Digital Storytelling

DIST
DIGITAL INTEGRATION STORY TELLING

A guide for the creation of digital stories

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2019

Dear teachers,

we are pleased that you have this guide in your hands! You show your openness to innovative teaching methods, your interest in social diversity and integration as well as your willingness to include these issues in the education of young people.

‚DIST - Digital Integration Storytelling' - is a project funded by the EU within the erasmus+ programme: In 2018 and 2019, six partner organisations from five European countries (Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Great Britain) developed a method to promote an exchange between pupils and teachers at schools about social diversity and integration. This will not take the form of frontal teaching, but in a way that highlights the creativity and personality of each individual.

The method was tested and documented in workshops with teachers and in practice with pupils in the participating countries with different backgrounds. You will find a large number of videos and 'digital stories' on the youtube-channel of the project, which you can reach via the project website: http://www.dist-stories.eu/.

This guide is designed for teachers who wish to implement this method at their school without the support of the project group. It covers the theory behind DIST and gives ideas and helpful tips on how to put DIST into practice in your school: what to consider when preparing and in terms of group size and dynamics, how to help pupils develop their personal stories and how to share them?

This guide can lead you through the whole process of implementation at your school. Of course, each class and each teacher has different demands and thematic priorities.

Good Luck!

Tabel of contents

DIST – The project

The DIST project was organised by the Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg in cooperation with the Flüchtlingszentrum Hamburg, the University of Loughborough (UK), the Kulturverein Archivio della Memoria (I), the vocational and language school European Learning Center (ES) and the NGO élan interculturel (FR) working on intercultural dialogue. DIST is supported by the European Union's erasmus+ programme.

The general aim of the project is to bring the method of 'digital storytelling' closer to pupils in different European countries by focusing on integration issues.

What´s ‚digital storytelling‘?

Formally, digital stories are short video clips of 2-3 minutes (or longer if necessary). The audio track usually consists by the author himself spoken text and if necessary music etc.. The illustration can be made up of different image media: e.g. photos, drawings, PowerPoint slides, videos... The arrangement and editing of these media is carried out with suitable video editing software.

The content of digital stories reflects the personal perspective of the narrator on a certain topic. The core of the story refers as far as possible to a "critical incident", i.e. an important extraordinary event which represents a special situation for the narrator (the DIST project was about experiences of belonging or strangeness). This should be made visible and comprehensible by the pupils in the video clips. The presentation of these videos in front of the class, for example at a parents' evening, opens up the possibility of a personal and creative form of knowledge exchange.

There are no right and wrong stories, all stories are valuable. It is especially important for the teacher to internalise this basic assumption when the pupils begin to develop their stories and when they are presented at the end.

The production process of the digital stories, in which the pupils reflect on their experiences and knowledge in relation to a certain topic and compress them into a story, is particularly didactically valuable. According to the basic forms of learning, 'digital storytelling' is nothing new: it is about making people aware of and compressing certain contents relevant to learning through the transformation between different media, starting with their own (episodic) memory and continuing with written and spoken text, images/sequences and music. However, today's technical possibilities significantly expand the possibilities for storytelling compared to earlier 'analogue' storytelling: e.g. recording of one's own voices, (automatic) translations, effects, etc.

Furthermore, data protection aspects play an important role during the production process.

The project is suitable for use in regular classes, project days or a working group and is open to all types of schools and all age groups. Digital storytelling is basically suitable for social science subjects and language teaching as well as for music and art. In general, it supports 'media education'. However, if

Learning to use media responsibly

teachers of mathematics and natural sciences have ideas on how relevant topics can be designed in this way, there are no limits to creativity! Otherwise, many of the following hints also apply to the production of explanatory videos.

Why ‚Digital INTEGRATION Story Telling'?

The DIST project was concerned with promoting intercultural exchange and the integration of a modern society characterised by diversity into society as a whole. Digital Storytelling provides a very direct and compressed insight into the lives and experiences of young storytellers. By listening (story listening), it makes it possible to empathise with other people, to understand them better and to develop empathy for their experiences. Through the plurality of individual stories and experiences, the actual diversity of society becomes visible.

