

-The press release mentioned Digital Philosophy of Education Narratives. What is that exactly?

These projects *are* movies that English education majors create to represent their educational philosophy through text, audio narration, music, images, and theme. The idea has many parents—Dr. Will Banks' work with inspirational teachers' stories through the *National Writing Project*, *The Center for Digital Stories'* emphasis on the expression of personal voice, and *The George Lucas Educational Foundation's* commitment to documenting how multimedia fuels learning. The "aha" moment came during open house at my daughters' middle school. Too many knowledgeable instructors were unable to articulate their teaching beliefs or anything about themselves.

I kept thinking during the orientation, wouldn't it be great if teachers showed a video that left us inspired and challenged? Imagine the tone that could be established. Imagine how much parents could support schools if they understood student-centered instruction.

At East Carolina University, we want teachers to advocate for progressive instruction; otherwise the expertise vacuum is filled by textbook company lobbyists.

Developing a coherent philosophy of education essay, a task required of almost every education major in the country, results in too many "I touch the future" papers. Most philosophies read like they were marinated in Splenda. No wonder, though. It's a challenge for the education student to wade through multiple theories and distill all the important experiences they have ever had into a few core beliefs about their role in advancing education. Try doing that without using platitudes!

When we change the philosophy assignment format from essay to digital narrative, students become more obsessed with representing themselves successfully using state-of-the-art technologies. They don't even notice that the conceptualization task is harder than mastering the technology.

After two weeks of laboring over the project, the philosophy of education becomes far more relevant than producing three pages of warmed-over Dewey. One creative student, Katrice Brown, after struggling for days, developed a new approach. She researched favorite poems to give her narrative the emotional truth she was after. Adam Skiadas tracked down a media company in Europe to secure permission to use just the right music soundtrack.

Why do you think it was important to initiate the project?

Most education majors in the country are required to develop a philosophy of education essay. By using Camtasia Studio 3.0, the reflective project becomes

more than a laundry list of clichés. Moreover, strategies for writing become more tangible for students. Also, I thought it was important to create a project that had genuine utility for setting expectations in public school classrooms.

-How is this program different than PowerPoint? Do you think it will eventually replace it?

I think that students are uncomfortable with the idea that life fits into their chosen discipline's tidy categories— those taxonomies depicted in PowerPoint software's bulleted hierarchies. *Camtasia 3.0* movies represent the type of narrative meaning-making that students pragmatically construct when they interact with the world, a philosophy that Jerome Bruner calls "narrative knowing."

The transition from slide-based to narrative-based instruction might take awhile to manifest. But Camtasia 3.0 makes it very simple for instructors that want to replace memorization strategies with teaching for understanding.

-The press release also said the Narratives will be shown at ECU's "Sundance" film festival. Do you know when that is?

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction will announce a "Mini-ECU Sundance Festival" screening of the student projects during finals week. Anyone is invited.

-What is the Digital Storytelling Movement? Are other schools using this new technology in Education graduate programs?

From www.cultureisaweapon.org: "This traditional approach has sharply contrasted with the rise of the community digital storytelling movement, a grassroots media phenomenon in which communities are creating their own short, three- to five- minute digital stories from the found material in their lives (digital video, photographs, letters, news clippings, etc). The principles of community digital storytelling movement draws from a diverse body of work including: third cinema, popular education, creative writing, oral history, filmmaking, and digital media manipulation. The basis of TWM's community digital storytelling curriculum came from work that was developed at the Berkeley based [Center for Digital Storytelling](http://www.storycenter.org)."

Most of the promising research in this movement that involves teachers has been orchestrated by the National Writing Project. Here are two helpful links:

- <http://www.writingproject.org/Programs/rsn/examplegrant.html>
- <http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html>

-Is the new program easier to use/faster/more efficient?

If you want to make a movie using a collection of diverse pieces of media, this software is very accommodating. Camtasia 3.0's interface is about as simple to master as PowerPoint, and it saves files in multiple compressed formats, depending on whether or not you want to save the product to a CD, the WWW, or handheld device.

-Is this meant to be used in public school classrooms for students?

The *Department of Curriculum and Instruction* and TechSmith are supporting a case study of how Camtasia impacts English education majors. The software is gaining ground in high schools, particularly in the sciences where teachers create online modules that demonstrate scientific processes. I believe an equivalent opportunity exists to illustrate the more abstract concepts and strategies of language arts. When students do this for themselves, all the better.