

# Once Upon a Time: Digital Storytelling to Enrich Asynchronous Classrooms

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# Once Upon a Time







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Class: Online asynchronous English Oral Communication class

Initial question: How can I get students to meaningfully speak/communicate with one another with online classes?

# Presentation outline

- Intro to flipgrid
- The problem with meaningful interaction
- Theoretical framework for storytelling
- Digital storytelling
- 3-act structure
- The project
- The results
- Implications

# Flipgrid

- Free video sharing platform available on most devices
- Students arranged into “grids” (classes)
- Teachers create a topic
- Students post their reply
- Students can watch and reply to other videos in their class grid

**FLIPGRID** Where social learning happens.



# Flipgrid: Student view

- It's easy to learn and manage assignments
- Add pictures, text, emojis, effects to videos while recording
- Edit videos in the app before submitting



# Flipgrid: Useful assignments for language classes

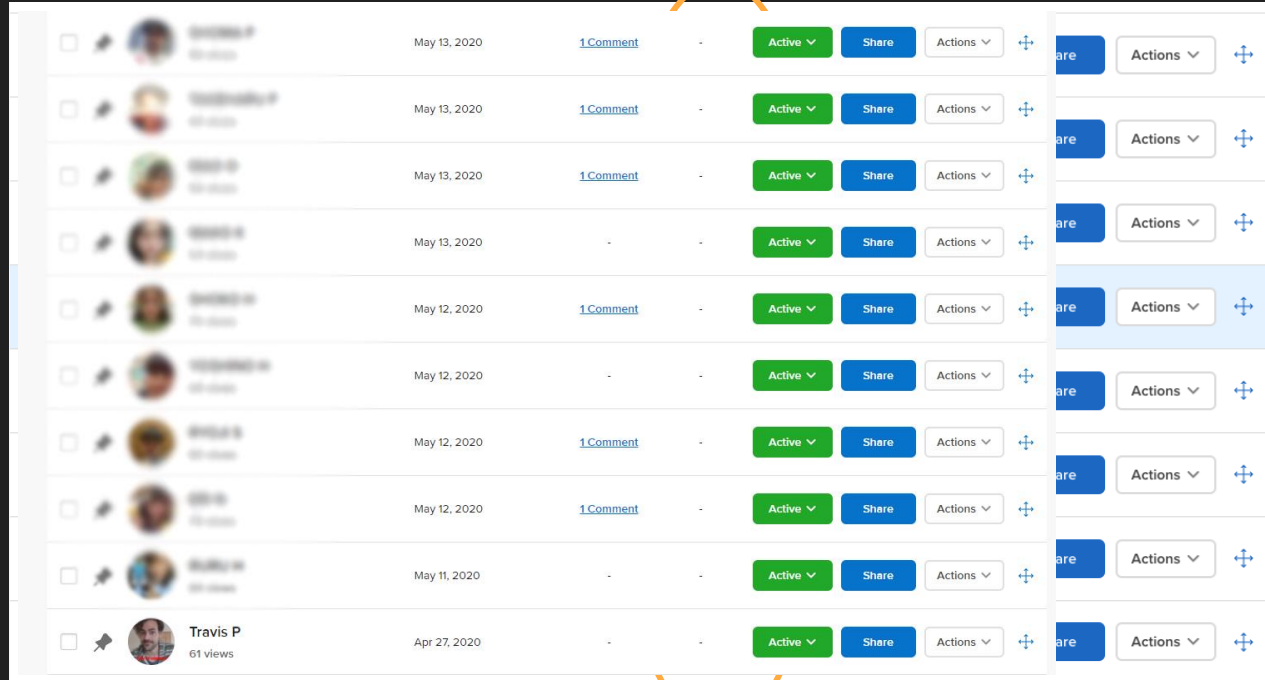
- Discussion questions
- Ranking activities
- Review a movie, show, books
- Presentations





