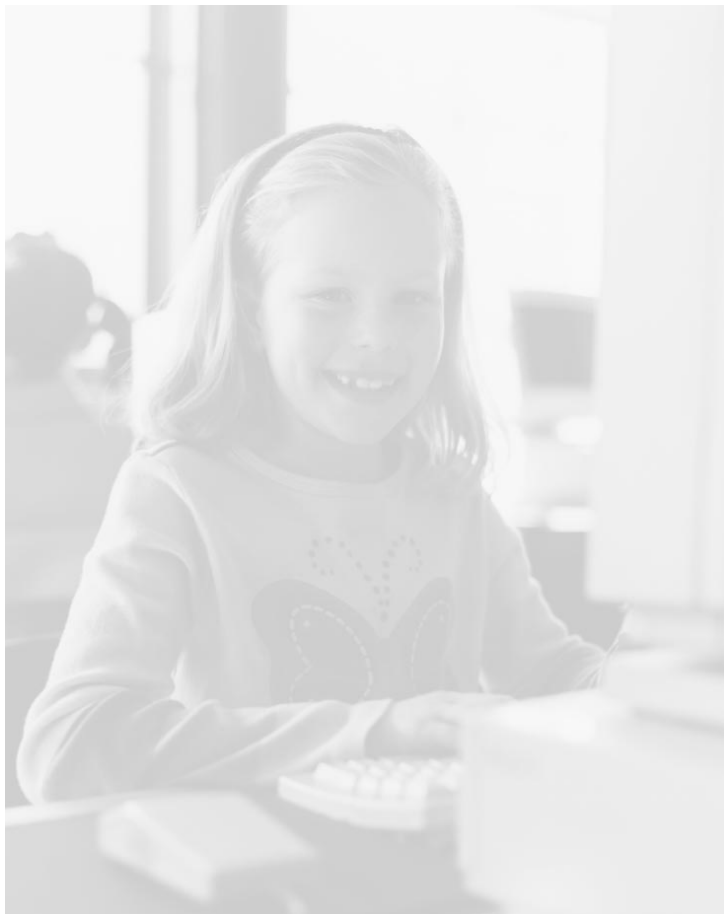
How are we using the C.O.P.E. (Create Once, Perform Everywhere) principle for our story?

How are we building leadership capacity by students telling stories?

Notes:



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About the Author

Mark Standley works internationally as an education consultant, presenter and author. He has been a research archeologist, professional educator, and an executive in the computer industry over the past 23 years in Alaska. He is former Executive Director of the Alaska Center for Excellence in Schools with the University of Alaska.

Mr. Standley is co-author of the books: The Technology Advisory Council (ISTE, 1993), School/Business Partnerships (Visions, 2000) and Global Project-based Learning with Technology (Visions, 2000), Technology Standards (Visions, 2001), and Future Courses (TECHNOS, 2001). He is former State President for the National Association of Partners in Education. Mark was named "Father of the IdidaMovie" by the Alaska Society for Technology in Education and a founding partner in the state of Hawaii's "IslandMovie," digital storytelling contests for schools.

Mr. Standley has conducted Leadership Retreats for over twelve years across America, in the United Kingdom, and Japan on subjects including the art of digital presentations, powerful story telling, global project-based learning, video conferencing in education, handheld technology for leaders, and school/business partnerships.

For a complete list of Mark's projects, publications, and resources, please go to: www.mstandley.com

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