Digital Storytelling for Language Learning:
A Project Based Learning Model

Phase 1: Introductory- teach students what they will need to know upfront (skills and content) in order to complete the project.		
To teach	Standard/Goal	Ongoing Assessment
1. Basic photography- great "hook" and leads into the next skill		
2. Media Management- system for keeping track of photos and audio recording		
3. Story topic- brainstorm Graphic Organizer		
4. *Group Organization-		
Phase 2: Guided Inquiry- give students framework and opportunity to create and tell their stories.		
To teach	Standard/Goal	Ongoing Assessment
5. Learn/research/interview people		
6. Collect media-photo shoots and excursions		
7. Outline story- beginning, middle and end		
Phase 3: Culminating Performance- edit and show digital stories		
To teach	Standard/Goal	Ongoing Assessment
8. Import media to editing software		
9. Record & edit audio/Match photos to narration		
10. Add titles, or subtitles! **Add transitions/music		
Show to a significant audience!		

* You will want to decide early on whether you want students to work in groups. We can discuss this in detail, pros and cons, and what size groups are ideal. An * will appear next to information pertinent to a group, rather than individual story makers.

**Transitions and music are nice to have and dress up the story, but add this only if you have time.

Digital storytelling skills:

I. **Taking good photographs-** Good photos make great digital stories. Even if you are not a photographer, you can teach these basics to your students, plus some new and useful vocabulary.

- **Elements of photography**
  - ✓ Light- use natural light whenever possible by finding the source and turning your subject toward the force so it illuminates the subject. Avoid flash whenever possible.
  - ✓ Color- look for color combinations that appeal to the eye or strike the senses. Simple combinations can be powerful.
  - ✓ Focus- generally we want photos in focus, but motion can be shown out of focus , and there are happy accidents.
  - ✓ Angle- shoot from distinct angles: from above, below, the right and the left.
  - ✓ Emotion- whether it is through facial expression, angle, light or content, emotion and mood told in a photo.
  - ✓ Composition- the Rule of Thirds, the background, unnecessary distractions.

- **Three types of shots**: Use a variety of these for visual interest.
  - ✓ wide or establishing- tells where we are, it sets the scene.
  - ✓ medium or mid range- tells who, what and where.
  - ✓ close or detail- invites us in, gives us the inside scoop.

- **Portraits**: shooting portraits of each other is a great interactive *TASK* in which students can practice their photography skills, as well as use new language. In a portrait, the photographer wants to "capture" the essence of their subject. Design several interview questions that will help the photographer to set the scene for the shot. For example- Q: What is your favorite color? A: Blue. (Then they find a wall, or curtain to put their subject in front of that is blue.) Q: What do you like to do? A: Read. (set up a photo with a book as a prop.) Etc. These portraits are useful for the digital stories too!

- **To review the vocabulary**, critique student photos using the elements of photography as a guide. Post helpful vocabulary alongside the screen.

II. **Manage your Media-** As your students collect media (photos and audio) develop and stick to a system for naming and filing them. You will be so happy that you did!

- Every story or group should have a working title that is short, like "Cats".

- Every "story" should have a **Project** folder on the desktop, inside it should be an **Audio** and a **Photos** folder. ***For multiple photographers in one group, use this protocol for renaming files to include the photographer's name, for example Melanie_01_14April. Each photographer should also have their own folder within the **Photos** folder. So the file path for this photo would look like this: ProjectCATS>Photos>Melanie>Melanie_01_14April.

- Later, when you select final photos for the digital story, create an addition folder inside **Photos** called **Final_Photos.** Only move the photos being considered for the story into this folder.

Special Tips for downloading and renaming photo files:

Downloading using iPHOTO

Open iPhoto and plug in camera or card reader to computer. iPhoto will automatically open a window prepared to load photos (if not, check cord/card reader connection).

Photos on memory card will appear in window.

