# Promoting mental health and well-being of Nak'azdli Elders using intergenerational digital storytelling:
## *Findings from the Nak'azdli Lha'hutit'en project*

**Jenny Martin**, Health Director, Nak'azdli Health Centre
**Dr. Shannon Freeman**, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, UNBC
**Carrie Nash**, Administrative Assistant, Nak'azdli Health Centre
Simone Hausknecht, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, SFU
Nicole Schafenacker, MSc Candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies, UNBC
Dr. Kelly Skinner, Assistant Professor, University of Waterloo
David Kaufman, Professor, SFU

- Acknowledge traditional territory
- Acknowledge grant funders

# Nak'azdli Whut'en Mission Statement

*"Nak'azdli Whut'en is a holistic community that believes in maintaining and enhancing traditional values by learning living and teaching our culture and heritage.*

*Nak'azdli is vibrant and self-determined, a community made up of diverse individuals and businesses working together to promote education, health, and economic progress.*

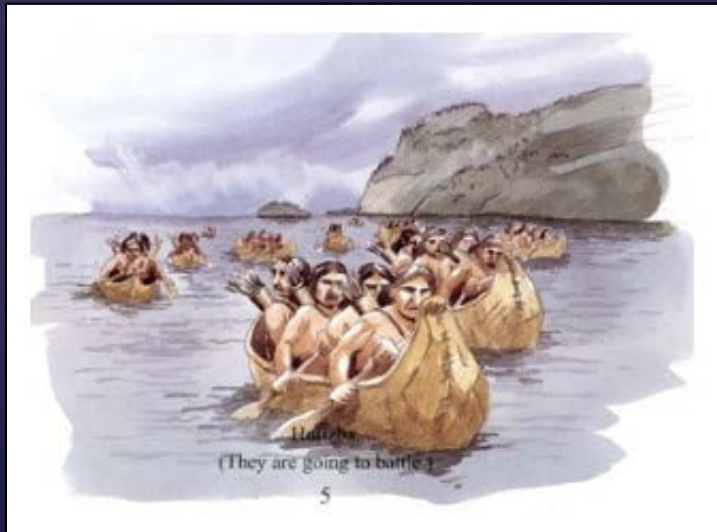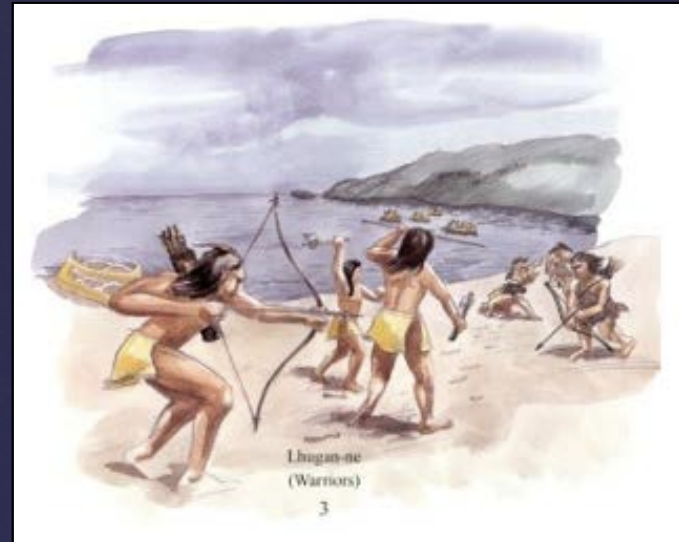*We challenge the future"*

