



## Theme 2

### Kindergarten experience

This is the report of an experience in a kindergarten of the Aosta Valley. It is not their first time participating to the contest. The children are already familiar with the kamishibai, as their teachers frequently use it in the frame of their pedagogical practice.

The project was carried out from December 2019 to mid-February 2020 and involved children of various ages, from 3 to 5 years old.

Pedagogical Stakes

The starting point of the project's implementation was **introducing it to the children** and explaining the **activities**: inventing a story by using various languages and illustrating it with simple and large pictures. This first step was important in getting the children into action and in favoring their commitment to the project - which represents a huge part of the pedagogic program. To begin, a base was established - a story whose protagonists were wild animals living in the forest. Reorganizing this base then led to a new narrative:



"Along with the children, we chose a different setting and some of the easiest animals to draw: the chick, the hen, the rooster, the cow, the sheep and of course, the wolf, who is a part of many stories. The presence of an antagonist immediately triggered the children's fantasy, and they came up with a simple but efficient narrative."

Based on the first draft of the story, **"The Chick and the Hazelnut"**, took shape in the dialogues and the drawings.



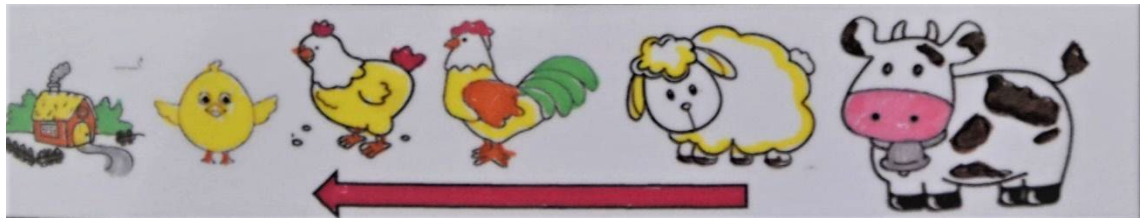
Strong Points

In the course of creating the kamishibai, **the tasks were divided** according to each age group's capacities. While working in small groups with the oldest children, the teachers read the text again and subdivided it in short extracts. After re-reading and following the children's interventions - they suggested a new version for each extract - the definitive text was put together.

The adult took charge of the **language choice** by taking into account **the linguistic diversity of the children's families**. The languages were gradually inserted in the narrative through a process of resumptions and repetitions. The chosen languages are varied: German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Romanian, Franco-Provençal. They are testimonies of the diversity and richness of the community, and also of the teaching staff's openness to said diversity. Indeed, the school often carries out actions to favor the inclusion of the families through a plurilingual, cultural approach - which the kamishibai project also enables in any educational environment:

"Parents' participation is an important aspect for this kindergarten, that already forged strong bonds of trust in the past. The parents are very willing to collaborate, they translated the texts in their mother tongues and spoke in class to indicate the correct pronunciation of a few words. They even recommended a language for each animal".

Once the story line was defined, **the illustrations** were created. The images were crafted in groups, then the children drew the animals, providing the material to be stuck on the cards. In kindergarten, language is oral and graphic representation plays a fundamental role - this is why another element was added to the kamishibai cards: the **pictogram**.



"Somebody suggested that we use pictograms - symbols to be associated with the drawings to make the text more easily understandable for its listeners, who see illustrations of the story pass through the butai. The children are familiar with pictograms: they are often used in French classes. Through these symbols drawn on patches one next to another, children compose sentences they then share with their classmates. This is the didactic progression: show and explain the pictogram. This means that one is no longer going to read words but instead, is going to tell the story to help others create images in their head in an even easier way: mime, play on the intonation, add information, make explicit the implicit. The union between this expressive technique and the comprehension of the text enriched the didactic activity that was linked to the project."

Consequences	<p><b>The kamishibaï project is characterized by its didactic flexibility.</b> This means that the offered activities often prompt other ones and suggest further pedagogical opportunities. Thus, the exhibition of the crafted kamishibaï and its introduction to children and parents weren't the only outcome, since many experiments were led alongside and after the creation of the kamishibaï:</p> <p>"Along with the children, we crafted little cardboard puppets representing the characters of the story, in order to make the text more easily understandable and to use the story as a plurilingual game that can be taken back home."</p>  <p><b>Plurilingual games, the Story Box, the use of pictograms and the creation of a song</b> that helped even the youngest children in memorizing the text, were other important experiments of this process. The children actively committed themselves to the project, which can be explained by the fact that their visual, linguistic, affective and relational channels were stimulated:</p> <p>"It is an oral experience that doesn't include the child understanding, hearing, identifying or recognizing everything. The child gets involved and this stimulates psychomotricity, ear and voice, of the rhythm, syllabic distribution, interaction. There is also pleasure in repetition, since memory plays a key role in language learning."</p> <p><b>Thus, the educational consequences are related to numerous fields.</b> On one hand, the phonetics of other, unknown languages made their learning easier; on the other hand, each child developed personal learning strategies in accordance with each and everyone's pace, experimenting with a large panel of activities and considering linguistic and cultural diversity as a richness.</p>
Testimonies	 <p>"It's always very interesting to offer some time for reading when it's done by parents, who can read the stories in other languages. In doing so, the project becomes a great tool for acknowledgement, social integration and validation of diverse cultures. The recognition and valorization of linguistic and cultural knowledge passed on within the family environment forge links between these competences and the one aimed by our school programs."</p> <p>"The joy of seeing children able to open their eyes and heart to the existence of other languages within the school environment, gaining a positive attitude toward the other cultures present at school or in their society - this is the best outcome of this year's initiative."</p>