

Policy Recommendations for Using Digital Storytelling in Informal and Community Education Settings

ABOUT EUROSPECTIVES 2.0

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, EUROSPECTIVES 2.0 tested out practices and methods on digital storytelling in formal and informal education environments as well as in citizen participation and community development fields. This policy briefing is based on learnings from the research, curriculum design and practical testing that have taken place during the project.

Digital Storytelling is a powerful medium and a useful tool that can help citizens to develop an understanding of the digital world.

Digital storytelling in informal and community education

With the growing importance of digital technologies within our everyday lives, digital literacy training needs to be prioritised in community and informal education settings so citizens can have the opportunity to fully engage in public life. This not only supports their lifelong learning and education, but also how they engage with society and have a stake in their communities.

Technology Democracy

In order for this to be successful, there needs to be technological democracy rather than technological determinism to ensure that citizens and communities can be involved and participate. So much of life today relies on the ability to access digital information and often relies on using new technologies. Presently there are 'digital gaps' with many people not having access due to reasons such as inequality in Internet reach in certain locations and the economic costs of digital devices and the Internet, or the ability to use digital technologies.

Digital Literacy and Inclusion

To ensure that citizens are able to have a voice in shaping their neighbourhoods, communities, the society that they live in and the world around them now and in the years to come, they will not only need to have access to digital technology, but they also know how to use it in a meaningful and informed way. It is essential to enable citizens to become technologically literate and to improve digital literacy. This means, that it is not only

important for all citizens to have access to media technologies and the Internet, but it is crucial that all citizens have the ability to use them and to gain an understanding of how these technologies are used. Ensuring that digital spaces, platforms and services are accessible, inviting and easy to use for the people they are designed for.

Digital literacy impacts on how well a citizen can use technology to:

- access important services such as health, education, government services, etc.
- use the internet safely and in a meaningful way for their own personal needs
- be able to access the same opportunities as everyone else

Informal education and community learning organisations must ensure that they are able to provide opportunities for citizens and communities to have to access to tools and training that:

- supports them to become familiar with digital tools, platforms and information
- provides them with training to develop digital skills and confidence
- assists them to make their own media products and engage in conversations in digital spaces

The Power of Digital Storytelling

'Digital Storytelling' is an effective method that supports people to learn about digital tools and develop technical skills in a meaningful way. Through digital storytelling,

community and informal learning providers can not only teach core digital literacy skills but also encourage conversations among community members, creating collective responses or a personal response to important local, national and international events and giving individuals and communities a chance to find their voice.

Informal and community education providers can help to foster these conversations and create the opportunity for collective representation by using 'digital storytelling'. It is a powerful medium and a useful tool and that can help citizens to develop an understanding of global literacy and visual literacy.

Media and Visual Literacy

There are a number of key principles that should be adhered to when delivering Digital Storytelling. Facilitators in this field should find ways to embed visual literacy into their education programmes, regardless of topic area. This helps citizens to explore how they view and 'read' visual image. This could include recognising their own biases and developing objective thinking, as well as boosting their critical thinking skills and analysis of media content and a deeper understanding of the language of the modern digital world.

As well as embedding visual literacy, it is also important to provide citizens with information and knowledge about digital media platforms, current media products and media content. Helping them to reflect upon and evaluate the ways in which power, authority and values that are contained in media outputs, and how they steer people to think and feel.

Improving media literacy and strengthening an individual's media competences is crucial for citizens to be able to receive and/or retrieve different information, and to have the ability to express to transmit and their own views thus helping to create independent digital participation in community life. Having the ability to access media, create content and to critically interpret media content is crucial to for civic participation to be effective in the modern world.

When these digital literacy competencies are supported, a deeper understanding of the language of the modern digital world will be strengthened, demystified and citizens can develop their own voices, create their own stories.

Policy Recommendation

1. Free super-fast broadband for every home in the EU and the UK.
2. Provision of digital tools for community development and non-formal education organisations and educators.
3. Digital storytelling methodology to be used in community development, civic participation and non-formal education organisations.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Title: Eurospectives – Digital Storytelling Curriculum for Participation and Citizenship in Formal and Informal education.

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