PERFECT

Handbook for School Team Leaders

Leading partner: International Parents Association

Document Title	Handbook for School Team Leaders
Project title:	PERFECT - Perform and share local histories
Authors:	IPA: Judit Horgas, Eszter Salamon
Contributors:	
Programme:	ERASMUS+ KA2 Strategic Partnership - Higher Education
Project Number:	2021-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000027801
Project Partners:	Istituto Comprensivo "G. Lucatelli" / IT (coord.) IIS "F. Filelfo" Tolentino / IT Innovate4Future - Centrul pentru Soluţii Educaţionale Avansate / RO Colegiul Naţional "Sfântul Sava" / RO Stichting International Parents Alliance / NL Organizing Bureau of European School Student Unions / BE Istituto Internazionale Di Diritto Umanitario / IT Ministry For Education and Employment / MT Borg Dreierschützengasse / AT Fondation des Regions Europeennes pour la Recherche en Éducation et Information / FR
Project duration:	01.12.2021 – 30.11.2024
Project website:	http://

Version history

Version #	Date	Prepared by	Reason
1	01.01.2023	Gabriel DIMA / I4F	Integrate partner' contributions
2	09.02.2023	Gabriel DIMA / I4F	Integrate partners' feedback
3	13.03.2023	Gratiela IANOS / I4F	Integrate partners' feedback
4	22.03.2023	Gratiela IANOS / I4F Loredana MANASIA / External contributor	Integrate external contributor feedback
5	26.03.2023	Judit HORGAS / Parents International Gabriel DIMA / I4F	Feedback from partners Integrate partners' feedback

Author(s): Name, Organisation

Contributors: Name, Organisation

Table of contents

Executive Summary

This *Handbook for School Team Leaders* aims to promote participation and inclusion in the local community through the creation of arts projects. The **PERF**orming and Sharing of Local Histories Proj**ECT** (PERFECT) project is based on a PERFECT conceptual model that emphasises the importance of participation and inclusion in creating an inclusive environment.

This document presents a comprehensive guide for educators and project managers to create an inclusive and participatory art project within an intercultural and transnational context. The guide comprises ten chapters, beginning with an introduction and followed by detailed chapters on creating a perfect conceptual model, participation and inclusion, and your local cultural product in an intercultural and transnational framework.

CHAPTER 3: PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

This chapter gives an explanation about art as an inclusion tool and the potential challenges related to it. The authors offer insight into creating the most inclusive environment in such art projects in order to avoid pitfalls and find solutions for challenges. The chapter introduces the notion of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and explains how the proposed PERFECT methodology is literally a perfect manifestation of UDL. Within this framework, we give advice to Team Leaders about building on the often-underestimated agency of children, enter into equal partnerships with parents and families, and engage with local communities. It also analyses possible and appropriate methods of evaluation and assessment.

CHAPTER 4: YOUR LOCAL CULTURAL PRODUCT IN AN INTERCULTURAL AND TRANSNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter dives deeper into the possibilities around defining the project to be carried out using the PERFECT methodology. It gives ideas about the types of cultural products Team Leaders may propose to the students, and elaborates on what makes such cultural products local. It drives the attention of the Team Leaders to identifying and utilising cultural diversity in the community that the project can build on, and gives them ideas about expanding learning by transnational approaches and methods to show their cultural product to communities in other localities and learn from watching others' similar products. It highlights domains Team Leaders need to pay special attention to, namely tackling culturally sensitive topics and the potential challenges of transnational collaboration. Finally, it advises them on wider outreach for promoting their work and the right methods for that.

CHAPTER 5: DETAILING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROJECT

This chapter offers a step-by-step guide for Team Leaders on facilitating the development of local cultural products by students. It gives not only technical support, but also guides them about areas of focus to ensure that the projects will be student initiated and led, embedded in the local community, and that they remain in their role of facilitators and

team leaders also giving advice on team building. The chapter gives advice also on building collaborative relations with colleagues in the school and the related challenges. The chapter translates the methodology to the widely-used project-based learning method and highlights the specificities of the various project phases.

CHAPTER 6:   THE SCHOOL TEAM LEADER'S ROLE IN PERFECT

The chapter is designed to depict the importance of the team leader's role in a large scale project like PERFECT and to investigate methods and strategies to facilitate and optimise coordination of the teachers' team involved in a project. A further objective of the chapter is to outline useful strategies and tools not only important to successfully create vital organisational conditions at school, but also to motivate, stimulate and engage students using adequate didactic measures. How to create and manage inspirational relationships with families, local partners, other school team leaders and project management for the project's success will additionally be discussed. Finally, the importance of taking part in project monitoring and evaluation will be emphasised.

CHAPTER 7: What to do if?

The "What to do if" session includes a list of possible risks and unforeseen circumstances that may affect school projects inspired by the PERFECT conceptual and operational framework. More specifically, it includes a series of possible difficulties that school leaders may encounter during the different stages of the project implementation: at its early stage (put in place section), during its practical implementation (put in action), due to the peculiarity of the artistic means chosen (put on stage) and, finally, the difficulties that may arise after the end of the project. To tackle these issues this section provides useful suggestions that school team leaders can put into practice. The suggestions are also based on feedback collected from the teachers who participated in the PERFECT project.

CHAPTER 8: PLANNING METHODS & TOOLS. This section introduces three important tools for effective project planning, monitoring, and evaluation: the START Matrix, the Project Canvas, and the Value Proposition Canvas. These tools provide practical and effective ways to understand project potential, improve communication, and ensure a strong connection between the project and its beneficiaries.

CHAPTER 9: MONITORING METHODS & TOOLS. This section introduces four tools for monitoring project implementation: The Graffiti Wall and reflection techniques. The Graffiti Wall is a creative tool for collecting feedback and generating engagement from participants. The Personal Mirror and Reflective Diary are reflective techniques that can contribute to professional and personal development within the project team. Additionally, the StarFish diagram is a helpful tool to synthesise reflections and identify areas of improvement in the project. These tools can enhance self-reflection and metacognitive strategies in learning and teaching.

CHAPTER 10. EVALUATION METHODS & TOOLS. This section discusses two evaluation methods and tools. Photovoice is an art-based technique that allows participants to take photographs that represent their experiences and discuss them in a group. The

Experience Map is a tool for individual and group reflection after the implementation of an arts project or a learning experience. Additionally, an evaluation matrix can be used to explore student achievements and stimulate regulation of learning.

To sum up, this guide is an essential resource for educators and project managers who are seeking to create an inclusive and participatory art project within an intercultural and transnational context. By offering practical advice, expert insights, and a collection of tools for planning, monitoring, and evaluating the project, this guide equips its readers with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the challenges and complexities of such a project successfully.

1. INTRODUCTION

The **PERF**orming and Sharing of Local Histories Proj**ECT** (PERFECT Project) aims at contributing to the innovation and quality of secondary education by developing and testing a teaching/learning strategy based on collaborative cultural production and intercultural exchange also through a meaningful, stimulating and interactive use of digital technology. The identified concrete objectives of PERFECT are:

- To stimulate and support the development of autonomous learning and basic research skills, creative thinking, collaborative attitudes and skills through the creation of cultural products based on local history;
- To organise and reward digitally-enhanced international collaboration of partner schools by supporting the exchange of good practice and cultural products originated locally by students' groups, interacting among them through digitally supported project work;
- To develop a review of the experiences conducted and produce a set of methodological instruments to support the replicability and dissemination of the PERFECT "open model" of action;
- To set up and promote a network of primary and secondary schools committed to participate in exchange of cultural products developed by their students and in a European Festival.

The project is developed through a transnational partnership in order to properly develop the following features:

- Cultural exchange: collaboration between schools of different countries allows pupils and teachers to share and learn about different experiences in diverse sectors. This leads to the identification of similarities, differences and new inputs and outputs;

- Didactical innovation: by sharing experiences, teachers and, more in general, schools, can get to know innovative ways of teaching/learning and can therefore put them into practice in their local realities.

- Openness to multiculturality: through cultural exchange, teachers and students have the opportunity to find out about other people's traditions and cultures, which can lead to feelings of cultural respect and understanding of other countries' cultural heritage.

All these elements will contribute to the promotion of Global Citizenship Education principles, European history and cultural heritage and represent important assets to understand and adhere to a vision of Europe and the world as interconnected systems with commonalities and differences worth to be explored and understood.

The Project will produce the following Project Results:

PR1: Conceptual model and competence framework for intercultural cooperative cultural production – this result will be a key pillar for the project development, but will also be useful to stimulate reflection in other schools, who will be invited to comment and, if possible, to join the exercise at a later stage of project development;

PR2: A Handbook for School Team Leaders, a more operational tool for the design and development of school-based cultural products;

PR3: A set of 5 cultural products collaboratively developed by the partner schools and associated partners to be presented as good practices at the end of year two. It is expected that, during the third year, other schools and institutions will join the project, producing other final cultural products;

PR4: A set of guidelines for school heads, teachers, students and parents, based on the evaluation of the first experiences conducted, to act as multiplier documents for newcomer schools;

PR5: A virtual showcase of school-developed cultural products, including a multimedia documentation of the development process, to be used as a set of inspiring examples for new classes and schools approaching the idea of developing their own cultural product.

The **Handbook for School Team Leaders** is intended to serve the need of the school-based teams in every country to professionally and creatively use the relevant local resources to design and articulate the cultural product that they will choose. The history, natural landscape and resources, the cultural heritage of the contexts, the local human resources that can collaborate to the project, the network of local cultural institutions and civil society organisations will be considered as a local resources pool and, when possible, mobilised following the guidelines proposed in this project result to create a community project experience centred on the partner schools. This handbook offers examples of how each of the previously mentioned aspects can become a source of inspiration or a concrete resource for the project implementation, providing a lively demonstration of how local context elements may help to strengthen the school educational project, to appreciate the local identity and to attract the local community support, with students' families in the front line.

2. THE PERFECT CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The PERFECT Project develops a holistic method to work out key transversal competences (cultural awareness and expression, citizenship, multilingual, digital, entrepreneurship, personal, social, and learning) through a transnational experience. Students create a cultural product (drama or musical theatre, an exhibition including students' works, a multimedia product, etc.) that includes historic research, literature and art history, music, performing arts and digital skills. It starts with a local celebrity or historical episodes connected to local history. There is collaboration in the development of parallel cultural products and sharing of resources for learning.

All learning takes place with the students' participation. There are different levels of participation. We refer to Hart's (1992) Ladder of participation to understand how participation varies from projects totally controlled by students to projects totally controlled by adults. In the Perfect Model students' participation is on various levels. All levels are somehow advantageous to the learner as long as the teacher fills the different roles as needed.

PERFECT also takes a competence framework as the basis of its methodology. The Joint Research Centre of the European Commission has provided guidance for professionals on transversal skills. PERFECT adopts the LifeComp framework as its basis. LifeComp Conceptual Reference Model, which focuses on the Personal, Social and Learning aspects, is the basis of the PERFECT Project. Competences are listed in detail with relevance to formal/informal art education.

When speaking about the **Personal Aspects** we refer to:

- Self-Regulation – Awareness and management of emotions, thoughts, and behaviour. Art evokes all sorts of emotions and therefore the baring of one's soul - both for the performers and audiences. This requires the performers to have total control over their emotions and expressions especially when dealing with highly controversial and soul-stirring issues.
- Flexibility – Ability to manage transitions and uncertainty and to face challenges. Implementation of an art project requires smaller or bigger changes all through the process. Facing such issues is easier if participants are well-prepared. It is advisable to create a risk assessment plan.
- Wellbeing – Pursuit of life satisfaction, care of physical, mental, and social health, and adoption of a sustainable lifestyle. Artistic expression is an important way to increase well-being. PERFECT projects, if implemented well, support students in developing skills for maintaining their own well-being.

In the **Social Aspects** then we speak about:

- Empathy – The understanding of another person's emotions, experiences and values, and the provision of appropriate responses. Art projects should be inclusive of all cultural and personal differences of all the participants. The

teachers should actively encourage the participants to use their various experiences and cultural heritage.

- Communication – Use of relevant communication strategies. Domain-specific codes and tools, depending on the context and the content. PERFECT projects are a way of communicating between the participants and other stakeholders (families, the whole school community, the neighbourhood, etc.). This helps in the development of students and teachers into more active, responsible citizens.
- Collaboration – Engagement in group activity and teamwork acknowledging and respecting others. PERFECT projects are based upon collaboration within a team of students. Students (and teachers) in traditional schools are often not very experienced in collaboration and this may cause some concern. Thus, the arts project – to develop the necessary skills – must be based on good planning and preparation.

Then there is the **Learning Aspects**:

- Growth Mindset – Belief in one's and other's potential to continuously learn and progress. The iterative processes of arts offer an opportunity for students to explore their capabilities for reaching their full potential.
- Critical Thinking – Assessment of information and arguments to support reasoned innovative conclusions. Implementing an art project requires a solution-based approach. This means gathering and evaluating information, considering evidence, assessing risks, and taking into consideration human resources. This is an excellent way of teaching students the importance of critical thinking.
- Managing Learning – The planning, organising, monitoring, and reviewing of one's own learning. In a PERFECT project, learning goals are set in a way that ensures students are at times following instructions and at times leading proceedings in the whole implementation and evaluation process. Thus learning and implementation management should be teacher/learner led but always learner centred.

Further to these we also refer to the importance of Aesthetic development where participants develop their notion of beauty when applied within the project. This Aesthetic experience develops both the participants and the audiences.

Then with the help of Competence Boats, every partner school will focus on and express the combination of disciplinary competences and transversal competences within the cultural product. This leads to the development of Community Maps that represent material and cultural features of a place. It is different from a 'normal' map because it aims at involving the inhabitants of an area in the management and protection of local heritage. It expresses what the inhabitants wish to pass on to outsiders and new generations. It is a tool through which inhabitants have the chance to represent their heritage, the landscape, and the know-how.

With all their background work in place then we move on to the choice of character as the representative of local history could be challenging regarding different national historical perspectives. History is always retold from a Hero's part, turning others into the enemy. Historical interpretations that used to be regarded as patriotic are questioned today. Teaching children critical thinking is very important to solve the possible problems that may arise. There are some main points which one has to keep in mind:

- **Acknowledging the construction process of the historical figures:** Reflecting on the character and on the character's multiple historical representations through time and in various areas may make the figure more humane.

- **Understanding our own narrative standing point:** Research must differentiate between legends and facts. Possible sensitive issues that national or religious minorities studying in your school or living in your community might have regarding the chosen figure, must be taken into consideration. Seeking objectivity is a must.

- **Allow characters to be complex and contrasted, to have biases and failures:** Doubts and regrets as a character's points of view, can help to understand them better. Inclusion of an opponent with a structured story and fair motivation may be equally important.

- **Use a double-narration process and acknowledge the audience's reception and critical thinking:** Choosing a lesser known or forgotten historical figure with less controversies can also be considered. Any character can be dealt with irony or can have its caricature drawn to display or accentuate its flaws and failures. Using these tools in a subtle way focusing on one specific topic related to the character, can be highly effective. There is never total control of a product's reception. Some may understand only explicit content, while others would understand the implicit content.

- **Break the 4th wall:** Breaking the 4th wall to allow a different perspective to come into view always works. Students can be given the chance to have contradictory points of view. The idea is not to say or present who is right or wrong but to allow different perspectives and different ways of expression to surface. Elaboration of a scene inspired from a pictorial representation, focusing on meaning and interpretation, should be added.

- **In the case of a pictorial exhibition:** You may elaborate a little scene about a pictorial representation, when two characters fight about the meaning and interpretation of it, to add to the exhibition.

Once all is in place we focus on the different ways that our project can be delivered. Whichever the medium, there is always the element of being live and having live feedback

during the delivery of the project. The project can have any of the following forms or a mixture of all.

THEATRE – works on the integration of both art and education to develop the personal, social and aesthetic competences of the students. It focuses on the initiation of learning and experience processes through theatre. Its basis is the holistic approach that tries to see people in all their dimensions and life contexts. Good Theatre Practice makes use of both:

- The Bottom-Up approach: where the teacher's role is as the facilitator of knowledge.
- And The Top-Down approach: where the teacher takes on the role as holder of all knowledge and the point of reference.

Theatre encourages students to explore and experiment with body motion, movement, speech, and expression in a structured and secure environment. They recognize their own emotions and how to express them. As actors, the students embark on aesthetic processes within their whole being. They experience human situations in another reality and communicate directly with the audience during live performances. Through reflection, students can better understand their own world, their own actions, and the actions of their peers. Positive effects upon the students' self-confidence should be emphasised.

MUSICAL THEATRE - melologue, concert, dance and auxiliary forms of mime, puppet theatre, circus art and illusionism are the artistic forms set in several actions in front of a live audience. Whether it is musical, melodrama or operetta, musical theatre includes all the expressive bodily languages made significant by music and communicated to the audience present. The artistic expression is conveyed above all using the body. The pedagogical value of musical theatre is inherent in the fact that it includes the disciplines of Singing, Dance, Music and Theatre.

