

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND THE CITY AT ITS CENTER

DIGITAL STORYTELLING Y LA CIUDAD EN EL CENTRO

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Narrativas digitales, idiomas modernos, desarrollo del lenguaje, redes sociales, comunicación, beneficios, desafíos, innovación.



Abstract

The city as a complex reality lends itself to research in many academic disciplines and offers the researcher a rich environment to study and explore from many perspective. From its beginnings to today, the city has evolved, grown, thrived, failed and been reborn over and over again. The fabric of a society, its people and culture, have stimulated changes in the city, the life of its citizens, the sustainability of the city itself, and the creativity of its inhabitants to remake the city to meet their needs or to become irrelevant. Therefore, urban areas can serve as a unique theme at the heart of Digital Storytelling. In this paper we focus on communication and, in particular, Digital Storytelling as a medium, a tool centered on the theme of the city and its impact on the persons who inhabit these urban spaces. The city as a theme associated with a discipline is not a novel concept but presenting it through the lenses of Digital Storytelling is new and worthy.

Resumen

La ciudad como una realidad compleja se presta para la investigación en muchas disciplinas académicas y ofrece al investigador un entorno rico para estudiar y explorar desde muchas perspectivas. Desde sus comienzos hasta hoy, la ciudad ha evolucionado, crecido, prosperado, fracasado y ha renacido una y otra vez. El tejido de una sociedad, su gente y su cultura han estimulado los cambios en la ciudad, la vida de sus ciudadanos, la sostenibilidad de la ciudad y la creatividad de sus habitantes para rehacer la ciudad para satisfacer sus necesidades o volverse irrelevantes. Por lo tanto, las áreas urbanas pueden servir como un tema único en el corazón de Digital Storytelling. En este trabajo nos centramos en la comunicación y, en particular, en el Storytelling digital como medio, una herramienta centrada en el tema de la ciudad y su impacto en las personas que habitan estos espacios urbanos. La ciudad como tema asociado a una disciplina no es un concepto nuevo, pero presentarlo a través de las lentes de Digital Storytelling es nuevo y digno de investigación.



Introduction

The city as a complex reality lends itself to research in many academic disciplines and offers the researcher a rich environment to study and explore from many perspectives. From its beginnings to today, the city has evolved, grown, thrived, failed and been reborn over and over again. The fabric of a society, its people and culture, have stimulated changes in the city, the life of its citizens, the sustainability of the city itself, and the creativity of its inhabitants to remake the city to meet their needs or to become irrelevant. Therefore, urban areas can serve as a unique theme at the heart of Digital Storytelling. In this paper, we focus on communication and, in particular, Digital Storytelling as a medium, a tool centered on the theme of the city and its impact on the persons who inhabit these urban spaces. The city as a theme associated with a discipline is not a novel concept but presenting it through the lenses of Digital Storytelling is new and worthy of research. The diverse foci of Digital Storytelling from personal to professional and the wide-range of audiences of digital storytelling from specialized and disciplinary to intimate and private are elements studied in this paper. In addition, examples of the implementation of Digital Storytelling and its impact on the authors and audiences of the communication act are also presented. Through the multidisciplinary processes involved in the development of Digital Storytelling, the students and the educators integrate curriculum, technology, introspection, analysis, evaluation, and critical thinking skills among others as they develop the Digital Story. The city as a theme presented through digital storytelling in an academic discipline offers the learner and the educator specific benefits and challenges. Suggestions for implementation of digital storytelling techniques and analysis of present practices are included in this paper.

Objectives

The objectives of this paper are to present the basic elements of Digital Storytelling and their implementation in the modern language classroom. By doing so, the benefits and challenges of the Digital Storytelling process are presented. Examples of evaluation rubrics, self-assessment tools and innovative uses of social media in Digital Storytelling are included. The authors also hypothesized on future developments of Digital Storytelling in light of new technology.

Methodology

The project follows a methodology of teaching innovation based on the incorporation of techniques, strategies and applications for the incorporation of Digital Storytelling in the classroom. In sections 4 and 5 the procedure and instruments used for its development are described in detail.

1. Definition of Digital Storytelling

For the purpose of this paper, Digital Storytelling is an act of communication in which complex communicative and linguistic processes take place. The basic aspects of storytelling: a storyteller, a story, and an audience are the essential elements of Digital Storytelling. This formula has been utilized since humans began to communicate using drawings and sounds up to the present time using computers and TICs to convey



the story.

