

# Investigating the Role of Digital Arts in Decolonizing Knowledge and Promoting Indigenous Standpoints

*Asiedu, Richard (Main author)*  
University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa  
Koforidua Technical University, Ghana  
rich.asiedu@ktu.edu.gh

*Stewart, Michelle (co-author)*  
University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa  
Stewartm2@ukzn.ac.za

*Cele, Sfundo (co-author)*  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
216075489@stu.ukzn.ac.za

## Abstract

Preliminary studies indicate that African educational systems reflected their socio-cultural being, and fit into the moral, economic and physical developments of its generation before colonial inception. Marker (2011) noted that education is one of the significant tools for colonial exploitation in Africa. Even in this post-colonial era, the contemporary African education or knowledge system is predominantly centered on foreign educational structures and standpoints. This undermines or alters the focus of African belief systems and culture. Africans must preserve and promote their traditional knowledge-based system regardless of its co-existence with foreign education in order to sustain and restore their self-respect and total emancipation. In order to elevate the rich cultural heritage of Africans and to promote the indigenous perspective, there must be a paradigm shift from foreign epistemologies to a decolonized knowledge-based system. Decolonizing knowledge is an effort to theorize one traditional knowledge system and entrench into the imposed foreign epistemology theories and interpretations in order to promote

This work is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>. The copyright remains with the authors.

indigenous standpoints. According to Dreyer (2017), it seeks to construct and legitimize other knowledge systems by exploring alternate epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies. The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of visual narratives/digital storytelling within Digital Arts in decolonizing knowledge and promoting indigenous African cultures and viewpoints. An exploratory research approach through a narrative literature review was utilized to come out with scholarly suggestions from the stance of digital arts researchers. Additionally, an oral interview was conducted to seek views from Digital Arts professionals and researchers.

**Keywords:** Culture, Folktale Animation, Decolonizing Knowledge, Storytelling, Visual Narratives

## 1. Introduction

Decolonization involves a paradigm shift from a culture of denial to creating space for indigenous political philosophies and knowledge systems, thereby shifting cultural perceptions and power relations in real ways (Paulette Regan, 2010). It involves constructing and legitimizing other knowledge systems by exploring alternate epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies (Dreyer, 2017).

The drive for the decolonization of knowledge and educational pedagogies in Africa should be the responsibility of everyone including political leaders, civil servants, entrepreneurs, and even students. In 2015 there was a movement to decolonize higher education in South Africa and students were at the forefront of the campaign (Heleta, 2018). Obviously, these students are much more aware that the knowledge systems of Africans are predominantly centered on foreign educational structures and views which undermine or alter the focus of African belief systems and indigenous languages. It is therefore necessary to champion decolonization in order to project African culture. In decolonizing pedagogy, we must critically approach knowledge



in a way to emphasise the “*monolithic, monocultural, ‘mono-epistemological academic traditions’*” (Heleta, 2018). Heleta noted that decolonization of knowledge is essential for rewriting histories and reasserting the self-esteem of the oppressed in the African continent.

To effectively champion the decolonization of knowledge, every educational sector must define its roles in order to strategically perform those tasks. The current study intends to define the roles of folktale or digital storytelling in decolonizing knowledge to project indigenous African perspectives and culture. The first section explores the related literature in order to identify functions and processes of decolonizing knowledge with specific reference to digital storytelling. Poka Laenui’s Processes of Decolonization (Laenui, 2006) were adopted as a framework that aids in generating specific roles of storytelling in decolonizing knowledge. Purposive sampling was used to sample two digital art/animation professionals in South Africa and one Ghanaian historian who is well-versed in tales and traditional knowledge systems.

The questions were semi-structured which gave room for leading questions. Sample questions and a summary of the interview proceedings are summarized in Appendix 1.

## 2.1. Decolonizing pedagogies

Decolonizing pedagogies refer to the teaching and learning approaches that both acknowledge and deconstruct structures of power associated with colonization in an effort to create space and give legitimacy to indigenous ways of acquiring knowledge (Regan, 2010). With respect to storytelling, indigenous peoples have always used an experientially based, embodied pedagogy that is rooted in storytelling, ceremony, and ritual to teach diverse peoples how to coexist peacefully after conflict has occurred. These practices and approaches of teaching connect the head, heart, and spirit of the indigenous people. Regan (2010) noted that some Western educators have now discovered that teaching/learning practices that

connect head, heart, and spirit can sometimes transform people in powerful ways that may not be fully understood on a rational level alone.