Name the **EVENT** with photographer's name, clic **IMPORT ALL**, fill in the **DESCRIPTION** with place and/or subject of photos. Do <u>not</u> delete originals, but instead use FORMAT on camera menu to remove photos from memory card. This will delete photos, reformat and prolong the life of your card.

Downloading using PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS

Start Photoshop – double click the icon on the desktop, then choose **ORGANIZE** at the start-up screen.

In Photoshop, from the **File** pull-down menu, choose **GET PHOTOS AND VIDEOS** then from **CAMERA** or **CARD READER.**

The Photo Downloader dialog box opens.

Choose where to **Get Photos** from and then your camera name.

Click the **Browse** button, and browse to find your group **Project>Photos** folder, then the folder you made inside it with photographer name.

Under **Create SubFolder**, choose none

Choose **Do Not Delete Originals**.

Choose: Shot date (yyyy mm dd) + custom name. Enter your name in the Custom Name box.

Click the **GET PHOTOS** button. All photos will download to your folder, renaming them with your name in the process, if you did all the steps above.

Click the safely-eject hardware button in the lower right corner of the computer's desktop before you pull the card reader out.

Erase the photos-find **Format** on camera menu. This will erase the photos, reformat and prolong the life of your card.

III. **Brainstorming Story Ideas**- The best way to do this in a language classroom is by using a graphic organizer. There are several types, a more basic one (a web) is best for lower level learners, and a more complex one (KWL chart) is better for higher level learners. By using a graphic organizer, you and your students can show the relationship between nouns, verbs, people and places even with a minimal understanding of the words you must use. Here are several examples of graphic organizers:

A.   B.   C.   D.   E.
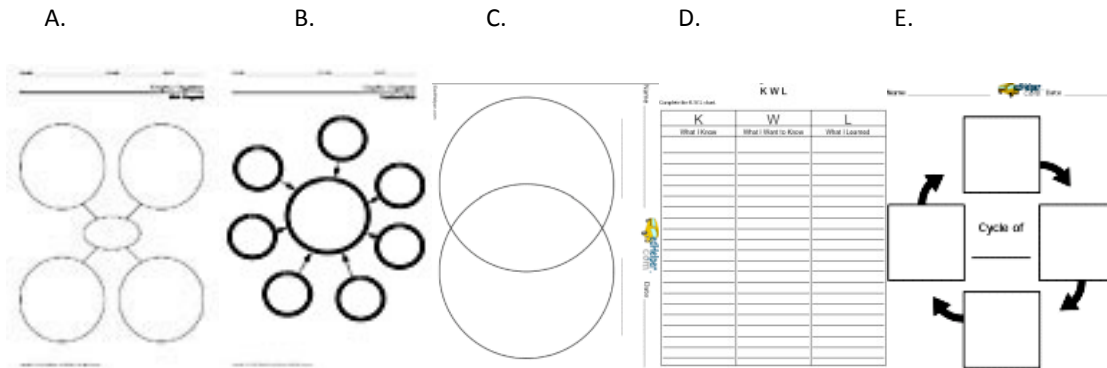
Graphic Organizer Samples:

A. * This is useful when a class will work with one similar topic, ex: family, and brainstorm several aspects of family, ex: celebrations, pets, grandparents, vacations. And from there, groups can choose one aspect to make a story about. Everyone can help brainstorm, and later students can choose a story group.

B. Once a story topic has been chosen, ex: celebrations, the story group can brainstorm aspects of celebrations that they want to talk about in their story, ex. how each person celebrates birthdays in their family.

C. Venn diagrams are a little more sophisticated and they lead to a comparison, similarities and differences. Ex: in my family we get breakfast in bed, and in your family you go out for dinner, but in both families we get presents.