# Flipgrid: Interaction

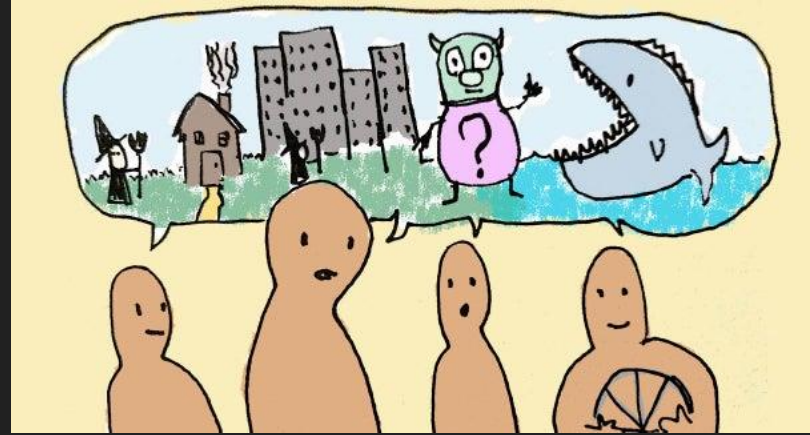
- Students were asked to reply to 2 other classmates videos in hopes to spark some conversation.
- It started off OK, but dwindled over a few weeks
- Few people responded to comments left on their videos



How can we increase interaction and engagement?

# Why not a collaborative story?

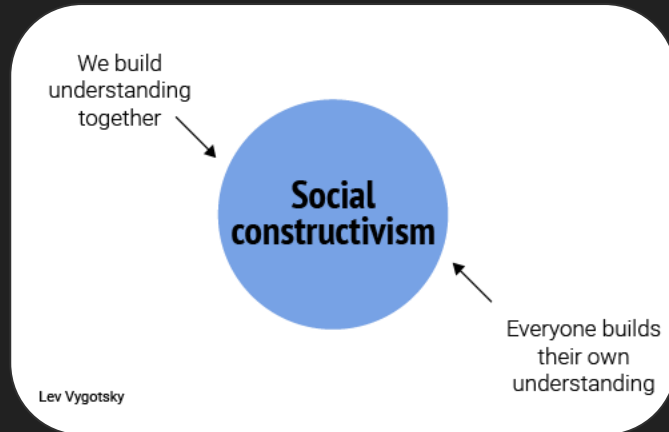
- Members of a group work together to tell a single story
- Everyone takes turns telling one part of the narrative
- Students will have to watch more videos
- Students will have to think deeply and consider the next plot point
- Increase creativity
- Fun
- Community building through co-creation



# Theoretical framework: Stories as pedagogy

## Social constructivist perspective

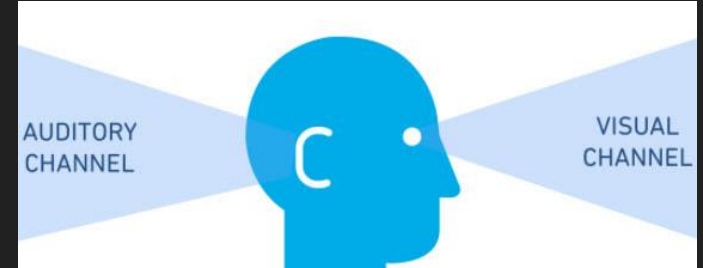
- Knowledge is co-constructed through interaction
- Stories create an opportunity for meaningful interaction (Liu et al., 2012)
- Increased involvement in learning (Guha et al., 2007)



# Theoretical framework: Stories as pedagogy

## Cognitive perspective

- Mayer's (2009) Dual Channel Assumption
  - Auditory input
  - Visual input
- Active learning assumption
  - meaningful learning occurs when people are engaged in selecting relevant information, creating coherent verbal representations, and selecting visual images



## 2nd language learning

- Exposure to target language
- Meaningful use and practice of target language & negotiation of meaning (Hwang et al., 2016)

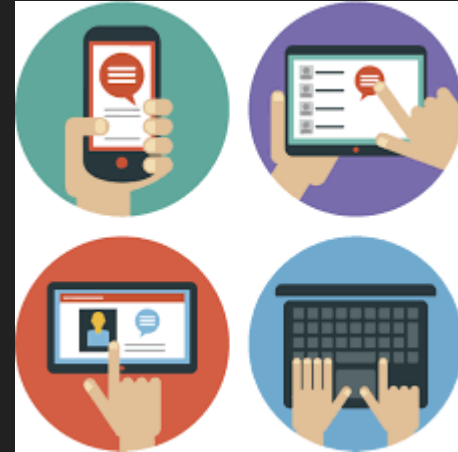


# Theoretical framework: Digital Storytelling (DST)

- DST is a movement that spawned in the late 80s that mixed storytelling with developing digital technology (audio, image, video).
- Robin (2006) categorized DST into 3 types of stories
  - Personal narratives, historical documentary, and stories to inform/instruct

## Benefits

- Robin (2008) argues it develops “21st century skills”
  - Digital literacy, global literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy
- Fosters sentence construction skills (Kim, 2014)
- Oral skills (Tahiri, Tous, & Movahedfar, 2015)
- Listening comprehension (Yoon, 2013)
- Increased learner engagement (Huang et al., 2017)