Misunderstandings about what integration means and the alarming expectations that go with it are everywhere. This can lead to conflicts and hardnesses in schools and beyond. It is therefore important to strengthen the abilities of young people to present their own perspectives, to listen respectfully to others and to talk about different points of views. Story telling and listening has great potential for this.

As the videos produced by DIST demonstrate, 'Digital Integration Storytelling' can break down stereotypes and promote social inclusion in the school context and, in the long run, social integration as a whole. Personal stories that otherwise would not find a platform have been and are heard - this gives self-confidence and encourages. By experiencing the stories of others, new perspectives were opened up. There were moments of AHA, which led to a better mutual understanding.

Exchange on social diversity promotes understanding and empowerment.

Which are the criteria of a suitable target group?

The size of the group must be adapted to the capacities of the teachers and, if necessary, supporting assistants. It should be noted that the size and composition of the group affects how freely and personally pupils want to tell their stories and how intensively they can engage with the stories of their classmates. One seems more suitable to us. In the case of problematic group dynamics it can therefore be useful to work only in smaller groups (5-10 pupils).

Which are the appropriate school conditions?

The great thing about Digital Storytelling is that there is no standard for the framework conditions. Depending on the organisational framework, technical equipment and learning objectives, different implementation structures are possible. In addition, some phases of the process (e.g. text formulating, storyboarding, image material collecting/creating) are also suitable for homework or similar. However, it is important to remember during the presentation that the more personal it should become and the larger the stage on which the individual integration stories are presented, the more the process has to be organised in such a way that there is no subsequent 'shaming'.

Digital Storytelling – Aims and Methodology

What can we reach with Digital Storytelling?

The didactic and social goals of Digital Storytelling can be differentiated further:

For the pupils:
- Empowerment through storytelling
- Change of perspective and empathy through listening
- The exchange between each other (class community) and with the teachers is supported
- Learning a productive and meaningful handling of information and communication technology (media education)

For the teachers:
- Professional gain of experience in social communication processes and media use
- The exchange between teachers and pupils is promoted
- Action-oriented teaching with new task formats

For school:
- Development of a participatory and collaborative school culture
- Social inclusion in the school environment, better atmosphere in the classes
- A toolbox of concepts and materials will be created, in particular to deal with the topics of diversity and social integration, and to reproduce the external image of the school

How does Digital Storytelling work? - 5 Steps

Based on our experience, it makes sense to structure the teaching process of Digital Storytelling into five steps. However, depending on the setting and composition of the group of pupils, it may be useful to modify the procedure described here. It is not a question of strict guidelines, but more of orientations for the teachers. In our own experience, it makes sense to try to produce a digital story with the pupils before producing digital stories, and at least partially go through the five steps of the method.

These are orientations for action, not guidelines.

The 5 method steps are:

1. Preparation
2. Storytelling and writing
    a) Storycircle
    b) Storyboard
    c) Script
3. Compose the audio and the media
4. Video produkction
5. Screening – presentation of the videos

These 5 steps will now be explained in more detail below.

1. Preparation

At the beginning the pupils should be introduced to the method and what digital storytelling is about. The following aspects in particular should be clarified:

- Definition of a digital story
- Notes on the length
- Notes on narrative style (or explanation style)
- Notes on the topic and nature oft he story
- Notes on the use of technology, equipment and media, and possibly also on data protection

Furthermore, it has proved to be useful to show ready-made results, i.e. suitable videos, if possible with different aesthetic approaches, so that a common understanding also develops for the diversity of creative possibilities. Therefore we recommend to talk about example videos at a very early stage. With the help of these videos it can be made clear that the stories can and may be completely different and very personal. Afterwards you can continue with the tips on narrative style, length etc. and create a common understanding of a digital story.

Videos from the DIST project can be found on the project homepage and on our Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC-RiQxg_v6JpzpRZ1tcNbA/videos

At the end of this first chapter it is important to explain the further course of the project or to give a corresponding overview.

