

Using Digital Storytelling to Support EFL Learning in China

By

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Bachelor of Arts, Guangxi University, 2013

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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With the arrival of the digital age, it has become an inevitable trend to integrate technology into curriculum. Although many classrooms in China are equipped with computers and other digital devices, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers still fail to take full advantage of digital technology for educational use. Digital storytelling is still a new approach that has not gained popularity in EFL teaching in China. However, digital technology offers unprecedented potentiality of facilitating EFL learning, stimulating learning interest, and reducing learning anxiety. Furthermore, digital storytelling is regarded as a differentiated strategy that helps instructors adapt the curriculum to meet diverse needs of students.

In this project, the value of digital storytelling is explored along with the feasibility of integrating digital storytelling into EFL classes in China. This project culminates with the development of a guidebook with the purpose of both preparing EFL teachers for the implementation of digital storytelling in EFL learning in China and helping them achieve curriculum differentiation competence.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Project

Along with the arrival of the digital age, computers are no longer unaffordable luxuries for many people in the 21st century. On the contrary, computers have become an integral part of our daily lives and are widely applied in various fields, especially in education. In China, take Hebei Province as an example. The proportion of schools with computers connected to the Internet is nearly 98% (Liu, Zuo & Zhao, 2013). However, although the availability of computers in academic settings reaches a high level in China, the application of digital technology for educational use is still in a preliminary stage. As noted by Liu, Zuo & Zhao (2013), “the vast majority of teachers use the advanced devices, including multimedia devices, interactive whiteboards, and etc... for just displaying courses content in exchange of attracting students’ learning interest and attention” (p. 333). Teachers still heavily rely on traditional teaching methods like textbook-based instruction and test-oriented teaching, and do not make full use of information technology in education even when their classrooms are equipped with modern technology devices like computers (Liu, Zuo & Zhao, 2013). In fact, digital technology offers unprecedented potentiality of enhancing learning experience.

Digital storytelling is such a method that could effectively stimulate students’ learning interests, spark creativity, cultivate sense of audience, bridge school and community, and hone computer skills (Frazel, 2010; Miller, 2010). Most importantly, literature has asserted that digital storytelling especially paves way for EFL learning in terms of the development of students’ writing and speaking skills (Miller, 2010; Kim, 2014). Also, digital storytelling has the potential of lowering EFL learners’ anxiety levels and engaging students in an active learning process (Yoon, 2012; Lence, 2013).

Furthermore, digital storytelling is regarded as a differentiated strategy that helps instructors differentiate the curriculum to meet diverse needs of students (Figg, Gonsoulin & McCartney, 2009).

Given that digital storytelling is a relatively new approach and has not gained popularity in Chinese schools yet, the present study is set up to investigate the following questions: How feasible is it to adopt this technology-based learning method in Chinese EFL classes? What are effective ways to prepare Chinese EFL teachers for the implementation of digital storytelling in China? In an attempt to answer the first question, the author explores the value of digital storytelling and analyzes the necessity and the appropriateness of integrating digital storytelling into EFL learning process in China.

Then, the author proceeds to design a guidebook with the purpose of both assisting Chinese EFL teachers to better employ digital storytelling in their instruction and helping them achieve curriculum differentiation competence. Since culture plays a key role in shaping values, attitudes, beliefs and norms of behaviour, cultural factors are also taken into account when creating this guidebook. Knowing that culture differs from one country to another, guidance given in this handbook is especially designed based on Chinese context. Hopefully, this project could ignite Chinese EFL teachers' passion towards digital storytelling and help them get the hang of this new approach.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

English, as a dominant global language, is widely used in the cross-cultural communication process. China, a non-English speaking country, considers English proficiency as a needed skill for its citizens to participate in international cooperation and global competition, thus laying great emphasis on this subject (Li, 2005). China Daily (2005) reveals that English is a key compulsory course in China and there are approximately 350 million Chinese students who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL). However, EFL teaching in China is still shown to be ineffective as supported by research by Li (2009) and Liu (2009). The reality is that the prevailing teaching techniques adopted by EFL teachers are always in traditional teacher-directed and test-oriented models where teachers do most of the talking and students show less interest in learning (Li, 2009; Liu, 2009). As a result, a lack of motivation and students' reticence have become Chinese EFL learners' most notable problems (Liu, 2009). A research project conducted to study mainland Chinese EFL learners' reticence level in English class reported that 83.3% of Chinese students kept silent in English class and over 70% surveyed teachers considered students' unwillingness to participate in class discussion as their biggest challenge (Liu, 2009). Liu (2009) made it clear that besides the textbook-centered teaching approach, low oral English proficiency was another key factor that led to inactive class participation. Approximately 63.3% of Chinese students surveyed indicated that they had difficulty in expressing their ideas in oral English (Liu, 2009). How to improve students' English proficiency while making the learning process an enjoyable experience becomes an urgent challenge faced by many EFL teachers in China.

As suggested by scholars (Abdel-Hack & Helwa, 2004; Clipson-Boyles, 2012; Frazel, 2010; Green, 2013; Liu, 2009), there are several ways to solve the aforementioned problem: (a) improve students' oral English skills; (b) stimulate students' motivation and learning interests; and (c) make students feel the need to talk and make their voice heard. Digital storytelling is a compelling pedagogical method that EFL instructors can employ to offer the opportunities mentioned above.

As one of the most accessible pedagogical strategies, storytelling is widely used in language instruction (Clarke & Adam, 2011). Storytelling has the potential to motivate and engage language learners to concentrate on the contextual use of language rather than monotonous vocabulary acquisition (Green, 2013). Students gain linguistic benefits in a more natural way. The implementation of storytelling in EFL class displays the possibilities of improving story comprehension, reading fluency, linguistic accuracy and building students' sociocultural identities (Green, 2013; Skinner, 2008). Also, students gain self-confidence and self-esteem through drawing upon their cultural background and past personal experience (Figg, Gonsoulin & McCartney, 2009).

Thanks to the arrival of the new digital age, it has become an inevitable trend to integrate technology into curriculum. By incorporating Web 2.0 technologies into storytelling, students are able to find their voice, produce professional-quality work, reach more authentic external audiences, and improve language skills in an engaging learning environment (Frazel, 2010). Digital storytelling turns flat one-dimensional writing into a multi-modal narrative and provides multiple ways for students to express themselves and experience success.

Storytelling in educational settings ranges from a focus on teachers as storytellers to student-produced storytelling project (Daniel, 2013; Miller, 2010). The interest of this project is to review the literature concerning student-generated digital storytelling for EFL instruction. In this project, the author begins with a theoretical framework. Then a brief introduction to digital storytelling will be presented, followed by the section regarding how digital storytelling could support EFL learning. Finally, the author proceeds to discuss assessment strategies for digital storytelling projects.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is defined by Benjamin (2014) as “a variety of classroom practices that allow for differences in students’ learning styles, interests, prior knowledge, socialization needs, and comfort zones” (p. 1). Generally speaking, teachers could accommodate students’ needs, skill levels and learning preference by differentiating the following three aspects: content, process and product. Schlemmer and Schlemmer (2007) made it clear that

Content is what we want students to know and be able to do; process means the activities students engage in as they make meaning of the content; and product is the way in which students provide evidence of understanding. (p. 8)

Novice teachers might get it wrong that a lot of time need to be spent in making accommodation in all of the three areas, namely content, process, and product. Baecher (2011) corrected this misunderstanding by pointing out that “usually, one modification in one of these areas is reasonable, rather than multiple changes in all three” (p. 68). He explained that “these differentiated tasks should be manageable and achieved through small adaptations, or they will become too daunting and time-consuming for teachers” (p. 68).

Since differentiated instruction encourages teachers to tailor instruction based on students' readiness and learning levels, the concept of differentiated instruction can be easily misinterpreted as reducing the workload for those struggling learners, but in fact, maintaining consistent high expectations for all students is the norm for differentiated instruction (Baecher, 2011). As noted by Baecher (2011) "whenever possible, the learning goal should be the same for all the students. Differentiated instruction for ELLs should not mean different learning goals" (p. 69). We just break down the long-term goal into specific objectives, and then break down these objectives into specific tasks. What we do is to vary the tasks to help learners meet the objectives and overall goals based on learners' varied levels and needs. In other words, what has been varied is the way students interact with the material and the task rather than the goal. The task is presented in different ways in an attempt to allow students select the way that works best for them.

As noted by the document of Alberta Ministry of Education (2010), key elements of differentiated instruction strategies include "meaningful activities, flexible grouping, scaffolded instruction and choice" (p. 64). Since the four differentiated strategies all can be found in digital storytelling class, Figg, Gonsoulin and McCartney (2009) also put forward that "incorporating digital storytelling activities into learning experiences for students not only engages students in acquisition of 21st century skills, but also provides teachers with opportunities to differentiate instruction" (p. 32). The reason why the four differentiated strategies are suitable for digital storytelling class are as follows. First, according to the AB MOE document (2010), meaningful activities refer to those activities which are "developmentally appropriate, connected and relevant to life experiences, authentic, engaging, respectful and fair to all students" (p. 64). Digital storytelling is such

a meaningful activity that emotionally engages students in the learning process by allowing them to bring personal prior or present experience into meaningful creation through meaningful technology integration (Sadik, 2008).

Second, in AB MOE document (2010), flexible grouping is described as a strategy that “involves varying instruction between individuals, partners, small groups, large groups and whole class. It also involves considering a variety of options within these basic groupings, such as whether to establish groups randomly or purposefully” (p. 68). According to Sadik (2008), flexible grouping strategy is frequently used in digital storytelling projects. Students have opportunities to work in a variety of contexts, such as one-to-one interaction (pair work), small groups or individual tasks. Students are grouped and regrouped based on their needs, and interests, which also helps to build a safe and supportive learning environment.

Third, the most obvious feature of differentiated classes is that students are provided with varied options “aligned with learning outcomes and learner needs, preferences, interests and readiness” (AB MOE, 2010, p. 81), while digital storytelling also fulfilled students’ choices. As noted by Kearney (2011),

A wide degree of choice enhanced student ownership of their projects; including choice of content, roles and if appropriate, film genre. The choice of student peers as the target audience was a major source of student motivation in our study. (p. 4)

By providing choice and open-ended tasks, digital storytelling projects create opportunities for students with differing levels of readiness and ability to respond. In addition, differentiated instruction recognizes that there are different types of intelligence and learning modalities, while students are encouraged to use multiple intelligences (linguistic, spatial, musical, and interpersonal) to demonstrate their mastery of knowledge

in the digital storytelling classroom. For example, in addition to text, students can use images, audio, and video to tell a story.