D. KWL Chart stands for: what we Know, what we Want to know, what we Learned. This is useful for when your students are setting out to learn about something, ex: space travel, and they will go on a field trip to the Museum of Flight. Before the excursion, they would fill in what they already know, and what they hope to learn more about. On the field trip they take notes and shoot LOTS of photos. When they return, they fill in what they learned about what they wanted to know.

E. Showing a cycle or process can also be a useful graphic. This can also be a straight line with arrows, showing a sequence or a cause and effect relationship.

IV. ***Assume group roles**. Anyone can perform roles, but one person must take responsibility for the completion of tasks within the role. Roles can also be combined, and there can be multiple narrators.

- **Writer:** this should be a collaboration with the whole group, especially the narrator, but this person should draft the final script.
- **Narrator:** this person should try to develop a personal connection to the story to make it more interesting and to grab the audience.
- **Photographer:** this person should keep track of all the photos taken, carefully choose photos that go well with the story, and determine what photos are missing (the "holes") and get them!
- **Audio Editor**: this person should carefully edit the recorded narration and choose music that goes well with the story. (see **Legal Music** appendix)
- **Final Editor:** this person will make the final selection of photos and match them with the narration. This person should also make a "credit" slide and "title" page. They are the last hands on the story.

V. **Three steps to story:** (you will have pre-taught some of these skills already!)

Step One Collect media and story ideas simultaneously

- Use the brainstorming graphic organizers to plan places to go on photo shoots and have an experience that will provide content for the story. (Ex: fieldtrips or interviews)
- Go out on several intentional photography shoots, and take pictures of some of the ideas that you came up with.
- Take GOOD photos:
  - ✓ in focus, (unless intentionally otherwise)
  - ✓ uses natural light, (look for the source and turn subject towards it)
  - ✓ frames the subject artfully (from interesting angles and distances),
  - ✓ considers the "Rule of Thirds",
  - ✓ does not have distracting or accidental items in the background such as a plant growing out of someone's head.
- Download your photos into **Photos** folder, and use naming conventions described above. Save any video or audio files in separate folders named **Video** or **Audio**. Keep all of them in **Project** folder.
- What questions went through your mind as you were taking pictures? Write them down, and explore the answers. Interview people who you meet and take notes. Research the questions or ideas. Site your sources.

Step Two Outline the story with words and images

- As a class, watch a story from YOUTUBE or http://bridgestounderstanding.ning.com/video/video IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE IF POSSIBLE and discuss these points. A GOOD story has:
  - ✓ a beginning, a middle, and an end,
  - ✓ a "mountain" shape: after introducing itself, tension begins to rise towards a central question or a conflict- for example "why do people continue to throw garbage into the lake?"
  - ✓ a peak where the storyteller and the listener have a realization- for example "people really don't know that it is suffocating the animals and plants. If we can make them aware, then we can tackle the problem."
  - ✓ a resolution of some kind, (even if that is to pose more questions). A Call to Action is a great resolution to a story- for example "The population of the plant and animal life in this lake has shrunk by 50% in the last 10 years. At this rate, it will be gone by the time we are 30 years old. Act now to save this lake by stopping the disposal of garbage here."

- In groups or as individuals, and using notes from brainstorming and photo shoot experiences, create a story board that generally outlines your story, following the guidelines above. *Writers take the lead. A storyboard with a mountain shape looks like this. The numbers correlate to sentences and photos.

```
           6
         5
              7
        4
  |    2    3        8    9    10
```
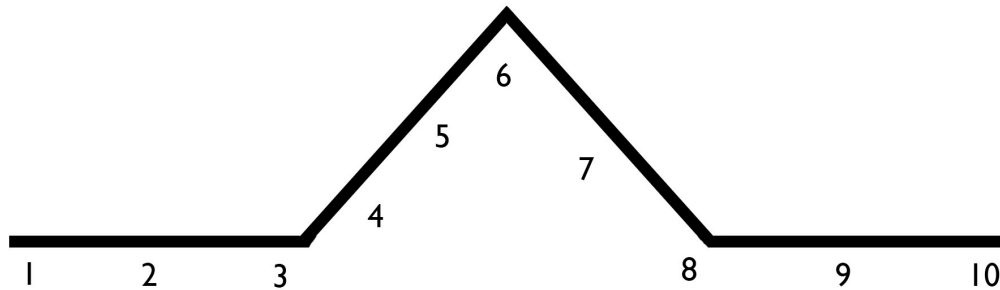
Beginning			Middle				End			
Photos										
Words										

