



LIFE TEAM-1 PORTFOLIO REPORT

Project name (as stated on the LIFE website): TLU Student Podcast Spring 2024

Group name/number: Group 1

Supervisor(s): Terry McDonald, Tanel Kadalipp

Group members: Sofia Odegova (Spanish Language and Culture), Annete Kulakovski (IT management), Anastasia Simonenko (English Language and Culture), Alisher Dyussupov (International Relations), Rita Razvarova (Education)

Podcast episode name: "From Marvel to Manga: pop-culture fueled language learning"

Project report/overview

Student Podcast Project focuses on creating an academic podcast on a chosen topic that should reflect all of the participants' fields of study, in other words, being interdisciplinary. This particular team has decided to explore the influence of popular culture and its outlets on language learning. As specific examples, English and Japanese languages were chosen. The choice was made based on popularity and relevance of the languages. Therefore, the goal of the project was to study theoretical materials on the usage of popular culture in class or extracurricular language learning, to conduct interviews with professionals in the field, namely language teachers/professors, and, lastly, condense found information into an audial outlet of a podcast. The information presented would be beneficial for multiple groups of listeners: language teachers and tutors who aim to make their lessons more interactive and student-oriented, language learning enthusiasts, or, in general, anyone interested in how culture affects our everyday lives and motivations. Moreover, since the podcast delves into the topics of how popular culture can have actual political weight via the term "soft power", listeners interested in political campaigns of Japan and the USA would also find the podcast beneficial and interesting. The expected result of this project is an uploaded podcast with a duration of 45-60

minutes that is reachable via Spotify platform. A successful marketing campaign is to be conducted in order to boost the popularity of the podcast.

As mentioned before, the main focus of the project is to research how popular culture affects language learning on examples of Japanese and English languages. The research showed that while it is proven that popular culture has a positive impact on language acquisition process (student motivation level, vocabulary expansion, practical implementation of the language and more), most teachers still have a rather negative perception of popular culture and its usage in the classroom (Rets, 2016).

In order to prove our hypothesis that pop-culture is indeed an important drive behind every learner's autonomy and can be used as a pedagogical tool, our team gathered theoretical background from academic literature. As it transpired, our hypothesis proved to be correct. In a recent article Kayo Shintaku investigates the impact of anime on Japanese-as-a-foreign-language (JFL) programs both inside and outside of the classroom. The author found out that Japanese entertainment media as a whole is one of the key factors behind increasing enrollment rates in JFL courses in the US and, in fact, is a great pedagogical tool (Shintaku 2022). Speaking of the second chosen global language, English, in an article written in 2015 Dipendra Bahadur Rawal advocates the idea that popular culture is an absolute necessity in English language courses since, again, as a global language, English is dominant in every sector of life, like education, entertainment world, politics, fashion, job, and travelling (Rawal 2015). Based on the article's standpoint, our team describes popular culture as a phenomenon in teaching practices nowadays. Popular culture can be seen as an omitted part of the original term "*cultura*" introduced in classical antiquity by the Roman Philosopher Cicero which refers to cultivation of soul and mind. And since "language is not only meant for communication, but is a direct expression of culture" Rawal affirms that popular culture is as valuable for deeper language acquisition as high culture (Rawal 2015). Moreover, Rawal provides the reader with multiple statistics that illustrate students' willingness to learn via popular culture. Both researches coincide with the notion of "transcendence" formulated by David Nunan in 1997 that describes an autonomy level where learners extend beyond the confines of the classroom and start making links between the content of the classroom and the broader world (Nunan 1997). Considering all of the above, the group believes

that this project can help reach future teachers, namely, students of Tallinn University, to expand their knowledge on this topic and potentially motivate them to implement popular culture in their future career practices.

With all the aforementioned things in mind, the 63rd episode for the Tallinn University Student Podcast titled "From Marvel to Manga: pop-culture fueled language learning" was created. We had 2 guests who shared their opinion and experience on the topic: Valeria Ohata and Paul Rüsse. Firstly, in order to get a deeper understanding of popular culture influence on language teaching processes our team conducted an interview with Valia Ohata who works as a Japanese teacher for kids in a language school and studies Japanese Language and Culture in Tallinn University. Secondly, to inquire about the process of teaching English in more detail with first-hand experience, we have invited Paul Rüsse, a professor at Tallinn University with more than 2 decades of experience in the fields of American literature and English language. Coming from our team's perspective, both interviews turned out to be concise, managed to cover the topic successfully, and proved our main hypothesis that popular culture should be used more in the classrooms.

Soft Power?

Soft Power

Interdisciplinarity of the podcast is supported by the theory mentioned before. Mainly, disciplines that were researched are:

- philology – English and Japanese languages as well as the process of learning those
- education – teaching strategies that include popular culture were explored, as well as the teachers' view on popular culture
- political science – in the form of Soft Power concept
- culturology/cultural anthropology – popular culture as a phenomena relates to these areas of study

Description of activities and the stakeholders

A list of potential stakeholders and target audience:

Educational institutions and Language Teachers: As we are exploring innovative ways on how popular culture can be used in language teaching then one of the stakeholders benefiting from it are the educational institutions and language teachers in Estonia. The findings of the project can influence the development and teaching of languages in institutions.

Students and Language Learners: The project aims to understand how popular culture influences the productivity and motivation in Japanese and English language learning. Therefore one of the stakeholders are considered to be students and language learners. By identifying effective methods, learners can adapt their approach to learning the languages.

Target audience: Most probably this topic will attract different listeners outside of the previously mentioned stakeholders groups – Japanese and/ or English learners, Japanese and/ or English teachers. Most definitely these are students and Tallinn University professors of Japanese and English philologies as well as international students who study in English. In addition, our target audience might include people interested in the phenomenon of the widespread pop-culture of both Japan and *English-speaking countries*.

Since the outcome of the project is an online podcast, we would assume that our audience is going to be mostly people that are familiar with Spotify platform, as well as the concept of online podcasts is general. It is impossible to name a specific number of stakeholders for this project.