Constructivism

Social constructivism is used extensively to study second language acquisition (Kao, 2010). A constructivist framework for teaching postulates that

Learning is a process by which learners construct new ideas or concepts by making use of their own knowledge and experiences. The learner has greater control and responsibility over what he or she learns and relies on schema to select and transform information, create hypotheses and make decisions. (Beatty, 2003, p. 99)

This means that students are not viewed as passive knowledge receivers but active knowledge constructors, and at the same time, the teacher takes the role as a facilitator rather than an expert. Based on social constructivism theory, Wood et al. (1976) investigated how instructors should provide scaffolding for students during the process of knowledge-building. The main principles put forward by Wood et al. (1976) are summarized by Kao (2010) as follows:

- (1) Recruiting interest in the task;
- (2) Simplifying the task;
- (3) Maintaining pursuit of the goal;
- (4) Marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced, and the ideal solution;
- (5) Controlling frustration during problem solving;
- (6) Demonstrating an idealized version of the act to be performed. (p. 122)

From the above description we can see that in order to facilitate knowledge construction, an ideal learning environment in constructivist models is a place where individual interests, needs, learning levels, prior knowledge and experience are addressed and learners are provided with opportunities for self-directed learning and authentic interaction with others to “reconstruct or co-construct their knowledge” (Mynard, 2014, p. 48).

In addition, social constructivism emphasizes that knowledge construction is a social process which not only occurs individually but also takes place through social interaction and collaboration in cultural context. Thus, in this sense, language learning is not merely viewed “as a cognitive process to acquire linguistic rules or knowledge”, instead, constructivism recognizes “the social nature of learning and investigating the complexity and dynamic social interaction involved in language learning processes” (Kao, 2010, p. 114). Today, thanks to the interactive nature of computer technology, students are able to utilize more approaches such as text, audio, video and multimedia to interact with wider communities and gain more diverse perspectives.

McGregor (2007) identified that another fundamental point in Vygotsky’s approach was the statement that “a defining feature of human mental functioning (on both the intermental and intramental planes) is that it is mediated by tools and signs” (p. 29). According to Vygotsky (1981), these ‘tools and signs’ include: “language; various systems of counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings; all sorts of conventional signs and so on” (p. 137). Jarvis (2006) pointed out that the definition of ‘tool’ given by Vygotsky was quite broad. The tools can take many forms including both concrete material tools and abstract tools, but generally they can be divided into two categories: psychological tools and technical tools. Psychological tools were defined by Mynard (2014) as “cultural artifacts, language, signs, or symbols which facilitate interaction with the world and enable cognitive change” (p. 29). Jarvis (2006) claimed that “technical tools are external material objects and affect the ways a child can interact with their environment” (p. 28). Computers and other digital devices fall into this category.

Among all of these tools, Vygotsky especially laid emphasis on the important role that language played in the learners' cognitive and metacognitive development. According to Kao (2010)'s interpretation of Vygotsky's theory, language which "is regarded as one of the symbolic (or psychological) tools" serve as mediators for "directing and controlling individual's physical and mental behaviour". Can (2009) gave detailed explanation of how language facilitate interaction and enable cognitive development:

By acquiring a language, the child gains the means to think in new ways and a new cognitive tool for making sense of the world. Language is used by children as an additional device in solving problems, to overcome impulsive action, to plan a solution before trying it out and to control their own. They use the language to obtain the help of others and to solve problems. (p. 62)

What is Digital Storytelling?

The term digital storytelling was first coined by Dana Atchley who together with Joe Lambert developed the Center for Digital Storytelling Digital in California in the late 1980s (McLellan, 2006; Center for Digital Storytelling, 2005). The Center for Digital Storytelling is an association responsible for assisting non-experts to craft, record and disseminate their individual narratives (McLellan, 2006; Alrutz, 2014). The establishment of the Center has attracted extensive attention. Since the early 1990s, digital storytelling techniques have been widely spread around the world (Miller, 2010; Alrutz, 2014).

Broadly speaking, digital storytelling "encompasses a wide range of self-produced media—such as blogs and podcasts—that employ story and technologies for personal expressions" (Alrutz, 2014, p. 5). In a narrower sense, digital storytelling refers to "a short (i.e., 3-5 minute) movie centered on the recorded writing of students, enhanced by music they select or perform, and illustrated with images or video chosen to represent the content of the story"(Caverly, Gregory & Steelman, 2010, p. 42).

Why Digital Storytelling?

Digital storytelling could support Chinese EFL learners in the following aspects: 1) Digital storytelling could effectively improve EFL learners' listening and speaking skills; 2) Digital storytelling promotes motivation and reduces anxiety level; 3) Digital storytelling provides opportunities for students to find their voice.

Developing speaking skills. College English education in China merely gives priority to the training of grammar, reading, and writing while ignoring the development of students' oral English (Li, 2009). In China, what to teach largely depends on what will be tested (Feng, 2003). High school students devote a lot of time and effort to the College Entrance Examination. Non-English major students in undergraduate level are required to pass the National College English Test Band 4 (CET-4), while students who major in English are under pressure to pass the Test for English Majors 4 (TEM-4) before graduation (Li, 2009). As a result, EFL teachers in China usually focus on grammar training and test-taking skills without paying attention to oral English practice because spoken English is neither required in the College Entrance Examination nor the College English Test (McKay & McKay, 2002).

However, research showed that students were more apt to make contributions in interactive activities when they became more proficient in English (Liu, 2009). The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (2006) underscored the importance of developing language learners' communicative competence in the foreign language learning process. 'Communication' is one of the five content goals for foreign language learning put forward by the National Standards (2006), known together as the five C's: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. Also, Li Yang,

the founder and chief teacher of the best well known English language training program Crazy English in China, attached great importance to the training of spoken English rather than focusing on grammar or linguistic knowledge (Abbas, 2010). He (Li, 2004) considers oral English skills as the key factor in helping students achieve overall success in English. Li (2004) points out that it is not credible when students claim they understand what they read and heard; only being able to talk it through is the foremost means to demonstrate mastery.

Recognizing the significant role that speaking has played in supporting students' progress in language learning is the first step of remedying the current situation where Chinese EFL students show low oral English proficiency. Digital storytelling is a method that could greatly help students to improve their speaking and listening skills (Abdel-Hack & Helwa, 2004; Ismail, Lin, Mahmud, Thang & Zabidi, 2014).

Much literature has asserted that the implementation of digital storytelling in EFL speaking classes could effectively boost students' vocabularies, develop sentence complexity, and improve pronunciation (Abdel-Hack & Helwa, 2004; Kim, 2014). Kim's (2014) research on using digital storytelling to improve EFL learners' oral proficiency revealed that participants were excited to practice pronunciation in digital storytelling project "because they could check and assess their speaking after listening to their own recordings" (p. 26). As reported by one participant in Kim's (2014) digital storytelling class, the recording program "was very flexible and convenient since she could record her speaking many times as well as monitor it, thus helping to improve her speaking" (p. 26).

In addition, while telling a story, students are naturally assimilating the vocabulary, language patterns and the structure of a story (Kim, 2014). Students may find it hard to

memorize a large number of words, but storytelling helps for faster recall and longer storage of information (Dirksen, 2012; Lewis, 2010). People have a natural inclination to place new information they encounter in a relatively familiar framework so that data becomes easier to master and remember (Dirksen, 2012). According to Dirksen (2012), story provides this sort of pattern. Each story contains a common framework, namely the beginning, middle, and an end. Stories help to tie elements together into one package; hence a broad array of information would get into the brain. We may find it hard to remember a number of new words at a time, but once these words are embedded into a story and presented in context, it is no longer decontextualized and easy-to-forget. Research shows that EFL learners apply the vocabulary and sentence pattern they learned in one story in other contexts spontaneously, thus enhancing language fluency and linguistic appropriateness (Kim, 2014). A story is like a Trojan Horse which sneaks into human brains with long-lasting information. In this way, the internalization of language inadvertently takes place.

Moreover, through the practice of storytelling, students learn to convey information in an engaging, vivid and coherent manner (Smith, 2006). Smith (2006) asserted that “storytelling is drama...The storyteller uses his or her voice in dramatic ways to enhance the story” (p. 129). In oral storytelling, an important way to attract and hold audience attention is to effectively use voice, inflection, and rhythm (Miller, 2010). As described by Smith (2006), she still can recall a story told by a storyteller in a performance many years ago because “the way he used words and gestures was marvelous. Most important was the way he used his voice, the inflections, the modulation” (p. 126). Although storytellers use computers to present narrative instead of physically standing in front of the audience in

digital storytelling projects, the power of voice and tone remains the same. Digital storytellers are still expected to use dynamic voice to ignite imagination, arouse curiosity and bring the listeners into the story. Storytellers take the roles of the story by altering speed, intonation and tone of voice. By doing so, listeners are able to distinguish different characters and go beyond the surface meaning of words by observing shifts in the storyteller's pace and tone of voice. Alburger (2014) commented that

It is the little shift of inflection or subtlety in the delivery of a word or phrase that makes the difference between an adequate voiceover performance and an exceptional voice acting performance. Effective storytelling is using the subtleties of performance to reach the audience emotionally and create strong memorable visual images. (p. 101)

As a result, through telling stories in a dramatic way, students are not only equipped with linguistic knowledge but also learn to utilize other dynamics like tone, volume, and space to make meaning, thus growing up into confident English speakers (Clipson-Boyles, 2012). As proved by Kim (2014), participants admitted that another added benefit which digital storytelling projects brought to them was that they felt more confident while delivering speeches.

A research study conducted by Somdee and Suppasetseree (2012) revealed that all participants who were 50 first-year undergraduate students scored much higher in the post-speaking test (mean score 2.43) than the pre-test (mean score 2.11) after completing a 12-week digital storytelling-based program. This finding confirmed that digital storytelling can have positive impact on the development of students' overall oral English proficiency.

Improving listening skills. Speaking and listening are known together as oracy and they should not be regarded as separate subjects within the English curriculum (Clipson-Boyles, 2012). When students are doing speaking activities, in fact, it has implicitly required an audience to listen to them (Clipson-Boyles, 2012). Also, storytelling is the art

of sharing story (Frazel, 2010). ‘Share’ implies that storytelling is not a solitary process; the listener is an inseparable part of this shared activity. However, when we discuss the pedagogical effectiveness of storytelling in EFL, much attention has been paid to the storyteller while ignoring listeners. In the well-worn mode of storytelling, audiences are unconsciously stereotyped as those who always sit down and become quiet. In fact, not only storytellers but also listeners can benefit from storytelling. According to Ebong (2004), one of the educational advantages of storytelling in EFL is that “While listening to stories, children develop a sense of structure that will later help them to understand the more complex stories of literature” (p. 44). When students listen to the story, they tend to inadvertently search for patterns in language and develop a sense of rhetorical structure (Ebong, 2004). Storylistening facilitates second language acquisition by offering opportunities for listeners to experience natural language input (Clipson-Boyles, 2012).

In addition, the digital age reshapes the relationship between the storyteller and audience. Storytellers no longer merely pour information into listeners but bring the listeners into the experience and evoke emotional responses. In this way, information does not just flow in one direction but flows in both directions. Clipson-Boyles (2012) asserted that responses not only “assimilate further and use that knowledge in transferable ways” but also helps listeners find their voice in an interactive and collective communication context (p. 70).

