Chapter III
THEORETICAL FRAMING

3. INTRODUCTION

To understand the complexity of this research study, the researcher opts for several theories to establish the framings of the topic discussed. This chapter will present the overall theoretical frames for the study. In the first place, the researcher bases the study on a social constructivist view on how learning is understood to take place. As described in Section 3.1.2 below, the researcher draws in this respect on the activity theory (Engestrom, 1999). Since the researcher wants to obtain an understanding of his field of research in light of recent present surveys on constructivist learning, the researcher will in section 3.1.3 in this chapter look at how the constructivist paradigm(s) can be expanded to embrace innovative ways of learning. Furthermore, the researcher has equally found it relevant to use the Technological, Pedagogical, Content Knowledge Model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) as an important theoretical framework. As further explained in Section 3.2, the researcher has also modified this model to better suit the purpose of this study. Finally, this chapter also presents relevant theoretical framings for second language learning and digital storytelling in the language classroom.

3.1 A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH TO LEARNING

According to Roger Saljo (2001), the Socio-Cultural perspective on learning highlights the importance of an active participation in a “social community” in order to build understanding and meaning. The emphasis is on the learning activity and learning process. A social community can precisely be a class, and this is why the researcher finds socio-constructivism to be an applicable outlook for understanding the use of digital storytelling as an educational tool and hence the reason as to why the researcher has found Socio-Cultural
Theory to be relevant for the study. In this section, the researcher will discuss how the traditional socio-cultural theory, as well as emerging constructivist theories related to 21st century learning, can contribute to an understanding of the study.

3.1.1 Traditional Socio-Cultural Theory and the Activity System

Emerged in the late 20th century, as a reaction to the behavioristic approach to learning, constructivism is closely associated with the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978). Constructivist parameter claims that learners are seen as autonomous, active agents where learner interaction and dialogues are central to the learning processes (Vygotsky, 1978). Social Constructivism, therefore, relates to the educational theory of acquiring knowledge which emphasizes the significance of culture and context in and constructing knowledge. Socio-constructivism focuses on the construction of meanings based on prior knowledge and on the social environments in which the learning takes place. The learning milieu is an explicit structure to ensure the proper learning system as a collective. Within constructivism, the learners actively try to create meanings and knowledge, hence the adoption of the metaphor “knowledge production” to describe how learning occurs.

Several constructivist learning theories have been developed in the course of time. According to Peter Doolittle from Virginia Technical University, “there is no single constructivist position within the field of education” (Doolittle & Camp, 1999). From this follows that constructivism should rather be understood as “a continuum instead of as a static position”. Doolittle (1999) points at three broad categories within the constructivist continuum: (1) Cognitive constructivism, (2) social constructivism and (3) radical constructivism (ibid.). It is the social constructivism, or the socio-cultural approach, that the researcher finds particularly relevant as the traditional constructivist theoretical approach to the use of Digital Storytelling as a learning activity.

The socio-cultural approach to learning, developed by Vygotsky in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s made known to the Western public in the 1960s, emphasizes the interdependence
of both the individual and the social processes in the construction of knowledge. the researcher finds this purview of socio-cultural constructivism to be particularly relevantly related to Digital Storytelling processes. The interrelation between the individual student and his production on the one hand, and the setting in which the learning takes place, on the other hand comes to the fore when students e.g. ask for and receive feedback from their peers and the teacher during the different phases of the storytelling production.

Vygotsky’s approach is based on the concept that human activities take place in cultural contexts, and that these human activities are mediated by language or other symbol systems (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Saljo (2001), Vygotsky used the concept tools both with reference to something material and to something more abstract, related to notions, signs, and symbols (as e.g. language). This wide sense of the word tool is also the interpretation of the term, and today this term also embraces digital tools. Artifacts are used as a common denominator for Vygotsky’s various interpretations of tools (Saljo, 2001). The relation between the learner and the objective of the learning takes place through the use of artifacts playing the role of mediation tools. By using various mediating artifacts, e.g. physical artifacts such as digital tools and linguistic artifacts such as different modes, learners discuss, interpret and together build new meaning and understanding within their community (Saljo, 2001).

