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KA220-SCH - COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

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## STORYTELLING ACTIVITY

5<sup>th</sup> PROJECT RESULT

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## INTRODUCTION AND STORYTELLING PRESENTATION

Within the framework of the TCE Skills project, specifically focusing on the implementation of the fourth project result, the Partners have created a training kit aimed at enhancing essential competencies in communication and cultural heritage.

The kit offers a well-rounded approach to skill development. It consists of six training modules, four of which are primarily theoretical, but meticulously designed to adapt to the needs of the target beneficiaries.

The fifth module, central to this report, delves into practical application and is aptly named “Storytelling”. Designed to immerse students in various storytelling techniques such as the *Hero’s Journey*, *False Start*, *In media Res*, and *Sparklines*, these tracks provide a proposal for students to experiment and craft their narratives. Each storytelling technique is paired with a specific course skill, accompanied by helpful indications to inspire students in creating their own compelling stories, drawing from the provided examples. The Partners have not only furnished the tools for story creation but also facilitated the construction of immersive and captivating experiences. The integration of new knowledge, imaginative exploration, and different storytelling methods has sparked valuable insights regarding the utilization of self-assessment pathways and the cultivation of versatile skills.

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The sixth module, titled “Toolkit”, serves as a comprehensive self-assessment and mapping tool for tracking the acquired knowledge. It enables the participating groups to gain a thorough understanding of their journey, the skills honed, the accomplishments attained, and how these can be practically applied in real-world scenarios.

The “Storytelling” exercise in module 5 proved to be an enriched and stimulating learning experience for all participants. By assuming different roles, students were able to cultivate and showcase a range of skills including communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration.

Edotto Srl researchers took charge of crafting **the first story** outline, focusing on “the hero’s journey”. Each student was tasked with embodying the protagonist of their own narrative, navigating through challenges and transformations along the way. This storytelling process prompted deep reflections on personal growth and change catalyzed by self-assessment practices and the development of versatile skills.



The protagonist embarked on a journey to explore unfamiliar places and worlds. Overcoming obstacles and making pivotal decisions shaped a transformative path leading towards resolution and self-discovery. The narrative unfolded with the protagonist encountering new territories, prompting introspection on actions, choices, and interactions. Guided by thought-provoking questions like: “What is the first action that the protagonist takes? Is it necessary to know or to act? What tools are needed to guide the choice? Is it better to adopt familiar strategies or new solutions? Is the protagonist supported by local people, friends, relatives who help him choose or does he/she prefers to do it alone? What are the feelings? Are different advice and points of view interesting or misleading? Visiting new places is a source of emotion, curiosity and stimuli, does it give you new stimuli? Or does it seem trivial? Was it easy to achieve the goal? What were the feelings and how did the journey enrich the protagonist’s baggage?”, students were encouraged to delve into their narratives with depth and introspection.

The story could contain episodes of life that really happened, or completely invented. Exploring uncharted territories evoked a mix of emotions, curiosity, and inspiration, challenging preconceptions and fostering personal growth. The journey’s culmination not only highlighted achievements but also underscored the profound impact of experiential learning on enriching one’s personal narrative and skill set.

SMS STAL devised the storyline for the **second story** in the “False Start” style, a tale that initially seemed predictable and futile but then took a surprising turn, pausing before restarting on a new trajectory. This approach required a logical progression from an expected conclusion to redirect attention towards the true solution, challenging audience expectations and emphasizing the value of adaptability while circling back to the core message. The track, titled “On the Road to the Championship”, followed a football enthusiast aiming to assemble a team for a local tournament, showcasing unique skills and seeking like-minded individuals to form a cohesive unit.

The protagonist’s journey involved scouting for diverse talents to complement his/her own, drawing on personal experiences of teamwork to envision an effective lineup. As the team took shape, training sessions were organized, and strategies devised for the upcoming tournament, highlighting the challenges of collaboration and unity in pursuit of a shared goal. Among conflicting ideas, playing styles, and interpersonal dynamics, the narrative explored how the team navigated obstacles through learning, compromise, and teamwork.

Leading up to the tournament, conflicts arose necessitating resolution through teamwork and communication. The story delved into how these challenges were addressed, emphasizing growth through shared experiences and mutual understanding. As the competition unfolded, further difficulties tested the team's cohesion and problem-solving abilities, prompting reflection on individual contributions and collective success.

