

Storytelling as an educational method? New international project offers innovative tools to support learning in schools

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Storytelling is a discipline that is slowly opening its doors to the arts and education. A new project called Stories4All, whose partner in the Czech Republic is the language school PELICAN, aims to harness its benefits in education. What is storytelling? It is essentially the return and rediscovery of a deeply rooted tradition of storytelling. It is the most natural human activity and art at the same time. We can read the history of the human race as one big narrative, but it's hard to retell it to a child at bedtime. And that's the point. Storytelling is a specific theatrical discipline that uses many kinds of exercises, games, and above all the imagination of the storytellers who are both authors and performers of the story.

Storytelling focuses on many skills - developing communication skills, self-development, creative writing, voice work, teamwork and mutual inspiration, etc. Its contribution to education is already emphasised in some school systems, e.g. in the UK and the Scandinavian countries. Storytelling is actually a fun way of conveying information. Pupils and students remember facts better through the experience of the story, as they are drawn into the storyline and specific situations involving emotion.

The Stories4All project combines this traditional method of transmitting information with modern technical means. It aims to create tools and disseminate skills for the creation of digital stories inspired by different cultural backgrounds in order to promote cultural and linguistic awareness, empathy and creativity and to facilitate the necessary educational interventions in schools and other educational settings.

This project will use the eShadow software, which has been used for several years in primary and secondary education with encouraging results. With its help, teachers can design and implement project-based learning interventions that combine various forms of digital media to create dramatized digital stories. In this way, teachers and students advance the STEAM approach. Their artistic, expressive (shadow theatre, storytelling) and digital (eShadow) skills are deepened.

The PELICAN Language School collaborates on the project with various institutions from three other European countries - Germany, Greece and Poland. It can thus benefit from the diversity of specialisations, cultures and educational systems of each country. More information about the project can be found at www.skolapelican.com.

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