Yrjo Engestrom, designation, at the Center for Activity Theory and Development research at the University of Helsinki, place has developed the Activity Theory (Engestrom, 1999). Engestrom’s model of the Activity System draws precisely on Vygotsky’s concept of mediation (ibid.). The subject (learner) – object (the learned) relation in Engestrom’s model corresponds, in the study, to the relation between a student and the learning outcome of a Digital Storytelling activity. The tools used by the student in his learning activity links the learner (the subject) and what is being learned (the object). In Vygotsky’s terminology, the tools are artifacts used to mediate the students’ learning process.
Figure 3.1 below presents Engeström’s model applied to a Digital Storytelling activity. This model might help the researcher understand his respondents’ and research participants’ met reflections on learning potentials since it gives a proper overview of different levels that could be interesting to explore.

The bottom line in the system points to the premises for the activities to take place. In this study, rules and regulations refer to the national curriculum and the competence aims (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006). The community of practice represents all the students sharing the same goals i.e. use Digital Storytelling as a learning tool for a specific learning purpose. In researchers’ opinion, the teacher in charge of the learning activity equally belongs to the community of practice but has obviously a different role.

![Figure 3.1: Engestrom’s activity system applied to a digital storytelling activity (Engestrom 2001)](image)

Both the peers and the teacher play an important role when it comes to giving support and advice. In this respect, the terms ‘scaffolding’ and the ‘zone of proximal development’ are
central to the debates and research study. These will be dealt accordingly in the following discussion below. Whilst ‘scaffolding’ is understood as “the process of supportive dialogue which (...) prompts them (i.e. the learners) through successive steps of a problem” (Wood et al. in Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 145). The ‘zone of proximal development’ is a metaphor that describes the difference between what a person can achieve alone, without any support or guidance, and what the same person can accomplish with support from someone else (Lantolf, 2000).

The last factor of the bottom line (division of labor), implies that the work or the actions are distributed among the members of the community of practice (Lantolf, 2000). Various roles are given to various members. In this study, this could e.g. be that the instructor or a potential student is responsible for parts of the learning scheme, as e.g. to provide for an outline of the contextual background related to the overall topic of the activity. The notion of Division of labor can also be applied to the linguistic side of the storytelling production, where the teacher e.g. supplies students with relevant target language concepts and notions that students later try to use in their script or narration. The three factors in the bottom line Contextualize the activity, as shown in the activity triangle.

The upper triangle in the activity system is the activity triangle. Applied to this study, this triangle shows the interrelation between the subjects, which in this study is the individual student working on the digital story, and the object, in the study represented by the specific learning objectives of the activity. These learning objectives could be related to either content understanding and/or also to linguistic development. If the latter is the case, Digital Storytelling is used as a tool to obtain another goal, e.g. to develop oral skills. The students reach these goals precisely by using various mediating artifacts. In a Digital Storytelling production, the mediating artifacts could be various digital tools (in Figure 3.1 referred to as ICT tools¹) and also the language. The objects can materialize in various ways through the progression of the activity, and can also appear different to the instructor than to the students.
This is also the reason as to why learning as the result of a Digital Storytelling Activity embraces more than the finished story. As mentioned, mediating tools can be both ICT and non-ICT. The use of ICT tools is precisely what has lead to the development towards an expansion of the constructivist paradigm.

3.1.2 Expansion of the Constructivist Paradigm

We have today a society where the focus has been switched from the teacher’s teaching to the student’s learning, where information is unlimited and ubiquitous, and where digital technology has made our students digital natives, to use a popularized term from Marc Prensky, the author of Digital Game-Based Learning (Prensky & Berry, 2001). This implies that having a constructivist perspective on learning today implies more than what was traditionally related to constructivism as a learning theory, as this one emerged in the later part of last century. Engeström (2001) argues that all standard learning theories, included constructivism, advocate a presupposition that “the knowledge or skill to be acquired is itself stable and reasonably well defined. There is a competent teacher who knows what is to be learned “(Engeström, 2001, p. 137). The researcher agrees with Engestrom that this view no longer fully represents today’s situation along the same line of thoughts on learning from Marcy P. Driscoll at Florida State University.

