LEARN TO CHANGE
Collaborative Digital Storytelling
for Sustainable Change

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Digital Storytelling Action Plan for Teachers

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Dear higher education teacher:

This Action Plan is designed to guide higher education teachers to benefit from the digital storytelling (DST) resources produced in our Erasmus+ project Learn to Change.

Based on our knowledge, experience, and outputs, we offer you inspiring ideas and simple guidelines on how to integrate our participatory digital storytelling approach into your teaching. We also share our insights into what to be aware of and how to prepare for these projects in advance.

This Digital Storytelling Action Plan for Teachers supports you in three ways:

1) You will know what digital storytelling tools and resources we offer you.

2) You will understand the benefits of using our digital storytelling resources .

3) You will be introduced to a step-by-step guide of how to plan and implement a digital storytelling project with students and industry stakeholders.

Keep reading and hop on board for a digital storytelling project journey!

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MAKE LEARNING ENGAGING AND CREATIVE

Are you looking for something new and innovative to do together with your students? How about digital storytelling? Browse through our digital storytelling resources on the Learn to Change website and be inspired!

Comments by teachers who were involved in our digital storytelling projects:

- "Helps everybody involved to think out-of-the-box, use their imagination and creativity."
- "Dare to learn and dare to change!"
- "Eye-opening experience of sharing new methods in practice, involving students and other stakeholders in co-creation."
- "Implementing the DST concept is complex and time consuming, it requires a lot of planning and management, but it is engaging, interactive and transformative."
- "Develops narrative reasoning, builds up visual sensitivity, supports meaningful dialogue and discussion, and enhances effective digital communication."
- "DST pedagogy is a very insightful 'joint venture' and a welcome change to everyday teaching."

Digital storytelling goes together with diverse needs and situations

Our digital storytelling approach and DST resources are suitable for any discipline and work especially well in multidisciplinary contexts, allowing students to combine their expertise. We have successfully tested the approach to international blended intensive programs (BIP) where students work collaboratively in small teams, both online and offline, to solve real-life sustainability challenges. For inspiration, read our case stories of two BIPs: Krea Spring School – Inspirational Storytelling in Helsinki and Boosting your Digital Storytelling Skills in Budapest.

In addition to integrating digital storytelling into existing courses or intensive programs, it is also possible to make use of our DST resources to provide a single student, or a special group of students, an opportunity to gain credits working autonomously. If you need to tailor courses to students with special needs, just go through our digital storytelling resources, pick and mix assignments according to your needs, and guide your students to make use of the assignments, case stories, and instructions on the website. Agree on checkpoints for feedback/feedforward and decide how you will communicate throughout the project to ensure that students do not get lost in the middle of their digital storytelling journey.

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USE DIGITAL STORYTELLING FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Our Erasmus+ project Learn to Change – Collaborative Digital Storytelling for Sustainable Change provides support materials and tools for project-based learning involving collaborative digital storytelling. Our pedagogical framework engages students in co-creating digital content that aims to inspire sustainable changes in people's thinking and behavior.

What do we offer higher education teachers?

- Knowledge and understanding of the power of digital storytelling as a pedagogical approach and hands-on support for engaging your students in real-life challenges and project-based tasks
- A participatory pedagogical framework that
  - helps foster students' creative and critical thinking, intercultural communication and teamwork skills, and other transversal skills
  - introduces a process model of digital storytelling for educational purposes
  - illustrates and promotes co-creative pedagogical approaches suitable for 21st century needs and challenges

- Inspirational open educational resources on digital storytelling in the form of assignments and modules that can be used in diverse educational contexts
- Methodological support by way of links to resources, digital tools, useful tips, and assessment criteria
- Encouraging **case stories** about co-creating digital storytelling and applying digital tools

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BENEFIT FROM OUR COLLABORATIVE DIGITAL STORYTELLING RESOURCES

Focused on real-life challenges and aimed at bringing about sustainable changes in people's thinking and behavior, our digital storytelling approach and resources will help you empower and involve your students in solving problems they find relevant and worth committing to.

However, applying digital storytelling to higher education teaching and learning requires careful advance preparation. Our open educational resources help you prepare and implement the projects from start to finish.

Ask these questions first:

- Do I want to integrate a DST project into my course?
- Does a DST project fit into the course timeframe?
- Does my teaching context enable students to work in teams of 4-6?
- Who will be the stakeholders of the project?
- Am I going to implement only some DST steps or do I have enough time to go through the whole DST process (Steps 1-5)?

