Digital Story Reflection

Stephen Fink

University of Alaska Southeast

For this class we were given an assignment to create a digital story. A basic definition of a digital story is any story that is told with the use of computer-based tools. We were given the choice to create a personal story or a professional story; factual or fictitious. Because of the circumstances of my internship (I taught a sophomore English class), I decided to make [my digital story](https://www.wevideo.com/hub#media/ci/505120228) into a video summary of one of the novels I taught: *Fahrenheit 451*.

My digital story was a film. It took the form of a slideshow that had background narration. I got the idea from a study tool that I used to use for my high school English classes quite often. The study tool—one that I have learned is still commonly used among students—is called Sparknotes.com. This website has a vast database of summaries and analyses of pieces of literature commonly taught in high school. Within the last few years, they have been creating Video Sparknotes, animated video summaries of different works of literature like *Lord of the Flies,* or *MacBeth*. These videos feature original art, and the drawings are showed in the style of Ken Burns with an accompanying narration. I decided to do a video in the same style of Video Sparknotes. There is no Video Sparknote of *Fahrenheit 451*, and I liked the idea of making this a project for students during a unit on a novel. This digital story would serve as an example of a project, as well as a study tool for the novel.

As our world is becoming more digital, so are our students. If we are interacting with the digital world, we are leaving a digital footprint. There is so much potential to leave a self-destructive and damaging digital footprint these days. Conversely, there is a lot of potential to leave a positive foot print. Our students are likely already heavily involved with the digital world, and as educators in this modern world, we need to teach them how to interact with it responsibly, positively, and productively. Digital stories is one of these ways.

Giving students the knowledge and skills to create digital stories is a great way to equip them with ways to productively interact with the digital world. An example assignment would look something like this: students create a digital story about a theme, a character, symbolism, or the plot of a chapter of one of the pieces of literature in class. My example, a digital story of *Fahrenheit 451,* would let them know that they can use original art. However, this would also be a great entry into teaching them how to research photos that they would want to use for their digital story if they decided not to use original art.

Through making this video, I learned that creating a digital story is a fun, educational, and personal experience. My experience in my internship so far has shown me that students these days will jump at any chance to use technology in the classroom, and this is a great way to give them that chance. They will learn the skills of video editing and storytelling, and if there experience was anything like mine, they will be proud of their final product.