

Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership  
2017-1- IT02-KA201-036777



**W**ork discussion **A**pproach in primary schools  
**T**eachers observe **C**hildren

# “Work Discussion Approach” Good practice in primary schools

*The project Intellectual Output*

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



*The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein*

# INDEX

## 1. INTRODUCTION

## 2. To the Origins of the Project

### 2.1. WATCH and the Infant Observation

### 2.2. WATCH and the Fairy Tales

## 3. The Discussion Groups: Psychotherapists' conclusions

### 3.1. In Italy

### 3.2. In Estonia

### 3.3. In Romania

### 3.4. In Slovenia

## 4. The experience in the schools

### 4.1. I.C. Ercolano 5 Iovino-Scotellaro

#### 4.1.1. Italian Coordinator's considerations

#### 4.1.2. Italian Teachers' Experience

### 4.2. Võnnu Keskkool

#### 4.2.1. Estonian Coordinator's considerations

### 4.3. Scoala Centrala Campina

#### 4.3.1. Romanian Coordinator's considerations

#### 4.3.2. Romanian Teachers' Experience

### 4.4. Vič Primary School

#### 4.4.1. Slovenian Coordinator's considerations

### 4.5. Project Coordinator's considerations

## 5. The project as good practice

### 5.1. The importance of the Observation

### 5.2. Sustainability and Transferability

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This publication is the final output of an experimentation made in four European primary schools: teachers were involved in specific activities inside and outside the classrooms with the aim of dealing with the emotional distress that is sometimes connected to the learning process and with the intent of improving their understanding of the pupils, the relationships inside the classrooms and the learning itself.

Our experience of this project was that, although there are many issues relating to particular cultures and educational systems, there are many shared ideas and experiences across a European context.

Children spend a great deal of their time in schools and other educational settings. Consequently those working in such contexts have a huge impact and influence on the development and thinking of the children with whom they interact. We believe such professionals need to understand and be curious about the range of influences on the lives of children, such as their families, the school context and the complex interactions between them.

The promotion of the emotional and psychological well-being of pupils is a shared concern and responsibility.

Starting from these premises, our experimentation came to life and consisted in the application of the Work Discussion methodology in the educational context: in turn, teachers wrote reports based on the observations made in the classroom during school-time activities linked to fairy tales, and then discussed these reports in periodically groups led by a psychotherapist and a psychologist. The aim of all this work was to understand if this methodology could effectively be able to support the management of the relational dynamics that occur in a classroom and that often turn into a real obstacle to learning.

The application of the Work Discussion approach in an educational context and the use of the fairy tales for facilitating the emerging of hidden emotions, represented the innovative combination to be tested.

The methodology has been experimented in three different phases - where fairy tales have been used in three different ways and work discussion groups organised periodically.

The Italian Association EDUlab supported the four schools in the implementation of these joined tools with its team of experts guided by the Scientific Coordinator dr. Carmine Ciannella, and it is now caring this publication as important resource for sharing how and to which extent the initial hypotheses have been fulfilled and if the methodology combined with the use of fairy tales can help teachers in developing (or rediscovering) the ability to observe and reflect on what is happening within the classes.

The experiences made inside the European schools are reported here from the points of view of all the involved key actors: psychotherapists, coordinators and teachers, and a first level of deductions/conclusions are contained between the lines of the following chapters.

As mentioned above, these conclusions are the fruit of a work based on the reports produced by the teachers and the psychologists and that, for a matter of privacy, we decided to not publish.

However, the teamwork of the project was constituted not only by psychotherapists/psychologists and teachers, but also by different professional figures such as non formal educators and project managers who had they too the opportunity to test the work discussion groups in the framework of the “simulations” organised during the learning activities addressed to teachers.

That was the occasion for experimenting themselves how a discussion, conducted and observed, works and for testifying the relevance of a multi-professional presence.

The FairyTale Action and what arose through it have been appreciated by all the actors involved in the project, who all now agree on underlying the importance of using inside the classrooms non formal activities: they stimulate pupils to behave with more confidence and this increases their overall emotional and social skills and improves the atmosphere in the classroom.

Finally, we can say that a psychological support for the educators has been considered necessary for developing an “eye” able to observe more deeply themselves and the children who have been entrusted to them and for increasing a disposition towards an in depth understanding of the behaviours inside a classroom.

The teacher, on the one hand, must continually encourage and motivate students' learning, and on the other must manage, contain, give a frame to his/her affective experiences.

The psychologist has then a great pedagogical function because, as Freud himself argued, the teacher is required (such as all those who play a social role) a minimum of knowledge of his/her own experiences, in order to exploit the most of his/her own resourcefulness.

The practice of the Work Discussion groups can help this development.

## 2. To the Origins of the Project

### 2.1. WATCH and the Infant Observation

In retracing the steps of this Project, we can say that the road which led to WATCH goes on the path traced by specific and important experiences carried out in this area.

Among the ones closest to us, but with a very broad international response, there is the experience realized in Naples thanks to the project <<CHANCE>> (S. Adamo and P. Valerio, 2003; S. Adamo, 2011): an *experimental intervention on school drop-out in very deprived urban contexts*, conceived and implemented by the founders of *Maestri di Strada* (Cesare Moreno and Marco Rossi Doria) and by Simonetta Adamo and Paolo Valerio, representatives of what was called <<Psychology Section of the University of Naples Federico II>> (Ciannella, 2012).

The Chance project, which lasted ten years, can be considered as a milestone in the field of psychological work in Educational Institution. It will not be possible here to go into the details of this complex project, but a fundamental intervention tool used in it was that of fortnightly work discussion groups led by child psychotherapists on observation reports produced by the involved teachers.

Of course, the origins of these paths go even further in time: think of the transcripts of teachers' observations during their professional functions used by the child psychoanalyst Susan Isaacs in the *Malting House School* (an experimental school for children directed by her from 1924 to 1927), or to the work of Anna Freud in the *Jackson Nurseries* of Vienna in 1937 and in the *War Nurseries* (War Kindergartens) in England between 1940 and 1945.

As pointed out, the application of the observational method in fields other than those of psychoanalytic training is, to this day, widely used in many contexts. The *Infant Observation* method represents the backbone of the WATCH Project which aims to disseminate this useful tool for enhancing some of the teachers' skills and providing the Educational Institution of an instrument that fosters the observational function and the sharing of anxieties and tensions naturally connected to the dynamics of teaching and learning and to the continuous interaction with groups of students.

The proposed device assumes that during the process of teaching/learning there is not only a transmission of contents, of notions, but also dynamics of fundamental importance take place. Observation, exerting a particular kind of attention towards one or more people, towards a relationship and the individuals involved in it, is one of the most favourable tools for understanding these dynamics.

The discussion groups allow us to work and reflect on multiple situations and on compared contexts, with the possibility of learning from each other.

Specifically, the group helps the educator to reflect on the interaction with the observed child (or the observed class), also through comparison with other similar situations. The involved colleagues and the conductor help the educator codify the behaviours and messages of the children, supporting him/her in approaching the children's internal world, so as to give meaning to what at first sight appears as incongruous and insignificant.

By learning to pay attention to the emotional aspects that come into play in the relationship with children (both as individuals and as a class) through a group thinking, educators may be able to better respond to the specific needs that each child brings with him/her.

It is expected, in fact, that the proposed tools can be profitably used in teacher training, for helping them to develop a reflective capacity during their educational practice.

## 2.2. WATCH and the Fairy tales

The observation method allows particular attention to be paid to the different modes of expression available to children beyond the explicit ones of verbal communication. In fact their game, their individual behaviour in relation to the class group and the adults, their body states, their drawings, etc. (and the connection of all this with the different moments of their personal and school life), can give access to a series of information on children's psychological and emotional state.

In this perspective, we have tried to use as a focus of our observations at school one of the potentially most communicative and evocative tools from the symbolic point of view that adults have at their disposal to support the emotional and psychological growth of children: the fairy tale.

There is sufficient literature on the subject of fairy tales and on the use of this tool; but what led us to use them in WATCH has to do with other work experiences and professional and personal meetings.

About eight years ago, during one of her collaborations with the Day Center of the Mental Health Service where I work for, dr. Alessia Barbato proposed a rehabilitation project for our psychiatric patients that included the use of fairy tales and had a very evocative name: <<Fantasticando>> (Ciannella, Barbato, Sannino, 2013), in English "Fantasizing" but for WATCH project it became "Fairytale Action".

Fantasticando has represented the evolution of a work done over the years with patients around the theme of narration, a work mainly based on the consolidated use of stories in adult therapy, but sometimes also adapting some clinical tools originally designed for working with children (both in diagnostic and in more strictly clinical fields).

Among these are, for example, the *fairytale workshops* (Lafforgue, 1985) conceived as "containers" of projections devoted to give a meaning, a shape to feelings-emotions that are not yet thoughts but which can later be given a name, to counter the tendency to deny, evacuate or act them. This type of setting facilitates the emergence of thoughts, feelings and emotions and activates emotional ties with the educators and among the participants.

The general aim of Fantasticando developed through the idea of bringing patients closer to some themes, treated in a symbolic way, without "forcing" them to talk about them, but dipping the users in these issues with imagination and creativity.

With WATCH we tried not only to transfer into the Educational Institution the device conceived with Fantasticando, but also to test it in four different social and cultural contexts (Italy, Estonia, Romania and Slovenia). For us the Work Discussion methodology is the tool - very tested but still not widespread enough - with which to support the involved educators, offer them a particular (multi)professional experience and evaluate in progress (and together with them) the effectiveness of the combination of these two working tools.

As for fairy tales, it seems obvious to emphasize their value and the irreplaceable function in the lives of our children: they educate, support and release their emotions; they also offer children an opportunity to come into contact with some important conflicts and dilemmas of their inner life.

The work methods proposed by the project aimed to give children the possibility of gradually moving from passive listeners to more active and participating subjects, stimulating their creative contribution.

In the later phases, in fact, children were asked to build a story in a group using first the *Fantastic Binomial* and the *Five Golden Rules of Gianni Rodari's Grammar of Fantasy*; after, the "*Cards of Propp*" (Propp, 1976) were used for the creation of new fairy tales and puppets were made for their representation.

The use of all these tools was however oriented by the constant attempt to make fairy tale the product of a group work.

As in Fantasticando, also in WATCH the use of puppets seemed to us a useful means for reducing some inhibitions and for involving as much as possible even less extroverted children; in the first instance, however, the intention was to give all participants the chance to "play" as freely as possible with the stories and the psychological features of their characters.

### **3. The Discussion Groups: Psychotherapists' conclusions**

#### **3.1. In Italy**

After the first International Meeting held in Italy, the four involved schools started the first phase of the Project.

In the Italian school our start came across a series of difficulties: the first work discussion group, in fact, was held in December, close to the Christmas holidays.

It was, therefore, also the occasion to think about the reasons that had made it difficult to schedule this appointment. Firstly, the school was closed due to a problem that made the building unusable and needed a restoration work.

This meant for the children, for the teachers (and for this group of ours) a relocation to another building and an inevitable reorganization of all the school activities already planned. The teachers told us that the children were few; they did more absences than usual also because mothers tended to keep them more often at home following this change of location (and perhaps also for the approaching of Christmas holidays).

They felt that a sense of belonging was lacking and, in this climate, it was difficult to concentrate; being a guest at this new school therefore had a negative impact on school work.

Even we psychologists felt a certain "effort to start", to approach this new experience and the first Work Discussion in such a complex condition.

At the same time, the teachers had long wondered about how to introduce the work with fairy tales to children (an implicit question seemed to be: "how can we introduce it to children?") and how to organize it (implicit questions seemed to be: could it be useful to work together to support each other in the observation? And to work in open classes? Do we have to use different methodologies depending on the age of the pupils?).

Even if for the most part this "delay" was due to the need to relocate and reorganize the school activities, perhaps to some extent it could have also been linked to the anxieties connected to the beginning of the project, anxieties already partly expressed during the first international meeting of November.

All this reminded us of those children who continually postpone school assignments and all the difficult and tiring things.

We therefore invited the colleagues to reflect on how it could be complicated for us adults to face a <<new task>>: we all thought that WATCH would be a stimulating and enriching experience, but perhaps we also felt the inevitable concerns related to the beginning of the path.

Moreover, one of the anxieties seemed to be connected to the fantasy of being evaluated: the first part of the conversation was precisely on the fear of being judged by psychologists for the quality of the reports produced. Here, the resemblance to some experiences lived by children at school seemed even more relevant and significant.

In this phase, the teachers addressed the theme of fairy tales in the class and tried to let the children choose some stories to read and comment on together.

