Web Tools for Digital Storytelling

Theresa McGee

Fitting digital storytelling into your curriculum can come in large or small pieces. Deliver instruction as a story or have your students create their own while integrating technology and improving communication skills. The following Web-based tools can help your students tell stories using digital media.

Animoto

Share your students' art experiences with the world as video using Animoto (**animoto.com/education**). This movie-maker will mix your still images or video clips to create an amazing composition set to music. Present a lesson to your students about an artist or tell a story about world culture art. See how Animoto was used to document a visiting artist during a sixth-grade art class: **tinyurl. com/ArtVisit**.

Other movie-makers to try with similar video-creation features include Flixtime (**flixtime.com**) or Stupeflix (**www.stupeflix.com**).

Fotobabble

Fotobabble (**www.fotobabble. com**) is an online tool that lets you upload photos, record audio, and then e-mail or embed it. Create a free class account and get your students reflecting on their own artwork. Use Fotobabble as explanation for an art process, as was done with this Photoshop tip: **tinyurl.com/PhotoshopTip**.

Blabberize

Similar to Fotobabble, Blabberize (**blabberize.com**) takes the talking picture concept one step further. Bring a portrait to life by using the selector tools to define the mouth and jaw of your image. The audio recording then synchronizes with the defined areas creating a talking portrait. Discuss classroom procedures or present the life of an artist using a self-portrait. See how Blabberize was used as a mystery artist of the month: **bit.ly/ iGeghj**. Video download is currently free, but that may change. Another saving option to consider would be recording directly from your computer screen using a screen recording tool such as **screencast-o-matic.com**. Check out this comic tutorial to learn more about Blabberize: **tinyurl.com/ BlabTutorial**.

VoiceThread

VoiceThread (**ed.voicethread.com**) is a unique interactive tool that allows text, audio, or video camera comments to be posted alongside uploaded images. Student comments can be added with individual identities created by the teacher. Comments may also be added by parents or older students from home. When the "comment moderator" feature is turned on, you can approve comments before they can be seen by others, which makes for a safer interactive environment. Use of the drawing tool brings attention to specific areas during voice commenting. Multiple images and comments can be added to each VoiceThread creating opportunity for a class critique. Watch a VoiceThread with fifth-grade students describing their art experiences and learning processes: **bit.ly/mxZ80M**. Or take a look at an early childhood art program having a group discussion about their dinosaur drawings: **bit.ly/lxA9YA**. Get started using the free educator account with this tutorial created by art education professor Craig Roland: **tinyurl.com/VoiceThreadTutorial**.

Go Mobile

Motivate your students to create their own story with mobile devices by Animoto (**tinyurl.com/AnimotoApp**), Fotobabble (**tinyurl.com/FotoApp**), and VoiceThread (release expected Fall 2011). ✍

Theresa McGee is an art teacher at Monroe Elementary in Hinsdale, Illinois. She also co-authors an art education blog (teachingpalette.com). tmcgee@d181.org