The need to decolonize knowledge and pedagogy of South African and West African countries is critical and must be taken seriously in order to enjoy full emancipation. Decolonizing pedagogies emphasizes the importance of indigenous peoples’ involvement in educational decision-making regarding their own systems of education and commitment to the community in building educational capacity (McGregor, 2012).

Learning from indigenous peoples’ experiences and perspectives is an effective way to instill cultural values and virtues into the African knowledge base. Dion (2009) describes in detail a research process - called the Braiding Histories Project – by carefully telling histories from indigenous perspectives and in relation to indigenous identity and values. She invited indigenous storytellers to create classroom resources, attempting to facilitate decolonizing by creating an “alternative listening position” for students. Dion disclosed that students’ existing ways of knowing were reproduced and reinforced rather than disrupted by the use of the Braiding History Project resources (Dion, 2009).

## 2.2. Storytelling/ Visual Narratives

The various forms of indigenous storytelling, are seen as important means for seeking justice, telling the truth, and a way to promote indigenous self-determination. They are unique to a specific group of people and their ancestors and have ordinarily been described as “lived values that form the basis for indigenous governance and regeneration” (Cornassel, 2009). Thomas (2005) stated that indigenous storytelling has the capability of nurturing, teaching and serves as acts of resistance that can communicate colonial injustices such as dispossession and genocide. They enable truths and multiple meanings to be heard and have the power to define what and how knowledge is formed (Bishop, 1999). Indigenous perceptions of storytelling depict their ontologies



and epistemologies, such as the “ assumption of the embodied and timeless nature of knowledge” (McIsaac, 2008). It is important to note that, Indigenous storytelling is grounded in a unique history and trajectory, revealing value systems and ways of knowing diverse indigenous peoples (Caxaj, 2015).

Digital storytelling is the practice of combining narrative with digital audio and visual content to create short content that typically contains a strong reflective, emotional and personal component (Lambert & Hessler, 2018). It must be noted however that, digital storytelling could also be combining oral tradition with digital technology to create a video such as folktale animation. Folktale animation carries narratives from indigenous or historical stories and myths. The characters may be in the form of animals (fables) and humans and together with the narratives carry a sunken message, especially to children and young adults. Martin et al., (2019) opine that, the focus of the digital story is not on the technical aspect, but rather the combination of the narrative, audio and visual elements.

Digital storytelling contributes enormously to Participatory Action Research (PAR). According to Estey, et al., (2009), PAR serves as a key strategy for carrying out research with indigenous populations in a respectful manner. Most indigenous researchers have proposed that Participatory Action Research principles reflect a significant beginning toward important issues related to representation, power and community benefit (Blodgett, et al., 2011). Carrying out research with indigenous communities that incorporates storytelling methodologies can help develop rich, locally relevant insights that may better guide culturally responsive understandings. In fact, indigenous teachings and epistemologies can uniquely guide research activities in such a way that can complement or enrich a PAR methodology (Davey, 2021).

Pratt, (2020), provides a valuable example of how a community-based educational project can create and restore intergenerational exchanges through

storytelling. According to Pratt, "Digital Storytelling in Indigenous Education" is the perfect resource for researchers in the fields of indigenous education, and those looking to explore the role of modern media in facilitating healing and decolonization in a marginalized community.

### 2.3. The Need for Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling is often used as a learning and capacity-building tool and can strengthen relations between participants. Globally, it has been embraced due to its significant impact on learning and capacity building. For instance, in the early to mid-1990s, Dana Atchley developed Digital Storytelling in California with the idea of putting “the universal human delight in narrative and self-expression into the hands of everyone”. Atchley developed an exportable workshop in which ordinary people were taught how to produce their own digital stories (Hartley, 2009).

Digital storytelling promotes critical thinking, and reflection and helps with digital literacy and writing skills (De Jager et al., 2017). This implies that using folktales to create digital stories will be an effective tool to sensitize people and promote knowledge. It offers a safe space to share and reflect upon experiences and it is often used when working with vulnerable or marginalized groups. It normally touches upon particularly delicate or sensitive issues such as gender-based violence and it is a platform for rich, descriptive narratives (Martin et al., 2019).