# The Nak'azdli Whut'en:  Location
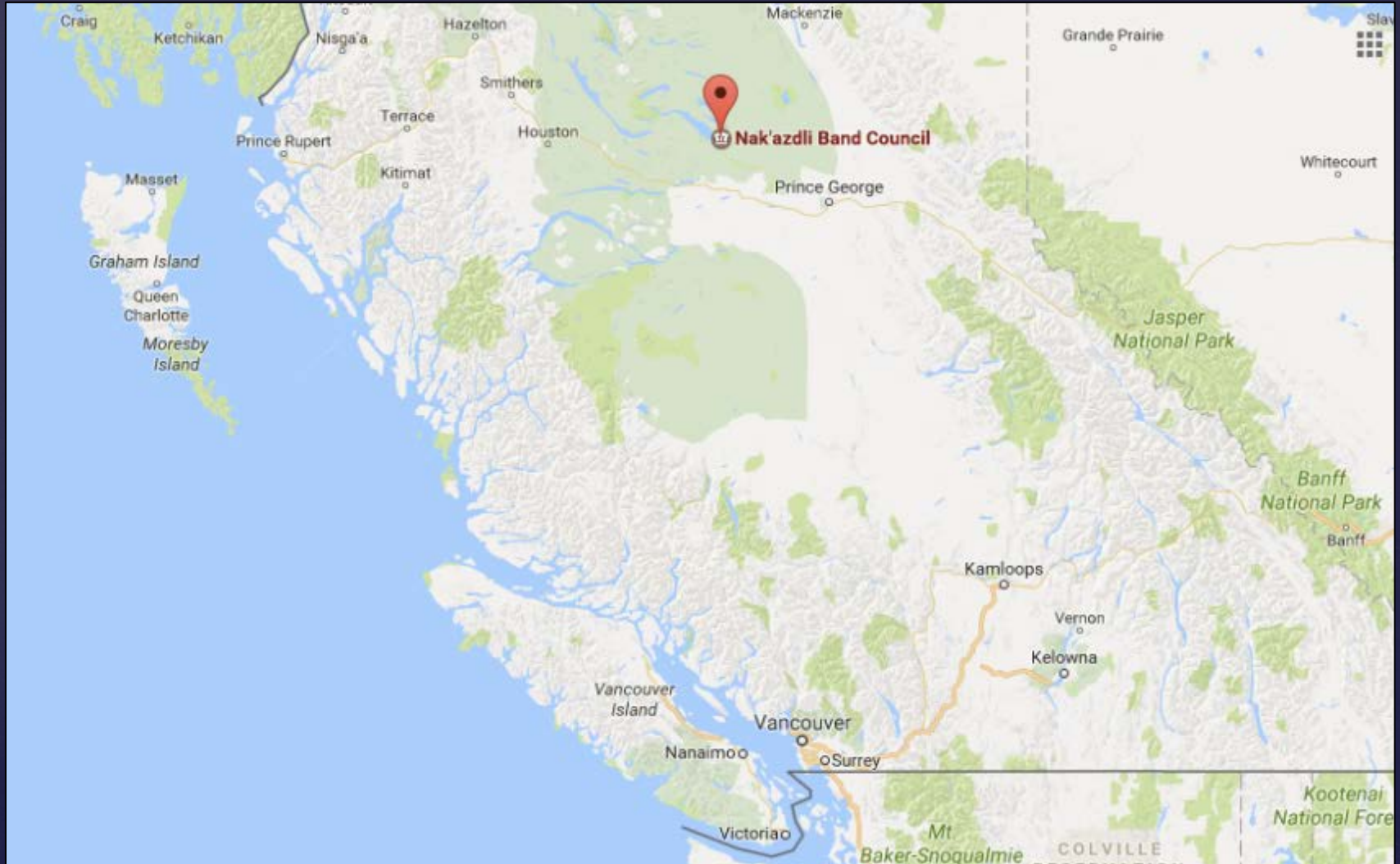
# Story of the Little Dwarves and the Creation of Nak'azdli
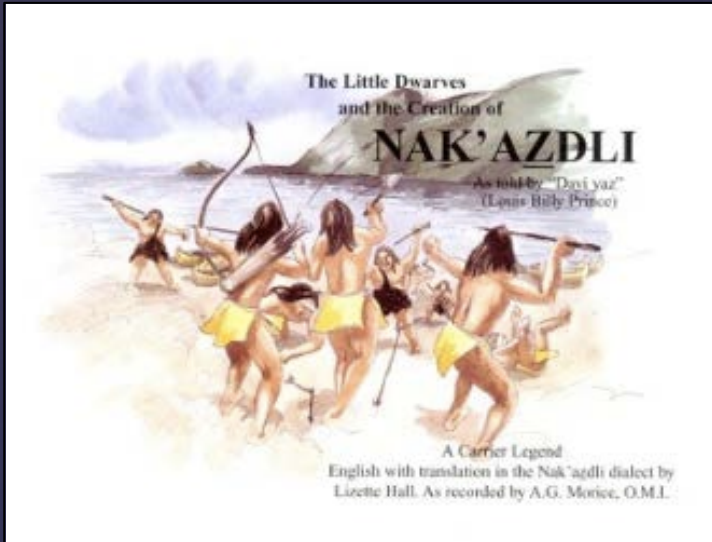
# The Nak'azdli Whut'en: Potlach System

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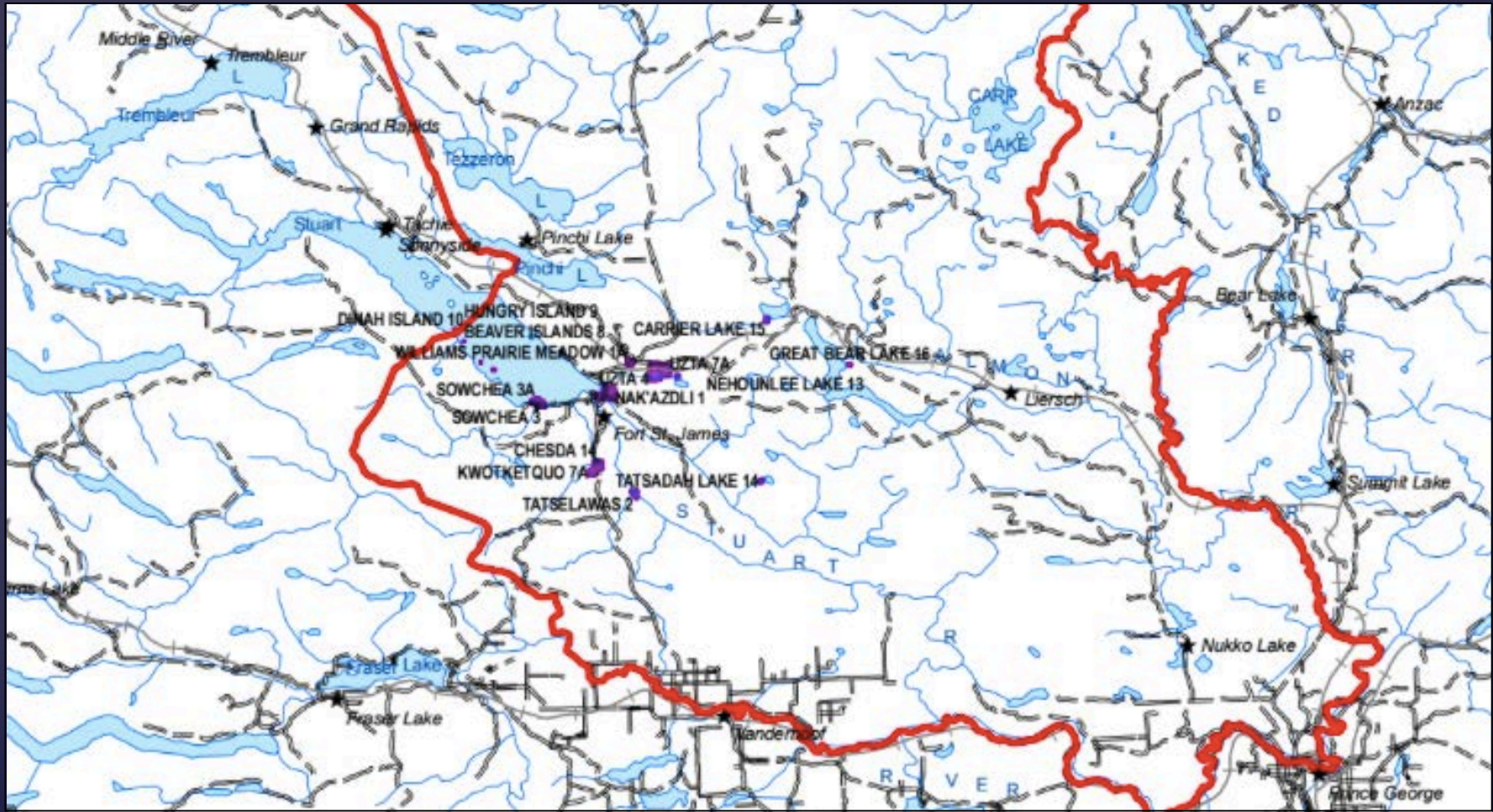
# The Nak'azdli Community