# Gaps in the research

## Fiction narratives

- Why doesn't Robin (2006) include fiction in his categorization?
- Fiction can reach beyond literal and hit upon deeper truths
- Allows people to contextualize difficult situations
- Allows people to talk about taboo subjects from a distance (Djerassi, 1998)
- It can be fun

## Collaboration - “pass the story” activities

- A majority of DST research focus on individual activities, what about collaborative?
- This is form of storytelling takes inspiration from the Japanese poetic form “renga” (連歌)
- Stories become a vehicle for community building (Gabirel & Connell, 2016)
- Increased feeling of ownership over the story as well as a deeper sense of responsibility to the group.

# Current study

1. Does collaborative storytelling on Flipgrid increase learner engagement in asynchronous classes?
2. Does collaborative storytelling work as a community building exercise in asynchronous classes?

# Methodology

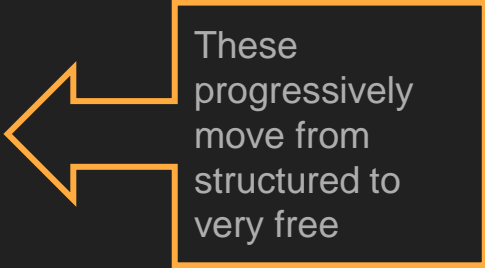
## Participants

- 17 students (10 female, 7 males)
- 1st year students enrolled in a competitive program
- Placed in the lowest level English class based on GTEC exam, roughly A2 CEFR

Task: work together in a group and create a single, coherent story on flipgrid

Project outline: 3 weeks of storytelling

1. Momotaro
2. Original fairy tale
3. 4 genres (action, romance, sci-fi, horror)

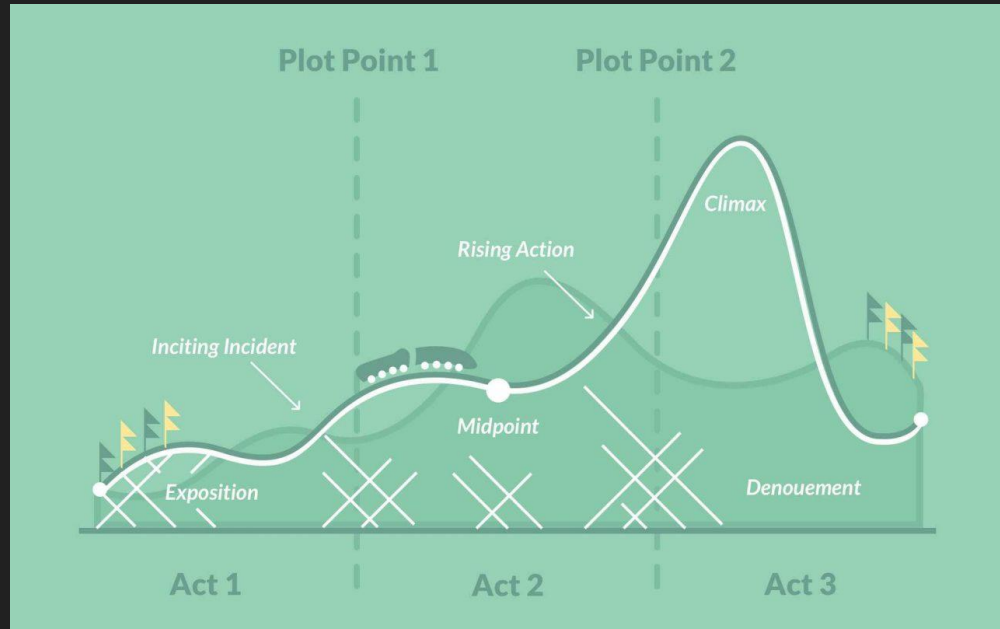


These progressively move from structured to very free



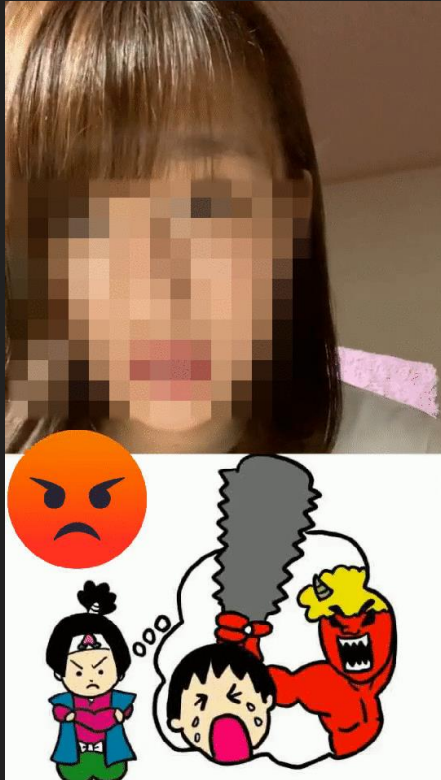
# Story organization: 3-act structure

- Students were taught this common story structure
- The outline of Momotaro was mostly completed for students
- Unfamiliar terms, familiar concepts