The narrative also prompted contemplation on various themes, through the following questions asked:

- What unique skills and talents (not just football) could individual members have brought to the football team? How could these skills help the group achieve common success?
- Could there have been situations in which differences in approach to training or football would have seemed difficult to reconcile? How could an agreement have been reached, given one's personal experiences?
- How might the relationships between the members of the football team have changed when they trained and competed together? What conflicts might have arisen, given your experiences? How could an atmosphere of greater openness, trust or mutual support have been built within the group?
- Could the use of communication and the expression of one's expectations help the group better understand each other's needs and adjust its strategy?
- Were there specific situations in which cooperation and collaboration between the members of the football team could have made it possible to overcome difficulties (even off the pitch) that seemed impossible to overcome? How could they have been dealt with, taking into account your personal experiences?

The track for the **third story**, created by WIDE Srl according to the style "In media Res", uniquely unfolds by commencing from the story's core and then retracing its steps back to the beginning before reaching its conclusion. This narrative technique immediately spotlights the central theme, progressing linearly towards a decisive end. Throughout this creative endeavor, the narrative strategically emphasizes the enriching value of cultural heritage. The tale embarks on its journey from a captivating point, establishing a connection with the initial scenario while subtly hinting at the genesis of a specific need, all without delving too deeply into unforeseen events or associated intricacies. Ultimately, it culminates in a logical and clear-cut resolution. Titled "Travel-Mind" by WIDE, the third track follows the protagonist's decision to embark on a transformative journey that promises to reshape his/her perspectives. As he/she contemplates his/her motivations for leaving, acknowledges those who

supported his/her endeavor, and plans his/her itinerary, the narrative vividly paints a picture of the places he/she visits, the characters he/she encounters, and the sensory experiences that captivate him/her along the way. Whether rooted in reality or pure imagination, the story weaves together a tapestry of peculiar and profound events that may have transpired with the narrator or others. The key lies in channeling creative ingenuity to captivate readers and inspire contemplation.

The track of the **fourth story**, envisioned by ITM Group in the Sparklines style, is a narrative structure that juxtaposes “as things really are” with “as they should be”. This approach delves into the protagonist’s actions and explores opportunities for growth and improvement in their life. The storyline unfolds through multiple narrative planes, showcasing the protagonist’s reality alongside an idealized version of events. By contrasting positive and negative narrative threads, the message is crafted with depth and complexity.

ITM Group tasked the narrator with crafting a compelling tale featuring two intertwined storylines: one reflecting the current world rife with crises and another portraying an idealized scenario. These narratives draw from both contemporary events and the protagonist’s personal experiences, whether inspired by reality or fiction. The story is expected to incorporate significant changes in the protagonist’s life, abundant cultural references, and a blend of creativity, engagement, and educational value for the reader.

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The overarching goal of this storytelling exercise is to ignite creativity, prompting introspection into the protagonist’s latent traits and fostering a newfound self-awareness. By viewing the character as a vessel of unexploited potential and talents, the narrative aims to stimulate personal growth and reflection.

## MONITORING OF THE STORYTELLING ACTIVITY

After collecting the stories made by the students of the respective target groups, the project Partners conducted a thorough analysis of each narrative. They focused on identifying the transversal skills developed throughout the teaching activities and showcased in the stories. By pinpointing common themes and elements within each target group's stories, the Partners aimed to streamline a comparative assessment between the anticipated project outcomes and the actual achievements.

Subsequently, a comprehensive evaluation was undertaken by comparing the results across the three participating countries. This holistic approach provided a comprehensive overview of the activity's progress, student participation, and engagement levels, as well as the effectiveness of the generated material. Through this evaluation, the Partners were able to evaluate how well the Storytelling activity met the specific targets' needs by practically applying the transversal skills acquired through model experimentation.

### ITM (Czech Republic)

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After completing the e-learning modules, the students of the Czech secondary school Střední uměleckoprůmyslová škola Jihlava-Helenín put into practice the techniques of "Storytelling" to develop the skills acquired in communication, creativity, critical thinking and cooperation.

