

FILLING GAPS

Learning Path describes the digital storytelling process using images of three different Polish re-migrants. It recreates the whole digital process and shows possible actions, when there are gaps in the contents (photos or script), which the authors want to fill to achieve a desired shape of the digital story.

	Learning Path FILLING GAPS
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<i>Target group</i>	The learning path was elaborated on the basis of workshops organised for Polish returning migrants willing to share their experiences from being abroad and after their return to Poland. However it can be implemented to any other group or individuals who want to learn digital storytelling, especially those facing similar technical problems as described below.
<i>Description of the challenges</i>	<p>This material is prepared on the basis of three examples of individual digital storytelling trainings. The participants (Agta, Bartek and Mariusz) had different levels of multimedia and computer skills and some different approaches to the tasks, but they all have one thing in common – they all desired to create digital stories from still images, which they didn't have before and couldn't take appropriate photos while they were participating in the workshops.</p> <p>Therefore, we knew from the very beginning that in order to show pictures presenting scenes from abroad, we would need to use someone else's material or we must think up something different.</p> <p>There were also smaller challenges connected to the script length and ability for self presentation.</p>

Training Point

Or

*How does this challenge
effect motivation and
achievement in your
group?*

The aim of this learning path is to guide a trainer or facilitator who wants to train others in digital storytelling or any person who wants to create her/his own digital story.

It describes the whole process of digital storytelling including photo shooting and indirect, metaphorical expression of memories and moods.



<p><i>Description of the activities</i></p> <p><i>Suggestions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Break the main activities down into manageable tasks and simple steps</i> 2. <i>Define the expertise required to undertake the activities and tasks</i> 3. <i>Estimate the duration and the time frame of this activity</i> 4. <i>Describe risks and uncertainties that could affect the implementation of activities</i> 5. <i>Describe shortly essential basic human, physical and financial resources to implement this activity</i> 	<p>This learning path will guide you briefly through the whole process of digital storytelling, highlighting those moments, which we perceive as most difficult, somehow unexpected or even a little bit deviating from the most recommended pattern.</p> <p>Digital storytelling workshops may be run individually with participants, how it was in the cases described below or proposed as a group activity – participants can work together, brainstorming, consult important issues with the trainer or among themselves, and learn in a collaborative way, how to practically create all the parts of their stories. Even if the stories are individual, group work is always an additional value.</p> <p>It is not easy to estimate the amount of time needed for the process. It really depends on the participant, her or his skills, personal dynamism, self-confidence and many other issues. In the average case, three/ four days (3/4 x 8 hours of training), including writing script and making videos should be enough. Some tasks like script writing, voice recording, photo shooting can be done without trainers’ assistance, if the participants feel skilled and self-confident enough.</p> <p>The definition of “digital storytelling” hides also the most important skills required from the storytellers. The first is the ability of expressing oneself with words and picture, drawing a short story on a specific subject. The second are the digital skills – at least basic computer skills (e.g. using programmes for movie editing, for example Windows Movie Maker, editing photos in this or other programmes, internet browsing) and skill of using at least simple camera. Any deficiencies in this matter requires stronger assistance from the trainer.</p> <p>The type of equipment to pick from both high-tech and low-tech is listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • computer/ laptop/ tablet for writing, photo editing, making the story, voice recording; • eventually some other recorder for voiceover recording; • photo camera – any type from the simplest in smartphones to professional – depend on you; • some paper and something to write and draw for storyboarding.
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Workshop process step by step:

I. If necessary, you should start with explaining or reminding the general concept of digital storytelling and main steps of its process: choice of subject and style, script, storyboard, planning and executing shooting and editing photos and video materials, adding text, voice and music.

1. In this particular case the subject was known from the beginning, but together with participants we outlined a set of main points of the desired stories and then asked them to write a script. We were very flexible with the group and left them to choose their own particular style.

2. Each of them started with an ordinary recounting style, however in one case it had to be changed at the end as narration seemed to be too short.

II. The general rule is that the script should have length around 250 words, which gives not more than 4 minutes of narration, however at this stage as in the whole digital storytelling process we shouldn't be too prescriptive – if you are this can stifle the creative process, you should encourage experimentation and trust your students to be creative.