In the Musical Theatre the lived experience becomes a performative experience. It becomes educational. All is done with great attention to detail and highly focused:

a) ATTENTION TO THE PROCESS which is the relationship between the educational path and the product.
b) The ATTENTION TO PRIVACY method does not simply involve the mastery of skills and concepts but clarifies how the performing arts touch deeply personal areas.
c) ATTENTION TO THE BODY, specifically on how work starts from a rather unusual attention to the body in the school environment.

DANCE – includes a variety of different ways of using the body within a space. Each way of dancing, from its origins, involves a type of movement of the various parts of the body. The teaching of dance cannot ignore the constant cultivation and pursuit of attention, intention, and concentration. The students' visions and responses generate immediate feedback and sharpen the outcomes and objectives of each lesson and the whole course. In dance, artists and artworks come together.

However, Educational dance does not belong to any technique and does not include the concept of right or wrong; it wants to provide a concrete way to approach the body and space, but also to manage thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Educating through "bodily intelligence" means:

- Developing imagination and creativity
- Acquiring expressive and communicative skills
- Increasing the ability to analyse and criticise.
- Acquiring knowledge and awareness of well-being and health

Among the dance tools taken up and enhanced in Educational Dance, there is the search for expressiveness and creativity, which is pursued through improvisation and the study of the student's spontaneous reaction.

VISUAL ARTS – can take a very wide range of art forms such as painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, photography, video, filmmaking, design, crafts, and architecture. Other artistic disciplines might also include some aspects of visual arts, e.g. performing arts, conceptual art and textile art.

MULTIMEDIA ART – uses a combination of different content forms such as text, audio, images, animations, or video. Popular examples of multimedia include video podcasts, audio slideshows and animated videos.

DIGITAL ART – can be any artistic work or practice that uses digital technology as part of the creative or presentation process. Popular examples are computer-generated images, digital paintings, artificial intelligence artworks or video installation art. This artform includes a high level of IT skills and it requires access to the necessary equipment.

Once the form of the project is chosen, a Presentation Driven Model is suggested and can be effective for any type of presentation. It is of utmost importance that all through the process everybody must be focused on creating the best presentation possible and feel a sense of belonging and proud to be part of the project, in whichever role. Teamwork will dominate and it is what makes or breaks the presentation. Learning will take place unconsciously and continuously.

3. PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

3.1 Why is an art project a good inclusion tool?

Every child has the right to quality education and learning. This means that when you start thinking about creating an art project you have to consider how to provide the opportunity of participation for all the students in your school, regardless of their various physical and mental abilities.

At the same time an art project is an excellent tool to prove to the students, your colleagues and the wider school community that with careful planning it is indeed possible for everybody to participate. It makes it possible for students whose talents are not in fields traditionally celebrated by the school to have a highly satisfying learning experience that may also boost their classroom performance. Since an artistic project needs people to perform a diverse set of roles you can find a suitable job for nearly every student. There will be creative people who are good at writing or making props and costumes, others will have the opportunity to show off their technical skills with music or lights, yet others will enjoy being on stage, etc. Very often an opportunity to show such non-school-like talents raises the social status of a student, and subsequently even their classroom results may increase.

First and foremost, you need to learn about your own implicit biases and blind spots, to help you actively mitigate those in your teaching. A useful self-assessment tool that can be used for this is the Identity Wheel (see in Annex 1).

Being aware of these biases is a very important first step, and it may be enough to consciously act upon them, but as they may have an impact on your approach to and communication with students or other people, you need to actively do something about them. In most cases there is no need for too much effort, but introducing safe (potentially anonymous) feedback opportunities or having a side-kick to counterbalance you are good measures.

When planning the project, you have to consider:
- *physical disabilities*, e.g. can your wheelchair user student enter the premises where you will have the project?
- *mental disabilities*, e.g. does your autistic student have a talent that could be useful in the project?
- *gender-related issues*, e.g. does the school community accept if girls play male roles?
- *age-related issues*, e.g. do the older students accept the opinion of their younger students?
- *national minorities*, e.g. does the project include any historical or cultural references that might be derogatory for your national minority student?
- *religious issues*, e.g. does the project timetable take into consideration the religious holidays of all the students?

In each of these examples, if the answer is not a definitive "YES" you have to think about possible solutions. It is unacceptable to shrug one's shoulder and make compromises. Naturally, if any of the above examples do not apply, e.g. because you do not have physically disabled students, you can skip considering those issues. However, you still have to be aware of these questions, because e.g. an under/overweight student or one wearing glasses might feel just as incapable of stage participation as a wheelchair user.

It might take more effort, time and dedication to find a real role for all the students who wish to participate, but eventually it will be much more useful for everybody. At the same time, do not force any student to participate, but make sure that those who are reluctant know that they have a wide range of possible roles. Play cooperative games with them, note their strengths and make suggestions regarding their possible tasks. If you feel that the student would be willing to participate, but their family does not support it (e.g. they feel that it takes too much time and would hinder their academic progress), consider inviting the family to take part in the planning (see further tips in 3.5.).

When looking for a solution, it is best to involve the student(s) and their families and ask for their opinion and advice. By acknowledging awareness of the issue you have taken the first important step towards inclusion and show that you, your school and the art project consider inclusion an essential starting point.

3.2   Creative an inclusive environment

An inclusive environment is **safe** in every sense of the word.

When planning the venue of your school project (it can be inside the school building or outside of it) it is necessary to be informed about the various needs of the participants. Beside the more obvious issues like basic safety (e.g. no loose floorboards or free-range wires) or wheelchair access, you have to consider if the venue is easily accessible for everybody at all times (e.g. commuters might find it difficult to go home if rehearsals last till late afternoon or are organised at weekends). The best way to make sure that the venue is acceptable for every participant is to include them in the planning from the very beginning.

A safe space needs certain boundaries. If you expect your students to express themselves artistically you need to make sure that they feel safe when doing so, especially during rehearsal times when they are still developing their skills. This means that you need a venue that is secure from the prying eyes of outsiders. Do not use a venue that can be accessed by anybody, and if it is not possible in the school, find an outside venue for the development stage. If there is a risk of trespassing, you can appoint students who act as "security guards" during rehearsals. Their task is to guarantee that no jeering can hinder the development of the project.

You should also create a space that is not only physically safe, but where all team members can express their opinion, concerns, fears, but also happiness and content. For this, it is of utmost importance to build trust within the group and also set rules together

to make proper feedback possible, but only in a constructive, non-obtrusive way. In adult theatre, verbal abuse is a known and tolerated feature and sometimes considered part of the creative process, but this is a total no-go in a context where the main goal is education.

Creating a mentally and spiritually safe environment for everybody is difficult, but maintaining it throughout the whole duration of the project is almost impossible. If your students feel passionate about their art, it is very likely that they will have some clashes from time to time. You need to make sure that they learn to communicate their frustration in a respectful way. Students who are very talented may be especially difficult to handle in this regard and may require a gentle but firm hand in curbing their attitudes. Sometimes it might be difficult to remember that you are not a Broadway producer whose first and foremost concern is to provide high quality entertainment. Your job is to support a learning process in which the development of the students is the most important goal.

3.3   Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that provides all students with an equal opportunity to succeed. The goal of UDL is to use a variety of teaching methods to remove any barriers to learning. It acknowledges that every one of us has special needs and aims to build in flexibility that can be adjusted for every student's strengths and needs. This approach to teaching doesn't specifically target children with learning and attention issues, but it can be very helpful for them, especially for those who have not been formally diagnosed. By applying UDL principles, teachers can effectively instruct a diverse group of learners. It does not require you to redesign the project you are working on, but rather provides a way of inclusive thinking ensuring that all involved parties are offered learning support in a way that best helps them to thrive. A complex project like one that is proposed in this methodology is the perfect ground for implementing UDL.

Try to take the three main principles of UDL into consideration when planning your art project:

- **Representation:** UDL recommends offering information in more than one format. For example, schoolbooks are primarily visual. But providing not only text, but also audio, video and hands-on learning gives students a chance to access the material in whichever way is best suited to their learning strengths. You can then further strengthen these recognized skills by giving them specific tasks, thus building their confidence.

- **Action and expression**: UDL suggests giving students more than one way to interact with the material and to show what they have learned. For example, students might get to choose between taking a pencil-and-paper test, giving an oral presentation or doing a group project. This will, once again, provide you with information regarding their strengths.

- **Engagement**: UDL encourages teachers to look for multiple ways to motivate students, e.g. by letting them make choices and giving them assignments that feel

relevant to their lives. Other common strategies include gamification and creating opportunities for students to get up and move around the classroom. When choosing the topic for your art project, this principle is especially relevant. It will be much harder to motivate your students to participate meaningfully if you are the only one who really cares about the subject matter.

Most readers are probably very familiar with the first three slots in the picture below. The additional two are bringing us closer to what we can provide in such an arts project based on historical research. With a PERFECT project we even go beyond the last picture: we don't only allow any student who want to become players, but we also offer possibilities for those who want to be the referee (e.g. the director) or play a different game (by doing the historical research serving as a basis or becoming cloakroom attendants or chaperones during performances).
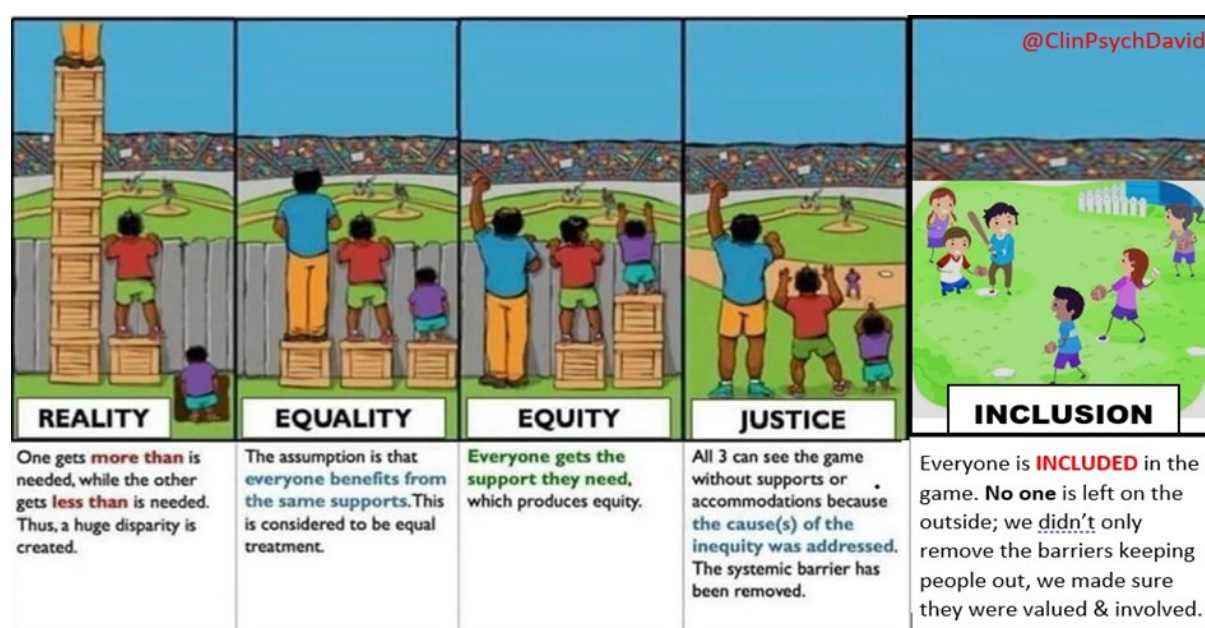
FIGURE 1: MISSING

3.4 Child Agency

Child agency means that children are capable of doing a wide range of things, usually much more than adults assume they can. It means that they are able to and thus may choose their way of acting, thus contributing to the construction of their social and cultural context. As per the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 and 13, children have the right to express their opinion, and they also have the right to be heard. They have the right to freedom of expression, and it also includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice. Article 14 protects the freedom of conscience, thought and religion that must be considered when deciding on topics you are working with. Children can and are allowed to express if they feel uncomfortable about a topic or how it is treated, and this must be acknowledged and acted upon. Article 16 protects the child's honour and reputation, obliging others, including adults to behave respectfully. Article 17 ensures the right of

children to gather information from a variety of sources. Article 19 protects children from abuse, be it mental or physical. In the context of child agency most of these regulations impose an obligation on responsible adults not only to ensure these freedoms, but also to guide children about the boundaries of these rights, namely that they cannot be exercised in a way that violates the rights of others.

The role of school in children's life is much more than just providing academic knowledge. School is a place where children can develop and practise social skills, where they can explore their interests, learn about the ways society works and how to learn with the guidance of professional educators. Skills and concepts like critical thinking, decision making, the consequences of a decision, democracy, cannot be taught in theory, they need to be learnt through practice and error. If children are allowed and supported to exercise these rights from an early age, they will be much more confident in them as they grow older. If children are included in the decision making for their own environment, they will feel ownership and will adhere to the rules much more. This is a skill even 2-year-olds are able to do.

If you let your students assume their agency when designing your school arts project, you provide them a safe space where they can develop the above-mentioned skills. It is difficult to let go of the illusion of complete control. Professional educators and parents often make decisions for children with the intention of keeping them safe, protecting them from harm and the negative consequences of bad decisions. While these intentions are noble, they don't allow children to learn and to make their own mistakes when the stakes are low and thus leave young people unprepared when they turn adults and there isn't anyone making decisions for them anymore. The role of adults is to involve and facilitate, to give them tools, help them consider options or point of views they have not thought about, make sure that everyone is heard. Children are one of the many stakeholders in school, and their input should be considered equally important as the other stakeholders' opinions.

In practice, you first need to acknowledge the benefits of collaborative decision making. Collaborative decision making can help the group focus their intent so it is not so much about winning the argument, but about finding the best solution. When this happens it builds trust and buy-in, which is a crucial element of strong and healthy group dynamics. As the responsible adult, you need to make sure the regulations in place allow this to happen, and everyone is aware of their rights and duties. You need to identify age-appropriate processes for students to express their opinions and practise their decision-making rights. Hart´s Ladder of Participation[1] (see below) is a great tool to monitor decision making practices, and to check if they are truly participatory.

---

[1] It is based on the Ladder of Citizen Participation by Arnstein and thus similar to the other Ladder included later on parent participation that was developed by Haider and Salamon, also based on Arnstein.

It is important to know the background of the students in your school. Their family, their social status and their heritage have a lot of impact on how they view hierarchy, what values they respect, and how comfortable they are with making decisions and facing the consequences. In order to make sure that every child is equally able to express their opinion and to participate, you need to be aware of these differences, and adjust the tools to accommodate them. It is essential to have a respectful and trustful relationship with parents too, so that children are not trapped between clashing values and practices.

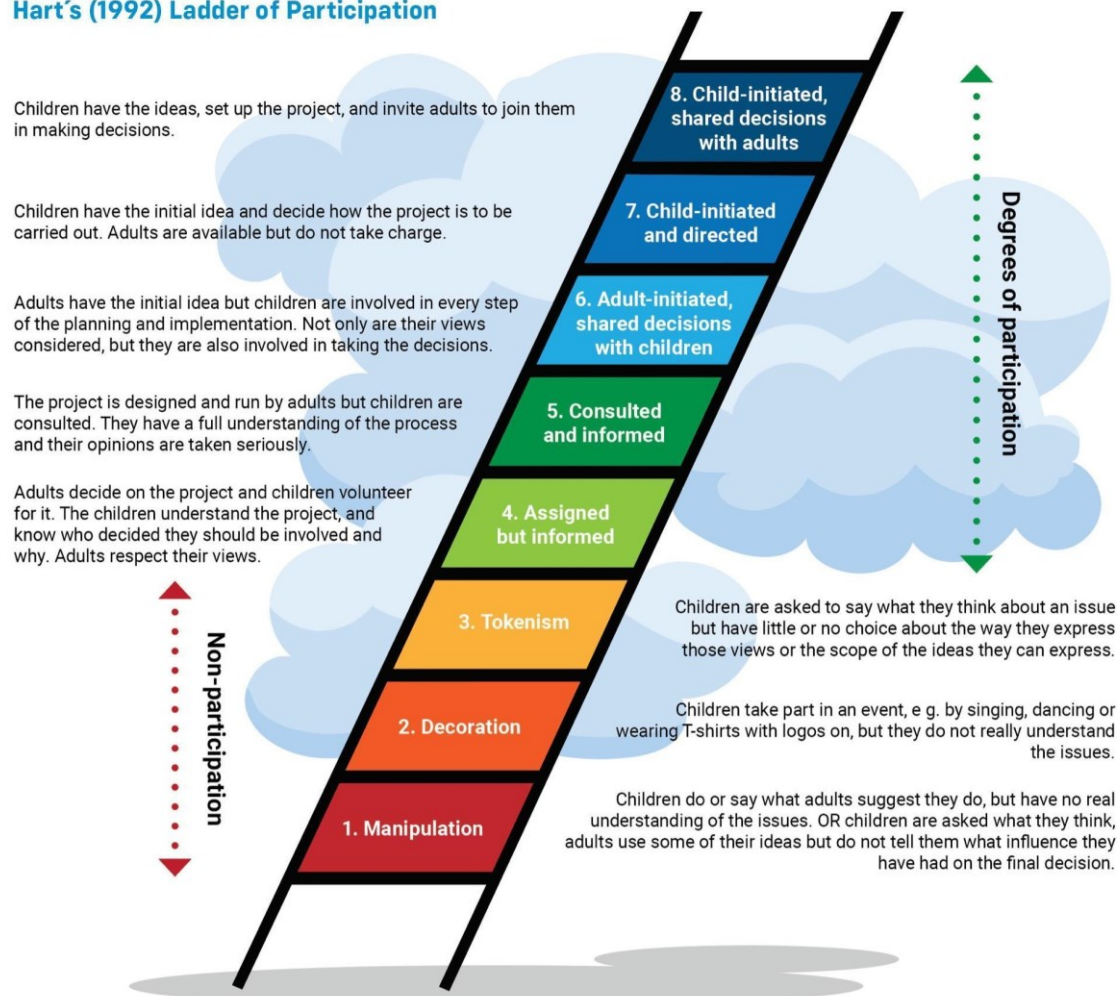## Hart´s (1992) Ladder of Participation

Children have the ideas, set up the project, and invite adults to join them in making decisions.

8. Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults

Children have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available but do not take charge.

7. Child-initiated and directed

Adults have the initial idea but children are involved in every step of the planning and implementation. Not only are their views considered, but they are also involved in taking the decisions.

6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children

The project is designed and run by adults but children are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.

5. Consulted and informed

Adults decide on the project and children volunteer for it. The children understand the project, and know who decided they should be involved and why. Adults respect their views.

4. Assigned but informed

Degrees of participation

3. Tokenism

Children are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express.

2. Decoration

Children take part in an event, e. g. by singing, dancing or wearing T-shirts with logos on, but they do not really understand the issues.

Non-participation

1. Manipulation

Children do or say what adults suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issues. OR children are asked what they think, adults use some of their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have had on the final decision.

FIGURE 2: HART'S (1992) LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

3.5   Parent / grandparent participation

Research shows that family factors have the biggest impact on students' academic achievement. Parental engagement in their children's learning is far more predictive of students' academic success than the family's socioeconomic status. The quality of teachers is the second or third most crucial factor depending on the age of the child (over the age of 11 the other is the peer group). If parents (in this Guidebook we use the term to refer to all family members who function as caretakers of a child) and teachers collaborate, they can make a huge difference in students' learning.

There are several factors that make parents/grandparents essential when creating a successful art project.

- **Parents as a resource**
  You will find that very often parents will be able to provide the necessary skills that are missing to make the project successful. It might be a very specific skill (e.g. the use of a special computer programme) or local knowledge (e.g. about local history). You can build on parents' cultural diversity and related specific knowledge they can bring into your project.

- **Parents in fundraising**
  Your project might need additional funds, especially if travelling is involved. Fundraising should not be your sole role and it might also be more effective if organised by parents. However, you can still arrange fundraisers, coffee and cake events, especially if these are initiated by the parents.

- **Parents as educators in the art project**
  You might want to ask for help from parents who can act as educators in your project – be that the necessary research (e.g. engaging a historian, sociologist or librarian parent), art education (e.g. teaching dance moves), teaching the use of some equipment (e.g. video camera) or in other ways of supporting the students (e.g. by organising team building exercises). For this, it is important to be aware of relevant parent knowledge or skills.

- **Grandparents have time**
  Managing a more complex art project can take up a lot of time, so it is good to know that grandparents often have a lot of free time on their hands and might be willing to help out with smaller or bigger tasks (e.g. practising lines with the children). In some schools, it is compulsory to have an adult present, and grandparents are a good choice for that. They can also accompany children on a necessary outing e.g. during research or buying material for props. This has the additional value of building a stronger relationship between the generations.

- **Grandparents have life experience to build on**
  As learning usually happens in a non-formal way during art projects, this is an excellent opportunity for children to learn from their grandparents (or from the grandparents of their peers). Grandparents often have a lot of knowledge about myths, local stories or first-hand experience related to the chosen historical figure that can be utilised as one source of information during research. It can also be a life-changing experience for grandparents to have their experience acknowledged and this eventually leads to a stronger school community.

Below you will find an image that helps you understand how to engage parents/grandparents to participate in the life of the school and common practices that we suggest you avoid.

Figure 3: Ladder of parents participation

3.6   Local community participation

Engaging (or not) with the local community is an important decision to be made by the team. Early outreach can lead to an early buy-in meaning that there is an interest about what you are doing among local community actors. If managed well, it can support your project from the history research phase to the final performance.

Local community can be a resource in itself with the history that is known to community members, but they can also provide the skills that become necessary during the project, but are absent from the school. Local communities can also help you out with material resources if there is interest and motivation.

Local historical societies or similar organisations can also be a great resource for truly localising your project, moving from a general interest of the well-known life-event of your chosen historical person to one that is more closely linked to local history.

Local community actors can also help you by providing safe and separable rehearsal space if the school is not available or suitable for some reason. It can be the cinema, the back room of the local pub or the training venue of a local NGO.

Groups of parents who belong to local minorities or local community organisations representing them can also be a great asset for your project. In the overwhelming majority of European schools these groups are underrepresented or missing from the school staff, and getting them on board may help with creating something truly multicultural and culturally sensitive. This kind of support can be actively sought by the team even if these minorities are missing from the group working on the project, but are known to them.

The most relevant community actors that you can collaborate with are local non-formal education providers. They can provide just space as mentioned before, but they may also become active members of the creative team. In this case, you need to make sure that they become real team members, accepting rules and common working methods. Of course, your students may decide to invite representatives of such organisations on an ad hoc basis, e.g. inviting them to give a presentation during the research phase or offering a speech improvement class.

Working with local actors is also a good idea, but in their case, it is even more important to properly prepare their participation. If you want to invite an artist, especially one with no experience with children or teaching, you may want to offer them a basic training. You can find guidance on this [in the resources of the CoMap project](#).

3.7   Inclusive assessment and evaluation

Arts projects may be extra-curricular. If this is the case, you are free to develop an assessment system that supports learning most. If you manage to include an arts project as a curricular activity, its uniqueness provides an opportunity to build an assessment system that suits your students best and the practices you develop during the project can later be used in your everyday teaching.

Below you will find definitions, explanations and examples for various types of assessment.

An **assessment** is a systematic process for measuring an individual's abilities based on various data. When you assess your students, you match their skills, behaviours against certain (usually centrally set) parameters, to provide a measure of their strengths and weaknesses.

Depending on the context, assessments can be standardised or fluid. A **diagnostic** assessment is a form of pre-assessment or a pre-test where teachers can evaluate students' strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and skills. These assessments are typically low-stakes and are intended to help teachers identify what students know and can do in different domains to support their students' learning. When planning your arts project, it is essential to conduct such assessments so that you are aware of your students' present skillset. Since you will also have a timeline to work with, make sure that you have realistic expectations regarding the development of students' skills. Underestimating their capabilities is just as harmful as overestimating it, and it might be necessary to be flexible and change some parts of the project on the way to make it more or less challenging for them.

Formative assessments take place throughout the learning process (in this case, the arts project) and provide real-time feedback. These assessments measure the efforts and dedication of your students. Even if they are not very skillful (yet), their enthusiasm or diligence might deserve praise. By acknowledging their commitment, you encourage them to develop further.

When applying **summative** assessments, you compare what your students know to the expected level of knowledge required for a specific context. As arts projects can be very complex, this might be difficult to measure, so it is a good idea to apply summative assessments to various aspects of the project, e.g. assessing the background research and the quality of the performance separately.

An **evaluation** is the systematic assessment of design, implementation or results of an initiative. For example, when having finished your art project you evaluate it, you critically analyse the various outcomes and data to help you measure its success. You aim to make an objective judgement on the value, quality, or significance of your project using a set of well-defined criteria. It helps students to see clearly how they performed, but this practice can also support the implementation of another similar project in the future.

It's important to assess how students' skills have developed during the project, and to do so in ways that don't inadvertently disadvantage some children compared to others.

Inclusive assessment is based on continuous activities that allow both students and teachers to understand how the students' progress meets the learning objectives. It should include:

- early, low-stakes, frequent assessment and feedback for learning.
- multiple and varied methods of student performance.
- the use of exercises or assignments that promote self-assessment and self-awareness.
- assessments before, during, and after learning.

- transparent assessments that clearly articulate step-by-step instructions as well as the criteria for success.

There has been increased attention over grading practices and equity, because research evidence shows that grading negatively impacts learning. Prominent grading approaches often privilege individuals with the greatest resources, preparation, and desired behaviours. While you might feel that working on a school art project does not necessitate giving grades at all (or you only give high marks as a reward for participating students), you might want to consider the practice of **ungrading**. It is not as simple as just removing grades. This practice suggests that we need to do intentional, critical work to dismantle traditional and standardized approaches to assessment. In ungrading, feedback is subjective and individualized and invites the student to use these to continue learning. For example, you might feel that the research a student has done on the local history of the school is not comprehensive enough, because they used just one book. Instead of rebuking the student, you should encourage them to find other resources, e.g. the local newspaper and see if that data confirms or contradicts the earlier research. This way the student's critical thinking also develops.

4. YOUR LOCAL CULTURAL PRODUCT IN AN INTERCULTURAL AND TRANSNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 What is a cultural product?

A cultural product can take countless forms, and the more your team members use their imagination to come up with new ideas, the more exciting your project will be. We list a few possible formats, but encourage you to feel free to go beyond these ideas.

- visual arts exhibition based on a local topic,
- theatrical performance based on local history,
- musical performance of local traditional music,
- dance performance connected to a local topic,
- multimedia presentation about local history,
- website building on a local topic,
- organising guided tours with the necessary marketing elements,
- fashion show of local traditional costumes,
- creating landart in the neighbourhood,
- publishing a community magazine,
- publishing a book of creative writings on a local topic (prose and/or poetry),
- creating oral history videos with locals,
- organising a community event of cooking local dishes and creating design for locally sourced food.

4.2 What makes it local?

When designing your project, you need to assess your students' interests in a geographical sense. By engaging them in preliminary talks, artwork or cooperative games you should determine whether they are more interested in a wider understanding of the word "local" (e.g. national) or they want to stay as close to the school neighbourhood as possible (e.g. dealing with the history of the school premises). Whichever they choose, make sure that the topic is relatively easy to research (some challenges are welcome, though).

Do not forbid any topics, but help your students by asking relevant questions to guide them towards the best possible choice. Encourage them to look for details that bring a historical figure or event closer to them, to find what they are personally interested in. They might find surprising or even funny information that will help them see these historical figures as real people, not just a collection of dusty facts. Their academic learning as well as their skills development will be much more successful if they feel personally involved and even their critical thinking will develop if they understand that historical figures are just as complex individuals as any of their acquaintances and that there are several sides to a story even if it happened a long time ago.

4.3　The intercultural nature of local context

In Europe, there are very few places that are historically monocultural and remained so until today. It is important for your students to explore the local context at the time of the historical events as well as today. Interculturality may be related to social status, religion, language(s) spoken, level of education, social status, etc.

It is often said that history is written mostly by the winners. Thus, it is important in the research phase of your project to consider the impact of the chosen person and/or their actions on local people coming from different groups, but also the views of people currently living there.

Once you have managed to choose the topic of your project, ask your students to research what parts of the topic might be relevant and what possible parallels they can find in other cultures. E.g. If you decide to make a multimedia presentation about your local history, suggest to your students to use the same tools to create a smaller presentation about a twin city and connect them to students from that place to work together.

4.4　Methods and opportunities for transnational collaboration

When planning transnational collaboration, you have to keep in mind that the same rules apply to this kind of work as your work in your own school (see 3.1.,2.,3.), even if you have less control over it. It is best to start the collaboration by discussing the basics to make sure that you are on the same page.

When you and your students meet with your transnational partners you need to organise events that include various forms of learning to make it as inclusive as possible.

Here is a list of possible formats:

- introductory, getting to know and team building sessions,
- non-formal occasions, containing both experiential and traditional learning elements,
- plenary presentations by guest speakers or facilitators,
- work in small groups, with results presented to the others,
- oral and/or written discussions,
- formal materials, such as educational handouts and presentations about scientific research,
- field visits,
- a summing up session to draw conclusions as well as giving an initial starting point for follow up activities.
- In the past two or three years more and more interaction has been moved from the physical to the virtual. While they do have a role (for example, it is not possible to have all preparatory or follow-up meetings in person due to financial and time constraints), in-person meetings have so much added value that they are the

preferred form of transnational collaboration. To mention a few: free time spent together before, during and after the performance has a bonding effect and cannot be replaced by virtual meetings. Reading body language enriches feedback, having culinary experiences or hearing people interacting in other languages are learning opportunities. Experiencing travelling and not sleeping in one's own bed with the parents nearby are just as important.

When considering transnational collaboration, the best is to start locally. You can explore your municipality's twin city connections as these usually include funding for education collaboration that can be enriched with such historical-artistic projects. You can also explore the possibility of collaborating internationally by finding a connection to the person whose life you are working with (their place of birth, another place they lived at or did something important at, etc.). Another way of making transnational collaboration as local as possible is building on relations of parents or other community members who come from other countries, and utilising their local knowledge and connections at the other place.

One way of making this possible is utilising Erasmus+ mobility funding that is available for groups of school students. If you want to regularly collaborate with schools on similar projects, it might be a good idea to learn about this possibility. There are opportunities for schools to find partners and get help with applications on the European School Education Platform https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en or during the annual DIPS training https://lfee.net/2022/12/dips-2023-in-prague/.

4.5   Dealing with culturally sensitive topics

When choosing a historic figure as the main character of your project, you should consider that kings and queens, warlords and rebel leaders, inventors and adventurers are also human beings. Therefore, they are rarely perfect. For example, recent historical interpretations question colonising efforts that used to be regarded as patriotic. Even benevolent rulers are hard to like from an egalitarian point of view. Teaching children critical thinking is very important, so you can solve the possible problems that arise from this in various ways.

- Research the chosen figure with the children and discuss the differences between legends and facts. Explain that history is usually written by the winners, but what is a great victory for one, must be a devastating loss for the other. Consider possible sensitive issues that national or religious minorities studying in your school or living in your community might have regarding the chosen figure. As the main focus of this project is intercultural understanding, researching these differences could be a major outcome of your project.

- Choose not a historic, but a lesser known or forgotten historical figure with less controversies.

- Focus on the outstanding characteristics of the figure, not the historic events. Be brave and present all the impurities that make one human. If you choose this

solution, go through the texts and imagery of your project with a fine-tooth comb and make sure that nothing is there that could be offensive to anybody.

4.6   Challenges ow working transnationally and how to address them (language, barriers, travelling)

You might feel that working transnationally is beyond your skills. The most common problem is the lack of (or the confidence in) foreign language skills. If you feel that this barrier is insurmountable for you, reach out to your language teacher colleagues, or to parents/ students who are fluent in e.g. English. Remember that your colleagues in a foreign school might struggle with the same difficulties and might welcome your support when working together. There are great applications and programmes that can help you with translating texts to all European languages – they might not be perfect, but these can help your basic communication. Using English as a common language among people who are not native speakers has major benefits in the learning process from having to think more about what you want to say to developing language skills as a side effect.

Travelling to foreign countries, especially with a group of children might seem to you as too much of a responsibility. Do not try to do all the tasks yourself! Remember the importance of child agency and delegate organisational tasks to older students or a group of children. You might find that some people in the school community (e.g. parents) have personal or job connections that could be useful, because they can offer you a discount or can help you with your travel arrangements. Ask your colleagues in the foreign partner school to use their local knowledge and make suggestions.

This checklist might help you be more effective:

- Travel documents are valid for all participants (some of your students might not be citizens so different regulations might apply to them).
- All minors have parental consent in written form.
- All minors' parents have given statements about regular medication and allergies.
- Agree on an amount of pocket money children bring with them.
- (Train/bus/plane) tickets are all in order and all participants have them. Check if a discount group ticket is available.
- Make sure that all adult participants have the European Health Insurance Card.
- Discuss with parents if they want to take out an extra insurance policy.
- Check that the accommodation you booked can be reached when you arrive (e.g. if your plane is late, is there public transport to take you to your hotel?)
- Check the route to the accommodation and find out what kind of tickets suit your group best (e.g. if you are there for three days and are likely to move around a lot it might be a good idea to buy three-day travel passes for everybody).
- If you have participants with physical disabilities, check that public transportation, the booked accommodation and all the venues are accessible for them.