# The Nak'azdli Health Centre

# Elder Mental Health and Wellbeing Programs

- *The Nak'azdli Health Centre Offers a wide range of programming to Elders in the Nak'azdli Community*

# Respect and Honour for Elders

*An Elder:*

- Recognized by the community to hold extensive cultural and historical knowledge

- Holds varied knowledge that they share with community ex. medicine, clan system, potlatch

- Not defined by age







Mary and Violet Show Gracie Sam and Jean Sagalon How to Make Devil's Club Medicine at the Elder's Society

# Teachings From Nak'azdli Elders

# Elder Mental Health and Wellbeing

# The Nak'azdli Whut'en recognize the need to preserve culture, language, and foster community relationships

# Lha'hutit'en:
## "We work together, we help one another"

Project arose from need to:

- Preserve Nak'azdli culture, history, and traditions
- Build intergenerational relationships
- Engage elders in meaningful ways

**Project aims to capture traditional stories**

SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN / PRINCE GEORGE CITIZEN
OCTOBER 8, 2016 06:52 AM

Nakazdli elder Florence Sam talking with students at Nakalbun Elementary School.

As a teenager Jenny Martin spent hours transcribing the words Nak'azdli elders spoke into old tapes, picking out bits of tradition in pieces of their past as she archived memories.

# Background to Story

- Story has been a form of knowledge sharing and expression of ideas and thoughts throughout much of history.
- These stories can be shared, leaving legacies and understanding of humanity.
- Life can be seen as made up of small stories, that lead to larger ones, and to the whole.

# Digital Storytelling in Research

- Medical/nursing (e.g. Christiansen, 2011; Stenhouse et al., 2013)
- Social justice  (e.g. Militello and Guajardo, 2013)
- Education (Digital literacies) (e.g. Robin, 2008).
- Other (limited work with older adults, intergenerational). With older adults found to create a form of legacy, social interactions across space and time, increased digital skills, and reflection upon life. (Hausknecht, Kaufman, Vanchu-orosco, 2016, 2017)

# Digital Storytelling is:

- "modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling. Digital stories derive their power by weaving images, music, narrative and voice together, thereby giving deep dimension and vivid color to characters, situations, experiences, and insights."  Leslie Rule

# Digital Storytelling Process: Wisdom Stories

- Piloted workshop at Nak'albun Elementary School
  - Involved all grade 6 and 7 students and Elders from Nak'azdli and surrounding communities

**Story creation and sharing**
- Older adults explore life stories
- Story circle is used to provide feedback and sharing

**Script**
- A final script is created after feedback and sharing sessions completed

**Storyboard**
- Create a storyboard using their script, choose images and sound to weave in the story

**Voice**
- Older adults record narratiion of their story
- Edit recording if needed

**Images and sound**
- Older sdults add images to the story
- Sound and music added

**Edit and Publish**
- Older adults edit their videos
- Community showing and publish

- Began with Wisdom stories – workshop for older adults developed by Hausknecht, Vanchu-Orosco, and Kaufman 2016
- Needed to be flexible and responsive to community needs
  - Adapted as required during workshop process

# Digital Storytelling Process: Adjustments

**Wisdom stories – workshop with older adults** (Hausknecht, Vanchu-Orosco, Kaufman, 2016)

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**Story sharing**
- Elders share stories
- Students record stories and ask questions

