NYC DoE Language Arts Program

Digital Literacy through Storytelling
English Language Arts

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PEOPLE:

Students:

*A combination of native and non-native speakers, 15-19 years old learners, who attend NYC public high schools (grades 6-12), have an interest in art, design, and/or technology, and aspire to have a career in the arts. The course is gender neutral (*gender is not taken into account for assessing course structure*) and will bring together around 30-35 students of diverse cultural backgrounds and ethnicities.*

 OTHER STAKEHOLDERS:

Collaborators:

- *[NYC Department of Education (DoE),](#) as a partner in funding and managing course, and in developing policies and procedures that can be integrated into the NYC DoE common core standards, using the course as model/pilot test*
- *Parents, who will be both collaborators in supporting students' success and also as students themselves for our students to teach them the skills and competencies that they gain in the course. In doing this, our students are better supported by their families*

Other potential Funders:

- The New School administration *due to their expressed commitment to working towards digital equity within The New School Community and abroad; to provide resources needed to set up a free, open-source, online course (human capital and financial support). Collaboration made possible through The New School for Public Engagement*
- *[Mozilla HIVE](#): an organization that supports young adults in developing digital literacies through pathways for individual success; to provide resources needed to*

develop a sustainable framework based on Connected Learning and practical strategies and resources to work openly on the web (human capital and financial support). The Mozilla HIVE network could adapt this course into after-school programs from various organizations

NATURE OF THE COURSE:

A course integrated into the NYC DoE English Language Arts for grades 6-12, aligned to common core state standards. The class is set as a hybrid course, which will meet in the classroom to introduce basic tools with a follow up of support materials asynchronously.

The course uses the [Connected Learning framework](#) and peer-to-peer learning, to engage students in sharing their stories, motivate them intrinsically, and support them in learning digital tools and skills that empower them in becoming agents of their own learning experiences. Based on a set of prompts that the teacher will provide, students will develop stories from interviews they conduct, written narratives, and other forms of storytelling. These storytelling methods serve as an opportunity to integrate language development implicitly (relevant to both native and non-native populations).

Purpose:

- Develop digital and technology literacy in a global sphere; produce an oral narrative in simple steps and free tech; a process that can be replicated in other spaces and for different purposes
- Get acquainted with open-source technologies that are useful in producing original content, which serves as evidence of learning
- Empower participants to share their personal narratives: their dreams, challenges, motivations; what is their imagined future? What do they need to achieve their goals and aspirations?
- Support young adults and their families by providing exposure and access to open technologies in order to become digitally literate
- Use Connected Learning as framework to build global support systems on the open web; promote a healthier internet through honesty and vulnerability
- Collaborate with organizations invested in social justice practices, education, and digital literacy and equity
- Introduce digital literacy and language development implicitly, using Digital Storytelling as tool for teaching and learning
- Align efforts with the **NYC DoE common core state standards** in order to develop resources and support specific to students' goals and needs
- Use the produced collection of oral narratives as a form of ethnographic research to understand the needs for resources, access, and mentorship outside the classroom
- Assess the effects of first-person digital oral storytelling

Students need to apply to the course by submitting a one-page essay (short biography, personal interests and specific interest in the course), There are no pre-requisites to this course; knowledge of digital environments/tools/skills won't be taken into consideration. The first day week of class will be devoted to a baseline assessment of students' creativity, language skills, and exposure to digital tools and internet platforms.

* institution NYC DoE high school system

TIME ALLOCATION:

This is an academic year-long course (Fall and Spring semesters) with a possible follow-up course during the Fall semester of the next academic year; the class meets for 90 min., twice a week. Students need to allocate 2-3 hours a week (asynchronously) to review support material, ask questions, and provide peer-feedback. All projects will be submitted online and the teacher will provide feedback online, at least 3 times a week (preferably on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays).

