II. WHY CREATE AN ESCAPE ROOM?

Twenty-first century learning and teaching do not and could not resemble the ones from the previous millennium. Ungraspable pace of the digital technologies development, increasing demand for a wider range of and highly elaborated soft skills, overcrowding of the public domain with information and false news, reshaping of the interpersonal communication due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak – these events are hybrid, but all of them influential enough to reorganize the well-known status quo of the human world.

Enlarging constantly their personal improvement horizons and removing the professional competences' boundaries, today's teachers face the need for enriching the set of didactic tools and learning strategies. A classroom meeting the challenges of the 21st century should provide a more intensified group dynamics, fast change of didactic instruments, learning-through experience environment and equipment. The new educational paradigms redefine the teaching style towards coaching and mentoring mode and highlight teacher's wholeheartedly presence and involvement. In the context briefly sketched the multifaceted escape room didactic tool plays an essential and irreplaceable role. We should overtly confirm the enormous intellectual effort and time consummation needed to create an effective escape room, nevertheless, the results are undeniably worth giving it a shot.

A meticulously built escape room turns to be **an entirely new world** comprising a few simpler didactic components – puzzles, theater performance and role-playing, varieties of digital visualization devices, storytelling, adventure games, etc. Students are normally anticipating an engagement in an alternative, 'total' reality, an unknown world, providing exploration and adventures, wrapped up in an unexpected rules and cause-effect relations.

Furthermore, the step-by-step unfolding of the escape room challenge keeps students' **attention** alive and give them the chance to taste the speed of the **active learning**. The

successful leaving of the room/dealing with the critical situation boosts participants'**creativity, stress resiliency**, and sharpens the importance of each one *personal input, responsibility, and reliability.*

An escape room **socio-cultural contribution** is to mention as well. Such kind of educational instrument turns to be a perfect forefront for social competences training – **active listening, public speaking and persuasion, empathy, problem-solving, dealing with diversity in terms of cultural background or physical differences** (especially large-scale projects and multinational teams given). Enjoying being together and working smoothly as an organism is one of the greatest social rewards of the escape rooms.

Moreover, the latter turn to be the most appropriate strategy while dealing with more **abstract or theoretically intricate subject matter (e.g. ontology, genetics, quantum mechanics)**. The tangibility of the escape room props, the game-based scenario, the step-by-step logic of pursuing the final goal give the participants the opportunity to cope with complex comprehensive contexts and improve knowledge acquisition.

To summarize, an escape room could be considered an entrance in an essentially new learning environment corresponding to the features of the 21st century social context. It is a rich and cross-sectional didactic tool for a fruitful and overall development of the youth and a rewarding challenge for the ambitious and willing to keep up-to-date teacher.