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20 – 21 SEPTEMBER 2021
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA KELANTAN, MALAYSIA

CHIEF EDITOR: NUR HAFEZAH HUSSEIN

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DIGITAL STORYTELLING: A HOLISTIC PROJECT BASED LEARNING TO ENHANCE 21st CENTURY SKILLS

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Highlights: Being recognized as a powerful technological innovation for the 21st century classroom (Robin 2008), DST has caught many practitioners' attention and they have started to utilize DST to aid in the teaching and learning process. This innovation has been widely used in the western context signified by the various established centres related to DST (Centre for Digital Storytelling, United States; Digistories, United Kingdom; Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Australia) and has started to spread to Asia (Digital Storytelling Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore).

Key words: *digital storytelling, CALL, 21st century skills, PBL, technology, language*

Introduction

Today's advanced economies, innovative industries, and high-growth jobs have increased the demands in the job market for more educated workers with 21st century skills which include the ability to respond flexibly to complex problems, communicate effectively, manage information, work in teams and provide new knowledge (P21, 2011). Current pedagogy needs an agenda that infuses 21st century skills into the teaching and learning to meet the demands of the global economy and a dramatically different society in order for students to develop 21st century competencies. Jakes and Brennan (2006) organized 21st century skills into four categories; digital age literacies, inventive thinking, effective communication, and high productivity.

As far as technology integration in education is concerned, digital storytelling (DST) is one of the pedagogical innovations that could be employed to develop 21st century skills and at the same time, enhance English language learning. The term 'digital story' was coined by Dana Atchley in the 1980's (Robin 2008). Many different definitions were given to define "Digital Storytelling" (McLellan, 2006; Hathorn, 2005), but in general, digital storytelling means combining the arts of storytelling with a variety of digital multimedia, such as images, videos, background music, and voice narration.

Content

DST is seen as an ideal alternative as compared to the conventional tasks given to students such as writing research reports, answering reading comprehension questions or memorizing grammar rules in the language classroom. Unlike the conventional tasks listed, DST can assist students to build up their English language skills, ICT skills, and soft skills (Robin, 2008; Hafner & Miller, 2011) which meet the demands in the job market. Recent evidences suggest that this computer-based multimedia task has helped students to improve their research skills, organizational skills, and give students greater interest in the content being taught (Salpeter, 2005).

It has been suggested that the inclusion of digital technologies "can support a more flexible, learner-centred notion of education that facilitates the soft skills vital for the demands of the 21st century global service and information economy" (Livingstone 2012, p.16).

There were four stages that students had to go through in the DST project as depicted in Figure 1.

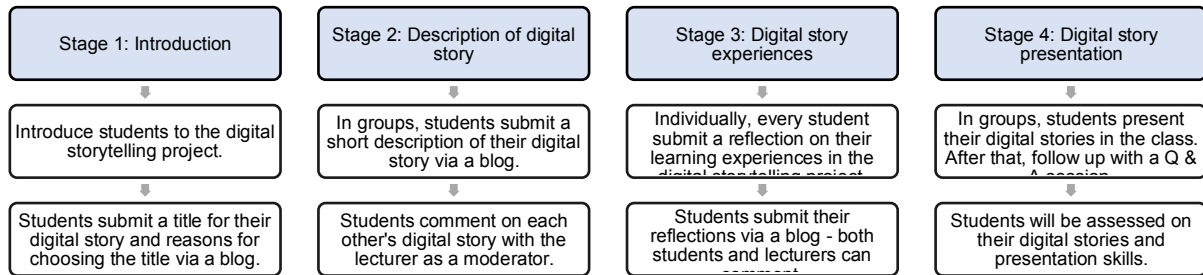| Stage 1: Introduction	Stage 2: Description of digital story	Stage 3: Digital story experiences	Stage 4: Digital story presentation
Introduce students to the digital storytelling project.	In groups, students submit a short description of their digital story via a blog.	Individually, every student submit a reflection on their learning experiences in the digital storytelling project.	In groups, students present their digital stories in the class. After that, follow up with a Q & A session.
Students submit a title for their digital story and reasons for choosing the title via a blog.	Students comment on each other's digital story with the lecturer as a moderator.	Students submit their reflections via a blog - both students and lecturers can comment.	Students will be assessed on their digital stories and presentation skills.

Figure 1 Description of the tasks and assessment involved in the project

The findings suggest that in general, despite the demanding nature of DST, students seemed to be receptive towards the innovation. They had developed their own digital stories in a group with minimal help from the instructors. It had enabled students to exercise their critical thinking skills and expose them to the collaborative working environment. The findings also revealed that the main challenges students faced were related to difficulties in working in group and technical problems such as software incompatibility and slow Internet connectivity.

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