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Newsletter 4

Activities in the project from May 2024 to December 2024

WP2 “Digital Storytelling Techniques” Training Programme – Piloting training in the Partner countries

Pilot Training in Turkey

Bafra Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

The training took place from May 13-16, 2024, in Bafra, Türkiye, as part of the "Digital Stories" project, which aims to reduce early school leaving by enhancing academic achievement through innovative digital storytelling techniques. A total of 12 participants were involved, including 8 teachers from lower secondary schools and 4 from upper secondary schools, primarily focusing on IT and Turkish language teaching.



The training was structured over four days, combining theoretical knowledge with practical applications, allowing participants to engage in hands-on activities and develop sample lessons.

Core outcomes included overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the effectiveness and usefulness of the digital storytelling modules, with participants expressing confidence that the skills and knowledge gained would significantly benefit their educational careers and teaching methodologies.

Yildiz Technical University

The piloting training involved 17 participants from Yıldız Technical University, including student teachers and educators at the graduate level. The sessions took place from May 17 to May 21, 2024, focusing on equipping educators with skills in digital storytelling to address early school leaving and enhance academic achievement.



The training aimed to equip educators with digital storytelling techniques to enhance their teaching practices and address early school leaving. The training involved participants who initially expressed a moderate belief in the usefulness of digital stories, with 76% finding them beneficial before the training. However, post-training results showed a significant shift, with 100% of participants recognizing the value of digital storytelling in their teaching. The training



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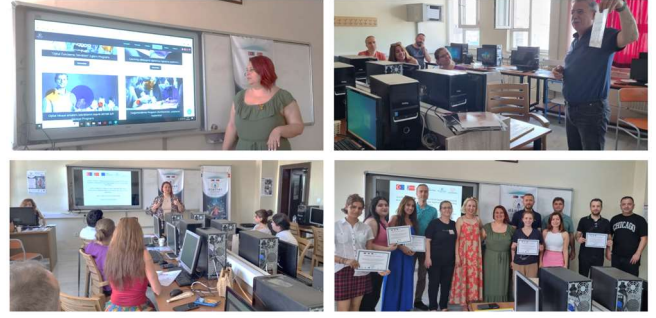


improved their confidence in using these techniques and fostered essential 21st-century skills such as analytical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration among students. Overall, the training was deemed effective in promoting digital skills and improving teacher-student relationships, contributing positively to the project's objectives of reducing early school leaving and enhancing academic achievement. Participants also expressed a greater appreciation for the modules' applicability in classrooms, their role in improving teacher-student and peer relationships, and their relevance to reducing early school leaving, reflecting a clear alignment with the project's objectives.

Fatih Atatürk Çağdaş Yaşam Çok Programlı Anadolu Lisesi

The piloting training for the "Digital Stories" project was held over five full days on May 3rd and 7th, 2024, at Fatih Atatürk Çağdaş Yaşam Çok Programlı Anadolu Lisesi in Istanbul. Coordinated by Tülay UĞUR, the sessions aimed to introduce educators to digital storytelling techniques and tools to enhance teaching practices. Participants received resources, including a Trainers' Training Booklet (translated into Italian) and a project brochure, to support their learning and engagement during the program.

The training involved 12 teachers from diverse educational backgrounds, including secondary (the majority), primary, and vocational schools. All worked with students aged 13-18. The group had a nearly equal gender distribution, with 58% female and 42% male participants. This diversity allowed for a comprehensive exploration of digital storytelling applications across various teaching contexts.



The comparative analysis of the pre-piloting and post-piloting questionnaires highlights a significant shift in the teachers' perceptions and confidence regarding digital storytelling. Initially focused on the theoretical potential of digital tools, participants post-training emphasized practical applications, ease of use, and the direct impact on student engagement. The training enhanced their appreciation for digital storytelling's role in fostering creativity, collaboration, and communication and strengthened their belief in its effectiveness in developing analytical thinking and problem-solving skills. This transformation underscores the training's success in equipping educators with the skills and confidence to effectively integrate digital storytelling into their teaching practices.

Pilot training in Italy

EU-Track organized an immersive Piloting Training event from May 27 to July 6, 2024, at Istituto Comprehensive "Maria Montessori" in Terracina, Italy. The training aimed to support teachers in designing engaging student activities through digital storytelling, following the 5Es constructivist learning model. Participants reported improved confidence in using digital tools, recognizing their potential to enhance student engagement, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, especially in addressing



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challenges like disengagement post-COVID-19.



Pilot training in Slovenia

The pilot training for the "Digital Stories" project took place at the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana from June 13 to June 27, 2024, involving 17 teachers from three Slovenian elementary schools. The training aimed to enhance teachers' skills in digital storytelling and its application in the classroom. Results indicated a significant improvement in teachers' self-assessment of their knowledge and the perceived usefulness of digital storytelling in promoting 21st-century skills, particularly in creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration.



Participants reported that the training materials were beneficial for fostering a positive attitude among students towards challenging subjects. In conclusion, the pilot training successfully equipped teachers with modern pedagogical approaches, highlighting the effectiveness of digital storytelling in enhancing educational practices and student engagement in Slovenia.