The narratives of digital stories often delve into specific issues and are normally cited for their knowledge communication and translation potential. Digital storytelling is one of the art-based methodologies for most Digital humanity disciplines. According to De Jager (2017), arts-based research methods allow findings to be publicized and understood by the general population. This increases the visibility of research beyond academic publications. Digital storytelling is participatory and co-productive in nature and therefore capable of breaking down



power hierarchies that are often present when using conventional research methods. Several researchers such as Morgan & Castleden (2014); De Leeuw & Hunt (2018) have claimed that digital storytelling can contribute to the decolonization of research.

Digital storytelling has the ability to propagate indigenous cultural virtues whilst discouraging the idea that violence can be a form of conflict resolution (Kangong, 2010). Magic Cellar, the first African 3D animated series in South Africa was a digital story that championed the promotion of African cultural heritage through folktales. This promotion ultimately serves as an engine of knowledge decolonization in South Africa. The series is based on African legends and folktales collected from interviews conducted in villages across South Africa. This is a clear promotion of the indigenous perspective in knowledge delivery.

Digital storytelling responds to research in a way that benefits the communities and cultures in which the research takes place. It is therefore undoubted that, digital storytelling has the potential to promote the decolonization of knowledge to project one's culture.

## 2.4. Significance of Animation in Storytelling

Animation is a form of visual storytelling involving sequential images played over time. Animation can take many forms in different media such as line drawing, shapes, photography and video. These elements can be manipulated differently to represent ideas. Animation through its vibrant colors, styles, a unique artistic approach actually makes the story alive (Hansa, 2022). It can turn an idea into a visual masterpiece and create a unique aesthetic experience for viewers.

Animation can help create a compelling story that viewers can relate to and keep them engaged throughout the entire narratives. For a example, Character Development Technology has ability to create characters with unique personalities, This work is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>. The copyright remains with the authors.

motivations, and goals. These powerful tools can bring imaginary folktale characters and myths into the lives of realistic beings.

Traditional knowledge and concepts which mostly descended from our ancestors can also be seen alive and as such bring forth an interactive experience for viewers. Animated stories establish an immersive and engaging experience for the audience by introducing colourful and engaging characters (Kucharska, 2022). For instance, *Zizji and Hanibels* by Pixcomm, *Kizazi Moto (Generation Fire)* by Triggerfish and *Magic Cellar* by Chocolate Moose Media Inc. (Canada) with Morula Pictures of Johannesburg are all practical examples of South African Animation series that have strong engaging experience, especially for children.

## 2.5. Methods of Decolonization

This section explains briefly Poka Laenui's propositions on the Processes of Decolonization. Laenui processes were based on two indigenous Hawaiians who shared their experience of colonization and the decolonization period in Hawaii. This paper utilized these processes as a lens for generating the roles of digital storytelling in decolonizing knowledge in this post-colonial era. Laenui stipulated five major phases namely: Rediscovery and recovery, *Mourning*, *Dreaming*, *Commitment*, and *Action* (Laenui, 2006).

**Rediscovery and Recovery:** Laenui noted that this phase sets the foundation for the movement for decolonization. Individuals begin to rediscover their indigenous history and recover their lost culture, language, identity, and traditions.

**Mourning:** This phase describes a time when people are permitted to lament or mourn their people who were victimized during colonialism. It is an essential phase of healing, Laenui noted. According to him, this phase may also be expressed in great anger and a lashing out at all symbols of the colonizer. In the context of decolonizing knowledge in this post-colonial era, this paper disagrees with Laenui and argues that decolonizing knowledge in this post-colonialism





must not be violent but must be a process to surface the indigenous knowledge to coexist with the foreign epistemologies in order to construct and legitimize our knowledge systems. In fact, the current Eurocentric knowledge base is useful but must not dominate to undermine our traditional knowledge.

**Dreaming:** This involves exploring one's own culture and aspirations for future, considering their structures of government and social order which encompass and express their hopes. This restructuring involves reassessment of existing institutional power structures, expanding worldviews and shifting paradigms to make a better world for all nations. undermines

**Commitment:** This involves making dreams a reality through fervent commitment. It includes readiness to commit to a single direction in which society must move. This phase allows people with common goals to combine their voices in a clear statement of their desired direction.

**Action:** The action phase originally focused on the use of arms, demonstration and rebellion to eliminate the colonial powers. However, such actions were sanctioned by international law. In the context of the post-colonialism era, the action phase could be executed through technologies such as Radio, Television, newspapers, digital stories and websites.