The **first narrative track** involved forming a football team to compete in a local tournament. The sports topic did not involve many girls in the target group; in fact, only one of them participated.

During the recruitment phase of the team members, the participants organized themselves into a group of 11, assigning roles, including choosing the captain. Despite the fact that three students aspired to this role, they resolved the conflict with a game of "rock-paper-scissors", gladly accepting the outcome. In the description of skills, they emphasized the ability to work in a team, collaboration, and rational conflict resolution.

In the planning phase, the challenges and conflicts that emerged related to the training programme and strategies. They identified empathy, calm communication, and the ability to compromise as essential qualities to meet such challenges. The captain acted as a mediator between the players, demonstrating problem-solving skills. Despite the lack of professional experience, the students

highlighted their collaboration and ability to empathize with the roles of players, coaches and managers, emphasizing the importance of team building activities, such as group dinners or trips.

The epilogue of the story about the football team emphasized that victory was not the focus, but rather collaboration, division of roles, and personal characteristics of the members. Students demonstrated communication skills, empathy, and critical thinking in resolving conflicts. Most of the students had no problem expressing their opinions confidently, but they also had no problem following their leader.

The **second track**, “Hero’s Journey”, focused on creating a narrative around the travel adventures of an individual seeking to break free from the confines of their comfort zone and the repetitive nature of daily life. Students were tasked with contemplating obstacles, planning approaches, and delving into their own characters, aspirations, and requirements.

Upon reviewing the submissions, the Czech partner noted a prevalent sentiment among students feeling ensnared by the monotony of their routines, experiencing a sense of perpetual *déjà vu* in their daily activities (waking up, attending school, completing assignments, consuming media content, sleeping, and repeating the cycle). Particularly, male participants expressed a desire to explore the world and unearth their life’s purpose during this transient phase of youth. However, many admitted to feeling exhausted by their thoughts and uncertain about initiating this journey.

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In the exercise introduction, some students expressed apprehensions about embarking on a travel adventure as it seemed like a daunting leap out of their comfort zones. Factors such as introversion or lack of independent travel experience without parental guidance added to their concerns. To address these worries, the Czech partner’s mentors reassured them that the narrative need not strictly adhere to reality. They encouraged students to incorporate desired personal traits they aspire to possess but currently lack, like the confidence to engage with strangers or venture out alone.

Only two out of all students decided to travel with someone else. Most of them have written their story as a solo travel adventure, which indicates that they feel that the journey of self-discovery is something they should do on their own.

Interestingly, only a minority of students opted for a companion in their fictional travels. The majority made alone adventure tales, indicating a belief that the journey of self-discovery is best undertaken independently. This choice underscores their conviction that this introspective exploration is a solitary endeavor worth pursuing alone.

The students selected a diverse array of destinations for their imaginary journeys, including:





- Czech National Parks,
- Prague
- Rome
- Barcelona
- New York
- Bali (Indonesia),
- Amsterdam,
- Paris
- Mexico
- Tokyo
- Egypt (specifically the pyramids).

Their choice of destinations reflects a desire to explore countries vastly different from their own. Evidently, the students are keen on discovering new cuisines, cultures, landscapes, and ways of life, a natural inclination at their age characterized by curiosity and a thirst for novel experiences.

In terms of trip organization, students displayed a preference for modern digital platforms and tools such as Google Maps and Trip Advisor over traditional interpersonal communication. However, they did not entirely leave personal interactions; some opted to stay in hostels with the hope of establishing friendships with travellers from other nations. Additionally, a few girls envisioned romantic encounters during their travels.

One prevalent apprehension among students was the potential language barrier due to perceived inadequacies in their language skills. To address this issue, some students proposed using tools like Google Translate to facilitate communication with locals, demonstrating resourcefulness in overcoming linguistic challenges.

In the **third track** of the exercise, students were supposed to write a story that juxtaposed the real world with their ideal world, incorporating both current global events and personal experiences.

One student envisioned an ideal world unaffected by the Covid-19 pandemic, while another painted a utopia where inclusivity reigned, free from discrimination and embracing all individuals, especially minorities and the LGBTQ+ community. Another touching example included a vision of a world devoid of conflicts and wars.