Before we start loading data into the video editing program and experimenting there, the 'data basis', i.e. besides a simple storyboard in most cases: especially the spoken text, has to be developed in the traditional way on paper.

2. Telling and writing

The writing process is structured in three steps: The writing of the spoken text, the script, is preceded by the (not always mandatory) story circle and the (largely mandatory) storyboard. These two steps are about the necessary compression of the story. Only then is the script created. Such a procedure also simplifies the handling of language barriers.

2a) Storycircle

For the implementation of the storycircle, a chair circle is ideal. Within this circle, ideas for personal stories about integration are developed and shared. A trusting and open atmosphere during the story circle is essential for the entire process of story production, because this is the first time the participants open up. This needs a respectful togetherness and a protected space. Some hints for this:

- Depending on the relationship to the class, start with an 'Icebrea-ker' (e.g. "I pack my bags and take with me").
- Principle of voluntarism! If you don't want to tell anything, you shouldn't be forced.
- Constructive questions and feedback.
- No degradation by classmates or teachers. There are no bad stories!

There are no bad stories!!!

The process can be speeded up by asking the pupils in advance to make their first thoughts of a personal story for the story circle. The teacher can also begin to open up to the pupil and share a personal experience. This step is not about presenting already finished, perfect stories. Rather, the focus is on making each other think, becoming curious about each other's experiences, and asking the pupils an idea of how they could transform their experiences into a story.

It is important that this is done in a respectful and empathetic way. In advance, the group could explicitly agree on such a way of communication. Once a person has finished his or her stories, the pupils or the teacher can ask questions. Interruptions should be avoided. Also, one should always stay with the person and their story who is in turn and avoid digressing or referring to one's own stories and/or general topics and contexts.

Principle of voluntarism!

For the storycircle it is good to have a flexible time frame. Everyone should - if they wish - have their chance to speak and share their first thoughts. The order is irrelevant and for the purposes of internalizing the voluntary nature of the narrative, it is therefore not necessary to follow the order of the chairs.
What can one do if the pupils have only vague thoughts on the subject and fear that they will not be able to tell a story? Then it is the task of the teacher

and, if necessary, the helper to encourage the person(s) to think further or to encourage them by asking questions.

Depending on the topic, such questions are possible as shown below:

- ✓ What were special situations for you in the past?
- ✓ Is there something that you had difficulties with in the past, but not anymore today?
- ✓ Which concrete event showed you that you no longer have a problem with xyz?
- ✓ What did you learn from this experience?

2b) Storyboard

The Pupils receive a blank copy of the storyboard (Fig. 1) printed on A3. With the help of the fields, they can structure their story, i.e. create a visual plan of their story and explain and expand it with keywords. It is also possible to work only with pictures. There is no demand on the quality of the pictures (stick figures).

Figure 1: Storyboard template

The storyboard is the rough plan for the individual realization of the story, which was decided upon after having been inspired by other ideas during the story circle.

After the templates have been distributed, the pupils can distribute themselves anywhere in the room to work on their storyboards. Some like to discuss in small groups, others prefer to sit down alone at a table, ...

In general, it is possible for pupils to work in fixed teams throughout the process.

The storyboard is used to find (a few) picture ideas and for the first narrative summary of the story. Depending on the class level and size, this step takes 30 minutes or more. It is important that everyone completes these phases, as the storyboard serves as the authoritative basis for the later video. If necessary, the completion of the storyboard can also be given up as a homework assignment.

2c) Script

The first linguistic condensation of the storyboard is now to be turned into a grammatically adequate text form. The storytellers write their own story with their own words - the teachers can support the class or the individual pupils as needed or encourage mutual support or necessary corrections.

This text is THE structural basis for the clips produced later. It is therefore important for the narrator to write down the story as he or she wishes to tell it - in his or her own rhythm. At best, the teacher should carefully intervene in the content.