The first fairy tale read in class and brought by the teachers to the discussion group was that of Cinderella. Through this story, we were also described the family contexts in which "their" pupils live: they are children defined as "difficult", who live in uninspiring environments; girls are often involved in household chores that have priority over homework (a sort of the Cinderella, precisely).

This story also seemed to recall the talk made before reading the report on the need for teachers to counteract the predominantly critical (and sometimes devaluing) attitude of parents in upbringing their children.

The choice of this story by the children and our associations of ideas and thoughts made us think about how they can be felt on the occasion of negative judgments, criticisms from a reference adult: perhaps, they feel a bit like Cinderella and would like someone to appreciate them.

This choice and the discussion that it had activated in the classroom, therefore, seemed to us to be very in tune with the issues present in the lives of children, of their families and in the relationships at school.

At the end of this first Work Discussion we perceived greater relaxation, a reduction in the initial anxieties; perhaps the group also perceived this space (and the work done) as useful and fruitful, but also as a "good job" to carry on.

From the second Work Discussion onwards, each group opened with the reading of the psychologist's report; for us it is a way of "linking" the two moments and giving back, in a form that is as organized as possible, what we managed to keep in our minds of the work done in the previous session.

At that moment, the reading of the report seemed to represent one of the many narratives that were beginning to arise during the project: it was a tale that intertwined with the ones read to the pupils, with the stories of the children that we psychologists began to collect from the teachers, etc... .

The teacher M. described the encounter between the children and the story of Tom Thumb. The feeling was that of a certain waiting in the class for this work.

Actually, when the teacher asked the children for an opinion on the name of Pollicino, the response was like a sort of "roar due to the overlapping of answers", with the children who were pressing to give their personal interpretation: <<*a child with a small thumb ... a short boy ...*>>.

Without going into the details of the dynamics in the classroom and the individual stories that connected to that of the proposed fairy tale (also to avoid the risk of making children recognizable), it seemed clear to us that the students had been very impressed by the theme of abandonment and they had strongly expressed the idea that parents should care for their children (<< *... in my opinion Pollicino's father should not have abandoned his children ... parents never abandon their children ...* >>) even if, sometimes, serious difficulties can be experienced as extenuating circumstances (<< *... but they didn't have enough money to look after them ...* >>).

Children were painfully aware of the difference between fairy-tale happy ending and real life; someone expressed the idea that the latter often does not offer happy solutions to problems: <<*it often does not happen that in real life*>>.

In this space of thoughts activated by the fairy tale, one of the pupils seemed to set aside his provocative behaviour by putting himself in harmony with the rest of the class: "*Often, adults don't love each other because they fight and we who are little can't do anything with it*".

The teacher confessed to us that she felt particularly tired after this activity, perceiving an excessive confusion in the classroom.

We reflected on the fact that fairy tales bring children closer to certain aspects of their real life that have complex emotional implications; the activation generated by these implications seemed to create a certain confusion even during our discussion: we struggled to manage the "too much material", the many food for thought that, at times, seemed to escape from our hands.

The tiredness of the teacher M. could be just the effect of this multiple activation of themes prompted by the fairy tale. From this point of view, the fact that the class had seemed too confusing and "unmanageable" could instead be the effect of the richness of the treated topics and the great involvement of the pupils. We imagined that the fatigue was also linked to the need to support the fragility of children when they faced such painful emotions.

The fairy tale of "The Beauty and the Beast" brought to the center of the discussion the themes of acceptance and marginalization, themes very present in the class in which it was read. The choice of the teacher, in fact, was not accidental and was motivated by the attempt to start a reflection on the dynamics of marginalization observed in the classroom. Starting from cases in which poor hygiene caused discrimination, we observed that the prejudice against some children and their complex family histories led to the same withdrawal reactions even when the hygiene care had changed for the better.

For the teachers it was very difficult to move between feeling sorry for these children who were excluded from the group, and understanding the need for protection that brings the other parents to this marginalization.

In retracing the painful stories of these children, we again reasoned about the conflict between feeling sorry for them and their unfortunate condition and the contemporary tendency to take distance from them (as for the lack of hygiene).

It emerged, quite clearly, that the neglect of the body perhaps referred to a social and family neglect, to a condition of deprivation and violence that activated a strong "fear of contagion"; putting your own children at a distance from these children may mean putting them away from all this, from the many bad things that surround these children.

The first discussion group of the second phase of the project seemed to start with a certain slowness; while we were waiting for the teachers who came from the other venue, those already present told us about the tiredness of the children at that stage of the year.

The report we read talked about the work done in the classroom for the choice of the fantastic binomial and the construction of a fairy tale starting from the words chosen by the children.

During the reading and discussion, we were "overwhelmed" by the description of the teacher who also showed us photos and videos of the activity described in the report, as if to emphasize, in a more incisive and concrete way, the great participation of the children and the result obtained by her class despite the difficulties of some pupils.

The group managed to describe us, however, also an experience of uneasiness and confusion: to someone it seemed that we were "going off track" with all those details on the stories of the children; we no longer dealt only with fairy tales and the dynamics of children in the classroom, but we were making hypotheses that went "too far", giving the feeling of a chaotic situation.

Moreover, despite the many questions raised, both for the initial delay due to organizational problems (and perhaps a certain resistance to start) and for the amount of material brought it seemed to us to have very little time for the discussion.

We wondered if the anxiety to do well, to do a good job had characterized the group (on one side the pupils, and on the other the teacher); the desire to give the maximum, however, could lead to an excess of information that, paradoxically, seemed to provoke losses (such as, for example, the loss of coherence felt by a part of the group).

One teacher admitted that one of her anxieties was that there were not enough themes to talk about, it was necessary to "lengthen the stock" for fear that our discussions were too "poor".

This feelings, perhaps unconsciously lived by all the group, seemed to have affected both the initial delay and the large amount of material brought to the discussion.

Right in the closing stages of the discussion, teacher A. told us that the children had expressed their disagreement as she had modified the title of the fairy tale they invented. The teacher justified herself by confessing to the students her desire to participate in the construction of story.

Through this significant parenthesis, the teacher seemed to show us that if on the one hand a little regression is necessary for one's work to favour the understanding of children's emotional needs, on the other it represents a factor that must be controlled.

It could happen, in fact, that some needs and / or anxieties of the adults come into play and may interfere with the work in the classroom. For example, in our case participation in the project has certainly triggered understandable concerns about the evaluation of one's work; in this, as in other situations, one can run the risk of using the work done by the class as something that witnesses one's professional skills. Then, changing the title of the fairy tale had certainly made it more presentable and captivating; however, it seemed to have reduced the satisfaction of the pupils and favoured the feeling of not having been able to perform a creative act in full autonomy, of not having done <<*all by ourselves*>>.

The report discussed in the next meeting was about the work done by one of the teachers around the fantastic binomial. The teacher explained us that she had "exchanged" the class with her colleague (3rd class) because she worked with younger pupils (2nd class) and the initial indications of the project were for a "higher" age group of students. This change had led to some difficulties in working with children: she hardly managed some of them (the most restless), perhaps because she was not their teacher<sup>1</sup>.

Regarding the fantastic binomial, the pupils choose the words "yellow" and "lamb"; in the opinion of all, the fairy tale that took shape - The Yellow Little Lamb - looked like - The Ugly Duckling.

The class had focused on the fact that yellow was an unusual, strange colour; this "strangeness" would certainly have caused the exclusion of the lamb - not only from the other farm animals, but also "from its family". A little girl admitted that this constantly happened even among them.

Thanks to this fairy tale, therefore, the class was able to deal with a theme that concerned them as a group: one of the children, in fact, often suffered isolation from his companions despite the teachers trying to constantly favour his integration. Thanks to this activity, however, he had emerged from the silence in which he usually took refuge and that caused a sense of powerlessness in the teachers.

The latter expressed their feelings of tiredness, partly linked to the final phase of the school year; some colleagues were absent because of the great stress, worsening the situation for those who remained "in the field".

---

<sup>1</sup> It occurred to us that this teacher felt compelled *to adopt* a class that was not her own and that she couldn't share with her "students" the possibility of doing this work with fairy tales. The project indications weren't so strict and we believed that a request for change would certainly have been accepted, the "rule" was so perceived as inflexible. This perception had *forced* people (students and teachers) to a *forced* adaptation that had caused anger and frustration.

They talked us of "difficult classes" that put a strain on emotional stability, exposing them to feelings of impotence, frustration for not being able to intervene incisively in "their" children's lives who, in many cases, experiment deaths, separations, abuse, violence, etc. and who seem to be abandoned to themselves.

We hypothesized that being in constant contact with situations of severe deprivation and degradation could be one of the reasons for their fatigue and demoralization.

One of the variables at stake was, therefore, that of the social and family contexts with which teachers worked: some of their pupils' mothers were defined as <<*mother-daughter*>>.

They were just teenage girls who had already taken on the role of mother, but who were still too close to their childhood condition. We thought it was probable that, in many of these cases, the difficulty of these young mothers to take care of their children replicated the deprivation of "good care" suffered in their turn as children.

The sense of powerlessness we continued to talk about seemed to affect also the atmosphere of our Work Discussion group; we wondered if this feeling had not turned into a certain haste to conclude our talk and reflections on the material brought.

Similarly, the end of the school year was also seen as the solution, the escape from all these tensions and the discomfort that teachers had so widely talked about.

During the last discussion group of the second phase (which coincided with the conclusion of the school year and the end of the first year of the Project activities), we found ourselves managing a "crisis" situation.

Teachers admitted to having had a series of difficulties during the second phase.

The first part of the discussion, indeed, focused on the idea that the teachers had not carried out "the task" in the best way (but also that they had not been helped enough by our "instructions") and that they had received a "negative judgment" from us psychologists. The question that arose seemed to be: "What did we do wrong?".

During the confrontation we tried to reason about these difficulties and tensions: our idea was that - apart from some stages in which the approach to work could be subject of further reflection - this group had been very collaborative and we had well done during the whole first phase.

The difficulties concerned the fact that W.A.T.C.H. asked them for an approach not easy to be implemented in an institutional context with consolidated operating and organizational methods.

An example was precisely the theme of evaluation, so present in the ongoing discussion, but also a peculiarity of many school dynamics (not only between teachers and students): identifying something that should be modified was experienced as an unquestionable negative judgment on our work.

From another point of view, recognizing things to be corrected - even if subjecting us to discomfort and fatigue of reviewing "our" work - could not have a negative connotation, but allow us to improve our work, reduce some unproductive tensions and obtain the maximum possible from the resources deployed by the project.

In the report that we discussed, the teacher had chosen to work with a 4th class but also for her the initial moments had been particularly tiring: to call the attention of the children had meant for her the assumption of a <<*more rigid attitude than usual*>>.

However, pupils developed their fairy tale starting from two words: HOME and FLYING. When they begin to tell it, their attention focused on the protagonist, a girl who <<*never wanted to go to school*>>.

This passage and the following comments seemed to be connected to the fact that many children, at this stage of the year, express their tiredness and the burden of having to go to school (fatigue that is sometimes expressed also with the typical chaos of the last days of school).

It seemed quite clear to us that the fairy tale invented by the children dealt with the theme of the conclusions: the end of the school year (which apparently seems strongly expected and desired by all), the end of the fairy tale (which did not arrive), etc...

The "closure", intended as an end, also entails a series of reasons for tension: one of these may have some connection with the fear of evaluation (promotion or rejection?); the other could be connected to the experience of loss for what is ending (including the relationship with the companions, with the teachers<sup>2</sup>); yet another could be linked to the fantasy of not "finding" (at the resumption) the school reference points (very different from those coming from pupils' problematic families).

---

<sup>2</sup> In class, in fact, a little girl said to the teacher: "I would have liked to finish the fairy tale, to make Eleonora (the protagonist) understand that the school is beautiful!"

The teachers, in this regard, told us of some children who - from time to time, during the summer break - hang around the school; it seems that they take the trouble to go and check that everything is still at the usual place, that the school is still there.

Sorrow can be expressed by children in different ways, even with apparently provocative attitudes; as if tensions or this kind of emotions can only be discharged through the body and / or this type of behaviour defined as "hyperactive".

Starting from these reflections, another way to communicate distress seemed more evident and clear: on more than one occasion, pupils had asked the teacher for help due to various types of illness. It seemed possible that, through physical symptoms, some children communicated to adults part of their discomfort, of their pain due to the imminent separation (and the need to be comforted).

Of course, the themes of the conclusion and the separation for the upcoming holidays also concerned us and the ongoing project; perhaps, the crisis moment we had gone through could have been influenced by the particular moment that we were living in that phase of the year, a moment that also involved a certain tiredness and anxiety for the inevitable conclusions connected to the end of each phase.