Sustainability of the project

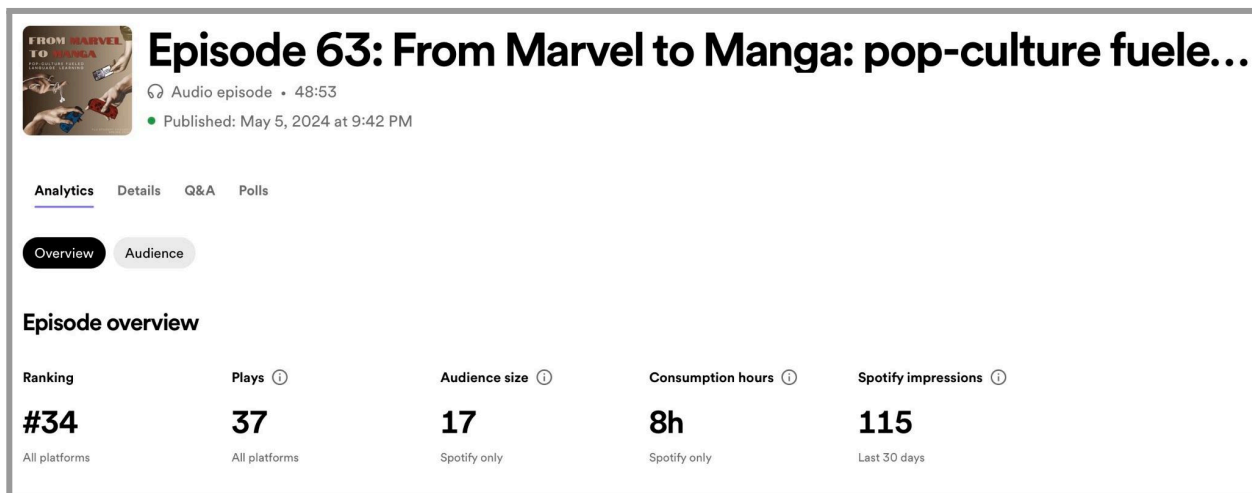
Podcasts are sustainable due to their digital nature itself, reducing waste and carbon footprint. They offer long-term value and flexible consumption, minimising resource consumption. Remote collaboration reduces the need for travel, promoting inclusivity. Content diversity engages communities, while repurposing content maximises its value, making podcasts a versatile and eco-friendly media format.

Tallinn University will have full ownership of the 63rd episode "From Marvel to Manga: pop-culture fueled language learning" created for the LIFE Project "Student Podcast Spring 2024" by Team 1.

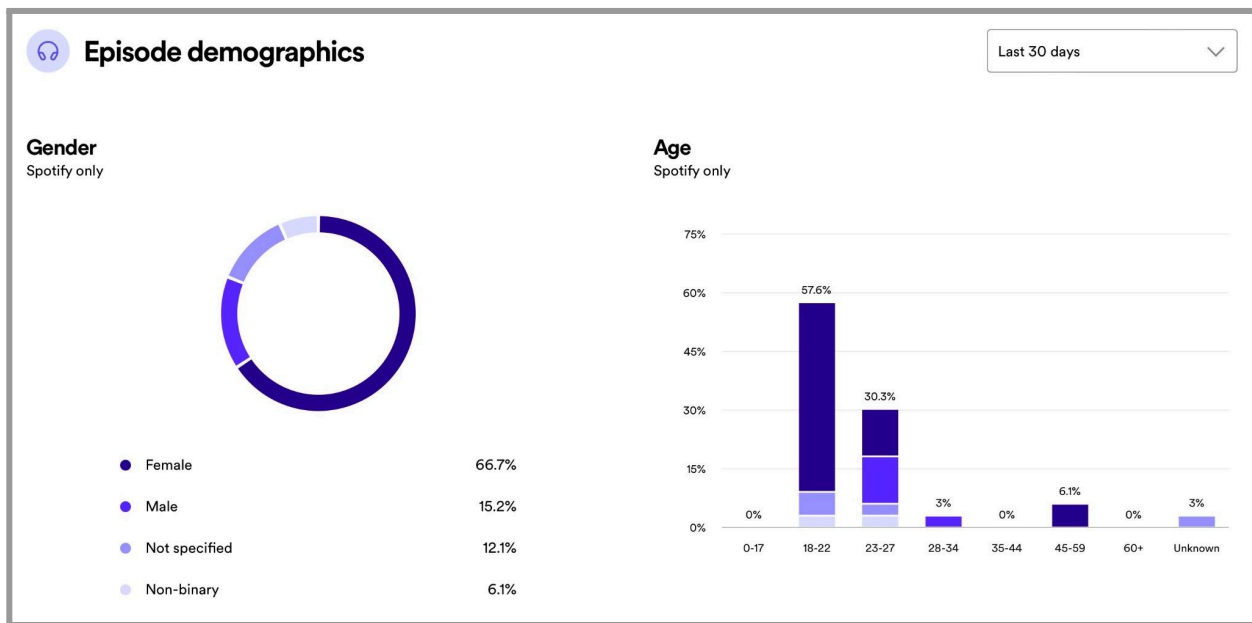
- Summary of the results and annexes

The 63rd episode was uploaded on Tallinn University Spotify page on the 5th of May before midnight.

Screenshots down below indicate episode overview on the date of 9th of May.



Picture 1. Episode overview on the date of 9th of May.



Picture 2. Episode demographics on the date of 9th of May.

Link to the episode:

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/elu-podcast/episodes/Episode-63-From-Marvel-to-Manga-pop-culture-fueled-language-learning-e2j9fln/a-ab847kd>

Team 1 Action plan

Tasks	Timeframe (which month)	Stakeholders	Student(s) responsible
First LIFE project meeting: become familiar with the project aim and Student ABC, divide into groups and share contacts, brainstorm possible podcast ideas	15.02.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members
Create a preliminary podcast idea: decide on the podcast topic, research questions, field of study, potential guests, and backup idea	22.02.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members
Second LIFE project meeting on Zoom: present the preliminary podcast idea to the supervisor and other teams, receive and give feedback	22.02.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members were present, Sofija and Alisher presented
Create an action plan for the project: decide on the tasks and deadlines, divide roles	26.02.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members, Sofija sent to the supervisors
Finalise the idea regarding feedback received: decide on the exact podcast idea, title, research question, find	29.02.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members, Sofija sent to the supervisors

supporting academic literature, potential guests			
Third LIFE project meeting: present the final podcast idea, action plan and update supervisors on the progress	07.03.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members, Rita presented
Contact potential guests: present them our podcast idea, decide on a day of the interview	08.03.2024	Paul Rüsse, Valeria Ohata	Rita contacted Paul Rüsse, Sofija contacted Valeria Ohata
Collect theoretical background: each group member reads 2 supporting academic article, creates a summary, and shares with the team	19.03.2024	The group members	All group members
Fourth LIFE project meeting: update supervisors on the progress made, receive and give feedback	21.03.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members were present, Sofija, Alisher and Anastasia presented
Create a mid-term report and presentation, send them to the LIFE coordinator	25.03.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members, Sofija sent
Mid-term week session: participating in the feedback session	28.03.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members were present, Alisher as the speaker