Formally, the teacher can provide support by asking questions and providing help as needed. In this way, they can provide introductory structuring help, e.g: "A story has introduction, main part, conclusion" -- "It is best to tell it one after the other" -- "In order to make it exciting, it needs (emotional) intensification". -- …

It is a good idea to split the text into text modules, as it is easier for most people to speak or read out smaller passages without mistakes, which is later relevant for the sound recordings.

If desired, there can be a correction process at the end, in which the pupils mutually correct their scripts or the teacher corrects rough linguistic or grammatical mistakes.

If the pupils cannot or do not want to write and speak sufficiently in the local language, a helper who is capable of this language should be organized in advance to translate the teacher's instructions and their comments in the story circle. Also they can support them in creating the story boards and scripts and finally help them create subtitles so that the video can be shared with the rest of the class.

In general, storyboards and digital stories can be created without spoken text. Videos can also be produced with meaningful images, individual keywords/text panels, subtitles and music. If the pupils find it difficult to write their thoughts independently of their language skills, they can also work exclusively with pictures.

However, we find it difficult to add a self-addressed text to the video without it having been written in advance. For it is not easy to tell a story stringently and freely and without any mistakes. This is even a problem when the text is formulated.

For the usual 2-3 minutes of a digital story you need about 250 words.

Depending on class level and group size, this step should be scheduled for 30 minutes or more (possibly as a homework assignment).

For the following steps, the technical and logistical equipment must be organised, i.e.

- Pupils bring their smartphones, laptops, microphones and headphones if necessary;
- There are enough rooms available for the audio recordings (unless pupils do them as homework);
- the computer room may be reserved for the group, or
- Pupils bring their own laptops/tablets;
- an internet connection is helpful but not absolutely necessary.

3. Creating Audio/Media

The written text can now be recorded as audio with the help of various devices (mobile phone, computer, recording device, tablet ...). The words can be read out, rapped, sung or....

Quiet places for audio recording.

The recordings should be made in a quiet place. If necessary, the corresponding rooms must be reserved in advance. The pupils retreat individually or in pairs to record their text. If you work in pairs, person A takes over the recording and person B can concentrate on speaking. A collaboration of more than two persons makes little sense at this point, as this only increases the probability of disturbances. With today's smartphones, voice recording is unproblematic: it can be done directly or with the headset's microphone or with a special microphone that is available for a few euros in specialist shops. Of course, the audio stream could also be recorded with tablets, cameras or laptops.

It's not that easy to read a text (halfway) without mistakes, clearly, not too fast and not too easy. Therefore a recording will probably require several tries. The text can be divided into different sections as described before.

The time needed depends on the number of pupils and the quiet places. 10-15 minutes per script should be enough. If the audio recording is not given up as a homework task, pupils will probably finish their script at different speeds. It should therefore be ensured that those who finish early can continue with the next steps..

4. Video production

There are no limits to creativity to illustrate what has been said. Pupils can use different image sources. You can take photos or search together, create small videos, generate your own drawings (analog and then photographed or digitally with appropriate programs) and select suitable music.

Tutorials for different types of users Video programs in the appendix

For the use of music and pictures, the information on data protection and copyright must be respected.

From the collected audios, pictures, videos and the music a video can be produced with the support of suitable software. This allows the video to be edited, corrected for defects and then saved.

4a) Image search/production + music

As soon as the storyboard is ready, you can already start with the picture search or production and music selection. Either the pupils prepare this step as a homework assignment and bring their own analogue and digital results. Or they are asked in advance to bring hard disks, photo albums, etc. with them and search them on site.

With search machines (like Google) filters can be adjusted, so that e.g. only right-free pictures are found. Some video production software provides rights-free graphical templates, music, sounds, etc. that can be found via keyword search. There are also various databases for rights-free media on the Internet.[1]

Please observe all copyright and data protection regulations!!

Of course, you can also make your own drawings, e.g. with the Paint program, or with sheets and paper and then photographed. You can try your skills here, there are no limits to your creativity.

Important to note regarding the picture quality: The pictures should be in .jpeg or .tiff format and should not fall below 300dpi or 1280x720 pixels.