- If you have participants with special dietary needs, make sure that these can be met during the whole journey.
- Make sure you have the mobile phone number of at least three different local adults who can be contacted in case of an emergency.
- Make sure that you have updated contact information for all the participants and their families.

4.7   Reaching out

A successful local art project raises the fame of the school and is also important for the local community. Therefore, it is a good idea to involve the local municipality in any way you can. Just as in the case of parental engagement, try to avoid decoration and tokenism (e.g. instead of asking the mayor to give the opening speech at your event, try to persuade them to cooperate with the students by becoming an active participant, for example a tour guide, or actively seeking their contribution to the historic research.)

In order to make your project visible, you may want to engage with the press. You will most probably have no difficulties with contacting your local press. Try asking for their help in reaching out to national or international publications to raise awareness of your project. If you have international contacts in your project, you can arrange to have their local press publish about your project and in return your local press can present their projects. You might also find that some parents/grandparents have useful contacts in the media and can help you in this. However, be careful when utilising media, especially if they want to use photos (see the section on dissemination in 5.7).

You might also be able to persuade local journalists to allow some students to job-shadow them for a few days as part of the art project. They can learn useful skills that will come in handy when you organise your next project.

Local businesses can also be very important parts of your project. For example, if your project is about local history, the present owners of local shops might be interested to find out what that their space was used for a hundred years ago. If you have local businesses that have been present for several generations, they most probably have interesting artefacts and documents that they might be willing to lend to you to be exhibited. Local businesses can also provide you with extra space (e.g. for advertising your performance in the shop windows), lend you some necessary technical equipment and expert knowledge on certain fields.

Involving local artists (not self-proclaimed amateurs, but acknowledged artists with local ties) can raise the quality and fame of the project. If your school has artist alumni they might be willing to participate as educators or advisors, or they might help you with lending their equipment or building important contacts. However, you need to do it very cautiously to ensure that the educational nature of your project remains intact. See comments in 3.6.

5.   DETAILING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROJECT

5.1   Where to start

Creating a piece of art, regardless of the art form is a lengthy and messy process, and might even lead to failure. However, when art is used for learning, good planning, preparation and guidance can help you to ensure that there will be results. The role of a team leader in such projects is mainly scaffolding the creative process avoiding interference as much as possible, but ensuring that there is progress.

First of all, you have to make sure you are the right person to be the Team Leader, and assess what you will need support with. The first question to ask yourself is the following: *Can I resist the urge to interfere, to influence the creative process?* If the answer is no, you need to find another Team Leader and find your role as a participant in the project.

Saying yes is relatively easy, but sometimes it is difficult to really act accordingly. It might be a good idea to draw up a list of things you promise not to do as a Team Leader and ask somebody (a colleague, one of the students or the whole group of students) to remind you if you drop out of your role. Being a teacher, it is sometimes difficult to let go of control and to accept that in such cases you are not the "knowledgeable" one. Thus, you may need a reminder if you:

- make decisions instead of facilitating group decision making,
- start instructing the artists instead of letting the director/producer do their job, or
- start doing things instead of the participants because it is faster that way.

5.2   How to choose the topic and art from

Using this method, your artistic project will focus on a person with a certain level of historical significance and local relevance. It is very important to choose a personality as well as an episode in the life of this person interesting enough for the participating students, and also for the audience of the artistic project. It means that choosing the topic and art form are the most important moments in such projects. It will be followed by a meticulous research phase with the actual art creation often becoming the smallest part of the project

5.2.1   Choosing the person and the event in his/her life

If there is an important anniversary (e.g. 200th birth anniversary of a national hero) it is a relatively straightforward decision to focus on this person. However, it might be difficult to find the local connection. If your pedagogical aim is to focus on such a person but find it difficult to make the local connection, you may want to focus on contemporary locals. It might be a good starting point if e.g. there is a contest you want your students to enter, or if your school sets educational goals around such an anniversary.

The best is to engage students in choosing the person and the event as openly as possible. you can call students interested in participating to make a kind of bid. this helps them to

become fully engaged with the process, but also to start the research necessary. You can make a call that is totally open or that is somewhat restricted. If the activity is designed to be extracurricular, a totally open call is a good idea, but if you want to link it to curriculum, it is better to offer a more closed set of possible choices e.g. politicians, war heroes, artists or female characters in a certain period of time (e.g. active in the 1800s). You can also decide to give a list of names only.

If you choose this method, you need to pose some simple questions for the students to make their bid. One way of doing it is offering a questionnaire. The questions might be relevant if you choose the topic in another way as it helps the group to focus.

Sample:

Name of the historical figure	
List 3 things he/she is known for	
What is his/her relation to our town/village/school	
List 3 important characteristics of the period he/she lived in	
Short description of the event in the person's life you would like to work with	
What you know about this event	
What is not clear to you about this event (and you think needs more research)	
Name and contact of the person making this recommendation	

5.2.2 Choosing the art form

Once you decide on the topic of your artistic product, you will have to choose the art form. It is preferable to give students as wide a choice as possible and decide together. Even if there is a preliminary decision, the final art form might be different from the first choice. During the creative process some elements may change and you need to be flexible with that.

The PERFECT methodology promotes performing art forms, but you are free to choose any others that you and the children feel comfortable about. Even within performing arts you and your students have a number of decisions to make.

Some main features of the performing arts product to consider:

- Will there be text or will it be a non-verbal performance?
- Will there be music? If yes, will it be live or will you use pre-recorded music? If you are using pre-recorded music, will it be performed by the children or will it be from somewhere else?
- Will there be visual effects? If yes, what technology is necessary for that?
- Will it be performed in one go like a theatrical performance or recorded in bits?
- Is there space for a live audience to watch the performance?
- Do the students want to make it available for viewers on the internet?
- Do you have a budget for props and costumes?
- Is there expertise in the student group to make costumes and backgrounds?
- Is there technology available for recording and/or playing music or video?

A very important, but often overlooked challenge is intellectual property rights. Even though it is an educational arts product and your performance will most probably be free for the audience, using music, video, etc. the intellectual property rights of which are protected, you have to request permission for using it and you are likely to be asked to pay a fee (educational use is not free anymore in the EU since 2021).

5.3   Participatory design and delivery

In an ideal case, the role of the Team Leader is a background role leaving most of the activities to the participating students. It is a difficult position, quite unusual for most teachers. You have to be present, monitor the process, enable progress, but interfere as little as possible.

Remember that every moment of the artistic product creation is a learning opportunity for the students, but it is learning by doing, so your role is that of the facilitator. You should also remember that students are capable of doing far more than most adults think if they are given the opportunity and feel they are trusted.

In the previous section you have already read about the ways children can make decisions on the topic. If the artistic form is chosen carefully together with the students, taking into account their passions, skills and possibilities for seeking help locally, you will have very little to do during the design and delivery process.

A nearly fully student-led project will offer the widest possibilities for learning. However, your presence as the Team Leader is essential in avoiding total failure. (Trial and error, however, is very beneficial for learning.)

After choosing the topic, students should be guided in the various phases of the project. They have to do the necessary research, decide on the various roles in the development

of the artistic project including stage and behind-the-scenes roles. It can also be students who organise the showing of the product in front of an audience.

5.3.1 Research

It is important for both you (and other participating teachers) and for the students to understand that artistic products created using this methodology are not art for the sake of art, but they are designed to be intercultural learning experiences using historical figures. This means that while the actual production is often much more fun and also the visible part, research is the most important element of the process.

Your students may not be familiar with social sciences research methods, so as Team Leader you have to make sure they are equipped with basic research skills. However, the research itself should be done by the students.

Research, if done properly will provide a solid basis to ensure that

- historical facts and myths are separated,
- there is a clear link to your locality,
- controversies are highlighted so that they can be properly handled in the arts creation process,
- participants have a clear understanding of the big picture their chosen character/story is part of.

Research can be done parallel with some preparations of the artistic product, but its outcomes have a major impact on the script and/or other details.

You will have students who are interested in this part of the project only. It is important to make them visible for everybody and to make everybody understand how essential the work done by them is.

5.3.2 Creating and staging

When making decisions on the various roles children will have in the creative process you need to consider two things: abilities and desires. All participants should enjoy the process as much as possible. Joy doesn't mean that it will be an easy process, but all learners enjoy challenges that they can overcome, and it creates joy. An arts production should offer all participants the possibility to learn in flow (if you are not familiar with the notion, check out the work of M. Csíkszentmihályi).

Your students will not feel comfortable in roles/jobs assigned to them without being consulted. There are some crucial roles in creating a performative art product that also require a wide consensus. The most prevalent of these is the role of the director, but a choreographer or musical director can be equally crucial. Keep reminding yourself that you are not staging a Broadway production, so the learning and happiness of students is much more important than the final outcome's market value. While the climax of the work is the performance, from the Team Leader's point of view the process is far more important (and the audience is likely to be enthusiastic friends and families anyway).

You also have to be prepared for some students who wish to have roles that might not suit them. If you know the participating students well, you might be prepared for it, already having some alternatives in mind. If you do not know them well enough, you can trust other students' opinions if expressed in an agreeable way. It may also happen that you choose someone for a certain role/job, and they turn out to be not suitable. Have some alternatives up your sleeve for such cases.

However, you have to be careful to differentiate between personal disagreements and being unsuitable for the job. Creating a performance is a process that inevitably leads to conflicts of varying seriousness. As a Team Leader, conflict management will be one of your main tasks to ensure the smooth creative process of your students. If you do not feel well equipped in this field, you can find training opportunities online (eg. in the [ParENTrepreneurs online training](#)). It is of utmost importance to introduce mutually agreed rules for constructive feedback, too.

To ensure a smooth production process, you need to support students in a number of areas, facilitating their work, for example:

- having an agreed script shared with all participants (and any changes clearly communicated to everybody during the production process),
- having clearly assigned and agreed roles,
- planning and developing stage backgrounds, props and costumes (if any),
- planning and implementing music, lights, sounds and any other technical details,
- planning the timing and place of rehearsals,
- transferring the performance from the rehearsal space to the "big stage" or camera.

5.3.3 Performance

Having the first performance or showing of a performing arts product is a very important moment. It means that you need to carefully prepare for it, support the performance itself and also have a clear plan for a follow up and next steps. Even if you have a number of performances scheduled, the first one will be special.

In the final hour leading up to the performance, you need to help all participants to be familiar with the environment. It is useful to point out (again) the way from dressing rooms to stage and back or the toilets. You also need to make sure everybody has water at hand, and you should have some grape sugar tablets at hand, just in case some of the students are so nervous that their blood sugar level drops and they feel faint.

You will have some students whose main role will be to prepare the space for the audience, and their role is just as important as the ones behind the scenes or on stage. Make sure that they feel valued and important. They will ensure that people are seated, that the cloakroom is operated, and – probably the most important role – that performers and other "artists" are not disturbed by friends and family members before the performance. Like in an adult theatre, there is no space for any member of the audience backstage.

During the performance you have to be very present. Technical equipment may not work, people who were totally confident throughout the creative process may freeze, forget their lines or be confused on stage. Your role is to make them believe that everything is fine and make any necessary push to forward the performance. Any member of the group might need to be reminded that it is not the end of the world if something doesn't go according to the original plans (and the audience may not even notice it). The best approach is to try to make them forget the audience and focus on each other even more than ever before.

When the performance ends, the Team Leader is still very important. There will be participants who are disappointed with the performance, with themselves or with others. Remind yourself that the performance itself is a high adrenaline event. The best approach is to insist on celebrating only and explicitly postpone any discussions for another day. Regardless of their actual performance, everybody needs to be told they were great. Keep an eye on parents and other guests, and if you hear any criticism, step in and remind them that it is a moment of celebration.

5.3.4 Beyond the first performance

Having slept on it, it is a compulsory element of the process to have a meeting to evaluate the whole arts project. Make sure to do it with everybody who was part of the production present, but nobody else. This is the basis for ensuring that students can be honest and open. Also make sure that your agreed rules on constructive feedback are still in place. There are several methods to facilitate such a meeting. Whatever methods you decide to use, make sure that

- all participants have a moment of self-evaluation,
- all participants have the opportunity to give both positive and negative feedback, and
- the discussion is not overpowered by emotions.

If there are a lot of emotions, be prepared to channel them.

In case there are more performances planned, such an evaluative meeting the day after the first performance is even more important. If the performances are close to each other, you will have to decide together if there is a need for rehearsals. If the performances are further away from each other in time, you have to draw up a rehearsal schedule. It is especially important if another performance is in a new place where the stage, the setting and probably even the equipment is alien to the participants.

If your students feel satisfied with the performance, they may push for further opportunities even if they were not planned. Together you can look into the possibilities of performing it at another school in the neighbourhood, entering festivals or performing to a more open local audience. In this case you have to guide your students in a well-founded evaluation process to avoid future disappointments. What is cheered by parents and friends may not be suitable for other audiences. You have to find the balance

between making sure they consider it a learning journey and not their first step towards Hollywood, and maintaining their enthusiasm for future projects. Starting to plan a similar project for another occasion may also be a good way to manage this.

5.4   Engaging your colleagues – pros and cons

As these art projects are designed to be school projects, it is important to consider which of your colleagues are to be engaged.

First and foremost, you need to have school leadership on board. This is necessary for a number of reasons: school leadership should understand the pedagogical value of your project, students or you may need to skip classes, you will probably use school premises and equipment, you may need support from other teachers or non-teaching staff, but they may even get involved in case of a complaint. Make sure that school leadership is kept informed, and make sure students are part of this information process so that this element of the project is also participatory.

You may want to engage other teachers, for example history or arts teachers in the process. In such a case, make sure that team leading is not taken over, students agree with engaging a certain teacher, the teacher's role is clear for all, and the teacher plays according to the agreed rules. In case of potential problems or doubts you can consider engaging an external player such as a local artist instead. The same is true for any non-teaching staff you may engage in the process, such as the janitor who may play a crucial role.

At the same time, your colleagues need to be informed and have ownership of your project as much as possible. Especially when you need a substitute or take students out of class, a positive mindset about the project is important. It is crucial to make the pedagogical value of your project clear to colleagues.

5.5   Project-based learning and its management

Although an artistic project has a lot of peculiarities, at the end of the day it is project-based learning (PBL). It means that you can safely use any tools you usually implement in PBL to support you in making it a reality.

Project-based learning (PBL) is probably the most widely known and used, complex student-centred methodology. Students work on a project over an extended period of time – from a week up to a semester – that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation for a real audience.

As a result, students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. If managed well, PBL has the potential to boost creative energy among students and teachers.

In PBL, students work in groups to solve challenging problems that are authentic, curriculum-based, and often interdisciplinary. Learners decide how to approach a problem and what activities to pursue. They gather information from a variety of sources and synthesise, analyse, and derive knowledge from it. Their learning is inherently valuable because it's connected to something real and involves adult skills such as collaboration and reflection. At the end, students demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge and are judged by how much they've learned and how well they communicate it. Throughout this process, the teacher's role is to guide and advise, rather than to direct and manage, student work.

PBL is becoming widely used in schools and other educational settings, with different varieties being practised. However, there are key characteristics that differentiate "doing a project" from engaging in rigorous PBL.

Doing a project is often a short, intellectually light activity "served up" after the teacher covers the content of a unit in the usual way. In the case of PBL the project is the unit itself, the vehicle for teaching the important knowledge and skills students need to learn. The project contains and frames curriculum and instruction.

In contrast to "doing a project" to verify learning, PBL requires critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and various forms of communication. To answer a driving question and create high-quality work, students need to do much more than remember information. They need to use high order thinking skills and learn to work as a team.

The role of teachers in PBL is the following:

- build a culture of PBL,
- manage activities,
- scaffold student learning,
- assess learning,
- engage in activities and coach students,
- support design and planning,
- align products with curricula.

In an artistic project that is proposed in this methodology, the roles of the Team Leader are the same. The most difficult of them is probably the last one, but regardless of the topic and the art form, there is always learning that can be aligned with curricula.

5.6   Team building and team leading

Depending on the composition of the student or student-adult team you are working with, as a Team Leader you may need to spend time and energy on building the group of people into a team as it is crucial for the success of your efforts. Team building activities create a climate of cooperation and contribute to collaborative problem-solving, develop empathy and trust in the group and in yourself, enhance creativity, and boost self-esteem. This means that you may need to include specific team building activities in case of a conflict or challenge during the creative process, too.

Team building helps everyone get to know and trust their fellow team members, but you do not build trust overnight. Your team goes through gradual stages as they grow from a collection of strangers to efficient collaborators. Psychologist Bruce Tuckman's team building model[2] describes five stages – forming, norming, performing, storming and adjourning – to show how teams can become more united over time. During the performing stage – that is desirable to reach with your team –, everyone is working together at their highest potential, they have built the highest level of commitment, trust, and support for one another. It means that they are at their most productive and are highly motivated to achieve team goals.