Script writing	03.04.2024	The group members	Annete - introduction, Sofija - Japanese, Anastasia and Rita - English, Alisher - Soft power, Rita - interviews
Fifth LIFE project meeting: update supervisors on the progress made, present preliminary script version, introduce the marketing plan	04.04.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members, Rita presented
Interview with Paul Rüsse	04.04.2024	Paul Rüsse, the group members	Alisher and Rita
Script editing: correct grammatical and stylistic mistakes, make everything link to each logically	07.04.2024	The group members	Annete
Interview with Valeria Ohata	11.04.2024	Valeria Ohata, the group members	Rita and Alisher
Create a poster and an logo for the podcast	19.04.2024	The group members	Rita
Record the script	22.04.2024	The group members	Rita and Alisher

Sixth LIFE project meeting: show finalised script, progress made, and finalised marketing plan to the supervisors	25.04.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All team members, Sofija presented
Editing	27.04.2024	The group members	Sofija
Post the final result on the TLÜ Spotify page	28.04.2024	Coordinator and the group members, Tallinn University	Sofija
Promotion campaign:	28.04–06.05	Coordinator and the group members, Tallinn University	Anastasia as the promotional leader, all group members assisted
Make the portfolio that includes: project report, project action plan, communication to stakeholders, reflective report on the learning experience of each group member	12.05.2024	The group members	All group members, Sofija will send it
Write a self-reflective report: each group member reflects on their contribution, personal development, and summarises the project to themselves regarding LIFE self-reflection guide	The deadline for submission is determined by the	The group members	Each group member individually

	supervisors		
Presentation day: create a presentation regarding LIFE presentation guide	11.05.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All LIFE project members as one partnering team, Rita as the spokesperson of Team 1
Presentation day	14.05.2024	Coordinator and the group members	All group members were present, Alisher spoke

Communication to stakeholders

The podcast was posted on Spotify platform with all of the previous podcasts done by the same project in past years. Moreover, it was agreed with one of the interviewed guests who owns a personal blog that the project would be reposted there. In addition to that, some student organisations of Tallinn University agreed to promote the podcast on their social media accounts as well. Obviously, the team members also spread the podcast in their personal social media accounts to attract the attention of peers, friends and family.

Self-reflection report about the learning experience of each team member

Anastasia: The LIFE Project provided me with an invaluable opportunity to research the topic that was

interesting and valuable. The topic of popular culture is relevant, and using it as a motivation to study languages gives another perspective on teaching and learning methods. Before the start of the project, I did not have any experience with writing the script. It was a learning curve to create a text that would be both captivating and academic. The resulting podcast is testament to our goal achievement, as it came out to be exactly what we envisioned at the beginning of the semester. Moreover, the interdisciplinarity of the project, with members from all the different majors, made the podcast multi-layered.

Rita: Personally, my initial goal for this project was to try myself out in script writing and then recording/hosting the podcast. Obviously, before that I had to practise academic reading and research once again to find valuable sources that would support the opinions of the interviewed guests. My academic writing skill definitely improved since the goal was to write an academic, yet entertaining text. The project was also of great benefit to my degree, as my major is Pedagogy, therefore, some materials were of my direct field of study. What surprised me the most was how smoothly our group work went, we had absolutely no issue with dividing the roles and everyone was working by the deadlines. I think that working in the team is the hardest aspect for me and having an overwhelmingly positive experience was definitely a beneficial takeaway message from this podcast. In my opinion, the podcast turned out to be exactly as expected, and though the pressure was high at some points, I believe that me and my teammates managed well.

Sofija: The LIFE project provided me with an opportunity to boost my skills of podcast creation as I had some experience in the past. I developed my editing, academic writing, and scripting skills. Coming from my perspective, our team researched an interesting topic of pop-culture fueled language learning that helped all of us to look at the teaching and learning processes from an entirely fresh point of view. As an English minor having a teaching career in mind, the project was directly related to my degree. However, our job as a whole was indeed interdisciplinary and with the help of my team members I learned more about the Japanese language and culture, soft power, and marketing. I believe that the final result truly illustrates the achieved goal of creating a fruitful and yet academic podcast which combines multi-dimensional topics within itself.

Alisher: I was always highly interested in media activities, but lacked sufficient experience in this direction. For this reason I decided to participate in the TLU Podcast project. As I am a BA graduate in translation studies and gained rich knowledge about IR discipline over my first year of Master Studies in TLU, I knew I could make a substantial contribution to our student podcast in the capacity of a scriptwriter and a co-host.

My main competence lies in bringing interdisciplinary character to our podcast episode. Despite our podcast episode mainly moved towards the topic of language learning, I found it reliable and valid to add Joseph Nye's concept of soft power, which means power through attraction. A motivation to acquire a foreign language, in most cases, remains the result of external cultural attraction. According to Nye, a foreign state's culture is one of the three main sources of soft power alongside the foreign policy and political values. In addition, I assisted Rita in co-hosting our episode and also took part in conducting an interview with one of TLU's professors. More importantly, the podcast production allowed me to realise how it feels to work with a team consisting of passionate and highly competent members. Moreover, I found a great opportunity to release and sharpen my scriptwriter skills. Most importantly, for the first time in my life I participated in conducting interviews. Needless to say, the TLU student podcast brought my skills to new horizons.

Annete: When I initially joined the LIFE Project to contribute to the podcast creation, my expectations were quite different from the eventual outcome. My intention was to be deeply involved, actively participating in crafting a podcast on a topic close to my heart. However, circumstances led me to join the team in a different capacity. Despite this deviation from my original plan, I found the teamwork to be exceptional. By the time I came on board, significant progress had already been made. Engaging in various tasks allowed me to delve into a subject matter I wouldn't typically explore, and for that, I'm appreciative of the experience. I now have a greater understanding of the dedication, resources, and meticulous planning required for each podcast session. This knowledge will undoubtedly prove invaluable in my future endeavours.

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LIFE PORTFOLIO REPORT

Project name (as stated on the LIFE website): TLU Student Podcast Spring 2024

Group name/number: Group 2

Supervisor(s): Terry McDonald, Tanel Kadalipp

TEAM MEMBERS: LAURA RAGEL (MA SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION), FREGA ROCHELLE KOOLMEISTER (JAPANESE STUDIES), ERIKA TUMME (TRANSLATION STUDIES), GETTER TRUMSI (CONTEMPORARY MEDIA), RAGLE MAIDE (MA SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION), ILAYDA GÜMÜS (DIGITAL LEARNING GAMES)

Project report

- *Description of the terms of reference and goals of the project - general introduction to the topic, ideas and the division of roles within the team.*

The term of reference of the project was to create an informative podcast on a topic of our choice. The podcast had to address a relevant topic in our society, provide interest, as well as be thought-provoking for listeners now and in the future, as the podcast will still be accessible for listening on Spotify platform on the TLU Podcast page.