Regrettably, some students expressed feelings of being misunderstood both at school and home, lamenting a lack of opportunities to fully realize their potential. They yearned for more hands-on activities in education rather than rote memorization, as well as additional free time to pursue hobbies, passions, and sports.

In summary, the ideal world of the students was represented by the following key attributes:

- Absence of global tragedies such as pandemics, wars, and conflicts,
- Ample opportunities for personal growth and exploration of interests,
- Equality and acceptance for all individuals, eliminating marginalization and bullying based on differences.

In the fourth track, analogous to the second, students embarked on a journey aimed at altering their perspectives. This time, they were tasked with planning a transformative journey using a specific narrative form – “in media res” - starting from the most thrilling moment, then delving into the beginning and concluding the tale. Their narratives had to detail the motivation for departure, the itinerary, and include a mix of imaginary, eccentric, or real encounters during their travels.

Interestingly, none of the students opted for their home country for this adventure, seeking more exotic and distant locales to immerse themselves in thrilling escapades. They chose to collaborate in small groups of 2 or 3, fostering opportunities to enhance communication skills, teamwork, and empathy. While minor differences come up during collaboration, students adeptly resolved them through rational communication.

The stories crafted ranged from grounded realism to fantastical fiction, with some students venturing into imaginative missions set in fictional realms. Despite encountering challenges in grasping the “in media res” storytelling technique and adhering to time constraints, the overall results of the exercise were deemed satisfactory.

The Storytelling exercise served as a platform for students to hone social skills and competencies like communication, empathy, collaboration, time management, and creativity. While areas such as time management and adherence to storytelling conventions may require further practice, the students exhibited a profound enthusiasm for exploration and pushing beyond their comfort zones. Their adept incorporation of cultural elements showcased a genuine curiosity and respect for diverse cultures and lifestyles.

## EDOTTO Srl (Italy)

The students from the Scientific High School, Art Department, G. Marconi and the Federico Frezzi-Beata Angela Classical High School took part in the experimentation of the storytelling activity, as part of the Italian survey conducted by Edotto.

The **first path** involved the formation of a football team to participate in the local league. Students had to describe the channels used for recruitment, selection methods, and strategies for managing potential internal conflicts. Notably, most teams were composed of close friends chosen based on personal qualities like commitment, passion, responsibility, and collaboration rather than solely physical or technical attributes. Remarkably, 14 out of 18 boys assumed the role of captain, emphasizing responsibility for team cohesion and functionality.

Interestingly, each student described their team as a group with varying characteristics, embracing different perspectives and qualities. The primary focus lay in nurturing individual potential through teamwork and fostering effective communication centered on encouragement and mutual respect. Conflicts were consistently resolved collectively, with the captain assuming a mediating role to facilitate open dialogue and shared problem-solving regardless of complexity.

The narratives underscored the significance of team unity over championship victories, highlighting a collective spirit geared towards overcoming challenges together. This demonstrated a strong inclination towards teamwork, active listening, and participatory leadership. Participatory leadership, characterized by democratic decision-making and employee involvement, empowers individuals to contribute meaningfully towards shared goals. The cooperative approach aims to elevate individuals by leveraging their unique skills and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for achieving objectives.

The **second track** was about an itinerant journey aimed at breaking free from comfort zones and the monotony of daily life, prompting students to introspect on their personalities, desires, and needs.

From the analysis of the texts, a prevalent theme of self-doubt emerged among the students, likely stemming from uncertainties about the future. Many expressed feelings of boredom, resignation, and a lack of motivation, struggling to find enthusiasm amidst routine. Their days followed a repetitive pattern of school, homework, leisure activities, and sleep, perpetuating a cycle of monotony.



Navigating through a transitional phase in their lives, the students yearned for self-discovery and exposure to new experiences. Curiosity was a common thread, with a shared interest in diverse cultures, cuisines, traditions, and a thirst for knowledge beyond their current scope.

The main destinations described were:

- Rome,
- Madrid,
- Cuba,
- Manhattan,
- Classical Greece,
- Giza,
- Mountain regions,
- Paris,
- Barcelona,
- London,
- Berlin,
- Amsterdam,
- Ireland.