Forming happens when your team first comes together. Team members learn about each other, the project requirements, and the leadership structure. This is also the information gathering stage. They are beginning to form impressions of how well they are going to work together. You may want to organise a picnic for all team members and include some activities that help them learn (more) about each other.

In the norming phase, teams become more cooperative. Team members start to understand and appreciate each other's working style, ethics, and roles. This helps them respect the team leader as well as each other. They acknowledge the talents, skills, and experience that each team member brings to the table. They are more willing to trust and depend on one other to get work done. You may want to organise a problem-solving event to support them at this stage, such as a scavenger hunt or escape room event.

In the performing stage, your team really starts shining and working together harmoniously. They are motivated to work towards the team's goals with efficiency and enthusiasm. You as a Team Leader can be sure that the work is being properly done and focus on boosting team morale rather than supervising your team. But even once you have achieved this goal of performing as a team, you want to keep the momentum going and keep an eye on them to notice any sign of the fourth stage of a team, storming.

There are various methods to keep up the team spirit in the performing stage. Most of them require being together outside of the project. You can take your team out to have ice cream together or have a friendly match in the sports court. Storming is also a natural part of team building. In the storming stage, people start to push against the established boundaries. Conflict or friction can also arise between team members as their true characters – and their preferred ways of working – surface and clash with other people's. At this stage team members may challenge your authority or management style, or even the team's agreed goals. Left unchecked, this can lead to face-to-face confrontations or simmering online tensions.

---

[2] Tuckman, B.W. (1965). 'Developmental Sequence in Small Groups,' *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6). Available here.

At this stage you may want to organise activities that are aiming at building trust, resolving conflict or clarifying personal and team goals. Town Hall meetings are also beneficial at this stage.

If your project is leading to a one-off performance, your team may also reach an adjourning (or mourning) stage when the team gets disbanded. It happens even if the students will continue to meet in the same school or classroom as the team itself is dissolved. Take the time to celebrate the team's achievements – having positive shared experiences will make it easier for them to engage in other activities or future projects with some of the team members. There might be team members who are uncertain about their future social position (it is typically those who are not the centre of attention or liked by teachers, but were brilliant in the project). Boost their confidence and future position by praising them in front of students or teachers. Small tokens of praise such as certificates are also often well received.

5.7   Dissemination

Dissemination of your project has three main stages:

1. Raising awareness of the project
2. Actively engaging people in the project
3. Promoting the final results

In the first stage your main goals are recruiting participants and setting a positive attitude towards your project in school leadership, the venues you are planning to use, the potential sponsors or supporters offering material help, parents, etc. In this phase your communication is short, to the point, but relatively general. You do not yet have a team, a theme and a chosen art form.

The second stage happens during the creative process and communication is very targeted. The aim of dissemination is supporting successful creation. If you could raise awareness of the above listed target groups, this is the stage to "cash" them in. This can take many forms from colleagues allowing children to skip class to the local librarian being enthusiastic to find resources for research to local entrepreneurs offering costumes and props.

In the final stage you first want to attract the audience (in the case of most school projects the targets are the students' families only), but also want to show your achievement to a larger audience such as the education authority, local municipality or the communities around the school. It may mean that you invite external audiences, but you have to be very careful about that. As mentioned before, it is very different for students to perform in front of family and friends, or strangers. Similar considerations are in place if the local media is interested or can be made interested.

One element of consideration is data protection in relation to pictures and videos. Even if all participants give consent to photos or videos to be made public, they have a basic right

to be forgotten, so you need to make sure there is a way for these photos or videos to be taken down. As it is a near-impossible task, it is better to not allow any public pictures – in practice this means asking the audience not to share photos where anybody is recognisable on social media.

5.8   Planning your future projects

The steps described above from careful planning to proper and honest evaluation are also the basis of any future projects. At the end of the work your team is advised to implement activities that evaluate not only the process, but also themselves and you. For most teachers it is difficult to give the floor to their students to evaluate them, but it is an important and necessary step. You should not start a new project without properly understanding what has worked well and what can be improved.

If working together was a good experience for most, you are likely to find a new team for a new arts project in the future. You need to revisit the starting point – what did we learn by choosing a historical figure and staging a performative art project? You may decide to use a different approach instead of the historical figure, to try another art form (less ephemeral than a play, non-performative, etc.). One thing is important: any future project must also be built on the enthusiasm and engagement of those participating and not be a compulsory activity.

Using arts is an experiential learning opportunity during which students "learn by doing" and by reflecting on the experience. It enriches project-based learning by making students reflect on their own learning process and the experiences they had during them. Experiential learning occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis. Experiences are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable for results. Having this learning experience may lead to your students demanding similar approaches in everyday classroom teaching.

6.   THE SCHOOL TEAM LEADER'S ROLE IN PERFECT

6.1 Coordinating the teachers' team

If a new project is envisaged, the question arises how to organise it and who might be suitable for becoming a team member. In most cases teams develop among people who are close to the team leader or among those who have already participated in a project and thus have the required knowledge and experience.

Teacher collaboration, which is essential for the success of any project, involves people working together to lead, instruct and mentor students with the goal of improving their learning skills and achievements.

Team teaching or collaborative teaching means that two or more teachers are responsible for teaching a course or group of students.[3] Working together in a team of enthusiastic teachers can prove to be beneficial for secondary schools, high schools or universities as students see the interdisciplinary nature of subjects and can learn from different teaching styles. Moreover, they may benefit from the different methodological approaches of their teachers and the individualised additional time they have to spend in a group.[4]

Although team teaching has a lot of advantages for both students and teachers, it is not always easy for the responsible one to coordinate the team. There might be problems if co-teachers have different attitudes regarding the contents of a project, the necessary working time, various teaching styles and methods or evaluation criteria. So, a team leader will frequently be challenged to motivate their team to be cooperative especially in project planning, time management and implementing the goals in time in order to guarantee a successful result. The bigger a team, however, the more complex and challenging the coordination, which will require a lot of motivation, understanding, far-sightedness, empathy, the ability to discuss serious issues and to finally achieve a solution pleasing everyone.

Of course, it may happen that the team leader seems to lose the support of the colleagues because there are controversies about certain ideas and tasks. Then it will be important to find out and try to understand what the reasons for the conflict are as it can ruin the atmosphere and endanger the completion of the project.

Therefore, team coordinators should have the ability to be aware of any destructive conflicts among the team members. The leader should also try to understand opposing positions in the team and avoid personal accusations. Moreover, it is sensible if the team coordinator tries to find a compromise by having an open ear for various suggestions that can be used to solve a conflict. This will definitely strengthen the motivation and

---

[3] Cf. https:// classroom.synonym.com/what-team- teaching-4651920.html. (dl. Nov. 26, 2022, 18:13)

[4] Cf. ibid

confidence of the individual team members and will certainly pave the way to more commitment for the project as a whole.[5]

All in all, it can be said that a team leader has to be endowed with manifold skills such as being a good listener and observer, a mediator and motivator. If one of these abilities is too hidden, team coordination might not be successful.

6.2 Project-based learning and its management

Working in a unique multi-national long-time project like PERFECT naturally requires a unique and innovative approach, regarding not only ideas and learning products but also organisational structures that support and enhance creativity and originality within team members. Therefore, it is of vital importance that careful structural organisation and coordination enable teachers, students, staff, parents as well as the school's affiliates to work as efficiently and as economically as possible. Communication among the different groups should work in an easy and uncomplicated way. Therefore, it is of high importance that the project's associates can gain profound knowledge of the aforementioned institutional settings and arrangements in general. Without structure, it would be nearly impossible for educators to get through the day-to-day tasks that are required of them.[6]

A chart depicting functions, structuring and management of a school is a good and common tool to quickly provide a good insight into internal structuring, duties and areas of work such as administration, budgeting and finances as well as the different set-ups of the departments. Moreover, clearly explaining the organisational structure to learners is also of high importance.

The design of a chart portraying shared responsibilities in the project team is a simple and neat method of organisation, information and delineation especially. For partners not that closely engaged in the project, an organisation chart might be a helpful tool as well.

Yet, before the roles and tasks can be assigned to individual team members, it is necessary to outline what resources, equipment and manpower are needed for the success of the project.

This implies that all project team members should be allowed to choose their parts or be selected in accordance with their preferences, skills and talents. Not only does this apply for the teachers, but also this is of vital importance for the students. This is why it is even necessary for student learning teams to assign roles and responsibilities following the aforementioned principles to the partners within their teams. Additionally, it is essential that team members are truly aware of their own responsibility regarding the result of the project. In order to check on the team structure, it is definitely a good idea to regularly

---

[5] Cf. https://project insight.com/blog/project-management tips (dl. Nov. 26, 2022, 19:45)

[6] https://www.skillsyouneed.com/rhubarb/importance-structure-education.html
(dl. Dec. 6, 2022, 20:34)

arrange feedback sessions or create a record-keeping system[7] to monitor what students do and which problems can be found and sorted. In this way, the success of the project will be guaranteed.

Moreover, team meetings in which every team member should be given the chance to express ideas, personal views or even criticism should be held on a regular basis. Personal goals should be set for each meeting so that teachers (or students as well) feel excited after the meeting[8]. This is a further ingredient ensuring an impressive accomplishment of the project.

Another crucial aspect supporting the positive outcome of the project is the organisation and enforcement of a respectful and polite working space on all levels, i.e. within the learners' groups, inside the classes, the school, in cooperation with associates from outside the school as well as at multi-national meetings with project partners. Even though the learning groups are clearly structured, students should also have a say in the project and in the project result. This way, motivation and learners' involvement in the creative process can be tremendously enhanced and the project's outcome will be positively influenced. Students' contributions, however, will only occur in a respectful and welcoming setting. It therefore goes without saying that the organisation and the output will suffer in case the atmosphere is unwelcoming and hostile, no matter what level is concerned.

All in all, it can be said that organisation in clear and visible structures is beneficial for everybody affiliated with the project as it portrays and depicts occupations and duties and simplifies cooperation as well as the sharing of tasks and assignments. From the students participating, singing and dancing in the scenic performance to the artists designing clothes and creating prompts, from the musicians to the financial manager and the project coordinator, everybody has to know the duties and responsibilities due to clear organisational structuring. This way, an inspiring, common perfect result can be created.

6.3 Creating and managing relationships with local partners

School projects which are not necessarily focused on the curriculum are getting more and more attractive and interesting for the teams working on them these days. It goes without saying that it also means implementing such activities outside school premises as an important contribution to the motivation and educational progress of all involved team members as such a step fosters self-esteem and a higher commitment among all participants at an age of ongoing demographic and social changes.

---

[7] Cf. Carol Ann Tomlinson, The differentiated classroom. Responding to the needs of all learners. ASCD 2009, chapter 8, para. 6

[8] Cf. Thomas C. Murray, Jeffrey Zoul, Leading professional Learning. Tools to connect and empower teachers. Corwin 2015, p. 26

It is therefore important to get in contact with external partners to make the local community, neighbours and family aware of the extracurricular activities a school is engaged in. This will lead to more public awareness and hopefully to a more diversified and even better appreciation of the pedagogical work being done.

This first step is not always easy, but a conversation among friends and relatives, a phone call to a local politician, an advertisement in a paper or an announcement on a billboard might be the first incentive to start a fruitful and promising cooperation with local partners. The relevant partners have already been mentioned in chapter 3.6.

Of course, this kind of relationship with external partners should leave a sustainable footprint in the cooperation between a project team and its partner(s): The project should not only arouse the attention of external partners but their interest should also be fostered so that the next step would be action, which is the beginning of the relationship. Undoubtedly, the cooperation should not come to a standstill after a while - instead it should prosper and guarantee sustainability in manifold respects.

However, mutual support and respect are expected if a working relationship is supposed to be successful. Therefore, the following suggestions should be taken into consideration:[9]

- Create a strong relationship with the partner, both personally and professionally;
- Make sure that there are partner-friendly programs and contents as partners have to receive relevant material to deal with;
- Guarantee consistent communication as the partner has to be informed about the ongoing process and development of the project;
- Provide your partners with the necessary tools and know-how they need to understand the content of your work;
- Create a partner-oriented framework with intense communication channels and accurate forecasts on the project development;
- Identify your local partner's profile and keep it in mind for further partner recruitment so that possible new partners are more likely to cooperate with you.

Even if everything seems to be fine between all the participants, problems might occur in the form of negative feedback or some kind of criticism coming from the partners. In such a case always bear in mind that criticism must be seen positively as it helps the project organisers and the teams to rethink their work and to critically evaluate the results. Therefore, openness to the feedback is essential in order to ensure both a satisfactory project progress and result.

---

[9] Cf. https://zift solution.com/5-key-elements-of-a successful partner engagement-plan (dl. Nov. 24, 2022, 18:15)

6.4 Creating and managing relationships with local partners

The teaching profession is a very complex one with demanding tasks ranging from instruction to supporting students, defining learners' capabilities and needs, creating a friendly and welcoming, yet challenging learning space so that every student feels welcome and appreciated by pointing out strategies and employing means to adequately support learners' individual needs. So, whether teaching a regular subject at school or motivating your learners to eagerly participate in a large-scale project like PERFECT, it definitely goes without saying that inspiring, motivating and listening to students should be a teacher's first and foremost objective in order to promote a creative, innovative and satisfying project result as well as to guarantee success. Hence, teachers need to be aware of strategies and didactic measures beneficial for creating a warm and encouraging workspace, in which everyone feels accepted, supported and appreciated. A few strategies needed to fulfil these tasks shall be outlined in the following paragraphs.

First of all, students' readiness to learn and participate can be enormously enhanced by triggering curiosity at the beginning of a project. Therefore, a surprising kind of input should be chosen in order to raise interest and willingness in the initial project phase. Furthermore, even according to students' statements, instructions should be clear and objective-oriented. It is essential for the inspiration and motivation of students that a project's objectives and learning goals are precisely outlined already at the start. Obviously, what applies for common school lessons as well as learners' motivation and engagement is also true for large scale project work.

Another highly important ingredient fostering students' performance and inspiration is the possibility to open up, which means that individual learners need to be given the feeling that they are seen by the teacher.[10] Being given the opportunity to disclose themselves can lead to a feeling of reward among students[11], it is essential that students are taken seriously by teachers in order to feel motivated. Hence, it should be evident that teachers need to show an interest in their students' thoughts and ideas, create a welcoming and friendly learning environment where learners are given the space and benevolent support needed for creativity and innovation. This, however, does not necessarily imply that teachers should not guide their students in the learning process. In fact, appreciation and praise of learners' suggestions, innovative or sometimes even surprising suggestions involves understanding their individually preferred learning approaches, values they hold and guiding them through difficult phases while providing them with support and adequate problem solution methods. As a consequence, the

---

[10] Cf. Joachim Bauer, Die pädagogische Beziehung: Neurowissenschaften und Pädagogik im Dialog. Ein Überblick unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Vorschulzeit. In: Ulrich, Hermann, Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für eine Neuropsychologie des Lernens. 3. Aufl., Beltz 2006, p. 148.

[11] Cf. Diana I. Tamir, Jason P. Mitchell, Disclosing information about the self is intrinsically rewarding, Department of Psychology, Edited by Michael S. Gazzaniga. Harvard University, University of California, 2012, In: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Vol 109, No 121, May 2012, p, 8041. (https://www.pnas.org/doi/epdf/10.1073/pnas.1202129109)

[11] Cf. Bauer, Beziehung, 2006, p. 148.

teacher needs to balance empathy and guiding competences the right way[12]. So, when students truly feel they actually have a say in the project results, this is an incentive not to be underestimated.

In order to guarantee the occurrence of divergent thinking, which is – as opposed to convergent thinking – a fundamental source of creativity. It is essential not to insist on completely rigid project results, but allow team members to think freely and without limits. This is why simple but effective didactic methods should be employed to promote divergent thinking. Moreover, students should be permitted to make use of their skills and talents with regard to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences[13]. Additionally, the students should be allowed to work at their own pace. In this way, the students might even reach a state of flow[14] when working on the project.

As a conclusion, it needs to be once again highlighted that students' engagement in project and schoolwork alike will be promoted by emphatic teachers who see their students, appreciate their various ideas as well as their individual learning approaches and guide them by providing a resourceful, kind and respectful learning space.

6.5 Motivating and listening to families

Successful pedagogical work can only be guaranteed if there is mutual respect, understanding and cooperation between teachers on the one hand and students and their parents on the other hand. In recent decades, schools have paid special attention to parental engagement in the form of consultation hours where individual teachers are available to deal with problems of their students by talking to parents in a private setting. If this is not possible, parents also have the option to come and talk to several teachers on a so-called parents' day.

Moreover, relevant information regarding various important school issues is sent to parents via letters or collective e-mails with the class teachers or the team leaders acting as some kind of mediator between students, parents and the teaching staff.