Driscoll (1994) points to learning, historically, as information that could be transferred from an active master to a passive learner. As long as the society in which the learning took place was a society characterized by poor access to information, the pure communicative or lecturing role of teachers was dominant and also established as a fully accepted teaching method. Since the learners today are given more responsibility for their own learning, the teacher’s role is as a result changing from being only a presenter of knowledge to also becoming a facilitator and a resource person (Driscoll, 1994). This development opens up for variations and modifications in the approach to learning.
Catherine McLoughlin from the Australian Catholic University and Mark J.W. Lee from Charles Stuart University also stress that knowledge no longer can be looked at as something stable, but on the contrary, is open for interpretation, modification, and recreation by anyone and anywhere (McLoughlin & Lee, 2008). They argue that this development opens the way to an expansion of the constructivist paradigm. Students will still actively participate in building their own knowledge, which is one of the key elements in constructivism, but the new constructivist approach to learning takes in addition into consideration that we today:

*Have an environment in which digital technology and information is paramount and in which “learning to learn” (know-how) is far more important than memorizing explicit knowledge and facts (know-what)* (ibid., p. 643).

### 3.1.3 New Terms, Pedagogies and Emerging Constructivist Theories

Throughout history, educational institutions have always prepared students of today for life and work of tomorrow. What society, in general, hopes students will know and be able to perform has however dramatically changed during the last 20 years? When reading the available literature on 21st century learning, one comes across a variation of terms used to describe learning in our new century, such as 21st century literacy, digital age literacies or 21st century skills.

Bernard Robin at the University of Houston describes the skills necessary to create for today’s students as a combination of digital literacy, global literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy and information literacy (Robin, 2008). Along the same line is a description from the Apple Classroom of Tomorrow – Today project (ACOT2, 2008), where 21st century learning is seen as being at the confluence of three major influences; how people learn, globalization and technology innovation (ibid.). The emerging learning theories that the researcher will point to as being expansions of the constructivist paradigm are all linked to the above-mentioned skills or literacies necessary to master in 21st century learning.
When Robin points to information literacy as a skill for 21st century learning, he defines it as “the ability to find, evaluate and synthesize information” (Robin, 2008). Closely related to this is the new learning theory called navigationism. Its originator, Tom Brown at the University of Pretoria focuses on the ability to be able to navigate in the “ocean of available knowledge” (T. H. Brown, 2006). Navigationism is defined as a broader and more inclusive term than constructivism (McLoughlin & Lee, 2008), but it includes knowledge creation, which is the key aspect of constructivism.

When we use digital storytelling as a learning activity in language classes, working with language development is obviously a priority. It is nevertheless also expected, as e.g. stated in the Knowledge Promotion (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006), that students are able to display knowledge of specific content areas related to culture, society and literature (ibid., p. 98). the researcher sees this in line with Andreas Lund, from the University of Oslo, who points to have a good command of English as more than knowing the English language (Lund, 2009). In this respect, the researchers’ interested in looking at whether the students are able to do what is pointed to as crucial in navigationism, i.e. to find and evaluate information so that the stories they produce show some degree of independent and critical use of sources. To which degree do they reflect on the necessity of rephrasing the information they have been working with and present it as a coherent story? These are relevant questions as to why the researcher finds that ideas from navigationism are useful also for his study on students’ reflections on learning potentials from digital storytelling.

Brown (2006) points to navigationism as a new learning-centered education paradigm, as opposed to the former focus on the teacher’s transfer of knowledge. In digital storytelling, students need competencies that will enable them to distinguish important from less important information during the script-working phase. In their work with various sources, are the students able to synthesize and compare information? Will their learning reflections embrace such aspects?
McLoughlin & Lee (2008) claim that learner-driven content and collaborative knowledge building as typical traits of 21st century learning and in this connection; they refer to communal constructivism as an expanded definition of social constructivism. Communal constructivism was developed at the Centre for Research in IT in Education at Trinity College in Dublin.

