Project Title:
Assessing the Impact of Digital Storytelling in the Public Speaking Classroom

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Abstract (200 words maximum):
Students in the Fundamentals of Speech course often have trouble being motivated to communicate. Motivation is one of the three requirements, along with knowledge and skill, which the National Communication Association claims makes a competent communicator. The relationship between communication anxiety and willingness to communicate comprises the concept of motivation for speakers. In this study we conduct a series of digital storytelling workshops on campus with participants who are currently enrolled in the Fundamentals of Speech course. It is our hypothesis that by using digital storytelling as a public speaking tool, we will provide students with the knowledge and skill to organize and present coherent messages. Using digital storytelling as part of the introductory assignment will allow students to later extend its principles to more traditional public speaking assignments. We believe that using digital storytelling will increase their motivation because they already willingly engage in the use of social media to tell their stories and their anxiety about doing so is significantly less than their anxiety related to speaking in front of a group. By seeing that they can create and communicate effective messages, they will be more motivated and able to do so in a variety of formats.