A successful cooperation and involvement of as many parents as possible will be necessary for a positive approach, implementation and final presentation of the project results, which may include some challenges, especially if the students come from manifold social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. These aspects along with language barriers have to be overcome, which, however, will only work with parental support.

---

[12] Cf. Joachim Bauer, Die pädagogische Beziehung: Neurowissenschaften und Pädagogik im Dialog. Ein Überblick unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Vorschulzeit. In: Ulrich, Hermann, Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für eine Neuropsychologie des Lernens. 3. Aufl., Beltz 2006, p. 148.

[13] Howard Gardner: Abschied vom IQ. Die Rahmen-Theorie der vielfachen Intelligenzen. Klett-Cotta, 2005

[14] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience. Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008

Therefore, the first step to be taken in such a project like this has to be detailed information of the parents regarding the topic, the participants among students and teachers, foreign schools, project partners and finances.

In this context it needs to be emphasised that it was a brilliant idea to start the PERFECT Project with the creation of community maps where students had to discover the immediate neighbourhood of their school and to demonstrate how far and to what extent the community has changed over the years. Undoubtedly, this was a great experience not only for the students but also for the teachers to see how motivated, creative and focused every single participant was to produce something unique. Additionally, the parents learned about their children's investigation into the history and development of their surroundings through vivid accounts and presentations of the community maps. Thus, community maps must be seen as incentives for students to get immersed in practical project development which will undoubtedly grow if there is appreciation and support not only from the teachers but also from the parents as the latter frequently provide further input, understanding and support for the extracurricular work being done by their offspring.

Of course, it is particularly vital for immigrant families to be involved in the PERFECT Project because one of its aims is to support multiculturalism and multilingualism, which will help bridge the gap between the various European and other foreign cultures and traditions. Therefore, this kind of cooperation is essential for a better mutual acceptance and tolerance among mankind.

6.6 Linking with other STL and with project management

The PERFECT project is a large-scale multi-national project that includes team members from various professional and different international backgrounds. To ensure the success and a satisfactory outcome of the project on a multi-national level, it should be clear that it is of vital importance that team members regularly meet and discuss the progress of the project on national as well as transnational levels.

Of course, it is of tremendous advantage for the satisfactory accomplishment of the project when team members meet in person. Hence, transnational work meetings are arranged on a regular basis within set periods of time. Partners exchange ideas, discuss further steps and participate in workshops focusing on topics valuable for the project realisation during transnational meetings. Another focus is additionally put on socialising in these meetings as it is essential to first get to know the other team members personally at the beginning of a project and to then draw on experience and further visions as regards the project later on. And, above all, it simply is great fun meeting the project partners in person whilst visiting new places in Europe.

As transnational meetings in person are, however, not always possible due to distance, individual occupations and, obviously, monetary issues, the internet provides team members with possibilities to meet virtually in online meetings. The virtual meetings are

arranged on a regular basis for mutual virtual exchange, inspiration and even monitoring to ensure the project results will turn out as desired. Even if a meeting virtually cannot truly replace a face-to-face meeting, we can at least make sure team members stay in contact, talk to each other and can cooperate at a more personal level. So virtual exchange amongst team members can be very inspiring and rewarding as well.

In case of suddenly arising questions or needs of any kind, team members may additionally be contacted through mail at any time, which is another very convenient and practical way of keeping in touch.

As mentioned before there are several possibilities of linking and staying in contact with all team partners, and even though the option of meeting in person seems to be the best, virtual meetings held on a regular basis together with exchanging emails are additional choices that ensure mutual motivation and inspiration.

6.7 Taking part in project monitoring, evaluation and data analysis

Project work can be perceived and evaluated differently by the project participants. This applies not only to the organisation of the collaboration as well as the experience gained while planning, but also to implementation and results of the work.

In any case, it is worthwhile to think the project through carefully, because it involves a great deal of creativity and work on the parts of those involved. And even if you are not satisfied with the overall project results "Failure is an opportunity to do better next time" (Henry Ford).

This is why evaluation is an essential part of the actual project, reflecting on what has been done and how major steps have been achieved is to be assessed. From this, important conclusions can be drawn for other future projects. A project evaluation should include the following points:

- (Partial) results should be recorded based on a systematic analysis of the data collected;
- Achieved results should be assessed based on the originally set goals and their success criteria;
- Accomplished, unaccomplished or uncompleted tasks should be presented and discussed by all.

Based on the continuously evaluated objectives, the project work should be continuously adjusted and optimised.

An evaluation includes qualitative and quantitative goals:

Quality is checked, optimised and determines successes or failures. Conclusions are drawn and taken into account in the further course of the project. These are individual data, which cannot be measured in numbers. They lead to the formation of hypotheses. It is about checking whether activities are goal-oriented, about new ideas, testing a program or an activity.

Quantitative data are the data that are measurable in numbers and units. Quantitative evaluation allows testing hypotheses, measuring behaviours, and verifying the impact of actions in numbers. Quantitative data is based on predefined questions and can be collected and widely distributed with statistics and surveys.

Good evaluation can determine the effectiveness and efficiency of a project, which makes it essential for impressive project results and must therefore not be neglected.

For further details on project evaluation and assessment see chapter 3.7 in this book.

7. WHAT TO DO IF…

Good projects are well planned, but things never happen exactly as foreseen. It is important to consider possible risks and ways to mitigate or face unforeseen circumstances that may have a negative impact, but also reveal to be opportunities to improve the project implementation.

This section introduces a typology of risks and unforeseen circumstances that may affect school projects inspired by the PERFECT conceptual and operational framework.

It also tries to suggest some ways to reduce risks or to face unforeseen circumstances, but obviously every project is different and solutions have to be found locally, in the context and relationship that exist within and around the school that is developing the project.

After a review of the nature of risks and unforeseen circumstances, the section addresses four different phases of project development, with some general indications on possible ways to face them, from the initial design to the sustainable development of the project results and their normalisation in the school mainstream activity.

7.1 Nature of risks and unforeseen circumstances that may affect the project development

Among the most frequent problems that may affect an innovative project in general it is possible to distinguish some broad categories:

- Lack of motivation and interest by some of the expected participants;
- Administrative constraints and resistance of school management or governance bodies;
- Insufficient resources to implement all the planned activities;
- Insufficient interest by local stakeholders who are expected to support the project;
- Lack of competences necessary to implement all project activities;
- Force majeure events and circumstances (such as the recent pandemic and the associated restrictions) that may interrupt or delay the foreseen activities.

Each of these categories has typical risk mitigation strategies, namely:

- Participatory design of the project activities to gain consensus and motivation by all parties involved; attention to emerging conflicts and individual support to potential "drops out";
- Activation of a "whole school approach" to guarantee reasonable solutions compatible with the existing rules and a potentially sustainable approach;
- Activation of external financial support by local financial institutions and long term project planning;

- Adequate communication activities, pointing out "what is there in the project" for several categories of stakeholders;

- Analysis of learning needs and capacity building embedded in all the project development phases, from design to sustainability building;

- Review of planning, administrative adjustment to the new calendar.

In the following paragraphs the typical problems that may emerge in the different phases of project development are listed. It is suggested that every school team willing to put in place a project inspired by PERFECT discuss the following list and prepare a specific "risk management plan".

7.2 Put in place

Starting is probably the most difficult phase. The following list is just illustrative of points that may stop the project idea at an early stage.

- Insufficient support by school heads or School Governing bodies;
- Lack of art/performing art education tradition in the type of school;
- Lack of spaces or resources to start activities;
- Lack of interest in pupils, parents or teachers to start the project;
- Lack of some necessary competences to draft the initial project;
- Lack of available school time to conduct the project activities;
- Lack of support by local administration and local cultural institutions;
- Potential conflicts on project coordination, main roles and recognition/rewarding of project activities;
- Difficulty to make learning outcomes compatible with official curriculum;
- Resistance of parents to engage their children in unusual activities.

7.3 Put in action

From the initial project to the real implementation: in this phase the originally gained support may suffer from several factors:

- Disagreement on the subject and the narrative to be developed;
- Lack of a collaborative approach by all parties involved;
- Mistakes in resources estimation, emerging lack of funds or competences;
- Lack of historical documents to support the narrative;
- Difficulties in addressing the community map approach;
- Emerging difficulties to involve all students in the project, inclusion challenges;
- Difficulties in organising collaboration between students who already have artistic competences and the "absolute beginners";
- Ratio of students/teachers is not optimal;

- Selection of teachers and students for the main role is not transparent and causes disappointment and conflicts;
- Uncertainty or disagreement on how to evaluate the project learning outcomes.

7.4 Put on stage

Once all the motivational, educational and organisational problems have been faced, the artistic value of the project result has to be guaranteed to demonstrate that all the efforts to experiment with a new interdisciplinary approach have developed a result of which all participants may be proud. Problems that are typical of this phase are:

- Inadequate space for performance at school;

- Lack of artistic leadership or specialised teachers who may inspire the team work towards creative and professional results;

- Difficulties in including students with disabilities;

- Students' lack of confidence in performance;

- Insufficient resources to get artistic, technical and professional support;

- Inadequate technical equipment;

- Disagreement on value of performance among team members and/or other stakeholders.

-

7.5 Put on mainstream

Once the first edition of the project has been successfully concluded, the most typical problem that may arise is how it can be replicated for the new students' cohorts. In addition, the opportunity to propose similar experiences to other schools has to be considered. In this "success management" phase, new difficulties may emerge:

- The project development has not been sufficiently documented, so it is difficult to reproduce, especially if the teachers' group has changed;

- The organisations that supported the first edition are no longer willing to support its replication because they have new priorities;

- The education authorities are not fully supportive to extend the experiment, because it is challenging the existing routines;

- The School Team lacks the competences that are necessary to communicate results and get additional support;

- Some teachers may lack the motivation to repeat the extraordinary effort done to implement the first edition.

It is not possible to propose a solution for each potential risk in this handbook: based on the initial part of this section, each school team is invited to discuss potential risks in their specific context and to prepare a risk management document. An indicative format for this Risk Management Plan is proposed as Annex 1.

8. PLANNING METHODS & TOOLS

8.1 The START Matrix

Every project has a START moment! That moment would be when we start to consider „what if" scenarios. The moment when we decide to take an idea, transform it into a journey and design a project. That moment is perfect to start asking questions. Undoubtedly, questions are powerful tools enlightening not only the planning phase, but also supporting monitoring and evaluation.

The tools in this section will allow teams to engage in a talent-based approach to project planning. The START matrix evaluates team potential according to two variables: expertise and passion, thus blending specific experiences and emotional commitment.

To use the START matrix with your team, the first step to take is doing an exploration session. By participating in this session, yourself and your team will be able to determine the available skill sets and relevant experiences and, additionally, the team's vitality and learning permeability. During the exploration session, the initiator will determine the amount of interest in developing the project.
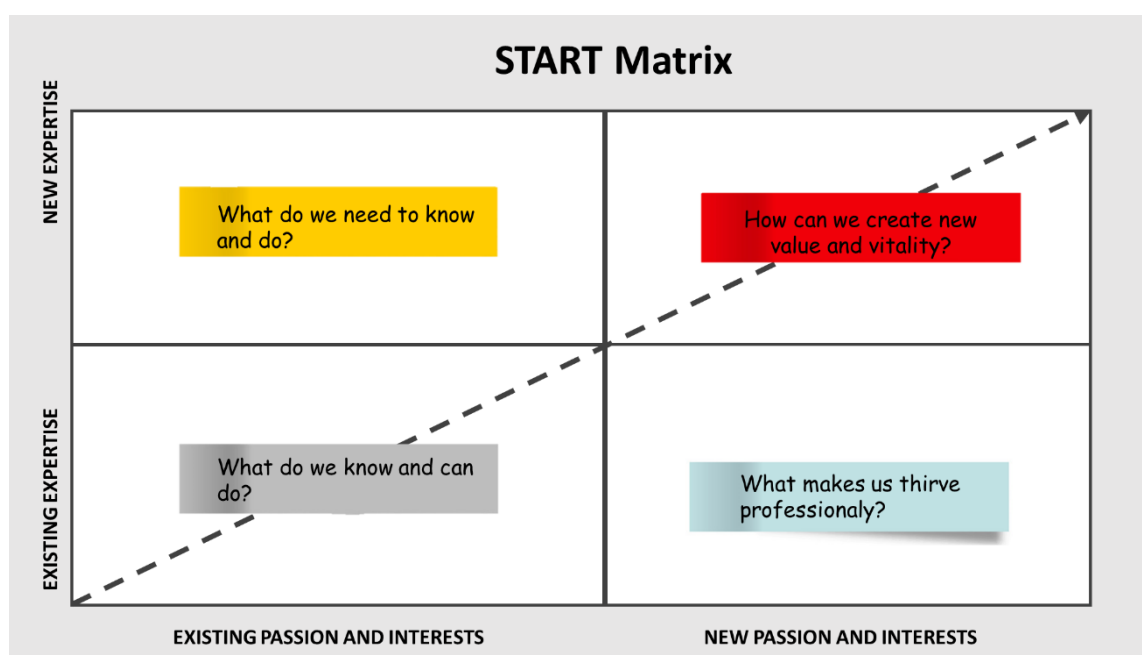
FIGURE 4: THE START MATRIX[15]

Specifically, when doing an exploration session, you'll be looking at: (1) the team's and organisational background; (2) the skill sets and mindsets; (3) the team's vitality and learning potential. To answer the focus questions in the START Matrix, several additional questions can be asked: What can we build on?; What is our plan?; How do we share

[15] Adapted from Neacșu, I. (coord.), Toma, S., Molan, V., Căprioară, D., Manasia, L., Pânișoară, G. (2018). *Psihologia educaţiei: fundamente, procese, mecanisme, aplicaţii. [Handbook of Educational Psychology. Fundamentals, Processes, Mechanisms, and Applications]*. Polirom. ISBN print: 978-973-46-7576-0

responsibilities as a team?; What are the team's strengths?; What are the team's weaknesses?

Reflection box

The START moment is not only of paramount importance for the project team, but also for the students. The instrument below – The START Matrix for Students – is a metacognitive matrix and thus stimulates metacognitive knowledge and planning. It builds on the technique of strategic planning questions and has a dual role: it is a tool for collecting narrative data on students' metacognitive behaviours, but also as a metacognitive scaffolding tool (Neacsu, 2018, p. 402). Other strategic questions can be: What is your plan?, What is the learning task?, What do you know about this task?, What is the nature of the task?, What is the purpose?, What kind of information does it require to solve it?, What strategies can be used?, How much time is needed? (Manasia, 2018, p. 402)

START Matrix for Students

Team: _____
School: _____
Project: _____

What do we know about ... (the project idea)?	What do we need to know about ... (the project idea)?	What we would like to know about ... (the project idea)?
	Are there any gaps? Do we have the expertise to design the project?	Does the team have the passion and interest to implement the project?

8.2 The project canvas

Projects are an essential part of education today. Managing projects in effective ways is of paramount importance for the development of teacher professionalism and student success. This section introduces an effective tool: The Project Canvas. It can be used to create an overview of any project. Project Canvas is a convenient tool for communicating within the project team, for decision making, and is thereby also a way of managing progress in the appropriate manner, as Simon Stubben, founder of Project Canvas, argues.

Project Canvas is a tool that improves communication in project teams and provides a simplified project overview. The canvas elaborates on one page (should ideally be displayed on A0-Posters) and covers the following areas of a project definition (see Figure 6):
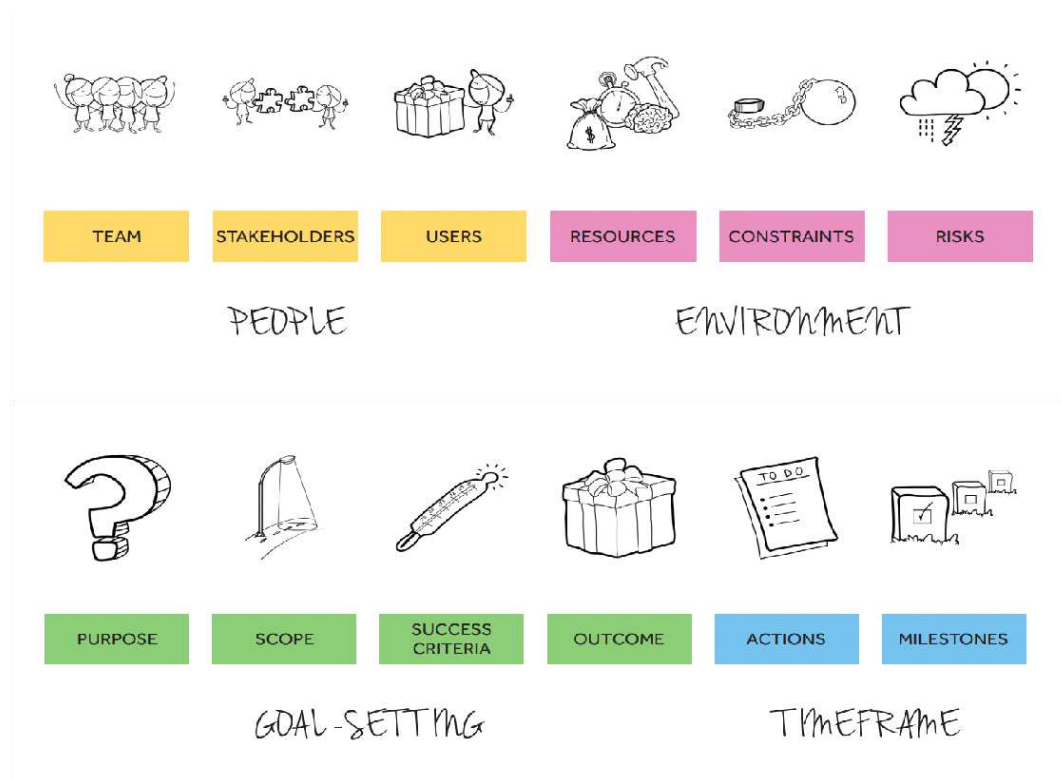
Project Canvas can be used both offline, as a physical printout with post-its, and online. We suggest using https://padlet.com/ or https://miro.com/[17] to create your digital canvas.

