EuLabRPG: EUropean LABoratories of Role-Play Gaming to promote school social and emotional culture. School Curriculum – Version 2 - September 2024

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to introduce and promote the EuLabRPG: European Laboratories of Role-Play Gaming School Curriculum Version 1, designed to enhance social and emotional culture within schools. Through structured role-playing activities being integrated into the curriculum, EuLabRPG aims to foster essential life skills, such as communication, empathy and problem-solving among students. By providing an overview of the project's objectives, implementation strategies, educational methodologies and targeted competencies, this document serves as a comprehensive guide for educators interested in utilizing role-playing games as a means of promoting social and emotional learning. Additionally, it highlights the potential impact of EuLabRPG on student engagement, school culture and overall educational outcomes, while offering further resources and best practices for effective implementation.

Glossary

Your guide to the world of EuLabRPG and TTRPGs. Discover the meanings behind the terms and jargon used in these exciting tabletop role-playing games.

- **Table-top role-play games** (TTRPG): A game where players assume roles of fictional characters in a shared setting and collaboratively create stories. They use dice, rulebooks, and imagination to navigate adventures and challenges. It is so called (table-top) because players require a physical space to interact and share information, like a table.
  In most games, a specially designated player typically called the [game master](#) (GM) purchases or prepares a set of rules and a fictional [setting](#) in which each player acts out the role of a single [character](#). The GM describes the game world and its inhabitants; the other players describe the intended actions of their characters, and the GM describes the outcomes. Some outcomes are determined by the game system, and some are chosen by the GM.[2] This pattern was established by the first published role-playing game, [Dungeons & Dragons](#), but is not universal across all tabletop RPGs. (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabletop_role-playing_game)
- **Game Master (GM):** The GM is a facilitator who sets the rules, describes the world, and controls non-player characters (NPCs). They guide the players through the adventure and adjudicate rules disputes.
- **Players**: Typically, 3-6 players, but can vary. They take on the roles of characters and make decisions that drive the narrative.
- **Non-player characters** (NPCs): These are characters controlled by the Game Master (GM) in a tabletop role-playing game. They serve various roles within the game world, like antagonists, allies and neutral characters.
- **Rulebooks:** These provide guidelines for character creation, game mechanics, combat, and other aspects of the game. They ensure consistency and provide a framework for the adventure.
- **Dice:** Used to determine the outcome of actions, such as attacks, skill checks, and random events. Usually, a set of dices includes:
  - **1d4:** A four-sided die
  - **1d6:** A six-sided die
  - **1d8:** An eight-sided die
  - **1d10:** A ten-sided die
  - **1d12:** A twelve-sided die
  - **2d20:** Two twenty-sided dice (often a different color to distinguish them).
- **Board Games**: While both TTRPGs and board games are tabletop games involving dice and rules, they have significant differences in their focus, gameplay, and the role of players.
  - Gameplay:

- **TTRPGs:** Involve a high degree of improvisation and creativity. Players create their own characters, develop their own stories, and face unique challenges.
- **Board games:** Follow a more structured format, with predefined rules, objectives, and components. Players follow the rules to progress through the game and compete against each other.
  - o Role of players:
    - **TTRPGs:** Players have a significant degree of control over their characters and the narrative. They can make choices that affect the outcome of the game.
    - **Board games:** Players have less control over the narrative and are primarily focused on following the rules and achieving their goals.
- **Setting**: The time period, location, and general atmosphere of the game world.
- **Campaign**: A series of connected adventures that take place within a particular setting.
- **Class:** A category that defines a character's role, abilities, and skills.
- **Race:** A species or ancestry that determines a character's physical attributes, abilities, and often their cultural background.

Project summary

The transition from adolescence to adults can be considered one of the most challenging phases for young people and the requirement to ease this transition is paramount. Also, according to the agenda for sustainable development, adolescents is increasingly seen as a crucial group for the success of the newly adopted Agenda (United Nations, 2014). Within its framework, the 2030 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health has extended Every Woman, Every Child agenda to adolescents (United Nations Secretary-General EO, 2015).

Schools are recognised as having a central role and responsibility in facilitating the transition of youth. That's within an environment that adolescents can develop social skills, resilience, and improve self-esteem or self-efficacy (Das et al., 2016) (fundamental capabilities and competences to assure future successful outcomes). And many interventions are being carried out within the school environment to promote the development of social and individual skills, as well as the promotion of mental wellbeing. Most of them focusing on nurturing groups through interventions which address barriers to learning arising from social, emotional, or behavioural difficulties in an inclusive, supportive manner, showing a positive impact on the social and emotional well-being of young people (Das et al., 2016). Also, one of the aims of the intervention programs is to deliver school activities in a more engaging and innovative way, according to the school and adolescents needs.

Based on these perspectives, the project focuses on the promotion of social inclusion of students, teachers, and parents through the development of Table-Top Role Play Gaming activities (TTRPG). In particular, this methodology that the project is implementing, refers to that developed by LabGDR© orientated to the empowerment of the individual, the promotion of well-being and socialization processes, with the aim of taking care of young people (Scicchitano, 2019). The LabGDR© Method was born thanks to the identification of social needs and specific clinical goals (i.e.: developing social skills in young people with autism). This method, defined and shared with national and international colleagues, can be defined as a method that promotes and empower metacognitive, emotional, and relational skills using the role play tool in its tabletop TTRPG and live versions.