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Italian researchers noted that 13 out of 18 students favored foreign destinations over local ones, indicating a gap in their ability to analyze, understand, and appreciate local cultural heritage fully. Notably, few students detailed the information sources or tools used to plan their journeys. While some relied on Google Maps, others envisioned seeking assistance from fellow travelers along the way rather than prioritizing social media or digital platforms, emphasizing a preference for human interaction and interpersonal communication.

The **third track** was about the contrast between the real world and the ideal world, with most stories sharing common themes, except for two outliers envisioning a world of sweets and a setting akin to Star Wars.

Out of 15 students, 10 depicted the real world as plagued by violence, individualism, hypocrisy, pollution, homophobia, racism, and bullying, fostering feelings of inadequacy and a bleak outlook for the future without prompt intervention. They perceived a society where self-centeredness prevailed over communal well-being, highlighting a lack of concern for broader societal issues.

In contrast, all students unanimously portrayed the ideal world with shared characteristics:

- Lasting peace through dialogue, cooperation, and diplomacy;
- Environmental sustainability as a top priority with sustainable practices and conservation efforts;
- Universal access to education and health;
- Tolerance and respect for diverse cultures, beliefs and orientations;
- Emphasis on personal and spiritual growth to safeguard mental well-being.

Despite their aspirations for a harmonious world, participants expressed skepticism about achieving such ideals due to societal focus on success, consumerism, and profit at the expense of essential values. Their narratives revealed a deep innate seated desire for change but highlighted a lack of empowerment or tools to effect meaningful transformation.

One poignant narrative touched on loneliness, reflecting on the pervasive sense of isolation even amidst social circles. Another student's story post-parental divorce underscored disillusionment with happiness and the struggle to find joy in everyday moments.

Remarkable was a collaborative diary-style narrative by three students juxtaposing real-life conflicts with ideal family scenarios, showcasing their sensitivity towards current global issues. They also critiqued the school environment as oppressive due to unhealthy competition, grade-centric pressures, and perceived injustices affecting both students and faculty.

These narratives shed light on the profound concerns and aspirations of young minds grappling with complex societal issues while yearning for a more inclusive, compassionate world yet feeling constrained by existing systems and norms.

In **the fourth and final course**, students were asked to set off on a journey that would change their perspectives, detailing their motivations for departure, itinerary planning, chosen destinations, and unique characteristics. Curiously, students predominantly favored international destinations over domestic ones, driven by aspirations for enhanced career opportunities abroad. This trend suggests a prevailing belief among youth that Italy may offer limited professional prospects compared to other countries, prompting thoughts of relocating beyond national borders.

The most popular destinations included:

- Japan,

- Istanbul,
- Marrakech,
- Madrid,
- Palermo,
- Monaco,
- Vienna,
- New York,
- Giza,
- Tuscany.

Tuscany stood as the sole Italian destination, featuring prominently in a narrative centered on a challenging boat trip amidst a sudden storm. The story underscored themes of teamwork and friendship, showcasing how camaraderie and unity enabled the characters to overcome adversity successfully.

A standout narrative diverged from the rest, portraying a character as a skilled thief embarking on a daring quest to steal a priceless treasure, showcasing imaginative storytelling.

During the development of the storytelling, some critical issues emerged that required the direct intervention of the Italian partner at the Liceo G. Marconi and repeated contacts with the teachers of the Liceo Classico “Frezzi”. Issues stemmed from difficulties in distinguishing between tracks, particularly those related to travel, leading to delays in material submission and analysis. Collaborative discussions with students helped clarify concepts and refine storytelling skills in real-time.

Students demonstrated notable growth in various skills including collaboration, communication, cultural openness, information literacy, curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, participatory leadership, and problem-solving throughout the exercise. These observations highlight their evolving abilities and adaptability in engaging with diverse narratives and crafting compelling stories.



## SMS STAL (Poland)

Participants in the trial in Poland consisted of students from the project partner Zespół Szkół Mistrzostwa Sportowego STAL w Rzeszowie.

The **first track** involved forming a football team to engage in a local league. Students were asked to describe the channels used to recruit players, selection methods, and strategies for managing potential internal conflicts.

The work was carried out in two groups. In the first group, students efficiently selected team members and identified leaders due to their enthusiasm for football-related activities at a sports school. Conversely, the second group faced disagreements during team selection, with some voicing dissent. A student mediated by offering compromise solutions, ensuring each member had a role.