Teacher's Role:

- Introduce digital tools using short directives, video tutorials, examples
- Moderate conversations
- Develop support material to help students complete their assignments (based on prompts)
- Provide feedback

There is no language level requirement; the idea is to use a content-based method where storytelling is the main subject and language develops through certain language activities integrated into the curriculum.

If the New School takes on this course as a pre-college after-school program, I imagine that technical support would be provided through Distributed Education/Open Campus program; so, yes, James Acevedo would be part of the support. If it happens through the HIVE, I would have to look into resources available through the HIVE networks.

TEACHING RESOURCES:

In order to manage this course effectively, the DoE needs to:

- provide students with IPads to record and edit narratives

- provide internet connection in the classroom

- setup an educational PathBrite account to set up the online portion of the course and for teachers to share support material, review students submitted projects, and provide feedback consistently and promptly

*In order to teach this course effectively, **the teacher (s) needs to:***

- have consistent access to the internet connection in and outside of the classroom

- setup an open-source app for one-on-one communications to provide student support, e.g. slack app, remind app

- develop support material (PDF instructions/ how-to texts, video tutorials, links to open source platforms and apps)

- Setup a communication app to reach out students outside of the teaching platform (such as [slack](#) or [remind](#)) to send group reminders, announcements, or connect one-on-one.

*In order to take advantage of open source technologies available to develop their stories, **students need to:***

- *have access to the internet connection (at least twice a week for 1 hour)*
- *have access to an iPad and/or smartphone*
- *setup an email account*
- *setup a digital journal/blog on PathBrite to submit projects*

Define resources

- Open-source platform for teaching: content delivery and feedback: Tumblr or custom website
- Open-source **apps** available for students to produce storytelling projects**: [WavePad Audio Editor](#)**, **[VideoShow- Video and Sound Editor](#)**, and **[Adobe Spark Animated Videos](#)**(for iOS and Android) free apps

***No textbook is required*

CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS:

Teacher

- Develop strategies to introduce language practice implicitly; scaffold language activities within a project-based methodology, as stepping stones to achieve digital literacy.
- Managing time, in terms of amount of content to review, and of realistic projects' deadlines
- Keep track of students' submissions and gained skills/competencies, as the course is set up as a self-paced program

Students

- Assess students' access to internet connection, smartphones/iPads, and digital tools
- Define methods to assess students' exposure to digital environments, digital skills, and competencies, starting with a baseline assessment and continue throughout the duration of the course
- Assessing students' language level (the 4 skills, grammar, pronunciation) at the beginning of the course—and differentiating appropriate materials for individual needs—is of great importance since students are native and non-native speakers

Goals and Outcomes

- **Define goals and outcomes in-line with NYC DoE Common Core State Standards**

Teaching pre-planning and flexibility

- Develop strategies to introduce language practice implicitly; scaffold language activities within a project-based methodology, as stepping stones to achieve digital literacy
- Define effective ways to deliver content, e.g. video tutorials, PDF instructions, readings, that are easy to follow, clear, and engaging
- Device a "syllabus grid" as a matrix of potential material that could serve this population; this matrix of possibilities could enable the teacher to adjust the course content based on students' assessment
- Managing time, in terms of amount of content to review, and of realistic projects' deadlines
- Keep track of students' submissions and gained skills/competencies, as the course is set up as a self-paced program