Typically, Laenui's process of decolonization was applied to the colonial era however, this study opines that it could be used as a motivational factor or strategy to campaign the post-colonial decolonization approaches suggested by some researchers. Fataar (2018) accounted for some approaches to decolonizing education in South Africa. He pointed out that, "decolonizing education should be inter-cultural or inclusion of all knowledge forms bestowed to humanity such as African, Arab-Islamic, Chinese, Hindu, Indo-American, Asiatic, and Western knowledge forms. This approach promotes a type of epistemic openness and seeks to avoid 'knowledge parochialism' (Fataar, 2018). He advocates the incorporation of these knowledge

systems into the curriculum of universities and schools and emphasizes that modalities of such incorporation must be the subject of urgency in policy circles, curriculum developers, textbook designers, university lecturers and teachers.

In another scenario, Hassan (2022) suggested the use of Black tutors as an instrument for the decolonization of higher education and the promotion of inclusivity in South Africa. The study demonstrated that the tutorial field provided a nurturing space where black tutors were made to feel comfortable on account of the tutors' 'symbolic capital and habitus' which they could relate to. Hassan argued that pedagogical tools such as the application of tutors' mother tongue and group work are the way forward to decolonization. It is important to note that, these approaches to decolonization education and others suggested by South African scholars call for urgent action and implementation.

To make the call louder, there is a need for sensitization and advocacy programmes. Digital storytelling is one of the major tools to champion this call. This article uses Laenui's steps as a strategy and motivational factor to unearth specific roles digital storytelling will play in the decolonization of the knowledge process. Applying Laenui's process of decolonization as a strategy will evoke the emotions of citizens and policymakers (with regard to discrimination in the apartheid and post-apartheid eras) and therefore expedite the implementation of some suggested approaches to knowledge decolonization.

### 3.1. Respondents Feedback

The study engages three professionals from the Digital Art industry and academia. This section summarizes their feedback and suggestions while Appendix 1 stipulates the interview questions with the corresponding feedback in direct speech.

1. *Photographs have the potential to tell historical facts and disseminating picture documentaries as well as visual narratives of historical facts is a way of decolonizing knowledge and projecting one's culture.*



2. *Students are encouraged to seek information from their grandparents or elderly persons concerning their cultural heritage, stories myths, and customs.*
3. *Teachers/lecturers should urge students to create digital stories from their culture.*
4. *Students are encouraged to feature South African culture – folktales, myths, and fables on a website and other social media platforms.*
5. *South African Animation studios such as Pixcomm, Sunrise and Triggerfish are doing well in projecting local content and culture.*
6. *Decolonizing Knowledge in the animation curriculum, suggests the inclusion of indigenous content/histories into the Animation Syllabus in order to stress on traditional storyline, tales, legends and indigenous values.*
7. *African Myths, dirges, and appellations are spiritually inclined and have the power to decolonize knowledge when adhered to it frequently.*
8. *Teachers are recommended to invite Indigenous elderly persons as resource persons in Visual Narratives or Storytelling classes to provide rich or first-hand information*

### 3.2. The Role of Digital Storytelling

Based on the literature reviews and the interview proceedings, The study generated specific roles of Digital Storytelling in decolonizing knowledge by situating them under Poka Laenui’s Processes of Decolonization (Laenui, 2006). Table 1 specifies these processes and the corresponding roles digital storytelling/Visual narratives could play in actualizing those processes with respect to promoting indigenous views: These roles will serve as a campaigning tool and call for action for the implementation of some suggested approaches to decolonization of knowledge.

Linking the roles with the Laenui’s Processes will end up sensitizing the public and opinion leaders to retrospectively remember their past sufferings and therefore embrace/implement the approaches suggested by various schools of thought.

Table 1: Role of Digital Storytelling in the Decolonization Process

Poka Laenui’s Processes of Decolonization.	Roles of Digital Storytelling
<b>Rediscovery &amp; Recovery</b> Rediscovery of indigenous history, culture, language, and identity and recover lost aspects of their culture such as language and traditions	Creating stories or visual narratives in the form of folktale animation with storylines that express indigenous knowledge, history, culture, and identity.
	Recording life stories from indigenous people and editing them into digital format with the aid of audio (local songs) and images to express traditions and history.
	Featuring digital stories of indigenous viewpoints in websites and social media platforms.
<b>Mourning:</b> Lamentation of afflictions and victimization from colonialism	Recording of dirges and appellations from indigenous folks and editing into digital format.
	Recording of Drum language that expresses lamentation and editing into digital format.
	Creating digital stories from cultural activities that commemorate the affliction of the colonial era. For instance, the emancipation festival in Ghana (Celebrated to commemorate the ancestors who led the struggle for independence in Ghana).