Act	#	Plot points	Details
1	1.	Exposition	Set up story, characters. Who, what, where, when
	2.	Inciting incident	Something happens! Good or bad - it starts the action in the story
2	3.	Rising action	What does the protagonist do next?
	4.	Midpoint	Protagonist has some trouble, must reconsider strategy
	5.	Learning/	Protagonist grows and becomes better/stronger
3	6.	Low point	Something bad/difficult happens - leads to climax
	7.	Climax	The final challenge - facing the antagonist
	8.	Resolution	What happens in the end? A happy ending? Sad?
	9.	The lesson	What does the protagonist learn by the end?

# Student video examples



# Survey

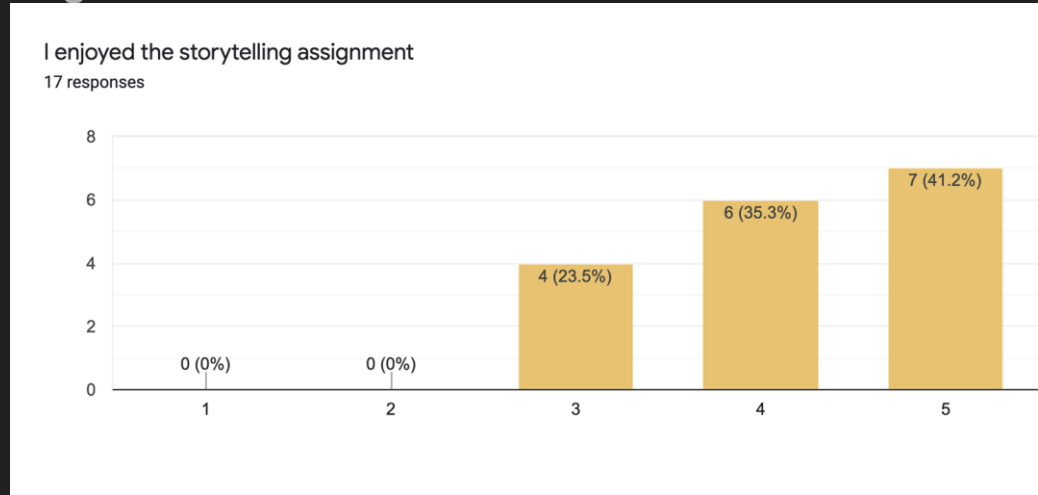
Participants were given a survey to elicit their levels of engagement, feelings of community, and overall impressions of the assignment

1. Questions were set on a likert scale
2. Free response questions



# Results

1. Does collaborative storytelling on Flipgrid increase learner engagement in asynchronous classes?
  - Results show most enjoyed the assignment



# Q1. Engagement

Compared to other Flipgrid assignments, was the storytelling assignments better or worse? Why?

“Better It was difficult to make the storytelling, but I could learn a lot of things from that.”

“The storytelling assignments need imagination in addition to English skills. I enjoyed it.”

“I think it’s better, because we think new story by ourselves, so we can improve our vocabulary and telling to someone.”

“I think it is better, because this assignments need use our brain more, and when we do this assignment we have to use our imagination.”

“Worse. Because It takes a long time to record and collect materials.”


“Worse. Because it was more difficult than others.”

# Q1. Engagement

The stakes were higher than in other assignments

“I think If I make a mistake, it could cause problems for other students. I think is a bad point compared to other videos.”

“I felt the need to take care of each other to avoid posting the same scene as other students, so that was a little troublesome. However, imaging stories were fun.”