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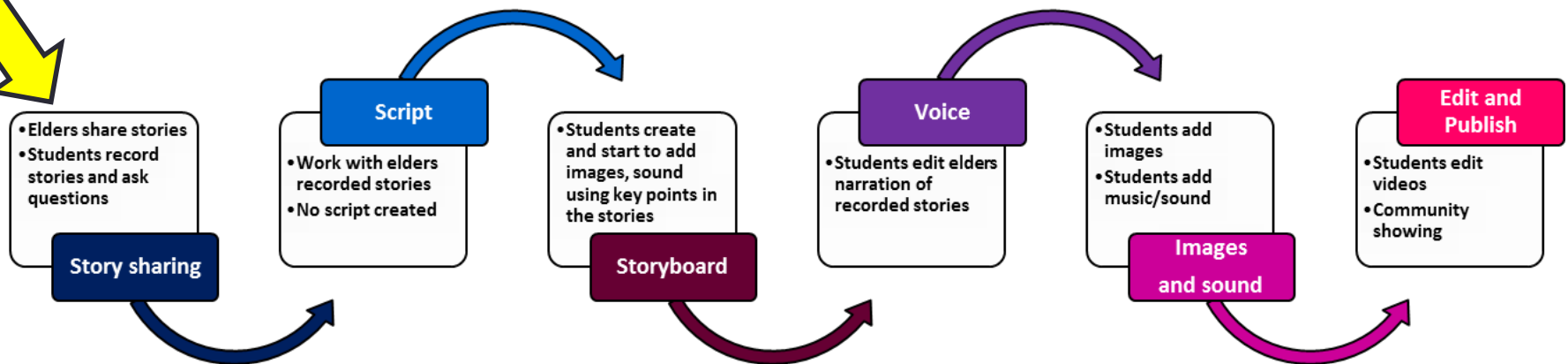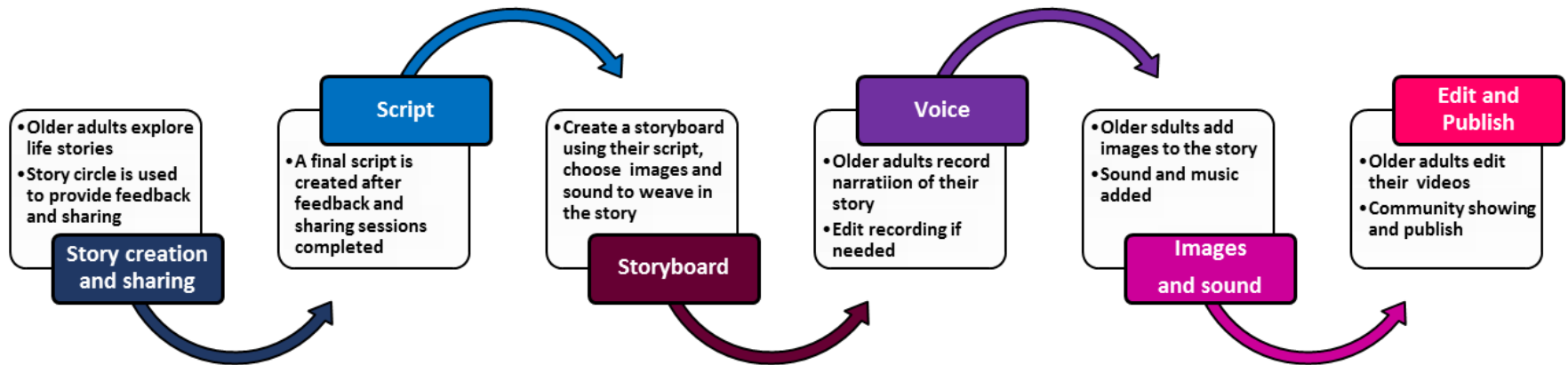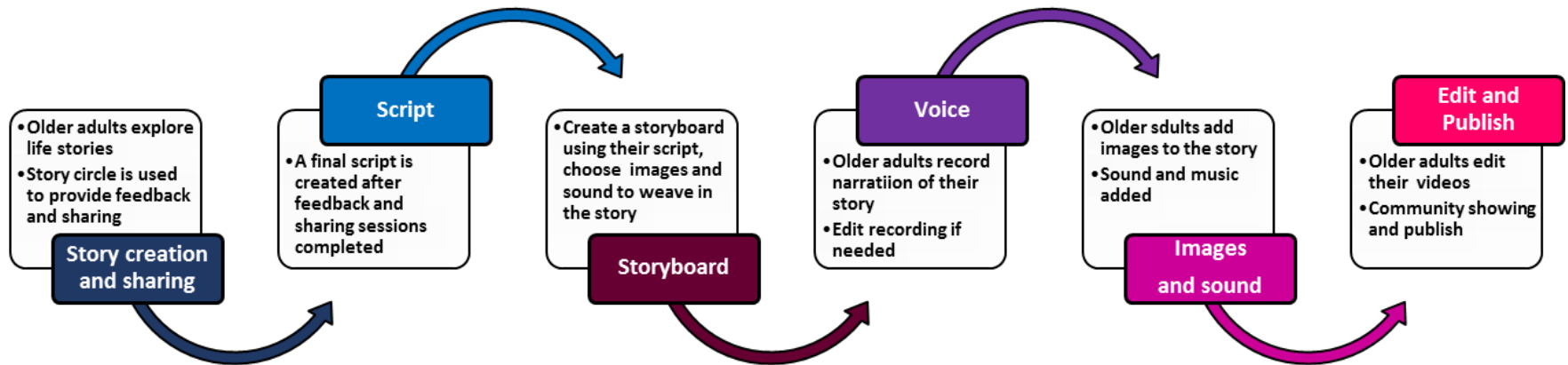**Story creation and sharing**
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