Title: Digital Storytelling for Lower-level Students
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Language teachers have long used storytelling to increase student engagement with the language and practice fluency. At an early stage of language development, stories can offer a valuable way of contextualizing new language, making it meaningful and memorable (Wright, 2000). These highly personalized accounts are associated with feelings and memories, which makes them attractive to students. At the same time, they provide an opportunity to practice linguistic forms, grammar, vocabulary, and formulaic speech within a meaningful and structured context that supports development of fluency (Dudeney, 2007). The advance of new powerful technology gave rise to digital storytelling that allows multiple people to share conversations around images media, and offer comments in oral and/or written form. This presentation discusses the use of digital storytelling with first and second year Russian students to produce short personal narratives using personalized sound and visual images. I will start by describing such advantages of digital storytelling as increased collaboration, motivation, and confidence; individualized learning; enhanced speaking and writing; students' interest in social networks, and giving voice to beginning speakers (de Ramirez, 2010). Then, I will talk about challenges instructors might expect and what could be done to avoid problems. Next, I will consider a variety of free storytelling technologies such as Voxopop, VoiceThread, and PhotoStory and compare their basic features. Finally, I will explain the procedure for integrating digital storytelling into curriculum, discuss potential topics and tasks suitable for storytelling, and demonstrate the actual projects done by students.

Dudeney, G. (2007). *The Internet and the language classroom: A practical guide for teachers.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

De Ramirez, L. (2010). *Empower English language learners with tools from the Web.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Wright, A. (2000). Stories and their importance in language teaching. *Humanizing Language Teaching, 2*(5), 1–6.