ASSESSMENT METHODS:
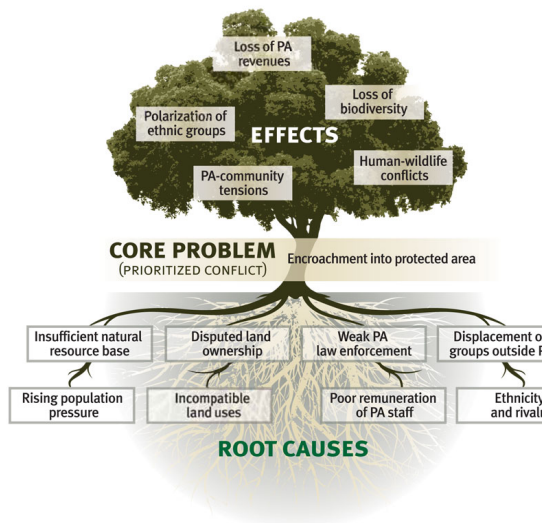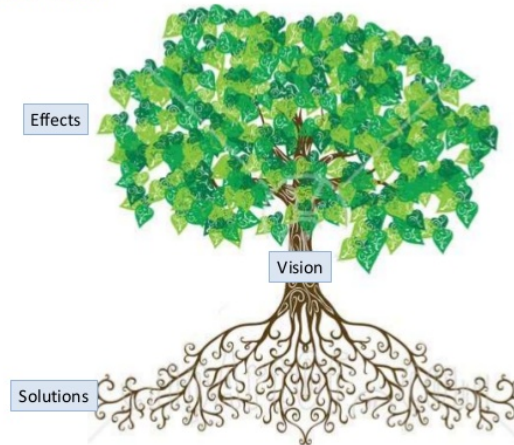
Students' learning

Teachers use a "problem tree" and a "solution tree" as assessment tools—baseline, mid-final course—of both subjective (cognitive) and objective (facts) needs. These "trees" data-mining exercises usually implemented in participatory design as an analysis and planning tool.
The **"problem tree"** would help assess needs and challenges while the **"solution tree,"** serves as a process to define the types of resources and support that need to be developed and provided.

Assessing course/teaching effectiveness:

Explore **Theory of Change(ToC)** (here some examples) and **Action Research** as possible methodologies to conduct a formative assessment.

- Define methods to collect hard data, such as Qualtrics surveys, or other tools used by the NYC DoE. *Qualtrics is a platform that use to conduct my research; it's a higher version of Survey Monkey.

- Map-out students' needs and provided resources at the beginning and end of course

ARTICULATING BELIEFS

Values and Beliefs in a Design Studio Classroom

Teaching and Learning: Roles

1. **The role of the teacher in the classroom is that of an advisor and facilitator**

*A teacher needs to stimulate students in a way that empowers students in having ownership of their learning experience while the teacher guides them through a process of discovery. In setting my role as facilitator of constructive dialogue, and as advisor of students' project development, I seek to **remove power dynamics** that could have a negative effect on my students; if seeing as an authority—"the professor"—many students feel intimidated, become agreeable, and sometimes believe that the teacher is the sole holder of knowledge. It is important for me to become part of the group and empower students to own their learning and understand their role as producers of new knowledge, explore their dreams, and face their challenges.*

In removing these power relations, I explicitly explain students my role as an advisor and facilitator in the classroom and their role as designers, producers, and owners of their work. I continue building this dynamic by giving students parameters with enough room for them to explore their personal interests and make their own decisions while I guide them through the process of research, conceptualization, ideation, and building new skills.

2. **Students need to be active agents of their own learning experience**

*As the role of the teacher should be to support students, students' role is that of **knowledge producers**. When students feel empowered, they become active learners, opened to discover and produce new knowledge rather than being passive receivers of existing knowledge from books and teachers. Producing authentic material to motivate students intrinsically supports this process of discovery—of language rules, patterns, practical usage—and helps students build a "producer" self-image. In my own practice, authentic texts have been at the core of instruction because it serves as both evidence and assessment of students' competencies and build capacities.*

Students are motivated intrinsically, which supports this process of discovery—of language rules, patterns, practical usage—and helps students build a "producer" self-image. In my own practice, authentic texts have been at the core of instruction because it serves as both evidence and assessment of students' competencies and build capacities.