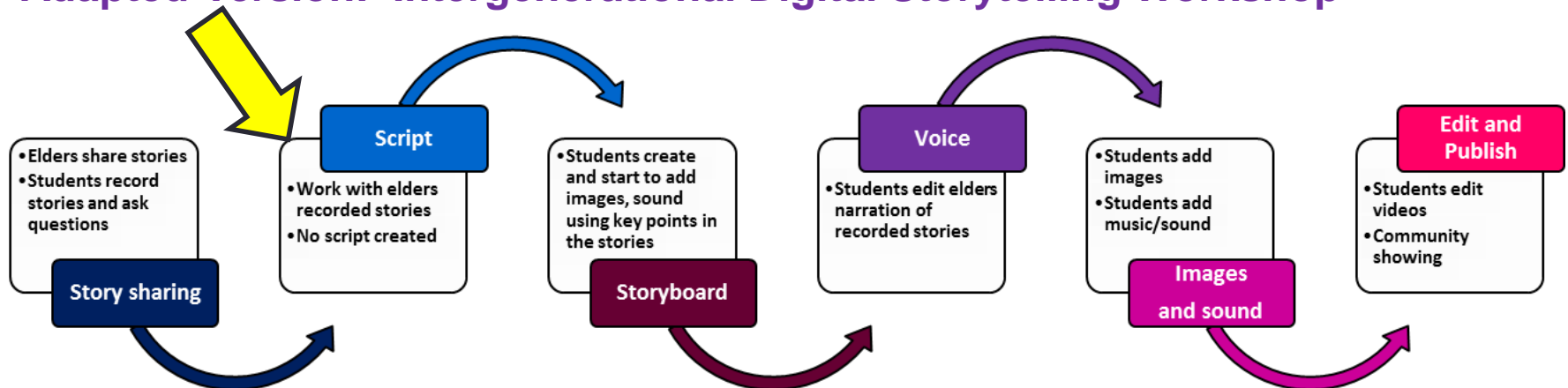
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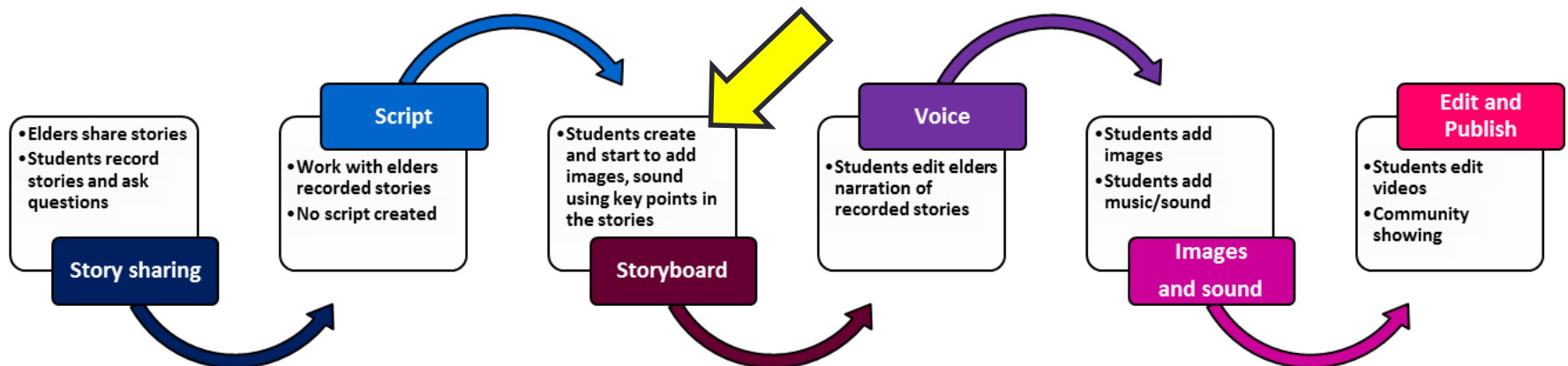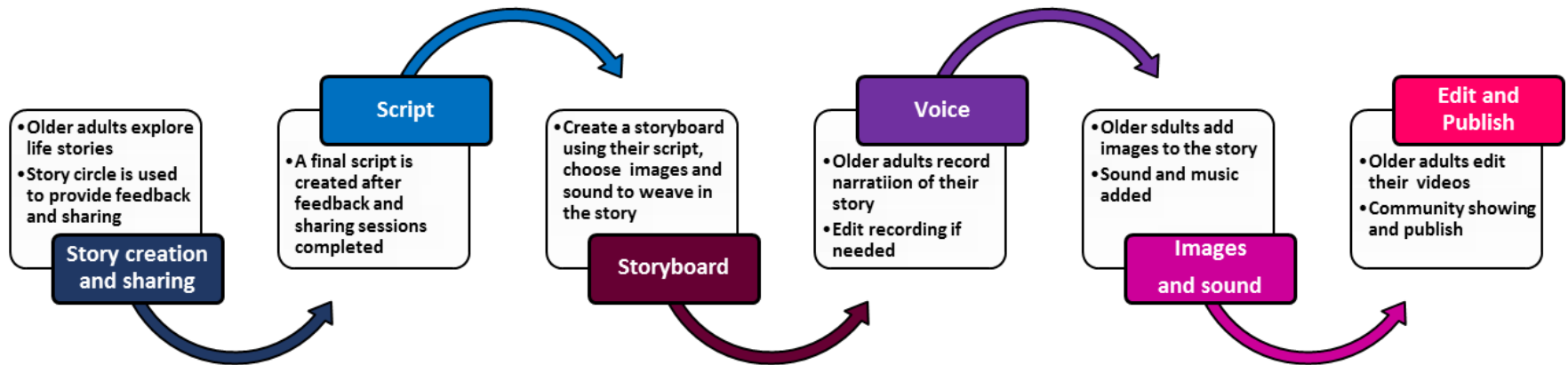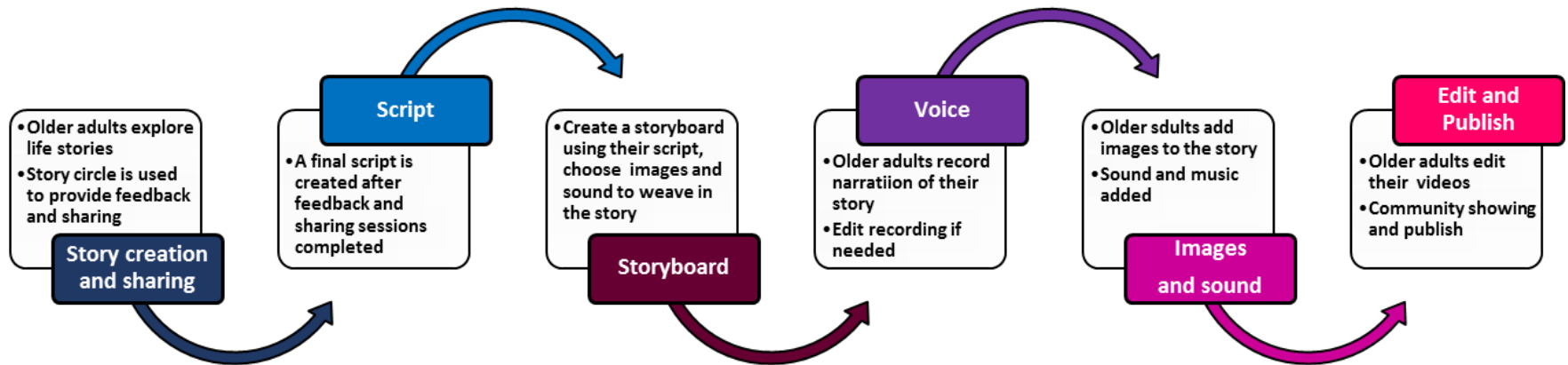**Story creation and sharing**