Though the application of TTPPG schools can be considered innovative and many initiatives have been used school-wide to promote positive student relations (Ruff, 2021). In any case, evidence from school intervention showed positively outcomes in a variety of areas. Teachers who have practice implementing TTRPGs comment that it "allow students to practise empathy, negotiation, problem-solving, teamwork, and

social manoeuvring" (as cited in Darvasi, 2019, sec. Real-World Fantasy, para. 3). Also, its transformative potential showed that TTRPGs are "particularly effective in fostering knowledge acquisition, developing role-play skills, strengthening team building, encouraging collaborative creativity, and exploring one's personal development" (Daniau, 2016).

In particular, those goals are pursued with the use of simulation, interaction and game dynamics, intentionally oriented towards the pursuit of significant objectives chosen considering the scope of intervention, the characteristics of the participants and the desired results (Scicchitano 2019).

Project objectives

The EuLabRPG project aims to increase the value placed to the empowerment of students and their wellbeing, develop teachers' ability to counteract poor mental health wellbeing as well as developing protective abilities. Finally, the project foresees creating Tabletop Role-Play gaming activities that includes metacognition moments in order to increase students' emotional and individual skills and fostering an inclusive and supportive school environment.

Notably, participating schools will have the opportunity to embed this methodology within current activities, by developing a complete Handbook, with details on how to implement the methodology, assessment procedures, and specific training courses for teachers and students on this methodology. As the implementation of activities like these has mainly been considered unsystematically (Ruff, 2021), the project aims to define a common strategy of implementation based on a critical assessment of schools/teachers/students' needs to promote school wellbeing through the involvement of schools as active partners. Also, the possibility to involve secondary and third level of education gives the project a strong value, by addressing the needs of a population suffering the outcomes of pandemic the most (students) and supporting the role of teachers in a changing school environment.

Implementation

To achieve the stated objectives, the project will develop and pilot a practical training course to enable teachers to master TTRPG sessions, upskilling their ability to address social and emotional competences. Teachers and students will be guided by the project partners, will have the opportunity to practice TTRPG activities, testing their effectiveness and advancing towards positive results like the promotion of a supportive school environment and resources to cope with their discomfort.

Results

As a result, the project will produce a dedicated school curriculum, describing methodology, competences, and supplementary activities to participating schools. In addition, a training toolkit will be available to increase the internal number of teaching staff to utilise. The completed handbook will guide future schools to develop TTRPG scenarios according to the needs detected in the future. Overall, the schools will benefit by promoting an inclusive and supportive environment.

Involved target groups

Secondary and tertiary school teachers (at least 80 in Work Package 2 (WP2) , 65 in Work Package 3 (WP3) and 15 in Work Package 4 (WP4)) are considered as the primary target group of the project, as they will be involved from the beginning of the activities: TTRPG curriculum will be tailored according to teachers, students and school needs and teachers will be actively involved in WP2, organising national focus groups to gather their feedback. In WP3, teachers will collaborate with project partners in the development of TTRPG scenarios; in WP4 teachers will deliver the pilot activities and have the role of facilitators during TTRPG activities.

Students within the age 13 – 19 are also considered as the target group (at least 100 in WP2, 90 in WP4). Along with teachers they will be involved since project beginning, and more actively during WP3 and WP4. Indeed, the development and implementation of TTRPG scenarios are directly aimed to improve students' life skills and social and emotional competencies.

A third and comprehensive target group the project aims to involve is the school overall. Different school professionals will be involved in the project, like educators and psychologists, collaborating with teachers and providing support to the implementation of the scenarios. Due to this participation, the concrete results produced will enable the school to improve the support services in place and promote an inclusive and supportive school climate.

Finally, as an undirected target group, the project will involve students' families and stakeholders. Families will be targeted through periodical and informative workshops with teachers, where project results and objectives achieved will be shared.

These specific disseminative and informative actions are also aimed to strengthen the collaboration between schools and families to provide the focus to students' discomfort and supportive pathways.

The methodology

LabGDR and role-playing game

To understand how role-playing can help achieve specific goals, identifiable based on the various contexts of application, we can refer to a psychotherapeutic technique called "Moreno Psychodrama". "Moreno Psychodrama" is a group therapy that explores subjective truths by dramatically retracing them; participants express themselves through spontaneous action and play. The main point of "Moreno Psychodrama" is spontaneity, which is used to help the personality emerge by supporting the participant in "Moreno Psychodrama" not to be conditioned by predefined and socially stereotyped roles. Using "Moreno Psychodrama" in psychological therapy, the therapist supports the patient in using body language to represent his experience at a psychic level and develop learning through activities, experimenting with how to manage situations through actions, words and communication.

Therapeutic role-playing uses mechanics similar to "Moreno Psychodrama". Role-playing is used as a psychotherapeutic technique in which, after examining a specific social situation, the active participants simulate the social relationships, exchanges and encounters that it entails so that each participant can reflect on their social role within the group and on the social role of the other participants.

Playful role-playing is based on the dramatization of social and organizational role behaviours. It requires that each group member freely chooses their role and character to interpret with the most appropriate characteristics. In playful role-playing, the professional does not play the role of a psychologist/educator but of a facilitator; the facilitator is an integral part of the game and directs, observes and records the dynamics in progress. In the school context, however, the teacher plays this role (Scicchitano, 2019).

Role-playing is, therefore, a tool with which teachers/educators can support the learning of social and relational skills by workshop participants. Firstly, role-playing is a tool a teacher/educator can use for young people's sensitivity to play, providing a context conducive to student learning through group workshops. Secondly, the school has a central role in facilitating and following young people transitioning from adolescence to adult life, which by its nature is not a simple moment and needs to be accompanied (United Nations, 2014). Role-playing can support the school in creating an environment in which adolescents can develop social and relational skills and communicate with peers to improve their social, communication and interpersonal skills (Das et al., 2016). In the school environment, many group workshops aim to develop skills that can help young people deal with social, emotional, or behavioural difficulties (Das et al., 2016); therefore, an important goal is to provide more engaging and innovative activities in schools to support both the school's and adolescents' needs.