After the long summer break we met again and, even if the school year had begun a few months, a certain tiredness was already present. The report to be discussed brought us back to the work done in the classroom with the Cards of Propp.

Once again, the contents of the fairy tales almost seemed to coincide with the family and social contexts in which pupils of this school live: children discussed animatedly both of a severe father always dressed in black, and of the Black Knight of the cards who played the bad character.

The teacher and a pupil tried to calm the spirits: the former tried to re-establish a "natural order" according to which <<*parents are all good and make sacrifices to offer the best to their children*>>; the latter tried to reassure his companion by talking her about a "good knight" who wants to kill <<*snake Amedeo who is the villain*>>.

However, the situation seemed to change again and the discussion took other directions.

First of all, the class overturned the story: Amedeo is no longer the villain, but the homosexual a bit ridiculed<sup>3</sup>. They talked of homosexuality, but with a coded language that did not allow the teacher to immediately understand the "different" meaning given by the children to the name Amedeo and making her feel confused and excluded from the talk.

Reflecting on this "coded language" used by pupils, previous considerations came to mind and we wondered if the most culturally deprived children cannot have similar experiences of exclusion and confusion by living as inaccessible and extraneous both the terminology used for teaching school subjects and the same Italian language (since they speak almost exclusively the Neapolitan dialect).

Anyway, the theme of homosexuality was treated in terms of tolerance and a certain respect: the name Amedeo served to indicate a homosexual, but with a less offensive meaning when compared to other dialectal terms. In the end, the children concluded that <<*everyone can dress as they wish (even black) and everyone can love whoever they want*>>.

Finally, during our discussion group we dwelt on an observation already reported by the teachers: children often <<*speak ill of others*>> trying to involve teachers in these dynamics as well.

We wondered if it could not be a sort of rudimentary defence mechanism: these children seem to be immersed in difficult situations that could lead to a feeling of shame (when awareness comes to the surface). Perhaps, the gossip is a way to move on the others the "bad things" that are initially attributed to them (or they fear they may be attributed to them); then, pupils get (temporarily) rid of negative things and seek the complicity of others to pin them in a seemingly definitive manner to the scapegoat on duty.

In the report discussed in the following meeting, the fairy tale created by children seemed to deal with a problem lived by the class and the difficulty of integrating a child: <<... *there was a very beautiful and rich child<sup>4</sup> who lived in a castle, but who was very sad because he did not had friends ...*>>. Two other companions, continuing on this line, explained that <<... *he had no friends because he was sad and he was not kind*>>.

---

<sup>3</sup> We discovered that the children, citing a very popular film that the teacher did not know, attributed this name to homosexual people.

<sup>4</sup> These adjectives seemed to indicate that this child was also recognized for his qualities: later, pupils added that <<he is a champion in the long divisions>>.

The class, through the fairy tale, thus seemed to put the accent on this child's sadness; this element made us hypothesize that sadness was not only the effect of his solitude, but also the fuse that triggered certain of his behaviours: <<*he was sad and (therefore) he was not kind*>>.

Starting from the history of this child, we took into consideration the idea of the "circularity" of certain dynamics: "difficult children" come from "difficult contexts"; perhaps, the family and social environment favour their dysfunctional behaviours, but at the same time the complicated management of these pupils (also experienced by teachers) often generates violent responses from their parents. If teachers try to reason with the latter about how their children behave in class, they often respond with immediate and excessive force (<<*The solution for parents? It is beating their children!*>>).

The questions put in field by the teachers were many: always regarding integration / exclusion, questions were asked about what kind of ties existed among children: were they solid and supportive, or ephemeral and fragile? One child, a girl, had been moved in a family home and many of the companions apparently had shown no pain at all due to her loss. Other questions shifted the focus on mothers' sensitivity and caregiving skills: <<*What's the difference between a "good mother" and a "bad mother"?*>>.

In the closing phase of our discussion group, teachers told us that in more than one episode some mothers had asked them for money. Sometimes this had happened using lies, subterfuges, and extreme need situations for their children.

Teachers concluded the discussion group talking about their tiredness, their difficulty of imagining that the following year a new cycle would start, about how heavy it was to think of having to <<*start doing all this again with a first class*>>.

It was not possible, also for reasons of time (some teachers were called for another school work) to express a thought on what emerged in the final part of our discussion. It made one wonder if teachers' sense of fatigue was not strictly connected to the presence of a great amount of children's needs; needs that find almost no answer in their family contexts. Indeed, the improper requests made by mothers (such as requests for money) seem to show that these parents even replace their children in the request for attention from teachers: these parents, not only do not seem able to respond to the material and emotional needs of their children, but they compete with them for the attention that teachers can offer to them.

At the following discussion group we were all a little excited about the final stages of our work: << *But today it is our last group meeting!* >>.

There was a note of melancholy in this sentence, but also a certain tension; so we welcomed the implicit request to read and discuss all the material available to make room for everyone's work. It seemed important to "complete" the presentation of all the reports, without excluding anyone.

Sharing the notes on the previous meeting distracted the group from the tensions of the day and brought everyone's attention to our project and to the work done in the classroom with the children.

One of the teachers began reading her report describing the work done with the Cards of Propp. The fairy tale that children had invented aroused, however, a certain uneasiness because the issues they dealt with were not only strong, but also very close to their difficult family realities. The plot, in fact, concerned the theme of domestic violence ("*Once upon a time there was a very bad man who always beat his wife*").

It took little to have to face the fact that "orcs" are concretely present in these children's lives, because they moved from the fairy tale to the explicit talk of their very difficult family realities.

The teacher, feeling the growing tension generated by these stories, had tried to reduce it by talking about the damage caused by the abuse of alcohol and drugs (which in the descriptions of her pupils appeared to be strongly connected to the use of violence). At the end of the reading of the report, An. was very upset and sorry, and commented: << *This is the reality of my class!* >>.

All this led us to a complicated question: << *What do we do with certain stories so painful that children bring us? What happens on the emotional level to the teacher and to the other children in the class?* >><sup>5</sup>.

Teachers told us how difficult it was to shoulder these stories and how they felt it necessary to introduce concrete moments of affection in order to counteract the weight of certain stories: << *They are children who ask to be seen, embraced, listened to, loved* >>.

---

<sup>5</sup> A girl who probably was very impressed by the story of her companions had asked the teacher and the class why this man was so bad.

Some teachers told us that they happened to go home to their family and think back to their pupils lives with a profound sadness.

Reading the other reports led us to think about some elements that the situations described had in common; one of these concerned the difficulty of the teachers in managing the classes with older children.

They told us about the common feeling of having to constantly "scold" them to obtain a polite behaviour and respect for others.

The boys often laugh and can't stand still, they get upset, and teachers must continuously intervene to re-establish a possible order. For these reasons, it can be very difficult to do the lesson; unlike the descriptions given in the classes with younger children, here the teachers seemed to be mainly involved in containing the destructiveness of some students.

All the teachers agreed that the only way to contain them was to "do something", to keep them constantly engaged in something: a dictation, a task, etc .... They argued that all this was necessary because these children show no interest in anything and they often tend to break the harmony of the class group by sabotaging any initiative. In describing these feelings of frustration shared by all, a teacher confessed to the group that she felt a "shamed" when she thought about the reports of the other countries involved in the project: <<*I fear that our children are the most desperate!*>>.

I suggested the idea that the shame described by the teacher could be a feeling conveyed by their emotionally deprived pupils: perhaps, even they were ashamed of all the bad things that happen in their families (and that they had confided to their teachers through fairy tales); as if somewhere they guessed that there are "good parents" (like their teachers), good and welcoming families, while they are "the most desperate".

We hypothesized that certain children's behaviours could be seen as a sort of unconscious representation of what they live in their respective families and social realities. In acting continuously conflict and provocation at school, perhaps they show us a condition of life characterized by tensions, violence, chaos, fear and frustration.

On the other hand, "being evil" could also be a way to defend themselves, to try to get out of a condition of passivity and of suffering what anguish them, and lay down this experience onto someone else: on teachers, becoming unruly, cynical, out of control and very aggressive; or on some companions as in the cases of bullying .

I shared with the group my feeling that the reports showed us a sort of "evolutionary passage". Pupils of the 3rd class looked like small fragile victims; it was natural for teachers to respond them with affection, protection (as pupils are, in turn, particularly seeking towards the teachers). In the reports regarding pupils of 5th class, it seemed that boys had turned into "executioners".

It came to be thought that survival strategies were needed to grow, for avoiding to be crushed by pain, by suffering.

We had than the impression that these children had to get rid of their sensitivity and vulnerability in order to be able to survive from the emotion point of view: when orcs are too close and "real", it is necessary to quickly sacrifice tenderness, the childlike part of ourselves and become hard, cynics, aggressive.

The conclusion of this last meeting was particularly difficult; time seemed to be insufficient and teachers asked us for another meeting to read our observations. Perhaps it was a way to face the sorrow for the end of a journey and to have once again this space of thought and sharing available.

In conclusion, we can say that this project initially generated understandable anxieties in this group, both because of the need to tackle a new task and because of the inevitable overload of work that it entailed.

However, even if it took place in a climate of great precariousness due to the unavailability of the school, the first phase was already very rich and productive. We realize that what we asked the teachers to do was not easy: working with fairy tales seems (and is) a game, but it activates a series of very complex experiences; for example, issues such as abandonment (a forced separation from their families), neglect, poverty that the stories proposed, were too similar to the stories of degradation that their pupils live.

From this point of view it seemed emblematic the experience of fatigue that was told us in some passages during the reading of the reports: the great amount of things expressed by the children during the work with the fairy tales and the emotions that they communicated were perhaps too many and too complex to be processed without a constant support.

Nevertheless, we have the feeling that for children to have teachers who provide them with opportunities like these to talk about such complicated things in their lives through fairy tales (a means that facilitates and puts very difficult questions at a distance), has been very important and represents one of the main results achieved by the project.

The return of the teachers to their scholastic seat has coincided with a difficult moment for our work group. Perhaps the new change of location, which we thought had facilitated us, was tiring as well (also because it was very close to the end of the school year).

At that stage we had the strongest sense of risking misunderstanding, of losing sight of the objectives of our project; however, it was always possible for us to rely on a setting designed to be of help for reflecting together not only on what happens in the classroom, but also on the internal tensions that inevitably emerge in every work group. Over time, this has allowed us to experience the discussion groups as an important appointment for sharing and comparing our professional and human experiences.

Although we expected the teachers to be able to "play" with fairy tales together with their students and use the creative and relaxing spaces offered by the project, one of the things we observed is that there was sometimes an underlying concern. Some of these concerns would seem to be related to the fact that the school context is very much influenced by the need for continuous evaluation.

For this reason, it was necessary for us to pay particular attention to helping teachers not to think in terms of good or bad reports, good or bad classes, good or bad fairy tales, good or bad discussion groups.

We feel that this effort has allowed us to use also the moments of tension and difficulty lived by the group, making them even useful for understanding some specific school dynamics.

*Carminè Ciannella*

Scientific Coordinator

Psychotherapist

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

ADAMO S.M.G., RUSTIN M. (edited by): **L'OSSERVAZIONE DIRETTA DEL BAMBINO IN ETÀ PRESCOLARE. TEORIA, METODO, APPLICAZIONI**, Psicoterapie, Franco Angeli, 2018.

ADAMO S.M.G., VALERIO P. (edited by): **IL CONTRIBUTO PSICOANALITICO AD UNA SCUOLA PER ADOLESCENTI DROP-OUT**, edited by "Maestri di strada" ONLUS, Grafica Editrice Romana, 2003.

ADAMO S.M.G.: "**Fox's Earth: Developing Social Links in a Traumatized Community**", in Harris R., Rendall S., Nashat S. (eds.), "*Engaging with Complexity: Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Education Contexts across Europe*", the Tavistock Clinic Series, Karnac, Londra, 2011.

BETTELHEIM B., **IL MONDO INCANTATO: USO, IMPORTANZA E SIGNIFICATI PSICOANALITICI DELLE FIABE** (tr. it. Andrea D'Anna, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, 1976), Feltrinelli, Milano 1977.

CIANNELLA C.; "**La funzione di contenimento dei sentimenti dolorosi nei processi di insegnamento e di apprendimento e nella prevenzione del disagio**"; Vitolo M., Villa F., Cavallo M., Manacorda V. (edited by), *Violenza ed Abuso Sessuale sui Minori, Atti del corso di formazione a. sc. 1997/98 - 1998/99*, Provveditorato agli Studi di Napoli - Associazione Italiana Giudici per i Minorenni e per la Famiglia (Sezione di Napoli), Officine Grafiche "Città Sociale" - Pozzuoli, 1999.