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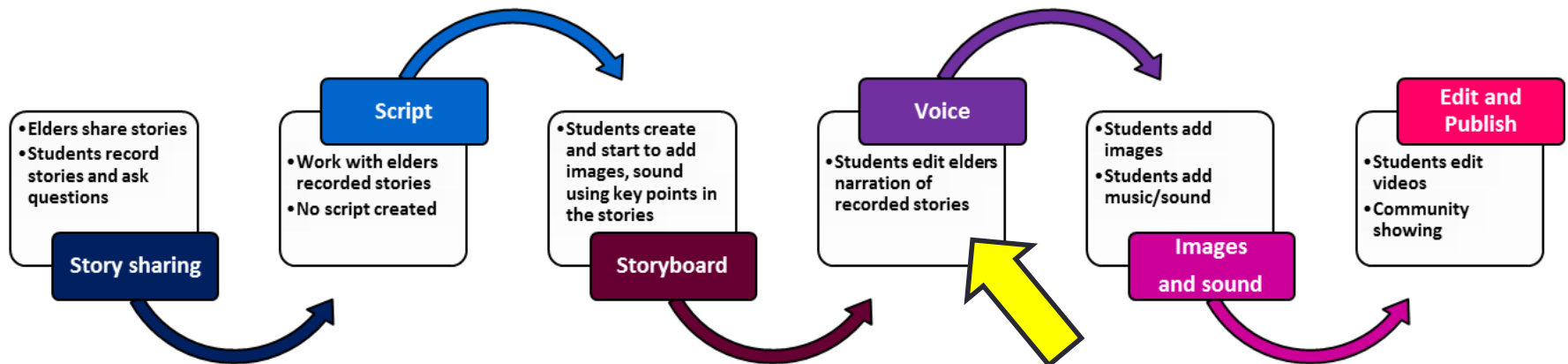
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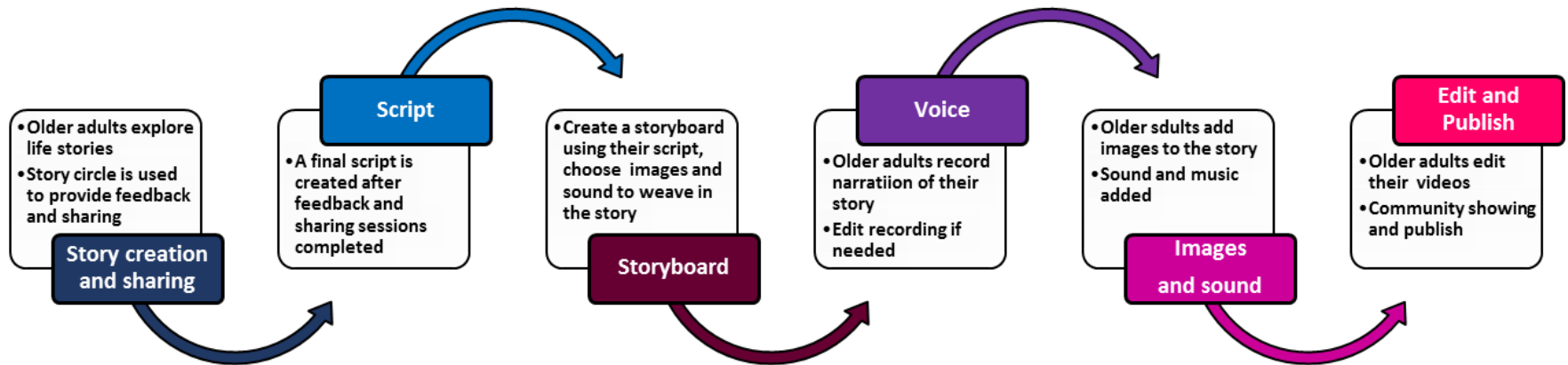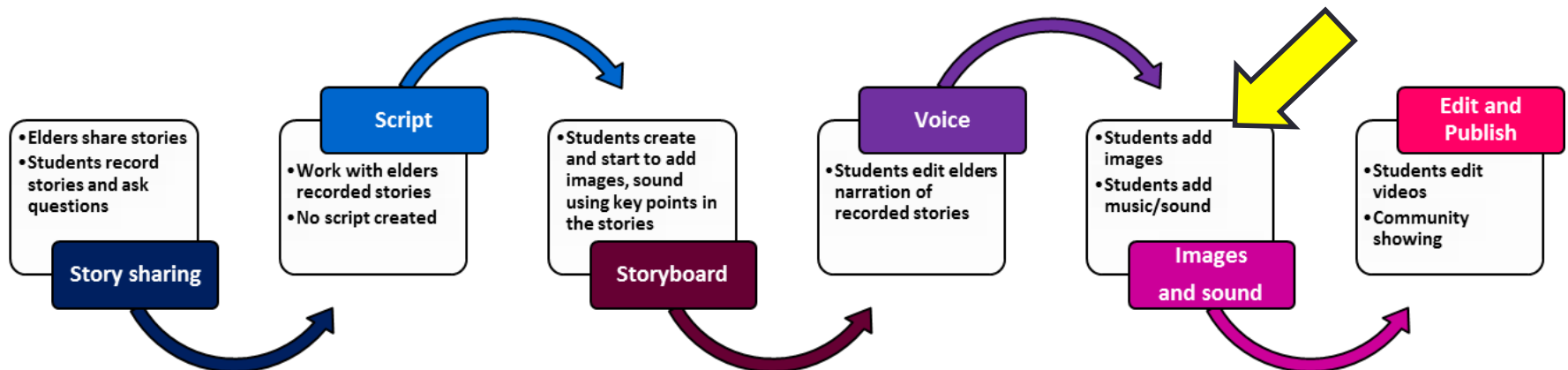