



MOOC Expo Milano 2015

Digital Storytelling at school

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DST_15_01

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AT SCHOOL

II edition www.policulturaexpo.it/world/online-courses-moocs/

COURSE SUMMARY

Digital Storytelling at School is an **online course** that **helps teachers to develop an effective educational activity based on a “digital storytelling”** (interactive and multimedia) **approach**.

Digital Storytelling (DST) is spreading in schools (worldwide) as a tool to enhance the acquisition of modern communication skills. Combined with the use of multimedia technologies and the network, it fosters a variety of educational benefits: cognitive, communicational, relational and motivational ones, “media literacy”, etc.

Target audience: teachers from schools of all levels/kinds (and anyone interested in the matter)

Duration: 6 weeks

Attendance: asynchronous **Community:** YES

Estimated effort : 25 hours

Telling stories can be done in various ways: from comic books to videos, from “slideshow” to animations. This course deals with the general issues with DST and tackles in detail a specific approach: the creation of multimedia, interactive narratives with 1001stories (a tool developed by HOC-LAB, Politecnico di Milano).

Interactive and multimedia DST is used within the PoliCultura initiative (with more than 1,000 “stories” created by students aged between 4 and 18) as well as within **PoliCulturaEXPOMilano2015** (www.policulturaexpo.it/world), the international educational competition launched by the organizers of the **universal exposition Expo Milano 2015**, in cooperation with Politecnico di Milano. It must be noted that participation in these initiatives is NOT a pre-requisite for enrolling to this course.

Description

The course addresses two fundamental aspects of DST: education and communication. It adopts a “workshop” approach: participants will go through all the steps that lead from an initial idea to the final product’s design. Actual implementation is recommended but not compulsory.

During the course, examples of narratives done at school (at all levels) will be commented.

Objectives

At the end of the course, participants will have:

- gained the main competences needed to implement a DST educational activity with their classes
- learnt on the main affordances and pitfalls with running a collaborative activity based on DST
- learnt the basics on how to evaluate a multimedia product
- more in general: gained a critical attitude in relation to the assessment of an ICT-based educational activity (cost-benefits evaluation of communication quality vs. pedagogical quality)

Delivery

The course is delivered in self-learning mode. Each participant can access in full autonomy the resources (videos, manuals, tutorials, articles). A thematic discussion forum is also available, where participants can interact and collaborate with colleagues on the course’s content and activities.

Resources

- Introductory and thematic videos
- Scientific articles and technical documents
- Additional resources (papers, websites, videos, etc.)

Acknowledgment

A **certificate of participation** will be issued to all the participants who complete the planned activities. They will also receive **digital badges** (according to the international standard of the **Mozilla Foundation**) **for each completed phase of work**. The transformation of the attendance into academic credits is possible as specified on the website.



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STEPS

The course is structured in 4 phases tracing an ideal educational path: from a general introduction to Digital Story Telling (DST), you follow the steps necessary for the creation of an interactive multimedia “story”, with an emphasis on the relationship among the narrative, management of class activities and educational benefits. The course is complete with guidelines for professional and educational assessment of the outcome.

STEP 1 – Digital Story Telling at school: introduction and the specific approach of PoliCultura

Duration: 2 weeks

The first phase of the course examines the educational and communicative values of Digital Story Telling at school. The features of interactive DST are many:

- communicating through a combination of media: audio, images, texts of various kinds, videos, etc.
- fragmenting a narrative into a set of short chapters
- developing a “non-linear”, interactive narrative style

After an overview of the course objectives and the organization of contents, the specific approach of Politecnico di Milano is presented in detail.

Readings: all participants read the required readings among those provided.

Interaction: all participants take an active part in the Forum discussions.

STEP 2 - The teaching quality of Digital Storytelling: relationship between implementation and benefits

Duration: 2 weeks

The second phase focuses on the complex relationship between the way of organizing teaching activities based on Digital Story Telling and the educational benefits that can be obtained (i.e., what participants learn).

It also presents the various steps necessary for the realization of a multimedia narrative: from outlining the editorial plan to collecting and selecting the contents.

Reading: all participants read the required readings among those provided.

Interaction: all participants take an active part in the Forum discussions.

Activities: each course participant chooses one of the following roles:

- **Designer:** she plans a DST activity for a class, focusing on the steps of (1) choice of a topic, (2) collection of contents and (3) creation of the editorial plan; she describes the choices she would make, based on the educational benefits she is looking for.
- **Reader:** he chooses one of the works submitted for the pilot edition of PoliCultura EXPO, commenting on the steps of (1) choice of a topic, (2) collection of contents and (3) creation of the editorial plan, according to the teacher’s description of the educational activity.

STEP 3 - Communication quality of storytelling and media literacy

Duration: 2 weeks

Media literacy, or the ability to communicate effectively using different media (and various channels), is a characteristic element of a Digital Story Telling activity.

The third phase of the course provides a series of guidelines for developing and improving the communication quality of the narratives created by a class: the choice of topic, the articulation of the story, the creation of contents, the linguistic aspect, the role of images...

Reading: all participants read the required readings among those provided.

Interaction: all participants take an active part in the Forum discussions.