Promoting motivation and lowering the affective filter. Although a rapid increasing number of native English language speakers have come to China to work and visit, English is still not frequently used in the mainstream of Chinese life (Zou & Zhang, 2011). Unlike native English language learners who “are refining skills in a language they already know”

(Feinberg, 2002), EFL learners position themselves in a vulnerable context where they may feel excluded and inferior and risk of losing face when they are learning a foreign language, so they keep silent in class to avoid making mistakes and being laughed at by others (Kojima, 2007). This is what Kojima calls second language anxiety. According to Gallagher (2008), second language anxiety is caused by affective filter. As Krashen theorizes, affective filter is an important factor in determining whether a student will be successful in the second language learning process or not (Gallagher, 2008). Gallagher (2008) explained that

Affective filter is an imaginary wall that is placed between the language and language input. It is a screening device in the internal processing system, governed by the acquirers' motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional states that allows or prohibits the acceptance of new input. (p. 22)

If the filter is up, the language input is prevented to reach the device that is responsible for language acquisition in the human brain and successful second language acquisition will not occur. Gallagher (2008) maintains that when students experience anxiety, stress, fear, frustration, despair, low self-confidence and the temptation to give up, those negative emotions would prohibit students to truly obtain input even though they may well understand every word they hear or read. On the contrary, when language learners are in a relaxed state and less concerned about the result, they are 'open' to the input and the filter is the lowest at that time. When the filter is down, language learners are so engaged and focused on the activity that are even not conscious of using a foreign language which they may have initially feared learning. That is to say, in order to guarantee successful second language acquisition, we need to create a supportive and respectful learning environment that helps to reduce learners' anxiety and sustain their motivation (Green, 2013).

Students could maintain affective filter at a relatively lower level when they are engaged in a storytelling project (Ling, 2007). Research confirms that digital storytelling helps to build a conducive learning environment where language learners are highly motivated and feel relaxed and safe (Lence, 2013). Stories help to let the guard down. Yoon (2012) explored the change in Korean ELL learners' learning attitude after attending 12-week digital storytelling-based English classes. Results revealed that Korean ELL learners strongly felt less anxious and stressed in a digital storytelling project, which arouses greater learning interests and contributed to more active class participation (Yoon, 2012).

There are various reasons as to why digital storytelling would be a feasible method to engage students, improve motivation, and keep affective filter at a relatively low level. The reasons are as follows. First, students in this digital age understand that technical and computer skills are crucial needed skills in the modern workplace "that deals in information as much as in goods and services, and whose marketplace is the Internet" (Frazel, 2010, p. 131). Students acknowledge the benefit of integrating technology in their educational experience (Frazel, 2010). They also show excitement about technology integration (Clarke & Adam, 2011). This could be in part because students love telling stories through a combination of images and music on the computer and they demonstrate pride in being able to leverage the power of technology. As pointed out by Sadik (2008), "students enjoyed the use of digital cameras, searching Web resources, authoring by Photo Story and playing with other non-linear editing tools to create short stories about what they really think and later to watch them" (p. 503). Students who grow up with technology will automatically engage with technological approaches, as technology has become an integral part of their everyday experience (Anderson, Carroll & Cameron, 2006).

Second, digital storytelling increases opportunities to reach more potential audiences, which heightens awareness of the audience and increases motivation (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). In most traditional writing classes, the audience is still limited to the teacher and classmates. They need an appreciative audience who really cares about their work (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Although an audience could be a factor that makes students nervous, it may also build enthusiasm for learning. Sylvester and Greenidge (2009) observed that reluctant learners who knew that there would be an end-product to be viewed by large audience were more likely to be willing to work hard to rewrite and rebuild the story until they thought they made a perfect performance.

Thirdly, with the wide availability of digital devices, it has become prevalent today for people to share their personal stories on YouTube or other social networking sites (Frazel, 2010). The popularity of digital storytelling on the Internet shows that people take delight in sharing their own stories. The application of digital storytelling in curriculum harnesses this potential of personal narrative. According to Abdel-Hack & Helwa (2004), the personal narrative is a major type of digital storytelling for educational use. When students recount their personal experience, enjoyment comes from self-discovery and reflection (Abdel-Hack & Helwa, 2004). Since relevance is one of the main contributors to motivation, students are more likely to write more productively when they are allowed to portray their own stories in creative and playful ways (Dirksen, 2012). As noted by Abdel-Hack & Helwa (2004, p. 20), “a student who might find a 10 page essay daunting may find a story of this size approachable”.

Moreover, digital storytelling used in second language learning also has the potential of helping students to explore and reflect their sociocultural identities (Hagood & Skinner, 2008). As pointed out by Hagood and Skinner (2008), digital storytelling works as

a venue for helping English language learners to acquire more than just English as a second language, foundational literacies or informational technologies skills, per se, but also to use English to make sense of their lives as inclusive of intersecting cultural identities and literacies. (p.18)

It is possible that English language learners rely on their prior knowledge and home culture to construct meaning and knowledge (Green, 2013). Through exploring cultural identities, English language learners will know who they are, what they believe in and how they relate to society (Figg, McCartney & Gonsoulin, 2009). Once their personal experience, prior knowledge, multiple identities or cultural background is valued, they will not feel lost in a new cultural community (Hagood & Skinner, 2008). They will not regard themselves as passive language learners but as knowledgeable participants. In this sense, identifying language learners' mother cultural identities helps to build their confidence in conquering the target language.

Finally, language is only part of the digital storytelling activity. During this process, English serves as a 'communication tool' rather than a serious subject (Green, 2013). This lowers the unconscious resistance to learning a language, because language seems not to be the ultimate goal. Students just use it as a tool to accomplish an end product (Green, 2013). To quote Green (2013), "learning is most effective when people can create some kind of meaningful product, often referred to as an artifact of learning" (p. 25). Also, from the perspective of what behavioral economists called 'sunk cost and loss aversion', making 'meaningful product' could help to motivate those reluctant learners (Dirksen, 2012). 'Sunk cost and loss aversion' means "people have a strong reluctance to discard something

that they've already invested in" (Dirksen, 2012, p. 226). When students are making a product, there is little likelihood for them to give up because they have made an investment and they clearly know how many steps are left. The expectation to see the final product serves as formidable willpower to encourage them to keep going.

Given the above, by using digital storytelling, we could create a relaxed and safe learning environment for EFL learners.

Encourage students to find their voice. Traditionally, teachers' authority gives them the right to dominate the discourse in class; consequently, not enough time has been given to the students to find their voice (Johnson & Sessions, 2014). As noted by Horn (2002), "Students are asked to be able to retrieve information, organize it according to the way they learned it, and arrive at the intended conclusion" (p. 225). Students demonstrate mastery of knowledge by answering uninspiring test-like questions; teachers evaluate students' performance based on how close their answer is to a predetermined right answer (Horn, 2002). Also, we seem to equate thinking with a quiet process and excessive classroom talking has been counted as misbehavior. Students need to raise their hands if they want to comment on certain topics. Only after being approved by the teacher can students talk in class. This is not what a high quality education looks like. Johnson and Sessions (2014) stated that "education is a place for sharing of ideas, discussing differences of ideas, and a place where every voice can be heard" (p. 53). To achieve this goal, we should provide opportunities for students to make their voice heard. Here, Johnson and Sessions (2014)

further explained that the ‘voice’ not only referred to the physical audible voice but also “the ability to voice our views and beliefs in a respectful manner” (p. 53).

Digital storytelling provides venues for students to articulate their perceptions, comprehension, imagination and creativity. To quote Clark and Adam (2010), “Digital storytelling developed in a milieu of arts practitioners committed to the democratization of culture: to empowering and giving voice to individuals and groups traditionally silenced, marginalized, or ignored by mainstream culture” (p. 159).

The Internet breaks down the high walls of classrooms, connects students to the worldwide community, makes their voice heard by a larger audience and even sparks influence. As noted by Frazel (2010),

Digital storytelling offers these students a voice. Students can learn to convey their views effectively to a wider audience than is usually available to them. They can share information or urge action on real-world issues that affect their schools and communities. (p. 111)

As noted by Figg, McCartney and Gonsoulin (2009), “the process of creating digital stories provides learners with opportunities to use the elements of language arts to become ‘agents of social change’” (p. 36). When students are doing their digital storytelling projects, they do not work to please their teacher or win classmates’ approval. They are working on creating stories that would voice their thinking, have impact on the audience, make people laugh or cry or set them thinking (Frazel, 2010). According to Figg, McCartney and Gonsoulin (2009), all participants in the digital storytelling workshop demonstrated ability to use higher order thinking skills to “make connections—either for purposes of connecting the new knowledge to culture and/or society, or for advocacy purposes, or for evaluating and even proposing solutions to real-world problems” (p. 36).

Assessment

A well-developed assessment is closely related to students' performance and improvement. It helps students understand a teacher's expectations. A clearly defined scoring rubric should be tied to the assignments. Lambert (2009) put forward seven key elements for evaluating the effectiveness of digital stories:

1. Point of view—establishing a clear perspective which could help to narrate the story best. Digital stories do not mean to create something from nothing. Students are allowed to draw upon prior experience from first person point of view. Of course, students are encouraged to try out different points of view as long as it fits the story.
2. Dramatic question--setting up a conflict early on that will keep audience's interest to the end.
3. Emotional content—making audience emotionally engaged and evoking emotional response.
4. Economy—giving appropriate amount of detail. The length of the story is neither too long nor too short. If the story is too short, the plot and points cannot be fully elaborated, but a sprawling story is not manageable for students. Generally, a digital story for educational use is about three to five minutes long.
5. Pacing—consciously controlling the rhythm based on the story line.
6. The gift of voice—effectively utilizing inflection, tone, and pitch to engage the audience into the story

7. Soundtrack—using music to emphasize dramatic effect, create atmosphere, set a certain mood and induce emotion. (p. 287)

A specific rubric given by Miller (2010) on the foundation of the seven elements is attached in Appendix A. Additionally, based on the seven traits of a good digital story given by Lambert, Miller (2010) added one more attribute on Lambert's list: art that helps tell the story. Students are allowed to download images from varied online sources or draw pictures by themselves to go with their stories. Miller (2010) suggested that it was important to challenge students to get a balance between text and visuals. Sometimes students pay too much attention on the visual aesthetics of the output instead of concentrating on the writing. This is especially true of students who are video enthusiasts: they have the risk of going overboard with the use of art and special effects, such as too many images, or too much animation or camera motion (Miller, 2010). This not only results in sensory overload for the audience, but also may dilute the learning experience. Miller (2010) pointed out that it was the story that matters, not the technology. The focus of digital storytelling in EFL education should always be on story rather than technology or art. Technology and illustration is just a tool to present and enhance stories. Just as elder generations used rocks, pens or printed texts to tell stories, although the form has been changed, the ultimate aims remain the same.