This also ties in to a greater concern for the group as a whole. Which could indicate a greater sense of community

# Q1: Engagement

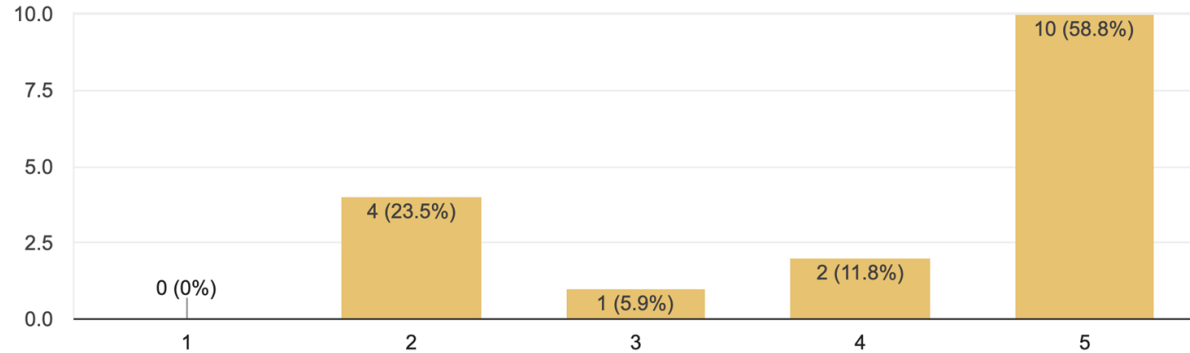
Most students felt favorable to including images in their stories

Pictures increased the demand of the task, but also assisted in comprehension.

Mayer's Dual Assumption model (2009)

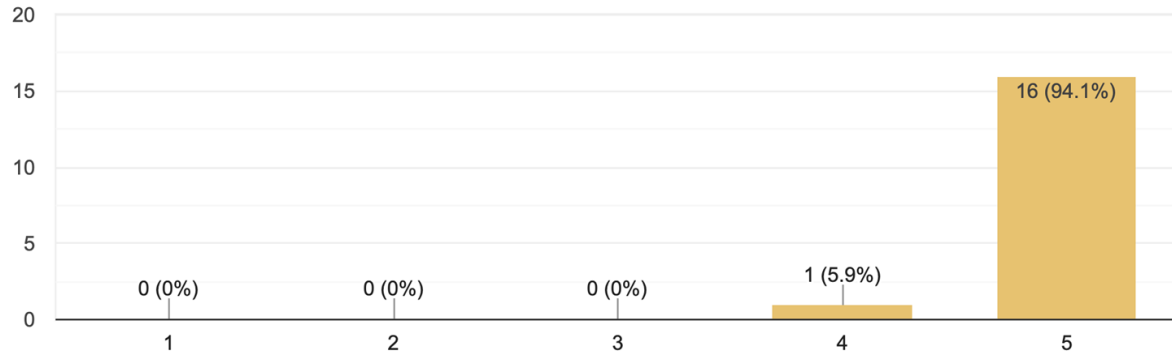
I enjoyed adding pictures to Flipgrid stories

17 responses



Pictures made the stories easier to understand

17 responses





# Q1: Engagement

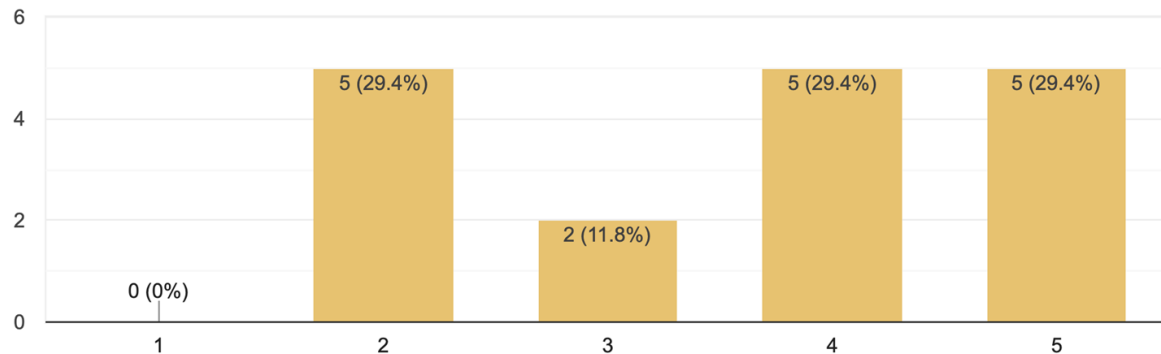
Some reported feeling of anxiety over sharing ideas in their story.

Is this due to language skills? 3-act structure?

