Prospective English Teachers’ Digital Storytelling Experiences Through a Flipped Classroom Approach

Hatrice Sancar Tokmak, Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey
Ilker Yakin, Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey
Berrin Dogusoy, Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to explore prospective English education teachers’ (PEET) experiences of digital storytelling (DST) through a flipped classroom approach. 36 prospective teachers who enrolled in a computer literacy course participated in the study. The data was collected through a demographic questionnaire, three open-ended questionnaires, and a semi-structured interview form. Four videos were prepared to give theoretical input in line with the DST phases described by Robin and presented asynchronously via Edmodo system. The results showed that PEETs described the DST process through a flipped classroom approach. described as entertaining, challenging, and instructive. Moreover, according to the results, PEETs learnt specific strategies about DST, were inspired, and had the opportunity to check their product quality, thanks to the flipped classroom approach. These results revealed insights about the design of a flipped classroom approach and the DST process.

KEYWORDS

Blended Learning, Case Study, Creativity, Digital Stories, Foreign Language Education, Prospective Teachers, Technology-supported Teaching, Videos

INTRODUCTION

Digital storytelling (DST), as a combination of the art of storytelling and of digital tools such as images, audio and video, has been used for language learning (Thang, Lin, Mahmud, Ismail, & Zabidi, 2014). Robin (2008) emphasizes that although DST is not a new idea, the DST movement starting in the late 1980s with Joe Lambert’s and Dana Atchley’s efforts in Berkeley, California, the educational uses of DST are more popular because of affordable technologies. Moreover, according to Robin (2008), giving learners tasks to create their own stories individually or in a group may be the greatest use of digital stories in education, since DST has the potential to promote learners’ 21st century skills: digital literacy, global literacy, visual literacy, technology literacy, and information literacy. Most scholars, such as Green (2013), Kent (2015), Yang and Wu (2012), Kim (2014), Liu, Wu, Chen, Tsai, and Lin, (2014), support using the DST process for language learning and state that learners use both writing and speaking skills during digital stories creation.

DOI: 10.4018/IJDET.2019010106

Copyright © 2019, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.
Yang and Wu (2012) summarize the theory behind the DST process: “DST provides a clear procedure that helps instructors design instructional activities easily, based on the “learning by doing” immersion method of constructivism.” (p.340). For educational purposes, the DST process provides a climate in which learners construct their own learning while creating their own digital stories on a topic. Language learners can write their own stories in the foreign language they are trying to learn, find/create images representing important points of the stories, and use software to combine their story images with their stories. This indicates that the DST process requires language learners to use both writing and speaking skills, in addition to technology use skills.

However, the DST process has some challenges. Kent (2015) states that these challenges may be related to creators’ low multimedia literacy, or to their limited access to hardware/software for creating digital stories. Moreover, Robin (2006) points out other challenges: students’ difficulty formulating storytelling for educational purposes, and copyright/intellectual property problems involving the creation and dissemination of digital content. English Education pre-service teachers had difficulty creating digital stories, especially during the writing stories step, according to the research study findings of Sancar-Tokmak and Yanpar-Yelken (2015). As noted by Lo and Hew (2017) “…flipped classroom approach enables teachers to spend more in-class time on student-centered instructions such as group discussion and teachers’ individual assistance…” (p. 1). All these challenges may be tackled by giving more space for the DST process itself, rather than its theoretical aspects, as formulated in this study through flipped classroom teaching.

Thus, the benefits of the DST process depend on how much the storytellers could concentrate on the process rather than its challenges. For that reason, this study aimed to contribute to the literature on present storytellers’ (the PEETs in this case) experiences with the DST process through a flipped classroom approach, by focusing on steps they followed, their feelings/thoughts about a flipped classroom approach’s effects on the process, the challenges they met, and their solutions. Moreover, there are limited studies investigating the DST process through a flipped classroom approach among the reviewed literature. This study may also contribute to the literature by being an example for the use of a flipped classroom approach through the DST process.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AND FLIPPED CLASSROOM LITERATURE

Rapid developments in technology necessitate the pursuit of new developments and instructional models in classroom settings. With this in mind, ‘flipping’ classrooms has been the subject of scholarly attention. A ‘flipped’ approach to classroom learning is defined as: “what has been traditionally done during class time, i.e. class presentations, is shifted to home activities, and what has been traditionally done at home, i.e. homework and projects, are transferred to class activities” (Sohrabi & Iraj, 2016, p.543). In flipped classrooms, video lectures (lecture materials) are given to the students and they follow these videos at their home, and homework or any exercises are supposed to be done in the classroom environment (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015; Chen, Wang, Kinshuk & Chen, 2014).

Student-centered learning involving a set of theories such as constructivism, active learning, and peer-assisted learning is the pedagogical framework of a flipped classroom (Hao, 2016; Sohrabi & Iraj, 2016). While constructivism asserts that knowledge is constructed by students via their experiences in an active constructive process, active learning as an instructional method requires students to engage in meaningful learning activities and to focus on what they are doing (Sohrabi & Iraj, 2016). Peer-assisted learning, on the other hand, is about active supports for students as they acquire knowledge and skills (Sohrabi & Iraj, 2016). These learning environments and the flipped classroom approach generally can be described as ‘student-centered’ because the process of learning in these environments is grounded in student activities – in what the student actively does with the support of teachers (Butt, 2014). For designing the flipped classroom approach in this study, the
Societal Issues, Legal Standards, & International Realities Universities Face in the Distance-Learning Market
www.igi-global.com/chapter/societal-issues-legal-standards-international/39462?camid=4v1a