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## **TEACHING MONOLOGUE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM THROUGH FOUR-ACT DIGITAL STORYTELLING**

Developing learners' ability to express themselves fluently and coherently remains a critical challenge in EFL teaching. While traditional speaking tasks may focus on accuracy or fluency in isolation, they frequently fall short in supporting learners to develop structured and meaningful monologues. Combining narrative thinking with multimedia tools, **digital storytelling** transforms speaking practice into a process of creative expression, critical thinking and language acquisition. Unlike simple retelling or scripted dialogues, digital storytelling tasks require learners to create original content, plan its structure, select appropriate language and present it in a multimodal format.

This paper introduces a “four-act” digital storytelling model designed to support the development of oral production skills in the EFL classroom. The model includes *four stages*: **Preparation, Exploration, Development and Presentation**.

The first stage, **Preparation**, introduces students to the foundational elements of storytelling. At this stage, learners begin by sharing their prior experiences and knowledge related to stories. They are guided through the key components of a narrative: setting, character, conflict, plot and theme. Additionally, they engage in targeted sentence-construction exercises to revise essential language structures required for effective storytelling. Following this, students listen to a sample story and independently analyze its structure, identifying each narrative stage. This activity deepens their comprehension of how effective stories are constructed and improves their ability to apply this framework in their own digital storytelling.

The **Exploration** stage initiates the creative groundwork for students' own stories. At this point, learners define the setting, main character, timeframe and surrounding circumstances establishing the narrative foundation of their own story. This stage combines idea generation with the development of monological speech. Through a series of activities, learners practice constructing coherent and logically sequenced utterances. They are encouraged to use connectors and descriptive language, drawing on their imagination in order to shape the content and direction of their future stories.

The **Development** stage focuses on creating the potential storyline of the narrative. At this point, learners work on building the plot, identifying central problems and suggesting possible solutions. Learners begin constructing their own interactive stories using digital tools. A key activity within this phase is the creation of *a storyboard*, which includes both textual and visual elements to help structure and visualize the main stages and turning points of the narrative. To support the creation of digital stories, students use various online platforms and apps: Canva, StoryboardThat, Draw & Tell, Toontastic etc. To ensure a smooth creation process, students are introduced to the functionalities of these tools and provided with step-by-step instructions for designing custom templates, which serve as a foundation for the final version of their story.

The **Presentation** stage marks the final “act” in developing learners' oral productive skills through digital storytelling. At this point, learners present their

digital stories (either by narrating them live with support of visuals or incorporating pre-recorded voiceovers using digital tools). The presentation activity improves students' speaking skills and provides an opportunity to assess their ability to creatively showcase the outcomes of their storytelling process. While one student is sharing the story, peers listen attentively to their classmates' work and create individual rankings based on criteria such as creativity, clarity and emotional impact. This process encourages students' active listening, critical reflection and analytical thinking.

In summary, findings of this paper highlight the potential of digital storytelling not only as a method for developing communicative competence but also as a means of enhancing learner motivation and ownership. Throughout the model implementation process at school, learners showed a high level of engagement and active participation, particularly appreciating the opportunity to express themselves creatively and work with digital tools. On this basis, we conclude that our model offers a practical and adaptable framework that can advance EFL teaching.

### **REFERENCES**

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