To get started with your digital storytelling project, go through these steps:

- Familiarize yourself with our Learn to Change digital storytelling website.
- Read our digital storytelling case stories to get an idea of the realism and benefits of DST as a pedagogical approach.
- Go through the overall DST process with its 5 main steps. For more information on the DST approach, read through the Digital Storytelling as Practice-based Pedagogical Framework report.
- To get inspired, browse through the DST assignments and modules.
- For digital support, go through the Digital toolbox with its Best practices section.
- Pick a course that is suitable for your DST project.
- Plan your project brief, preferably together with all relevant stakeholders (including students). For this, you can pick and mix our DST materials or you can design your own project brief template. Feel free to modify and develop our materials according to your own needs.
- When your course starts, direct your students to the project website for inspiring examples of deliverables created by other students.

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SUPPORT STUDENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

If you are a teacher in a DST project, your role is to act as a coach to your student teams. Be available to offer feedback and support, constantly encourage and inspire students forward through challenges and uncertainties. Make sure that communication flows freely between yourself and students, within and across student teams, and among all project stakeholders.

To implement your digital storytelling project, go through these 10 steps:

1. Encourage and support your students to think out of the box and be innovative in choosing their DST topic and designing their story concept. Support them with DST assignments and modules as well as digital tools available in the Learn to Change website.

2. Follow the 5 steps of the DST project journey according to your project brief.

3. Be prepared to support the interaction and communications between all project teams and project stakeholders throughout the project.

4. Help students identify their target audience(s) and analyze their needs and expectations with the help of our materials (DST Steps 1-2). Provide feedback and encouragement.

5. Guide students to plan their digital storytelling concepts carefully (DST Steps 1-3). Provide feedback and organize critical discussions involving all teams and stakeholders.

6. Encourage students to script and storyboard their digital content (DST Step 3) carefully before starting the production and editing phase. Provide feedback and organize critical discussions involving all teams and stakeholders.

7. Encourage students to experiment with different digital tools, platforms, and channels until they find the best ones for their purposes (DST Steps 4-5). Give feedback and facilitate knowledge-sharing between team members and across teams.

8. Guide students to publish their content through platforms and channels that are preferred by their target audience(s).

9. Guide students to plan desired forms of audience engagement ahead of publication and to find ways to measure the success of audience reactions and behavior (DST Steps 2 and 5)

10. Arrange an event where students showcase and launch their digital stories along with a plan for sharing and engagement, involving all project stakeholders (DST Step 5).

To support your DST projects further, consider joining forces with colleagues through team teaching. Furthermore, you can invite stakeholders to share their expertise with your students.
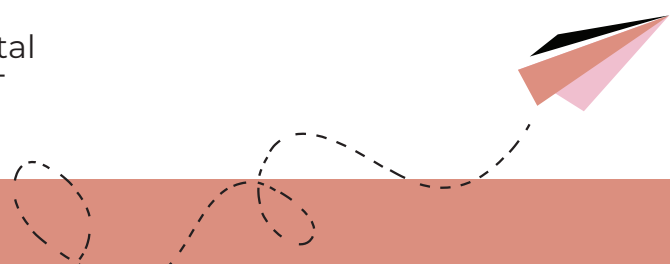
MAKE USE OF COLLABORATION TO REALIZE DREAMS AND TACKLE CONCERNS

Based on discussions during our Learn to Change stakeholder workshops, higher education teachers have both dreams and concerns about using digital storytelling in their classes.

Teachers' digital storytelling dreams:
- Sharing personal experiences and values across generations
- Promoting stories that highlight local and global topics in need of change
- Sharing stories of critical incidents that trigger awareness and critical assessment from many perspectives
- Promoting stories that help approach complexities in different life situations
- Drawing attention to personal relationships with specific places and people to build rapport with local and global audiences and to show how small the world is
- Sharing fun events and occurrences to entertain and inspire others

Teachers' fears and concerns about digital storytelling projects:
- Busy life, lack of time
- Afraid of getting started
- Lack of digital competencies
- How to create strong story concepts: why, for whom, and with what effects
- How to motivate and encourage students throughout the process
- Privacy and copyright issues

With these dreams and concerns in mind, we have created our open-access materials that are geared to support you step by step. Through collaborative digital storytelling projects, we can overcome the fears and concerns – and focus on realizing the dreams.

We invite you to take the first step.

Start browsing our **Learn to Change collaborative digital storytelling resources** together with your colleagues and students!