Activities: each participant maintains the role chosen in STEP 2

- **Designer:** continuing the planning of a DST activity for a class (started in STEP 2), he designs and coordinates the creation of multimedia contents. In so doing, he takes into account technological problems and, as in the first phase, the learning outcomes he wants to achieve.
- **Reader:** always referring to a work submitted for the pilot edition of PoliCultura Expo (the same as in STEP 2 or a different one), she carefully examines the phase of content creation, including technological aspects; the goal is to highlight the relationship between a teaching plan and learning benefits.

STEP 4 - Evaluation of the result

Duration: 2 weeks

The fourth stage examines the criteria necessary to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the outcome of an activity based on Digital Story Telling. It takes into account both the learning impact and the communicative quality of the result. The analysis takes into consideration the structure of the story, the illustrations, the audio quality and the different possible scenarios of use.

Reading: all participants read the required readings among those provided.

Interaction: all participants take an active part in the Forum discussions

Activities: each course participant chooses one of the following roles:

- **Designer:** discusses (1) how to perform an evaluation of the communicative quality of the final product and (2) how she would carry out an educational assessment of the work done (taking into account both group work and individual contributions).
- **Reader:** always referring to a work submitted for the pilot edition of PoliCultura Expo, he discusses the communicative quality of the final product and its relationship with the educational benefits (perceived and/or reported by the teacher in the page dedicated to the educational activity).

Open SELF-EVALUATION TEST (required; always available)

12 multiple-choice questions must be answered in 15 minutes. Each participant can try the test 3 times.

Open SUPERCHALLENGE (required; always available)

Wiki: Populating a wiki with the description of one or more tools for digital storytelling and its assessment, highlighting strengths and weaknesses.



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RESOURCES

Videos (curated by HOC-LAB – Nicoletta Di Blas):

- “**how-to**” videos illustrating the various steps involved in building an interactive multimedia narrative and proposing guidelines for its evaluation.
- “**stories of the week**” videos commenting on works already completed by teachers in schools

Required readings

- Di Blas, N., Paolini, P., Torrebruno, A. (2010). Digital Storytelling at School. Does the TPCK Model Explain What’s Going On? In J. Sanchez & K. Zhang (Eds.), *Proceedings of World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare, and Higher Education 2010*. Chesapeake, VA: AACE. pp. 2239-2248
- Boase C. Centre for Active Learning & Department of Education, University of Gloucestershire (2008), *Digital Storytelling for Reflection and Engagement: a study of the uses and potential of digital storytelling*
- Torrebruno, A., Di Blas, N. - Report: tools for digital storytelling
- Di Blas, N., Paolini, P. (2013). Technology and Group Work: Inclusion or Diversification of Talents? In Proceedings of ATEE Winter Conference - Learning & Teaching with Media & Technology; March 7-9, 2013, Genoa (Italy).
- Di Blas, N. – On content quality (Internal report)
- Reeves, T. C. (1994). Evaluating what really matters in computer-based education. In M. Wild, & D. Kirkpatrick, (Eds.), *Computer education: New Perspectives* (pp. 219-246). Perth, Australia: MASTEC.

Recommended reading and other resources

During the various stages of the course you will be offered a selection of recommended readings and online videos, in order to learn more about various aspects of Digital Story Telling activities at school and about broader issues, such as creativity.



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ROLES

Participants enrolled in this course can choose their level of commitment according to their own interests and time available.

First they can select a general role:

- **Reader:** the emphasis is on reading Digital Story Telling projects. Critical reading and reflection on projects already completed by other schools are the characterizing features.
- **Designer:** for those who wish to develop their own ideas and projects.

The community of teachers active in the forum is important to fully exploit the potential of the course. However, intervening in the discussion and keeping up with it can be challenging; participation modalities may depend on the level of each teacher's prior experience.

Two levels of participation are possible:

- **Contributor:** adequate participation in the discussions;
- **Leader:** active and vibrant participation in the discussions; a leader stimulates debate by proposing new topics, commenting in detail on others' contributions, etc.

The main activities of the course are planned for an intermediate level of commitment, but “doing more” is always possible for those who want. In fact we propose a Superchallenge: those who feel ready to take it on may choose one or more activities at a higher level of complexity among those offered (details will be available to participants accessing the course).

Participants who stand out for the quality and the extent of their Superchallenge work can achieve the status of **Experts**.



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CERTIFICATES and BADGES

CERTIFICATES

All teachers who complete the required activities will receive a participation certificate and a digital badge.

DIGITAL BADGES

The badges are digital attestations that certify skills, capabilities, accomplishments and/or course attendance.

The Mozilla Foundation created the Open Badges system, providing it with a standard that makes badges internationally recognizable and a technological infrastructure for acquiring them: the Backpack. This is a personal online portfolio where people can create collections of badges to share on major social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn), blogs and websites.

Badges convey a variety of competences that are hard to capture from a resume, giving ample space to informal training experiences, and certifying skills and expertise with concrete evidence (in detail: openbadges.org/)

THE BADGES FOR “Digital Storytelling at School”

Every single activity (required or optional) provides recognition for acquired skills through digital badges.

The course staff decides which badges to assign evaluating each individual case, taking into account also the growth of the participant.

Participants who complete all required course activities will receive a badge equivalent to the final certificate of participation. The degree of participation in the MOOC and each person’s specific contribution according to their chosen roles will be explicitly recognized with different levels of badges.