- Create a shot list with three different types of photos and good content for the story. Include a photo of any characters in the story, including the narrator. *Photographers take the lead.
  - ✓ wide or establishing shots (set the scene, where are we?)
  - ✓ medium shots (a closer look at the people and things that are around this scene)
  - ✓ detail shots (close ups that are interesting to the eye and force the viewer to pause and think.)

Step Three Collect final media, record and edit story

- Using the storyboard as a guide, write out the script and practice it! (*Writer/Narrator)
- Review photos in **Photos** and select those that will fulfill needs on your shot list- for example "a wide shot of the lake". Put those in a new folder called **Final_Photos**. (*Photographer/Editor)
- "Shoot the holes" Now go out and shoot the rest of the pictures that you need. Download into **Photos**. Now select only the ones you will use for your story, and move them to **Final_Photos**. (*Photographer)
- Depending on the editing software you choose, you may wish to record the narration in an audio software such as *Audacity*. *In this case **Audio Editor** takes the lead and these files are stored in the **Audio** file in your project folder. (See **Audacity** in the appendix)
- Select the editing software you will use and prepare to record your narration. We suggest one of these two options: (*Editor)
 1. MovieMaker (Windows) and steps are:
    - open a New Project file and name it,
    - import photos from **Final_Photos** folder,
    - record narration and sound (*Audio Editor/Narrator)
      (see appendix for more suggestions)
    - edit narration (cutting out errors, adding pauses)
    - drag and drop photos into timeline,

- add transitions and titles,
- adjust narration and photos timing,
- add music (must be copyright free)
- render and publish (Save as an .mov or MP4 file and share it online!

2. Photo Story 3 (free download for PC only, progress through these steps simply by clicking "Next")
   - open a New Project file and name it,
   - import photos from **Final_Photos** folder,
   - Arrange them in the proper order (you can change this later as well),
   - Remove black borders, edit photos and add "effects" by "right clicking",
   - add titles, and subtitles
   - narrate the photos by speaking during each frame (for a more natural sound, start sentences on one photograph and finish them on the next),
   - add motion, zooming in and out,
   - add music using options available, including Create Music,
   - Save movie for playback on the computer (Windows Media Player). Share it online!

(For a complete tutorial, see http://millie.furman.edu/mll/tutorials/photostory3/index.htm)

Appendix:

A. More Story Building ideas:

For more advanced language students, you can push them further on their story development. And you can encourage more dialogue amongst group members by using these prompts. For lower language levels, the use of interrogatives may be enough to help them to frame their story.

What:	What is your story idea? What questions will your story ask and answer?
Why:	Why do you want to tell this story? Why is this an important story to tell now?
Who:	Why are you the person to tell it? What is your connection to the story?
Where?	Where will you need to go to do this story? What places, things, and activities will you need to photograph? (or have you already photographed)
How?	How will you tell this story? What is the angle/perspective?
Knowledge:	What do you already know about this story? What do you still need to find out? What do you learn?
Obstacles:	Are there any obstacles to telling this story? If so, what are they and how will you overcome them? (or how did you already overcome them)

B. Multi Media Software and Production: a few more words

Most of the movie editing softwares are pretty similar. The first step is to organize your media (images and audio) into a folder on your desktop that is easy to identify, and to name your media files in a manner that you can understand and remember their contents. This is really important, especially when working in a group.