Based on these perspectives, LabGDR ASD APS has chosen to support the promotion of social inclusion in the school environment through the development of table-top role-playing games (Table-Top Role Play Gaming - TTRPG). LabGDR ASD has chosen to contribute to the EuLabRPG project by coordinating a subcontractor in creating a new Table-Top Role Play Gaming (TTRPG) that uses the LabGDR© methodology to promote individual well-being and socialization processes, especially in young people within school workshops (Scicchitano, 2019). The material produced by LabGDR ASD APS and included in the final package can be used by teachers in the school environment, educators in extra-scholastic environments, and parents in the family environment.

The LabGDR© method aims to support the diversity of needs of young people in the school environment since the LabGDR© method was born to identify specific needs, such as social skills, in young people with autism. In the past years, the LabGDR© method has been shared nationally and internationally to promote participants' metacognitive, emotional and relational skills in LabGDR© workshops through table-top role-playing games (TTRPG).

LabGDR ASD APS has chosen Table-Top Role Play Gaming (TTRPG) as an educational tool to be applied in schools, considering that initiatives have already been managed in some schools that have confirmed the positive effect of Table-Top Role Play Gaming on relationships between students (Ruff, 2021). The feedback received has shown positive results in various areas; in fact, teachers who have practised the implementation of TTRPG have commented: "It allows students to practice empathy, negotiation, problem-solving, teamwork and social manoeuvres" (as cited in Darvasi 2019, sec. Real-World Fantasy, paragraph 3). Furthermore, Table-Top Role Play Gaming has demonstrated an additional characteristic: "TTRPG is particularly effective in promoting knowledge acquisition, developing role-playing skills, strengthening team building, encouraging collaborative creativity and exploring personal development" (Daniau, 2016).

Educational objectives

The LabGDR method uses the potential of role-playing for psycho-educational purposes, promoting the achievement of three main objectives within a game based on the LabGDR© method:

1. The development of the metacognitive function: metacognition is the ability to self-reflect on thoughts from an objective and not subjective point of view. Metacognition is possible thanks to the possibility of distancing and self-observing oneself that occurs when the participant in the game projects his or her thoughts onto the character he or she is playing. To encourage the development of metacognition within the role-playing game, the facilitator of the role-playing session (master) asks the players questions to generate emotions that help them enter more deeply into the situation as if they were experiencing it. Furthermore, the master can dedicate some time at the end of each game session to reflect on what happened in the game. The strength of the role-playing game is that the player experiences real emotions but on events related to the character he or she is playing in the game; this dynamic (metacognition) allows the player to reflect on real emotions that are linked to the game situation and, therefore, detached from the player.
2. Management of emotions: The table-top Role-Play Game is developed within a game adventure that involves both the players' reasoning skills and their emotions; therefore, the TTRPG produces important emotional experiences in which players must experiment with how to manage and overcome difficulties within the game.
3. Learning relational skills: The role-playing game involves challenges that players can overcome only by collaborating positively in a group through specific behaviours such as looking each other in the eye, exchanging opinions and establishing collaborative strategies.

To pursue the development of metacognition, management of emotions and learning relational skills, the LabGDR© method uses three elements: simulation, to allow players to experience a situation by simulating it in the game and then bringing it back to the actual experience; the game to stimulate the players' emotions and reasoning to learn in an immediate and fun way; relationality, to stimulate players to interact with a group and also learn through their peers.

Schools that use the EuLabRPG project toolkit will have the opportunity to structure a TTRPG workshop based on a complete rulebook developed in the project. This will allow teachers to support students in developing their reasoning, metacognition, and emotionality.

Previously, table-top role-playing games have been implemented in schools, but not in a systematic way (Ruff, 2021); for this reason, LabGDR ASD APS has coordinated the development of material based on the LabGDR© method to support teachers in structuring Table-Top Role-Play Gaming workshops that can be replicated over time to promote well-being in schools.

The possibility of involving students from the EuLabRPG project's target schools has strong value as it supports the portion of the population that suffers most from the pandemic's social and relational consequences. It also supports and enhances the role of teachers in an evolving school environment.

Topics for EuLabRPG

Based on the work objectives, according to the LabGDR© method illustrated previously, we have identified the ten topics on which it is possible to work. These are grouped as follows:

- The development of the metacognitive function
    1. **Prediction**: The ability to project oneself into the future and imagine oneself or others from an emotional, cognitive, or behavioural point of view.
    2. **Monitoring**: The ability to evaluate the effects of one's actions and modify them if they do not prove effective.
    3. **Mind theory**: The ability to relate mental states (beliefs, intentions, desires, emotions) to oneself and others and to understand that others may have mental states different from one's own.
- Management of emotions
    4. **Assertiveness**: The ability to express one's emotions and opinions clearly and effectively while respecting others and oneself.
    5. **Emotional management**: The ability to recognise and express one's and others' emotions.
    6. **Empathy**: The faculty to understand what another person is experiencing, read their verbal and non-verbal behaviours and tune into their feelings.
- Learning relational skills
    7. **Ability to work in a team**: The mindset to develop cooperation, non-verbal language, leadership, and respect for turns.
    8. **Negotiation**: Proficiency in interpersonal decision-making when one's goals cannot be pursued and achieved unilaterally.
    9. **Self-esteem**: The set of evaluative judgments that the individual makes about himself.
    10. **Self-efficacy**: The awareness of mastering specific activities, situations and events.

