



## Theme 12

### Storytelling and narration with the plurilingual kamishibai

Storytelling is fundamental in any education and training activity, for it involves multiple functions - simple or complex -, from short term memorization to the capacity to "fabricate memories", from the sharing of collective experience to mere entertainment. It shapes a deeper knowledge of oneself and of the world through the ability to invest, to captivate listeners and readers. For that matter, the kamishibai was used in Japan to attract children and to sell them candy - for nothing serves this purpose better than telling them a picture story.

To write a kamishibai text is to go "through the looking glass". One goes from being part of a mesmerized audience to becoming the creator of a story able to captivate its audience.

To this end, the story of the plurilingual kamishibai must obey a few rules in order to be as efficient as possible: short sentences, a simple, coherent plot that can introduce foreign words understandable in the given context, and well-defined characters.

The testimonies extracted from the kamishibai project logbooks show the methods adopted by the teachers and project leaders during the creation of the story. Of course, these experience reports are non-exhaustive but they represent concrete methodological examples.

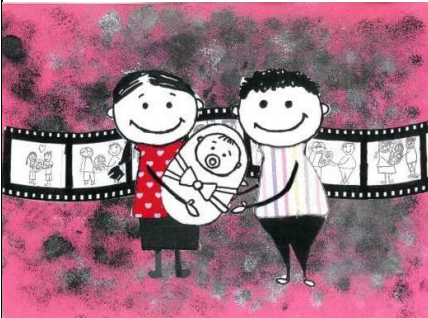
The starting point in creating the story is certainly reading plurilingual kamishibais to become familiar with the textual typology suitable to this kind of tool. Storytelling, in accordance with the age brackets and the group situation, can also be a relevant method. The triggering factor may be a story read, a movie, a poem, a song or a collective discussion.

"The story of "The Chick and the Hazelnut" is the result of the restyling of a story located in the woods, that had a few wild animals as protagonists." (Aosta Valley kindergarten)

"We read some kamishibai stories. The children heard the story of "La chenille qui fait des trous" / "Il piccolo Bruco Maisazio" / "The very hungry caterpillar" / "Rupsje Nooitgenoeg" in several languages. (...) We then established the characters, the locations, the duration and the storyline of a story that the children invented, first in groups then all together." (Aosta Valley elementary school)

"We came up with the stories through a discussion with the children, during which we decided upon the characters and the unfolding of the story" (Aosta Valley elementary school)

"The children came up with the theme and adopted the idea of past, present and future embodied by characters based on the documentary-movie "Home", that they watched in class at the beginning of the school year." (Aosta Valley middle school)



This discovery phase is often induced - or followed, depending on the case - by a workshop on storytelling, a **reflection on the narrative structure** and some **dramatization** and reading-out-loud exercises.

"[...] we worked a lot on emotions during the project: first by recalling memories, then on the expression of fear for the writing of the story and finally, on the expression of various emotions while reading (surprise, fear...)" (France)

During the creation of the story, **collaboration within the group** is fundamental to make sure that the various languages are inserted in the story in a natural way, that the correspondence with the imagery is adequate and the text is coherent, understandable, efficient, and of course, correct.

"The more the children are grown up, the more the use of kamishibai, the topics handled, and typology of the texts are diversified. For instance, while teaching a fifth-grade class of the elementary school, we first worked on memories and on how to narrate the past. Afterwards, the pupils wrote the text and we corrected it together. Finally, we divided the story into little pieces." (Aosta Valley elementary school)

"Each pupil created mini story cards and crafted their own cardboard castelet. The children typed up the texts and we read the story all together. We then established the characters, the locations, the duration and the storyline of a story that the children invented, first in groups then all together. The story was written in thirteen sequences to which we associated drawing sketches for the making of the cards.' (Aosta Valley elementary school)

"It's a pleasure to witness as the collective reflection wanders towards more individual reflections and then comes back to a project that is common, visible, presentable, and suitable for their pedagogical means (especially reading). It's a pleasure to mix genres (oral/written/art/history/geographics, world knowledge...) naturally and according to the needs in presence." (France)

It is also a **meticulous work of review, of reading and proofreading**, of image adaption and vice versa, in which dialogues also play an important role since they dynamize the scene and they enable the intervention of several voices during the reading. It is a laborious work, that is nonetheless carried out thanks to collaboration and to the common will to create a beautiful story. As the authors of their own plurilingual work, the children get involved in this pedagogical project, which motivates them to undergo learning in general and to fight against early academic disengagement.

"The pupils learned how important it is to rewrite, to proofread and not to be afraid to change things. They learned about the importance of global consistency." "A great motivation to improve writing skills. They learned they couldn't write "perfectly" on a first attempt". (France)

"The pupils get a bit more involved in writing exercises, especially fifth graders who, for the most part, improve details in their noun groups, and they can tell the difference between oral and written language." (France)

"Writing is clearly the activity that frightens them the most. Texts are proofread numerous times. Given the final result, it seems that this work has been beneficial." (France)

And reading the story out loud is the decisive test to verify that the chain of events works well:

"The pupils had to increase their oral participation, to explain their ideas or to read their dialogues to their classmates. During these activities, they understood that oral intervention requires speaking loudly, articulating, addressing an audience and using the grammatical structures and vocabulary they learned." (France).

"The children were led to formulate correct, articulate sentences in order to tell the story. Recording their voices was one way to re-work their elocution. By hearing their recorded voices, the children realize their pronunciation mistakes and are able to correct them." (France)





In parallel with writing skills, this tool fosters **reading comprehension**. The narration of the text embeds the reading activity in a meaningful context, that goes beyond a passive repetition of sentences. The reading practice becomes more than just a sterile school exercise whose only recipient is the teacher. This work is necessary to result in a quality reading in front of a real audience. Moreover, a public performance doesn't only require reading technique to be fluid, it also

demands paraverbal skills: intonation, articulation, delivery, volume. The fact that the reader is partly hidden behind the butaï prompts them to speak, since the castelet acts like a protective screen separating the pupil from its audience - they can thus put their fear or shyness aside.