According to B. Holmes, B. Tangney, A. Fitz Gibbon, T. Savage and S. Mehan (2001), the main idea of this learning model is that students not only construct their own knowledge, neither do they construct knowledge only as a result of interaction with their environment or community. In a communal constructivist perspective on learning, students are also actively engaged in the process of constructing knowledge for their learning community (Holmes et al., 2001). This represents another continuum of the constructivist paradigm; from learners constructing their own knowledge (constructivism) to learning as the result of active participation in a learning community (social constructivism) to learning as constructing knowledge for others (communal constructivism). The researcher finds this to be an interesting theoretical perspective also for digital storytelling productions.

As early as in 1996, The New London Group (Cazden et al., 1996) emphasized the need to broaden the use of the term ‘literacy’ to include more than the ability to read and write. They argued that new literacy pedagogy should account for a “variety of text formats associated with information and multimedia technologies” (ibid., p. 61). The term multiliteracies, introduced by The New London Group, is related to Robin’s reference to visual literacy (cf. p. 20), and has commonly been acknowledged as a characteristic of learning and mediation in the new century. Digital Storytelling is precisely a genre where students use several modes of representation to express feelings and attitudes or to present content knowledge.

Perhaps the most typical trait of 21st century learning is that today’s students have ubiquitous access to technology, as emphasized by e.g. Robin and the ACOT project (cf. p. 20). Access to technology is a decisive factor related to which learning activities we can engage
our students in. According to Glynda Hull (2002) at the University of California and Kathrine Schultz (2002) at the University of Pennsylvania, there is a gap between the uses of technology in out-of-school practices, as compared to the implementation of technology in teaching especially in learning.

Sometimes teachers, who traditionally are experts in their content field, might be afraid to lose sight of “their subject” when integrating technology into their curriculum. In the researcher opinion, this fright is based on the stand on technology as being separated from content and pedagogy. This leads him to a model that he has found to be highly clarifying for the integration of digital storytelling as an efficient technological learning tool in various subjects; the Technological, Pedagogical, Content Knowledge model.

3.2 TECHNOLOGY, PEDAGOGY AND CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

In addition to socio-constructivism, the Technological, Pedagogical, Content Knowledge model, henceforward known as and referred to as the TPACK model (Technology, Pedagogy and Content Knowledge), constitutes of the other main theoretical anchors of this study. The TPACK model, developed by Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler at Michigan State University refers to a framework aimed at describing the necessary qualities of knowledge required by teachers for technology integration in their teaching (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

The model draws on a formulation by L.S. Schulman on “Pedagogical Content Knowledge” (ibid.). As shown in Figure 3.2, the model emphasizes the connections, interactions, and interplay between and among three bodies of knowledge content, pedagogy and technology. Mishra & Koehler (2006) emphasize that the model argues against the teaching of technology in isolation. They point to this model as arguing for learning activities allowing teachers and students to explore technologies related to subjects in an authentic context (ibid.). The intersection between all three bodies of knowledge; the technology,
pedagogy and content knowledge, goes beyond all three individual components of the model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

Figure 3.2: The TPACK model (from http://tpack.org/)

The researcher wants to explore whether this model can be used in a slightly modified version as a relevant theoretical frame of reference for students reflecting on their own learning in digital storytelling productions. More specifically, he wants to use the adapted model below (Norman, 2011) as criteria for the analyses to be carried out in the study. The three overall bodies of knowledge in his modified model are related to content, pedagogy, and skills.
In this model in Figure 3.3, content refers to the students’ use of digital storytelling to work with and present second language content knowledge. He will argue that digital storytelling in higher education is often used precisely as a method to present what has been learned from working with a topic. This way of applying digital storytelling is linked to developing the students’ understanding of the content knowledge in question. He is interested in uncovering whether students actually point to learning in digital storytelling productions as the construction of knowledge and possibly how do they react to this innovative knowledge.