1. In our case only Mariusz managed to “fit” with optimal length of the text. Bartek wrote a script much more too long for digital story, while Agata was very frugal with words, so we had to decide, how to adjust it to our needs.

2. In Bartek's case we simply shortened the text making it less detailed or just performed edit cuts of parts which we decide were less important.

3. On the other hand, Agata was not able to make more elaborative script, so we decided to add some questions in between the paragraphs to make it more interesting and dynamic.

III. The next step of the process is storyboarding. It differs depending on the situation, whether you prefer to make your story as moving or still images. Here we deal with still images, where it is advisable to draw on a paper sheet all the planned photos/scenes, which will be later parts of the movie and match it with the text of the narrative already prepared.

IV. After that you can start taking photos.

Usually, it should be possible to take photos after planning the storyboard, but in this case we met particular problems. The main challenge was that we wanted to show something from the past, not very well documented with photos or without photos fitting for the digital stories. Another problem appeared when it came to expressing moods, emotions and feelings from the past. There are several ways to approach this task.

Downloading random photos shared online by other people appears to be the simplest way and in fact we found this to be the case, but you must be very careful about copy right and image usage rules. If you don't want to or cannot pay for pictures, the safest way is to use photos shared under creative commons licences or to get author's permission. This was our solution in two cases: of Agata (all of the photos were "borrowed") and Mariusz (part of the photos from the UK were not his).

Another solution for gaps in photo material are the drawings. If you cannot take photos of something, you can draw it or you can draw something that expresses your thoughts in an indirect, metaphoric way. This is how Bartek overcame his problems with the content.

The next step for improving levels of expression in your digital story can be achieved by appropriate music selection. More information on this can be found below.

V. When the material is ready, it is time to edit it in a computer programme, add narration, music and synchronize everything together. Good option is to use [Windows Movie Maker](#) – the programme on the free licence, easy to learn, having different online tutorials.

VI. The narration (voiceover) should be recorded in a quiet space, with good acoustic (no echo), if possible with usage of special microphone or recorder, or at least a smartphone with good microphone and software. Sometimes several attempts will be needed for achieving this desired effect.

VII. The last part of creating the digital story is adding background sound (music). Background music can add greatly to or enhance the atmosphere of the story and can be helpful for expression of the author's moods, feelings, emotions or personal dynamism.

How the music influences the digital story, you can see, comparing [Mariusz's](#) and [Bartek's](#) movies. In the first case there's dynamic music together with rather fast and vast narration. It harmonizes with positive statements and vision of the future. The second narration is more nostalgic, when it comes to the content and way of reading, and so is the music. Of course these are only examples and very individual ways of expression. There can be many other solutions. Sometimes also "silence" can be music...

VIII. Adapting the music you also have to remember about property rights. It is good to find free sources of music with open licences. We used YouTube free [music audio library](#) but there are many others, also those mentioned in our handbook.

<p><i>Learning Outcomes</i></p>	<p>As a result of the implementation of this workshop process, the participants should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basics of digital storytelling; • the whole of the digital storytelling process and how to use it as a powerful communication tool; • how to convey messages through visual expression, in both direct and indirect (symbolic, metaphoric) way; • how to use digital and computer devices, such as smartphones, computers, cameras, audio recorders, etc. in order to create a digital story.
<p><i>Foreseen impact on the direct beneficiaries</i> <i>Foreseen impact on the indirect beneficiaries</i></p>	<p>The participants will have other skills, tools that will enable other way to contemplate and present their situation, to reflect on the process of migration or any other important period in their life, to separate, what is more and what is less important, what is the cause, and what is the result in their situations, sometimes also to understand the reasons of their emotions and finally – an opportunity to share all of those with others. This should give them a chance to improve their self-understanding and communication with other people in their environment.</p> <p>It will also have an impact on the people around them – most of all they will have a chance to know more about other countries, about the digital stories from other authors and in general – about the phenomenon of migration and returning migrants.</p>
<p><i>Documentation and web resources useful to implement the scenario</i></p>	<p>Digital stories created in a way described above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to myself (Bartek); • Short talk about return (Agata); • Between the continents (Mariusz). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Windows Movie Maker video tutorial. 2. Youtube free music library.