Chapter 55

Telling Tales with Talking Texts:
Developing Language and Literacy with Digital Tools

Sheila Flihan
The College of Saint Rose, USA

ABSTRACT

Using a case study design, this study examined how Microsoft Photo Story 3 for digital storytelling influenced the language and literacy development of an eighteen-year-old English Language Learner. It describes the role of digital storytelling in the development of oral fluency, word knowledge, grammar, and language use. Data included semi-structured participant interviews, conversations with the parent as key informant, and artifacts including the participant's notes, written and recorded drafts, and final digital text. From a sociocognitive perspective, findings indicate that Microsoft Photo Story 3 is a collaborative tool that creates student centered teaching and learning experiences. Findings indicate that multiple written and recorded drafts composed during the digital storytelling process provided focus for language and literacy instruction and encouraged use of reading, writing, listening, and speaking during all stages of the composing process. Findings have the potential to inform how we teach and learn with digital tools and texts.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the "Internet and other forms of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are redefining the nature of reading, writing, and communication" (International Reading Association, 2009, p.1). They are also redefining what it means to be a literate person in the 21st century. According to the National Council of Teachers of English (2008), the ability to use technology for creating, communicating, and consuming information is essential for literacy. *The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* reflect the positions of these organizations. Currently adopted by forty-five states and three U.S. territories, these standards characterize students who are prepared for college

and career as able to "use technology and digital media strategically and capably…to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p.7).

Current notions of what it means to be literate in today's society reflect the technology driven lives of learners in our K-12, college, and university classrooms. In 2010, the Pew Research Center shed light on technology use among the eighteen to twenty-nine-year-old Americans who make up the Millennial Generation. Born in the '80s and 90's, 61% of those surveyed viewed their generation as "unique and distinct from other generations" and 24% said technology "sets their group apart" (Pew Research Center, 2010, p.13). The majority of Millennials surveyed viewed technology positively. In fact, 74% responded that "new technology makes life easier" (Pew Research Center, 2010, p. 26). It also helps them stay socially connected. Slightly more than half (54%) reported "new technology makes people closer to their friends and family" (Pew Research Center, 2010, p.26).

The 2010 Kaiser Report suggests that technology is equally important in the lives of Generation M2 (Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, 2010). On average, the eight to eighteen-year-old survey respondents used media such as television, computers, video games, music, and movies for seven hours and thirty-eight minutes each day (Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, 2010, p.2). When we consider that this group also engages in forty-nine additional minutes of daily cell phone media use (Rideout, Foehr and Roberts, 2010, p.18), it becomes clear that Generation M2 engages with media longer than most adults are in the workplace (p.2).

Learning experiences that utilize digital tools for reading, writing, listening, and speaking may make it possible for educators to connect to the everyday lives of their students while fostering the language and literacy skills that the 21st century demands. This chapter explores this possibility by examining a case study of the ways in which creating a digital text with Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows promoted the English language and literacy development of a linguistically diverse adolescent. Specifically, this chapter describes the powerful role that digital storytelling played in the learner's oral fluency, word knowledge, and composing process.

A SOCIOCOGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

A sociocognitive perspective of language and literacy informs this study of digital storytelling. Based on this perspective, literacy is the processes and practices of constructing and communicating meaning that are valued and fostered among members of particular social or cultural groups (Langer, 1987). Members of these groups develop and refine their literacy through their interactions with other, more skilled group members who model literacy by creating and conveying meaning in ways deemed appropriate and valuable within the community (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Wertsch, 1993). From a sociocognitive perspective, literacy is never static. The tools, processes and practices of literacy are constantly evolving based on the needs and values of the community members. In the 21st century, membership in actual and virtual communities requires the use of digital tools and texts to create and communicate meaning (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004).

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Digital storytellers "[c]ombine the age-old tradition of storytelling with the latest technology and the result is a compelling tool that motivates students to read more and write better. The technique is called digital storytelling…" (Feldman, 2007, p.9). It is a multimedia process, product, and tool

Related Content

Improving Collaborative Filtering Algorithms: Sentiment-based Approach in Social Network
Firas Ben Kharrat, Aymen Elkhleifiand Rim Faiz (2020). *Natural Language Processing: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 638-657).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/improving-collaborative-filtering-algorithms/239958

Data Extrapolation via Curve Modeling in Analyzing Risk: Value Anticipation for Decision Making
Dariusz Jacek Jakóbczak (2020). *Natural Language Processing: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1379-1407).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/data-extrapolation-via-curve-modeling-in-analyzing-risk/239996

Leadership and the Function of Discourse on International Political Economy
Pinar Altiok Gurel, Recep Yilmaz, Nevin Ozgur Cambazand Nurten Yilmaz (2014). *Computational Linguistics: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 132-145).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/leadership-and-the-function-of-discourse-on-international-political-economy/108718

Natural Language Processing Tools
Justin F. Brunelleand Chutima Boonthum-Denecke (2012). *Cross-Disciplinary Advances in Applied Natural Language Processing: Issues and Approaches (pp. 9-23).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/natural-language-processing-tools/64577

Can Computers Create Comics and Animations?
Miki Ueno, Kiyohito Fukudaand Naoki Mori (2020). *Natural Language Processing: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1058-1084).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/can-computers-create-comics-and-animations/239979