Competencies by the teachers when dealing with their students

In 2018, the Council of the European Union adopted the Recommendation on "Key Competences for Lifelong Learning", setting out a core set of skills necessary to work and live in the 21st century. The Recommendation has been the starting point for the European Commission to develop LifeComp; the European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence. LifeComp describes nine socio-emotional and metacognitive competences: Self-regulation, Flexibility, Wellbeing (Personal Area), Empathy,

Communication, Collaboration (Social Area), Growth mindset, Critical thinking and Managing learning (Learning to Learn Area). EU Commission (2018).

Personal area

The skills, qualities, and attitudes that are covered by Teachers' LifeComp in the personal domain are crucial for maintaining work-life balance, managing stress, building healthy relationships, and fostering personal well-being. They do not only enhance teachers' well-being and job satisfaction, but also create a positive impact on their students' performance, social-emotional development and overall learning experience.

- **Self-regulation** is extremely important as it allows for managing emotions, behaviours, and cognitive processes effectively in various professional and personal contexts. Teaching is a demanding profession, often characterized by high levels of stress. In professional life, teachers encounter a wide range of extreme emotions including frustration and stress but also excitement and joy. Self-regulation supports recognizing and regulating emotional responses in a variety of challenging situations, including working with challenging students or dealing with conflict situations.

Teachers should be able to manage various classroom situations: They need to remain calm and emotionally resilient to maintain a positive classroom environment and to show students how to control and self-regulate emotions. Resilient teachers maintain a positive attitude, are optimistic, and view obstacles as opportunities for growth and learning. They show how to control their actions, impulses, and responses to various types of stimuli. They are patient, tolerant and reasonable in making thoughtful decisions, as well as staying calm while facing students' provocative behaviours. Acting in this way, teachers can serve as role models for their students and promote a culture of respect, self-discipline, and responsibility in the classroom. Self-regulation can also have a positive impact on productivity and efficiency in lesson planning as it allows for maintaining concentration and prioritizing tasks.

- **Flexibility and adaptability** support teachers in unexpected challenges. They help face changing situations and diverse students' needs as well as overcoming learning barriers through adjusting strategies, approaches and classroom routines to individual needs and learning styles. This fosters a dynamic and inclusive learning environment, and it increases student engagement, motivation, and outcome. Flexible teachers are open to lifelong learning and professional development. They are ready to modify their teaching methods, provide alternative explanations, offer supplementary materials and adjust teaching styles to provide all students with positive learning experiences.

Bearing this in mind, flexible teachers seek feedback from students regarding their learning preferences, comprehension levels and areas of difficulty. Thus, teachers can reflect on their teaching methods and identify areas for improvement. They can modify, adjust, and improve teaching approaches and address students' concerns effectively, thereby, promoting a collaborative and student-centred learning environment. They are ready and willing to use a variety of digital tools, multimedia resources and online platforms so that the lessons are dynamic and interactive.

In the face of challenges, they seek creative solutions and alternative approaches to maintain a positive and productive learning environment for their students. When embracing inquiry-based learning approaches, teachers can improve students' critical thinking, problem-solving skills and student autonomy, i.e., shape the key competences. Flexibility also means recognising and valuing cultural diversity and individual background of students. Therefore, they can incorporate culturally relevant materials, perspectives, and instructional methods into their teaching practices to create inclusive learning environments that honour students' identities and experiences. Being flexible also allows for engaging students in dialogues, sharing best practices, and collaborating on curriculum.

In summary, flexibility is the skill that encourages educators to adapt, innovate, and respond proactively to the evolving needs and contexts of their students, fostering a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that promotes student engagement, motivation and success.

- Teachers' **well-being** is crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life balance, which in turn prevents burnout and reduces stress. It encompasses various dimensions, including physical health, emotional resilience, work-life balance, job satisfaction and sense of fulfilment which are critical for professional effectiveness, job satisfaction and overall quality of life. Teachers' well-being affects students because happy and positive teacher means happy and positive students.

School organizational culture should be positive and supportive as well, as it should foster collaboration, mutual respect and professional development. Teachers should be provided with peer support, mentorship, and shared decision-making which will make them feel valued as members of the school community. Access to training programmes, workshops, and resources that support instructional effectiveness, pedagogical skills and leadership development is essential for promoting teacher well-being, which will certainly contribute to teachers' sense of fulfilment, competence and job satisfaction. Teaching can be emotionally demanding, requiring teachers to face challenging situations, manage student behaviour and cope with stress effectively. Building emotional resilience, practicing self-care techniques and seeking support from colleagues, mentors, or counsellors can help teachers maintain psychological well-being and cope with the demands of their profession. By addressing the factors that influence teacher well-being and fostering a culture of care, collaboration and professional growth, schools can empower teachers to flourish in their roles and make a positive impact on the lives of their students.

Social area

Teachers can play a crucial role in fostering the development of LifeComp competencies in their pupils. They should use Empathy, Communication, and Collaboration in their interactions.

- Regarding **empathy**, teachers should strive to understand their pupils' emotions, experiences and values. This involves actively listening to pupils, paying attention to non-verbal cues and being perceptive to individual needs. For example: during one-on-one discussions, teachers can ask open-ended questions about pupils' well-being, allowing them to express their feelings.

For instance, "How are you feeling about the upcoming exams? Is there anything on your mind that you would like to share?" Moreover, teachers ought to respond to pupils with sensitivity and understanding. They must attempt to create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where pupils feel heard and valued.