CIANNELLA C.; "**Simonetta Adamo: intervista sul progetto Chance**"; in *Rubrica Online AIPPI website: Interviste*; (<https://www.aippiweb.com/wp/2012/12/23/intervista-a-simonetta-adamo-sul-progetto-chance-i-parte-di-carmine-ciannella/>; <https://www.aippiweb.com/wp/2012/12/24/intervista-a-simonetta-adamo-sul-progetto-chance-ii-parte-di-carmine-ciannella/>).

CIANNELLA C., BARBATO A., SANNINO G.; "**Fantasticando**" (sull'uso della fiabazione in un progetto riabilitativo con pazienti psichiatrici). In *Giornale dell'Ordine degli Psicologi. Notiziario degli Psicologi Campani*. Anno XIV. n. 2. 2013.

LAFFORGUE P.; **POLLICINO DIVENTERÀ GRANDE**. Roma, Magi, 2005.

PROPP V.; **MORFOLOGIA DELLA FIABA, LE RADICI STORICHE DEI RACCONTI DI MAGIA**, Newton Compton Editori, Roma, 1976.

RODARI G.; **LA GRAMMATICA DELLA FANTASIA**, Einaudi, 1974.

SALZBERGER I.W., WILLIAMS POLACCO G., OSBORNE E.L.: **L'ESPERIENZA EMOTIVA NEL PROCESSO DI INSEGNAMENTO ED APPRENDIMENTO**, Liguori, Napoli, 1987.

SHIRLEY H.: "**La vecchia donna che viveva in una scarpa**", in *Il Progetto Chance: Seminari Psicologici*, edited by Adamo A.M.G., Onlus Maestri di Strada, Grafica Editrice Romana, 2003.

### 3.2. In Estonia

This project was carried out at Võnnu High School by teachers, psychologist, psychotherapist and school management during two years.

As a result of observation and work discussion there were many interesting tendencies found that deserve to be elaborated upon and maybe further examined.

At first we should point out that it was quite challenging for the teachers at Võnnu High School to take part of this project. It forced them to have another angle towards teaching, communicating, their and their students' abilities and opportunities. It made it possible for them to see so called bigger 3D picture about the world around them. Collaboration between teachers, psychologist and psychotherapist in discussions helped the teachers to see/ to acknowledge and to reduce fear. It brought along the need to recognise students' as subjects' emotions during their studies.

It is important to point out that we have to take into account our education system where the results (gained points) are significant part of the studies at the end of the learning process. None the less we talk a lot and quite often about cultivating a diverse personality. In reality there is an emphasis put on passing on knowledge rather than on the development of emotional and personal part.

The WATCH Project pointed out the need to see a student as a subject rather than the result of education and upbringing. Student must be seen as a fully-fledged part of this project that has rights to have positive and negative emotions. These emotions may suit or suit not with us. We understand just perfect that in case of such approach teachers feel frustrated, terrified due to the time limits, specific programme and specific tasks. Sometimes they are not able to overcome this on their own.

Therefore these kinds of work groups and projects like the WATCH raise teachers' desire and need for professional development. At the same time I have to state that we have to take into consideration the reality in our education system where students' results are more important than their development of creativity. The teacher plays an important role in getting high results. During reaching this kind of goal the teacher cannot feel emotionally free, flexible and ready to let her students develop their creative parts. It is nor reasonable to expect such abilities and results from the teachers during strict time limits. Emotionally restrained teacher cannot create conditions for the students to develop their creativity.

Therefore this kind of project gave the students and the school management an opportunity to have a different angle on a teaching process. It also made teachers to find new opportunities and inner resources, pointed out the need to raise their inner freedom, flexibility and not to focus on expected results only.

The teachers are truly interested in such projects as the WATCH hence these projects help them to improve their own personal as well as professional knowledge/characteristics.

Work discussion groups brought out following aspects:

a. Hidden resistance

When the teacher works according to the regular lesson plan, the roles of the participants are set in respect and permanent and there will be no argument: teacher – student.

According to the rules everyone has his or her obligations and status. For a child to be a “good” child she/he has to be loyal to these rules and fulfil the requirements: answer, revise, listen etc. The teacher is supposed to teach, to pass on her/his knowledge and to assess students’ results. Everything is intelligible. There is no room for “excessive” emotions hence these are not in accordance with the rules. Emotions are limited by the roles of “the teacher and the student”. Therefore students are divided into two groups:

- Active students, who gain points by “being a good student”
- Passive students, who try to cope with their anxiety levels by inappropriate ways like “running away/ ignoring the problem” or having (hidden) aggression. It seemed that the activities combined with fairy tales should have opened up the students and provide them with an opportunity to feel calm and relaxed. In fact it does not happen (exemplified by the first phase of the project). Children/students will remain true to their “status” even in playful situations. So what is the problem? After the discussions amongst the work discussion groups, the teachers came to a conclusion, that they lacked for flexibility and skills to resolve situations immediately. Different solutions were generated only while having a discussion with colleagues, psychologist and psychotherapist. The teachers now offered non-standard approaches to resolve these situations. In such case the teacher sees these situations not as a teacher but as a supervisor – like an observer. Such approach offers a better overall picture and creates ability to find the solutions to the problems that may rise.

b. Aggression

So-called aggression was amongst the other problems that rose during the fairy tale project WATCH. Some teachers who faced the problems with students behaving in such ways were not ready for such situations hence they had no such problems in their regular lessons. It was especially surprising that the aggression was mainly towards the teacher. The reasons for such aggression were unclear for the work discussion groups. During the situations' analysis the teachers came to a conclusion that due to their cultural background and nationality (for example modesty, restraint and fear to show off their emotions in public), Estonian children try to stick to their role frames. It means that the students remain respectful towards an adult (teacher), stay reserved and follow the rules. Working with the fairy tales gave students an opportunity to bring along new rules and new roles that gave them an opportunity to express their thoughts and emotions outside "the teacher-student" frame. It means that they will not break the rules and will not insult anybody ("it is just a fairy tale", it is just a role" etc.). Hence students cannot express their emotions (for example confronting their teacher, rules, pressure) in more adequate way, they expressed their emotions by the protest that for the teacher seemed to be aggressive. Those teachers who were not ready for such behaviour came to a conclusion during the work group discussions that they need more collaboration not only with the colleagues but also with psychologist and psychotherapist because only those specialists can resolve these situations in a way that is beneficial for both participating parts. They can point out that the student is an individual and a fully-fledged part of the study process functioning as a subject. The teachers' role is not to calm down, not to subordinate, not to discipline, not to dominate but to find a common ground with a young growing and developing personality who needs attention, understanding and being accepted the way she/he is.

c. Confrontation led by gender

One quite surprising "finding" for us was confrontation between "student-female teachers" during the work with fairy tales. We are used to the fact that sometimes boys and girls compete with each other, in some situations boys gave in, sometimes they do not get along very well and we do not pay much attention to it. During every-day situations in the classroom teacher-female is used to the situations where boys disturb the classroom peace, being hyperactive and teacher always has to respond to those situations by disciplining boys mostly in dominant way: with teachers' status, voice etc. and this is nothing uncommon hence the discipline is a way to get study results.

During the discussions some teachers pointed out that while working with the fairy tales some boy-students took the right to not to respond teacher's remarks by ignoring her methods of disciplining the class. During hidden resistance between boys and girls and finding a suitable situation (working with fairy-tales), boys try to get out of the control of the teacher-female, bringing along their own rules that are not in correspondence with the rules provided by the teacher. These boys wanted to show their opportunities and hidden wish to dominate and in some way to resist "female power". The members of the work discussion groups came to a conclusion that the boys who were under the control of their mother had to accept the offers made in the classroom established by the dominant female teacher due to the reason that boys often have more modest results than girls in their studies. Boys used fairy tales as a tool to bring along their rules and visions. They forced their rules upon others even for a short period of time. They did it in accordance with the rules and not by disturbing the classroom peace/ by maintaining the roles and customs. The teachers came to a conclusion that they have to be more flexible and open-minded and to avoid being dominant during communicating with the boys.

d. Methodological aspect

The theme for the work discussion groups was the situation with the R-Cards. According to this method one of the tasks was to open up the creative potential of the students. According to the creators of this method every student gets one card that is chosen by himself/herself and according to this card he/she can create/recreate an activity (or part of it). One interesting aspect arises: instead of stimulating students' process of creativity, their cards become restrictive for them. The students could not break through the framework presented in the picture (story line, character, situation). By analysing this method the teachers came to a conclusion that most likely our children/ students are used to follow concrete rules and tasks since the playschool and imagination was generally not accepted in some reason. There could be a possibility that the child did not get (positive) feedback from the playschool teachers. Therefore, even those children, who were the most rational did not accept the possibility /necessity immediately to open up and to broaden the framework. The teachers who faced this situation offered a possibility for the students to select/take/give/ 2-3 pictures related in substance. In one hand it was to stimulate ability to create and in other hand to bring out students' need/ effort to open up their mind and feelings and to become braver in their out-sayings.

It is important to point out there were none of these kinds of problems with older students. Older students already accepted the rules/norms in lessons and in school overall and could adapt these rules/norms to situations and to their behaviour. Therefore they could be as creative and free as they could be taking into consideration that Estonians do not want to show their emotions in public. Therefore it was very important to create fairy tale in thorough (as much as the lesson enabled) manner. It was important for most of the students to have enough time to do it.

Teachers, psychologist and psychotherapist made following conclusions amongst the work discussion group:

- a. Taking part of the Project WATCH was important for improving the learning process as well as teacher's self-improvement.
- b. Working with the WATCH method brought out hidden problems that mostly involve the relationships between different personalities. To resolve these situations it is necessary to create work discussion groups that meet regularly. These work discussion groups should involve psychologist and psychotherapist who may help to see hidden motives in behaving. They also give the teachers an opportunity to deal with difficult situations in a more calm and balanced manner to improve the study process and help to resolve problems between different personalities.
- c. Thanks to taking part in this project the teachers saw an opportunity and need to change, broaden their professional opportunities and skills- to see the student as the subject rather than the object. Students should be seen as fully-fledged personalities with their own diversity. This brings along the need for the teacher to have courses to help her/his own personal development.
- d. The work with the materials of this project (especially with the R-Cards) gave an opportunity to see the learning process in a different light, in more advanced levels than just listening, reading, analysing. Student is involved as a subject in the process of creation. She/he can have her/his emotions, knowledge and skills. This enabled the students to loosen up also to their interests outside the school (drama courses, theatre courses) where are no such strict limits and the emphasis is rather put on opening up personalities and creative skills. Working with this kind of emphasis the child does not seek/earn teacher's approval by hiding her/his feelings and emotions.

In such case the role of “a good student” becomes secondary. The student won't be afraid to be “different”, “unsuccessful”, “bad” anymore. He/ she will develop a need to express his/her feelings in a calm, dignified way. She/he will not overreact. In such case the learning process is moving towards the level personality-personality (subject-subject). We all should have a need to reach such level of communication.

- e. While working in this project the teachers saw opportunities for self-improvement and self-development. Teacher's job is very difficult in its every aspect-the level of responsibility in front of the students and the parents is great. The expectations for the good results are high, constant reflecting and analysis affects teacher's quality of life and not always for the better. Taking part of this project showed the necessity to keep in mind also this aspect of teachers' lives that in turn affects the quality of teaching. The calmer and open-minded, flexible in her/his judgements teacher is, the easier it is to resolve complicated situations in more rational and profitable ways.

*Jelena Žilkina,*

Psychotherapist

### **3.3. In Romania**

The "WATCH Project - Work Discussion in Primary Schools: Teachers Observe Children" project was a novelty through the proposed themes and gave us the opportunity to self-refine. The collaboration of teachers with the psychologist and the psychotherapist aimed at improving interpersonal skills and solving problems in the educational environment.

From our point of view, regular working discussions have been an effective way of debating social situations with which teachers meet in class. These meetings have been an important support for teachers who have been able to expose the difficulties and the efforts they face in their work. They were given the opportunity to be supported without the impression of a psychological intervention because there were no clinical interviews or other therapeutic tools. At the beginning of the project there was little resistance from subjects suspecting specialists to carry out a therapeutic approach. These fears were quickly overcome and things went naturally.

The story is the mediator of pain and suffering. It can trigger in humans the appearance of mechanisms through which fear, weakness, uncertainty can be overcome or defeated, and through which hope can be discovered. The story becomes an instrument that brings emotions and feelings to the surface that can be hidden in the subconscious: fears, desires, envy. The subject links the story with its own problems. He will later have a revelation about the message of the story, when healing begins, resolving in a new and subjective manner the impasse. Thus, solving realizes with the inner resources of the subject. Stories have had a strong impact on children as well as on teachers. Group discussions highlighted this. Teachers did not randomly choose stories read to children. They said that choice made it in line with their needs.