Pilot training in Portugal

The pilot training of the "Digital Storytelling Techniques" program in Portugal was conducted in a hybrid format, combining face-to-face and asynchronous sessions from June 21 to July 23, 2024, in collaboration with Escola Secundária Carlos Amarante and the Centro de Formação de Sá de Miranda.

The training engaged 34 teachers, significantly exceeding the minimum participation requirement, and facilitated a month of autonomous exploration of the digital storytelling modules. Results showed a marked improvement in teachers' perceptions of the training materials, with many rating them as "extremely useful" post-piloting. This positive shift in feedback underscores the program's effectiveness in enhancing teachers' confidence and skills in integrating digital storytelling into their classrooms, suggesting a strong potential for improving student engagement and educational outcomes.



WP3 - Online interactive learning/teaching platform

The **Digital Stories project** targeted a diverse group of educators from Turkey, Italy, Slovenia, and Portugal, selected for their interest in integrating digital storytelling into their teaching practices. This group includes teachers from various educational levels and backgrounds, ensuring a broad range of feedback that reflects different cultural contexts and educational needs.

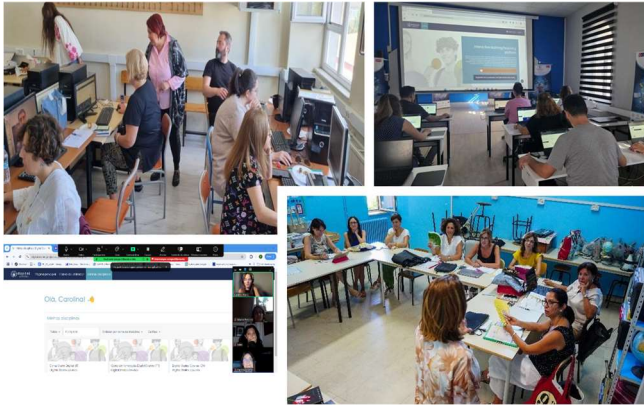


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The diversity of the participants was essential for assessing the platform's effectiveness across various teaching environments.

The **piloting process** involved structured testing sessions conducted in multiple locations, where participants engaged with the Digital Stories platform through both guided and independent exploration.



This approach allowed educators to familiarize themselves with the platform's functionalities and provide real-time feedback. Evaluation questionnaires were utilized to gather insights, with translations provided to ensure clarity and encourage honest responses. The piloting aimed to create an interactive experience that would yield comprehensive feedback on the platform's usability and content.

The **analysis of the evaluation questionnaire** indicated a strong positive reception of the platform, with participants highlighting its user-friendly design, intuitive navigation, and clarity of instructional materials. While the feedback was predominantly favourable, some constructive suggestions for improvement were noted, such as enhancing navigation and simplifying access to certain features. Overall, the findings confirm that the Digital Stories platform is an effective educational tool that meets the needs of educators, providing a solid foundation for future enhancements to ensure continued alignment with teaching objectives.

WP4 - "Recommendation Programme" to promote digital

story telling techniques - Small Scale Meetings

The small-scale meetings organized as part of the Digital Stories project were designed to promote dialogue among education stakeholders to address early school leaving and took place in all partner countries. These discussions involved principals, teachers, parents, and other educational professionals who emphasized the potential of digital storytelling as a tool to engage students and personalize learning experiences.



Participants highlighted that storytelling can simplify complex concepts, enhance classroom interaction, and reduce dropout rates, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas. The need for targeted interventions and increased investment in resources for vulnerable regions was also stressed to create a more inclusive and motivating educational environment.



In these meetings, participants focused on the practical benefits of integrating digital storytelling into curricula. They noted that such approaches could make lessons more dynamic, allowing students to actively participate in



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creative tasks that resonate with their personal experiences. By fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support, digital storytelling helps marginalized students feel connected to school. The discussions also highlighted the importance of tailoring activities to students' interests and incorporating emotional engagement to maintain their attention and improve learning outcomes. Further recommendations emphasized the importance of professional development for teachers and the need for improved infrastructure to support digital storytelling initiatives. Teachers were encouraged to receive digital skills and storytelling training to effectively incorporate these methods into their teaching. Additionally, the inclusion of innovative teaching practices, such as gamification and flipped classrooms, was suggested to create a more interactive and engaging learning environment. Overall, the small-scale meetings identified storytelling and digital tools as effective means to enhance educational engagement and mitigate early school leaving.

WP5 - Evaluation Programme - Final conference

The Digital Stories project concluded its journey with a highly anticipated Final Conference, held on December 6, 2024, at the prestigious Yildiz Technical University in Istanbul. This event brought together academic staff, students, and public authorities in education to celebrate the project's achievements and explore its impact on modern education.

Key Objectives of the Conference:

Showcasing Results: A comprehensive presentation of the outcomes achieved over the project's two-year duration.

Sharing Best Practices: Open discussions and exchanges with stakeholders to highlight the innovative methodologies and strategies developed.



Reflecting on Impact: A deep dive into how digital storytelling has proven to be a powerful tool for enhancing education and fostering creativity.



The vibrant participation and insightful contributions from attendees transformed the conference into more than a closing ceremony—it became a platform for inspiring new ideas and forging future collaborations in digital education.



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