Image quality not below 300dpi or 1280x720 pixels

The time frame required for this step is individual and depends on the concrete topic and task.

4b) Video editing
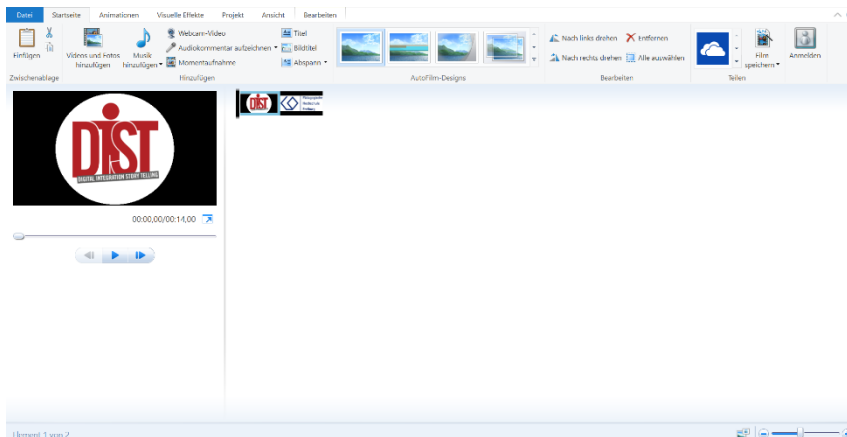
Before producing the video with suitable software, it must be ensured that the necessary technical equipment is available. You can see a checklist here:

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[1] From the PH Freiburg there is a collection of links to copyright-free media: http://cineschool.ph-freiburg.de/Freie-Musik.249.0.html

✓ Are the individual pupils or each working group equipped with suitable and functional hardware (Smartphone/Tablet/Laptop/PC) and the necessary Lade cables?
✓ Are there enough electrical outlets in the room?
✓ Is the selected software available for video production? - So is it either pre-installed or do the licenses for online programs exist?
✓ If necessary: Is Internet access guaranteed?

The following editing programs are available for video production:

- iMovie (Apple) / MOVIEMAKER (Windows) / KineMaster (Android) - the standard applications: free and easy to useWEVIDEO – eine internetbasierte Plattform
- ADOBE - expensive and complicated to use, but offers more tools
- SHOTCUT - available in many languages, less suitable as an introduction to videoproduction

Moviemaker (for Microsoft) and iMovie (for Apple) are free editing applications. They offer extensive editing possibilities, especially image transfers, and titles and credits can be produced directly. Otherwise, the best way to get to know the various functions is to try them out - this applies to any software.

Important to note:

✓ The voice recording is the basic sequence of the video clips. It should therefore be added to the audio track as the first step. This is because the sequence of images and other selected media is based on the speed of the spoken word.
✓ The sound and image files should be added in the highest possible quality.
✓ Crossfades between the individual images or video sequences added with the software ensure a smooth process.
Subtitles can be added to videos whose language is not understood by the majority of viewers.

The time required here is very different from individual to individual. We ourselves were pleasantly surprised to see that both pupils and teachers sometimes only need a few hours to produce impressive videos. In addition, less is more. Even very simple videos, with few special effects and media, can transmit a wonderful profound message. Also with this step should always be kept in mind: There are no bad stories!

In video production, it can be useful for pupils to work in small groups in order to better share their experiences with the software.

6. Screening –Presentation of the videos

Now everyone has the opportunity to share their work with the others. The videos can be moderated by the pupils themselves or by the teacher. As with the storycircle, pupils should listen respectfully and give appropriate feedback. It is important to avoid any negative reactions to personal stories.

Finished videos can be made available to a larger audience after completion and collection of the parent's and especially the student's declaration of understanding. Here, too, there are various conceivable formats. The pupils can show their digital stories online, on DVD or at their best: with a live audience, e.g. at the end of the project days, at the parents' evening, in class at the end of the school year.

In the case of screening, the group present may be limited in such a way that the video cannot be used as a bullying template.

