

Background information

This case study was submitted by Andrej Pastas, a teacher at Srednja medijska in grafična šola, Ljubljana.

Andrej delivered Story Valley across a school year, with workshops every month.

Delivering Story Valley

This section will provide an example of how Story Valley can be delivered as a coherent project.

In particular, you may find this useful for the 'get creative' module – providing ideas of how to develop the stories shared in your initial sessions into a creative project.



How did you plan your first Story Valley session?

I prepared a historical text that the students had to read before the meeting. This text served as an introduction to a lecture about the specific topic of migrations and the wars in the former Yugoslavian republics. After the lecture we discussed the main events and problems that occurred within these events, with our students.

How did you engage students with finding and telling stories?

At first in the classical way – frontal lecture and discussion. Later I also used comics that covered the same topic. Some students liked the more visual approach, because it was more appealing to them.

What surprised or interested you about the stories that emerged as part of Story Valley?

I was mainly interested in the effect that migrations had on those students whose families migrated to Slovenia, and the reflection that the Story Valley project had on their perception of this issue before the project began and after it was finished.

Can you provide some examples of creative projects students completed as part of Story Valley?

Keeping in mind that our students are still in secondary school and that Story Valley project was not in our regular curriculum, the completion of stories was an achievement on its own. Furthermore I liked the comic story by Nika and the interview Lejla did with her parents. One approach is more visual, the other is quite difficult because it involves a high degree of personal involvement.

Can you provide an example of how creative thinking and creative practice were developed by your students throughout the project?

In my opinion creative thinking and practice evolved through sharing and dissemination between the other students and different teachers during the project. This diverse approach contributed to the learning growth of our students. We also included an outside mentor, journalist Kristina Božič, who helped the students in crafting their stories and challenging them to express themselves in a creative way.
Describe one student or group whose work stood out to you during the project.
As mentioned before I liked Lejla's idea to incorporate her personal story and the personal experience of her parents into her article, which was emotionally demanding. On the other hand, at least as I saw it, this approach worked because it touched the audience on an emotional level, probably through its brutal honesty.
What went well and what you would do differently in the future when running a Story Valley project?
Overall the project went well. The only things we had problems with were related to scheduling, so in the future I wouldn't recommend running this project as an extra-curricular activity, but rather I would suggest incorporating it into the regular curriculum. This way more students would be involved and could benefit from the project.
Can you summarise any formal or informal feedback you have received from students regarding their involvement in the project?
Students responded really well to the project. At the end of the school year they were pleased with the results of the project, proud of the work they had done, and sorry that the project had ended.

Sharing creative work

The section will provide an example how students' work was shared – which might provide ideas for sharing your own group's project(s).

On what scale was students' work disseminated?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internally <input type="checkbox"/> In your local area <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internationally <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe)
Describe how students shared their work as part of your project.
<p>The students published their works in the form of a school newspaper. Their experience of the Story Valley project was also presented at a public event, held by our partner Ljubljana, UNESCO City of Literature.</p> <p>They made a video about the newspaper reveal, which you can watch here: https://youtu.be/EpM4kiU2g90</p>
Can you share any examples with us? (e.g. links, images, videos)
<p>The school newspaper can be accessed on our website at: https://www.smg.si/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/casopis_StoryValey_maj_2022_splet-enojna-stran-1.pdf</p>
Did students benefit from the process of sharing their work? If so, how?
<p>Of course, through the accumulation of new knowledge and experience, to learning about new approaches and meeting new friends and colleagues from different countries. They</p>

got to experience new cultures, which broadened their horizons, and they say they have more confidence in writing now, compared to before.

Integrating Story Valley with your curriculum

In this section, the Story Valley deliverer reflects on how they used Story Valley to meet wider goals and outcomes, which might prove useful in setting up or pitching a project in your own setting.

The deliverer also describes their formal and informal evaluation practice; providing ideas on how to explore and communicate the programme's impact in your community.

Are the students in your Story Valley project studying on a course or for a formal qualification?

Yes – please specify which course and/or qualification

No – please describe the nature of your Story Valley group

Any student attending SMGŠ in the previous school year was allowed to join the group as the project was offered as part of our extra-curricular activities. Hence the number of students also fluctuated throughout the year, but in the end there were about 12-15 students actively participating in the project.

What was your main objective when you began the Story Valley project?

- To build students' literacy skills
- To connect students to stories and storytelling
- To build students' creativity and/or creative skills
- To connect students from different backgrounds
- To engage students with their learning
- Other – please explain

How did you embed Story Valley into your curriculum?

- Story Valley was delivered as part of students' curriculum course
- Story Valley was delivered separately – as an extra-curricular activity

How did the Story Valley project link to the objectives of your curriculum?

We tried to connect Story Valley to things that were covered in different parts of our regular curriculum, mostly history and language classes.

Did you assess the impact of Story Valley on your students? If so, how did you approach assessment?

No, because the majority of the students that were involved in the Story Valley project are not in my regular classes at SMGŠ.

How did Story Valley add value to your students' attainment and achievement?

In my opinion the students' literary skills have improved. Both their writing and speaking skills have improved, and they have gained a lot of general knowledge, thanks to diverse approaches to learning and thinking, as well as teaching students different ways of expressing themselves.