The goal of our podcast is to draw attention to the fact that university students' life tends to be more physically passive compared to those still in school, where pupils have compulsory PE classes; provide recommendations and explanations how and why students should pursue a more active lifestyle and how it will benefit their academic performance.

We strive to encourage students to pursue a more active lifestyle and inspire them by sharing our simple and relatable tips supported by the words of a specialist. We also wish to explain to students that a good academic performance is directly connected with an active lifestyle, as it improves the quality of information processing.

The vast majority of work was done together, such as:

- making decision about our topic
- literature / academic sources search
- division of tasks
- drawing up the mid-term report
- preparing the presentation

- presenting the work
- promotion of podcast

The tasks that were divided also were:

- direct podcast plan compiling, audio recording and editing - 3 participants
- podcast uploading to Spotify - 1 participant
- individual self-reflection report uploading
- *The importance of the problem, its description and choice of methods - a more thorough description of the topic, including the importance of the problem and choice of methods aiming to resolve the problem. Description of the past situation, reasons why the project was needed.*

Describe the present situation in Estonia or elsewhere, the problem the project aimed to resolve and activities that were carried out in order to resolve the problem. Refer to relevant studies, statistics and development plans. Describe the suitability of the methods and/or activities you have chosen to achieve project goals. Comment on the choice of methods and/or activities and how they helped achieve the project goals in the best possible way (include relevant references to describe evidence-based methods).

Nowadays many people like to listen to podcasts on different topics. We do too.

We believe that a podcast is an efficient way to get the word out, and social media platforms will help us promote our episode so as many people as possible can hear it.

“Find Your Superpower: Improving Your Studies by Being Active” - in this episode we discuss how sports and physical activities affect academic performance and mental state during university studies. We touch on the transition from compulsory PE classes in high school to sitting in lectures, spending hours studying and mostly having a physically passive university life. Previously, a podcast was made by the other group on a similar topic, so we are also continuing the discussion on the matter.

We emphasise the positive effects physical activity has on our brain and cognitive performance and share tips on how to stay active even with a busy schedule.

The project was needed and a topic is relevant because during the initial discussion we have all noticed, even coming from different walks of life, that the mentioned topic speaks to us and we do see this as a common problem for the vast majority of university students regardless of a chosen speciality that they major in. Nowadays people spend a lot of time using their computers and having

quite physically passive or static jobs. The problem is relevant not only in Estonia, but also in many other countries. This tendency grows, so we wish to encourage young people to think about the importance of movement on a daily basis.

Research questions:

- Why is it important to stay physically active during university studies
- What are the benefits of physical exercise on a student's mental health
- How to balance physical activity and university studies
- What has the university done to prioritise physical activity of the students

Field of study: psychology, natural science

Guest: Kristjan Port (sport biologist, Professor of Health Behaviour and Sports Biology, TLU)

Related bibliography:

- Cox , Ryan Thomas 2022. *THE IMPACT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES IN MATHEMATICS*. ST. John's University, New York.
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- *Description of activities and reaching the stakeholders - description of who the project activities are aimed at.*

Describe the direct and indirect stakeholders that were impacted by project activities (include the total number of stakeholders). Depending on the context of the project, it is also a good idea to refer to other important indicators (e.g. descriptions based on occupation, age, gender, etc.)

Impact: Promotes overall student well-being by emphasising the link between physical activity, academic performance, and mental well-being within Tallinn University and beyond.

Contributions: Students, faculty, and staff contribute insights and expertise, shaping project content and direction. Educational experts inform discussions on best practices in student support and academic success. Student perspectives ensure project relevance and resonance with peers.

The project is primarily aimed at the university students, teachers and other people who are listening to the TLU podcast.

- *Sustainability of the project - description of how sustainability of the project and cooperation with stakeholders have been planned.*

Explain how the sustainability of project activities has been ensured. Which structural unit/organisation/person will be responsible for the implementation of the systems, methods, plans etc developed as a result of the project. Who will have the ownership of project outcomes?

The overall idea of our project is very efficient and liberating, as we do not aggressively propagate any ideas and mindsets, but inform the listeners of a podcast and positively encourage them to take action and take care of their health. We also do not touch upon the stereotypical side of "doing physical activity for looks", but rather for your own health benefit and our guest provides scientific/biological reasons to support the main ideas and statements.

Our topic is already quite sustainable by itself, as it will still be relevant in the future. The prepared podcast will be available on Spotify, where everyone is welcome to listen to it. As the podcast will be uploaded to the official page of our university's podcast, TLU will have the ownership of this material.

- *Summary of the results and annexes - describing the project results, completed tasks.*

Results are presented in the most suitable way for the participants, e.g. written papers, collected additional materials, article summaries, teamwork results and process analyses, case studies, layouts, concept maps, mind maps, photos, graphs, web links etc.

As a team we have made all the necessary steps for a project to come to life, starting from initial discussions and finishing up with the actual recording and promotion of the podcast. We have developed our own idea and found a competent guest to discuss the topic with us and our potential audience. Luckily, the teamwork was smooth and there were no problems along the way from our team's side.

A link to the prepared podcast: <https://spotify.link/2naCmCZesJb>

Project action plan

PROJECT ACTION PLAN - TEAM 2

LIFE PROJECT: TLU PODCAST

SUPERVISOR(S): TERRY McDONALD

TEAM MEMBERS: LAURA RAGEL (MA SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION), FREGA ROCHELLE KOOLMEISTER (JAPANESE STUDIES), ERIKA TUMME (TRANSLATION STUDIES), GETTER TRUMSI (CONTEMPORARY MEDIA), RAGLE MAIDE (MA SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION)

Tasks	Deadline	Student(s) responsible
Choosing the topic for podcast, first bibliography, possible guests and questions	22.02	EVERYONE
Creation of action plan first draft	22.03	Laura Ragel
Writing to the guests	5.03	Getter Trumsi

Agreements on the guests	15.03	EVERYONE
Scheduling recording times	17.03	Getter Trumsi
Project action plan ready and sent to evaluation	18.03	Erika Tumme
LIFE mid-term report	18.03	Ragle Maide
Mid-term session	28.03	EVERYONE
Script writing	01.04	EVERYONE
Recording	8.04 ,09.04 or 11.04	Hosts: Laura Ragel Ragle Maide Guest: Kristjan Port
Editing	Finished by end of April	Getter Trumsi
Final touches and editing of podcast before publication	End of April	EVERYONE
Uploading to Spotify	8.05	Frega Rochelle Koolmeister
Promotion of the project/podcast	Start of May	TLÜ Podcast, editors
Self reflection	1 week before the final presentation	EVERYONE
Final presentation	14.05	EVERYONE

Communication to stakeholders - overview of materials to illustrate how the activities, process and/or results of the project have been communicated to stakeholders. Some examples of methods and channels:

- *coverage in print media, local newspaper, web media, television, radio etc.*
- *e.g. article on popular science, podcast, blog post in the blogs of TU academic units, Media Hub, news report, 1-minute video of the project, information leaflet, webpage etc.*

As the podcast was uploaded to Spotify, we are monitoring how many listens our podcast got and getting feedback from listeners on social media. Feedback from the first listeners was positive.