This involves addressing both academic and emotional needs. This might include providing extra study materials, arranging tutoring sessions, or offering alternative learning approaches. In reference to the three macro areas, teachers can contribute to the development of assertiveness by actively listening to pupils, asking open-ended questions, and expressing sensitivity to their needs. When pupils feel heard and understood, they are more likely to assertively communicate their thoughts, concerns and ideas. For instance, a pupil who feels comfortable expressing their feelings about upcoming exams is practicing assertiveness.

- Secondly, regarding **communication** strategies, teachers should employ various communication strategies to cater for the diverse learning styles of pupils. They may use visual aids, technology or interactive discussions based on the content and context to ensure effective communication. This accommodates different learning styles and enhances comprehension. Furthermore, depending on the subject matter, teachers must use specific language and tools relevant to the domain.

This ensures that pupils not only grasp the content but also become adept at using the appropriate terminology and tools in their field. By familiarizing pupils with the terminology and practices used in the field, the teacher prepares them for real-world applications and professional environments. In reference to the macro areas, this material underscores the significance of teachers responding with sensitivity and understanding to both academic and emotional needs. This not only contributes to pupils' emotional growth but also creates an empathetic and supportive classroom environment. Furthermore, by fostering a culture of mutual respect through class discussions that encourage different viewpoints, teachers enhance pupils' empathy by helping them understand and appreciate diverse perspectives.

- Thirdly, when it comes to **collaboration**, teachers may design activities that encourage collaboration among pupils. Group projects, discussions, problem-solving tasks promote teamwork and help pupils develop interpersonal skills. For example, assigning a group project where pupils must collaborate to solve a real-world problem, not only enhances teamwork but also allows pupils to appreciate diverse perspectives and skills within the group. Also, teachers should model and reinforce the importance of acknowledging and respecting diverse perspectives within the classroom.

They should create an atmosphere where pupils feel comfortable sharing ideas and fostering a sense of community. Teachers can facilitate class discussions on topics that encourage different viewpoints. During these discussions, students learn to express their opinions respectfully and consider alternative perspectives, fostering a culture of mutual respect. In reference to the macro areas, the material above highlights the importance of collaborative activities, such as group projects and discussions, in promoting teamwork among pupils. By engaging in these collaborative tasks, pupils develop the ability to work in teams. For example, when pupils collaborate to solve real-world problems, they learn to appreciate and utilize diverse perspectives and skills within the group, fostering effective teamwork.

By integrating these competencies into their teaching approach, educators contribute not only to the academic development of students but also to their social and emotional growth preparing them for success in various aspects of life.

Learning to learn area

- A **growth mindset** is the belief that one can improve one's abilities and talents through effort and feedback.

To help promote a growth mindset, teachers need to show they believe in their students' abilities and promote this with positive reinforcement. Dweck's (2006) early research demonstrated multiple potential benefits to encouraging a growth mindset in education. One of her studies showed that praising students' efforts rather than their intelligence made them more likely to pursue more difficult challenges. Her research showed that students who were taught about developing intelligence went on to perform better in school and exhibit more motivation in the classroom. Teachers can further promote this by allowing students to make mistakes in a supportive environment, creating an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and providing frequent feedback that is both constructive and encouraging, focusing on what your student has done right rather than what they have done wrong.

- A **critical thinker** is someone who can evaluate evidence, arguments, and assumptions, and draw logical and creative conclusions.

Critical thinking is a vital skill that empowers students to analyse the information/data rather than accept it as common knowledge. This is very important in the era of digital explosion and fake news. Integrating critical thinking into the classroom fosters deeper understanding, problem-solving abilities, and informed decision-making. Promoting critical thinking isn't about providing answers—it's about equipping students with the tools to think critically and navigate the complexities of the world around them Ferlazzo (2021). From solving

problems to making informed decisions, thinking critically is a valuable skill that will help students navigate the world's complexities. Critical thinking can be promoted by teachers in the classroom by encouraging students ask questions with a more critical lens. They need to be aware of fake news and understand how to navigate reliable sources. With the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence, it is imperative that students are given direction and support to advance their curiosity mindset and activate curiosity by inquiry-based learning. Debate, collaboration and critical writing skills tasks also promote critical thinking within the students.

- A **self-regulated** learner is someone who can plan, organize, monitor, and review their own learning goals and strategies.

In the realm of education, fostering self-directed learning is essential for empowering students to take ownership of their educational journey. When learners are intrinsically motivated to learn, they become more actively engaged in the process. Teachers can help promote this by setting clear objectives for learning, sharing assessment rubrics, and promoting engagement. Self-direction of learning is easier if learners are intrinsically motivated to learn.

These skills can help individuals overcome challenges, solve problems, and achieve their personal and professional aspirations. Furthermore, research indicates that earlier academic skills also predict later social-emotional skills in the school context (Welsh et al., 2001) The authors propose that students with better academic skills are more 'at ease' in school and tend to be more accepted by their peers; they experience less frustration in the school setting, have more friends and overall, more opportunities to develop and practise social-emotional skills.

It is necessary for teachers to foster these competencies for their students to help them grow and become more resilient. The digital era can promote some of this, but also can be disadvantageous, if they get no break from the bombardment of information and potentially a reduction of person-to-person communication and developing of friendships and resilience in life.

Social and Emotional Learning competencies

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies (Weissberg et al. 2015) are crucial for teachers because they play a fundamental role in fostering a positive and supportive learning environment, enhancing student success, and promoting overall well-being (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Meyers et al., 2015). These competencies can be helpful to improve teacher-student relationships, understanding students' individual needs and provide personalised support. These positive relationships foster a sense of belonging and trust, enabling students to engage more fully in their learning (Zins et al., 2004).

