

What's the Story Pacioli?

Father of Accounting



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Background

I am a Chartered Management Accountant with a Masters Degree in eLearning Design & Development, specializing in game-based learning, from Crawford College of Art & Design CIT.

I teach accounting on two level 8 degree programmes: BA Arts Management and B.Bus Entrepreneurship. My students will run music festivals, set up small businesses, be 21st Century freelance workers.

80% have not studied accounting or any business subject at second level and few would have significant Excel competency on entry.

All my accounting modules are delivered in computer labs and assessed digitally: mostly through Excel. There is no prescribed text for any accounting module. All module content is pitched at an applied level and contextualised to creative and small business environments.

From Documenting to Documentary

General and hybrid business undergraduates, who suffer a module or two of accounting over the course of their studies tend to see it as a posthumous "adding up" exercise in the service of tax compliance. A subject to be passed and then dismissed. (Lucus, U., 2002).

Chartered and Accounting degree students see it differently. To them accounting is as much about documentary as it is about documenting. Because of a different motivation towards the subject matter and a greater immersion in the material they recognise the narrative implicit in the accounting framework and process. This narrative makes accounting meaningful, personable, effective and engaging – it gives the reader a sentience and a connection to the entity the numbers describe and the human decisions behind them.

One effective way to suggest this narrative to the non-traditional accounting student is to simply shift platform: from paper to screen. If the student "plays" with an interactive gamified spreadsheet with connecting parts, multiple "what-ifs" and a Profit & Loss and Balance sheet re-presented as "data visualization", with conditional formatting and IF statement formulae indicating if key figures and outcomes are correct - thereby providing instant feedback –they tend to become more immersed and retain more learning. (Lehman, M. W., & Herring, C. E., 2003). It is important to impress upon them however that this is a tool for learning and imparting meaning. Real life financials will be less playful!

GBL	Accounting
Narrative/Storyline	Transactions
Mission	Be profitable/sustainable
Rules	Accounting Law
Game space	P&L & B'sheet
Players	Owners/Students/Taxman
Quantifiable Outcome	Balancing/KPIs
Abstract of reality	P&L & B'sheet
Feedback	Balancing/KPIs/Tax audit
Dashboard/Badges	P&L & B'sheet
Time	Deadlines
Emotional reaction	ZERO

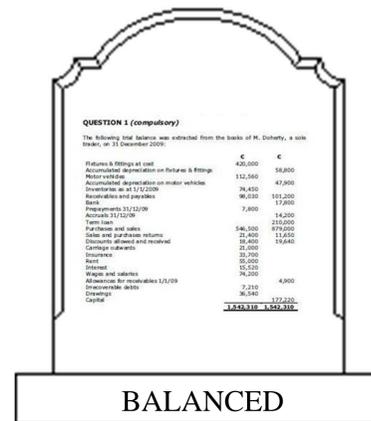
Alexander, B. (2011). The new Digital Storytelling: Creating Narratives with New media (Kindle ed.). Santa Barbara: Praeger.

Lehman, M. W., & Herring, C. E. (2003). Creating interactive spreadsheets to provide immediate feedback. *Journal of Accounting Education*, 327-337.

Lucus, U. (2002). Contradictions and uncertainties: Lecturers' conceptions of teaching Introductory Accounting. *British Accounting Review*, 183-203.

Accounting [isn't] Posthumous Tallying

This is how many students see accounting ...



Accounting is Storytelling

Accounting is storytelling – thus transactions can be written in the first person in normal language – where the student is the protagonist, in a creative or small business setting interacting with other characters: suppliers, clients, staff – suggesting participatory (digital) theatre. (Alexander, B., 2011)

Retail Consultant Ltd		Profit & Loss		Balance Sheet	
Sales	1,300.00			Total Assets	9,035.00
Cost of Sales				Fixed Assets	
Gross Profit	1,300.00			Computer Equipment	600.00
				Depreciation Provision	-50.00
less Expenses				Current Assets	
Landline	-89.00			Bank	8,185.00
Office Supplies	-200.00			Debtors	300.00
Wages	-150.00			Stock	
Depreciation	-50.00			Total Liabilities	-3,239.00
Total Expenses	-489.00			Liabilities < 1yr	
Operating Profit	811.00			Creditors	-189.00
				Wages due	-150.00
less Interest	-15.00			Liabilities > 1yr	
Profit (Loss)	796.00			Loan	-2,900.00
				A - L	5,796.00
				=	5,796.00
				Capital	5,000.00
				Share Capital	5,000.00
				Current Profit(Loss)	796.00
				Reserve	

Gamifying a Spreadsheet

- ✓ Personalise screen (Skins)
- ✓ Use hyperlinks to accounting knowledge on the net
- ✓ Students use comment boxes to make notes.
- ✓ Colour code transactions already done
- ✓ Drop down lists for jargon
- ✓ Remove/corrupt formulae (break relationships)
- ✓ Use conditional formatting to mark goals (badges), different colours for difficulty.
- ✓ Encourage students to make mistakes on their tab and then update the solution with the instructor.
- ✓ Add a timer
- ✓ Password protect solutions or unhide solution tab
- ✓ Each tab is a new/more difficult challenge
- ✓ Collectively the workbook becomes a record of students progress and a customised textbook.