You can create a nice atmosphere for the screening by making popcorn available, as in the cinema, and everyone can take a comfortable sitting position, e.g. on the floor in a semicircle..

Especially with regard to the learning effect, the storytelling includes counting and listening to each other. The teacher should make the audience aware of respectful interaction and constructive feedback. It can be discussed both thematically and methodically.

Any story is worth showing off!

Comments on data protection aspects:

The use of pupils' private devices:

Private equipment is used by pupils, they are only allowed to take pictures of themselves. The admission of classmates or teachers with their own equipment is legally problematic. The pupils are only allowed to film/photograph each other with the school's equipment and the teacher's permission.

Picture and film material:

With a view to publication on a larger scale, care must be taken to make sure that pupils only use copyright-free images and music from the Internet for their digital stories.

When using pictures showing, for example, family members, friends or classmates, it is important to sensitise the pupils to responsible media use in accordance with the Basic Data Protection Regulation. This means that persons depicted must agree to the publication of these pictures..
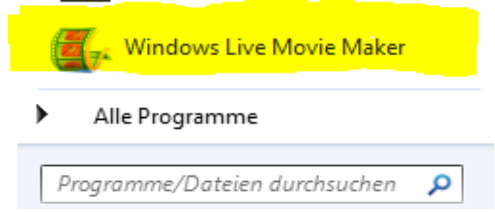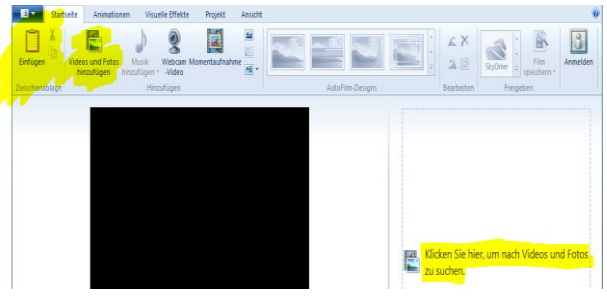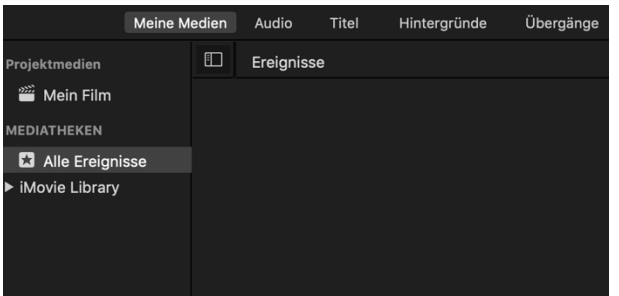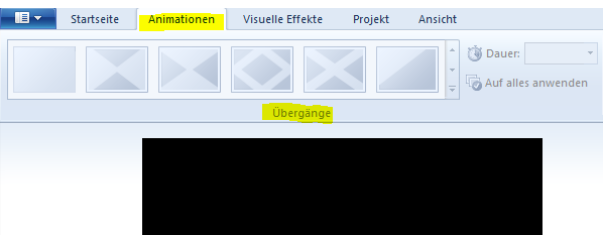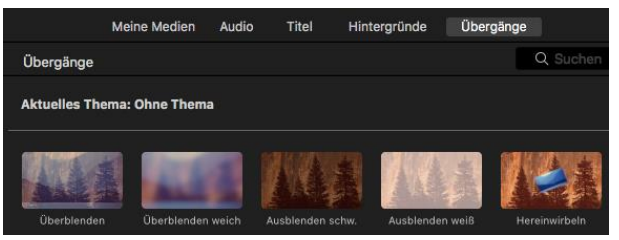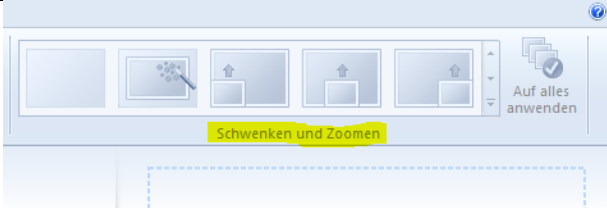
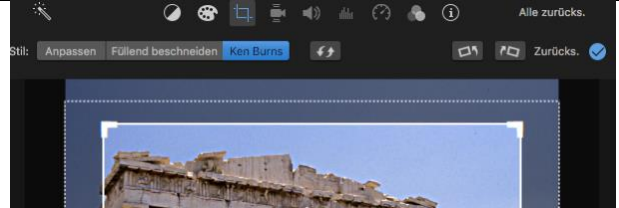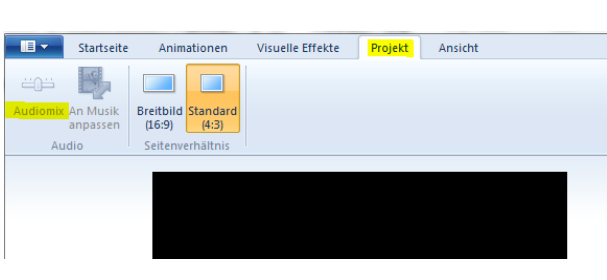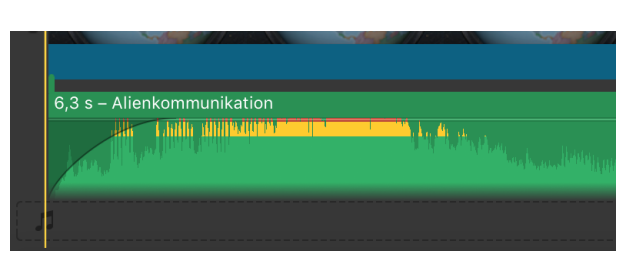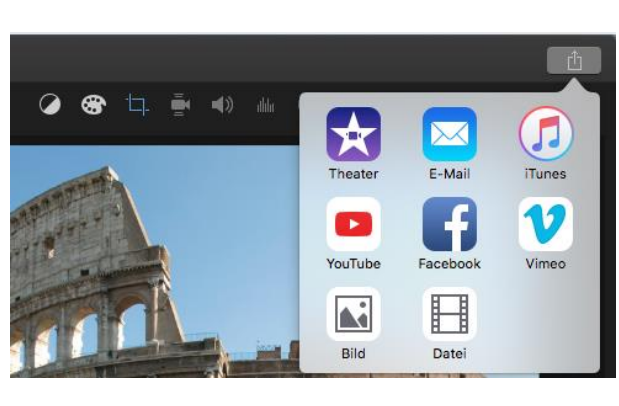*Forms for various declarations of agreement in the Appendix*