	Digitizing and disseminating poems of lamentation to the public.
<b>Dreaming:</b> Exploring one's own culture and reassessment of existing institutional power structures and shifting paradigms for the betterment of the indigenous folks.	Recording drama that depicts cultural activities and disseminating them into TV stations and social media platforms.
	Creating visual narratives with storylines that project indigenous teachings over contemporary pedagogies. For instance, creating storyboards that show a teacher in a class with an old indigenous lady as a resource person.
	Digitizing poems of aspirations and disseminating in public
<b>Commitment:</b> making their dreams a reality through fervent commitment. For example, sensitizing the public through decolonization campaigns, public talk and teachings	Creating documentaries, storyboards, and visual narratives for public teachings and campaigns.
	Folktale animation series on television.
<b>Action:</b> Implementation of indigenous power and knowledge system by disseminating information through the media – Radio, Television, Newspaper	Creating awareness through folktale animation series on televisions. Showcasing animated stories in the public auditorium and cinema houses.
	Creating cultural narratives and storyboards in the form of cartoons or realistic figures and circulating in newspapers, billboards, signboards, posters, banners, flyers, and magazines

#### 4.1 Results and Discussion

African folktales/storytelling play an essential role in instilling good character and values such as integrity, honesty, and courage in children and young people. In addition, these stories act as a medium for bringing the community together and developing a social identity. Since these stories were narrated to a group of people in a community, these stories eliminated anti-social behaviors among the people. African folktales have evolved with the modern age of technology. For instance, modern digitization has nearly replaced the traditional method of narrating these stories. Most of these folktales have been recorded in films, movies, and Digital storytelling/Animation.

The findings of the study indicate that Animation as a digital storytelling tool can help reach a wider audience because it appeals to most children and adults of different cultures. Furthermore, it can easily help to tell stories that would be difficult to tell using traditional oral methods or stage play. For example, mythical stories and imaginary stories of creatures could easily be told and characterized with animation more than any other method.

Animation can also be used to tell stories about complex emotions or difficult subjects that would be difficult to discuss in a realistic setting (Mutai, J., 2023). The use of animation is a great storytelling approach since it has the ability to motivate and evoke human emotion. Therefore, it

will play an outstanding role in decolonizing knowledge. Hansa (2022) confirmed that excellent storytelling must comprehend human emotion, motivation, and psychology since it intertwines with human existence.

Moreover, the study confirms that Digital storytelling represents counter-narratives to the dominant foreign epistemologies or Eurocentrism. It is an important means to explore and preserve Indigenous Narratives and has the ability for cultural memory, community empowerment, and mobilization. It can be used as a research methodology. Cara (2021) pointed out that telling stories is a potential method in psychological research whereby respondents from racialized societies orally share their life experiences. Kovach (2009) also added that stories are considered as both “method and meaning” in many indigenous groups. He emphasized that collective storytelling is a culturally grounded way of transmitting community knowledge between generations.

Poitras Pratt utilized storytelling in her effort to decolonize knowledge in a Metis community (Pratt, 2020). She noted that using digital stories has a significant impact on viewers and said, “Students are often able to quote lines from the stories verbatim, others see connections to their own family stories, and there are those who are inspired and yearn to share their stories”. She opines that Digital Storytelling is the perfect resource for researchers, scholars, and postgraduate students in the fields of Indigenous education, comparative education, and technology education, or those looking to explore the role of modern media in facilitating healing and decolonization in a marginalized community (Pratt, 2020).

With regard to decolonizing pedagogies, it was found that indigenous people must be involved in the teaching and learning process because learning from indigenous peoples' experiences and perspectives is an effective way to instill cultural values and virtues into the African

knowledge base. A typical teacher-centered approach employed in most classrooms often fails to meet the needs of indigenous students (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). It is therefore necessary to occasionally invite indigenous resource persons to the class (*in this context, Storytelling classes*) in order to enhance teaching and learning. This approach to decolonizing knowledge is effective but sometimes comes with some challenges that need to be addressed for maximum benefits. For instance, in my interview with Professor Christo Doherty (renowned scholar at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa), he pointed out, “I tried it sometime but the students find it difficult to cooperate with the old lady”. This looks ridiculous but truly, some students are much more engulfed with modern epistemologies in such a way that some steps to decolonize their thoughts become problematic. The academic lecturers and facilitators must therefore sensitize their students very well in advance on the need to decolonize knowledge before adopting such an approach.