In Africa and the Caribbean, for examples, storytelling times were vital to the evolution of the community. Children were taught important life skills that were designed to help them function in their community. Adults also benefit from storytelling moments as it could be used to pass on political views and important lessons for the betterment of the community. Storytelling was also used to instill morality and religious views in the people. The format was always the same, a storyteller, a story, an audience, and the use of music and musical instrument to convey the message. The content depended on the storyteller and most of the time involved nature as a conduit to extract and disseminate knowledge. (Asihene, 1997)

The goal of traditional storytelling was to convey messages directly from the storyteller to the live audience. The African or Caribbean storyteller used a call-and-response format to keep the audience engaged and to make sure the messages were reaching the audience. Today's digital storytelling can be compared to traditional storytelling practices in oral cultures. The format is similar and involves a storyteller, a story, a digital platform, an audience and a message to a targeted audience. Music and other media are also part of the package (Harris et. al., 1973)

The Digital Storytelling Association in 2011 presented a brief but accurate view of the evolution of storytelling through history and its representation in Digital Storytelling: "Digital storytelling is the modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling. Throughout history, storytelling has been used to share knowledge, wisdom, and values. Stories have taken many different forms. Stories have been adapted to each successive medium that has emerged, from the circle of the campfire to the silver screen, and now the computer screen." (Digital Storytelling Association, 2011, pág. 1)

2. Why use Digital Storytelling in the Modern Language Classroom?

As language educators, we know the importance and benefits of communication in human interaction and the Digital Story is a medium that our students can employ to produce higher levels of communication in a short, focused, structured and comprehensible manner. Digital storytelling, as a tool within the language class, integrates an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning. Many disciplines and techniques that students have developed during their studies or in everyday use of technology and communication will be employed in the development of the Digital Story.

Many researchers of Digital Storytelling have emphasized the emotional aspect of digital stories but B. R. Robin in the Power of Digital Storytelling to Support Teaching and Learning (2016) supports the role of personal stories created to communicate on a wide range of topic. In this paper we have selected the City as the topic of the digital story in view of its relevance in the life of our students and the global importance of the city for all cultures.

Digital Storytelling is used at all levels of education from Elementary to Higher Education. Smeda, Dakich,



and Sharda in their article: The effectiveness of digital storytelling in the classrooms: a comprehensive study, in *Smart Learning Environments* (2014), presents their research on the implementation of Digital Storytelling at the elementary and secondary levels in Australia. In their conclusion the researchers point to the benefits of Digital Storytelling in the classroom by developing a positive personal image and supporting social interaction. In addition, Digital Storytelling Educators emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary education and a Digital Storytelling project employs digital media, integration of communication skills and knowledge of language and culture to create a unique story. Moreover, in today's culture where technology and the last "must have gadget" seem to rule the world around us, storytelling has taken a whole new direction. Storytellers are able to engage their audience's senses to convey meanings and activate different reactions using a plethora of platforms. Also, the audience is no longer a small group of people in a single location. Hence, the world becomes an interactive audience who is ready to respond and react to the story at the very moment it is being told at a click of a button. Digital Storytelling creates a classroom without borders.

Digital Storytelling fosters implementation of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity (The Four C's). Educators worldwide have established the importance of the Four Cs in preparing students for success in the classroom and beyond. The National Education Association (NEA) has emphasized the importance of the incorporation of the Four Cs: critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation across the curriculum. Through the use of Digital Storytelling educators can incorporate these skills into their courses (National Education Association, 2011)

1. *Critical thinking* is an integral part of a well-developed story. The author must gather information, ask questions, analyze data, evaluate results, synthesize, and reflect to arrive at conclusions. In Digital Storytelling the author must select the story to be told, the format used to present the story, the resources needed to accomplish the storytelling goal and select the media components needed to present the story as the author envisions it while fulfilling the author's purpose. Critical thinking will be a central tool for the author throughout the draft, development, and successful conclusion of the story.
2. *Communication* is at the heart of the Digital Storytelling act. The authors will communicate thoughts, feelings, knowledge, opinions, facts, fantasies, aspirations, and other information in an effort to communicate with others. The communication tools available to the author are language, sound, images, and other forms of media and technology. The use of these tools will bolster the audience's comprehension, promote the author's purpose and enhance the effectiveness of the story. Understanding of the audience, its culture and discreet language preferences will increase the success of the communication act and the storytelling itself.
3. *Collaboration* is an essential element to understanding and communication. In a story the author and the audience form an alliance to facilitate communication and understanding. They are collaborating and supporting each other as they reach the goal of comprehension and recognition of each other's role in the communication process. The storytelling must focus on the audience and



the audience must be open to perceiving the story for communication to occur. They form a team of collaborators united in an act of communication.

