Take Six: Elements for Storytelling

1. **Living Inside Your Story** The perspective of each story is told in first person using your own storytelling voice to narrate the tale much like the storytellers of old! Through the story you share who you are, what you felt, and what this event or situation means for you in such a personal way that it acts as a "conduit" for viewers to engage in their own very real and EMOTIONAL JOURNEY. Rather than a detached telling ABOUT this happening and that happening [called bed-to-bed stories], viewers experience an emotional connection with this story. Digital storytelling is shared through the *heart* NOT the head.

2. **Unfolding Lessons Learned** One of the most unique features of this specific digital storytelling style is the expectation that each story express a ***personal meaning or insight*** about how a particular event or situation touches you, your community or humanity. A good story has a POINT to make, a moral conclusion, a lesson learned or an understanding or wisdom gained. The author develops a personal connection to the story facts by answering "so what!" The lesson learned for *I-imagine* stories is the student's older self giving advice to their younger self – from a place of knowing that they had arrived in their best future. The lesson learned of any good storytelling is the "spine" that holds the entire story together!

3. **Developing Creative Tension** A good storytelling holds attention using a **Story ARC to develop** intrigue or tension around a situation that is posed at the beginning of the story and resolved at the end sometimes with an unexpected twist as long as a few clues are tucked into the storyline. A compelling *hook* is created to intentionally draw the viewer into wondering: How it will unfold and how will it all end? What does the title mean? Who is that little girl? Will happen to the fish? What does the young girl discover when she leaves home? Does Amber ever have friends? What is the meaning of having a life without a father? The ***tension*** of an unresolved or curious situation engages and holds the viewer until reaching a memorable end. ***Pacing*** is an invisible part of sustaining story tension as we know so well from the era of Hitchcock films. Pacing unfolds what will happen next and wondering how IT [the dramatic question] will be resolved.

4. **Economizing the Story Told** A good story has a destination – a point to make –and ***seeks the shortest path*** to its destination. Each digital story is 3-5 minute based on a written script that is no more than one (1) page or five hundred (500) words. The art of shortening a story lies in ***preserving the essence*** of the tale—using the fewest words along with images and sound to make your point. By holding clarity about the essence of the story, the additional narrative that would normally be part of storytelling can be pared down.

5. **Showing Not Telling** Good stories use ***vivid details*** to reveal feelings and information rather than just saying something was tall, happy, scary, or difficult to do. It was a dark and stormy night does not have to be said in the script. Unlike traditional oral or written stories, images, sound and music can be used to show a part of the context, create setting, give story information and provide emotional meaning not provided by words. Both words and media need to ***reveal*** through details rather than be named or simply stated.

6. **Developing Craftsmanship** Any media product incorporates technology in artful ways demonstrating ***craftsmanship*** in communicating with images, sound, voice, color, white space, animations, design, transitions, and special effects. All media elements are selected to ***illuminate*** the meaning of the tale rather being bells and whistles that become distracting, overused, misused or simply used to illustrate what is being presented. Good craftsmanship creatively combines media elements to convey ***significant meaning*** rather than being used as "decoration" the story. Ask if your media resources are decorating, illustrating or illuminating?