In another scenario however, Cathy Wood (A respondent and a lecturer in the School of Animation, Cape Town) pointed out that, “I asked my students to go and ask their grandparents after refusing to tell me a story about their own tradition, and they came back with excellent stories”. This could be one of the effective means through which educators can emulate to champion the decolonization of knowledge.

McGregor (2012) stipulated that the inclusion of elders in instruction, for storytelling, indigenous language instruction, ceremonies, and other pedagogies for learning consistent with Aboriginal pedagogy are very effective means of decolonizing knowledge. It is important to note that the current curriculum of Digital Arts, Animation, or Digital Storytelling must be reviewed to factor in the inclusion of an indigenous knowledge system. In another





scenario, one of my respondents pointed out that their Animation/Storytelling curriculum is basically dominated by Western epistemologies. This confirms the initial assumption that the study hypothesized.

The study also established confirmation that Animation studios in South Africa are putting up their best in projecting the rich cultural heritage of the land and for that matter the entire continent. However, one of the challenges the animation industry in South Africa is facing is that sometimes the studios send their content to other foreign countries to produce because of cheaper production costs (*Respondent complained*). Consequently, it is possible for the characters and the settings to be adulterated into foreign concepts which ultimately defeats the purpose of the story. For instance, Magic Cellar was produced in India and the settings and the characters were comparatively foreign which could have been better off if all the characters and settings were entirely African.

## 4.2. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study established that storytelling is a key avenue through which decolonizing knowledge and promoting indigenous perspective could be achieved. This avenue must not be overlooked, especially in this technological age where stories can be generated digitally in so many media platforms to reach so many people. In fact, digital storytelling has a great impact on decolonizing knowledge because of its ability to propagate indigenous cultural virtues to reach a larger number of people. This could be done perfectly through digital means such as generating animation out of indigenous legends and knowledge, creating a visual narrative, and developing documentaries of stories with cultural significance.

This paper is part of an extended Ph.D. study the researcher is undertaking at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg – South Africa. The main purpose of the study is to stimulate and promote African Cultural heritage

through folktale animation or Storytelling. The study involves a full research component that will utilise an Exploratory Research Design - Case Study and a Practice-Based project. The cases to be studied will be explored through the lens of the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML). The focus is to access selected African-animated folktale videos using the CTML principles as the major conceptual framework. This is to find out whether African folktale animations follow appropriate multimedia principles to ensure their maximum functions as far as the education of African cultural values is concerned. Additionally, the study explores the role of Storytelling/folktale animation in decolonizing knowledge and promoting indigenous viewpoints (*Highlighted in this article*).

The practice-based component will involve creating a short 3D animation from an excerpt of the Ghanaian ‘Ananse’ story to lay emphasis on the CTML principles.

This article recommends that both print and electronic media agencies in South Africa are encouraged to join the decolonization process by publishing Folktale Animations, comics, visual narratives and other indigenous stories. Moreover, the Government and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as well as local philanthropists and civil society organizations are urged to invest in Digital Storytelling/Folktale animation and other indigenous stories to project and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the land. Again, South African animation studios can pick inspiration (*not to copy*) from successful international studios and embed it in their local animation style in order to attract the young ones who are obsessed with foreign content and styles.

Moreover, there must be an urgent Call to Action by educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to implement some approaches and strategies to decolonization through storytelling. For instance, educators can embed storytelling in the curriculum of basic and high schools while the teaching of digital storytelling at the tertiary



levels is enhanced by predominantly focusing on creating digital content that is based on oral traditions and the cultural heritage of the land. Tiba et al, posited that educators are being urged to integrate digital storytelling into curricula, but development is slow due to lack of digital skills and technology (Tiba, 2015). For educators to effectively adopt digital storytelling and technology in teaching and learning, there must be an in-service training on technological knowledge in order to provide instructors with the requisite skills.

Lastly, there is a need to create a culturally inclined Mobile Digital Storytelling Application (MDSA) to enable most people to have access to indigenous digital stories on their mobile phones. Bidwell, (2010) created an easy-to-use mobile

digital storytelling system that allows people living in rural African communities to shape their own form of digital storytelling that is compatible with their ways of doing and saying stories. They capture digital stories from users and use virtual reality to retell the story (Marsden G. et al, 2010). The environment of this virtual storytelling contains the storyteller, a powerful background with the moon and fire and the user.

