The current reflection focuses on the digital story named “Maiden`s Tower – Istanbul” the author created as part of requirements of EDCI 566. In what follows, first, the reflection starts with a brief description of the digital story and the reasons behind its design. Then, specific characteristics of the digital story and what could have been done differently are covered. Conclusions drawn follow.

First of all, the digital story addresses a specific part of a larger instructional unit or lesson plan. This unit or lesson would consist of a history topic focusing on the history of Istanbul. The city is one of the oldest settlements in the World including many events covered throughout the history. So, instead of presenting the history of Istanbul in a traditional or routine way, the digital story aimed at providing an authentic context that presents a part of the history of the city by relating to Maiden`s Tower. Dates pertaining to this building do directly relate to Istanbul as well and this way, historical information is not presented as rote learning material but situated in a context. In addition, information about legends included in the digital story no matter whether they are real or not serves to take attention of the learners and to motivate them. Needless to say, they aim at presenting history not as a routine subject matter consisting of discrete information pieces but as a meaningful whole story in which different information pieces are tied together. Finally, due to pictures, captions or overlay text, and narration, the digital story also serves multisensory information processing thus hopefully promoting learning one step further.

When it comes to the characteristics of the digital story, they have both pros and cons, which means that there have been trade-offs among different options that could have been implemented. The opening and closing music, Istanbul but not Constantinople by The Flat Cats (this song is originally created by The Four Lads) was chosen since it is directly related to the content of the digital story with an intention of taking attention of the learners and motivating them.

Second, the pictures pertains to both Maiden`s Tower, Istanbul and the two legends included in the digital story in order to preserve coherence. These pictures are all in color and authentic. The reason behind this was to make it as realistic as possible in order to increase learners` feeling of ownership of learning. However, this made overlay texts or options blurry at the beginning. So, the author had to change the places of the captions on more available spaces on the pictures. Plus, depending on the color of pictures, the captions are colored differently in order to make them more perceivable or readable. A different approach would be to include videos instead of pictures or videos together with pictures in order to increase the variety of the learning materials, which would in turn impact learners` attention-motivation as well as perseverance.

Concerning the captions mentioned above, they were put in the digital story in such a way that they do not accompany the narration as much as possible. Specifically speaking, they are placed in the digitals story where there is no narration, which generally refers to the end of a specific part of the digital story. This is because viewing the pictures, listening to the narration and reading the captions simultaneously would overload limited cognitive capacity of the learners thus interfering with learning. What is more, the captions also aimed at redirecting learners` attention to upcoming parts of the digital story after they cover a section of the digital story.

The narration included in the digital story was inserted in such a way that each part of the narration is presented simultaneously with the corresponding pictures. The aim was to foster temporal contiguity between the auditory and visual information that need to be processed at the same time. However, the narration was recorded by the author himself who is a nonnative speaker of English. This distorts the authenticity of the information included in the digital story to a certain extent. A native speaker would have been used to record the narration in order to overcome this.

Finally, the digital story is self-paced in order to give learners the control over their processing of the information included. The reason is, this way; learners are expected to have more flexibility to adjust both rate and amount of learning they can achieve through the digital story. Other advantages of self-pacing such as more chance of review and reflection on learning (by means of note taking for instance) were also assumed to tap.

In conclusion, the digital story was planned to be a specific small part of a larger lesson or unit. Content-based instructional methodology was implemented in order to situate target learning (possibly historical facts in this case) in an authentic learning context. Overall, the story was designed to promote multisensory information processing, learner control over the rate and pace of learning, and to present declarative information in an interesting and motivating way.