Foreign language like no other discipline is intended to develop a competent specialist, who not only has certain knowledge, skills and abilities, but also applies them practically; is able to go beyond the frames of his/her profession; has certain creative potential for self-development.

A foreign language needs to be taught as a specialty language at the technical universities because students are to take part in international symposia and conferences; participate in international grants and scholarships; apply for writing diploma thesis abroad. They also need to use electronic data resource in a foreign language and to be, as a result, competitive and in demand at the labor market.

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DIGITAL STORYTELLING FOR ENGLISH LEARNING

Nowadays it is impossible to imagine our life without different electronic gadgets such as PDAs, mobile phones, tablet PCs and other devices that we permanently use. These devices became not only a part of our everyday life but also became a part of the learning and teaching process. This penetration of digital technology causes the development of new methods and ways to make learning more interactive and creative. With the emergence of mobile technologies, teaching methods have changed. Many methods of teaching foreign languages actively use various information technologies. Language learning often began to use various online resources, games and tests on a computer, computer presentations. However, the most interesting, creative and unusual method is digital storytelling.

Digital storytelling is a compelling activity for the language classroom. Easy to use for both writing and speaking practice, digital storytelling can be a good way to motivate students to use the language both inside and outside the classroom. Many teachers report high motivation

levels, and not only for their students! In this practical work, we will briefly outline what digital storytelling is and give some tips on how to get started.

Digital storytelling at its most basic core is the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories. There are a wealth of other terms used to describe this practice, such as digital documentaries, computer-based narratives, digital essays, electronic memoirs, interactive storytelling, etc.; but in general, they all revolve around the idea of combining the art of telling stories with a variety of multimedia, including graphics, audio, video, and Web publishing.

The same as a traditional storytelling, most digital stories focus on a specific topic and contain a particular point of view. However, as the name implies, digital stories usually contain some mixture of computer-based images, text, recorded audio narration, video clips, and/or music. Digital stories can vary in length, but most of the stories used in education typically last between 2 and 10 minutes. The topics used in digital storytelling range from personal tales to the recounting of historical events, from exploring life in one's own community to the search for life in other corners of the universe, and literally, everything in between.

This means your students can combine two or more of the following, produced by themselves or by others:

- Text
- Audio
- Music
- Video
- Photos
- Screenshots, for example from computer games and websites
- Other images
- And other digital media

They can produce a video with voice-over, a website, an audio interview, or simply a written text with an added 'twist' such as a scrolling text or changing colours to reflect different moods. Students could write an autobiography, or a narrative, and could use any genre that you set.

In reality, digital storytelling is not a new practice. One of the field's most noted pioneers is Joe Lambert, the co-founder of the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS), a nonprofit, community arts organization in Berkeley, California. The CDS has been assisting young people and adults in the creation and sharing of personal narratives through the combination of thoughtful writing and digital media tools since the early 1990's.

Why digital storytelling? As engineering students we can say that learning a foreign language is not easy. Moreover, there are quite a few reasons for this: lack of understanding of grammar, repetitive tasks, disinterest and laziness. Digital storytelling is exactly what might make students be interested. They can develop different projects in a foreign language individually or in groups. Students will be able to learn something new on the subject of the project and in the process to memorize foreign words and their pronunciation.

Also, this method is useful for teachers. By asking students to collect information from different sources teachers have opportunities to get them to reflect on and explain why they made their selections, encouraging them to become more critically aware of the learning process and their own choices therein. Also, in groups where there is a high anxiety about writing (perhaps with younger learners or beginners), starting with the materials that students collect rather than expecting students to start writing straight away can certainly lower the affective barrier. Finally yet importantly, digital storytelling is an activity that values students for the activities they are engaged outside the school. It shows that their skills are important and can be used in school, thus bridging the gap that often exists. Digital storytelling can be, in our own experience, a fun, rewarding and motivating activity for students and teachers alike.

However, to create a digital story is not enough to have a desire and a basic knowledge of the language. You will need a camera or a mobile phone, a computer and a software that helps you create a video.

Creating a digital story could be as simple as using a presentation tool such as Apple Keynote or Microsoft PowerPoint, or as complex as a full video project with Apple iMovie or Microsoft MovieMaker. However, there is also a variety of web-based tools that enable students to create a unique user experience as they tell their stories.

PhotoStory3 - A free download for Windows computers, this program provides an easy way to edit videos. More information can be found on Microsoft homepage.

Animoto - This intuitive and powerful web-based application provides basic but impressive multimedia features. Animoto offers music and professional-looking special effects to add to your photos and text. Students can sign up for a free account and access Animoto from any Mac or PC with an Internet access.

ComicLife - With this program, students can easily tell their stories through their own comics. This program works on all platforms

and is relatively inexpensive. For a quick project, a 30 day free trial version is available.

StoryBird - Another free, web-based application, StoryBird allows students to read, write, and collaborate on digital picture books. Thousands of illustrations have been contributed to this online community, and all authors can integrate them into their written pieces. Completed stories can be printed as books and shared via the Internet.

Digital Vaults - This new tool from the National Archives allows students to create their own accounts and then build a story using digital resources directly from the National Archives. They can search through historical collections and even build their own collections of resources. Each image contains historical information that can be added as captions. The movie making tool includes soundtrack options as well as basic editing functions. With a free login account, students can save their work, and completed projects can be emailed or shared via a hyperlink.

VoiceThread is a great Web-based digital storytelling program that enables users to upload pictures or documents, record accompanying audio (or video) commentary, and invite others to record commentary as well. It's simple combination of visual and recorded media is perfect for creating multimedia presentations in a relatively short time frame using simple tools. With VoiceThread teachers and students can create virtual tours, reports on books they've read, comment on historically significant photographs, debate a topic, and more. Its uniqueness lies in the ease in which audio commentary can be added to images and documents and the ability to add multiple commentaries to a single artifact.

In conclusion, I want to say that to learn and understand a foreign language is not easy. Maybe that is why there are so many different methods of teaching the language. Digital storytelling is one of them. In our opinion, this method is creative and effective for language learning.

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