4. Creativity is a crucial characteristic of Digital Storytelling. The author must create the story in words, images, and sounds that recreate the environment, the ambiance, the characters, the visual and audio aspect of the story envisioned in the author's mind and presented it to the audience utilizing media to promote effective communication.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has mapped out five important skills associated with language proficiency for 21st century language learners. Based on ACTFL's and researchers' these skills offer educators, learners and others models of integration of 21st Century skills throughout the language curriculum.

There is a direct parallel between the 21st century NEA skill set and the ACTFL language standards presented in the 21st century skills map. ACTFL offers the 5 C's: *Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons* and *Communities*. Reinforcing the 5 C's or goals are the NEA's 4 C's. Without *critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity* the learners cannot accomplish the ACTFL 5 language standards or utilize the three modes of language communication to convey and receive messages effectively. According to the norms established by ACTFL, these three modes are "interpersonal, or two-way interaction with someone else; interpretive, the ability to understand and interpret a one-way aural or written text; and presentational, the ability to present information in either a written or oral format. These modes reflect how people communicate in real life (ACTFL, Skills Map, 2011).

Within Digital Storytelling in the Modern Language classroom process, all three modes of communication are utilized in the target language:

Step 1. *Interpersonal communication* is essential to conceptualize the storyline, peer support groups offer suggestions, research on the city for development of the storyboard (beginning, problem, conflict, solution, ending) and script consultation with the instructor for suggestions on revisions of the digital story through research and development.

Step 2. *Interpretive communication* is essential to understanding and selection of appropriate research sites, analyze recommendations from peers and instructor and select images, sounds and music as well as video and still images that will be incorporated into the digital story enriching the final product.

Step 3. *Presentational communication* is vital to bringing the linguistic, cultural, and media components of the digital story to life and sharing the story both orally and in writing. Feedback from peers and instructor as well as reflection by the storyteller is the final elements of the digital storytelling process.

The eight steps illustrated below in the Digital Story process by the University of Houston (2011) are incorporated in the three modes of language communication throughout the digital story development process.

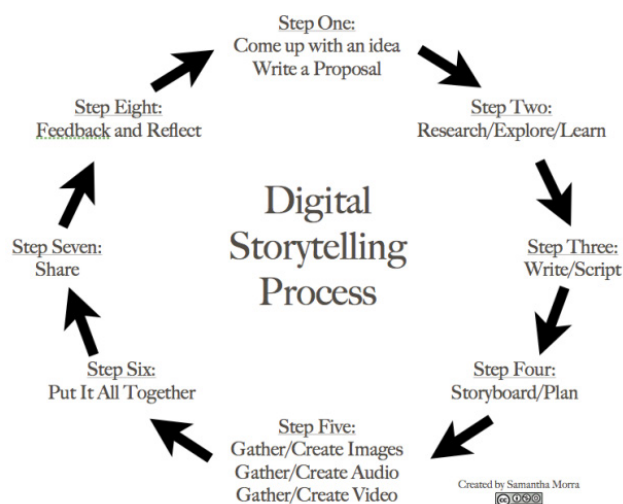


Figure 1. Exploring How Digital Tools Transform Learning.
Fuente: Samathamorra.com

2.1. Challenges to implementation of Digital Storytelling

Challenges for educators may relate to the use of new technology and time constraints. Students and educators may feel intimidated by the Digital Storytelling multimedia process. For example, although students may be familiar with using social media, they may experience difficulties learning how to incorporate new multimedia application in their project. This issue may be address with preparation and a well-defined rubric. Instructors are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the specific platforms they recommend for use by the students. Because time constraint can be related to familiarization with the use of technology and time limits for instruction, it is recommended that students and faculty utilize technological resources available at their institution to support the implementation of digital resources.