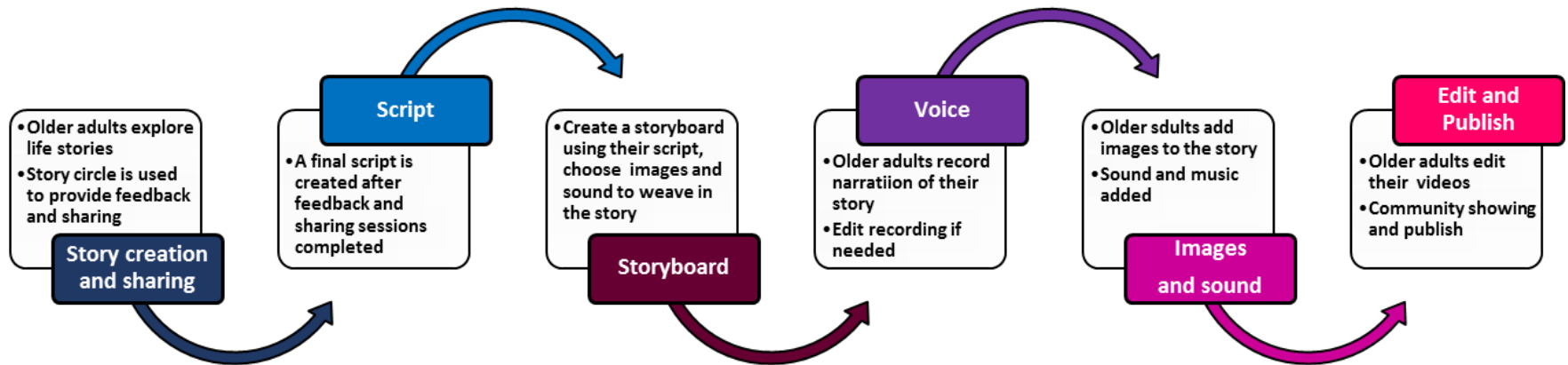**Story creation and sharing**
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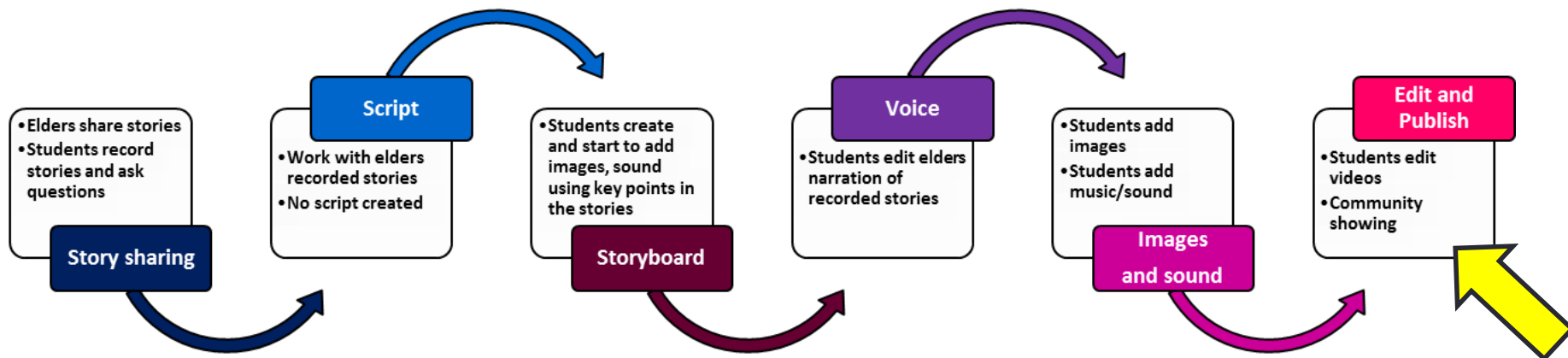
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# Design:10 sessions