Positive response to classmates' videos ->

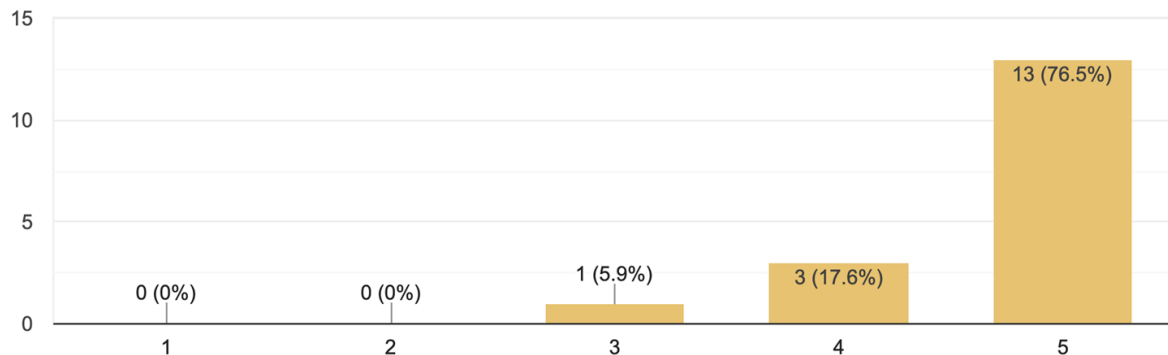
I could clearly share my ideas/tell my part of the story