In an attempt to guide students embrace technology critically, Frazel (2010) pointed out that students should be assessed according to the three stages of digital storytelling, namely, preparation, productions and presentation. The primary focus of the preparation stage is story development and the quality of written work, while the production rubric mainly concentrates on students' mastery of technology (Frazel, 2010). In the preparation

stage, students will be evaluated from the following aspects: assignment comprehension, contributes to discussion, story idea, story development, first draft, story editing, second draft, tenets of good writing, and final draft. For the part of production, students' grade will be determined by the following elements: locating multimedia elements, digital citizenship, troubleshooting hardware and software issues, assembly, editing, completion and deadline (Frazel, 2010). By assessing the preparation part and production stage separately, students will have a clearer understanding of the teacher's expectations on story development instead of giving too much weight to artistic and technology aspects.

Another benefit of Frazel's assessment model lies in that assessment takes place as an ongoing part in the progress of teaching and learning rather than an extra part at the end of the activity. As noted by Clipson-Boyles (2012), well-constructed assessment requires both summative assessment and formative assessment to judge students' end products and to monitor students' learning progress in different stages. Frazel (2010) recognizes the importance of the quality of process, which is consistent with the requirement of the ongoing drama assessment put forward by Booth (2005).

In fact, since the characteristics of a storyteller vary from person to person, it is hard to use one-size-fits-all standard to measure success. As noted by Sadik (2008), no scoring rubric instrument is completely valid and reliable to evaluate student performance in digital storytelling. In an attempt to improve validity, we could utilize a range of approaches concentrating on diverse segments (Atherton, 2013).

Conclusion

Digital storytelling proves to be a compelling technique that could have positive effects on developing EFL learners' listening and speaking skills, stimulating learning interests,

improving motivation, reducing anxiety and increasing self-esteem. Moreover, when stories are presented digitally, students are provided with opportunities to utilize different intelligences to create a product that could voice their thoughts. Since students are connected with worldwide audience with the help of the Internet, their stories may have a bigger impact than oral storytelling.

Although it is hard to come up with a totally valid scoring rubric, we still could make strenuous efforts to design a relatively reliable one. Breaking a whole digital storytelling project into several stages and evaluating each phase separately helps students pay attention to the process rather than merely focus on the product itself.

In China, digital storytelling is still a novel concept in education and there is not even a nationally recognized Chinese phrase to translate this term, not to mention a lack of research in this area. I have searched various databases including ERIC, PsycINFO, Libraries of University of Victoria, and CNKI the biggest database of literature in China, using the terms digital storytelling and China, and found that few results are related to the integration of digital storytelling projects in China. Since a digital storytelling project is evidently such an effective method in improving second language acquisition, more research concerning using digital storytelling to support Chinese EFL learners is needed in the future.

Chapter 3: Guide for EFL Teachers to Use Digital Storytelling in China

Introduction

As described in the literature review, a thorough search of the research databases turned up few results on digital storytelling and EFL learning. For this reason, I wish to fill the gap by creating a guidebook especially for Chinese EFL teachers to help them better instruct students to both improve English proficiency and enjoy language while working as creative producers in digital storytelling projects. This guidebook takes social constructivism and differentiated instruction as a theoretical basis and is comprised of four parts: Part I discusses how to build students enthusiasm for doing digital storytelling project; Part II gives detailed description of how to scaffold students to develop high quality story through the writing process; Part III demonstrates ways of guiding students how to use computer technology to enhance written work and transfer it into a video; Part IV is concern with presentation and reflection. As mentioned previously, the resources offered in this guidebook are customized to meet the needs of Chinese users based on Chinese culture.

My intention is neither to provide a one-size-fits-all framework that could be used in all situations nor to put forward principles and models to confine creativity. I hope that this guidebook could spark inspiration, and teachers are encouraged to keep an open mind and come up with new ideas based on their learners' characteristics and needs. The purpose of this project is to familiarize Chinese EFL teachers who work with K-12 students with the implementation of a digital storytelling activity in an academic setting and to help students critically embrace digital storytelling techniques.

Part I: Building Students' Enthusiasm for Digital Storytelling

We should not take for granted that a digital storytelling project with fascinating animation would automatically waken students' motivation. After all, it is such a big project with which students are not familiar. How to attract students' attention and build their confidence to finish this long journey is the major concern of this part. Although digital storytelling might be a field that most students have not stepped into before, teachers need to be careful that extensive theory and introduction should be avoided for it may have the risk of weakening motivation (Dirksen, 2012). Students might get bored if the class starts with the history of digital storytelling. Instead, an interesting or mysterious opening would be easier to grab students' attention. Imagine that Jessica, who is an EFL teacher, works in a K12 school in China. She has just finished the unit of 'theme park', and now she is going to ask students to do a digital storytelling project based on the unit they have learned. Then what does she need to do to start a class? There are several ways to do so.

- Use interesting metaphor or analogy;
- Draw on students' previous knowledge ;
- Ask relevant questions;
- Use visual aids;
- Baecher (2011) identifies that "bilingual students use both languages to learn" (p.66), so EFL teachers could use appropriate home language, in this case, Chinese to mediate comprehension.

Stage one: Quick review of last lesson and prepare students for the new Class.

Jessica's script to the students in Chinese: "中国有句古话叫“巧妇难为无米之炊”。谁能告诉我这句话是什么意思呢？没错！这句谚语强调了素材的重要性。如

果光知道怎么样去煮饭而没有食材，还没不能煮出香喷喷的饭菜的。学英语也一样。上一节课，我们学习了和主题公园有关的词汇和句型。这些词汇就像我们做饭的食材一样。这些句型就相当于烹饪的方法。不同的食材搭配不同的烹饪方法，就可以烹制出风味各异的菜肴。既然我们已经有了这些食材，那下一步我们要考虑的就是如何利用这些食材搭配出各具风味的美味佳肴呢？好，那我们在制作‘大餐’之前，先来盘点一下我们手头上都已经有了哪些‘食材’了呢？我们先回忆一下在上节课学习了哪些有关主题公园的表达？主题公园里又有哪些游乐设施呢？我们又是怎么问路的呢？

Jessica's script to the students in English: "There is a Chinese saying that even the cleverest person cannot make a meal without rice (or in western version, even the cleverest person cannot make bread without flour)". Who can tell me what the meaning of this proverb is? (Give students one minute to respond to the question.) Yes, this proverb emphasizes the importance of material! Even if you know how to cook, you still cannot make a meal if you do not possess ingredients. The same goes through English learning! In the last class, we have learned some English expressions about theme parks and we also learned how to give and ask directions in amusement parks in English. Those vocabulary and expressions we learned are like raw materials for food while the sentence patterns are just like methods of cooking. When different cooking techniques coordinate with different food, various delicacies could be produced. OK, before starting to 'cook', let us first review the 'materials of food' we had. What are the words we learned last class to describe a theme park? Could you name some entertainment attractions in amusement parks? What are the ways to ask directions?"

Analysis of Script: By using metaphor or analogy, we could turn abstract knowledge or concepts to concrete ones. Jessica draws an analogy between ‘raw materials of food’ and ‘vocabulary’, and compares ‘sentence patterns’ to ‘methods of cooking’. By relating to daily life, she links students with what they are familiar with, thus closing the distance between students and serious subjects. Moreover, before going straight to the project, Jessica first asks questions that help students recall the vocabulary and sentence patterns they learned in the last class, which help to identify students’ levels of academic readiness and prepare students for the writing process.

Stage two: Introduce students to the project. Jessica’s script in Chinese: “哇！你们掌握了这么多有关主题公园的词汇啊！太棒了，你们一定花了心思去记忆！既然我们已经有了这么多食材，也掌握了一些烹饪方法。那么接下来，我们就应该想想怎么样把这些食材组合起来，然后怎样打造你们自己的招牌菜！我们知道每个人都有自己的口味。接下来，大家就从我们学过的内容当中选择自己喜欢的或者你觉得有用的表达作为素材来创作一个故事，可以是你自己的亲身经历，也可以是虚构的故事。也就是说根据你的喜好，你的口味用我们学过的单词来烹调出一道视听的饕餮盛宴。完成之后我们就可以发到网上，让更多的人来看。现在给大家来看几个视频。（学生看视频。）这个就是我做的了。还不错吧？这就是我们说数码故事。在制作成视频之前，它只是平面的文章。但是再用多媒体的元素来扩充之后，这个故事就变得生动多了。在 21 世纪，我们可以用电脑多媒体技术来增强故事效果，比如图像啊，配音啊，音乐啊，音效啊。把文字和多媒体结合在一起，我们可以做一

些很炫的东西，比如卡通或者电影。你自己的绘画或者声音也会让你的作品变得独一无二。我打赌你们的作品肯定会比我要好！”

Jessica’s script in English: “Wow! You guys show a really good command of words about theme parks in English! You must have worked really hard on this! Since we have already owned quite a lot of ‘raw materials of food’ and mastered some ‘cooking methods’, the next thing to consider is how do we combine these elements together and ‘cook a dish’ with unique flavor which is proudly made by you! We know that not everybody’s tastes are necessarily the same, so you are encouraged to, according to your own taste, choose the expressions you like, choose the words you find useful or sentences that get you inspired from the unit we learned to write a story! After we complete the story, we will turn it to a really nice video and publish it on Tudou for more audiences to watch! Now I would like to play some videos for you. (Show some student-generated digital storytelling videos to the class.) Also, here is a sample of my work (see Appendix A for the script from a video the students watch). Awesome, isn’t it? That is what we called digital storytelling. Before turning it into a video, it just a flat writing. But after using multimedia elements to enrich the text, the story becomes more vivid and intriguing. In the 21st century, we could use computers to enhance your story through adding varied multimedia elements like images, voiceover, music and sound effects. By marrying written words with art, we could create really cool stuff, just like an animation or a movie. Your own drawings, paintings and your voice can make your video unique and attractive! I bet your digital stories must be better than my work.”

Analysis of Script: The teacher consciously avoids using person-oriented praises like ‘you are so smart’ or ‘you are really good at this’. On the contrary, she contributes students’

success to their effort, which helps to turn students' attention on the process rather than the traits like cleverness and intelligence which cannot be changed. Second, students' previous knowledge and diverse background are valued by allowing them to draw upon their experience. Moreover, Jessica encourages diversity, which indicates that choices are provided to build the story based on their interests and expertise. In addition, students are shown the 'before and after'. The teacher models instruction by showing her own work and other students' work of digital storytelling to students. Showing students the end product may give students a clear idea of what they can achieve after this program and make them realize the value of this project. Those videos also serve as visual aids to attract students' attention. As pointed out by Dirksen (2012) that "effective use of both visual and verbal information help keep learners from being overwhelmed by the material, and give them more ways to find the information again" (p. 151).

Stage three: Provide instant support and lower students' anxiety level. Jessica's script in Chinese: “我知道这是一个大工程，但是别担心，我会一步步的带着你们一起探险的。你们只要有了这个数码故事菜谱/秘籍/。我会教你怎么用这个秘籍。我已经迫不及待的要看你们怎么写这个故事然后把它做成一个视频了。我们出发吧!”

