3rd Press Release

STORY CHANGERS: Highlights of the 1st Intellectual Output: Best practices report

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During March 2021 Our project Story Changers [2020-1-CY01-KA201-066072] set out desk research which aimed at identifying representative examples of good and best practices in three fields of interest: storytelling (ST), virtual reality (VR) and/or other technology for the development of social skills, and the combination of the two. More specifically, the consortium explored their various applications by focusing on their actual or potential impact in terms of enhanced teaching methods contributing to the development of pupils' basic social skills.

At this staring point, two main questions were attempted to be addressed by the implementation of the research:

- To what extent do storytelling, virtual reality, and the combination of the two contribute to the development of pupils' basic social skills – especially in primary education?
- What are the criteria that make each of these an enriching teaching method?

As a result, the main findings at this stage included in the aforementioned intellectual output reveal that:

- Due to their very nature, storytelling and virtual reality can be applied in multiple fields: education, communication and self-expression, trauma recovery, community or social relationship-building etc.
- Story Telling and Virtual Reality represent compelling means to boost and cultivate empathy, problem-solving skills, team-work, self-reflection and expression, as well as to face self-assertion challenges and learning difficulties.
- As far as the effects are concerned, the study shows that these are not independent from the composition of the target group, the aim, and the framework of the practice
- Although apparently trivial, the adaptation of the settings to the learning situation and the target group is paramount.
- Interestingly, one preliminary question seems to be essential when considering the application of storytelling in the educational field: will storytellers – students - create individual and real stories

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or rather common and fictitious ones? The answers, once again, are likely to depend on the target that the educator wants to reach, and the foreseen learning outcomes

- Both storytelling and virtual reality represent ways of conveying a message with a combination of speech, sounds, visuals, movements and imagination. Together they bring to the same table one of the oldest inclinations of human beings – creating and telling stories – and one of the newest technologies available – that of creating virtual and interactive environments.

In its opinion of October 10th, 2018, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy of the European Parliament underlined that *"in a context of rapid digital and societal transformation, the education system should support, from an early age and throughout life, a balanced set of skills and competences boosting individuals' resilience, critical thinking, well-being, and innovation potential"*. Story Changers, aims at addressing this very challenge, that is, to enhance young pupils' social skills by *"building a bridge"* between storytelling and virtual reality, and by integrating such notions into a curriculum adapted to the primary education system. Storytelling, on the one hand, is in fact seen as a compelling tool to enable young students to develop a set of skills that will support and enrich their way towards adolescence and adulthood.

For more information

[Progress on the European Commission's 2021-2027 digital education action plan (europa.eu)](europa.eu)

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