

Title: Promoting Narrative Skills in Russian through Digital Storytelling  
Author: Victoria Hasko, University of Georgia  
Olga Thomason, University of Oslo

Digital Storytelling refers to the practice of using computer-based tools to create and digitally share stories, which can include brief to extended personal narratives, recounting of historical events, news casts, op-ed pieces, etc. More and more language educators are recognizing the pedagogical potential of digital storytelling as a tool promoting contextualized, creative, and engaging avenue for building narrative skills in foreign language learners with diverse learning styles. This presentation examines how digital storytelling can be incorporated into a program of study for intermediate-level students and what are the effects of such incorporation (using the corpora gathered in a third-year Russian Conversation and Composition course).

The presenters will discuss the principles of using Digital Storytelling as an instructional tool for language teaching, providing a brief overview of the technological part of the project (software, special effects, soundtracks, titles, captions, a voice-over narration, etc.). Judgments about the effectiveness of Digital Storytelling incorporation into the coursework will be made based on the analysis of the linguistic behavior of students in class: the students' first drafts and final variants of Digital Storytelling projects, reports into students' use of digital storytelling as a tool, as well as their weekly discussions in class and on line and other traditional assignments. The study shows that Digital Storytelling improves students' narrative proficiency (both written and oral), reduces their inhibition while communicating in Russian, it also makes welcomed adjustments in learners' motivation and confidence. A showcase of students' work will support the presentation of the final results. The authors will also share instructions for the tasks assigned and offer a sample assessment rubric for evaluating Digital Storytelling projects.