

Telling the New Story

By David Warlick

The session begins with some of the stories that we've been hearing and telling for decades, and how they continue to drive a big part of what schooling is about. It is a testament to the continuing power of stories, even when they are old and counter-productive.

The rest of the presentation is structured around some writings of cultural anthropologist, Dr. Jennifer James, on telling compelling stories as a function of leadership. She talks about the leader who is the master, and the leader who is so creative that people follow. But she says that the leader who will affect real change in education will be the leader who can tell a compelling new story.

James continues by saying that compelling new stories must include three components:

- They must fit the market place and our sense of the future.

Hands down, the marketplace is changing. It's getting bigger and there are a lot of new players. Perhaps the most compelling story about a new market place that is being told today comes from New York Times report Thomas Friedman and his universally talked about [The World is Flat](#) (ISBN: 0374292795).

Another story teller of importance today is urban studies academic, Richard Florida, who has written two salient books, [The Rise of the Creative Class](#) (ISBN: 0465024777) and [The Flight of the Creative Class](#) (ISBN: 006075690X).

- They must resonate with deeply held values.

What we value, are our children, and our children are a different species from us. They are tech-savvy, adaptive, fast learners, always connected, and ultra-communicators. They can see, hear, and speak through walls and around the planet. Neither walls nor distance prevent them from getting to the information they need to learn what they need to know, to do what they need to do. We must come to value their skills and their information experience and harness it to make them not only educated by world-ready.

Much as been written about the millennial generation, but mentioned here will be Marc Prensky's [Digital Game-Based Learning](#) (ISBN: 0071454004) and [Don't Bother Mom – I'm Learning!](#) (ISBN: 1557788588), and John Beck's [Got Game](#) (ISBN: 1578519497).

- We must be able to model the story.

We desperately need a vision of classroom that is not centered around the technology, but around what our children are doing, what the community is seeing, and how that vision fits the future vision. We need to concentrate less on integrating the technology and the games into the classroom, and much more on integrating the classroom into the new information landscape and the experience that engages our children in the deep learning that they accomplish. We need our classrooms to become learning engines.

We must be willing to be bold. Small changes don't excite people. Big changes do. I think that the story that is going to change our classrooms into ever improving and adapting learning engines will come from outside the classroom. These stories should be told outside the classroom, and they should be told from an outside the classroom perspective.

It's not so much that technology has changed the nature of teaching and learning, but that technology has changed the nature of information and how the world works, and how people work and learn and play. Because the world that we are preparing our children for is changing so dramatically (and continuing to change), we must rethink the what, how, and why we are teaching our children, and retool our classrooms to accomplish new goals.

The stories will come from forward thinking educators. But we need to get those stories out into the public, and get parents, neighbors, school board members, legislators, and even presidents telling those stories.

Online Handouts: <http://davidwarlick.com/newstory/>

New Story Starters: <http://davidwarlick.com/newstorystarters/>