3. Evaluation of the Digital Storytelling Project

The University of Houston Digital Educational Uses Of Digital Storytelling website offers many resources for the development and evaluation of Digital Stories at the following website: <http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/archive/rubrics.html>

Here is an example of one of the resources offered for evaluation of a graduate level digital storytelling course:

Sample Grading Rubrics for Student Digital Storytelling Project

Sample 1

The Digital Storytelling Project is worth a maximum of 28 points based on the following 7 grading categories:



DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROJECT	Outstanding	Good	Average	Poor	No Credit
1. Purpose of the Project	Establishes a purpose early on and maintains a clear focus throughout.	Establishes a purpose early on and maintains focus for most of the project.	There are a few lapses in focus, but the purpose is fairly clear.	It is difficult to understand the full purpose of the project.	No purpose is included or the project was not submitted.
	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
2. The Script is Well Written and Establishes a Meaningful Purpose for the Story and Maintains a Clear Focus Throughout Until Reaching a Logical Conclusion	The script is extremely well written and contains all of the required elements, including a meaningful purpose, clear focus and logical conclusion.	The script is well written and contains all of the required elements, including a meaningful purpose, clear focus and logical conclusion.	The script is written in an adequate manner and contains most of the required elements, including a meaningful purpose, clear focus and logical conclusion. However, with additional effort, it could be even better.	The script is poorly written lacks a meaningful purpose, clear focus and logical conclusion. Additional work on the script is definitely needed.	The script was poorly written and does not contain the required elements, or no final project was submitted.
	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points



3. Audio Narration was of High Quality and Loud Enough to be Heard Clearly; and Music, if used, was Mixed at the Right Level and Appropriate for the Content of the Project	The project contains excellent high-quality audio narration that can be clearly heard and understood. In addition, if music was used, it was mixed at the correct level and perfectly complemented the content of the project.	The project contains good -quality audio narration that can be clearly heard and understood. In addition, the music was mixed at a good level and nicely complemented the content of the project.	The project contains fair -quality audio narration that could be improved with additional effort. The mixing of the music could also be improved so that it can adequately complement the content of the project.	The project contains poor -quality audio narration that need a significant amount of additional effort. In addition, the music was not mixed at the correct level so it did not complement the content of the project.	The audio narration was difficult to understand needs to be re-recorded. In addition, the music was not mixed at the proper level or was not appropriate for the project; or no final project was submitted.
	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points

DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROJECT	Outstanding	Good	Average	Poor	No Credit
3. Audio Narration was of High Quality and Loud Enough to be Heard Clearly; and Music, if used, was Mixed at the Right Level and Appropriate for the Content of the Project	The project contains excellent high-quality audio narration that can be clearly heard and understood. In addition, if music was used, it was mixed at the correct level and perfectly complemented the content of the project.	The project contains good -quality audio narration that can be clearly heard and understood. In addition, the music was mixed at a good level and nicely complemented the content of the project.	The project contains fair -quality audio narration that could be improved with additional effort. The mixing of the music could also be improved so that it can adequately complement the content of the project.	The project contains poor -quality audio narration that need a significant amount of additional effort. In addition, the music was not mixed at the correct level so it did not complement the content of the project.	The audio narration was difficult to understand needs to be re-recorded. In addition, the music was not mixed at the proper level or was not appropriate for the project; or no final project was submitted.
	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points



<p>4. Project Includes Clear, Well Focused, Well Exposed Images Taken with a Digital Camera and/ or Downloaded from the Web</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate excellent proficiency using a digital camera and downloading images from the Web.</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate good proficiency using a digital camera and downloading images from the Web.</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate average proficiency using a digital camera and downloading images from the Web.</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate poor proficiency using a digital camera and downloading images from the Web.</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate no proficiency using a digital camera and downloading images from the Web, or the project was not submitted.</p>
<p>5. Project Includes Some Digital Images that Were Created with or Clearly Improved through the Use of Digital Image Editing Software</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate excellent proficiency using digital image editing software.</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate good proficiency using digital image editing software.</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate average proficiency using digital image editing software.</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate poor proficiency using digital image editing software.</p>	<p>The images used in the project demonstrate no proficiency using digital image editing software, or the project was not submitted.</p>
<p>6. Choice of Software Programs Used to Create the Final Project Were Used Effectively and Appropriate for the Content</p>	<p>The project demonstrates that the software used was appropriate and presented the content in an excellent manner.</p>	<p>The project demonstrates that the software used was appropriate and presented the content well.</p>	<p>The project demonstrates that the software used was mostly appropriate and presented the content adequately.</p>	<p>The project demonstrates that the software used was not really appropriate and the content was poorly presented. Additional work on the project is definitely needed.</p>	<p>The software used was inappropriate for the project and the content was not adequately presented, or no final project was submitted.</p>
	<p>4 points</p>	<p>3 points</p>	<p>2 points</p>	<p>1 point</p>	<p>0 points</p>