17 responses



I could understand my classmates' videos and ideas

17 responses

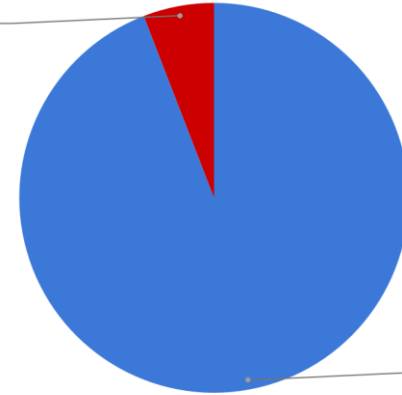


# Q1: Engagement

- Increased motivation to watch videos

I watched another group's story

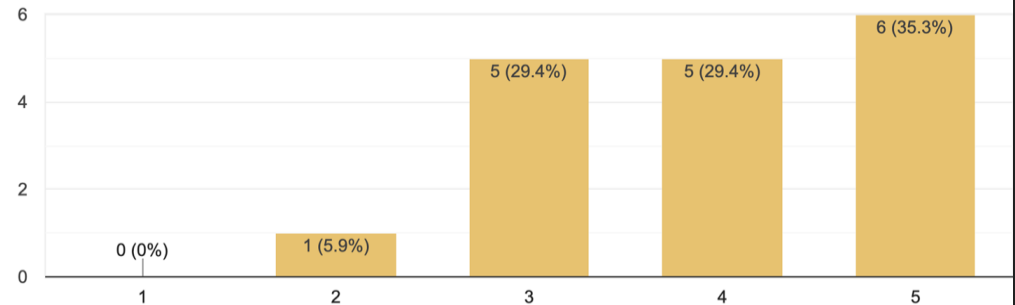
No - 1  
5.9%



Yes - 16  
94.1%

I watched more videos during the storytelling assignments than other assignments

17 responses



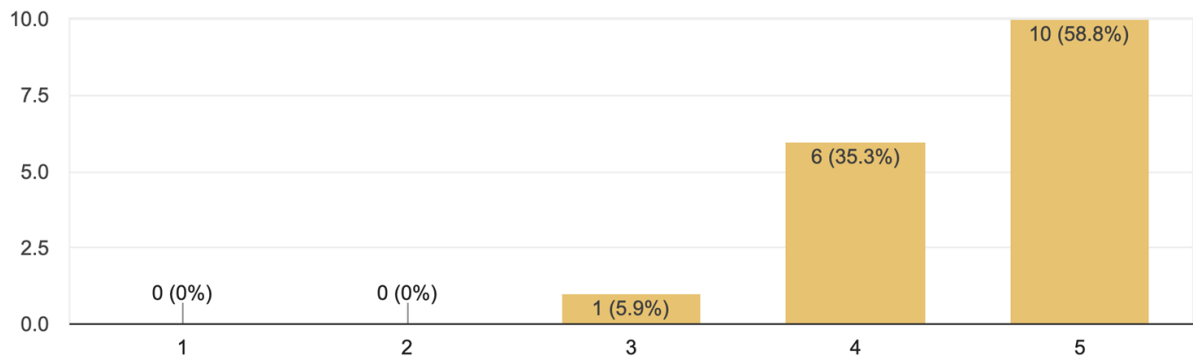
## Q2: Community

Connecting  
engagement to  
community

Pride and ownership  
over the completed  
story

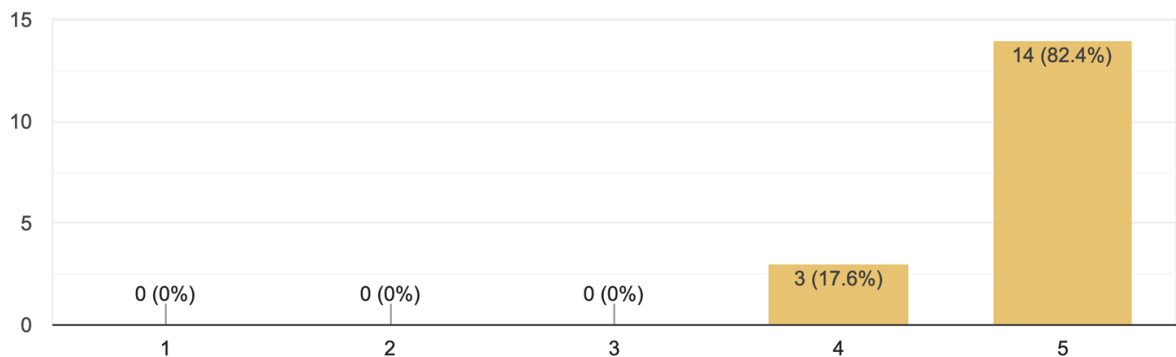
I was interested to see how my group's story ended

17 responses



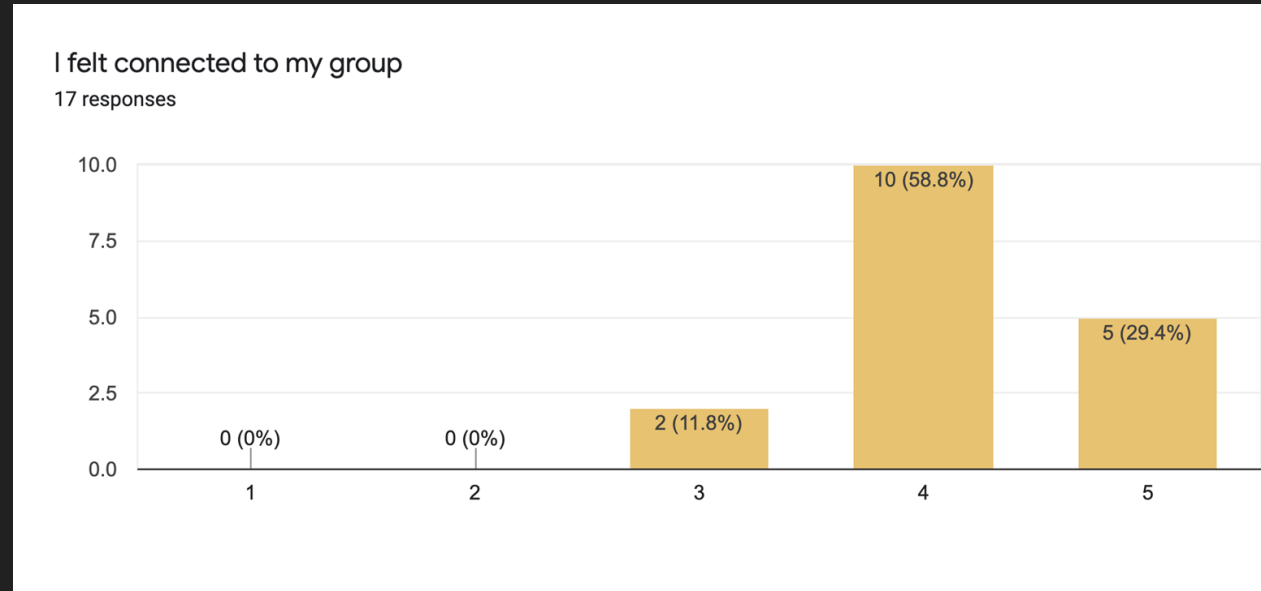
My group made a good story

17 responses



## Q2: Community

Does collaborative storytelling work as a community building exercise in asynchronous classes?



# Q2: Community

## Task specific responses

- In 4 genres, I remembered it was joyful and I felt that it's fun to connect the story with my classmates.
- I like those assignments because I could connect with my classmates and communicate them! I could enjoy them
- I think I watch classmate's video more
- I think better than other assignment because I enjoyed doing this assignment with many friends of English class.

