

Hello! My name is Katja Omahna and I am one of Lea's former students from the time when she was still living and working in Slovenia. Thanks to Lea, I got a chance to experience Storyline as a student. Imagine a 10 year old girl whose eyes light up when the teacher starts a lesson in different way. "It is something new, unknown to me," I thought. Even if I could not entirely understand what this will be about, I knew - this will be something for me. And it turned out that I was right. When I have been writing this speech for the conference, Lea asked me to try to put myself in the time when I was in the fifth grade, and all of a sudden, I started to recall all of the excitement, anticipation and curiosity that was present during that time. Enthusiasm for an entirely new way of working, for hearing a teacher talking to us in another way, for sitting with a teacher in a circle and brainstorming ideas, answering her open questions, which led us from one point to another and awoke pure curiosity.

When Lea mentioned Storyline, the image of the figure that I created appeared in front of me, a figure with which I travelled across Europe. She had orange hair, a yellow dress, and she was a part of a family. I also recalled all the books on European countries that I read during our Storyline project, and how we as a team prepared presentations. Then, we were given the opportunity to fly by plane, and although this was just a flight simulation, the experience was unique. Through Skype, we met schoolchildren from Istanbul and, more than anything, we first faced a situation where we had to use our knowledge of English in practice. We also strengthened it when we received visitors from Sweden, Finland, Latvia and the Czech Republic in our classroom. We made vehicles for our families, and we made a 'village' in which typical houses from different countries were placed. There was so much more, but what I want to say is that schoolwork became more and more interesting from one week to another. You can only imagine how exciting it was to experience all of this! A rich variety of impressions is still kept in my memory. I loved the way we could literally fire ideas out of ourselves, write them down together and thus learn how to work as a team and how to establish good communication within our teams. I remember how proudly I loved to explain at home what we were exploring, where we were traveling and what we were creating in school.

The schoolwork became more and more interesting and dynamic from one to another. We learned many new things, but unfortunately weeks quickly ran out, however our desire for new skills and knowledge remained. We prepared an unforgettable closing event for the parents when we invited them to fly with us across Europe. Our schoolmates and I did not quite agree with ending there. We came up with the idea of continuing this in the 6th grade, but the problem was that

teachers in Grade 6 were not working with Storyline. And that's why we went to Lea and asked her if we could somehow continue with Storyline in Grade 6. Lea satisfied our request, and so we met every Friday after regular lessons, just to prolong a feeling of working freely. I thought at that time, but now I see, how well guided our work has been.

I can today with a certainty say that Storyline brought a completely fresh and different way of thinking from that used in my previous or later years of schooling. We began to think critically, think outside the box, learn how to listen to each other, develop creativity, develop speaking and communication skills. We were put in new situations where we had to find solutions to problems in our own critical way. That was one of the greatest things I took with me for the future. It gave me the "thinking out of box" approach; I became more creative, talkative, and gained a desire for exploring, which has often been proven a great bonus in my life.

I believe that we can best show our qualities when we work in groups, when we are given the opportunity to make decisions about our own work, when we have to communicate with each other and discuss solutions. All of it gives us a sense of control over our own learning. In this way, we also connect with classmates and teachers in another way. Now, when I am just about to start studying at university, I would like to share my modest opinion and give advice to every teacher, if you firmly believe that your students are capable of reaching beyond the prescribed knowledge, they will do that. Let them be aware of this, tell them that! They will develop skills, gain motivation, and will understand that many things can be easily reached not only by external but also by internal motivation. I have experienced these qualities when I could be a part of experiencing Storyline as a student. Storyline is creating a better tomorrow in schools.

Education is not an ending process. It does not start with a morning bell and it does not end in the afternoon. It does not start in grade 3 when students are assessed for the first time with grades, and does not end with the final exam. Unfortunately, our current school system focuses only on successfully written tests and obtained grades. This is exactly where Storyline is succeeding, as it measures your abilities, your development without you being nervous about it as a student. I think teaching nowadays should be focusing on how certain topics are being introduced to us. If we see them as something useful, as something that we will need in the future, it is easier for us to internalize them and carry them with us.

I always liked going to school, because I could easily find qualities in everything new. As with everything, some things woke up more interest in me and some less. Unfortunately, I did not experience Storyline or anything similar in my later years of schooling; however, I am firmly convinced that if I had, my skills would have been even wider and greater now. Perhaps it would be easier for me to decide now what to study after gymnasium. At the time when I was experiencing Storyline, it did certainly help me to better understand myself, my qualities and how to develop them.

Although it is 8 years since I experienced Storyline, and my path has led me in different directions, I can say something: let me spend 8 years, 20 years, 50 years, and I will always be happy to return to the days, that were in my opinion, the key to this path, which I have decided to walk on. And after which I have a desire to continue my way in the future.

I will never forget the quote that Lea shared with us at the end of the school year - The quote went something like this: "Imagination gives the wings to creativity. Fly high in the sky, preserve imagination and share your creativity!" And when I think back now, I could not be able to find any other teacher in my life who actually lived that quote out as Lea did. She knew how to let us grow our wings, let us open them wide and has during all that time been like a breeze who has invisibly guided us. At the same time she gave us the opportunity to freely express and develop, not only our creativity, but also to be aware of the importance of developing our own abilities within different areas. Is not Storyline exactly all about this?

This is why I would like to finish this speech by letting everyone know - keep Storyline alive, make teachers understand why they should use Storyline. It stays for a lifetime, remains in students, gives them a chance to grow, building relationships, expressing openness, and finally yet importantly, directs us towards reaching our dreams.

Thank you! HVALA!