3. **Long-term learning is achieved through discovery, critical/analytical thinking, and making**

*It is important that students are producers of new knowledge in reflective ways; by discovering new knowledge, critically analyze what was found, and using the knowledge to produce something authentic, students are motivated intrinsically and become self-driven. As William Littlewood's (200: 34) discussed in his study of East Asian and European (3 countries) students, students wanted to "explore knowledge themselves and find their own answers" (as cited by Beaumont and Chang, 2011, p. 295). Learning through Discovery (Harmer, 2007, p.207) is empowering, and sparks students' curiosity engaging them in meaningful ways. In order to motivate students intrinsically, in what Zoltan Dornyei defines as "possible selves" (Dornyei, 2014: 518); students' productions come from themselves to be shared out in the world, and these productions become the vehicle by which students **find their voice**, as individuals, and as a group when they produce authentic material. My aim is to **foster inquisitive minds, and a culture of exploration and constant inquiry.** In my courses, students immerse themselves in real-life explorations to figure out both their design tasks and language productions; in these courses, methodology (task-based) and context are very closely related.*

Learners Needs/Challenges and Learning Experiences: Inclusion and Equity

4. **Course design needs to be grounded on students' needs and challenges**

*In every class, students are different; they come with an array of skills, and of gaps that need to be filled. **Nurturing inclusion and equity** in classroom spaces promotes safe and brave spaces where students can build confidence, and find they voice while enhancing their skills and competencies. The support that a teacher provides needs to be individualized; equity is not about providing all learners with the same support but being able to cater to individual needs. Students learn in different ways—based on their temperament, personality, and belief systems—and acknowledging these differences also allows me to be opened to my students' **cognitive learning styles** and helps me cater to my students' individual needs rather than adopting a teaching approach based on course content.*

*Multi-modal and VAKOG (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory)** offers a framework to cater to a variety of **cognitive learning styles.** Experiential learning is one of the most fertile spaces in which we become life-long learners; acknowledging cognitive styles as relevant to learning is important in developing multi-modal and paced lessons (Thornbury, p.24). In order to engage students cognitive learning styles (Harmer, 2003, p.291; Celce-Murcia, 2014, p. 536) multi-modal lessons need to be integrated into classroom activities and, as Lev Vygotsky stated in his Theory Social Development (1978), cognitive development needs social interaction. Using **neuro-linguists** as premise—and the work of Vygotsky in combination with Brown's theory of play (2009) and Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligences (2001; as cited by Harmer, 2007, p.90)—teaching students through every-day experiences, and role play taps into their cognitive and affective depth (Thornbury, p.25-26) and enables learning to become long-lasting.*

Also, positive emotions and arousal through play (guided and free play) have shown to be an effective way to engage students. Stewart Brown's theory of play (2009) explains the importance of play as a way to practice all human skills/capacities; to engage students in various forms of play—like role play and performance—in order to elicit positive emotions, and lower affective filters; this is especially important when preparing students for stage presence, public speaking, oral presentations. In my classes, I integrate forms of play as a way to build rapport and bridge gaps between design theory and practice.

Subject Matter/Context

5. **Incidental language teaching/implicit learning is effective in courses where the subject matter is not language teaching, i.e. ESP in a project-based curriculum**

*Teaching ESP in the context of art and design fields, a project-based methodology guides students to enhance language skills implicitly, by completing activities that build a larger design project. When language is taught implicitly—in the context of studio courses—students embrace language as a stepping stone towards completing projects, and it removes the stress and pressures of high performance in a foreign language. Being less aware of language learning, and concentrating more on the creative process, students perceive language as a medium by which to be able to share ideas, receive and provide feedback, and present their work. Live-long learning activates through experience; when students become immersed in the course content, the learning experience is imprinted in the long-term memory. **Implicit teaching and learning** promote experiential learning by engaging the unconscious, unfiltered, mind; combined with **kinetic learning (body movement)** and the **act of making** learning become part of our reptilian brain, and are automatized after devoting time to practice.*