- **Self-awareness** is the ability to identify and recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and their influences on behaviour. It includes recognizing one's own strength and challenges and being aware of one's own goals and values. High levels of self-awareness require recognizing how thoughts, feelings, and actions are interconnected.

This is a critical skill for teachers, enabling them to understand and manage their emotions, teaching styles, and relationships with students. It empowers teachers to navigate classroom challenges with mindfulness and poise, set meaningful goals for professional growth, and cultivate positive learning environments. Through self-awareness, educators continuously refine their teaching methods and foster authentic connections with students, ultimately enhancing student learning and development.

- **Self-management**: entails the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively, including stress management, impulse control, motivating oneself, and working toward achieving personal and academic goals. It also contains self-management in social interactions.

Teachers promoting self-management competence in students facilitate the development of skills necessary for regulating emotions, managing stress, and achieving personal and academic goals (Evertson & Weinstein 2006). They provide opportunities for students to practice self-awareness, impulse control, and effective decision-making. Additionally, teachers model healthy coping strategies, offer guidance in setting realistic goals, and encourage students to take ownership of their actions and responsibilities. By fostering self-management skills, teachers empower students to navigate challenges, persevere in their endeavours, and thrive both academically and personally.

- **Social awareness**: is the ability to take the perspectives of others—including those who come from a different background and culture—to empathize with others, to understand social and ethical norms, and to recognize resources and supports in family, school, and community.

In promoting social awareness competence among students, teachers facilitate the development of empathy, perspective-taking, and understanding of diverse cultures and backgrounds. They create a classroom environment that celebrates diversity and encourages respect for others' perspectives and experiences. Teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in discussions, activities, and projects that promote understanding of social and ethical norms. Additionally, they model inclusive behaviors and foster a sense of belonging by recognizing and valuing the contributions of all students. By nurturing social awareness skills, teachers empower students to navigate complex social situations, collaborate effectively with others, and contribute positively to their communities.

- **Relationship skills**: provide children with the tools to form and maintain positive and healthy relationships, communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, negotiate constructively during conflict, solve problems with others effectively, and offer and seek help when needed.

One more societal and emotional group of competencies is the relationship skills of students. Teachers provide opportunities for them to learn and practice these skills through various activities and interactions in the classroom, while they serve as role models for students by demonstrating positive communication, active listening, cooperation, and conflict resolution in their interactions with others. Consequently, they form a learning community where students feel respected, safe, and motivated to build relationships with their classmates. Through discussions and activities such as role-playing games, they focus on topics such as empathy, self-regulation, and emotional expression. While immersing themselves in these topics, they must also deal with solving problems as a team, fostering cooperation and teamwork skills. Additionally, teachers create a culture, where asking for help is encouraged by emphasizing that seeking assistance is a sign of strength and resourcefulness rather than weakness.

- **Responsible decision making** equips children with the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about their own behaviour and social interactions, considering safety concerns, ethical standards, social and behavioural norms, consequences, and the well-being of self and others.

Another critical skill that teachers help cultivate in children is responsible decision-making. Teachers establish clear expectations for behavior and social interactions in the classroom, helping students understand what is acceptable and what is not. They incorporate discussions about ethical standards and values into their lessons, helping students understand the importance of honesty, integrity, empathy, and respect for others. Teachers provide students with information about the potential consequences of their actions, both positive and negative, helping them understand the impact of their choices on themselves and others. Additionally, teachers encourage students to reflect on their own behavior and decision-making process, helping them develop self-awareness and self-regulation skills that are essential for responsible decision-making. In this situation, they offer students opportunities to practice decision-making in a variety of contexts, both in and out of the classroom for example by involving them in role-playing scenarios, by engaging them in group discussions, or by participating in real-life decision-making activities.

Summary of findings from validation with target groups

Overall, the feedback and opinions from teachers and students regarding EuLabRPG Curriculum was satisfactory.

In particular, the validation analysis conducted in Greece and Italy suggests that the Curriculum should address more in depth the methodology while providing description of specific activities and examples to facilitate the comprehension. Furthermore, Italian participants suggested to better define the goals of the project, also highlighting some strategies to support the teachers during the Curriculum implementation, like help desks.

The feedback by the Irish teachers was that they agreed that the project does enhance social and emotional culture within schools if carried out properly and it could enhance communication and problem-solving skills.

The focus groups from Cyprus and Poland provided overwhelmingly positive feedback on the curriculum, its clarity, and alignment with educational goals. The respondents expressed significant enthusiasm for the use of TTRPGs in the classroom, though some educators expressed the need for additional guidance on how to implement these activities effectively. No changes to the curriculum were proposed, reflecting overall satisfaction from both focus groups. During the Cypriot discussion, many mentioned that the project provides an opportunity for active learning in an entertaining way. However, there were valuable suggestions, such as the integration of technology (AI) in Cyprus and the desire for more detailed methodological explanations in Poland.

The project is seen as a way to promote active, engaging learning that develops essential skills in students, with potential interdisciplinary applications.

In conclusion, the feedback collected enriched the Curriculum experience in shaping its features according to the target groups' needs. Furthermore, the Consortium was facilitated in shaping specific sections and adding relevant information like the Glossary.

Further details on the results of our validation can be found in our document on the project's website: https://eulabrpg.eu/images/document/12245395/ReportSummaryofSurveysandFocusGroups.pdf

Extra-curricular activities

Based on our experience, the following extracurricular activities can enable teachers to foster the abovementioned competencies and macro areas.

a. **Debate Club:**

- **Competency Focus:** Assertiveness, Communication

- **Description:** Participating in debates encourages pupils to express their opinions confidently, articulate arguments, and engage in assertive communication. It helps them develop public speaking skills, critical thinking, and the ability to defend their viewpoints.

