



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens

English and Digital Literacies

Unit 3.2: Digital Stories in the English Language
Curriculum

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Digital stories in the EFL curriculum

One of the first decisions to be made when deciding to use digital stories in the English classroom is whether:

- The EFL teacher will create the Digital Stories or
- EFL students will do it or
- ready digital stories will be used.



EFL teachers creating their stories (1/2)

- EFL teachers may decide to create their own stories and show them to their students as a way to present new material (an interesting way to capture their attention and increase their interest in exploring new ideas).
- At the beginning of a lesson a digital story may function as a bridge between existing knowledge and new material.



EFL teachers creating their stories (2/2)

- Teacher-created digital stories may also be used to enhance current lessons within a larger unit, as a way to facilitate discussion about the topics presented in a story and as a way of making abstract or conceptual content more understandable.
- Research indicates that the use of video and multimedia helps students retain new information and aids the comprehension of difficult material (Robin, 2008).



EFL students creating their stories (1/3)

- Digital Storytelling can also be a potent tool for students who are taught to create their own stories. After viewing example digital stories created by their teachers or other story developers, students may be given assignments in which they are first asked to research a topic and then produce their story.
- This type of activity can generate interest, attention and motivation for the "digital generation" students in today's classrooms.



EFL students creating their stories (2/3)

- Students use their creative talents and they begin to tell stories of their own.
- Students who participate in the creation of digital stories may develop enhanced communications skills by learning to organize their ideas, ask questions, express opinions, and construct narratives.
- They also learn to create stories for an audience, and present their ideas and knowledge in an individual and meaningful way.



EFL students creating their stories (3/3)

- In addition, when digital stories are published on the Web, students have the opportunity to share their work with their peers and gain valuable experience in critiquing their own and other students' work (enhancing their emotional intelligence and social learning).
- Working for a digital story in groups fosters collaboration and enhances their experience through personal ownership and accomplishment (Robin, 2008).



The World of Digital Storytelling

Through creating electronic personal narratives, students become active creators, rather than passive consumers, of multimedia (Ohler, 2006).



Example of a digital story by a student (1/4)

Imagine you are watching the digital story that Kim, a 6th grader, has created for a language arts assignment. As the story opens, the computer screen slowly fills with photographs of Kim's parents, one from when they were young and another taken more recently.



Example of a digital story by a student (2/4)

Instrumental music plays in the background as family pictures appear on the screen. We hear Kim's voice telling the story of how her parents came to the United States from rural China. They worked long hours, saved their money, and eventually created a good life for their family.



Example of a digital story by a student (3/4)

Kim's narration explains that although she loved her parents, her relationship with them was often strained because they considered her unresourceful and unappreciative of her good fortune. Kim was tired of hearing about how hard life was for her parents as children.



Example of a digital story by a student (4/4)

Suddenly, Kim's story shifts to the fire that nearly destroyed her family's house. Somber music plays and photographs from the fire scroll by as Kim narrates details about the tragedy. Interspersed among the photos are Kim's original pencil drawings of her family standing by a smoldering house (Ohler, 2006).



Digital stories by students (1/2)

- **Technological Literacy** – students who create digital stories improve their skills by using software that combines a variety of multimedia tools including working with text, still images, audio, video and oftentimes, Web publishing.
- **Visual Literacy** – they develop the ability to understand, produce and communicate through visual images.



Digital stories by students (2/2)

- **Information Literacy** – students find, evaluate and synthesize information.
- **Media Literacy** – as students create the narration and soundtrack for a story, they gain skills in using microphones, digitizing audio and working with music and sound effects.



Skills development with digital stories (1/3)

- **Research Skills:** Documenting the story, finding and analyzing information.
- **Writing Skills:** Formulating a point of view and developing a script.
- **Organization Skills:** Managing the scope of the project, the materials used and the time it takes to complete the task.



Skills development with digital stories (2/3)

- **Technology Skills:** learning to use a variety of tools, such as digital cameras, scanners, microphones and multimedia authoring software.
- **Presentation Skills:** Deciding how to best present the story to an audience.
- **Interview Skills:** Finding sources to interview and determining questions to ask.



Skills development with digital stories (3/3)

- **Interpersonal Skills:** Working within a group and determining individual roles for group members.
- **Problem-Solving Skills:** Learning to make decisions and overcome obstacles at all stages of the project, from inception to completion.
- **Assessment Skills:** Gaining expertise critiquing their own and others' work.



Refernces

- Robin, B. R. (2008). Digital storytelling: A powerful technology tool for the 21st century classroom. *Theory into practice, 47*(3), 220-228.
- Ohler, J. (2006). The world of digital storytelling. *Educational leadership, 63*(4), 44-47.



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Notes

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