The canvas employs a neutral language, is simple for all project stakeholders to use and comprehend, and can be applied without reference to any particular project management standard or methodology. The project manager will integrate all significant stakeholders to aid the creative process of defining the Project Canvas's content. Both a face-to-face meeting and a virtual project setting might use it. The intricacy of the project and the number of participants affect the session's length. Throughout the project, it may be used for orientation and visualisation, for tracking and regulating the progress, and at the conclusion as a foundation for a review and lessons learned

---

[16] Retrieved from https://www.projectcanvas.dk/project-canvas-manual.pdf (pp. 8-9) on December 19th 2022

[17] Visit the library of miro.com to use ready-made project canvas templates or design a new one https://miro.com/templates/project-canvas-2/

FIGURE 6: PROJECT CANVAS[18]

There are also other approaches to designing and understanding the project canvas. Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez[19] has developed a tool with 14 dimensions. One particular element points towards Purpose and Passion. As Nieto puts it, besides having a rationale, a project should be linked to a higher purpose. A project's purpose is its fundamental reason for being. An effective purpose reflects the importance people attach to the project's work – it taps their idealistic motivations – and gets at the deeper reasons for a project's existence beyond just making money[20].

---

[18] Retrieved from https://www.projectcanvas.dk/project-canvas.pdf on January 5th 2023

[19] Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez is the global champion of project management and author of the "Harvard Business Review Project Management Handbook" (HBR 2021) https://antonionietorodriguez.com/

[20] Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/8-project-canvas-simple-tool-everyone-wants-lead-nieto-rodriguez/ on December 9th 2022

Another metacognitive matrix that can be applied with students is the Team Matrix. By using strategic questions, the TEAM Matrix explores the student team's readiness for learning and understanding of the learning task. It is suitable for collaborative projects(Manasia, 2018, pp. 402–403).

TEAM Matrix for Students

Team: _____
School: _____
Project: _____

	Share your team's experience
What can we build on?	Recall previous experiences
What is our plan?	Think ahead
How do we share responsibilities as a team?	Indentify roles and responsabilities
What are the team's strengths?	
What are the team's weaknesses?	Brainstorm and build capacities

8.3 The value proposition canvas

In this section, we challenge you to understand your project from an entrepreneurial perspective. Ideally, the project addresses a societal need and has a transformative impact. To make sure that this is what you design and deliver, embark yourself and your team on a process of analysing the relationship between what you are building and the

beneficiaries. A valuable tool to support the process is the Value Proposition Canvas (see Figure 8 and Figure 9.

The Value Proposition Canvas is a framework which can help ensure that a product or service is positioned around what the beneficiaries value and need. The Value Proposition Canvas was initially developed by Dr Alexander Osterwalder as a framework to ensure that there is a fit between the product and market[21]. The Value Proposition Canvas can be used when there is a need to refine an existing product or service offering or where a new offering is being developed from scratch.
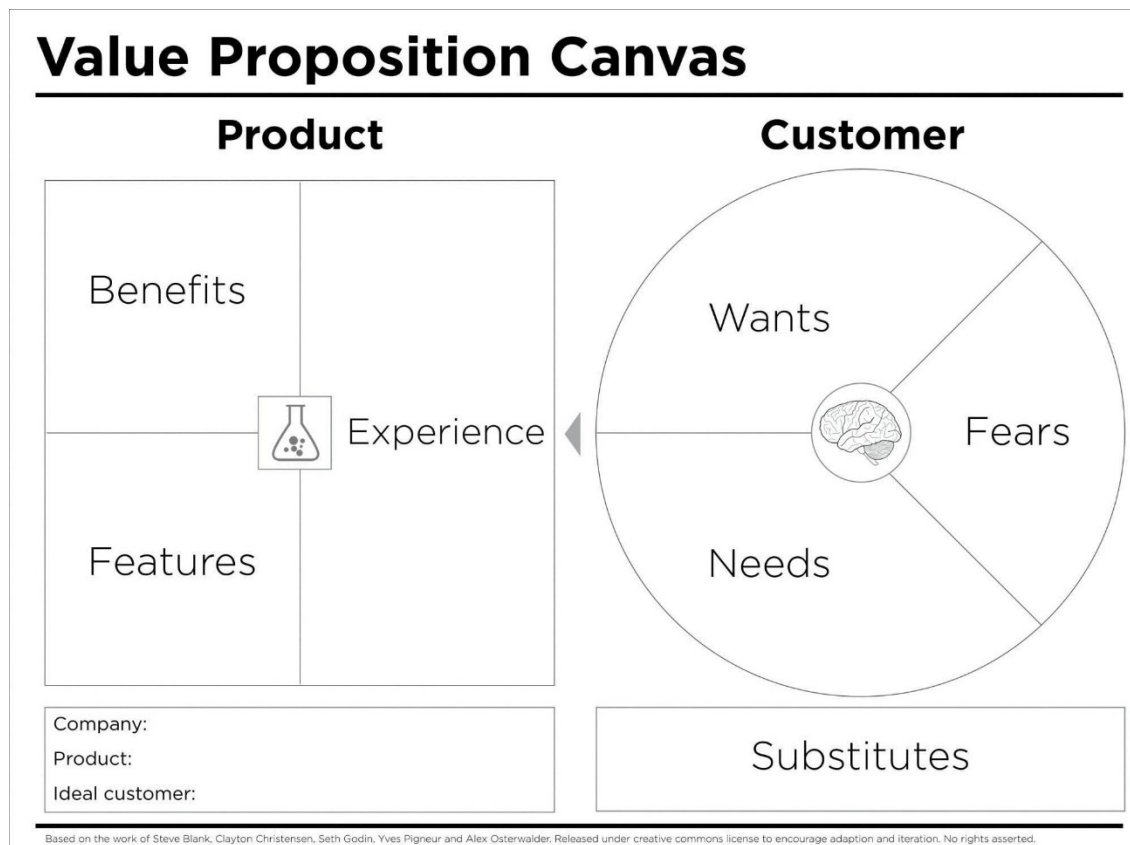
FIGURE 7: THE VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS (Source: Peter Thomson)

[21] Retrieved from https://www.b2binternational.com/research/methods/faq/what-is-the-value-proposition-canvas/ on January 17 2023
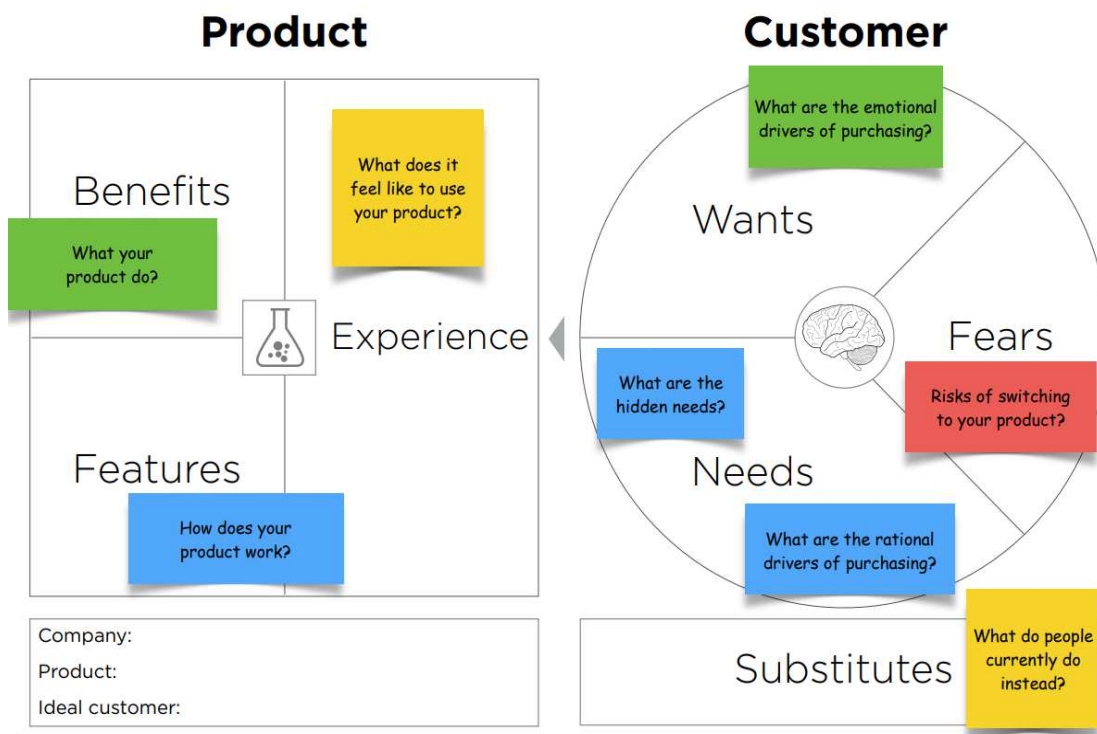
FIGURE 8: THE VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS (Source: Peter Thomson)

Remember that you have embarked on a journey to establish a connection between your project and its beneficiaries. Therefore, prepare for an ideation workshop where you use the Value Proposition Canvas above to co-create an analysis of your project idea, outcomes and beneficiaries. The results of the co-creation session should deeply influence further practice and project implementation. At the end of the workshop the team should be able to identify the transformative pillars of your project (the gains) that have the potential to shape both your students and perhaps a wider community.

Reflection box

Before engaging in a co-creation workshop using the Value Proposition Canvas, perform an individual ideation session on the subject or course you teach.

Start from this trigger idea: *Students don't need a course. They rather need to get knowledge, skills, attitudes, values or competences. There are many possible ways to achieve the result. There are always various alternatives to achieve results, even if you don't like or prefer some of them*. Reflect on how your students' needs, fears and wants are addressed in your course and translated into a meaningful and engaging experience.

9.   MONITORING METHODS & TOOLS

9.1 The Graffiti Wall

Methods and tools for monitoring the implementation of a project should not be exclusively conventional. The Graffiti Wall allows participants to use a large sheet of paper, post-it notes etc to respond to an event or activity in a highly creative way by using a huge sheet of paper, post-it notes, and other materials. The Graffiti Wall tool is especially successful for drop-in events (such as festivals) and with the general public, primary or secondary school groups, but it may also be used for interactive workshops, lectures or presentations, and with interested adults. Unconventionally, it can work for project meetings as well.

You need a large wall space or board, large sheet of paper, post-it notes or other way of recording participant responses, questions or categories to help prompt responses. There are also digital tools that can help you build your online wall and keep track of all feedback and input generated by your team and stakeholders. We suggest using https://padlet.com/ or https://miro.com/

This tool produces an excellent visual picture of overall energy and engagement (ideal for images for final reports), but it might be difficult to analyse in depth. Many individuals believe that merely reading the comments helps them gain a better sense of the participants' experiences, whilst others choose to do a more systematic analysis - for more information, see word clouds or theme coding.

Reflection box

Another metacognitive matrix that can be applied with students is the Team Matrix. By using strategic questions, the TEAM Matrix explores the student team's readiness for learning and understanding of the learning task. It is suitable for collaborative projects (Manasia, 2018, pp. 402–403).

WORK Matrix for Students

Team: _____

School: _____

Project: _____

	Share your experience
Is the work plan being followed?	Review the initial plan
Do I need to change the plan?	Analyze the evidence and make a decision
What is the role of each team member?	Is everyone valued?
What are the strengths of the team that we have used?	
Are there any milestones I/we have reached?	Analyze progress in learning
What could I/we improve?	

9.2 Reflective diary & Personal Mirror

Reflection techniques and tools are great for self-regulation and team regulation. In this section we introduce Reflection diaries, the Personal Mirror, and the Starfish diagram. A reflection diary allows instructors to record their thoughts and monitor an ongoing experience. They can provide a platform for professional growth and learning. Team members can expand their expertise by delving thoroughly into their teaching techniques, situations, or even long-held beliefs.

Table 1: Scaffolding questions for a reflective diary for teachers

Learning goals & outcomes	To what extent we have reached the learning goals?
	What about the complexity of the learning task?
	Were there any bottlenecks in performing the learning task?
	What were the learning outcomes we achieved?
Learning design	What learning activities and resources are making an impact?
	Are learning activities stimulating the enjoyment of learning?
	Is it something I can do differently?
Students	All students were involved in the lesson's development?
	If not, what prevented them from doing so?
	Which sequences were most appreciated by the students? And the least appreciated?
Self focus	How did I feel doing this lesson/project/activity?
	What did I like most?
	What would I change about myself?
Classroom management	Was the pace of teaching/learning optimal?
	Did conflicts arise? Were there students who refused to engage in group activities?
Goal setting	Make brief notes about what you will do next… nothing will ever give you 'all you need to know' on a subject. Therefore, you should always be thinking: What next?

A self-reflection tool that can contribute to the learning process within the project team is the Personal Mirror (see Table 2). It is based on the strategic questioning technique and can be used in individual or group reflection sessions. Within the reflection sessions, the team will be able to identify highs and lows, but also takeaways that had a transformative impact. With the *Personal mirror table* as a guide, have your team spend some quiet time and reflect on the questions. After the team is ready, ask everyone to share their reflections they feel comfortable with. The facilitator will encourage participation, and become the mediator when the going gets tough.

Content	*What have I learned from this activity/project?*
Evaluation	*What else do I need to learn in relation to the observed practice?*
Regulation	*What can I do better?*
Academic development	*How does this learning experience contribute to my academic development? Based on it, what further objectives do you want to achieve?*
Professional development	*Based on the Teacher Roles and Responsibilities Framework, what was your professional learning gain?*
Personal development	*What did this experience mean to you?*

To wrap-up the reflections and improve project implementation, have your team synthesise their reflections in a StarFish diagram (see Figure 10). The five prompts of the Starfish technique are as follows:

Stop – What should we stop doing?

Less – What should we do less?

Keep – What should we keep on doing?

More – What should we do more?
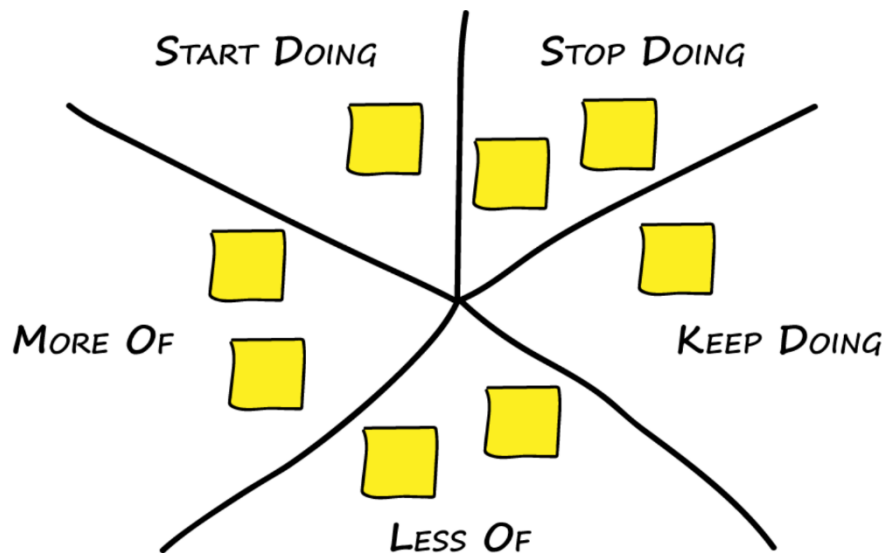
Start – What should we start doing?

The Starfish technique helps you identify the impediments in your work and remove them to speed up the work in progress, and more importantly, values the feedback from your team.