Jessica's script in English: “I know it is a big project, but do not worry, I will walk you through this exciting journey step by step. You will survive as long as you get this, Recipes/Secrets/Cheats for Successful Digital Storytelling. I will show you how to use the amazing secrets later! I cannot wait to see how you will develop your story and turn it into a video. Let's see which story is the most interesting. Here we go!”

Analysis of Script: It would be a common way to call the collection of instruction ‘guidebooks’, ‘manuals’ or ‘help files’, but people are likely to associate these terms with serious and vapid academic stuff. However, when these materials are described in a more interesting way like ‘recipes’, ‘secrets’ or ‘cheats’, those supporting documents become less daunting and more approachable than those formal names like ‘guides’. For example, ‘cheats’ referring to “the information that helps to complete computer games successfully” is a popular word among adolescents especially computer game players (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2015). Using buzzwords in computer games enables teachers shorten the psychological distance between teachers and their young students. In this respect, naming supporting documents ‘cheats’ may help to create intimacy and spice up the project. Similarly, ‘recipe’ or ‘secrets’ makes the project sounds entertaining. The benefit of providing help files for students lies in that students could immediately and easily get help whenever they need support. Furthermore, making the supporting resources right at hand lowers the levels of uncertainty and makes this project look manageable and predictable, thus lowering students’ anxiety levels of accomplishing an unfamiliar task and building their confidence of reaching the destination of this intellectual journey (Dirksen, 2012).

Stage four: Indicate reward schedule and increase motivation. Jessica’s script in Chinese: “每当你闯过一关的时候，你就会得到一个印章在你的通关文牒上。集齐了所有的印章，就可以得到一个证书。”

Jessica’s script in English: “When you pass a stage, you will earn a stamp on your Recipe/Passport for Digital storytelling. When all of the stamps are collected on your Recipe, you will be awarded a great certificate!”

Analysis of script: Like the design of video games, the collection of stamps section serves live a reward schedule and extrinsic motivation. After gaining the first stamp, students need to work on the second stamp, the third stamp until they collect all of the stamps. Actually, each stamp represents a short-term goal. Students move from lower goals to higher goals. When all of the short-term goals are completed, the long-term goal is achieved and the project is done successfully. By encouraging students to collect stamps through different stages, instructors actually visualize the progress and guide them through the route of learning.

Part II: How to Scaffold Students through the Writing Process

The process of writing stories is what we call the preparation stage. It does not mean that writing is the main activity in this stage so teachers could walk away and just leave students free time for writing by simply saying: “Hey, just use the knowledge we learned in this unit to develop a story! Take your pen and start writing!” Instead, this stage includes the following steps: Before writing; draft and revise; finish writing (Miller, 2010). Each step of this stage requires careful scaffolding and management. Before plunging right into the writing process, we need to first determine what we could write about.

Introducing story genres. A specific story genre always shares some common characteristics. Having a command of genres may enable students to clarify the direction they are moving toward, determine the scope and the type of their stories as well as coming up with some preliminary thought about the potential characters and settings that could be

used in their writing. Although the types of story could be classified in various ways by different scholars, we could still introduce some basic story genres to students at K-12 level.

One way to help students to deepen their understanding of the types of stories is to associate the story genre with its particular characters and settings like the following examples. After introducing the story genres, we could also invite students to use role-play to demonstrate the basic types of stories and ask the rest of students to guess the genres of the scenarios they perform. The scripts could be chosen from some classic work of a specific genre. Sometimes one story falls into several genres and it is hard to tell them apart. In this case, we had better choose the scenarios with distinctive features at the beginning stage. After students get familiar with the basic types of story, we could move to the story with blending genres. Since students have different levels of academic readiness, either famous Chinese literature or western story could be used and printed script could be prepared for students who have low English proficiency and may encounter difficulties in understanding English dialogues. When carrying out role-play activities, students are put in the shoes of characters and have the opportunity to experience the context described in the literature, thus enhancing the understanding of story genres. Also, Ormrod (2010, p.41) makes it clear that we need to “get students physically involved with the subject matter” in order to grab students’ attention. Those kinesthetic learners are allowed to move around to act out the story, which helps them to sustain motivation. Here are some basic story genres.

1) Science Fiction

Definition: “Science Fiction is the branch of literature that deals with the effects of change on people in the real world as it can be projected into the past, the future, or to distant places” (Gunn, 2002, p. vii).

Key Features: “It often concerns itself with scientific or technological change, and it usually involves matters whose importance is greater than the individual or the community; often civilization or the race itself is in danger” (Gunn, 2002, p. vii).

Characters: Alien, Robots, etc.

Settings: Space Travel, Time Travel, Planet, Moon, Spaceship, Galaxy, etc.

2) Fantasy

Definition: “Fantasy refers to any work with elements that violate what we consider to be the rules of reality. This includes elements of magic or the supernatural” (Hollands, 2007, p. xvi).

Key Features: Element of Magic

Characters: Warriors, Talking Creatures, Fairies, Demons, Wizards, Gnomes, etc.

Settings: Forest, Sky, Undersea, Castle, Wonderland, etc.

3) Action/Adventure: “of the hero---individual or group---overcoming obstacles and dangers and accomplishing some important and moral mission” (Cawelti, 2014, p. 39).

Key Features: “The prototypical Adventure story features a hero on a mission and he must face a range of obstacles along the way. The reader gets a firsthand look at the exotic locale in which the story is set” (Saricks, 2009, p. 16).

Characters: Hero, Children, Pirates, Robbers, etc.

Settings: Forest, Cave, Desert, Island, Undersea, Underground

4) Detective/ Mystery: “The characters in these stories usually have a puzzle to solve. As the characters try to solve the mysterious puzzle, they make mistakes and face danger. The ending is usually very exciting” (Brown, 2005, p. 19).

Key Features: Crimes, Secrets, etc.

Character: Robbery, Thieves, Kidnaps, Murder, Spy, Detective, etc.

Settings: Old house, Museum, Police Station, School, Hospital, Bank

5) Personal Story: Told in first person, the personal narrative conveys a story from the personal experience of the teller. The account is shaped by combining elements that were a part of the storytellers' original experience (Thursby, 2006, p. 46).

Key Features: "These stories develop in a family or school setting. The problems to be solved are usually ones in everyday life so these stories are often the easiest to write" (Brown, 2005, p. 19).

For more genres, see recommended resource: Sariks, J. G. (2001). *The readers' advisory guide to genre fiction ALA readers' advisory series*. Chicago, United States: American Library Association.

Jessica's script in Chinese: "就像我之前说的, 人们有不同的偏好, 不同的视角, 不同的背景, 所以我们提倡多样性。非常欢迎不同的题材。可以是一个真实的个人经历, 或者一个虚构的故事。可以是一个搞笑的, 也可以是悲伤的故事。"

Jessica's script in English: "Like I said a moment ago, people have different preferences, different perspectives, different backgrounds, and different experience, so diversity is encouraged. Different genres are welcomed. It could be a narrative of real personal experience or a fiction story that will not happen in real life. It could be a funny story that makes us laugh. It also could be a sad story that touches us deeply".

Analysis of script: Students are offered choices, which is a feature of differentiated instruction. By emphasizing the importance of diversity, the teacher also conveys a message that we need to respect diversity and respect other people's work.

Begin with artwork. Another way to generate ideas before writing is that we could use sketches to symbolize main ideas, find the connection of characters, shape the structure of story and even discover the value of the story. Unlike illustrations which simply parrot back what happened in the story, sketches before writing contains deep personal interpretation and meaning construction and enable students use drawings as starting points to develop plots (Miller, 2010). It could be challenging to understand such a sketch without the explanation of the author. Here, the author would like to give some tips for helping EFL teachers leveraging sketches before writing.

Sketching is a flexible activity other than a stylized one. No strict rules and standards should be made to confine creativity. Students are allowed to draw pictures in whatever ways they like. The purpose of sketching before writing is to stimulate students' imagination and assist them to discover story ideas from fresh insight.

Since not everyone is interested in drawing, 'sketches before writing' is an optional section rather than mandatory work for every student. In an attempt to differentiate instruction, students who prefer words to drawing could skip this part and use brainstorming list instead of pictures to think about what their stories might look like. For those students who would like to begin with pictures, they could work with small groups or pairs that share the same interest. When students discuss their sketches with others, students may find new perspective. Others may point out the details that one did not notice before or ask some questions that provoke deep thought. Through explaining their drawings, students are also offered the opportunity to organize their thought. In this way, collaborative talk enables students to explore more possibilities and even enrich the story line.

Sketches before writing might be regarded as an informal self-organized activity of students, however, it still requires teachers' involvement during this process. Since Chinese students get used to teacher-centered teaching methods, students may expect teachers could more or less offer some suggestions when they are exposed in a totally self-directed group discussion. Teachers are encouraged to walk around and listen to students' interpretation of their own system of symbols and demonstration of the drawing. The problem is how much contribution teachers should make to the group discussion. It would be inappropriate for facilitators to over-elaborate their viewpoints. They are supposed to act like the "running coaches" who stand outside the racetrack but always motivate and guide the "runners" while they are running. It is the runners themselves to control the speed, pace and breathing to reach the optimal state.

Prepare elements of story. The above methods may help students have a rough idea of their story, but that is not enough. We need to make the story plan more specific and clear. Before starting to cook a 'dish of story', teachers can help students to have the four main ingredients of stories prepared, namely, characters, setting, conflict and resolution. When helping students get ready for the four basic elements of story, instructors are actually creating a safe path to walk them through and save them from an aimless and clueless journey. I would like to suggest the use of graphic organizers with a reader-friendly format and limited amount of text to help students plan their story. The following samples show how teachers can coach students to develop characters, setting, conflict and resolution. Do not pass out the materials all at a time in case students are overwhelmed by too much information. Teachers could create a mysterious atmosphere by saying that "Now you will get the first secret ingredient. Only after finishing the preparation of the secret ingredient

can you get the next clue”. To make the progress more interesting and mysterious, those supporting materials and teachers’ feedback could even be put in envelopes.

Jessica’s script in English: “The characterization might determine the way characters react to the conflict of the story, thus directly affecting the outcome of a story. In order to make the characters come alive, try to use adjectives and give detailed description of their traits either through appearance or personality. Give specific information like how they talk, what they look like, or how they think and feel will make the characters ‘real’ to the readers. For example, Leehom is a singer. This sentence sounds vague. But if we add more details and adjectives, the images of Leehom will become more concrete. Leehom, known as a polite and friendly Chinese-American pop star, never refuses to take sweet photos with his fans. In this way, we know what the character is like.”

Analysis of script: According to Bixler (2006), relevance is another contributor to motivation. The teacher tries to make the content relevant to students by using a pop singer reference to create sentences. It is a useful way to use superstars to grab students’ attention. Furthermore, the teacher tries to accommodate students’ needs, skill levels and learning preference by providing multiple pathways for students to interact with the form of Character Design. As you can see, instead of directly asking students to write descriptive sentences about characters, choices are provided for low-achieving students. They could tick the words given in the form if they have difficulty in coming up with ones. Also, if those struggle writers have problem with writing a complete paragraph to describe a character, they could draw a sketch or use Chinese to map out the character.