Teachers meetings have shown their interest in improving their relationship with their students. Educators have said they sometimes face difficult situations that they would like to respond positively to not endangering their relationship with children. The use of the direct observation method has been shown to be welcomed in the professional development of teachers by helping them to solve emerging problems and to develop a reflexive capacity during their educational practice.

We must not forget that students have general as well as individual needs. I have now noticed, after two years of working with teachers, that they place more emphasis on the emotions and feelings of the subjects they work with.

Assertive communication and observing student behaviour have led to an optimal relationship. Teachers have managed the difficult situations positively by integrating all students into activities.

The work done within the project has brought us satisfaction. Prevention and intervention in education are very important. Beneficiaries are children and it is very important for them to develop their emotional intelligence from an early age. The project called for pupils aged 6 to 9 to come into contact with fairy tales, following how they empathize with positive or negative characters. It is the optimal age at which there are major improvements in socialization and the ability to interact with others. Children want a lot to belong to a group and integrate, a very important aspect for developing self-confidence and increasing self-esteem. Under the guidance of teachers who can determine the purposes of their behaviours and calmly solve difficult situations, these children will develop harmoniously and become mentally healthy adults.

I have discovered difficulties faced by teachers in the classroom. One teacher educates a large group of pupils performing teaching / learning activities, paying attention to children's behaviours and sometimes working differentiated with children with disabilities who do not have specialized staff. However, the teachers we worked with on the project have been receptive to our recommendations and have mastered the specific strategies to manage the difficult situations they face.

Romanian education needs flexible, constructive, responsible teachers. The team with which we have worked over the two years has been led to develop capacities to develop innovative strategies through engagement in the project, as demonstrated by the products of their work. Teachers have developed a personal attitude and self-awareness that reflects activism, collaboration, interrelation. The project team has identified genuine developmental resources, affective and cognitive balancing. The new strategies used have stimulated creative affirmation and adaptation.

*Sabo Lidia,*

Psychotherapist

*Dinu Simona,*

Psychologist

### **3.4. In Slovenia**

As a young psychologist and psychotherapist of the transactional analysis with many practical experiences, I greatly encourage new, creative forms of work with children. Therefore I responded positively to the invitation of the Vič primary school to take part in the project.

The two-year Erasmus+ WATCH project with participants from Slovenia, Italy, Romania and Estonia has brought something new, different, fresh and promising to me. Not only did we apply the new quality method in schools, but we even upgraded it with the international cooperation between various experts, namely teachers, psychologists, psychotherapists and coordinators. These days such projects are very promising if we approach them guided by internal motivation and enthusiasm. There must be enthusiasm on the part of the participants.

Children are a large group, but they haven't yet received enough attention both in a psychological and therapeutic way. There are too few children's psychotherapists or psychological counselors for children and there is as well the lack of research in this field. Children represent a specific group adults have sometimes difficulties to approach directly, as there are more indirect ways used when dealing with children in schools, educational institutions and elsewhere.

There are many creative techniques and methods through which we can determine the thoughts, feelings and experiences of children. They help us observe children's behavior more easily and by using them we reach different conclusions about children.

To get into the inner world of a child, we must use creative methods, such as the work discussion method used in our project. I would point out that our method was even more attractive as it was combined with fairy tales.

The team collaboration between different experts was needed, since every one of them contributed their own professional input and engagement, and together we slowly reached new insights and conclusions. Each of the school was represented by the group of teachers, a psychotherapist, a psychologist and a coordinator and every half of the year, representatives of the countries met in Italy, Slovenia, Romania or Estonia, shared their experiences, reflected upon their work and thought about how to proceed.

Fairy tale was our main medium in using the work discussion method. The project consisted of 3 phases:

- 1) Teachers read fairy tales to children while children listened to them and later transformed them.
- 2) Children with the help of teachers created their own fairy tales through brainstorming.
- 3) Children used the cards of Propp to create fairy tales and play them with a help of puppets.

I joined the project at the end of the first phase. My task as a psychotherapist was to participate at meetings of teachers, psychologists, coordinators and psychotherapists at the primary school within each phase.

My task was the most important one, namely to lead a discussion among teachers who read and reflected upon their reports of their work with children. I had to be quite attentive at all times and in tune with teachers. I have found that they focused all the time on the content of fairy tales that children narrated and that they discussed about subjectively perceived unsatisfactory content on the part of their children.

I noticed that they did not focus on the essence of the method or that the content of the project was not entirely clear to them. I re-examined the project's guidelines and began to remind them that the essence of the project was something else, namely through various forms of dealing with fairy tales such as listening, creating new fairy tales, playing fairy tales, etc.) to observe how reactions of children influenced reactions of teachers. . The method helps to observe the process, to observe the psychic dynamics within each student, and to observe social dynamics within the class. This approach helps to create a safe, comfortable, pleasant environment in the class, and helps to approach a particular student in an appropriate way, after various intra- and inter-psychic signs are identified.

As mentioned above, teachers did not take this point into account at first. Therefore, it seems to me that the first phase did not end as expected by coordinators. I would like to emphasize that there was nothing wrong with this, because the whole project was qualitative and thus unpredictable with many unpredictable and disturbing variables. I myself, too, prefer to use qualitative surveys which are more demanding, require more work, time, coordination, documentation, but they are also more real and have "more soul" in them. I greatly welcome such a project, because we have come up with new, encouraging findings through the longitudinal process.

At our school, we found that the teachers were too focused on the content of the stories and results. They were interested in how good, according to their personal assessment, fairy tales would be at the end. But in fact, we were not interested in this. We were interested in a process that would bring the children to some conclusion, that is, for example, to some new invented fairy tale, or role plays for final performances, etc. Teachers were too focused on results instead of the process where there were various, important dynamics within individual children, between various children, among the teacher and the individual pupil, between the teacher and the whole class, etc.

In fact, the subject of observation of the teacher was teachers themselves, namely how the reactions of the pupils, either the individual or the group influenced the teachers' reactions. I can say that we used a rather psychodynamic method. In a discussion group, I tried to guide them to rely on their own reactions, thoughts, feelings, responses and behaviours triggered by children during fairy tales.

We came to the conclusion that the fairy tales were only a means to achieve our goal: intra-psychic observation of teachers and their view of the dynamics of the class. Through student reactions, they could learn about their own classroom work; what they responded to, what they did or reacted, why they focused on specific students, what triggered them etc. I will explain this with the following examples from the real situations.

- ✓ A teacher with pride and a gleam in her eyes told how one girl was diligent, how she put together a fairy-tale with a happy ending. At the work discussion group we discussed her report and realized that the teacher liked happy endings of fairy tales and that she considered that children have to be good and obedient.
- ✓ A teacher was angry with a group of children who, in her opinion, made a poor performance of the fairy tale, that they didn't put any effort in it and that the teacher therefore lost her motivation. After asking questions and leading her to have an insight into her own reaction, we found that she appreciated perfectionism and that therefore she found her students to be incapable and lazy (I am talking about a specific situation).

Thus, in the course of the project, with a help of psychotherapist, teachers through their reports, views, thoughts, concerns, etc. repeated at our work discussion group meetings, acquired the insight into their own functioning in the classroom, their attitudes towards individual students and towards the dynamics in the class and towards the reasons why they didn't like particular students.

These insights were very constructive for the teachers though sometimes unpleasant.

As mentioned above, we repeatedly mentioned to teachers that they should concentrate on the subtle aspects, that is, on the process, not on the results. Teachers were cognitively aware of this, but unconsciously results always came at the front of their thoughts.

Together, we realized that the results were generally important to them, giving them a fairly high value. If we use fairy tales to look at teachers' work through the psychodynamic projection method for frontal teaching, we see how the grades are highly valued by them, and this means again focus on the result, instead of focus on the process. Grades have the highest value for almost all participating teachers, and also for the entire Slovenian school system. I have already identified this from my previous experiences when I myself was a student at school, as well as in practical work as a psychologist with students at schools.

In Slovenia, it seems to me that there is a great rivalry at schools about the grades that can bring individuals to their desired education and then to good job and salary and so forth. Too few teachers put their attention to the process of acquiring the knowledge itself, its value is not appreciated and every success has to be measured in grades and marks. All these things promote competitiveness, reduce solidarity, strengthen individualism, reduces connectivity, co-operation.

I also wanted to introduce this to teachers, that through this direct method they could recognize their often unhealthy way of functioning. Let me emphasize that this is not a criticism of teachers, but a school system mode of operation, Everything is in rush, lessons should be quickly learned, and marks quickly given. It turned out that the fairy-tale project caused many teachers to be in the stress although they personally liked the project and had sympathies towards it.

Here again, we come to an understanding of how we operate in Slovenian schools as it seems to be a kind of collective Slovenian consciousness. We still like the frontal teaching the most, although it is boring, but it is more effective in terms of the pace and quantitative knowledge. I can understand that teachers are in distress due to the curriculum but I believe that it will be liberating for teachers to try it differently.

I very much welcome the decision of the school to decide to participate in this project, to try a different kind of work.

The conclusion that we reached with our groups was therefore common, namely that it was necessary to focus on the process, not on the goal. In the last phase teachers also managed to incorporate different, creative forms and very creative ideas into fairy tales.

The Erasmus+ WATCH project encourages us to think otherwise and that nothing is right or wrong that it is just as it is. We also discussed at our international meetings the fact that we realized we had guidelines for the project on one hand but on another we had pretty much free hands how to implement it. So, the path, especially the most creative one, is important, not the goal.

The reactions of students during fairy tales, of course, reflected their open and even latent inside contents. As I mentioned before, it is a projection technique, where the characters in the fairy tale reflect the thoughts, feelings, desires, longings, experiences and their well-being at home. It was interesting to observe how teachers often focused on the so-called "problematic" students, or on those "diligent" students.

"Good" students evoked pleasant emotions, thoughts, etc., among teachers while "problematic" students evoked less pleasant feelings with teachers. In the discussions, we tried to touch on why the mentioned pupils provoked specific feelings for specific teachers in order to get a greater insight and, therefore, to provide more optimal way of functioning of the teachers in the classroom.

Of course, we always took the discussion in a safe way. The Work Discussion method with fairy tales served as a tool to recognize the psycho-dynamics of children, not only individuals, but also the psychodynamics of the group, i.e. of the whole class.

Some students were never mentioned, that is, they were either ignored or they did not have enough stimuli. I think that we could also create a sociogram and check whether teachers' reports were connected with the potential results on the sociogram, that is, who among students is "popular", who is "rejected" and who is ignored.

I think the WATCH project is very good and useful. It encourages creativity in the case of teachers who had some basic guidelines at each stage of the project on one hand but on the other hand they had free hands to be creative. That was valid also in case of students who co-created the content of fairy tales.

The teachers learned through themselves about themselves and about their disciples.

Even the choice of a certain fairy tale showed why a teacher opted for a certain fairy tale ( Did she really consider students' wishes or she wanted to please her ego from her childhood which can on the other hand be very positive and help open up a new content that communicates with the pupils' content?).

Fairy tales are to most people beneficial. It is possible to hide yourself in the world of fairy tales, but at the same time to speak abundantly through them.

It was great that the teachers first worked by themselves, then reported their work to the group of other teachers and a psychotherapist, then got information from their colleagues and psychotherapists about their work, and then the discussion followed , which often opened many new topics. All this was shared among participating countries, where we could also compare cultural differences between us. Thus, the project got even greater and there is a possibility for future cooperation between us.

We took a record of all the events very carefully so that the project remains well documented.

A positive experience was also the communication in English and improvement of our knowledge of English although it was often also an obstacle, since communication with different translators took a lot of time and the expression of thoughts and feelings in the mother tongue is definitely more genuine. In my opinion, it would be good to enhance teachers' knowledge of English in school. On the other hand it seems to me that many of the important things and knowledge from each of our schools was lost through translation.

The virtual classrooms did not come to life as expected due to the foreign language problems of many teachers from our school. If teachers succeeded in participating more, the project would probably have even better results. In future cooperation, it would be necessary to communicate more often and better between us.

I conclude that fairy tales were the way to reach the conscious and unconscious insides of teachers and students. They were just a medium, a method. It was important that these fairy tales stimulated their thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

As a psychotherapist I wanted to be real and honest, I believe the project at least triggered a shift in teachers' desire to use such projection techniques. I will certainly use them myself in my therapeutic work.

Teachers and other school staff need psychotherapeutic counselling in connection with their work at school, because they are often overly subjective in situations.

Therefore support is needed for them, as well as support is needed for children, for each individual and for a group of children.

We hope that the school system will sympathize with this idea in the future. This project has shown that this method is of high-quality and successful and it brings relief on many levels.

