

“Accept Difference, the Approach to Understand Autism.”

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1. Describe in several detailed paragraphs the context of your digital story: whose story is it, and why tell it?

- **What is the story:**

It is about Students and kids who are suffering from autism. In the opening part of the story, we give an example of a true story of an individual who went through autism. This person wants to bring people's attention to autistic kids and adults from an inclusive perspective. Autistic disorders are very good at hiding, and early symptoms are not easy to be realized both by teachers and parents; we have to pay attention to it at the early stage of autism which includes observing students' behaviour and reaction. In the body part, we discuss solutions and pedagogical theories that could help teachers and students overcome this problem together. The story will also list some institutes that are already in the field of studying autism. Finally, the story will end with positive examples, and the bright future shall give people hope and motivation.

- **Why do we choose the story:**

In the traditional classroom, teachers are not specialized in helping autistic kids or detecting autism at different levels. How can we ensure the students who have autism are engaging in the learning environment as well? Do teachers need assistants, and shall the assistants be qualified in teaching? If the problem is the budget, what can we do? The story helps teachers and parents be aware of early autism signs to enrich a better way to lead with autistic children. As soon it is detected, parents, teachers and classmates can provide a better learning and relationship environment and improve their life quality.

Also, educators could use this story in multidisciplinary projects with young students in the classroom, especially in Social Studies, Biology, Arts and Languages. It also helps students understand and respect autistic students. It improves students' engagement in supporting the autistic group to communicate and interact well with each other. This process of inserting thoughtful ideas about autistic people decreases bullying and other social issues around them.

2. What element(s) of the digital story address your students' learning styles and academic needs?

- **For learning styles:** The digital story and vivid visions and audio often catch students' attention with a rich purpose. They will be motivated to dig deep into the problem that the story brings to them. It also improves the sense of emotion, helping engage in the content proposed.
- **For academic needs:** Digital stories often combine different examples together, and those resources are from real-life experience and credible resources. For some digital stories, they provide research instructions to faculties and students in school. A well-referenced digital story is very persuasive on both social and academic levels, and this approach enables differentiated learning. Some students are more audiovisual learners. Others who have writing issues such as dyslexia can use this methodology to showcase their literacy by oral and visual version. This tool integrates students into the digital world, allows them to connect and share their ideas globally, and collaborate to their digital citizen future.

3. Why do we implement digital storytelling into the learning environment? Why is it a better instructional medium to share compared to traditional means?

- Digital storytelling is trending in the 21st century, especially in the digital learning environment. A digital story involves different media platforms to build a complete version and help us deliver our message to the local community, even the world. A good story goes along with vivid visions and audio that catches students' attention. Based on the facts above, digital storytelling is more interactive and engaging than traditional content. By implementing such a project to the learning environment, students will be motivated to dig deep into the story's problem. In addition, according to the International Society for Technology in Education, digital storytelling is a powerful tool to empower students' learning. In this instructional medium, they can seek feedback that informs and improves their practice and demonstrates their learning in various ways. It also includes them in the Digital Citizen, engaging them in positive, safe, legal and ethical behaviour through the digital world, including social interactions online or when using networked devices. It also makes them construct their knowledge by critically thinking of the story contents, curating various resources using digital tools, and producing creative media. It brings students the opportunity to be innovative designers using many technological media to create their media projects (International Society for Technology in Education [ISTE], 2021). Finally, through digital storytelling, students gain more opportunities to create, communicate and collaborate globally, better than in traditional instructional tools.

4. How does the use of digital storytelling address learning standards, in particular those that relate to critical thinking?

- Digital storytelling promotes a better understanding of the subject, in this case, autism, as it uses multimedia. Using audio, images, sound effects, or background music helps teachers and students achieve the learning goals in multiple ways. The ISTE Standards give educators detailed information about how digital stories can empower professional teaching and learning. Teachers continually improve their practical skills by learning from and with others. By using multimedia, storytelling is a way to facilitate connecting people globally. On the other hand, digital storytelling helps educators cultivate students as facilitators. Educators transfer knowledge in the form of a story to challenge students' thinking patterns and eventually lead them to inquiry learning and problem-solving. Meanwhile, educators inspire students to be contributive and responsible participants in the digital world.

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