Settings tell the reader where and when the story takes place. Time could be present, past, future, a particular year or a single day. The place could be in China, USA, on earth,


on moon or another location. Where this story takes place will significantly change a story. Imagine how different *Harry Potter* would be, if this story happens in China. If we want to ground our audience in the story and make our story more interesting, try to use five senses to reveal more descriptive information like taste, feeling, sound or sight. For example, teachers could invite students to discuss the following sentence: “There are a lot of people in Guangzhou railway station.” But we could make the sentence more stand out by saying this instead: “The Guangzhou railway station smells like overnight spoiled sardines and is always crowded with people rushing forward,” and then ask students to improve some given sentences to make them more vivid and specific.

Figure 1: Character Design

Name _____ Title _____

Character Design

1. Who are the main characters in my story? _____



2. What does the character look like?


Eyes: almond-shaped beady bloodshot blue bewitching brown bright
oval green round tear-filed _____


Hair: bald ash-blond braided bushy curly frizzy oily
short silky smooth long _____

Skin: acne-prone aged aglow dry hairless rosy rough ivory _____

Clothing: blouse coat cardigan dress skirt gown scarf _____


Unique Features: _____






3. Personality: How does the character act?

4. Background: When did the character live?



6. What are the character's important thoughts and feelings?

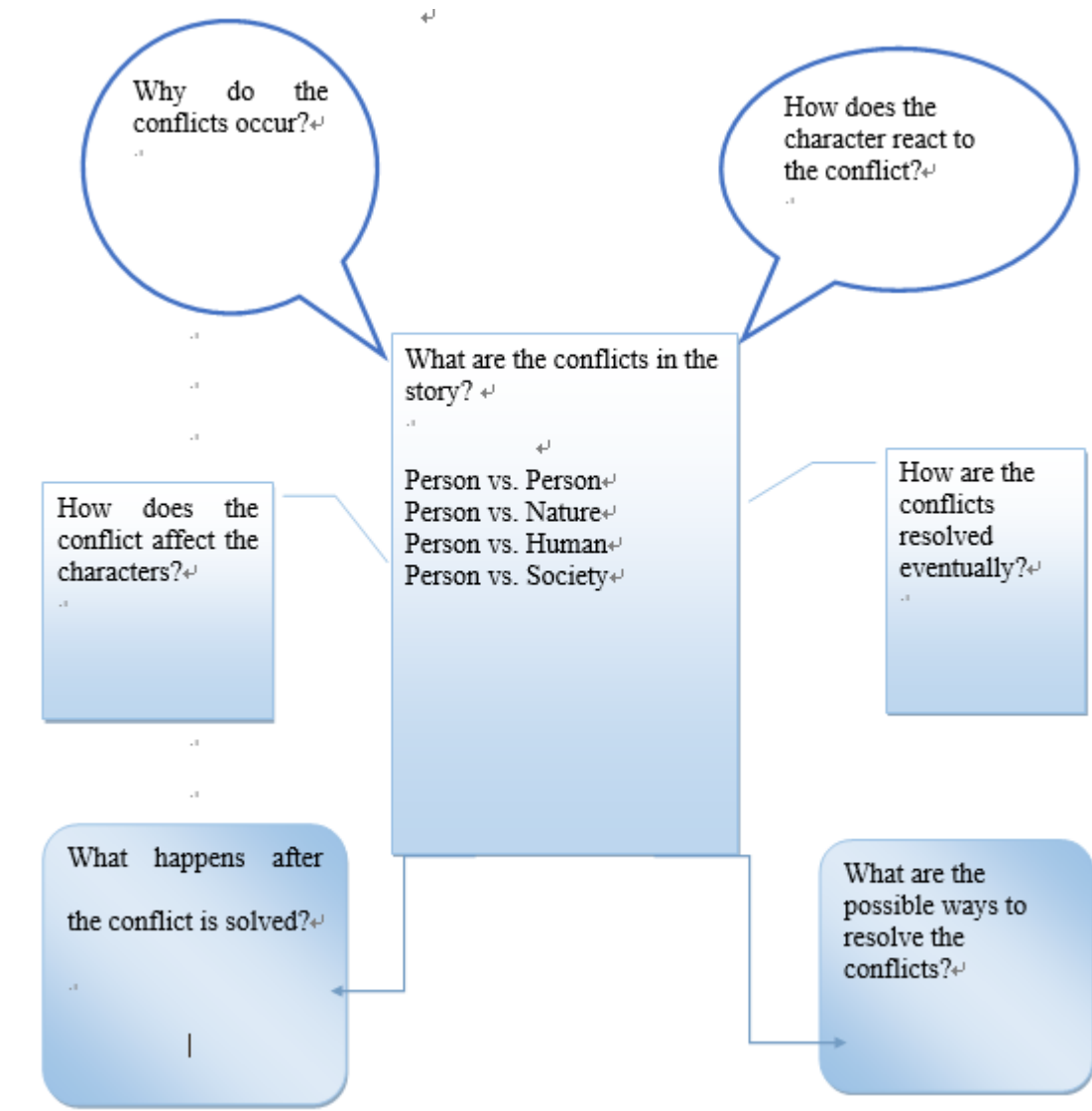
5. What are the important event happened to the character?



7. How do other characters in this story connect to this character?

8. Write in complete sentence to describe your character or draw a picture of it.

Figure 2: Design Conflicts and Resolutions



Support students when they are writing. Teachers could set up a ‘filling station’ in the corner of the classroom for those students who feel stuck in writing and need to stop for refueling. If students feel they need to have a talk with teachers, they could come to the filling station and have a meeting with the instructor to get some refreshing ideas. To make the process fun, students could be treated as customers. They will get a customer copy of

receipt which records the hints and key points of their meeting and students can go over the notes after the meeting. On the other hand, the teacher should keep a ‘merchant copy’, which records students’ strengths and weaknesses they found during the conference and this merchant copy of receipt can be used to develop learners’ profiles and help teachers to make customized instruction in the future.

In China, students generally accept the inequality that teachers possess higher status than theirs. Usually, when students come to ask questions, they often stand beside the teacher while the teacher is sitting in front of the class. In an attempt to build a relaxing and supporting learning environment, teachers could arrange a table with several chairs in this filling station area, so other students could have a seat while waiting and they are also welcomed to join into the discussion together rather than standing in line. If students want to discuss their writing with the instructor in person, he or she could place the sign ‘private talk’ on the table. Ideally, teachers could even decorate the table with some engaging posters, flowers and/or students’ handmade craft to make the meeting warm and sweet. Next to the table, a ‘supply depot’, or a ‘dining car’ could be set up to provide some office supplies including paper, crayons, color pens, pencils, sticky notes, graphic organizers, and other supporting documents.

After students finish their first drafts, they are asked to use the editor’s checklist to self-revise their writing. The writing checklist is a criteria list that enables students to see the expectation of teachers, but we do not want it look too much like a rigorous rubric. I would like to suggest teachers use students-friendly language, mentor text, and appropriate illustrations. We could also leave some space for students to develop their own criteria in the editor’s checklist, which helps to share responsibilities with students to revisit elements

for a good story. Besides self-editing, students need to find other students to improve their writing with color editing pencils. After giving some helpful comments to the author who asks for help, the co-editor is asked to use his or her name stamp to mark on the paper, which helps to increase their sense of authority and stimulate interests.

Part III: Turn Written Words into Video

Pronunciation training. Although story itself is the core of the project, it is no doubt that the application of technology will enhance the creation of story. In an attempt to help students to tell their stories with proficient oral language, supporting them with the training of English speaking skills is essential. During this practice, students will have a chance to improve pronunciation and know how to use intonation, tone, pace, and articulation to enhance their performance. Suggestions on how to give students the training of pronunciation are as follows. First, students are required to orally read the story independently and mark the words that they find uncertain. Then, they are asked to look up e-dictionaries to find out the phonetic symbols of the uncertain words. Also, students are encouraged to invite a native speaker to record a narration for them, which expands the teaching after class and increases the opportunities to communicate with English native speakers. Most importantly, students can compare their own recording with the native speaker's version and see how their pronunciation differs from the standard one. Once students confirm the pronunciation of the whole story, they can sign up for a one-on-one meeting with the instructor. To make it fun, we could give the meeting an interesting name such as "the gym for English muscle training" to reduce the anxiety level of students. The purpose of the meeting is to assess students' learning outcomes after their self-correction and discover other errors that occur in their speech. Teachers can prepare a notebook named



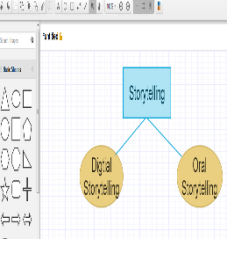

'NG records' for each student, which can be neatly organized into several categories such as consonant/vowel pronunciation, syllable stress, voice mechanics, characterization, and pacing. That is to say, teachers not only focus on English speaking skills but also storytelling performance skills. During this meeting, students are taught how to vary voice tone, volume, strength, tempo and pace to individualize different characters in the story; how to use natural storyteller's voice to deliver emotion; how to use dramatic pauses to hold audiences' attention and interest; and when to accelerate the speed to make the story exciting. It is important to notice that EFL teachers need to be equipped with the storytelling skills as well. Workshops regarding drama skills could be arranged for teachers. This notebook serves as a monitoring list of the problems that students need to pay attention to. In this way, students can go over the corrections and suggestions after the meeting.


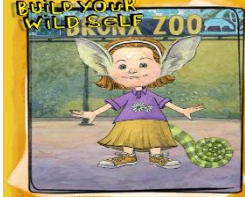
Create visualizations. There are several ways to prepare images used in the digital storytelling:

- Take photographs by students themselves
- Scan students' hand-drawn pictures
- Use online drawing tools to create illustrations

The followings are some recommended online drawing tools. Instructions could be found on those websites.

Table 1: Online Drawing Tool

Drawing Tools	Hyperlink	Description	
Sticker Pictures	http://www.nickjr.com/kids-games/nick-jr-sticker-pictures.html	This is a simple web-based picture-generating tool that offers varied options of characters and settings. Users could easily create a 'sticker picture' by dragging and dropping characters or other stickers on different backgrounds.	
Free Draw	http://www.nickjr.com/kids-games/nick-jr-free-draw.html	Free Draw is an online drawing tool that allows users to draw with diverse tools including crayon, spray can, pen, glue, water color, paint brush, sparkles, sprinkles and markers. User-friendly interface makes it manageable even for young students. Also, encouraging words from the system while painting inspire students to keep going.	
Gliffy	http://www.gliffy.com/	Gliffy is a browser-based diagram program. Users could quickly create professional flowcharts, organisational charts and other diagrams by using various templates or shapes given by Gliffy.	
Draw For Children	http://drawing.gamemaker.nl/	Draw For Children is powerful drawing software that helps users boost their creativity by offering a variety of pens and stickers. It combines the merit of both the Sticker Picture and the Free Draw.	

