



Washington State University

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Will defend their dissertation on

Date: April 3, 2026

Time: 3:30 P.M.

Pullman Campus – Cleveland Hall, Room 160A

Zoom: Link by request ceshs.gradstudies@wsu.edu

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

Title:

EMPOWERING LIBYAN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS' ENGAGEMENT THROUGH MOBILE DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Chair: Deanna Day Wiff

Abstract:

In many teacher-centered environments, such as Libyan university classrooms, mobile phones are often seen as a waste of time; therefore, students usually keep them hidden in pockets, on desks, or in backpacks. These devices are always present; however, they are kept out of formal learning activities due to exam-focused instruction and traditional teacher-centered practices. This qualitative study investigated Libyan university EFL students' engagement experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges when implementing Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) and Digital Storytelling (DST). The study examined how MALL and DST transformed the traditional teacher-centered classroom environment and the instructor's role within a limited technological context through the perspectives of Engagement Theory and Activity Theory.

Data was collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews with students and their instructor, students' exit reflection tickets, and students' final stories and collected materials. Through thematic analysis, the findings revealed that students' responses gradually shifted from hesitation to participation and then to confidence. Students also demonstrated engagement by creatively investing more effort and time than the project required. Students brought additional personal materials and tools to support class development and project development. Additionally, students perceived the implementation of MALL and DST as valuable for collaboration, boosting confidence in using English, especially while speaking, and helping create a positive and entertaining classroom environment. Still, challenges such as classroom noise, classroom cultural norms, group inequity, and classroom technical challenges were reported. However, students continued to describe these challenges, especially the technical ones, as manageable and not discouraging their performance and participation. Finally, the instructor demonstrated a shift in her role from a traditional lecturer to a supportive assistant. The study's findings suggest that technology implementation, namely MALL and DST, should be intentionally designed because engagement does not come from technology alone. Nevertheless, it results from students' emotional adjustment, social interaction, and their participation in meaningful activities.