The outcome of this paper will be an effective strategy for campaigning toward the decolonization of knowledge in Africa. Further studies could focus on exploring an appropriate model for the decolonization of knowledge that will spell out effective pedagogies in our educational system as well as specifying more effective means of handling digital storytelling.

## References

- Bidwell, N.J., Reitmaier, T., Marsden, G., and Hansen, S. (2010). *Designing with Mobile Digital Storytelling in Rural Africa*. CHI '10, ACM Press.
- Bishop, R. (1999). Collaborative storytelling: Meeting Indigenous people's desires for self-determination. Paper presented at the World Indigenous People's Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 15-22.
- Blodgett, A. T. et al, (2011). In indigenous words: Exploring vignettes as a narrative strategy for presenting the research voices of Aboriginal community members. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17, 522–533.
- Cara, A. et al, (2021). "Method and meaning": Storytelling as decolonial praxis in the psychology of racialized peoples. *New Ideas in Psychology* Volume 62, August 2021, 100868. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2021.100868>.
- Castagno, A. E. et al, (2008). Culturally responsive schooling for indigenous youth: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 941-993.
- Caxaj, S. (2015). Indigenous Storytelling and Participatory Action Research: Allies Toward Decolonization? Reflections From the Peoples' International Health Tribunal. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research* 1–12 DOI: 10.1177/2333393 615580764. [gqn.sagepub.com](http://gqn.sagepub.com)
- Cornthassel, J. (2009). Indigenous storytelling, truth-telling, and community approaches to reconciliation. *English Studies in Canada*, 35(1), 137–159.
- Davey, N. G. (2021). *Telling Tales: Digital Storytelling as a Tool for Qualitative Data Interpretation and Communication*. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*



-Sage.<https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211022529>

- De Leeuw, S. & Hunt, S. (2018). Unsettling decolonizing geographies. *Geography Compass*, 12(7), e12376.
- De Jager, A. et al, (2017). Digital storytelling in research: A systematic review. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(10), 2548–2582.
- Dion, S. D. (2009). Braiding histories: Learning from aboriginal peoples' experiences and perspectives. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Dreyer, & Jaco, S. (2017). "Practical theology and the call for the decolonization of higher education in South Africa: Reflections and proposals" . *HTS Theological Studies*. 1–7 [2, 3, 5]. doi:10.4102/hts.v73i4.4805 . ISSN 0259-9422 .
- Estey, E. et al, (2009). Aboriginal Knowledge Translation. Canadian Institute of Health Research. Retrieved from <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/41392.html>
- Fataar, A. (2018). Decolonising Education in South Africa: Perspectives and Debates. *Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC) Volume: 7 Special Issue June 2018*, pp. vi-ix. [ersc.nmmu.ac.za](http://www.ersc.nmmu.ac.za) ISSN: 2221-4070. Editorial.
- Hartley, J. and McWilliam, K. (2009). Computational Power Meets Human Contact. In J. Hartley and K. McWilliam, *Story Circle: Digital Storytelling Around the World*. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, UK.
- Hassan, S. L. (2022). Reducing the colonial footprint through tutorials: South African perspective on the decolonization of education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*. Online version: ISSN 1753-5913. *S. Afr. J. High. Educ.* vol.36 n.5 Stellenbosch.[http://dx. doi.org/10.20853/36-5-4325](http://dx.doi.org/10.20853/36-5-4325).
- Heleta, S. (2018). Decolonizing knowledge in South Africa: Dismantling the 'pedagogy of big lies.' *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 40(2), 47-65.
- Kangong, R. N. (2010). 3D Animation As A Medium Of Cultural Representation And Education: A Case Study Of Magic Cellar Part 1
- Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous Methodologies, Characteristics, conversations, and contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Laenui, P. (2006). Processes of Decolonization. <https://www.sjsu.edu/people/marcos.pizarro/courses/maestros/s0/Laenui.pdf>
- Lambert, J. & Hessler, B. (2018). *Digital storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community*. Routledge.
- Marker, M. (2011). Teaching history from an indigenous perspective: Four winding paths up the mountain. In P. Clark (Ed.), *New possibilities for the past: Shaping history education in Canada* (pp. 97-112). Vancouver: UBC Press
- Marsden, G. et al, (2010). *Digital Storytelling in Africa*. *International Journal of Computing*.
- Martin, S. L. et al, (2019). "I've been silenced for so long": Relational engagement and empowerment in a digital storytelling project with young women exposed to dating violence. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919825932>
- McDrury, J. & Alterio, M. (2003). *Learning through storytelling in higher education: Using reflection and experience to improve learning*. Routledge.z
- McGregor, H. E. (2012). *Decolonizing Pedagogies Teacher Reference Booklet for the Aboriginal Focus School*. Service Project for: Vancouver School Board. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- McIsaac, E. (2008). Oral narratives as a site of resistance: Indigenous knowledge, colonialism



