Down the Drain:  
**Digital Storytelling in the Classroom** 
*Teacher Resource*

What is digital storytelling?

Digital storytelling is the practice of using technology to create stories. Digital stories, like their more traditional counterpart, can focus on telling any type of story (personal, narrative, historical), but the tools used to tell the story are what make this practice unique. Digital stories often incorporate the use of several of the following:

1. Images  
2. Video  
3. Graphics  
4. Text  
5. Narration  
6. Music  
7. Sound Effects

There are many great examples of digital stories on the web. It is strongly recommended that teachers show their students several examples so that they have an idea of what is possible and what is expected. The following websites have excellent examples:

2. [http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/social_studies.html](http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/social_studies.html)

Why use/create digital stories?

There are many reasons to use, create, and assign digital stories in your classroom. Digital stories can be used to create interest for a new concept or unit, to enhance current lessons, or as an assignment for your students. Creating digital stories has many benefits:

1. Incorporates 21st century skills into your curriculum.  
2. Appeals to diverse learning styles and creativity of your students.  
3. Generates student interest and motivation.  
4. Allows students to practice skills or organization, planning, research, analysis, synthesis, revision, communication, and questioning.  
5. Provides an opportunity to work with (or create) primary sources.  
6. Utilizes free software.
What equipment (hardware and software) do I need to have my students create a podcast?

Hardware and Software: Students will need access to computers and individual headsets with microphones. These headsets, which generally have USB connections, allow for students to work in groups in the computer lab to record and edit individual podcasts. Photostory, a simple and easy to use program, is available for free at: [http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.mspx](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.mspx)

It is strongly recommended that teachers practice using the software before introducing it to the students.

There are many alternatives to the equipment and program recommended above. Teachers should work with the IT department to utilize equipment that your school already owns or to purchase equipment that has the potential to be useful for other projects. In addition, you may have different options available to you based on the operating systems (Windows or MacOS) that are supported in your school. Your IT staff or librarian will be able to best advise you on how to publish your podcasts on the web.

Additional Notes:

For teachers who don’t have access to the resources or time to create a digital story using Photostory or iPhoto, there are other options that would allow your students to go through a similar process with a different “deliverable” product. The other options include:

1. A traditional essay in which students follow the same pattern as the digital story including an introduction, overview of the water crisis, explanation of his or her personal water use, strategies to reduce water consumption, and a conclusion.

2. A PowerPoint slide show that uses captions rather than an accompanying narrative. This allows students to incorporate some multimedia elements (music, pictures), but relies on more widely used software.

3. A speech in which students follow the same pattern as the digital story including an introduction, overview of the water crisis, explanation of his or her personal water use, strategies to reduce water consumption, and a conclusion.