Self-reflection report about the learning experience of each team member - learning experience of each individual student (up to 150 words) to describe the experience gained during the project and evaluate the achievement of project goals

Erika Tumme: I have yet again learned about the importance of having a good team that values the efficient workflow, because we have managed well and I am grateful for that. Additionally, especially for this project it was crucial to choose an interesting and attention-grabbing topic for a podcast, which I believe we also did and hope that our podcast will be valuable for other students as well. Not having any experience with the podcast creation, it was very new to be involved in this process and see what steps needed to be done for an actual episode to come to life. My personal contribution consisted of search of literature on the topic as well as preparation of the written part of the project, including compiling the portfolio and final presentation.

Frega Rochelle Koolmeister: From participating in this project I have learned the importance of teamwork - from the very beginning we have had such a well coordinated team, that does assignments on time and is considerate of other team members. I have also learned so much about the podcast making process and the challenges of it - like finding a guest speaker for the podcast and getting him to actually show up. The final result of our podcast was so cool and professional - like we actually managed to make a real podcast episode! My personal contribution to the project was helping with choosing the topic, helping to make the files like this one (and action plan; members and ideas) and uploading the podcast to Spotify .

Getter Trumsi: From start to finish, this project has taught me teamwork and patience. In terms of teamwork, it was a valuable experience to walk the path of creating a podcast episode with students from other faculties, getting to know each other but also adapting to each of our busy schedules. Right from the start we had a good mindset as a team, we set common goals and worked towards achieving them on time. In terms of patience, I learned not to rush things and have a back up plan set. More precisely, we had to wait for the final confirmation from our guest longer than we anticipated. That made us anxious but we were patient, we conducted a back-up plan and eventually everything worked out. My personal contributions to the project in addition to the tasks done as a team were contacting the guest (and the backup guest), arranging the recording at the BFM studio, attending weekly meetings, and editing the episode.

Ragle Maide: Participating in the TLU Podcast project was a truly rewarding experience that expanded both my skill set and my appreciation for interdisciplinary collaboration. Working within a diverse team, I had various roles, including conducting research, scriptwriting and participating in the podcast recording process. One of the most challenging aspects of this project was coordinating meeting times with group members due to our busy and different schedules. The podcast recording itself pushed me out of my comfort zone, particularly as I don't feel comfortable with public speaking, especially in English. However, the experience ultimately proved to be very beneficial, allowing me to grow personally and professionally. Recording in TLU's professional studio was a highlight of the project. The opportunity to engage with Kristjan Port on a topic that I had a personal interest in was gratifying. I am incredibly thankful for this unique opportunity that had a really great outcome.

Laura Ragel: This project has taught me that 6 people, all with different schedules, can successfully work together in order to create something new and interesting. Even though it has been stressful from time to time, overall I'm very happy with the outcome. I've learned how to be patient and trust the process. I'm glad I got to meet new people from the university and work together on this project. In addition to the group tasks, I was responsible for writing the script and being one of the hosts for the episode.

Ilayda Gümüs: This project has been difficult on me at the beginning as I lost teammates and then changed into a different team, however I learned that people from different backgrounds can come together and come up with things and create an end product. I am grateful for all my teammates and their endless efforts.

LIFE PORTFOLIO REPORT

Project name (as stated on the LIFE website): TLU Student Podcast Spring 2024

Group name/number: Group 4

Supervisor(s): Terry McDonald, Tanel Kadalipp

Participants: Julia Jalonen (BA. Politics & Governance), Sigrid Salundo (MA. Psychology), Anna Yaroshchak (BA.Liberal Arts in Humanities), Alberto Peralta (MA. Estonian Studies), Keidi Jaakson (MA. Contemporary Culture), Nikita Dolgov (MA. Digital Learning Games)

1. Background and description of the project

Describe the aim and the importance of the project. Define the central problem of the project. Describe the role of your group in achieving the project objectives.

The student podcast is a project part of LIFE projects and its aim is to Students Conceptualize, Create, and Promote Podcast Episodes as part of an Ongoing Series. The creation and dissemination of a podcast – focused on research, ideas, and activities that are important to current and prospective members of the TLU community, and other potential interested audiences. Over the course of the semester, the teams will create 1 episode on a topic chosen by themselves, relying on the expertise present within the group and TLU at large.

"The Soundtrack of Life: How Music Shapes who we are" is an interdisciplinary research project that delves into the intricate relationship between music and personal and social identity formation. At the intersection of psychology, neuroscience, and sociology, this project aims to explore the profound ways in which music influences individuals' sense of self, their emotional and cognitive development, and their place within various social and cultural contexts.

The primary aim of this project is to investigate whether and how music shapes our identity. This includes examining the emotional, cognitive, and social impacts of music on individuals, as well as understanding how music can reflect and influence our personal beliefs, cultural background, and social interactions. The importance of this project lies in its potential to provide insights into the universal role of music in human life and its power as a tool for personal growth, social connection, and cultural expression. By unraveling the complex relationship between music and identity, this research could have significant implications for educational strategies, therapeutic practices, and broader societal understanding of the role of music in shaping who we are. Our central problems with this project lies on the foundations of how to make sure that our podcast has scientifically and scholarly credible information, in order to stay in the lines of the TLU Student podcast format which is based on giving some educational and scientific information.

The central problem this project addresses is the question: "Does music shape our identity? If yes, how and why?" Despite the intuitive understanding that music is a powerful influencer of human emotions and social connections, there is a need for a systematic exploration of its specific effects on identity formation.

Our group's role in achieving the project objectives is multifaceted and collaborative, drawing on the diverse expertise and interests of each member.

Responsibilities include:

Literature review for the podcast's framework: Conducting a comprehensive review of existing research in psychology, neuroscience, and sociology related to music and identity. This involves incorporating insights from various fields to build a coherent theoretical framework for our podcast.

Finding experts for the podcast: Identifying and engaging with experts in relevant fields, including neuroscientists, music therapists, and sociologists.

Preparing the script and podcast episode: Compiling our findings, analyses, and conclusions into a coherent podcast episode. Our group will prepare a podcast episode to disseminate our research findings to a broader audience, making our research accessible and engaging for both academic and non-academic listeners.

2. Implementation of activities

Our end goal for this project is to achieve one quality episode for the TLU student podcast platform which is both scientific and interesting for the general public (listeners).