| Session | Date | Activities | • Elders |
|---------|------|------------|----------|
| 1 | March 2 | Introductions | • Elders come |
| 2 | March 3 | Exploring and sharing stories | • Elders share stories |
| 3 | March 7 | Story circle | • Elders share stories |
| 4 | March 14 | Intro storyboarding and WeVideo | |
| 5 | March 16 | Recording the narrations | • Elders come to record<br>• narrations of story |
| 6 | March 17 | Editing narration, Intro to imagery | |
| 7 | March 21 | Photos, videos, and effects | • Elders (optional) |
| 8 | March 23 | Sound and Music | • Elders (optional) |
| 9 | March 24 | Editing in WeVideo, title, credits | |
| 10 | March 28 | Final touches, Publishing and downloading, Sharing stories | |
| 11 | TBA | Community showcase | • Elders come to present |

# Software: WeVideo

# Evaluation of Nak'azdli Intergenerational Digital Storytelling Project

- Conducted focus groups
  - Midway: Elders, schoolchildren
  - End:  Elders, schoolchildren, teachers, principle

- Held community showcase event
  - Attended by more than 75 people
  - Attendees completed a feedback form

# Findings: School Children

- **Students took pride in the abilities to create a digital story**
  - Showed great respect to their Elders
  - Excited to use new technology
- **Engaged children who may not typically be engaged**
- **Found workshop enjoyable**
  - *"I enjoyed talking and asking the Elders questions."*
  - *"I enjoyed making the digital stories and editing and working with WeVideo."*
  - *"It was fun. I liked the editing. I liked talking to the elders. You could learn things."*
- **When asked about what the community would think about their digital stories, students responded:**
  - *"I think they [the community] will be surprised because we are young and it's a new thing and the first time they will see things like this in the community."*
  - *"I think they [my parents] will think we did a good job. They will like it. They will be proud."*

# Findings: Elders

- **Enjoyed meeting and building relationships with the school children**

  - *"I loved the kids.  They were really attentive.  And I felt good."*

  - *"My grandchildren were happy to see me there.  I don't get to see them often at home.  So, I see them at school and they were surprised.  It brings our relationship closer.  I think more parents and leaders should visit the school."*

- **Important opportunity to preserve their language**

  - *"It's really important to talk Carrier to our children.  It's a start. A lot of clans they don't know the full language correctly."*

- **Felt children were enthusiastic to learn and through telling of the stories the elders could leave a legacy for future generations**

  - *"They were really interested.  That is what I liked.  I told them about my regalia and the potlatch."*

  - *"The children wanted to learn more about the sweat lodge and ceremonies and healing too."*

# Findings: Teachers/Principal

- **Saw opportunity to preserve culture and promote language**

  - *"Having elders come in and work closely with kids. The connection [was meaningful]. We often have pressure to bring Carrier into our classroom. And that is very difficult to do. … This was a very creative way to do it."*

- **Project aligned with BC curriculum**

  - *"The whole idea is great. It does touch on a lot of the curriculum."*

  - *"It was really nice to have that portion of the curriculum to have ideas for this part of the curriculum. I would never have brought technology in the classroom that way. Usually people ask about technology in the classroom and we are like I have a smart board. But what do your kids really do with the technology. That is the question."*

- **Children continue to use the technology**

  - *"The kids are making their own stories right now. Its really funny. Have you ever watched my strange addiction on TLC? They were like our grade six strange addiction was the dab. Our grade seven strange addiction is slime. They all bring slime to school. They went around the school interviewing people. They have it on the iPad. Today they stayed in for lunch by choice to make a WeVideo on the iPad. It is so cool. They do like the process."*

# Technology can be a bridge



- Mutual benefits
  - Elders and youth both contribute
- Very positive response from community
  - Some who were hesitant at first are now enthusiastic
- Community felt ownership for this work
  - Research team focused on learning the process rather than end product
- School teachers and principal keen to support program again
  → Felt original program offered needs to be adjusted to be sustainable in the future

# Moving Forward

- Saw benefits to continue this program and integrate it into their program

  *I would do it again. I think that the value in it, like having the elders in the classroom and the connections that are made and the stories that they hear and what they learn and using the technology and like all of that is way to good in my opinion not to do it again."*

  *(Nak'albun Elementary School Teacher)*

- Lots of ideas and suggestions for conversation with community partners
  - Who should select which stories to share?
    - Elder driven, student driven, community driven
  - Which grades of students?
    - High school students, elementary school students, outside of school with youth council
  - What is best timeline?
    - Once a week for a year (ex. Friday afternoons), condensed activity conducted during heritage week
  - What is the best mode of delivery?
    - Train the trainer model, bring in external team, mixture of teacher led and researcher led

# Project Involved Many Important Partnerships

Lha'hutit'en means "We work together, we help one another"

Have a strong team who are committed and work well together

- Nak'azdli Health Centre
- Nak'azdli Whut'en
- Nak'azdli Elder Society
- Nak'adli Youth Council
- Nak'albun Elementary School
- Nezul Be Hunuyeh
- University of Northern British Columbia
- Simon Fraser University
- University of Waterloo

All team members must see value in their contributions to the project

# Questions and Comments





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