- **Example:** European Youth Parliament, Model European Parliament

b. **Service-Learning Projects:**

- **Competency Focus:** Ability to Work in Teams, Empathy

- **Description:** Collaborative service projects, such as community clean-ups or volunteering at local charities, provide students with opportunities to work together towards a common goal. This fosters teamwork, empathy for others, and a sense of social responsibility.

- **Example:** beach clean-ups, EU Conexus International School Contest (EU Conexus International School Contest, 4th edition, Think Smart-Create Green, available at https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/think-smart-create-green/), visits to local charities.

c. **Model United Nations (MUN):**

- **Competency Focus:** Assertiveness, Collaboration

- **Description:** Model United Nations (MUN) simulations involve pupils representing different countries and debating global issues. This activity enhances assertiveness as students articulate their country's position. It also promotes collaboration as they work with peers to draft resolutions and find diplomatic solutions.

- **Examples:** PASCAL English School Lemesos participates in various Model United Nation conferences. These are educational simulations where students typically role-play as delegates representing different countries or organizations in simulated sessions of the United Nations or other international bodies. Participants engage in debates, negotiations, and discussions on various global issues, aiming to find diplomatic solutions and draft resolutions. Some of these are: PSMUN (Plato School Model United Nations, available at https://ps-mun.gr/), MEDIMUN (Mediterranean Model United Nations, available at https://www.medimun.org/) and CUIMUNHS (Cambridge University Model United Nations – High School Conference, available at https://www.cuuna.org/)

d. **Drama Club:**

- **Competency Focus:** Assertiveness, Empathy

- **Description:** Acting in plays or participating in drama activities requires pupils to express themselves confidently and understand different characters' perspectives. This encourages assertiveness and empathy as they step into others' shoes.

- **Examples:** PASCAL English School Lemesos has put numerous plays and musicals in the past few years including Mary Poppins, What the Butler Saw and The Mousetrap.

e. **Student Council or Leadership Programs:**

- **Competency Focus:** Ability to Work in Teams, Communication

- **Description:** Being part of the School Council or participating in leadership programs involves collaborative decision-making and effective communication. Pupils learn to work together to address issues, plan events, and represent their peers, enhancing both teamwork and communication skills.

- **Examples:** Globeducate Student Leadership Conference (https://www.globeducate.com/news-events/news-details/~board/news/post/student-leadership-summit-at-stonar)

f. **Sports Teams or Intramural Leagues:**

- **Competency Focus:** Ability to Work in Teams, Collaboration

- **Description:** Participating in sports fosters teamwork, cooperation, and collaboration. Whether it is a traditional team sport or an intramural league, pupils learn to work together towards common objectives.

- **Examples:** basketball, football, and volleyball teams

How do schools manage students' discomfort? What is the common path?

Pascal Private English School

PASCAL English School Lemesos' Safeguarding Policy sets out to outline the actions that will be taken to ensure that all pupils are properly safeguarded in school and at home. This Policy is reviewed annually by the School Management Team led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL collates any input from pupils, parents, colleagues, Heads of Department, Heads of Year, Assistant Head Teachers, Career Counsellor, External Examinations Officer, School Examinations Officer and Parents Association. This Policy is based on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child legislation relating to the Rights of the Child (Articles 19 and 24), the European Convention on the exercise of Children's Rights and the Cyprus Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Law. This policy also incorporates key points from the UK best practice and NSPCC guidelines. Also, it is in line with the relevant the Republic of Cyprus legislation as given:

http://www.moec.gov.cy and as given: http://www.cylaw.org

The welfare of the child is at the heart of this Policy. This Policy emphasises the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff and those with designated responsibility for child safeguarding and protection. The policy is in line with the Globeducate Safeguarding Policy (available at https://www.globeducate.com), the provisions of PASCAL English School Study Guide, Rules and Regulations 2021-22 as well as the school's Anti-bullying Policy 2023-2024. All members of staff are duty bound to help ensure the wellbeing and safeguarding of all the school's pupils.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and undertaking that role to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully. A child-centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding (Based on UK Dept for Education Statutory Guidance available at Schools: statutory guidance - GOV.UK - www.gov.uk) is outlined below.

All staff should maintain an attitude that 'it could happen here'. If staff have any concern about a child or young person, the interests of the child or young person will lie at the centre of actions. It is paramount that staff act immediately on any concerns. The below process should be faithfully followed.

Anyone aware of such a situation must report it immediately to the relevant Head of Year or DSL/Deputy DSL for further investigation. Staff must not assume a colleague will act on a case of concern. Any information regarding a safeguarding case must be shared with the DSL/Deputy DSL.

The staff member's role is not to investigate or verify the situation, but rather to collate as much as possible information and make the report and set in motion the process of getting help for the child. Support of the pupil is important. To do that, the following recommendations are provided:

- Reassure the pupil that it is okay to speak about what has happened.
- Staff may ask the pupil if they would prefer to speak to the Social Services first or to a member of staff, they feel confident speaking to.

- Tell the pupil what to expect. If you do not know, say so, but let the pupil know they can be supported by you.
- Project a calm, understanding and supportive attitude to the pupil.
- Avoid having the pupil repeat their explanation to different staff.
- Let the pupil know that you must tell the DSL to get help. Explain that you will have to tell another person because the pupil is at risk.
- Reassure the pupil that it is not their fault.
- Make clear, detailed notes of the conversation.
- Respect the pupil's privacy by not discussing the situation in or out of school.
- After reporting, it is important to maintain a supportive presence for the pupil.