***Most movie making software does NOT *store* your files, but rather, it *references* your files with in the software; so the files need to be on the computer, or on a disc that is inserted, or on a flashdrive that is plugged in.

Don't forget media rules and etiquette: you can only use that which is your own property for purposes other than this original use. That means, you need the permission of others in your group to use any of their media for another purpose; and they need yours! We all have to respect these rules, and the media karma dog really does come back to bite….

C. Legal Music Resource: This musician, Kevin MacCleod makes some great stuff and it could not be easier to find something here to add it to your multimedia piece: http://incompetech.com/m/c/royalty-free/
BE SURE TO CREDIT THE MUSIC SOURCE/MUSICIAN IN YOUR VIDEO CREDITS!

D. Recording Narration in Audacity: If you need an audio recording option that is not built in to your editing software, I suggest **Audacity** because it is FREE and EASY! You must first download it onto your computer http://audacity.sourceforge.net You will need a microphone (with a USB jack) if one is not built in to your computer, and some headphones to listen for best quality. Next familiarize yourself with how your software and equipment work by making a few practice recordings. For information on Audacity settings, go here: http://podcasting.about.com/od/recordingtutorials/ss/audsetup.htm

1. Editing can be kept at a minimum if you follow these instructions:
   - Practice! A few practice are always a good idea.
   - No paper rustling as you read. If you must turn pages, stop reading, rustle all you want, stop rustling, and then start reading again. The rustling can be edited out later.
   - Feel free to take long breaks and breaths between paragraphs, or, occasionally, between sentences. Pauses are pretty easy to cut out.
   - If you mess up, no problem. Just start reading again at the beginning of the sentence you made your reading error in. If you're unhappy with an entire paragraph, reread the paragraph.
   - Keep close to the mic, and keep a consistent distance away. Avoid touching the mic or its cords.
   - Be comfortable. If your posture is stiff, your reading probably will be, too.

2. In Audacity:
   - To open a file, double click the Audacity icon on your desktop and then go to "file" and name your project in "save project as"
   - Press "play" to record and "pause" if you need to take a break. Try to record all in one track, as you can edit later. Listen to your recording completely, making notes of what you want to edit. Use the tools in the upper left corner of the program to select, highlight, zoom in, or move clips.
   - When you are happy with your recording, save and then export (under "file") as a .wav or an MP3 file.

3. Advice for best quality:
   - Get into a space that doesn't echo (find a space where there are curtains over windows and a lot of things on the walls; you don't want a barren room with a lot of hard surfaces). You can modify a space that's not ideal and make your own little sound studio by bringing in pillows and hanging up blankets around you.
   - Make sure the microphone is on a stand or the person holding it is not moving their hand on the mic – it will pick up all of those little sounds. Keep the microphone about 6 inches away from the person's lips. Depending on the model of microphone, different angles of speaking will pick up better – play back your narration and see how it sounds.

- Remember if there is background noise (traffic, other people talking, etc) it makes your audio files hard to edit.
- Monitor the sound while you're recording. Wear the headphones and listen to what you are recording. There is a separate volume control for the headphones.
- If you press "pause" to stop recording, when you resume recording it will stay in the same track. If you press "stop" to stop recording, it will start a new track when you resume.

E. Standards
Digital Storytelling is a great tool for teaching and learning languages.

World Language Standards http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/Standards/
The Technology Standards http://www.k12.wa.us/EdTech/Standards/default.aspx

When shared locally or internationally it provides a tool for reciprocal learning, and building community. Sharing your stories with a broad audience increases the learning potential and instills pride in your students. Make plans to complete this step!

F. Assessment
A number of rubrics for various steps in the digital storytelling process are available through Zeitgeist Creations, LLC. Assessing products (photo assignments, script writings, graphic organizers, recordings, final story) as well as processes (interviewing, group work, oral critiques) are all possibilities. Assessment should be based on your objectives, student aspirations (expressed in KWL chart), and effort.