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Teachers' Stories Come to Life with Technology

Six teachers from the Rural Voices Country Schools network came to Berkeley this summer for an intensive, one-week digital storytelling workshop, where they produced multimedia presentations of the teacher research they've been conducting for the past four years. This pilot program, funded by a seed grant from the Spencer Foundation, was jointly offered by the Center for Digital Storytelling at UC Berkeley and the National Writing Project as a means of empowering teachers to promote their research to a broad audience.

Participants had just five days to learn to use new tools, cull from their research materials, and produce a complete, three- to five-minute story burned onto a CD-ROM, suitable for presentation on personal computers and the Web. The finished products tell stories of teacher research in a

powerful format that blends teacher and student voices with rich contextual snapshots of classrooms and communities.

The next step in the digital storytelling pilot project is to share and discuss the digital stories with other classroom teachers, TCs, academics, and community members. Workshop participants are scheduled to present at the NWP Annual Meeting in November. They plan to facilitate a workshop at the Penn Ethnography Forum in March and at the AERA Conference in Seattle in April. Storytellers will be seeking feedback about how the medium enhances an understanding of classroom practice and will examine how the format might be used for professional development.

See related articles on pages 10 and 11.