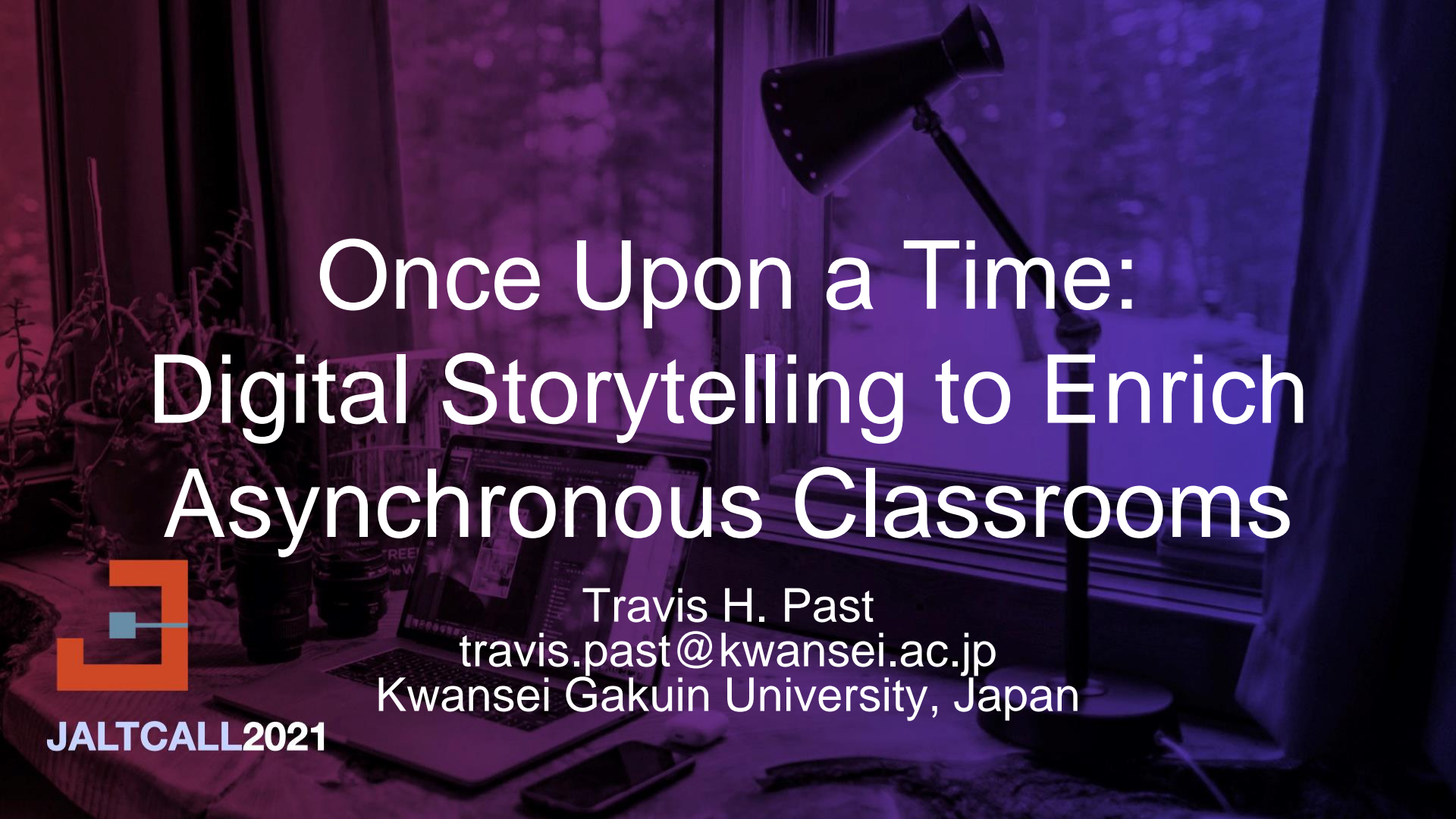
## General attitudes towards Flipgrid

- I like to be able to watch classmates faces and to hear their voices.
- It was so good! It is because I couldn't make friends on other classes but I could make some new friends.
- I think that was good. In situations where we can't meet in person, it's good to know what kind of people are my classmates by using Flipgrid.
- I think it's good. Because it's make us easy for making friends and it was relieved my tentions when I met my classmate on the first time.

# Implications

- Creating meaningful interaction on video sharing platforms can be difficult
- Asking learners to collaborate and work together on a single narrative story can increase engagement
- Collaborative activities can help establish a sense of community
  
- The world needs to use SNS/media sharing platforms in ways that connect and build together





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