Dopple Me	http://doppelme.com/	This is a free online avatar maker. Users can choose expressions, hair, eyewear, hats, tops, bottoms and other accessories from the library and change color by adjusting the color box.	
Build Your Wilde Self	http://www.buildyourwildself.com/	This website provides service for making fictional characters. No professional computer skills are required.	

Download images from the Internet. There is no denying the fact that Education in China seldom lays emphasis on guiding students for the protection of intellectual property, which results in students with a great lack of the awareness of copyright and citation. However, students should always remember to give credit to the cited work if they capture pictures from the Internet or other copyrighted resources. Since students might find it time-consuming to seek permission from the owner of the image, I would like to recommend some websites to get free stock pictures without violating someone's copy right.

Table 2: Free Online Pictures

Website	Hyperlink	Description
Pixabay	http://pixabay.com/	Pixabay has a library of almost 320,000 free pictures with high quality. No restriction for the use of the pictures.
IM free	http://www.imcreator.com/free	IM Free is neatly organized in several categories: Template, people, occupation, nature, transportation, education, etc.

Stock Free Images	http://www.stockfreeimages.com/	Stock Free Images includes 1,229,520 pictures which all can be used for commercial project or personal creative purpose.
Creative Commons	http://creativecommons.org/	Creative Commons provides a wide range of artifacts with flexible and eligible copyright-licenses. Basically, the main types of licenses provided by Creative Commons include attribution, attribution non-commercial, attribution no derivatives, attribution share alike, attribution non-commercial share alike, and attribution non-Commercial no derivatives.

Store and organize media elements. After students finish the search of media elements, they could save them on a cloud storage place, so students do not need to bother transferring their unfinished work from lab's computers to their personal devices. They could easily access the files online whenever they need. Qihoo 360 Cloud Drive is such an online storage tool provided by a Chinese company Qihoo 360. After signing up a 360 Cloud Drive, users will get 36 TBytes cloud storage space for free and it can be accessed from desktops, smart-phones or Pads. It is such a convenient tool that allows students to synchronize, organize and download their media files (documents, video, music, photos) almost anywhere and anytime as long as they have access to the Internet. A detailed step-by-step instruction is given on its website.

It is worth noting that students need to obey the content policies of cloud computing. When signing up an account on 360 Cloud Drive or other cloud service, users are required to sign a legal agreement regarding cloud computing rules and regulations with the company. The existing regulations require that users are not allowed to publish any violent materials, sexually explicit materials, hate speech, personal and confidential information, and other unlawful activities.

PowerDirector for video making. PowerDirector is an easy-to-use video editor with simple interface and powerful functions that could satisfy users at all levels. The main interface is quite simple and easy-to-navigate, which includes a media library, a preview panel and the timeline of the project. Besides the media library, there are tabs for the effect room, the PIP object room, the particle library, the title room, the transitions library, and the audio mixing room. PowerDirector's DirectorZone and Flickr have teamed up to provide unlimited free design resources for its users. Wide range of pictures, templates, effects and PiP objects allow students to be as creative as they could. Also, students can personalize their video by uploading their own photos, adding music or even narrating in their own voice. The instruction of using PowerDirector to make digital stories is as follows:

1. The first thing we need to do is import the media elements of the project. PowerDirector allows users import audio images, video clip or even the whole folder. Students just need to locate and select the media elements, and then click open. In this way, media elements are imported into the main library. The media library can be displayed in different ways: video only, audio only, images only or all media, which helps students locate the file they want to use in a fast way.
2. Select the images, and insert them into the image track in timeline by using drag and drop. The timeline could be expanded or changed to a storyboard view for accurate editing. If students want to change the order of the images, they could just drag the picture to the right place on the timeline or re-position it in the storyboard. The duration of each picture can be adjusted by modifying its length on timeline. Students could right click and remove the unwanted parts.

3. PowerDirector provides a variety of transition effects. Students can see the real time effect immediately if they move the mouse on each effect for the preview purpose. There are two ways to apply a transition effect on an image or video clip: add it to the effect track or dropped it directly on the media they want to work with. Transitions can be done one by one or can be applied to all features.

4. Inserting a title is easy. A wide range of title templates are available in the title library. Students could select the template and drag it on the right spot of the title track in the timeline. Also, the title can be customized by highlighting the template and clicking modify. In the title design, students can rewrite the text and change the font color, font border, font size as well as start and end time. We could drag a color board and insert it in the timeline.

5. Students can use audio mixing room to record a voice-over narration and added to the sound track by using drag and drop. Unlike traditional oral storytelling, digital storytellers do not need to finish their work in one take. The entire script can be divided into several paragraphs. Students, then, could record each portion of text individually. Smaller chunks are more controllable for students to edit and revise. For example, when mispronunciation happens, students could easily go back to record that section again instead of remaking the whole story. PowerDirector has several sound tracks, which enables students to insert music or ambient noises to enhance the storytelling. For example, if the student is telling a story about theme parks, the story will be more vivid if kids' laughter sounds effects have been added into the narrations. It might be challenging to capture high-quality ambient noises in a specific environment by students themselves, so another popular option is to download sound effects of different settings from websites (Troy, 2013).

6. When all the editing is done, students can view their video in the preview window. If the project is ready to share, students can choose an output format in the produce module and wait a few minutes before the story is turned into a video.

Besides of using computers to do video editing, iPads with powerful functions such as taking photos, shooting videos, recording narratives, and web-browsing have become ideal alternative devices for building digital stories. Below is a list of some recommended mobile apps for digital storytelling.

Table 3: Apps for Digital Storytelling

Apps	Links to iTunes App Store	Description
Tellagami	https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/tellagami/id572737805?mt=8	This library of Tellagami provides almost all the needed costumes, backgrounds, settings and props. Wide range of expressions, poses and actions allows students to be as creative as they could. Students can design the avatar to match their stories. Students can immediately build flexible characters or scenes just by simply dragging and dropping. Also, students can personalize their video by uploading their own photos or adding music or even narrating in their own voice.
Animoto	https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/animoto-video-maker/id459248037	Animoto is a quick video maker. It provides over 50 video styles. Users can easily add photos, video clips, songs, voiceover, and captions for their movie.
Little Bird Tales	https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/little-bird-tales-easy-digital/id517996494?mt=8	Little Bird Tales allows student import their original art works, add text, upload music, and record audio to their digital stories. After users finish their little project, they can upload it to the Little Bird Tales' website.
Animation Desk	https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/animation-desk-for-ipad/id409124087?mt=8	Animation Desk make it possible to create hand-drawn animations on iPad. Animation Desk allows users to choose a dynamic background or insert images from their own gallery as static background. Users can enhance animations by adding pictures, background music and sound effects.

There are several things to notify:

One of the added benefits of digital storytelling is that videos can be shared on a wide range of social media websites, thus reaching more audience and having bigger influence than it might be. However, if the video is published on public-facing websites, how to protect students from malicious comments will be a problem instructors need to consider.

Except for Qzone, almost all of the main video-sharing websites in China do not support comment moderation such as Tudou, 56, and Youku. In fact, Ozone is a social networking website with features including blogging, albums for picture and video sharing, profile, music, and timeline. Teachers can create a Qzone account for the class and use this account to publish videos instead of asking students to publish their video respectively. By doing this, the benefit are twofold. First, teachers can have pre-moderation privilege. Before comments are published publicly, teachers have the option to approve it or send it back to students for revision. Second, sharing videos, as one of the bonus features in Qzone, is limited to paid members. Students could be waived from paying the fee by using one paid account to publish videos.

Part IV: Presentation and Reflection

In an effective class, information should not only flow from teachers to students but also from students to teachers. Reflection activity could be conducted on an ongoing basis in order to track students' progress. One recommended activity is called 'interactive notebooks' (AB MOE document, 2010). Students jot down lecture notes or discussion points on the right page of the notebook. Their individual interactions with the information, including reflecting, processing, making connections, doodling ideas or posing questions are on the left page. Then, they can share their interactive notebooks in a group of four

students and invite others to make some comments on it. Dirksen (2012) pointed out that we should “add some friction on learning”. This activity enables students chew on the materials they learned instead of letting the information smoothly flow away.

Another activity is called ‘vocabulary zone’. The back wall of a classroom can be used as a place for vocabulary building, which could be divided into several areas based on the categories of the vocabulary such as characters and settings. Students are encouraged to put the words they would like to share on the wall. This activity enables students to revisit their story.

Once the whole digital storytelling project is done, classroom presentations need to be arranged. In digital storytelling, storytellers use computers to present narrative instead of physically standing in front of the audience. That is not to say that we use digital storytelling to waive face-to-face presentation. Students still have opportunities to hone their face-to-face presentation skills. In an attempt to add interest in the presentation section, the desk arrangement could feature restaurant style seating. In China, students always sit in vertical rows, which does not seem conducive to group discussion. In fact, the furniture in the classroom could be strategically used as meaningful props for role-play. Since from the beginning of the class we have pretended that students take the role as chefs and the process of making digital stories is likened to cooking a dish, now it is time to serve the meal in the presentation section. In this case, students’ desks can be organized into several groups. Students sit around tables like in a restaurant. Before the presentation, each student will get a ‘menu’ that lists the names of the videos and their producers. Students take turns to give a brief introduction of their productions before presenting videos on a computer. When the video is over, they need to lead a discussion regarding their digital stories. Peer

assessment can be done in this section as well. Usually, students are assessed based on a 100 point scale and we could make some changes here. We could use dollars to represent points. For example, if the total scored points of the video is 97, it means that this ‘dish’ is worth \$97, and then, we will have dishes at varied price.

Part V: Conclusion

This guidebook aims at walking novice teachers through the whole process of a digital storytelling project. By deconstructing the big project into four stages, the route of digital storytelling classes becomes clear and manageable. In the first phase, the primary goal is to create student interest and raise aspiration for learning. At the beginning of the class, a quick review section can serve as a warm up activity and a differentiated strategy to gauge students’ readiness levels, prepare students for the new project, and add fun to English as a foreign language classroom. After students demonstrate mastery of the previous learned material, the teacher leads into the current topic and shows other students’ digital stories as well as the teacher’s own work to the whole class. Using visual aids and building a reward system is another way to attract students’ attention before beginning a new project.

The main goal of the second stage is to help students develop their stories. In this stage, differentiated instructional strategies are used. Unlike the non-differentiated instruction lessons where whole class instruction prevails, students are provided with the opportunities to work in various group settings based on their learning needs, interests and academic levels. Also, students will get one-on-one help from teachers. Moreover, bear in mind that choices are one of the core elements of differentiated instruction and students are at different proficiency levels, so students are provided with a variety of choices in the writing process. They are empowered to use multiple ways such as drawings and texts to represent

ideas. In addition, the English section of National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) in China only requires a maximum 150 words of writing and Chinese EFL instructors design their teaching plans mainly based on the standard of NCEE, so students usually have little opportunity to write an English composition that is more than 150 words (Li, 2009). However, in order to fully unfold a story, it is very likely that the length of the digital storytelling project will be more than 500 words or even 1000 words. Since it might be a big writing project that Chinese EFL students at K12 level have not done before, suggestions on how to support them during the writing process are given.