*Anja Ibrčić,*

Psychotherapist

## 4. The experience in the schools

### 4.1 I.C. Ercolano 5 Iovino-Scotellaro

#### 4.1.1. Italian Coordinator's considerations

For our school, the participation to WATCH project was also linked to the development of civic competences for an active citizenship: of the eight key competences for life-long learning listed in the recommendations of The European Framework, the number 6 (social and civic competences) is the one which should have been developed by all students and teachers by the end of their experience. As a matter of fact, one of the school tasks is to try to train future citizens, who are able to identify and develop the necessary skills and competences which will help them to “*participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life in an increasingly diverse society*”<sup>6</sup>.

Developing citizenship, that is, developing social responsibility and participation for the improvement of the community means: collaborate with other people - being able to work respectfully with different teams; interact effectively with the others - developing flexibility and adaptability; adapt ourselves to changes - balancing different views and coming to quick solutions.

At first, teachers mainly focused on the *Fairytale Action* methodologies: students were engaged in a process of actively constructing meaning, a process that the teacher can only facilitate but not invent. The invented stories are the result of pupils' constructions, the beliefs and emotions about experiences in their lives.

In this context “construction” simply refers to the ways they build their own understanding of the world around and how they fit into it.

The story is the result of an active and democratic participation of every pupil, a collaborative work about necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal.

---

<sup>6</sup> Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006/0962/EC) on key competences for lifelong learning. The *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework* is an annex of a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. It was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* on 30 December 2006/L394

But the fairy tales were the tool and not the aim of our project, which relies on the work discussion groups where teachers discuss about their experiences and help each other in sharpening their observational skills towards their pupils.

Last, but not least, teachers' mobility has been an important element for developing new professional and social skills, not only for improving teachers' English language competences but also, if not more important, for fighting prejudice and stereotypes. These exchanges, in fact, also offer an opportunity for working together on a project, for cooperating with our colleagues and sharing our knowledge.

Working on a common theme tends to highlight similarities between individuals and cultures, rather than emphasizing differences.

Finally, as a local coordinator, I just want to do some reflections on the sustainability and impact of the project upon our school.

The Watch project has transformed the fundamentals of the perception of cooperation. All the teachers involved in this experience talk about a before and an after the project. In fact, we can observe that something has changed ... and that this change is linked to the experiences made together, to the shared decisions, to the creation of the final output, to the application of a innovative methodology.

The whole project has had a deep impact on the development of teachers' personal, didactic and social competences, whose aims are the promotion of a serene learning atmosphere in the classrooms.

We can observe that in our school there is a more open attitude towards Europe and a new pleasure and ability to work in team: teachers of various kind and levels (kindergarten, primary and secondary school) started to cooperate, to implement activities aimed at promoting inclusion and acceptance of diversity. Differences produce opportunities not barriers.

Teachers now feel encouraged to reflect on their teaching practices and to share these reflections with colleagues not only within their school, to broaden their perspective and vision, to be even more confident in the application of the work discussion methodology.

In the end, I just want to add two words about two tools suggested to the involved teachers: Google Classroom and e-twinning.

The first one has been used for easily cooperating with colleagues, for creating debates, publishing notices, sharing contents (links, videos, pictures), for reminding deadlines and storing material produced.

E-twinning has been introduced, with all its functionality, in the framework of the last learning activities of the project. E-Twinning offers a secure platform for teachers to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share ideas and all the involved teachers have been sensitized to use the potentiality of this channel for transferring the results

*Annunziata Punzo,*

Local Coordinator

#### **4.1.2. Italian Teachers' experience**

##### Carmen Acampora

The project WATCH, which the school Iovino-Scotellaro took part to, was made up of three phases. Each phase had specific aims and objectives to reach.

In the first phase the main feature was the reading of traditional fairytales in order to help our pupils to express their inner world, that is often unknown to themselves and us teachers. In this phase the children could modify the characters, the events and the endings of the stories according to their socio-cultural context.

The children identified themselves with the characters and modified the events, in this way they could internalize the reality and modify it. The whole class worked together to reach the same aim, the children got in touch better and knew each other better. There were also quarrels and bad moods but everything was overcome in the best way.

During this first phase I tried to create a link between the children and the fairytales, I tried to help them to express their feelings and emotions.

In the second phase the children created their own fairytales and rebound them with images, too. The class was divided into small groups, each group had a specific task. The children put their creativity into action, each pupil was important for the realization of the fairytales, because each pupil contributed by doing what he or she could do in the best way. In this phase I coordinated and supervised their job.

In the third and last phase the children made puppets in order to dramatize their fairytales. They first planned which characters to make, then chose the materials to use and finally made a creative workshop.

In this phase I collaborated with my children and advised them when needed, I changed the position of chairs and desks in order to give them more space to work in the best way.

After the creation of puppets, we did a show, where each pupil had a role, there were also a director, a narrator, a cameraman and a coordinator.

The aims reached thanks to this project were: to favour the children's creativity; to help them to plan the realization of a final product; to highlight each pupil's features and skills.

Thanks to this project we teachers learned our pupils better, we learned their strong and weak sides.

But we also understood our limits, we had the possibility to compare with our colleagues and to cooperate with them thanks to the work discussions, meetings we had each month, where we discussed our reports about our activities in the classroom with our children.

There were two fundamental specialists, the psychotherapist, who was the conductor of the work discussions, and the psychologist, who was the teachers' observer during the discussions.

Moreover, during the transnational meetings we teachers could compare our work with our foreign colleagues, we all agreed with the educational importance of fairytales, thanks to which children can express their creativity and their inner world, so that we can improve our relationship with them and can help them in their growth process better.

### Teresa Autiero

As it was a curricular project, its activities were introduced in the regular school time and organized in the classrooms, but we arranged desks and chairs in order to create a circle time that could favour the children's participation and expression of their emotions and feelings. Through this project they could, in fact, express their inner world, creating in this way a positive climate in the classes .

During the activities the children were more active and creative in comparison with their regular class activities. They felt protagonists of their job, the teachers played the role of tutor and mediator, facilitating their creativity and expressivity. Sometimes we teachers had to modify something during the different phases.

Working individually or in small groups according to the different activities, gave the children the possibility to express themselves according to their necessities and needs.

This project represented the possibility for teachers to meditate on their social skills and their capacity to exchange ideas and experiences, they could improve techniques, contents and methodologies.

They understood the importance of the role of fairytales as tools to understand their children better in order to help them during the learning process.

Fairytales are in fact very useful in the children's personal development.

From a social and moral point of view fairytales help the children to know positive ways of interacting such as cooperation and solidarity, or negative ones such as envy, trick and fraud; moreover they learn the different consequences.

They get in touch with positive and negative characters, so that they start learning how to be and behave in the best way.

Thanks to the reports about the three phases and the monthly meetings with the psychologist and the psychotherapist, the teachers got aware of the relationships there were among their pupils and had the possibility to share problems and experiences in order to improve their work. They in fact grew from a professional point of view.

As for the assessment of the children's experience, according to the observation during the activities, it was certainly very positive and useful for most of them.

### Giuseppina Cozzolino

The project, that aroused a deep interest in the pupils, consisted in the reading of fairytales, the invention of new ones and a creative workshop for the creation of puppets, that were used for the dramatization of the invented fairytales.

Thanks to this project the children could freely express their fantasy, they improved their communicative skills and they were all appreciated for their individual features. They could reinforce the group spirit learning to share and not to contrast each other anymore.

They learned respect and solidarity that are important for their social and moral improvement. Thanks to the dramatization of their fairytales, the children could train their memory skills and overcame their shyness.

The meetings with the psychologist and the psychotherapist were a tool to control the development of the different phases and, moreover, to share problems emerged during the activities.

In conclusion I can affirm the project was positive both for us teachers and our pupils, it was a very enthusiastic experience we shared with our European school partners.

## Annarita Oliviero

We have arrived at the end of the project made up of three phases.

The first phase is the one about listening and reading of classical fairytales; teachers played the role of facilitator and tried to make pupils have fun.

The children could express their emotions and feelings both in a verbal and graphic form.

In the second phase the children had to create a fairytale of their own, it was the most difficult phase, because they didn't seem interested. So the teacher found the strategy to let them identify with the characters of the fairytales as animals.

The invention of a happy ending, which solved the difficult situation lived by the characters, gave the children the possibility to live important experiences and to understand what was wrong or right.

As a matter of fact in the fairytale "The yellow little lamb" the topic is diversity, through its creation the children learned that, even if people are different from us, they are as good and talented as us.

The third phase of the dramatization of the fairytale was an imitation game, the children could express freely their emotions, feelings and fears, they identified themselves in the characters and they were surely the funniest moments of the project.

## Maria Valletti

I took part to the project "Erasmus Plus" with the class 4 A.

I noticed my children were careful and interested during the phase of the listening to classical fairytales, through which they sometimes found answers to their questions. They understood that during our life there are obstacles and that, only who faces them with courage can overcome them. They reinforced their emotional and cognitive skills, they made questions about life and meditated on what they lived.

In a short time the children became more self confident and overcame their initial fears.

The phase of the project they liked most was the one of the puppets creation.

They identified with the characters, they became little actors and in this way they had the possibility to express their inner world without being judged.

I noticed they became more communicative and were more open to new experiences and group activities.

The monthly meetings with the psychologist and the psychotherapist were very useful not only from a professional point of view. We teachers could share our problems and results and so we could grow as teachers and persons, too.

## 4.2 Võnnu Keskkool

### 4.2.1 Estonian Coordinator's considerations

This project was complicated for Võnnu High School in many respects. There were some alterations within the teachers of the elementary and lower secondary school involved with this project. The school administrator, involved with this project, had also left. Regards to the alterations within the personnel it became clear what kind of problems the administrator had within the systematic approach of presenting a larger picture. In reality there rose a need for four to five phases for this project that caused time pressure. Despite of the problems in organising there was an increase in efficiency regards teachers and students.

Supervised by their teachers, the students could read, think about, retell, create and act out the stories and fairy tales more intensely as it was planned at the beginning. The teachers who realised that there were deviations regards the project met more often. There were discussions and the planned activities were more focused.

The results made it possible for the psychotherapist to study the hypotheses of how to improve school system. The psychotherapist could make the suggestions taking into consideration methods, grouping and feedback.

During the project the administrator/coordinator had different roles. While I was settling with my new role my colleagues who were involved in this project from the beginning had a bigger burden to bear. There were high expectations to the therapist who was involved in the substantial activities that started from the second year of this project.

The implementation of the methodology. In addition to the provided activities and methodology, the teachers had a freedom to choose time, place, genres of the puppet theatre etc. In addition to using the Prop Cards the teachers invented their own ways of dividing the stages of the stories, to provide the students with their roles and to replay it all. Primary school classes are at the separate wing of the building.

Therefore the neighbour class students were used as an audience. The teachers' intensive cooperation played an important role in their reflections and creativity.

Cultural features. Võnnu High School is a rural school situated close to the biggest city in Southern Estonia. It is a state funded school and where majority of the students are male. Connected with Estonian cultural history, Estonians are restrained people. Boys are even more restrained than girls.

Therefore it is important that in addition to the intellectual activities there were also involved some hand- coordination activities (puppet making). This helped to start the fairy tale activities. It also helped to think about the characters, their personality and emotions. Fairy tales were mostly played from behind the screen/curtain that proved to be especially encouraging for the students who were modest.

Due to that it was interesting to find out that the differences in creativity and presentational skills between boys and girls declined. The differences between the students who had had acting classes and who had not had any acting experience also declined.

Reflection about the project and the vision of how this methodology affected teachers, students and parents. This project involved certain activities yet its impact is certainly broader. We as a school wanted to find ideas that would help to develop students' reading skills and to enhance their creativity.

We wanted to find ways to increase the ability to read, to understand and to fantasize.

These are important study skills in our school's curricula. This was supplemented in creating characters and implementing their behaviour. Activities involving hand coordination and presentational skills are additional value to the WATCH Project. Even though creating fairy tales was just a tool in this project, for us it is one very important teaching tool.

Fairy tales can be used for understanding texts, creating texts, teaching listening and reading skills, to implement values and so on and so forth.

Teachers were grateful to learn new methodology. Even though in some cases this proposed methodology was used before (dices used for creating stories), every new aspect is welcomed.

The most important nuance is the overall of the WATCH methodology. Work Discussion Group Methodology helped to understand how to use this so-called “third eye” insight and the specialists helped the teachers to understand themselves and also how to observe the students’ behaviour, reactions and development.

Actually, it made it easier to talk to the colleagues about the problems in classes and to share advice.

*Valdek Rohtma,*

Local Coordinator

## 4.3 Scoala Centrala Campina

### 4.3.1 Romanian Coordinator's considerations

The WATCH project has been implemented in Scoala Centrala Câmpina since the 2017 school year and it has been running for 2 years. This project has been a challenge for our school from the beginning.