The next body of knowledge in the model is pedagogy. The researcher wants to relate this to the working process, hence also define digital storytelling as a learning strategy. This embraces aspects such as the students’ work with various sources in order to write a script and how digital storytelling functions as a strategy for connecting and constructing knowledge from the sources they work with.
The last circle in the model donates skills. From his experience as a researcher in digital storytelling, the researcher sees that there is sometimes a risk of reducing digital storytelling to a way of simply working with developing digital skills. In accordance with the second hypothesis, he is therefore interested in unveiling whether students point to digital storytelling merely as a diverse interactive learning experience and use of digital artifacts, or whether they also define digital storytelling works through reflection, creating different interpretations and offering diverse, various interactive learning experiences.

Benjamin Bloom identified three domains of educational activities (Anderson, Bloom, & Sosniak, 1994). The three domains of educational activities are:

- Cognitive: mental skills (Knowledge)
- Affective: growth in feelings or emotional areas (Attitude)
- Psychomotor: manual or physical skills (Skills)

His taxonomy of the cognitive domain will be used when the researcher discuss students’ own reflections on learning, as analyzed according to the modified TPACK model. He wants to see if, and possibly how, learning from digital storytelling can be defined and understood within the Bloomean taxonomy.

3.3 THEORY RELATED TO CRITICAL THINKING

The main application of digital storytelling lies in enhancing students’ critical thinking, which scholars since Dewey (1910) have emphasized as a major goal for education. The American Psychological Association (APA) offers a general definition of critical thinking as “judging in a reflective way what to do or what to believe” (Facione, 1990, 112). In the context of contemporary information overload, it is increasingly necessary to cultivate students’ critical thinking for evaluating the authenticity of claims from among a mass of online information (Yang, Newby, & Bill, 2008). Five measurable dimensions which reflect this critical thinking ability include recognition of assumptions, induction, deduction, interpretation, and evaluation of arguments (Yeh, 2003).
When students create their own digital stories, they gather evidence to support the plot, empathizing the similar difficulties which they may face in their daily life, and project these problems onto characters in the story. Sims & Bovard (2004) suggests that the process of listening to and telling stories includes many critical elements, as storytellers must use critical thinking such as deductions and interpretations to persuade their audience. In creating their own digital stories, students ultimately make decisions and overcome the characters’ problems by using a critical theorizing process and reflection skills.

One of the hypotheses outlined in this study focuses on increasing the ability for critical thinking and enhances the use of higher level vocabulary when digital storytelling is used as a second language learning activity. Benmayor (2008), Maier & Fisher (2006) and Malita & Martin (2010) carried out a study related to critical thinking and suggesting that digital storytelling may have an effective instructional strategy for improving students’ critical thinking. Digital Storytelling offers more variation because a) because of the generating power of digital storytelling as no story has been the same! b) Once an application has been developed, it can be used over and over again without becoming repetitious and boring.). The researcher wants to discuss findings related to critical thinking and reflection in his study in the light of their research.

To discuss aspects related to gender and learner differences, the researcher will lean on Andrea Barton from the University of Manchester and her article on learning styles and gender effects (Barton, 2002). Barton has been carrying out research on the effects of gender on pupils’ learning styles and presents in her article various traits related to boys’ preferred learning styles with reference to foreign language learning.

3.4 THEORETICAL FRAMINGS RELATED TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

This study views digital storytelling as a catalyst for language learning. The socio-cultural theory constitutes the overall theoretical framing also in respect of the specific language learning parts of a digital storytelling project. Socio-cultural theorists assume that
the same general learning mechanisms will apply to language, as to other forms of knowledge and skills (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The latter implies that what the researcher has already presented as important elements in socio-cultural theory in Section 2.1.1, also applies to second language learning.

