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Digital Storytelling: Developing Greek young learners' writing  
skills in an EFL blended learning environment

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Patras, Greece, February 2021

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## **Abstract**

Literacy instruction in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been remarkably transformed. Globalisation and networked computers have created new challenges for future citizens thus requiring a new set of skills to account for the multiplicity, multimodality and the diversity of social contexts. Therefore, the teaching of writing should comply with the current pedagogical trends that situate it in authentic, technology integrated environments whereby knowledge is constructed through socialization and extends beyond the classroom walls. The present dissertation describes a small scale practitioner research conducted to the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade learners of a Greek State Primary School. Its aim was to investigate the development of the learners' writing skills through the implementation of a digital storytelling project structured around the Project-based learning principles and realized within a fully online blended learning environment. A process-approach was adopted and a variety of Web 2.0 tools was employed to facilitate the instructional procedure: Webex meetings for the synchronous lessons, the e-me social networking platform for the asynchronous, Google Docs collaborative documents and Storybird for the publishing of the end products. The research was conducted during the lockdown period in December 2020 and a variety of instruments was employed in order to accumulate multiple perspectives. The data was coded and analysed before the presentation of the results. The findings were very encouraging for the development of the learners' writing skills and facilitated a shift in the learners' attitude towards collaboration and computer-mediated writing. Finally, taking into consideration the limitations of the research a set of suggestions for future research was outlined and a general conclusion was reached.

## **Keywords**

Digital Storytelling, Blended learning, e-me platform, Process writing, Project-based learning.

Ψηφιακή αφήγηση: Αναπτύσσοντας τις γραπτές δεξιότητες  
Ελλήνων μικρών μαθητών σε μεικτό περιβάλλον εκμάθησης της  
Αγγλικής ως ξένης γλώσσας

Χριστίνα Τσιγάνη

## Περίληψη

Η διδασκαλία του γραμματισμού στον 21<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα έχει μεταμορφωθεί. Η παγκοσμιοποίηση και οι δικτυωμένοι υπολογιστές έχουν δημιουργήσει νέες προκλήσεις για τους μελλοντικούς πολίτες απαιτώντας μια σειρά από νέες δεξιότητες για να αντιμετωπίσουν την πολλαπλότητα, την πολυτροπικότητα και την ποικιλία κοινωνικών περιβαλλόντων. Επομένως, η διδασκαλία του γραπτού λόγου θα έπρεπε να συμμορφωθεί με τις σύγχρονες παιδαγωγικές τάσεις που την τοποθετούν σε αυθεντικά, τεχνολογικά υποστηριζόμενα περιβάλλοντα όπου η γνώση κατασκευάζεται μέσα από την κοινωνικοποίηση και επεκτείνεται πέρα από τους τοίχους της τάξης. Η παρούσα διατριβή περιγράφει μια μικρής κλίμακας εκπαιδευτική έρευνα που διεξήχθη σε μαθητές 6<sup>ης</sup> τάξης του δημόσιου, ελληνικού δημοτικού σχολείου. Στόχος της ήταν να ερευνήσει την ανάπτυξη των γραπτών δεξιοτήτων των μαθητών μέσα από την εφαρμογή ενός πρότζεκτ ψηφιακής αφήγησης δομημένου σύμφωνα με τις αρχές της μεθόδου πρότζεκτ και πραγματοποιημένου πλήρως διαδικτυακά σε περιβάλλον μεικτής μάθησης. Υιοθετήθηκε μια προσέγγιση με βάση την διαδικασία και αξιοποιήθηκε μια ποικιλία εφαρμογών Web 2.0 για να υποβοηθήσει την διδακτική διαδικασία: Webex meetings για σύγχρονα μαθήματα, πλατφόρμα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης e-me για ασύγχρονα μαθήματα, συνεργατικά έγγραφα Google και το Storybird για την δημοσίευση των τελικών προϊόντων. Η έρευνα διεξήχθη κατά την διάρκεια της περιόδου της καραντίνας του Δεκεμβρίου 2020 και μια ποικιλία εργαλείων μέτρησης χρησιμοποιήθηκε για να συσσωρεύσει πολλαπλές οπτικές. Τα δεδομένα κωδικοποιήθηκαν και αναλύθηκαν πριν την παρουσίαση των αποτελεσμάτων. Τα ευρήματα ήταν πολύ ενθαρρυντικά για την ανάπτυξη των γραπτών δεξιοτήτων των μαθητών και υποβοήθησαν

μια μεταστροφή στη στάση των μαθητών απέναντι στη συνεργατικότητα και τον τεχνολογικώς διαμεσολαβούμενο γραπτό λόγο. Τελικά, λαμβάνοντας υπόψιν τους περιορισμούς της έρευνας σκιαγραφήθηκε μια σειρά προτάσεων για μελλοντική έρευνα και εξήχθησαν κάποια γενικά συμπεράσματα.

### **Λέξεις – Κλειδιά**

Ψηφιακή αφήγηση, Μεικτή μάθηση, πλατφόρμα e-me, Διαδικασία γραψίματος, Μάθηση μέσω πρότζεκτ.

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## List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
DS	Digital Storytelling
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
f2f	face-to-face instruction
NA	Needs Analysis
NNS	Non-native speaker communication
OCL	Online Collaborative Learning
PBL	Project-based Learning
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TENOR	Teaching English for No Obvious Reason
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOS	Teacher Observation Sheet
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development



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Author's Statement:

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