Although it is the largest school in Câmpina, Scoala Centrala has no experience in European projects. However, it was received with great enthusiasm by the teachers, but especially by the students.

One difficulty was to understand that this project is built on 2 pillars: the introduction of the *Work Discussion Methodology* and Instrument-Fairy tale action.

In addition, a psychologist and a psychotherapist would collaborate in the project, a less common practice in Romanian schools.

At first, teachers understood that they must introduce fairy tale into classroom activities. There was little difficulty in finding the time needed for these non-formal activities.

But the great challenge was the Work Discussion methodology. It was not very clear at first the role of the psychologist and the therapist in the work of teachers.

After the first discussion, the role of this method was understood: the teachers reflected on class activity, and the psychologist and the therapist helped them better understand students' reactions during non-formal activities.

The first stage of the project was a real challenge for teachers. Especially because of the 6 classes involved, 3 classes were preparatory, with students that teachers did not know and who now understood what a group and group rules means.

Thus, teachers have more easily discovered students, and pupils have been more easily revealed through fairy tale action.

Implementation of the methodology. Teachers had the freedom to choose the time, place, make puppets, puppet theater. For the first phase, each teacher has chosen a list of 6 classical fairy tales, which he has read to the students.

For the second phase, teachers have found their own ways of choosing the title of fairy tales and applying Rodari's rules. For example, each child wrote a word on a paper, and then picked out 2 words from a urn from which they started creating a fairy tale. This encouraged the children to accept the opinions of others and to cooperate.

The third phase was applied with the greatest pleasure by the teachers. Propp's cards were presented and the pupils created a story orally, respecting their meaning. Students then used their skill to create puppets. Thus, even the most shy ones were involved in group activities, and most pupils expressed themselves through the puppet theater.

Teachers noticed pupils and, through reflection, discovered their hidden passions and talents. Teachers were grateful for having learned a new methodology.

Cultural features. Scoala Centrala Campina is the largest school in the city, with about 600 pupils aged between 6 and 15 years old.

The school's vision is to promote open, flexible education, capable of forming key competences, to provide children with equal opportunities through high-quality education.

The WATCH project offered the school the opportunity to get involved at European level in scientific innovations by applying a new methodology to help teachers reflect with different eyes on classroom work. Strong teacher cooperation has played an important role in reflecting and stimulating creativity.

Thus, the impact of this project was profound:

- It has made teachers more open to colleagues, through working discussions, to accept their emotions and fears and to talk about them. Reflect more on students' reactions by writing a reflection journal. In fact, it was easier to talk to the other teachers about class problems and share advices.
- It has led students to cooperate, to respect colleagues' opinions.  
Through the implementation of the project, students' creativity was stimulated, the shy ones found a way to get involved in group activities.  
They either created puppets or made themed drawings.

Children with special needs felt they were part of a group, because they could express themselves in other ways than words.

- For psychologists and psychotherapists, it was an opportunity to understand the difficulties faced by a teacher during non-formal activities. It was a good opportunity to support teachers in understanding the reactions of certain children and giving them support.
- For the local community it was extremely important. It was a confirmation at European level of the quality and professionalism of Scoala Centrala.

And winning the national contest ***Made for Europe*** through which this project has been disseminated throughout Romania has brought pride to the whole community.

*Laura Andreea Arman,*

Local Coordinator

### 4.3.2 Romanian Teachers' Experience

#### Corina Iatan

As Daria, a 9 years old child, said, through this Project, we have come to know "many souls of children". But also the child from our soul.

"Work Discussion Approach as good practice in primary schools" - interaction with classical fairy tales have revealed frightening characters in formation, children's desire to empathize with positive and negative characters. The creativity, the imagination, the beautiful, the fantasy, the spontaneity of the pupils, the team work through mutual collaboration and complementation, sometimes the competitive spirit, as well as the involvement of all children, regardless of character and personality, have been highlighted. It was a joy to feel all the students involved in the activity. The fairy tales allowed the children to express what they think, to be, "what they want, who they wants, when they want their dreams to get the most beautiful form, to talk about themselves through writing, a drawing, through an object he makes with his hands".

Discussions for me were a confirmation of a good collaboration with my colleagues, they were a validation of new work experiences in my profession, a more efficient knowledge of working methods with children, an improvement of the professional communication, with both my students and my colleagues, a job satisfaction, as well as a self-knowledge.

#### Laura Iordache

In this project we have learned to work together for a good result that we can all enjoy.

Following our participation in the Erasmus + project, we realized that all extracurricular activities of this type represent some beneficial experiences for people interaction; shaping your character and developing your skills in a recreational-social way.

The project I was involved in was educational, it was a good way to develop myself, to find out more about what application of the WORK DISCUSSION METHODS means in the school context.

Along with my students, I did something useful to develop skills such as self-confidence and others, patience, joy, passion, freedom, and curiosity. Children have come to know

each other better, to bind new friends, to work in the team and to talk freely about what they feel.

This project represented the opportunity to participate in the realization of a collective product - The Fairy Tale. For teachers, they provide text support for literary classes and an opportunity to draw up a report on each student's reactions / involvement / empathy. For students, they offer both classical texts and texts created by other colleagues, making them more accessible by language. Drawings accompanying the fairytale clarify the text message and support non-verbal children (with special needs).

This project was a learning opportunity for those involved - teachers, students. Each of the project participants had to learn and win at the same time. For me, this project brought new knowledge, new capabilities, exchange of ideas, transfer of creative practices, access to new teaching materials, language training and language development in real contexts.

### Oana Moise

The implementation of the Erasmus+ KA2 WATCH Project has been beneficial in that we have collectively discovered that group discussions are generating new ideas, enthusiasm and commitment to engage.

During the three phases I have strengthened some beliefs, but I have discovered other strengths of my children: how familiar they are to fairy tales, how much they like to read or to be read, to what extent they can play the contents of a fairy tale and how they express their own opinions, how creative and original they can be, how well they express themselves in words or drawings, acting skills and innovation, ability to collaborate, coordinate, accept or convince and not only. We have surprised unexpected reactions and also enthusiasm, because they have not been overwhelmed by the patterns of a "premeditated" lesson, but have given free way to their own imagination, feelings and desires.

Some children were involved in the holding of share impressions, opinions, others the creativity, others dramatization or making puppets, dolls required dramatization, but the fact is that at the end, each child contributed conduct of the activities proposed by this project. Extroverted children have constantly come up with new ideas, they have been keen to get involved and express their opinions, introverted children and those with greater sensitivity have expressed themselves by drawing.

Those with disruptive behavior have been associated with some fairy-tale characters, and most girls have focused their attention on princesses or positive female characters. Each time they lived intensely the triumph of the Good and extracted valuable teachings.

It was an element of novelty, and the curiosity characteristic of the young age made a move that was, in my opinion, a success.

Thanks to coordinators and collaborators for this experience!

### Marieta Necula

In the depth of its idea, the Project has generated reactions from both the children and the teachers.

It was a launching run in an attempt to enter the fascinating world of fairy tales, in the face of the reality we live in.

I could say that after these months of intense communication based on reading and dramatizing stories, I managed to capture through words and images, fragile emotions, trying to understand and learn something new and to make order in the disordered thoughts of school children.

I tell you ... my poor knowledge in this area has been taken over by the intense experiences of children in their journey through the world of thoughts.

As much as possible, student involvement was beneficial to some ... but not to all. Everyone reacted in his own way. Only participation within the team made them integrate as well and so it is good for the child to evaluate his behavior and his emotional state.

Thank you, ERASMUS !!! For me - a wonderful experience ... for children - a sunshine through a door open ...

### Magda Șerban

It was an extraordinary experience, both personally and professionally. I first discovered my flexibility, how easily I can adapt to a new lifestyle, to a new education system. I have been put in a position to communicate and interact with new, different people from a cultural point of view.

Everything was impressive, with the desire to self-refresh, open to new, the desire to learn and accept the new rules of the system you entered. Rigidity and conservatism should not look into the structure of the Erasmus project.

The children had the opportunity to learn how to create a story, how to present, how to make sure that their message is heard by the other colleagues.

Benefits of students:

- has developed their desire to express themselves;
- have challenged students to an imaginative exercise;
- esteemed the desire for knowledge and creativity;
- have enjoyed the victory of positive characters they have often identified;
- have learned to define their positive emotions in relation to the negative ones, to make more social tolerances;

Together, I did something useful to have skills such as self-confidence, patience, joy, passion, freedom and curiosity. It was a good method to involve all students. They have come to know each other better, to win new friends, to work in a team and to talk freely about what they feel. Every time I worked, I did it with joy!

As far as I am concerned, as a teacher, I would mention the following:

Opportunities:

- better knowledge of children through an activity that has not imposed too many limits;
- participation in an international activity;
- the possibility to experience another type of extracurricular activity.

Benefits:

- achieving better and stronger collegiate relationships and achieving the cohesion of the group;
- developing creativity through teamwork;
- satisfaction by obtaining the final product;
- widening the knowledge horizon;
- improving communication with introverted students;
- a deeper knowledge of all class children.

The attraction of the fairytale stood in the capacity of delighting and entertain. It provided so much due to the fact that it drove away the pressure, the anxiety, the feelings of inadequacy, the nearness of the cases. The children were able to understand the whole, to associate themselves with the heroes of the bass, to attract the appropriate matches.

For me, the creation of the fairy tale was a very difficult one. And I have recovered the moments of my childhood that I have become aware of. The story went out to meet the little soul translated to me as hidden secrets, it helped me with the best of the conflicts. I am convinced that the same things have been felt to the likeness of the people, the only people who can not afford to express themselves are adults.

This feedback, in a context of exploration, has amplified the psychological role of fairy tales. "The one to solve the conflict between the positive and the negative ones in the Self" (Sheldon Cashdan).

Playing/ acting the fairy tale created in the third stage helped the children move slightly and give life to their inner voice. Even children with special needs have expressed themselves freely, without necessarily dealing with visual exposure to an external audience. The created storyline, representing the end product of the group, contributed to the consolidation of the group itself, strengthening the sense of belonging and "being able". This project was very useful and interesting.

As a conclusion, I can say that this experience has been a challenge that all of them have won.

### Elena Velcea

Personally, participating in this project enjoyed me greatly because it helped me to better understand the child's thinking at this age and found that it is much deeper than it seems. It is important for our teachers to constantly seek those gates to reach the child's mind and soul for a fuller knowledge and maximum use of their inner potential.

I felt that between me and my students there was a stronger bridge and communication possibilities with those shy or introverted students. I felt joy, energy, a desire to experience and something other than school activity, for the benefit of group cohesion, a group in which I, the teacher, became a child like my students.

## 4.4 Vič Primary School

### 4.4.1 Slovenian Coordinator's considerations

Since 2017 Erasmus+ Ka201 WATCH project has offered us an unique opportunity to get the knowledge of the innovative and valuable Work Discussion method thanks to the unique partnership between EduLab NGO and Iovino Scotellaro School from Italy, Scoala Centrala Campina from Romania, Vonnu Keskkool from Estonia and our Vič Primary School.

On the other hand, the Erasmus+WATCH project proved to be challenging as well.

The first challenge was to find time to perform fairy tale actions with our pupils and have regular Work Discussion group meetings as our members consisted of both persons employed fully by the school as well as of persons partially employed by the school or from the outside of the school.

The second challenge was how to involve very young pupils aged 6-8 years (classes 1 and 2 of the primary school) in creating and performing fairy tales during the three stages of the project. We involved both full classes as well as classes of the after school care. During these two years some pupils were therefore involved with the project for both years while other pupils were only involved in it for one school year.

The third challenge were three stages of the project. The last stage involving creating puppets and performing fairy tales with puppets was the hardest one on one hand but on the other hand it enabled the creativity of our pupils to come out.

The implementation of the Work Discussion method. As Slovenian school curriculum emphasizes the role of fairy tales in first classess of the primary school in Slovenia, choosing fairy tales as a basis upon which to implement the Work Discussion method in practice proved to work well. We learned the method step by step by through three stages of the fairy tale action.

In the first stage, teachers chose six well-known international and Slovenian fairy tales and read them to pupils.

In the second stage, pupils were invited to give their input to the fairy tales action by creating their fairy tales based on choosing certain words and applying Gianni Rodari's grammar fantasy.

The third stage proved the most innovative for pupils by creating their own fairy tales by using the cards of Propp and creating their own puppets for their fairy tales.

The performances of their own fairy tales helped pupils to become more self-assured and to show their ingenuity. The fairy tales have therefore become the starting point to unleash their hidden inner potential.