The second language learning focus in this study is on communicative competence and on the language in use, and it involves both language input and language output. The researcher leans on a definition of communicative competence from Dell Hymes, who points to communicative competence as “what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Students working with digital storytelling productions are exposed to various forms of second language input, e.g. through studying literature related to the content of their story, or through listening to the teacher or to their peers, or even to their own recordings. Language output is related to the written and spoken narratives. In addition, language output can be an informal enterprise, when students negotiate meanings or collaborate by using the target language.

In line with this, and with respect to how language development often takes place in a second language digital storytelling production, the researcher also finds elements from the communicative teaching-learning approach interesting for this study. According to Vivian Cook (2008), the ultimate goal of communicative language learning is to use the language adequately for communicative purposes the language is at the same time the target itself and the means for acquiring the target. Active use of the language is the keyword (Vivian Cook, 2008). In second language digital storytelling processes, the researcher will argue that students might develop their communicative competence precisely by negotiating meanings. The focus is on active use of the target language and embraces both the goal (the finished product) and the working process.

Closely related to communicative language learning is task-based learning, which shares many of the same principles as communicative language learning (Cook, 2008, p. 257).
The main point with both styles is that students learn the target language by using it. The difference, according to Cook, is that in communicative language learning the tasks and activities are organized around a language point, whereas in task-based learning the language must come from the learners themselves, not from the teachers (Cook, 2008, p.259). The latter is exactly how language development in a digital storytelling production is expected to take place. The emphasis is precisely on conveying meanings by telling the story, i.e. conveying information from one person to a target group.

3.5 DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

From the didactical perspective, teachers often need to apply a broader approach to the process than what is described in the seven elements, to make sure the digital storytelling activity aligns with the competence aims and can be expressed in the form of specific learning objectives. Although the advent of numerous technological advances has made digital storytelling possible and easily accessible in today’s classrooms, appropriating them as learning tools for learning should always be grounded in the curriculum. That is also the case in the language classroom.

When used as a learning activity, it is the researchers’ opinion that digital storytelling must embrace more than the production of the story itself. Jason Ohler, writer, teacher and researcher points e.g. to the importance of assessing the whole process, not just the finished story (Ohler, 2008); this is totally in line with the researcher experience; the researcher has the experience of instructing digital storytelling to some volunteers students at University of Mysore- Mysore and Alliance Francaise in Mysore, South India (2011-2012). Students learn more during the whole digital storytelling process than what they express through the story itself. It is thereby important that we allow them to document this also to be precise about what can be accomplished in multiple ways. The students, who were working with this researcher, often wrote a reflection log where such additional knowledge might be expressed. Alternatively, they sometimes addressed their audience with additional information and
background study related to the story to be projected. The researcher could also arrange for an informal conversation around the working process and the choices the students had made. If the story is about a content matter, rather than something personal, there is also the possibility of testing the students formally on aspects related to overall content understanding.

With reference to the researcher’s own experience described above, he arrives at the opinion that digital stories made in the language classroom can be of two kinds. The first is related to digital storytelling used to tell something personal, precisely in line with the tradition referred in the section above. For these stories, there is an emphasis on the use of new technology to work with traditional literacies, such as speaking and writing. DST lends itself perfectly to that use. The students in the research create digital stories as part of their English and French lessons throughout the year, where personal topics around friends, family members, pets or keepsakes, just to mention a few, were presented. In addition, they made personal stories related to books they read, the idea which is taken in the current research would be based on Shakespeare’s tragic play, *King Lear* (1608). With all these topics, the focus has been on personal reflections as to why these people, animals or things are important to them. The students have hence tried to avoid purely descriptive stories, but this is not always easy, especially for the beginners, and especially when students use their second language in the narration.