Both groups encountered challenges during cooperation, particularly in scheduling training sessions. Students navigated conflicts through calm discussions, understanding differing perspectives, finding common ground, and making compromises. They emphasized effective communication and problem-solving skills.

Assigning key roles considering players' abilities was crucial. Students highlighted the importance of discussing decisions with benched players and reaching compromises. They recognized the significance of risk management, seeking benefits for the team, fostering team spirit, and adapting to changing roles within the team.

Students learned that roles in a football team can change rapidly, emphasizing the need for inclusivity and responsibility among all members. The coach played a vital role in emphasizing each member's impact on team dynamics. They stressed mutual respect, acceptance, observation skills, and proactive intervention to maintain team cohesion on and off the field.

Participants acknowledged the value of non-football activities like outings or parties to foster camaraderie beyond training sessions. Investing time in building relationships outside of football activities was seen as essential for enhancing team unity and support during challenges.

The **second track** turned around travel adventures aimed at breaking free from comfort zones and the monotony of daily life, providing students with a platform to introspect on their personalities, desires, and needs.



Before to commencing their narratives, coordinators encouraged participants to step out of their routines and comfort zones, emphasizing the importance of managing the accompanying anxiety. The pursuit of new experiences and exploration was deemed a natural inclination. The concept of “getting out of the comfort zone” was highlighted as a means of personal growth, challenging individuals to push beyond familiar boundaries for development.

The Polish target group, comprising athletes accustomed to pushing their limits, seamlessly embraced the role of travelers. Most stories centered on group travel experiences with friends, while two female students ventured on solo journeys: one to Mazury to conquer fears through sailing lessons and the other on a hitchhiking odyssey across Europe.

A common thread in all narratives was the students’ eagerness to test their boundaries, immerse themselves in diverse cultures, cuisines, and unfamiliar territories. This thirst for exploration and novelty is characteristic of adolescence, a period marked by intense curiosity and a drive for new experiences.

Despite mentioning foreign destinations predominantly like Barcelona, Madrid, Berlin, and others, some stories hinted at a lack of interest in exploring their own culture or country. This could stem from limited guidance or encouragement to delve into their heritage. Challenges surfaced regarding trip planning tools, with students unsure about where to seek destination information. While some relied on Google or booking portals, social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram were popular for connecting with new acquaintances.

Many students expressed a desire to meet new people during their travels, with one even aspiring to find love on the road. Concerns about interacting with strangers, navigating local risks, and lacking language skills were common themes among students grappling with the intricacies of trip planning and interpersonal dynamics.

The **third track** was about the juxtaposition between the real world and the ideal world, prompting students to depict current realities alongside their envisioned ideals, incorporating cultural references from their country into their narratives.

While themes varied slightly, a recurring motif across all stories was the portrayal of school in the real world as a realm characterized by boredom, monotony, lack of creativity, hypocrisy, and bullying. Students expressed feelings of underappreciation and condescension from teachers and at times



within their families, highlighting a disconnect with older generations who often failed to acknowledge teenagers seriously.

A prevalent sentiment was the desire for recognition and respect from elders, with frustrations stemming from perceived outdated mindsets focused on survival rather than progress. Cultural references like World War II underscored historical contexts shaping perceptions in Poland.

Another facet explored was teenagers' relationship with technology, viewed as a norm by adolescents but a concern by parents. Students hoped for older generations to recognize the value of their technological proficiency in daily tasks, emphasizing the need for mutual understanding and appreciation across generations.

The impact of the pandemic emerged as a significant narrative thread, reshaping not just health but also habits and lifestyles. Online classes during the pandemic were favored by students who appreciated the flexibility it offered. Challenges upon returning to physical school included early mornings and disruptions to personal passions like sports training, highlighting the importance of nurturing interests for youth motivation.

In their ideal world, students envisioned:

- Greater understanding and respect from older generations towards adolescents,
- More opportunities self-expression and self-discovery,
- Enhanced intergenerational cooperation,
- Unrestricted opportunities to pursue passions without adult hindrance.

