




Theme 13

Kamishibaï and dramatization: middle school experience


This document details the experience of the Thessaloniki middle school “5th middle school of Evosmos” thanks to the testimonies of teachers who participated in the 2019-2020 plurilingual Kamishibaï contest on the theme “I remember”.

This plurilingual kamishibaï creation project was realized during a creative writing workshop, with the participation of pupils aged 14 to 15 years old and from November 2019 until June 2020, both remotely and face-to-face.

Pedagogical Stakes	<div data-bbox="305 892 597 1087" data-label="Image">  </div> <p data-bbox="613 892 1398 1087">The inspiration “was the history of the city of Thessaloniki, that has long been at the crossroads of cultures and languages.” Teachers thought it would be interesting “to take advantage of that mosaic in order to unveil the students’ current multilingualism and multiculturalism.”</p> <p data-bbox="316 1129 1398 1262">Among the public affected, there were children from immigrant backgrounds, of Russian and Serbian origin. The languages for the kamishibaï were chosen in accordance with the origins of the entire group’s children, but other languages were also added: English, French, Italian and Hindi.</p> <p data-bbox="316 1297 1398 1394">During the kamishibaï writing process, the teachers used some catalyzing mediums (files and videos). Divided in groups, the students did their own research at the school and public libraries as well as on the Internet.</p> <p data-bbox="316 1430 1398 1631">Once the necessary material was collected, the group dived into creative writing, with the writing of the plurilingual kamishibaï storyline. All teams cooperated and developed characters and a storyline that was then divided into episodes. In addition, the interdisciplinarity method provided a way to engage other fields (languages, literature, history, geographics, fine arts) in order to get all necessary information.</p>
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<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Pedagogical Stakes</p>	<p>The experience of dramatization/staging highlights the positive impact of theatrical activities on the development of linguistic skills, but also on the key factors of academic success - especially motivation and self-esteem. The group went from "on paper" to "action", allocated the roles, learnt and acted a part of the story, and became more active. The teachers noticed that "all participants mentioned they prefer this kind of activity and they all got into it with enthusiasm."</p> <p>According to the teachers "this workshop pushed them to find pleasure and motivation in reading, listening and acting." With the creation of the kamishibai, "the students question and discover a new way of presenting their story by enabling each child to find an acknowledged role in the group.'</p> <p>Whether it is through reading, writing, researching or dramatizing, every step of the kamishibai creation prompted the pupils to participate in the social and cultural school life. The kamishibai is thus a citizenship learning tool. We were able to mingle knowledge about languages with transversal know-how (spot, analyze, explain) and social skills (openness to otherness).</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Strong Points</p>	<p>Once the plot was finished, the pupils decided to dramatize the narrative before they started on the drawings for the kamishibai story cards. To this end, they were able to collaborate with the Cinema Museum who helped them film the story and let them use their material and facilities. Indeed, the students pointed out that "this is truly a unique and utterly new experience for us, for it is the first time that we are lucky enough to get filmed on a green screen, playing scenes that we chose and designed ourselves." Of course, rehearsals were planned, the staging was directed, and the group went looking for costumes that would look as typical as possible of the historical period (the student of Russian origin brought his grandfather's military uniform), photos and postal cards depicting the city at the time, flags of the countries...</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>Another asset of the introduction of the kamishibai is that all students put their knowledge of other languages (English, French) into action. For those they didn't know (Italian, Hindi), they led an investigation in order to collect the necessary words and to learn how to write and pronounce them, as they parallelly compared the writing and phonological systems.</p> </div> </div>



<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Consequences</p>	 <p>The creation of the kamishibai was the driving force that allowed the unveiling of many skills the students had and to “discover the languages and cultures that surrounded us within the class.”</p> <p>The children’s language and cultural experience acted as a guide throughout their searching and writing process. They associated, confronted and mingled these diverse experiences of plurality to transform them into skills. At this point, it also must be noted that the children whose first language wasn’t Greek spoke their mother tongue in front of their classmates for the first time. They felt happy and proud of their plurilingualism. The latter, by combining the skills of their linguistic and cultural repertoire, became a self-esteem and self-confidence factor. It is these students who took on a particular role: they translated the sentences in their first language, wrote them down in the proper alphabet and helped others in terms of pronunciation. They were encouraged by their role, and they felt proud of having more knowledge than the other students - a knowledge they got from the family environment instead of school. From then on, their first language - that had thus far been neglected - gained in value. Their linguistic baggage was a sign of distinction, a social and intellectual asset. In consequence, their classmates became aware of plurilingualism and otherness through the discovery of other languages.</p> <p>The teachers admitted that “everything that involved the creation of the kamishibai filled the students with joy and showed that they are open to languages and ready to welcome them, to value those of their classmates and to open themselves up to otherness.”</p> <p>Other consequences were also pointed out by the teachers: the awareness of their students’ and their own linguistic representations, the consideration of families’ languages, the sharing of ideas and experiences, the reinforcement of the involved students’ social bond. According to them, “the kamishibai becomes a fun, creative but also dynamic tool that strengthens linguistic and cross-disciplinary learning, as well as numerous skills unrecognized by the educational structure.”</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Difficulties Encountered</p>	<p>As the group was about to start illustrating the kamishibai cards, the schools were closed because of the Covid-19 sanitary crisis. The schedule thus had to be adjusted.</p>