Our project's success is based on a well-structured action plan and effective team collaboration. We have divided responsibilities among team members, capitalizing on individual strengths and interests to ensure all aspects of the project are covered. Despite the division of tasks, we foster a collaborative environment where team members are encouraged to contribute ideas and feedback across all project phases. We communicate daily in a dedicated group chat, ensuring that all team members are updated on progress, upcoming tasks, and any issues that may arise.

These are our activities planned to fulfill our goals for this project:

- **Research:** We will conduct a thorough literature review and online research to gather existing knowledge and insights on the influence of music on identity from psychological, neurological, and sociological perspectives. This will inform the content of our podcast and ensure that our discussions are grounded in academic and empirical evidence.
- **Finding Guests:** Based on our research, we will identify and reach out to potential guests, including academics, neuroscientists like Toomas Toomsoo, music therapists, and individuals with personal stories about music's impact on their identity. This diverse lineup will enrich our podcast with varied perspectives.

- **Scripting and Question Preparation:** With our guests in mind, we will craft detailed scripts and prepare engaging questions that aim to delve deep into the subject matter. This ensures that our discussions are coherent, informative, and engaging for our audience.
- **Scheduling:** We will coordinate with our guests to schedule recording times that are convenient for them, ensuring a smooth and efficient recording process.
- **Recording:** We will conduct interviews with our guests, ensuring a comfortable and conducive environment for open and insightful conversations. Before that we will do a test recording session without the guests to ensure everything goes well the first time.
- **Editing:** Post-recording, we will edit the episodes for clarity, pacing, and engagement. During this phase, we will also select theme music and sound effects that complement the mood and theme of our podcast, enhancing the listener's experience.
- **Marketing Plan:** We will develop a comprehensive marketing plan that includes social media promotions, collaborations with educational institutions, and engagement with online communities interested in music, psychology, and neuroscience.
- The culmination of our efforts will be the release of "The Soundtrack of Life: How Music Shapes Who we are" on the TLÜ Student Podcast platform.

3. Stakeholders of the project

Our episode lies in the fields of neuroscience, psychology and music and our episode is about how music is connected to shaping our identity and personality, in a nutshell who we are. Our quest for our episode is a music therapist **Pille Rand**, who will be including a professional outlook and information into our episode by answering our pre-prepared questions. All in all, from our quest we are hoping for new insights and interesting facts to add to our topic in order to achieve an informative and interesting episode we can put out to the TLU student podcast.

Our topic of our episode lies on music and identity (personality development) which has been researched and studied by numerous academics and researchers which has enabled us to narrow down our own contributions on the pre-existing research. We narrowed down our research to especially focusing on identity and personality development shaped by music, however also this particular research has many different aspects to it such as the environment you're in and people around you which made us find our own outlook on our topic.

Other stakeholders for our project include, academic Institutions and Researchers in fields such as Psychology, Neuroscience, Sociology, and Musicology. Their Impact for our project includes these institutions

and scholars to contribute foundational theories and research findings that guide our project. Our work, in turn, offers fresh insights and empirical data that can enrich the academic discourse, potentially informing future research in these fields. different Experts and Practitioners for example in Neuroscientists (e.g., Toomas Toomsoo), music therapists, psychologists also contribute to our project such as our guest Pille Rand. By participating as guests, these experts share valuable knowledge and experiences, enhancing the project's content. Our platform offers them an opportunity to disseminate their work to a broader audience, fostering public engagement with their fields of expertise.

Of course our project includes other stakeholders such as the Listeners and the General Public and This group benefits from increased awareness and understanding of the relationship between music and identity. Our project aims to provide listeners with new perspectives, encouraging self-reflection and a deeper appreciation for music's role in their lives and society. In addition, Cultural and Music Communities which are impacted by Artists, musicians, and cultural organizations may find in our project new avenues for exploring and expressing the complex interplay between music and identity. This can lead to innovative artistic projects and collaborations that bridge the gap between academic research and cultural expression.

In summary, our project stands at the intersection of various communities and fields of study, acting as a conduit for sharing knowledge, experiences, and insights about the transformative power of music. By involving a wide range of stakeholders, we aim to create a comprehensive and impactful exploration of how music shapes our sense of self and our connection to the world around us.



Our group with our esteemed quest Pille Rand while recording. Picture by: Anna Yaroshchak

4. Basis of research

In undertaking "The Soundtrack of Life: How Music shapes who we are" project, our research is grounded in a diverse array of sources and best practices from across the fields of psychology, neuroscience, sociology, and musicology. This multidisciplinary approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, allowing us to explore the multifaceted relationship between music and identity from various angles. We have used numerous academic sources and journals to gather information of our topic and peer-reviewed articles and scholarly books serve as the foundation of our research, providing theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and critical analyses on the topics of identity formation, music psychology, and the neuroscientific impact of music. Notable sources include the works of Erik Erikson on psychosocial development, Daniel J. Levitin "This Is Your Brain on Music" for insights into the neuroscience of music, and Vivian L.

In addition we have researched music and cultural analysis and how examination of various music genres and cultural contexts provides a lens through which to view the diverse ways music influences identity across different societies. This includes analysis of music lyrics, videos, and the social dynamics within musical subcultures. Adopting methodologies from various disciplines allows for a more nuanced exploration of the research question. This includes quantitative surveys to gauge the correlation between musical preferences and personality traits, qualitative interviews for depth of understanding, and content analysis for cultural studies.

Some of the sources we used while conducting this research:

Beverly Daniel Tatum, "The Complexity of Identity: 'Who Am I?'," in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice: An Anthology on Racism, Sexism, Anti-semitism, Heterosexism, Classism and Ableism*, ed. Adams et al. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 9-14.

Vignoles, Vivian. (2017). Identity: Personal AND Social. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316790231_Identity_Personal_AND_Social

Sokol, Justin T. (2009) "Identity Development Throughout the Lifetime: An Examination of Eriksonian Theory," *Graduate Journal of Counseling Psychology: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, Article 14*. Available at: <https://epublications.marquette.edu/gjcp/vol1/iss2/14>

Levitin, D. J. (2019b). *This is your brain on music: The science of a human obsession*. Langara College.

McFerran, K., Derrington, P., & Saarikallio, S. (2019). *Handbook of Music, Adolescents, and Wellbeing*. Oxford University Press.