**The fourth track**, which involved the creation of a story according to the principles of *the Sparklines*, was introduced as an innovative tool to develop students' creativity and storytelling skills. This approach encouraged creating stories by commencing with a captivating moment, unfolding the beginning, and culminating in a satisfying conclusion. Beyond honing writing techniques, the emphasis was on integrating cultural heritage into narratives to deepen cultural and historical appreciation.

Students were organized into groups; collaborative group work facilitated idea exchange, consultation, and collective narrative shaping, fostering teamwork and negotiation skills alongside storytelling prowess. The teacher assumed a pivotal role as a mentor, providing guidance, materials, and motivation to refine and enhance students' stories continuously.



Challenges encountered by both groups varied from initial technique application misunderstandings to time management, balancing creativity within set guidelines, differing opinions or approaches, cultural comprehension depth, and perfectionism hindering drafting progress.

Despite obstacles, students showcased problem-solving insight, adaptability, narrative proficiency, research acumen, visualization skills, and organizational abilities. The storytelling endeavor also cultivated social competencies like empathy, time management, responsible leadership, effective communication, conflict resolution, collaboration, emotional regulation, and self-assessment.

Through process analysis and evaluation of final submissions, the exercise proved effective and engaging. Polish students demonstrated not only creativity but also a profound grasp of storytelling techniques. The exercise facilitated adaptation based on peer and teacher feedback, enhancing flexibility and responsiveness. Furthermore, delving into cultural contexts enriched students' perspectives and deepened their understanding of the world around them through storytelling immersion.

## COMPARISON OF PARTNERS TARGET GROUPS TRENDS TO STORYTELLING ACTIVITIES

After conducting the experimentation of the Storytelling activity within the TCE Skills project, it was possible to draw some valuable insights by comparing the experiences of the target groups of the Czech Republic, Italy, and Poland.

The results across the three countries underscored the efficacy of the training kit in strengthening soft skills such as communication, critical thinking, and cooperation. Participants exhibited growth in storytelling abilities, showcasing heightened self-awareness regarding their potential, skills, and comprehension of the training journey.

Evaluation of the **first track** development revealed shared focal points, including the significance of team cohesion through non-football activities, adept conflict resolution via calm communication and negotiation skills. Variances surfaced in team formation approaches, with the Czech Republic emphasizing football aspects, Italy focusing on players' personal traits, and Poland blending both perspectives. Italy displayed a more participatory leadership style, contrasting with Czech Republic's game-based captain selection and Poland's traditional method. The narratives emphasized conflict management, collaboration promotion over mere victory, while highlighting areas for improvement like inclusivity for girls and celebrating group diversity.

The **second track** centred on a journey adventure to prompt introspection on students' aspirations unveiled a collective yearning for exploration beyond daily routines. Curiosity and a thirst for novel experiences emerged as universal traits. Students favoured foreign destinations but struggled to appreciate local cultural heritage uniformly. Planning preferences varied with digital tools favoured in Czech Republic, a human-centric approach in Italy, and Poland's blend. Enhancing local cultural awareness, fostering intercultural interactions, and educating on travel planning tools are key areas for refining outcomes in the second track of the kit.

The development of the **third track** offered an in-depth look at the visions of young Czechs, Italians, and Turks regarding the contrast between the real world and the ideal one. While they share common aspirations, such as lasting peace and environmental sustainability, cultural differences have become clear. In the Czech Republic, creativity has characterized narratives, highlighting the need to develop one's potential and break down personal barriers. In Italy, a more direct critique emerged, pointing to



a lack of trust in success- and profit-oriented institutions. In Poland, the intergenerational perspective has stood out, with the lack of understanding on the part of older people at the heart of concerns. Common to all three nations was the criticism of the school system, recalling the need to make it more stimulating and oriented towards individual development.

The goal of the **fourth track** was, instead, to stimulate a change of perspective through the exploration of imaginary journeys. The formation of story-making groups fostered teamwork and empathy, with differences being rationally resolved through communication. Looking at the results, the researchers noticed some differences between the three trials: while students from the Czech Republic and Italy preferred foreign destinations, suggesting a perception of limited national opportunities, the Polish target chose to incorporate local cultural heritage into their stories, thus expanding their wealth of knowledge about their roots, an approach that would be good to encourage in other countries as well.