Reflection box

Another effective technique to support self-reflection and the use of metacognitive strategies in learning is the free-form or question-key journal. Learners who use learning journals to describe and analyse their learning journey, progress and outcomes achieve a higher level of 'learning to learn' competence. The learning journal is a tool with intrinsic reflective potential, in that writing about a moment of learning gives the learner the context to identify inconsistencies, errors or positive aspects that are easily transferable to a similar context. To support reflection through a journal, the teacher will integrate strategic planning, monitoring or evaluation questions into the journal (Manasia, 2018, p. 403).

---

[22] You can also use a Miro ready-made board to conduct the reflection session
https://miro.com/miroverse/project-retrospective-fastforward/

What	*Briefly describe the activity you did: draw something, wrote, worked with others, etc.*
Why	Briefly analyse what you have done. What was the purpose? Was it useful? Were you able to achieve your goals?
Reaction	Describe how you felt doing the activity. What did you enjoy? What didn't you like? How did the activity make you feel?
Learned	*Tell what you learned from the the activity you participated in or during a lesson. What was new to you? What did you already know? What do you wish you knew more about?*
Goal setting	Propose something to do in the future in relation to the work you have done! Surely there is something you want to do next!

10. EVALUATION METHODS & TOOLS

10.1 Photovoice

One commonly used art-based technique that can be seen both as an "arts-based intervention to promote social change", as well as an "arts-based evaluation" technique is photovoice. In the structure of the term, VOICE is in fact an acronym for Voicing Our Individual and Collective Experience, thus summarising the nature and purpose of the method, namely to communicate individual and collective experiences (see Figure 11)
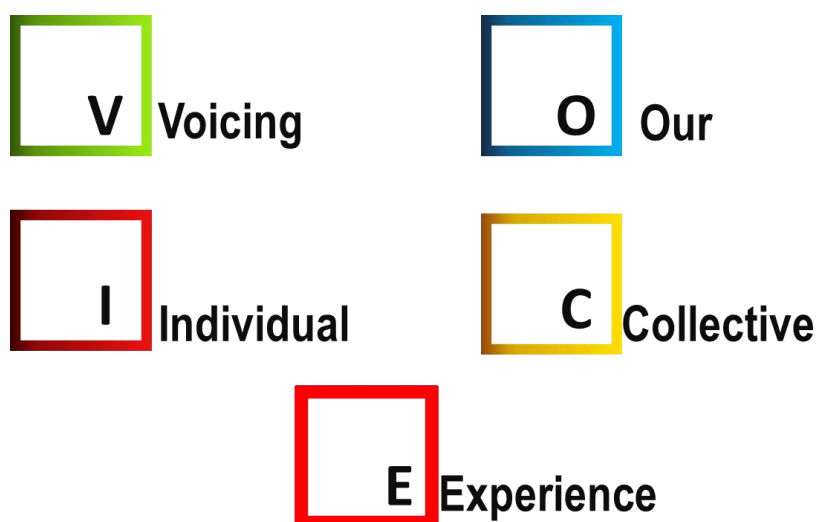

FIGURE 10: EXPLAINING PHOTOVOICE

Building on a rich tradition, Caroline Wang and her colleagues are associated with the inception of photovoice methodology (C. Wang & Burris, 1994; C. Wang et al., 1996)[23,24]. Scientific literature describes photovoice as a participatory action research method in which participants use cameras to take photographs of persons, contexts, or situations they consider representative of a particular aspect of their individual and/or social life (Harley, 2012; Sutton-Brown, 2014)[25,26]. The key feature of Photovoice is that participants can select and capture life experiences, actions or emotional states in situ, without external intervention. The application of this methodology provides access to both objective (activities, facts, people) and subjective (thoughts, emotions) aspects of the study participants, thus contributing to an in-depth understanding of human behaviour.

---

[23] Wang C., Burris M. A. (1994). Empowerment through photo novella: Portraits of participation. *Health Education Quarterly*, 21, 171–186. Crossref. PubMed.

[24] Wang C. C., Yuan Y. L., Feng M. L. (1996). Photovoice as a tool for participatory evaluation: The community's view of process and impact. *Journal of Contemporary Health*, 4, 47–49.

[25] Harley A. (2012). Picturing reality: Power, ethics and politics in using photovoice. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11, 320–339. Crossref.

[26] Sutton-Brown C. (2014). Photovoice: A methodological guide. *Photography & Culture*, 7, 169–186. Crossref.

When applied as an art-based evaluation method, photovoice offers several key methodological advantages. First, photovoice provides access to settings and subjective experiences that are difficult to access in retrospective or observational research. Second, photovoice urges subjects to engage in the research process and offers instantaneous data collection. For example, photographs are taken during real-life experiences, thus reducing bias caused by retrospective reporting. Third, photovoice gives access to learning experiences of a vast number of subjects and supports (Ciolan & Manasia, 2017).

Wang (C. C. Wang, 1999)[27] further suggests a structured dialogue technique be implemented to support group discussions. In this technique, the participants select five to seven favourite pictures, the SHOWED technique then guides the dialogue. The word (SHOWED) is an acronym for a set of "questions that are analytical and action oriented" (Simmonds et al., 2015, p. 39)[28]. The questions are as follows: "What do you *S*ee in this picture? What is actually *H*appening in the picture? How does this relate to *O*ur lives? Why does this situation, concern or strength *E*xist? What can we *D*o about it?"(C. C. Wang, 1999, p. 188).

[27] Wang C. C. (1999). Photovoice: A participatory action research strategy applied to women's health. *Journal of Women's Health*, 8, 185–192. Crossref. PubMed.

[28] Simmonds S., Roux C., Ter Avest I. (2015). Blurring the boundaries between photovoice and narrative Inquiry: A narrative-photovoice methodology for gender-based research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14, 33–49. Crossref.

FIGURE 12: PHOTO COLLAGE FROM THE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE PROJECT (VIS)29

[29] Learn more on the VIS Project here https://e-sl4eu.us.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Newsletter-2-2022-3.pdf

FIGURE 13: PHOTO COLLAGE FROM THE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE PROJECT (VIS) – 2

In traditional research methodologies, data collection and analysis are distinct parts of the research. In Photovoice, the borders between these two aspects are less obvious. Data analysis in photovoice research is broken down into two main stages, namely, (1) participatory analysis, wherein participants assume the role of co-researchers, and (2) non-participatory analysis, wherein researchers apply computer-assisted techniques and then compare and combine the results with those of participatory analysis. When used as an evaluation method, participatory analysis by the project team and stakeholders is essential. Another strong point of Photovoice is the possibility to use the photos in an exhibition to disseminate the results of the project.

10.2   The Experience Map

The evaluation process should not finish with a meeting at the end of the project. Partners must reflect on the evaluation in order to ensure that what was learned is applied to improve future practice. This section discusses ways to move forward in a positive and constructive manner following review.

The Experience Map can be used for individual reflection, but especially for group reflection after implementation of an arts project or after a more complex learning experience.

The project team works in small groups to review the journey of the implemented project. Each symbol on the map makes associations with possible experiences during the project. Participants discuss and reconstruct the implementation journey. Discussing in small groups, they will start to recall what they have experienced and based on what they remember experiencing, they draw on a flipchart a path, a map of the areas that correspond to the interpretation of their experience. From the symbols on the map they will choose only those that were relevant to their project experience – they don't have to use all of them. They will designate the order of the experiences they have been through. An area may be passed through more than once. When they choose to write a particular area of the map on their flipchart, they should describe/argue as a group why they chose it, what it means to them and what associations they make between the name of the area and how they perceived that moment in their experience.
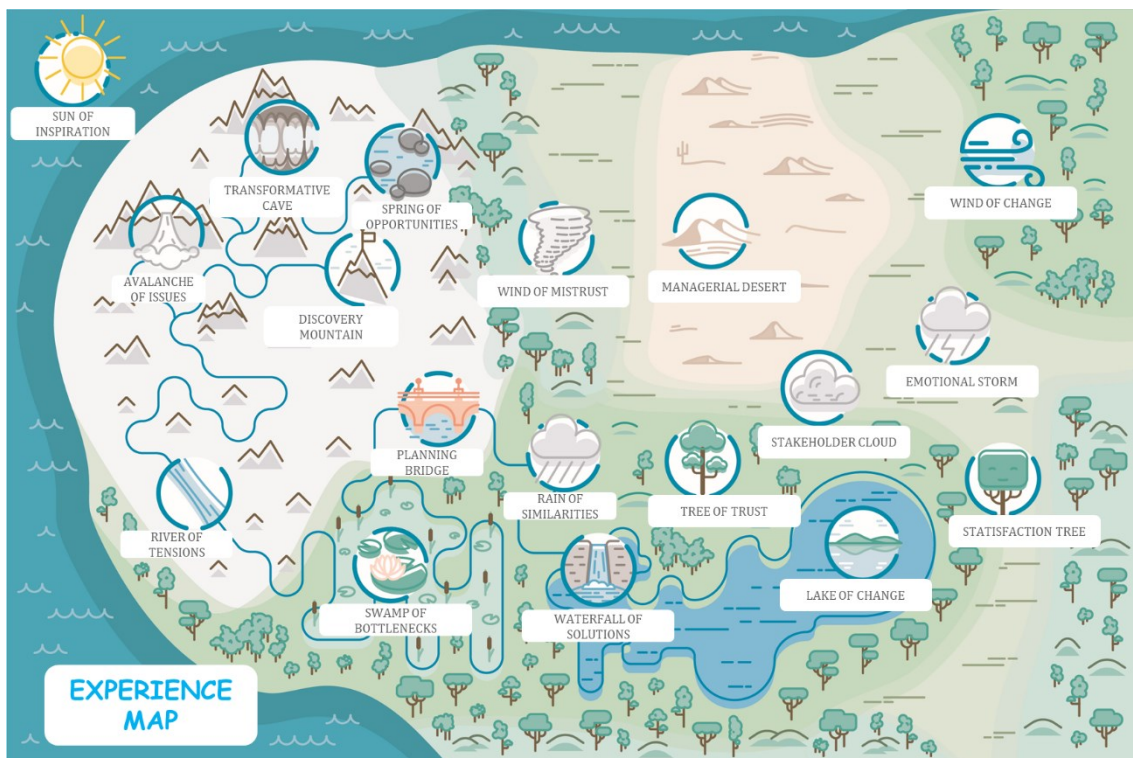

FIGURE 14: THE EXPERIENCE MAP – AN INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE REFLECTION TOOL30

---

30 Adapted from https://www.noi-orizonturi.ro/2018/10/01/harta-experientelor-noastre/

Reflection box

Similar to the metacognitive matrices suggested for the planning and monitoring stages, students can also use an evaluation matrix for when they complete the project. By using strategic questions, the EVALUATION Matrix explores student's achievements and stimulates regulation of learning. It is suitable for collaborative projects (Manasia, 2018, pp. 402–403).

EVALUATION Matrix for Students

Team: _____
School: _____
Project: _____

	Share your texperience
Din I achieve the goal(s)?	
What went well in the process of …?	
What went wrong in the process of …?	
What would I change in future actions/projects?	
What would I keep in the future actions/projects?	

11. CONCLUSIONS

The Handbook for School Team Leaders has provided a comprehensive framework for educators and project managers to develop inclusive and participatory arts projects within intercultural and transnational contexts. By utilising the PERFECT conceptual model, which emphasises participation, inclusion, and collaborative cultural production, the guide equips team leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills to create an environment that fosters community engagement, celebrates diversity, and promotes better quality secondary education.

The PERFECT model, derived from the ERASMUS+ Programme, outlines four key objectives: illustrating the design principles of the project, orienting the collaborative work of partner schools, providing references to the transversal competences using the LifeComp framework, and proposing a coherent organisation of cultural products through subsequent and parallel phases. The model integrates the LifeComp Conceptual Reference Model and focuses on the development of personal, social, and learning aspects, while also considering the aesthetic growth of participants. The Competence Boat concept is introduced to express the combination of disciplinary and transversal competences.

The guide emphasises the importance of building Community Maps as a foundation for creative expression, enabling project participants to understand and appreciate their local community's history, landscape, heritage, and cultural values. This approach encourages a more comprehensive exploration of local figures and historical events, urging educators to humanise their subjects, consider multiple perspectives, and avoid biassed narratives.

Throughout the handbook, various chapters have explored critical aspects of project development, including participation and inclusion, local cultural products, teaching and learning, planning, monitoring, and evaluation. The guide has introduced tools such as the START Matrix, Project Canvas, Value Proposition Canvas, Graffiti Wall, Personal Mirror, Reflective Diary, StarFish diagram, Photovoice, and Experience Map to ensure the successful implementation and assessment of the arts projects.

The handbook has also highlighted the importance of using the arts, including theatre, music, dance, visual arts, multimedia, and digital arts, as a means to enhance learning and communication. Emphasising the performance-driven nature of the PERFECT model, the guide encourages creativity, collaboration, and inspiration throughout the project development process, ultimately resulting in a fun and engaging experience for all involved.

In conclusion, the Handbook for School Team Leaders is an invaluable resource for those seeking to create inclusive and participatory art projects within an intercultural and transnational context. By providing practical advice, expert insights, and a wide range of tools, the guide empowers educators and project managers to navigate the challenges and complexities of such projects while utilising the innovative PERFECT model, fostering a more inclusive and diverse learning environment for all.

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations can be made to educators, project managers, and schools seeking to develop inclusive and participatory arts projects within intercultural and transnational contexts:

- Adopt the PERFECT model: Embrace the principles of participation, inclusion, and collaborative cultural production by adopting the PERFECT model, which has been proven effective in fostering community engagement, celebrating diversity, and promoting quality secondary education.
- Utilise the provided tools: Employ the various tools introduced in the handbook, such as the START Matrix, Project Canvas, Value Proposition Canvas, Graffiti Wall, Personal Mirror, Reflective Diary, StarFish diagram, Photovoice, and Experience Map, to ensure successful implementation and assessment of the arts projects.
- Build Community Maps: Create community maps that help participants understand and appreciate their local community's history, landscape, heritage, and cultural values. This will foster a comprehensive exploration of local figures and historical events while encouraging multiple perspectives and avoiding biassed narratives.
- Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration: Facilitate collaboration between educators, artists, and students from different disciplines and cultural backgrounds to promote a rich, diverse learning experience.
- Focus on transversal competences: Develop students' personal, social, and learning competences through the integration of the LifeComp Conceptual Reference Model and the Competence Boat concept, which will enable them to navigate complex, intercultural contexts more effectively.
- Embrace diverse art forms: Utilise various forms of art, including theatre, music, dance, visual arts, multimedia, and digital arts, to enhance learning and communication throughout the project.
- Monitor and evaluate progress: Regularly assess the project's development and outcomes using the tools and guidelines provided in the handbook. This will help ensure that the project remains on track, aligns with the PERFECT model's principles, and achieves its desired impact.
- Share success stories: Share project outcomes, best practices, and lessons learned with other educators and project managers in the field. This will contribute to the growth and development of the broader educational community and inspire others to create similar projects.
- Foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement: Encourage reflection and self-assessment among team leaders and project participants, helping them identify areas for growth and improvement.
- Engage with stakeholders: Involve parents, community members, and other relevant stakeholders in the project to ensure its success and create a sense of

ownership and pride in the final cultural products. This will also facilitate a deeper understanding of the local context and promote greater community engagement.

ANNEX 1

Risk Management Plan

Risk category	Probability	Severity	Risk mitigation measures

ANNEX 1

REFERENCES

Ciolan, L., & Manasia, L. (2017). Reframing Photovoice to Boost Its Potential for Learning Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*(1), 160940691770290. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917702909

Harley, A. (2012). Picturing Reality: Power, Ethics, and Politics in Using Photovoice. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *11*(4), 320–339. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691201100402

Manasia, L. (2018). Dezvoltare personală și psihologia diferențelor individuale în educație. In *Psihologia educaţiei: Fundamente, procese, mecanisme, aplicaţii. [Handbook of Educational Psychology. Fundamentals, Processes, Mechanisms, and Applications]*. Polirom.

Neacsu, I. (2018). *Psihologia educatiei: Fundamente, procese, mecanisme, aplicatii*. Polirom.

Simmonds, S., Roux, C., & Avest, I. ter. (2015). Blurring the Boundaries between Photovoice and Narrative Inquiry: A Narrative-Photovoice Methodology for Gender-Based Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *14*(3), 33–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691501400303

Sutton-Brown, C. A. (2014). Photovoice: A Methodological Guide. *Photography and Culture*, *7*(2), 169–185. https://doi.org/10.2752/175145214X13999922103165

Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1994). Empowerment through Photo Novella: Portraits of Participation. *Health Education Quarterly*, *21*(2), 171–186. https://doi.org/10.1177/109019819402100204

Wang, C. C. (1999). Photovoice: A Participatory Action Research Strategy Applied to Women's Health. *Journal of Women's Health*, *8*(2), 185–192. https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.1999.8.185

Wang, C., Linng, Y. Y., & Ling, F. M. (1996). Photovoice as a tool for participatory evaluation: The community's view of process and impact. *Journal of Contemporary Health*, *4*, 47–49.