*Students immerse themselves in real-life explorations to figure out both their design tasks and language productions; here methodology (task-based) and context meet in a "happy symbiosis" (Harmer, 2003, p. 292). In order to motivate students intrinsically, in what Zoltan Dornyei defines as "possible selves" (Dornyei, 2014: 518); students' productions come from themselves to be shared out in the world, and these productions become the vehicle by which students **find their voice**, as individuals, and as a group. **Using top-down/inductive strategies** elicit incidental language learning through cognitive depth, world knowledge and inquisitive minds, (Griffiths, 2011; Harmer, 2007, p. 270); Celce-Murcia, 2014, p.94), these strategies help carry the in-class work to the everyday lives of the students and help contextualize what is being learned.*

*Moreover, the idea of task-based learning leading to **automation** (Johnson, 2002, p. 190) through practice is an idea reflected in neuroscientific research of the reptilian brain, of how we learn tasks by doing, and with time, it is imprinted in the long-term memory (McLean, 1970, as cited by Carter, 2009). What I do not agree with Johnson is the idea of 'practicing' as a mechanic activity that could be compared to drilling exercises; practicing could take many forms; it is the quality of the experience, affective and cognitive depth (Thornbury, 2002 p. 25-*

26), engagement, intrinsic motivation, what makes it meaningful and imprinted. Kinetic learning is also part of this experience—of learning by moving—and processing information through procedural memory, the "how-to" memory (The Human Memory, 2016).

Conceptualizing Content

I used EQUITY as my central concept, in aiming to gain digital social, language, and educational equity within this course. Each of these dimensions become a stage in the process of producing video narratives while the 4 language skills are integrated throughout the process. Starting with the SOCIAL, I will introduce students to visual chronologies as a tool to create various forms of personal narratives, first as non-verbal exercises that will be the guide for writing different types of narratives using a series of prompts (one prompt provided by the teacher as an example and others build by students as a group). In the LANGUAGE stage, students work with molding their written narratives to use as a script for interviewing (first themselves and then others). EDUCATION: students document all drafts/refined pieces (written and recorded) in a digital journal to start exposing students to digital tools and self-reflective practices in virtual spaces, in this case, a digital journal as evidence of growth and learnt skills. Once students define their final script, they start working with DIGITAL open source apps to edit video and sound clips to produce the final narratives.

This section would be defined in conversations with the professor teaching the course
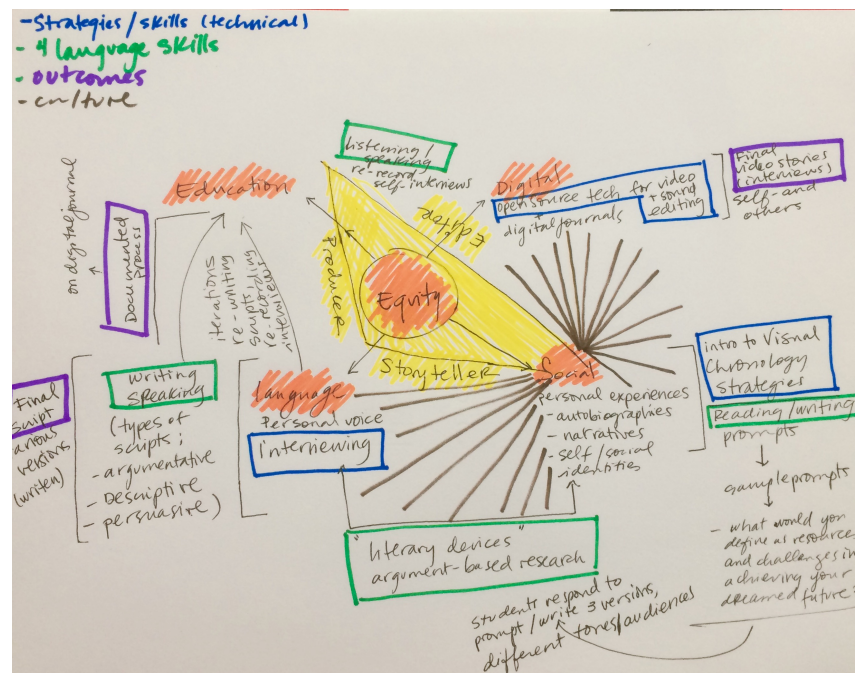
OVERARCHING COURSE GOAL

