Title: **Digital storytelling: Hearing the student voice**

Presenter: **Richard Beggs, Caitlin O'Dowd, Tony McGovern and Christopher Mitchell**
Ulster University

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- consider the benefits of using digital storytelling to create a sense of belonging;
- consider giving students a platform to share their stories and build their digital capabilities;
- know what skills can be enhanced through storytelling, such as: presentation, sourcing images using Creative Commons, storyboarding, script writing, digital creation, critical evaluation, reflection.

Session Outline

Holding on to students during their transition from secondary to tertiary education can be a challenge for any HE institution and we have the 'What works' project findings and report (Thomas 2017) to help us with an institutional approach. Often, we are focused on the metrics of students who have left our institutions, trying to work out what went wrong and learn from what didn't work, which is an invaluable exercise. However, we have an extensive number of success stories, students who had difficulties and doubts, but through resilience and hard work have overcome their barriers to succeed. These stories would be an invaluable resource to share with our new students, so that they know that they are not alone, others had similar struggles and overcame these to progress, but how can we capture this student voice? Digital stories (Thomson 2014) are an authentic and accessible way to capture stories, but they take time and effort to produce. At Ulster University we invest time and resource in inducting new staff. As part of the induction plan for our two placement students within the Centre for Higher Education, Research and Practice (CHERP) we organised to have two block days for a Digital Storytelling workshop in their first week in September 2018 where they had to tell a 2-minute story on their transition to HE. Another two students were starting their industrial placement year in a different department, Access, Digital and Distributed Learning within Ulster University on the same day, so the workshop was opened up for them to attend, as well as some past students and Ulster staff and guests. This session will outline the reflective process involved in the digital storytelling workshop, the transferable skills they acquired, and the students will share their digital stories with attendees.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- Welcome activity, in pairs tell a brief story about an object you have with you (5 mins)
- Introduction and rational (2.5 mins)
- Digital storytelling workshop overview (2.5 Mins)
- Digital story showcase (15 mins) (Audio and video required)
    - Caitlin's Story
    - Tony's story
    - Michael's story
    - Christopher's story
- Questions on student stories (10 Minutes)
    - Indicative questions:
        - What did you learn from the digital storytelling process?
        - What skills did the process give you?
        - Where will the digital stories be shared?
        - What technology did you use to create your stories?
- Discussion and reflection in groups (10 mins) and using Mentimeter.com to feedback digitally
    - What stories could you tell?
    - Could students be involved?
    - How prepared do you feel you are to create a digital story?
    - How prepared do you feel your students are to create a digital story?
    - Are you willing to give your students the time and resource to produce a digital story?
    - How do you gain the skills you and your students need?
    - What is your key take away?
    - What would you like to know more about?

References

Thomas, L., Hill, M., O'Mahony, J. and Yorke, M. (2017) Supporting student success: strategies for institutional change: What Works? Student Retention and Success programme [Internet]. Available from: https://www.phf.org.uk/publications/works-student-retention-success-full/

Thomson, C. (2016) Telling better digital stories. Jisc [Internet]. Available from: https://www.jisc.ac.uk/blog/telling-better-digital-stories-20-jun-2014