When comes to the third stage, technological issues become the major concern. After helping students improve their pronunciation and performance skills, students will be guided through the process of making a digital video. Since students may have different comfort levels of technology, we could invite students who act as tech-savvy in the class to coach other students. On one hand, peer teaching helps to solve technical problems encountered by students with lower computer skills. On the other hand, it could also deepen the expert's knowledge and skills (AB MOE, 2010). The final stage is the reflection and presentation section. Students are arranged to present their digital stories to the whole class. It is also significant to leave some time for students to make reflection.

Chapter 4: Reflections

Although digital storytelling is an effective approach that creates more possibilities than traditional oral storytelling, it is still challenging to popularize digital storytelling in Chinese secondary schools for the following reasons. First, the class size of Chinese secondary school seems large, typically 45 to 50 students in each English class (Wang, 2002). If there are too many students in a class, the presentation of digital stories could be quite time-consuming. Imagine that if each student needs 10 minutes to present their stories and lead discussions, then we need 400 minutes to view 40 students' stories, which equals 10 classes. Even if we cancel the discussion section and shorten each video's time to 5 minutes, we still need 200 minutes, equivalent to 5 classes, to get all students' performances done. As noted by Tomei (2004), twelve students per class is the ideal class size. If the class size can be limited to 10 students each class, classroom management will become easier for teachers and at the same time students will get more individualized attention and scaffolding such as one-on-one help on their pronunciation and performance skills. Alternatively, digital storytelling projects could be done in groups of students, which would be easier to integrate into regular classrooms.

Second, a considerable amount of financial investments have been put into increasing the number of computers for students in schools and great efforts have been made in training teachers' computer skills in China (Li & Walsh, 2010). According to Li and Walsh (2010), "all teachers under the age of 45 by 2000 were required to attend computer training courses organized by local educational authorities" (p. 100). However, it seems that we still have a long way to go to integrate information and communication technologies into education. As reported by Li and Walsh (2010), "75% of teachers from

primary and secondary schools could use Windows software, but only 7% of secondary school teachers frequently used computers in their teaching, with 78% of their use devoted to editing teaching plans and preparing teaching materials. Only 5% of ICT use was for making presentations in class, with only 1% dedicated to interactive teaching activities” (p. 100). Since most of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) courses for EFL teachers are merely the training of basic computer skills such as web browsing, the use of emails, PowerPoint, Word and Excel, Chinese EFL teachers might not be well equipped with sufficient technical knowledge to integrate digital storytelling projects into their teaching (Li & Walsh, 2010). To prepare EFL teachers for successful implementation of digital storytelling, courses specialized in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) methodology and video making should be offered rather than general use of office software.

Furthermore, restriction of the use of computer labs is another obstacle that prevents the application of digital storytelling in secondary schools. As noted by Li and Walsh (2010), 37% surveyed EFL teachers indicate that computer labs are not always available since the labs are scheduled to be used for computer class. If teachers cannot book a computer lab, then the process of creating video cannot be done at school, which means that limited technical support could be provided for students. What is more, approximately 65% of surveyed EFL teachers claim that the exam-oriented education system in China makes them feel stressed (Li & Walsh, 2010). Since they have a very tight schedule every academic year, teachers could barely cover the required syllabus (Li & Walsh, 2010). In this vein, EFL teachers in Chinese secondary schools might lack sufficient time to try out some big projects such as digital storytelling.

In addition, as previously mentioned, the focus of English teaching in China is writing and reading. Listening, which only takes a small portion of the English exam, is not taken seriously by Chinese EFL teachers, let alone speaking which is even not included in the College Entrance English Exam. Teachers might consider spending extra time to practice English speaking skills and storytelling skills is superfluous, not to mention spending time to turn a story into a video.

These aforementioned factors might hinder the application of digital storytelling in Chinese secondary schools. However, from my perspective, the time is ripe for the implementation of digital storytelling in private English language training schools; however, before any initiation, the teacher will need to be sure to consult school policy and parent permission around video creation, especially if hosted on the Internet. A digital footprinting is defined as “the trace you leave on the Internet” (Gold, 2014, p.93). That said, digital literacy is an important skill for student development, and navigating these issues of consent, privacy, location and control of personal data, and safe practices on the Internet will help students to hone these skills. Further reason for implementation are as follows.

First, as supplementary language courses, the average class size usually is smaller than public schools. In an attempt to guarantee that students can receive sufficient individualized attention and instruction, the average class size is limited to 12 students or fewer. In this case, EFL teachers do not need to get busy with dealing too many students at a time and it will not take too much time to go through all of the student-generated videos.

Second, due to the small class size, courses offered by those private English language training schools are pretty flexible and can be customized to address different needs,

interests and academic levels of students. Teachers do not need to strictly follow the textbook. In most cases, teachers are empowered to prepare their own teaching materials and go beyond textbooks according to students' learning levels and learning needs. Usually, in order to distinguish themselves from public schools, an important selling point which private English language training schools use to make them stand out is that they could provide students with an enjoyable English learning environment rather than tedious test-oriented education. In this case, their teaching materials and teaching plans are always designed to stimulate students' learning interest while maximizing the learning potential. Since the exam stress has been minimized, innovative teaching methods like digital storytelling projects will become acceptable.

Most importantly, unlike English education in public schools, the goal of private English training school is to improve students' overall English skills. English speaking skills even take priority in some private language training institutes. In this respect, digital storytelling projects that put emphasis on oral English training will not be considered as a waste of time.

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Appendix A

CATEGORY	20	15	10	5	Subtotal
Point of View - Purpose	Establishes a purpose early on and maintains a clear focus throughout	Establishes a purpose early on and maintains focus for most of the presentation	There are a few lapses in focus, but the purpose is fairly clear.	It is difficult to figure out the purpose of the presentation	
Voice-Pacing	The pace (rhythm and voice punctuation) fits the story line and helps the audience really “get into the story”.	Occasionally speaks too fast or too slowly for the story line. The pacing (rhythm and voice punctuation) is relatively engaging for the audience	Tries to use pacing(rhythm and voice punctuation), but it is often noticeable that the pacing does not fit the story line. Audience is not consistently engaged.	No attempts to match the pace of the storytelling to the storyline or the audience.	
Images	Images create a distinct atmosphere or tone that matches different parts of the story. The images may communicate symbolism and/or metaphors.	Images create an atmosphere or tone that matches some parts of the story. The images may communicate symbolism and/or metaphors.	An attempt was made to use images to create an atmosphere/tone but it needed more work. Image choice is logical.	Little or no attempt to use images to create an appropriate atmosphere/tone.	
Economy	The story is told with exactly the right amount of detail throughout. It	The story composition is typically good, though it seems to drag	The story seems to need more editing. It is noticeably too long or too short	The story needs extensive editing. It is too long or too short to be interesting.	

	does not seem too short nor does it seem too long.	somewhat or need slightly more detail in one or two sections.	in more than one section.		
Grammar	Grammar and usage were correct (for the dialect chosen) and contributed to clarity, style, and character development.	Grammar and usage were typically correct (for the dialect chosen) and errors did not detract from the story.	Grammar and usage were typically correct but errors detracted from story.	Repeated errors in grammar and usage distracted greatly from the story.	

Appendix B

When I grow up

Katie, a little girl in fifth grade, was celebrating her 10th birthday. She was excited that the number of candles on the cake increased from nine to ten. This meant quite a lot to her! You can't imagine how badly she wanted to be a grown-up. Although she was only 10 years old now, she was still satisfied that at least she was older than last year. She hoped that one day she could be an independent big girl who could do whatever she wants without parents' permission. She felt that kids' world was always filled with too many rules. Every time when mum was putting on make-up, she also wanted to have a try. But mum frowned and said: "No, you can apply makeup only when you grow up." When dad was drinking beer, she also wanted to sip a little bit to see how it tasted. But dad shrugged and said: "No, you can drink beer only when you grow up". But for Katie, the most unbearable thing of being a kid was that she needed to do homework. In fact, when she got home from school, what she wanted to do was to entertain herself after a long day at school and found something fun to do like watching TV, but mum said: "No, you have to finish your homework first." Katie pouted and asked: "When can I not do my homework?" The answer seemed obvious ----"when you grow up."

So Katie closed eyes and made her birthday wish--- grow up quickly. Suddenly an angel appeared in front of her: "I can make your dreams come true!" The angel began an incantation and said: "Time moves faster!" Before she knew what was happening, she had already become a young lady. "Oh, look at me, mum! I grow up!" Katie shouted happily. But soon Katie found herself alone in the house. "Mum, dad, where are you?" Katie became anxious. The angel appeared again: "don't waste your time finding them. They have

disappeared. That's the price for your wish." After saying that, the angel vanished from sight again. Oh, what a bittersweet moment!

Then Katie decided to find a job first. Luckily, she found that a secretary job vacancy was available. She screwed up her courage to apply for the job. The manager asked: "Do you have secretary certificate?" "No." Katie answered. "Can you speak English?" "No." "Are you proficient in operating Office software?" "No." "I am sorry maybe you are not the right person we are looking for."

Disappointed, Katie strolled on the street aimlessly and she was so hungry. Good smells of bread were emanating from a bakery. A man was buying bread and milk. Katie stepped forward and asked: "Sir, could you buy me a lunch. I'm starving. Please, please!" The man gazed at Katie and readily agreed to help her. The man said: "Sure, but there is no such thing as a free lunch. I buy you a lunch, and you also need to do me a favor".

The man then took Katie to a theme park. The man pointed to the park and said: "I am a ticket taker. See, this is where I work, but I need to leave earlier today. You just need to cover for me for two hours".

"Wow, bumper cars, roller coaster, ferris wheels, and merry-go-round! The park is amazing!" Katie got excited and clapped her hands. She completely forgot her responsibility as a ticket taker. She fully immersed herself in joy of riding a merry-go-round. It was fun to spinning in circles with upbeat music. Katie laughed out happily and she even wasn't aware that a lot of people without tickets poured into the park.

Katie rode on the horse and turn around and around, suddenly the music stopped. Someone looked like a manager and the man who bought her lunch as well as many other staff members stood in front of her. They looked owlish and grim. "Look what you have

done!” said the man in an angry voice, “A lot of people came into our theme park without paying tickets!” The manager shouted indignantly: “You must compensate us for our financial losses!” Other staff members clutched fists and cried out with rage: “Arrest her! Arrest her! Arrest her!” When people gather around, Katie panicked and screamed: “No, no, let go of me! Let go of me!” Katie struggled to get free, but angry people clutched at her arms and scratched her face.

Suddenly Katie sat bolt up right and panted. Mum was sitting beside her stroking the side of her face: “Katie, Katie, wake up, wake up!”

Oh, it was only a dream.