To be able to work openly on the web in order to provide a platform that nurtures collaboration and equity in education and digital literacy for students to become digitally literate and learn how to act responsibly in virtual environments

GOALS

Cognitive: process language implicitly
(Knowledge/comprehension)
Students will apply language knowledge learned in class by using it as content for authentic productions (video essays, research presentations, and other forms of storytelling)

Proficiency: become producers of content
(Application/analysis)
Students will be able to produce video essays, research presentations, and other forms of storytelling, using open-source technologies independently. as tools to produce

Affective: intrinsically-motivated individuals
(Analysis/synthesis)
Students will construct stories—of self and their communities—in order to develop and strengthen their personal voice

Transfer: adapt gained skills to other learning spaces
(Synthesis/evaluation)
Students will be able to analyze written stories using storytelling techniques

COGNITIVE GOAL (storytellers)

Students will apply language knowledge learned in class by using it as content for authentic productions (video essays, research presentations, and other forms of storytelling)

DoE standards: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Reading
Grades 6-12
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Literature

Grades 9-10: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).

Grades 11-12: Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

Objectives
Students will be able to:

1. Define sets of questionnaires for different types of interviewing (self and communities)

2. Evaluate various written genres in order to use as models for writing scripts based on interviewing results
3. Plan and record—and re-recording—a set of 4 self and others' interviews

PROFICIENCY GOAL (editors)
Students will be able to produce video essays, research presentations, and other forms of storytelling, using open-source technologies independently. as tools to produce

DoE standards: Writing
Grades 6-12:

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

a. *Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.*
b. *Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.*
c. *Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.*
d. *Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.*
e. *Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.*
f. *Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).*

DoE standards: Informational Text
Grades 6-12:

Key Ideas and Details
Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

Craft and Structure
Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
1. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
2. Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).

Objectives
Students will be able to:

1. Listening and transcribing interviews in order to select the content for video production
2. Write a script based on the content selection
3. Edit stories based on written script, implementing the Dramatic Arc (storytelling structure)

4. Record sound and video clips and piece them together using open-source technologies

AFFECTIVE GOAL (producers)
Students will construct stories—of self and their communities—in order to develop and strengthen their personal voice

DoE standards: Speaking and Listening
Grade 6-12*:*

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
1. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
2. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Objectives
Students will be able to:

1. Explain specific strategies used to make editing choices
2. Formulate editing approaches to take advantage of open-source digital media
3. Assemble stories objectively, based on preliminary research (subjects' background) and interview results
4. Analyze the relevance of collected stories in social contexts, and in their own lives

TRANSFER GOAL (producers)
Students will be able to analyze written stories using storytelling techniques

DoE standards:
Grade 6-12*:*

Production and Distribution of Writing
1. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

2. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

Craft and Structure
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

Objectives
Students will be able to:

1. Evaluate interviews' language use (of transcripts, script, and final video productions) by noting idioms, collocations, phrasal verbs, and other features, that are directly connected to semantic and pragmatic meaning, intonation, tone, and voice
2. Expand preliminary research (background information), as needed, in order to improve final productions

Self-reflect—and self-assess—their creative process, new learned digital tools, and developed language skills

Assessable tasks:

DoE standards: Range of Writing

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Digital Journal (logs):
- **Reading log**
- **Dictionary Log**
- **Process log**

Projects:
  Video stories of self and others (based on written stories)
  Written stories (based on interviewing questionnaires)
  Book publication of stories, illustrated by student

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Key:

Bloom's Taxonomy

Storytellers
Editors
Producers