- and Western Discourse (pp. 89 – 101). In G. J. Dei, B.-D. Hall, (Eds.), *Indigenous knowledge's in global contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Morgan, V. S. & Castleden, H. (2014). Redefining the cultural landscape in British Columbia: Huu-ay-Aht youth visions for a post-treaty era in Nuu-chah-nulth territory. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 13(3), 551–580.
- Pratt, Y. P. (2020). *Digital Storytelling in Indigenous Education: A Decolonizing Journey for a Métis Community*. Routledge 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017
- Regan, P. (2010). *Unsettling the settler within Indian residential schools, truth-telling, and reconciliation in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Thomas, R. A. (2005). Honouring the oral traditions of my ancestors through storytelling. *Qwul'sih'yah'maht* (pp. 237 – 254). In L. Brown & S. Strega (Eds.), *Research as resistance: Critical, indigenous and anti-oppressive approaches*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Tiba, C. et al, (2015). Digital storytelling as a tool for teaching: Perceptions of pre-service teachers. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, 11(1) July 2015, pp. 82-97





## Appendix 1: Summary of the Interview's Proceedings

	Questions	Summary of Participants' Response (Direct speech)
1	Can photographs / still images have the potential of telling a story about the history of South Africa and for that matter other African countries such as Ghana? How?	Photographs have the potential to tell historical facts but must be scrutinized to expunge possible doubts. Documentaries and visual narratives could be created out of photographs.
1.1	Can we espouse this process in the decolonization of Knowledge? (In order words is there any relationship between this and the decolonization of knowledge?)	Of course, disseminating picture documentaries as well as visual narratives of historical facts is a way of decolonizing knowledge and projecting one's culture.
2	In terms of teaching animation and storytelling is there a conscious effort to encourage students to identify a local South African identity? Can you cite an example?	I encourage my students to find information from their grandparents or elderly persons concerning their cultural heritage, stories myths, and customs to class for discussion. After the discussions, Digital stories are created based on the information students brought.
2.1	Has this ever translated into the exploration of African folktales, from a teaching and learning perspective, and if so can you cite an example?	Yes, students are encouraged to search for various resources to obtain African traditions, myths and legends and contextualize to South African culture. They've been working on a website that hosts folktales, myths, and fables.
3	Do Animation Studios in South Africa concern themselves with promoting indigenous knowledge and storytelling? Can you cite an example?	Yes, some of them are doing well in projecting local content. For example, Pixcomm, Sunrise and Triggerfish create local content.  Pixcomm in Cape town also write local content. They created Jabus Jungle (fables) which has been translated into different languages. They also created Zizi & Hanibel all targeting children.  Triggerfish is also very instrumental in sourcing African stories. For instance, they were behind Kizazi Moto: 'Generation Fire' - an animated anthology short series. They are also mentoring about 10 African storytellers across Africa.
4	What do you understand by the notion of decolonizing knowledge, in terms of animation curriculum? You can refer to both the practice and theory/ history of animation.	The notion of decolonizing knowledge, in the animation curriculum, suggests the incorporation of indigenous content and histories to the animation syllabus so as to stress on the traditional storyline, tales/legends and indigenous values.
5	Will you recommend an indigenous elderly person as a resource person in Visual Narratives/Storytelling class. If yes, what role will you assign to him/her	Yes, especially those who witnessed the colonialism will share first-hand experience of which students could generate authentic digital stories from it. Funny enough, the first time I invited old lady to class, my students were not cooperating.
6	What is the significance of dirges, myths and appellations in indigenous storytelling?	African Myths, dirges and appellations are spiritually inclined that have power to decolonize knowledge when adhere to it frequently. These dirges and appellation are sometimes accompanied by Drum language and it is a means for our ancestors to hear our plea.