In addition, do note that:

- It is important to understand the importance of early reporting.
- A member of staff who reports in good faith is protected from civil liability.
- Reporting a disclosure is a request for an investigation.

Further links

(Pascal Private English School)

1. Best practices in social and emotional learning prepared for WASA School Information and Research Service: www.wasa-oly.org
2. Step by Step - Toolkit Promoting Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in Children and Teens: www.worldbank.org

Supporting Organisations and Guidance

1. National Support for Children and Adolescents telephone: www.cyprus.gov.cy
2. Cyprus Social Welfare Services telephone: www.eige.europa.eu
3. Hope For Children Helpline (provides support to children facing any type of abuse, neglect as well as support to parents seeking guidance on issues related to their children): 1466 email: info@uncrcpc.org
4. Citizen communication helpline number (direct police contact for help/information/complaints): 1460
5. Crime Combating Department: Safeguarding Sub-Directorate number 22808442 email: domviol.childabuse@police.gov.cy
6. Commissioner for Children's Rights Cyprus number 22873200 email: childcom@ccr.gov.cy website: www.childcom.org.cy
7. Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
8. Beat Bullying: www.beatbullying.org
9. Childline: www.childline.org.uk
10. DfE: "Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies", and "Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools" March 2014: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
11. DfE: "No health without mental health": https://www.gov.uk
12. Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
13. Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
14. MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
15. NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

16. PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
17. Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
18. The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
19. Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
20. Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
21. Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net
22. Childnet International: www.childnet.com
23. Digizen: www.digizen.org
24. Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
25. Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
26. UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
27. EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
28. Pace: www.pacehealth.org.uk
29. Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
30. Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk
31. Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
32. Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
33. DfE: SEND code of practice: https://www.gov.uk/send-code-of-practice
www.specialneedsjungle.com/keeping-children-with-send-from-getting-lost-in-digital-space
34. Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
35. Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
36. Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
37. Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
38. Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educationa

Vardakeios School of Ermoupolis

39. Child`s Advocate in Greece: https://www.synigoros.gr/paidi/
40. National line SOS for children in Greece: 1056
41. European Antibullying Network: www.antibullying.eu/
42. Support centres for children and families «The Smile of the Child»: www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/kentra-stiriksis/
43. Network for children`s rights in Greece: ddp.gr

X Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. I.J. Paderewskiego Akademickie w Katowicach

44. Social and psychological support: https://twojpsycholog.pl
45. Empowering Children Foundation (NGO): https://fdds.pl
46. Counteracting various forms of discrimination: https://www.fundacja4power.pl/
47. Preventing all types of violence against children and young people and to help them when they are in crisis, or their safety is at risk: https://szansa.glogow.pl/en/
48. KomitetOchronyPrawDziecka (Children's Human Rights) - https://kopd.pl/
49. Report on teachers' well-being: https://glos.pl
50. Where to look for help and support: https://www.niebieskalinia.pl/en
51. Teachers' well-being: https://www.edu-akcja.pl/dobrostan/
52. Best practices (numerous actions organized by our school psychologist): https://www.xlo.pl/index.php/osiagniecia

Consorzio Ro.Ma. & LabGDR

53. Con I Bambini Impresa Sociale - fund for tackling child educational poverty: https://www.conibambini.org/
54. "Sinergie" project: https://percorsiconibambini.it/sinergiemercogliano/
55. N.E.MO (Natura ed Educazione per nuovi MOdelli partecipativi): la comunità educante di Borgo Bambino project: https://percorsiconibambini.it/nemo/scheda-progetto/
56. Guidelines to promote psychological wellbeing at school: https://www.psy.it

Munster Technological University

57. Government of Ireland (2023) Policy Brief: From Poverty to Potential: A programme for Child Poverty and Well-Being, Initial Programme Plan: July 2023 – December 2025 https://www.gov.ie/en
58. Children's Mental Wellbeing: https://childrensmentalwellbeing.ie/about-us/
59. National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI): https://www.youth.ie/about/
60. Professional Development Service for teachers (PDST): https://www.pdst.ie/wellbeing
61. Government of Ireland (2023) Wellbeing information for school staff – primary: https://www.gov.ie/en
62. Webwise: Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre funded by the Department of Education and co-funded by the European Commission: https://heroes.webwise.ie/
63. Aware: https://www.aware.ie/
64. Jigsaw: Mental health advice and support – online and in person – for young people aged 12 to 25 years old, and for parents or concerned adults: https://jigsaw.ie/talk-online/live-chat/ or https://jigsaw.ie/
65. Childline: Ireland's 24-hour listening service for young people up to the age of 18. Childline is a service from the ISPCC: https://www.childline.ie/
66. BeLonG To Youth Services: Support, information and groups for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI+) young people in Ireland, their parents and carers, and other professionals: https://www.belongto.org/
67. Spunout: Spunout is Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people. Articles and information for young people on many topics, including mental health. Free-text SPUNOUT to 50808 to chat with a trained volunteer, any time: https://spunout.ie/
68. Barnardos: Services for children, families and communities, to transform the lives of vulnerable children affected by adverse childhood experiences. Barnardos also provide a Children's Bereavement Service. Freephone 1800 910 123, Monday to Friday 10am to 2pm: https://www.barnardos.ie/
69. CARI: Therapy for children and young people who have been affected by child sexual abuse. CARI also provide information, support and counselling to non-abusing parents, carers and siblings. Phone 0818 924567, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm https://www.cari.ie/
70. The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) is dedicated to enhancing the lives of children and young people; they are at the heart of everything we do: https://www.ispcc.ie/

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