7. Choice of Content is Appropriate for the Topic and Contains an Instructional Component	The content used in creating the project demonstrates an excellent connection to the topic and could easily be used in an instructional setting.	The content used in creating the project demonstrates a good connection to the topic and could be used in an instructional setting.	The content used in creating the project demonstrates a fair connection to the topic and probably could be used in an instructional setting.	The content used in creating the project demonstrates a poor connection to the topic and could only be used in an instructional setting with considerable modification.	The content used in creating the project demonstrates no connection to the topic and could not be used in an instructional setting, or the project was not submitted.
	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points

Table 1. Fuente: digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu (<https://goo.gl/a9SmX8>)

Sample 2

Rubric ID: 237329
Find out how to make this rubric interactive

Digital Storytelling : Multimedia

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Point of View	Establishes a purpose and maintains clear focus; strong awareness of audience	Focuses on a purpose; communicates with an audience	Some evidence of communicating with an audience for a specific purpose; some lapse in focus	Limited awareness of audience and/or purpose
Dramatic Question	Realization is dramatically different from expectation	Realization differs from expectation	Realization from expectation is subtle	Realization and expectation do not differ
Emotional Content	Audience is deeply and emotionally engaged	Audience is emotionally engaged	Audience lapses in emotional engagement	Audience has little to no emotional engagement
The Gift of Your Voice	Consistency in presentation; speaking slowly in a conversational style	Consistency in presentation; speaking in conversational style	Some consistency in presentation; lapses in conversational style to monologue	Breaking consistency; monologue style of presentation
The Power of the Soundtrack	Music sets up a rich emotional response; all music is original	Music sets up an emotional response; most music is original	Music is evident; some music is original	Inappropriate choice of music
Economy	Sequential composition; succinct; images create an atmosphere and/or tone, and may communicate symbolism and/or metaphors	Sequential composition; succinct; images create an atmosphere and/or tone	Sequential composition; succinct; images are controlled/logical	Sequential composition; images are acceptable
Pacing	Engaging rhythm; use of punctuation; suggestions of emotions via sound effects; use of "white space"; enhanced vitality	Engaging rhythm; use of punctuation; some suggestions of emotions via sound effects; use of "white space"; evidence of vitality	Some rhythm; some use of punctuation; limited suggestions of emotions via sound effects; lapses in vitality	Mechanical rhythm; limited use of punctuation; limited vitality

Date Created: October 01, 2003

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Table 2. Sample 2. Fuente: rubistar.4teachers.org (<https://goo.gl/PxyekL>)



A comparison of these two rubrics offers the instructor categories and point values divided into specific areas common to all digital stories. These two examples can be utilized as a starting point for the development of a discipline specific rubric compatible for each discipline. In the case of Modern Languages these rubrics can be combined with language specific rubrics measuring aspect of communication in the target language and use of specific material and resources as established by the instructor.

4. Focus on the City

The following tasks and guidelines will be implemented in the classes completing the digital storytelling pilot project at UCF in spring 2018.

For the Digital Storytelling project focused on the city, each student will perform the following steps:

1. Conduct research on a City in a target country, collect data on the city itself, its cultural characteristics, its inhabitants and significant landmarks and unique aspects of the city. Once the research has been completed, the student will select an area, monument, social theme, legend, historical figure or other topic centered in the city and of significance to the student;
2. In view of the research, the student will ask the following questions to focus the project on priorities and purpose:
 - a) What is the purpose of the story?
 - b) Why is its significant?
 - c) What do I want my audience to know about the city and my focus?
 - d) What do I want the audience to learn from my story?
3. Prepare a storyboard with the basic components required for an initial evaluation of your story. Include a beginning, a problem, a conflict, a solution and an ending;
4. Write the script / text for the story keeping in mind your focus, audience and purpose;
5. Select images that are significant to the theme or focus selected for the story. Evaluate the images for effectiveness, emotional impact, and cultural significance;
6. Select the sound, music (reference commercial music or use available open sources), and other audio considerations for the story. Evaluate significance to the theme and focus, emotional impact, position within the multimedia presentation, and cultural significance of the audio selection;
7. Re-evaluate your script to coincide with the images, video, voice and other multimedia components of your digital story. Speak in a clear, well-paced manner;



8. Include correct citation and bibliography for all material that is not original. Use the format accepted for this class when citing the materials from other sources;
9. Utilize the web authoring resources recommended for this course (See web authoring tools handout);
10. Review and finalize your digital story for posting on the course website.