With an overall view, it is possible to assert that the students have demonstrated that they possess the necessary skills and competencies to be able to carry out the exercise with satisfactory results.

From the comparison between the incoming skills and those developed as a result of the use of the training kit, it emerged that participants are able to communicate successfully and rationally, they know how to listen to and appreciate the opinions and feelings of others, they are able to solve various problems and conflicts using critical thinking, they are able to choose their own leader and manage the group on the basis of participatory leadership and, finally, they demonstrated high levels of curiosity and creativity (some more than others) when they decided to describe completely imaginary worlds and stories or to want to push themselves to learn about new cultures and points of view.

For some, managing time has not been easy due to excessive perfectionism; however, in terms of skills applied and results obtained, the exercise is considered by the Partners to be more than satisfactory.

Overall, students showcased adept skills post-exercise: effective communication, empathetic listening, problem-solving with critical thinking, participatory leadership selection, curiosity, and creativity. Time management challenges due to perfectionism were noted but did not overshadow skill application and results. The toolkit effectively nurtured social competencies like empathy, leadership, communication, collaboration, conflict resolution, and goal-oriented teamwork. Students learned to navigate emotions positively, reflect on strengths and weaknesses post-project, and strategize for ongoing skill enhancement.

There were also some differences in the ways in which participants approached the different storytelling techniques and the topics they chose to cover, when they were given ample room for self-expression and creativity, for example, the way in which conflicts were handled in the stories of the second story reflected the specific cultural and social dynamics of each country.

During the analysis of the stories and common experiences, problems encountered by the students of all the groups that took part in the experimentation emerged and that led to the identification of some areas that could be improved to further optimize the effectiveness and replicability of the narrative kit.

Some difficulties related to the understanding of the structure of the narrative and the technique to be used, which, although stimulating, was new to many students; the time limit was a great challenge for almost all the participants who struggled to condense their ideas into a set period of time; in some teams the differences in vision or approach to the exercise led to conflicts of different kinds. Often solved thanks to good communication and the ability of some to adapt. Based on the observations made, the guidance provided to participants could be made more detailed and specific, encouraging more in-depth reflection on crucial issues such as change, personal growth and conflict management. In addition, greater support during the exercise could help to ensure a better understanding of the indications of carrying out and applying the skills acquired, something that was probably missing in track 4, section in which the target encountered more initial doubts. Groups should also be encouraged to abandon perfectionism and simplify research in favor of a more fluent flow of ideas and creativity.

Given the success of the experimentation of the storytelling activity, it is worth considering proposing it again for other groups of students in the coming school years, possibly with modifications to adapt to the level and expectations of the new participants. Other writing techniques may also be introduced within the kit. In addition, the stories will be posted on the project website so that students can share their stories with a wide audience, thus gaining wider feedback and promoting their work. It's also worth considering holding writing workshops with professional writers or editors who could provide students with valuable guidance and inspiration. Finally, it would be peculiar to propose the same exercise to target groups of different ages to notice and compare factors and influences that characterize different maturity.

The upcoming phase of the project involves developing a comprehensive toolkit incorporating the most effective practices identified during the online training and storytelling experimentation. This toolkit will encompass guidelines, activity samples, experiential workshops, and educational materials

to assist teachers and educators in integrating creative workshops into their curricula. The workshops are designed to engage students actively, promote the transversal and cultural skills honed through the project, and cultivate an informal, collaborative learning atmosphere. By encouraging such an environment, the initiative aims to raising informed, engaged citizens who actively contribute to societal progress.

## SOURCES

Polish Report\_storytelling\_SMS Stal (individual report on the experimentation of the storytelling activity carried out on the sample of students identified by the Polish Partner Zespół Szkół Mistrzostwa Sportowego STAL w Rzeszowie, as part of result 4 of the TCE Skills project)

Italian Report\_storytelling\_Edotto (individual report on the experimentation of the storytelling activity carried out on the sample of students identified by the Italian Partner Edotto Srl, as part of result 4 of the TCE Skills project)

Czech Report\_storytelling\_ITM (individual report on the experimentation of the storytelling activity carried out on the sample of students identified by the Czech Partner ITM Sro, as part of result 4 of the TCE Skills project)

<https://tceskills.uniformando.it/>