The other type of digital stories that are addressed within the researcher’s second language classes is stories related to a content topic within the core subject- English. These stories are mainly about historical content or about literature but obviously narrated in English. Even stories of this type might be told in the first person, e.g. when students take on the role of a character in a book, or of a historical avatar. This shows that even “academic”, based stories, as opposed to personal stories, might contain a personal element in the narration. The other option is to the third person narration. Contextualization is significantly in respect to this group of stories, where content understanding is one of the learning objectives.
When the researchers’ students produce digital stories in English, they always have a written draft of the narrative. It does not necessarily have to be as such, but there are several advantages. One among the latter is that they can practice and develop their written skills. Another is in tune with writing spurs reflection, which is so important to encourage in digital storytelling. A third advantage is that a written narrative might produce an artifact for assessment purposes, either for the teacher- or peer assessment.

Based on what is described various story types above, the researcher will summarize by claiming that in a learning perspective, a student can either tell a story about the self, about someone or about something. The story can be narrated in the first or third person. Within a second language framing, digital storytelling is particularly interesting because it allows for an alternative and perhaps motivating way to practice oral, written and digital skills. However, if digital storytelling is going to be more than a happening that allows for variation, and rather understood as learning activity used to build language competence and content knowledge, a systematic instruction is necessary. Figure 3.4 visualizes how various subjects might take part in such an instruction, with a point of departure in various core subjects.

**Figure 3.4:** Digital storytelling instruction framework
The researcher devised this overview, to visualize how students of higher education at several levels from the Department of English and Cultural Studies, Punjab University, Chandigarh can agree on a joint responsibility for getting the necessary instructions needed for a good mastering of digital storytelling. This overview is made with reference to the Norwegian National Curriculum; henceforward referred to as the *Knowledge Promotion* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006), and shows that several aspects useful to master digital storytelling actually align with main areas of various subjects. Such an approach will also make it easier for the language teacher (or any other teacher) who wants to use digital storytelling in a learning activity, since the students might have learned some of the necessary tools in other subjects, prior to the storytelling activity.

Ohler (2008) refers to the role of the teacher in a digital storytelling activity as “the guide on the side rather than the technician magician” (Ohler, 2008, p. xi). It might sometimes be that our students are more skilled, technically, than teachers are. Digital competence or digital literacies are commonly referred to as important in 21st century learning. Ola Erstad (2010) at the University of Oslo has defined various categories related to the practice of media literacy at school (Erstad, 2010, p. 62). The researcher leans on a definition of digital competence made by the European Commission in their report “Key Competences for Lifelong Learning”. Digital competence is here seen as one of eight competencies and is understood as:

“The confident and critical use of Information Society Technologies for work leisure and communication. These competences are related to logical and critical thinking, to high-level information management skills and to well-developed communication skills. At the most basic level, ICT2 skills comprise the use of multi-media technology to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in networks via the Internet” (European Communities, 2007).
From a school-related digital storytelling perspective, the researcher will point to the creative use of technology in higher education as the most interesting aspect. This is related to how students can use digital technology to produce and share content understanding, which would take place in English as a Second Language. Since 2006, digital skills have been one of five basic skills in the Knowledge Promotion (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006). In that perspective, it has been highly relevant to focus on how digital skills development could take place without ending up with a purely instrumental use of digital tools. The researchers’ experience is that digital storytelling is one of the several answers here, and this study will also explore whether the students share that opinion. The concept of digital storytelling is closely linked to the use of new technology, but as we know it is always the story and not the technology that should be focused. “The point of technology is not for it to tell the stories for us, but to allow us to craft stories that engage people on many levels” (David Thronburg in Ohler, 2008, p. viii). Along the same line is Ohler (2008), when he emphasizes that the only rule within digital storytelling is perhaps that “story without digital works, but digital without a story doesn’t” (ibid., p. xviii).

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The researcher has in this chapter addressed relevant learning theories for the study. The main theoretical approaches chosen are based on a Socio-Cultural framing and within the TPACK model. Theoretical framings around reflection and models related to second language learning were also briefly presented. The researcher hopes that conducting the study in light of several theories and models will contribute to a broadest possible understanding of the research questions and shed useful light on the study’s overall topic.

EndNote

1See Figure 3.4 for a specification of tools for digital storytelling