Declarations of consent by minors

When it comes to the consent of pupils under the age of 14, their parents or legal guardians must always sign for them. From the age of 14 and up to the age of 18, pupils must sign for themselves in addition to their legal guardians. You will find the corresponding forms of declarations of consent for each scenario in the appendix.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Instructions Moviemaker (Windows) and iMovie (Apple)

Step	Screenshot Movie Maker	Screenshot iMovie
1. Check that the program / app is instal-led on your device. Otherwise, you will need to download it first. 2. Open the program		
3. Now add your media (pictures, videos, music, recordings) to the project. 4. Once you have uploaded the media, you can arrange and edit them (shor-ten, cut, etc.).		
5. For "animations" or "transitions", you can decide how 2 images or videos should be connected.		
6. If you want to draw attention to special features in your pictures, use "Pan and		

Zoom" in Movie Maker. In iMovie, all media have their special editing options above the display window.	Schwenken und Zoomen	
7. Then you can add filters and sound effects, change the picture format and adjust the volume of the audio tracks so that you understand the language well. With title and credits, the finished video can look really good!		
8. When your project is finished, save it in Movie Maker as you would a Word file. 9. In iMovie, the "Share" button gives you several ways to save your video.		

Note: Only use images and music that you have the rights to. It is best to use your own material or ask your teacher for access to rights-free media.

Have fun creating your video. Be as creative as possible and try everything! There are no limits to your imagination!