5. Self-Assessment and Evaluation

5.1 Assessment

The student will submit a written report addressing the 10 steps required in this project. This report will be a self-assessment check sheet of completion of the 10 steps.

5.2 Assessment

Upon completion of the project the students will be asked to answer a self-assessment questionnaire that the instructors will utilize for feedback and revision of the project for future implementation of the digital storytelling project.

5.3 Formal Evaluation 1-language specific

The language specific evaluations will measure the use of the target language based on the AP language exam rubric and the six categories of presentational language use: strong, good, fair, weak, poor, and unacceptable. Each category has descriptor addressing language usage and effectiveness. AP Scoring Guidelines are available at: https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap14_spanish_language_scoring_guidelines.pdf

5.4 Formal Evaluation 2-project specific

The project specific evaluation will measure effectiveness of the digital story in the categories of purpose, focus, and effective and appropriate use of images, sounds, music, voice, cultural relevance, and timing. The rubric consists of four discreet categories: outstanding, good, average and poor with standards within each category clearly established (See University of Huston rubric above, Figure 2).

5.5 Formal Evaluation 3-student final written reflection

Each student will present a final reflection that addresses the following aspects of the project in the target language:

1. Describe the challenges you encountered during your research, development and final presentation of your digital story
2. Describe the most important learning outcomes relevant to target language skills you gained from



this project, i.e. speaking, reading, writing and listening production and comprehension

3. Describe how this project enhanced your knowledge of the target culture and understanding of the target city.
4. Reflect on how the use of digital media supported your language and cultural learning experience.

6. Innovative use of Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling is a ubiquitous form of communication that lends itself to new media and new potential for global communication. The interconnectivity between the storyteller and the audience has opened the realm of possibilities for implementation and development of digital stories in the classroom and beyond. Dr. Manuel Gertrudix et al. in their paper *El lenguaje sonoro en los relatos digitales interactivos* signals the capacity for development of new formats and models thanks to the availability of new technology and the Internet. Gertrudix affirms the following:

“La narrativa digital interactiva dispone de una extraordinaria capacidad de recursos para el desarrollo de nuevos formatos y modelos de relato y formas de vivenciarlos. El desarrollo tecnológico que acompaña la evolución de internet va nutriendo las opciones que los nuevos narradores poseen para contar historias en los entornos digitales. Dicha experimentación supone, indudablemente, reconfigurar los límites de los lenguajes sobre cuyas sustancias se han habilitado las narrativas literaria y audio-visual, para capitalizar las dimensiones multimedia e interactiva que son medulares en los nuevos medios” (Gertrudix, M. et al. 2017)

6.1 Examples of use of new media in Digital Storytelling

While the digital format allows access to a larger audience and offers the possibility to include a diverse selection of social media tools to reach the audience and to elicit different reactions from those on the receiving end through a call to action. The call for action is a comment or a request for a response engaging the audience and the development of the digital story. This aspect is very similar to that used in traditional storytelling in Africa and in the Caribbean. The digital platform allows for interaction between the story teller and the audience and vice versa. The fact remains that digital storytelling is still a powerful educational tool similar to traditional storytelling. In addition, the learning platform has extended beyond the scope of nature as a repository of knowledge to include all types of environments, both natural and electronic. Therefore, whatever the milieu, digital storytelling can be used to help the storyteller convey the message and the audience to respond to the call for participation in the storytelling act. In this paper, the city is at the center of the digital storytelling platform.

Snapchat

Another interesting aspect of digital storytelling today is the fact that the platform and the audience can become storytellers as well, based on the medium used by both sides.



Snap Map is a digital tool created by Snap, for Snapchat in 2017. It has become one of these tools millennial learners are using to tell their stories to their audience and it fits perfectly with the city as the center. With Snap Map, storytellers can immediately snap videos of their immediate surroundings all across the world. Snap describes this new App as a means to “view Snaps of sporting events, celebrations, breaking news, and more from all across the world. If you and a friend follow one another on Snapchat, you can share your locations with each other so you can see where they’re at and what’s going on around them...” This is clearly a new way to tell your personal immediate story and to get a reaction from your audience. The audience can know exactly what is happening in any given city and can react instantly to the story being told. Storytellers, can shape their city story in a snap! (<https://9to5mac.com/2017/06/21/snapchat-snap-map-update/>).