Work Discussion Group meetings of the teachers, the psychologist and the psychotherapist proved especially valuable as they enabled us to learn the principles of the Work Discussion method in practice. As the method was new for our school, we had to learn about the role of psychologist and psychotherapist first.

At the beginning we focused more on classroom activities and reactions and behaviour of our pupils during fairy tales actions but later on our focus completely shifted to our teachers' reactions, emotions and experiences caused by reactions of pupils. The psychotherapist constantly reminded us that it wasn't only the results that mattered but that it was the process leading to the results that mattered the most and that we should be innovative and adaptive in the process.

The Cultural Context. The Vič Primary School in Ljubljana is the biggest primary school in Slovenia with around 900 students and with a tradition of participating at various Erasmus+ projects.

The school's vision is to be inclusive and supportive of both teachers and students' development in a safe environment. The school participates at various competitions in different fields and therefore enables various forms of potential and skills of students to be developed. The school is also open to learning new methods in order to improve its results.

The Reflection on the Erasmus+WATCH project and its effects. Pupils have developed more interest in fairy tales. Some shy pupils have got bigger self-esteem and some pupils with lots of ideas have got appreciation of their newly found skills.

Fairy tales have also had impact on reading, listening and writing skills as well as on internalization of values present in fairy tales. Pupils have learned how to cooperate with each other and to take other pupils' ideas into account.

The psychotherapist and psychologists have got insight into the work of teachers and with the new knowledge they have been able to advise and support their work.

The Work Discussion method used at the Work Discussion group meetings enabled us to cooperate with each other ( a psychologist, a psychotherapist, teachers) and enabled teachers to self-reflect on our emotions in our work interactions and it helped us improve our capacities to better understand our own behaviour as well as behaviour of our pupils affected by various processes during our regular class lessons as well as during fairy tales actions.

We learned to observe, uncover, and address emotional discomfort within us in order to better understand behaviors and emotional factors that have impact on our teaching and learning.

The Work Discussion group meetings provided a regular and a safe space for us educators to reflect on challenges as well as to be more helpful to our pupils and their families in future with our new knowledge of the Work Discussion method.

The Work Discussion method is a valuable method for the formation of skills relevant for education here in Slovenia. We learned new knowledge, skills and attitudes which I hope they will help us in our future work. Our understanding of emotional and other aspects of our experiences with pupils have been enhanced.

Personally , I would love to see Work Discussion method applied and implemented in some new Erasmus+Ka201 project in other fields as well such as the field of environment or the humanitarian field ( e.g. refugees) involving both schools and NGOs.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all participating members from EduLab NGO, Iovino Scotellaro School, Scoala Centrala Campina and Vonnu Keskkool as well as to our principal Mr. Sašo Vlah for his support to the project and to all Vič Primary School participating teachers, psychologists and a psychotherapist.

*Robin Dewa,*

Teacher and Local Coordinator

## 4.5 Project Coordinator's considerations

The project has revealed an interesting, innovative, highly formative and involving experience for everyone taking part to it.

At first, the project intimidated and frightened everyone a little, not only the Italian team, but the other partners too, because it presented itself as a new adventure and also a challenge.

In a purposeful way, each of us shyly got involved in the project.

So we started just to play with children in each of the three phases of the project.

Thanks to the use of fairytales, tool in order to understand, create, fancy up, express oneself, relate to others, we experimented the work discussion, the main methodology of the project, a truly moment of proof for teachers.

Through the support of psychologists and psychotherapists, teachers were more and more able to compare each other, to cooperate and share their problems in the class.

They became more confident in the use of the methodology and developed their "third eye", that they learned to use above all in order to understand themselves and then to observe and better understand their pupils' behaviour, their reactions, their emotions, their way to relate to others and their fears, too .

Thanks to the transnational meetings we had the opportunity to share the different project phases on a large scale, improving our professional skills and competences, overcoming the geographical barriers.

We got aware we had the same working needs and shared our experiences both on a professional and personal level.

The difficulty of the English language, felt at first in all four countries, was overcome in a very professional way thanks to the local coordinators and the Association EDUlab, who created a comfortable and nice atmosphere during the meetings.

Moreover, thanks to this project the Italian school has become a Cambridge exams centre in order to improve its pupils' and teachers' English language skills.

As concerning the sustainability of the project, what we all highlighted, is that we can continue to use the results of the project beyond the two years of its duration.

This important aspect makes us understand how it is a winning project.

As a matter of fact the Romanian partner school won the national contest "Made for Europe" just thanks to this project, it was really a great success for the Romanian community.

As concerning our regional context, the project Watch was presented at "Expo School Italy 2.0" last 16th April 2019.

What are our plans now? Certainly, thanks to the successes obtained during the last two years of experimentation, our goal is to use the methodology of the Work Discussion in the daily routine of the primary school, and , moreover, as ours are comprehensive schools, it's to use it in all the grades.

Good job.

*Monica Malfitano,*

Project Coordinator

## 5. The project as good practice

### 5.1 The Importance of the Observation

*To see is the perceptive activity,  
To look is to direct the eye towards an object,  
To observe is to consider something with care;  
The difference between these verbs is in the intentionality of the act  
and in the depth level of the gaze.  
(Baumgartner, 2004).*

W.A.T.C.H. has, among its references, a shared idea initiated during a period of collaboration with the Day Center of the Mental Health Service of Naples.

The role I played in this project allowed me to experience the different meanings of observing.

Putting myself in a listening condition but also acting as a “memory narrator” of the group through writing reports, gave me the possibility to observe it “staying outside” - by reading its internal dynamics, but also “staying inside” - by having an active part in the sharing of the emerged reflections.

To be an observer of an external situation also means to be able to observe our own inner processes: preserving the knowledge and the awareness of our filters we modify, by sharpening, the ability to observe and the quality of the observation.

In the first phase of the project, the presence of the observer initially generated a certain "apprehension", as if my role was to evaluate.

The curiosity that lit teacher's eyes while I was writing aroused a certain tenderness in me and I wondered if I had become myself "the teacher".

In subsequent meetings, the tension regarding my presence has greatly relaxed, above all thanks to the sharing of the notes I collected "while the others were talking".

The pen that runs on the sheet has taken on a different and deeper meaning: a shared and acceptable narration that has given the group the opportunity to go through the phases of the project while holding hands.

Through the observation we can capture elements that could otherwise be lost.

At each new meeting there was the memory of the previous one, with the reflections that had emerged, the thoughts that escape our attention when we are in a group, the unspoken words because they are too heavy to say, the intense emotions that children have unconsciously donated us - especially the most painful that we tried to take charge of with the group, along a road at times impervious but often full of satisfaction.

In fact the observer, turning his attention to the relationship with himself and to the relationship of help that he/she is observing, can consider the whole process as the creation of a systemic vision, which retains the received information and preserves the relationship in order to detect data and make it possible to recognize them.

The etymology of the Italian and therefore latin word *osservare* (to observe) derives from the union of two words, "ob" and "servare", whose meaning becomes: to preserve, to guard, to consider. These three verbs represent the action carried out by the observer, which coincides with the inner experience I lived on the emotional and cognitive plans, playing my role both as "observer" and as "observed".

During the Watch project several implicit and explicit needs emerged: the needs both of those who talked about them (the work discussion groups, that is the teachers) and of those the group talked about (the children). As a consequence, the meaning of the word "consider" has to do with "take care of" the urgency of these needs, which showed their disruptive strength at each meeting, sometimes leaving the group with very little energy. It was necessary to narrate these needs in more than one voice, "sometimes raising the voice" to be "respected", sometimes using silence in order to be "listened to".

The observation, through the writing of the report, has allowed us to "preserve", that is to "set aside" some of these elements for using them in the appropriate moment, so that the group was ready to accept what had emerged. As an observer, all this has represented for me the ability to contain up to the moment of feedback those cognitive and emotional aspects caught in the discussions and in which I had been involved, carrying out a listening and self-listening role, an observing and self-observing work, as a witness of them all.

"To guard" also means "to monitor", that is to supervise responsibly, protecting from possible dangers. The narration of intense emotional events brings with it several "dangers", from closure to prevarication, and collusions but also rigidity may emerge.

Observation can become a useful tool for participants in the group, provided that in the act of "re-reading" all the elements they are able to move towards a process of self-reflection that broadens self-awareness as a tool (teachers as an educational tool for children), but also self-awareness as a person who can go through a change and develop new coping strategies in order to face complex, at times exhausting and painful situations (those lived by children within their families).

The personal qualities of observation and assistance that the observer succeeds in putting into play through the use of feelings such as acceptance, empathy and cognition, can take on the very meaning of "preserving with care".

"To take care of" can become, in its reflexive form, a verb that indicates the reflection of the action on the same subject and, therefore, the "taking care" of the observer - as well as for all the help operators - turns into one of the fundamental processes that affects the work of observation.

Becoming aware of his/her own needs, of his/her own emotional experiences as well as of the different ways of being and staying in a relationship, allows the observer to take care of him/herself: guarding him/herself in order to guard, in a game of intertwining in which an evolutionary narrative can develop and can promote a change.

*Alessia Barbato*

Psychologist

## 5.2 Sustainability and Transferability

The acquisition of the importance of having an observational eye in the classroom and of reporting and sharing what observed inside structured groups, has been a significant point for all the schools involved in our project.

The benefits coming from the observation have been experienced and it is an aspiration of the entire partnership to sustain the practice of the work discussion methodology even if the project is concluded.

The presence of professional figures like psychologist/psychotherapists inside most of the involved schools could definitely facilitate this purpose. In the Italian schools the presence of a psychologist is still not compulsory but many educational institutions are involving them on their own initiative.

However in most cases the focus of their interventions in all the European schools is usually devoted to directly support the children so it is essential to turn the attention more and more also towards the teachers in consideration of their crucial and delicate task.

Even the teacher training in many countries is mainly subject-focused, child development is still an optional component in their training and there is no culture of reflective supervision for teachers.

In this context, for reflective practice we mean enabling teachers (and educators in general) to reflect upon, and be supported with, the emotional impact that work with children can have and how this is effected and mediated by the contexts within which they live.

Not by chance the need, to have space and opportunity to think about the everyday feelings and emotions, is more and more urgent: teachers cannot be left alone in their difficult journey and this project suggests a practice which can be fluently utilised, as all the literature produced and all the work done testifies.

Where a culture of reflective practice is absent, it is understandable that many education professionals feel uninformed and unskilled in even contemplating that they have an important role to play in promoting the mental well-being and development of children in their care.

It is then important to push towards this change and it has been decided to disseminate the reasons and the results of the project through the organisation of local workshops and any other initiative also after the end of the project.

The outputs produced has been designed for facilitating the transferability of the project.

Together with the initial booklet, this publication represents the instrument for applying the methodology and is mainly dedicated to school managers, teachers, psychologists and educators.

Also the website, <http://www.erasmuswatch.eu>, and all the resources contained are useful tools for transferring the WATCH approach.

As a matter of fact the site offers the possibility to use its contents in 5 languages: English, Italian, Estonian, Romanian and Slovenian. The official language of the site is English but the user can select another language.

The main contents of the methodology and of the project results can be found in the sections “Our project”, “Activities” and “Outputs” of the website.

The page OUR PROJECT contains a short but in depth description of the project with its objectives and leads to two sections: FAIRYTALE ACTION, where all the work done in the classrooms can be found, and WORK DISCUSSION METHODOLOGY with the main points of the proposed practice.

In the section ACTIVITIES there are the contents concerning: the TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS, the LEARNING ACTIVITIES, addressed to the teachers but attended also by the psychologist/psychotherapists of the partner schools, and the national multiplier EVENTS organized for the dissemination of the project results with specific attention to the Intellectual Output.

Finally, the section OUTPUTS gives the opportunity to download what realized for the project objectives including the FINAL FAIRY TALES invented by the pupils and all the RESOURCES i.e. the main presentations used in the framework of the learning activities and the transnational meetings.

Of course the main outputs, the initial BOOKLET and this FINAL PUBLICATION, can be found and downloaded in this section.

All this information and material will be available for a long period in order to effectively disseminate the contents for the application of the methodology.

For this purpose a multiple years domain web site has been preferred.

In conclusion we can affirm not only that the whole partnership has been cohesive in considering the scheduling of the activities done as a good practice but also that the application of the methodology has been considered by the teachers as part of their personal development and by the headmasters as a great opportunity for the school system.

The latter talk about teachers now needing to be more aware of the emotional component to learning and child development, and the challenges that this presents to the profession. As a consequence, they are seriously evaluating the possibility of involving in the application of this methodology also the other teachers who didn't participate in this project, including those teaching at a different grade.

This last point will probably constitute another possible area of investigation for further innovative projects.

This publication has been edited by