Greenberg, D. M., Baron-Cohen, S., Stillwell, D. J., Kosinski, M., & Rentfrow, P. J. (2015). Musical Preferences are

Linked to Cognitive Styles. *PLOS ONE*, 10(7), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0131151>

5. Interdisciplinarity

Our project draws upon knowledge from several distinct fields to address its central problem, integrating insights into a cohesive exploration of music's impact on identity. We came up with the episode idea collectively, by brainstorming together and finding different fields of interests and strengths. Our topic that lies heavily on music, was notable in everyone's interest in the group at least in some ways and the idea of mixing music and personal development was intriguing to everyone in the team, so it was relatively easy to find a common interest to start planning our episode. The fields include:

- Team members: We have an ideal team of 6 people from different study programs and people with different interests & skills which offers new insights and contribution into our interdisciplinary project.
- Psychology: Offers theories of identity formation and development, including Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, to understand the psychological aspects of identity influenced by music.
- Neuroscience: Provides a basis for understanding how music affects the brain's emotional and cognitive processes, using research from sources like Daniel J. Levitin's work on the neuroscience of music listening.
- Sociology: Contributes insights into the social aspects of identity, including how music functions within social groups and cultural contexts, influencing individual and collective identities.
- Musicology: Examines the structure, history, and cultural significance of music itself, allowing us to explore how different genres and musical expressions reflect and shape identity.

6. Timeframe of the project

Describe the timeframe of the project (group activities) and the division of roles within the team.

We have worked on our episode collaboratively every week since the start of this project in the middle of February and have been communicating actively if not daily, at least weekly to stay on track of different tasks in order to complete our project. Zoom meetings with Terry have helped us navigate our schedule and as a supervisor has offered us helpful tips and comments on our progress. Everyone in our group had different tasks and everyone kept sure that deadlines were met in time and we have been able to be on schedule in order to put our episode out on May 13th.

7. Project (group) results

We have achieved our goals we set as a group at the beginning of this project. During our journey we have come up with some setbacks including having to move the recording time due to our quest being sick (as well as securing a potential quest) and we had some audio problems with our finished recording. We have created all mandatory documents in time and for example attended mid-term feedback sessions and zoom meetings with our supervisor and other group members.

We have chosen a topic for our podcast "The soundtrack of life: How music shapes who we are" and done collectively a lot of research behind different fields and scholars in order to finalize an informative and scientific script for our episode. We have developed an action plan, which we have actively followed throughout this project with some changes to schedule due to reasons out of our control. We have secured a quest and recorded our episode which in addition has been edited. We have done a marketing plan which includes setting up posters and possibly doing tiktoks and other posts to TLU social media. We are fully ready for our episode to come out on May 13th on different platforms in order to get more listeners. all in all, have finished all the tasks in order to achieve a TLU student podcast episode that reflects our skills, commitment and expertise.

8. Feedback

The ELU project was an interesting and insightful experience which allowed us to participate in an interdisciplinary project that was something different from our usual curriculum and courses. It challenged us to participate in teamwork with people from different backgrounds, fields, interests and so on which enriched the whole experience. The TLU Student podcast it's an amazing way in our opinion to participate in the ELU project for many reasons but most importantly it was something creative but still allowed us to showcase each team member's skills the best, however at the same time challenging us while doing something new (a podcast). Is no wonder that this project is one of the most popular ELU projects and Terry for sure has done an amazing job while supervising and keeping this project going.

9. Project action plan

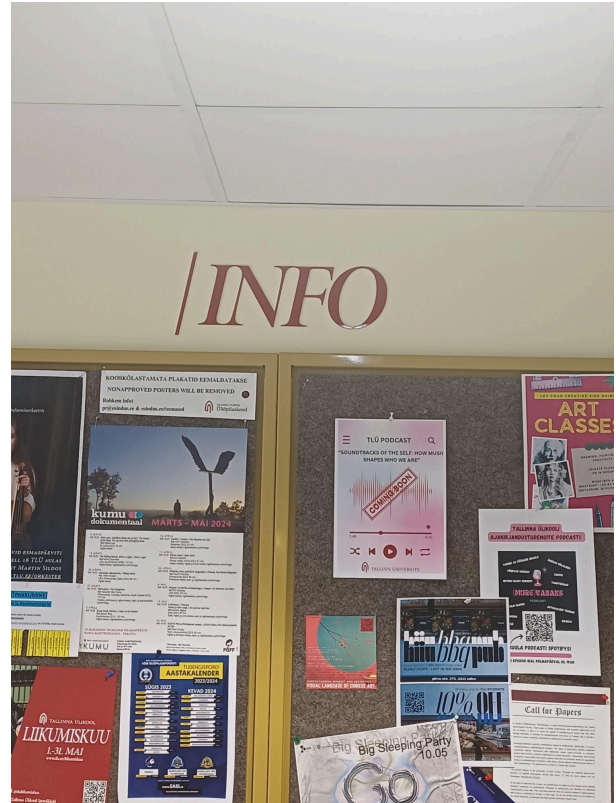
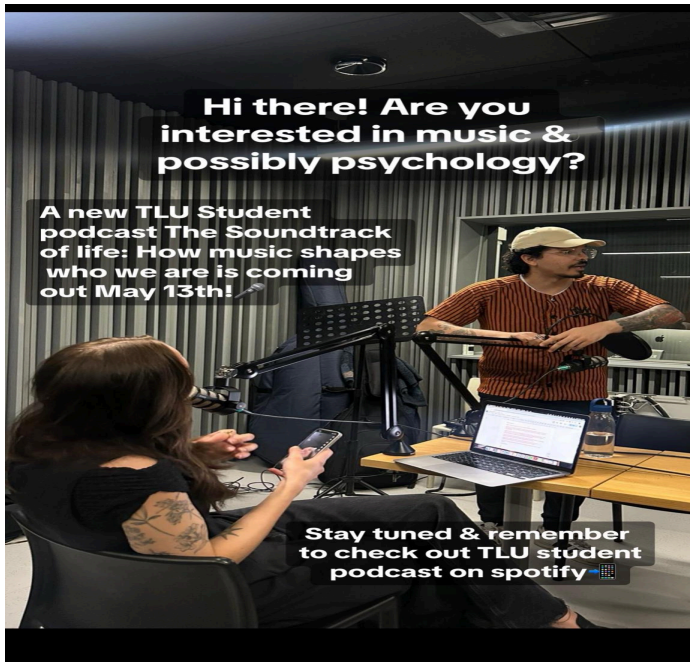
Tasks	Deadline	Student(s) responsible
Choosing the topic for podcast, first bibliography, possible guests and questions	22.02.24	EVERYONE
Creation of action plan first draft	27.02.24	EVERYONE
Contact potential guests	28.02.24	Anna - email template Sigrid - contacts Katrin Kullasepp - no Anna - contacts Liisi