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

Other social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, allow users to tell their story instantaneously adding digital media, text, and other multimedia components to share with their followers. For example, in times of natural disasters, political unrest and other emergencies, users can communicate to their family and friends, via their digital stories their situation and what is happening around them in a moment. Facebook for example has the feature “*I am safe*” which can be utilized in times of emergencies. During the hurricanes in September 2017, the public was immediately engaged and could experience the circumstances others were suffering through their digital personal stories. Instagram, for example, includes a selection of editing tools in their application to enhance the images incorporated in the digital story. Therefore, the storyteller has the ability to present a more polished digital story to the audience as opposed to Snapchat where users can be more creative in a lighthearted manner. Twitter, on the other hand, is more politically and business oriented. Storytellers use this platform to bring awareness to sociopolitical issues and to engage the audience.

6.2 Other examples of Digital Storytelling for non-educational purposes

Asociación Española de Storytelling

The Asociación Española de Storytelling (ASEST) began in 2016 and is focused on the implementation of digital storytelling in the areas of marketing, sales, human resources and finance. This association supports the use of storytelling as a tool in the marketplace. ASEST highlights the importance of emotions and feelings in an effective story and develops the professional status of the storyteller through certification courses, workshops and conferences in related field. <http://asest.es/>

University of Central Florida

The *I Am UCF* Project is a Digital narrative program initiated through an award by the Quality Enhancement Program to develop personal digital narratives focused on diversity at the University of Central Florida. This project has developed digital stories from a student’s perspective on what it is to be a member of the UCF community. There is an interactive map that connects the story to a building or area on the UCF



campus that is significant to the student. This project will be expanded in the spring 2018 to include digital storytelling in pilot courses with a focus on UCF as a community and its impact on the lives of those who study at UCF. <https://iamucf.cah.ucf.edu/>

The *Be You* project is another digital storytelling project underway at UCF. In this project students, faculty and other UCF personnel present a reflection on their life story that makes each one of us unique but yet unites us as part of the human race. These stories highlight the diversity that makes UCF a rich community. <https://diversity.ucf.edu/events/be-you/>

Conclusion

The city as the theme presented through the medium of Digital Storytelling permits the educator and the student to explore integration of a multimedia approach to language teaching. Through a multidisciplinary method, the storyteller relates the personal impact the city has had on the individual. For our purposes, Digital Storytelling is an act of communication that incorporates complex communication and linguistic processes utilizing multimedia tools. This process enriches the curriculum and fosters integration of technology, critical thinking skills, writing, self-evaluation, introspection and the development of language skills in a discipline-specific digital story.

The benefits of using Digital Storytelling in a Modern Language course include using the target language in a culturally relevant context. Preparation, development and conclusion of the Digital Story involves communication among peers, instructors and utilization of resources in the target country. Students will utilize language in a personal, creative manner. As for the challenges, users may encounter difficulties when asked to use technology that is new to them. Time spent on learning new technology maybe a negative factor in completing the project within a limited time frame. However, the benefits far more outweigh the challenges.

An additional challenge is finding your own voice. Some students may feel that they cannot tell the story in an entertaining or acceptable way. J. Lambert addresses this issue in his *Digital Storytelling Cookbook* stating "... we are aware that most of us carry around a little voice, an editor, that tells us that what we have to say is not entertaining or substantial enough to be heard. That editor is a composite figure of everyone in our lives who has diminished our sense of creative ability, from family members, to teachers, to employers, to society as a whole" (Lambert, 2010). As educators we can address this limiting belief with modeling and peer support in small groups interaction.

Within the storytelling components, self-assessment and formal evaluation should be considered for the academic use of the digital story. This process supports student's ownership of the project and promotes personal growth and accountability. Formal evaluation allows the instructor to measure teaching and learning effectiveness and develop new strategies for improvement of the digital storytelling process.

Digital Storytelling is aligned with today's technological age. Most students are familiar with digital platforms, social media, and their use. Applications such as Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter



are evolving and users are communicating their stories in creative ways. Both storytellers and audience interchange roles for instantaneous communication. The Digital Storytelling frontier is wide open for innovation and facilitates a classroom without borders.

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