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The Seven Steps of Digital Storytelling

Own Your Insights

- We all have experiences. What do we understand. How do we act differently because of them. Write what you know because of what you experienced.
- “Why this story, why now?” ask yourself, to gain entrance into the writing
- What’s the message, what am I trying to convey to the ‘world’?

Own Your Emotions

- Address the emotional content of the story. This maybe easy to understand, but sometimes harder to execute.
- Emotional content is what makes stories authentic. We watch and listen to compare our emotional journey to yours. We want to learn more about the journey – the struggle, the celebrations - of change. This is a fundamental aspect of being human.
- Some strategies for accessing emotions:
 - Tell story from your heart to the heart of your audience rather than from an analytical space. Be careful not to be cliché with emotions. Be authentic.
 - Find emotion through evocative moments of story. What were the most “intense” moments of the story – how were you feeling – what did it mean that you felt that way?
 - Free write, pretend you are writing in a diary.
 - Question your reactions as you recall. Why did you react in a certain way – what happened to cause that reaction in you? Let the audience know these things.

Find the Moment

- Create scene to bring people into your story, to the moment.
- Use detail of the moment – small details, dialogue, etc.
- Show emotions through evocative moments in story rather than describing/telling of them/talking above them.

Hearing Your Story

- Write the way you talk.
- Gift, uniqueness of your own individual voice
- Tone, pacing of how you tell it
- Consider how the sounds other than your voice may add to your story. Would it make your story more engaging? Would it situate a story in a particular time, place or culture?
- Music can be used to encourage reflection by audience, or support the story's pacing
- Music can undermine and detract from the story if it overpowers the story or contradicts (in lyrics or tone) the intended message of your story.

Seeing Your Story

- Images help tell the story: provide visual 'proof', enhance scene, provide visual engagement...
- Engage your audience to make connections between the images and the voiceover.

Assembling Your Story

- Levels of meaning conveyed through the various pieces, how they all work together (voice, images, sound).
- Voice, images, sound can all be thought of as separate layers of the narrative that need to work together to help convey the meaning of the story.
- The creative journey involves making decisions about what each of the layers looks like or sounds like, and how they will work together to accomplish the goal of your piece
- We will help you by providing ideas and options about how all of these pieces will fit together, but the final decisions will be up to yours.

Sharing Your Story

- Personal stories are. The process of writing and analyzing and creating brings us important new understandings of our world and ourselves. They can be used for much good, but stories can also make us vulnerable. Carefully consider how the process of sharing the story affects the content of the story.
- Need to consider what to include, what not to include, in order to stay safe (in both words and images).
- Reflect also on the implications of truth telling on others, on communities, etc. – for instance, how your individual narrative is situated within larger social/cultural/historic/political contexts.
- When editing, consider what information is more effectively shared as part of the introduction to the story or in accompanying information to the story, and what information is more effective when included in the story.