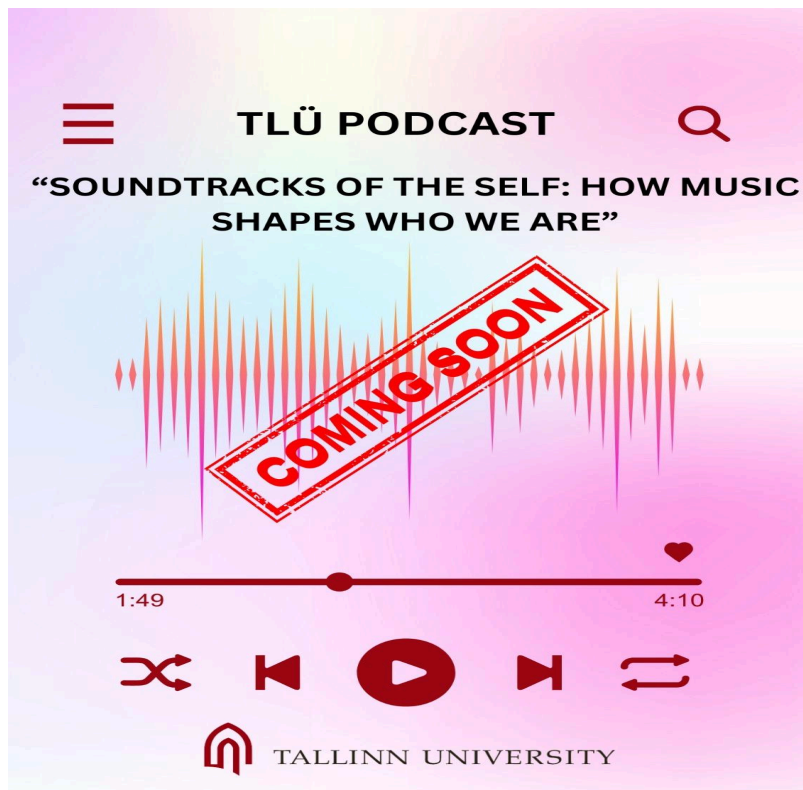
		Ausmees (TU) Sigrid, Anna, Keidi - find new guests
Research and Summary	Sigrid & Keidi - 5.03.24 Julia, Anna, Nikita - 10.03.24	Sigrid & Keidi - What is Identity? Julia, Anna & Nikita - How does music affect people?
Agreements on the guests	15.03.24	Sigrid & Anna
Project action plan ready and sent to evaluation	18.03	Sigrid
Booking recording times (the studio) + equipment	12.04	Nikita & Alberto ask from kadalipp@tlu.ee
Writing Scripts	1.3-12.4	Hosts - Keidi & Sigrid
Mid-Term Report	18.03	Keidi Jaakson + everyone supports
LIFE Mid-Term Feedback Session	22.3	EVERYONE
Planning recording times (with guests)	Beginning of April	Anna Secured Quests: Alice Pehk
Review and practice - recording preparations	Middle of April	Hosts - Keidi, Sigrid
Recording (including probable interviews)	22.4-30.4	Nikita, Alberto + everyone learning on the side
Theme music	End of April	Nikita
Editing	End of April	Nikita, Alberto
Finalizing the episodes (Titles, descriptions, thumbnails)	Start of May	Title, description - editors + hosts Thumbnail - TLÜ one
Marketing plan	Start of May	Julia
Publishing the episode	Start of May	Nikita, Alberto
Cross-Promotion	Start of May	Julia, Anna

Self-Reflection Report	Start of May	EVERYONE
Final presentation	May 14th	EVERYONE

10. Media coverage

For marketing we set up posters all across TLU campuses encouraging students (which are one our our target audience) and we have planned to put out a Tiktok video and Instagram post to TLU socials in order to promote our episode and get more listeners.





11. Self-reflective reports. (Attached below)

Julia Jalonen: My role in the group was in the beginning mainly coming up with possible episode ideas for the podcast, together with my group mates and after that, we collectively were doing research for our topic "Music and identity". Personally I did a lot of research on different music genres and how they can possibly be associated with different personality traits, which was highly interesting. In the bigger view of the project, I was in charge as the Team Leader that would send out all the documents to the ELU supervisors, for example before the mid-term seminar and together with the team handle the promoting and marketing of our episode.

Alberto Peralta: Coming into this project I was really excited because I listen to plenty of podcasts and have always been fascinated by all of the work that goes behind making one. My task for the episode were to help our producer with all recording, editing and production tasks and to also provide help in other areas or portions of the project. During this project, I had the chance not only to learn from my teammates but also to have a lot of fun with a fantastic group of people that made it really easy. I learned more about podcast recording and production and also had the chance to use uni equipment that I would not have been able to

use in other aspects of my life which made it more exciting to record this episode. I wish that I can continue this wonderful journey of podcast recording and also hoping that if it does, I can be accompanied by great teammates like the ones I had the pleasure to work with this semester.

Anna Yaroshchak: Podcast project is my best learning experience in this semester so far! I gained new acquaintances and enjoyed the time we devoted to work through group work. I also learnt new things, like marketing and editing. The most valuable experience was working for guest search and keeping in contact with her. I loved this LIFE project experience!!!

Sigrid Salundo: In the Student Podcast project, I had the privilege of wearing multiple hats, being involved in almost every stage of podcast production. Alongside our amazing team, I had a role in research, guest acquisition, scriptwriting, and co-hosting. Hosting the podcast and preparing for recordings was undeniably the highlight of the project for me. It allowed me to hone my communication and presentation skills while delving into intriguing topics with our guest and co-host. It definitely left a lasting impression due to which I am looking forward to further exploration of the podcast industry. I am also incredibly proud of our team and the fact that we were able to work through all the challenges of the project as a team. As well as found a way for each of the team member to contribute to the project in the way that was best suited for them. Building confidence among team members was another crucial lesson, ensuring everyone felt empowered to contribute their talents. I assume that feeling safe and comfortable within our team was also one of the reasons why we got through it all quite seamlessly. And that feeling was something which was created by all team members and I'm incredibly grateful for that.

Nikita Dolgov: My tasks were primarily focused on recording, mixing and publishing the podcast episode. In addition, I made an intro track for the podcast episode. From my point of view, I didn't have such horrendous difficulties. During this project, I approached audio from the new side. This includes booking and handling the recording equipment, recording and mixing the podcast (not music tracks, as I usually do). We had some unexpected situations during mixing the podcast, albeit we got rid of them and this challenge only strengthened my wish to continue to explore more of the aspects related to audio.

Keidi Jaakson: “Throughout the development and execution of the podcast episode, I had the opportunity to engage in every facet of the podcast creation process. This project was not only a collaborative effort but also a significant learning curve for me. I took on multiple roles including researcher, co-host, and scriptwriter, working alongside my team. I am incredibly satisfied with the knowledge I have gained and am eager to explore podcasting more seriously on my own. This project has not only equipped me with the skills needed but also ignited a passion for further exploration in the field of digital storytelling.”