

Traditional tales

Context:

- This six-week project took place in the nursery class of the French section of the European School Luxembourg I, a multicultural and multilingual institution. In this class, where the language of schooling is French, the children speak eleven different languages (www.euroschool.lu).

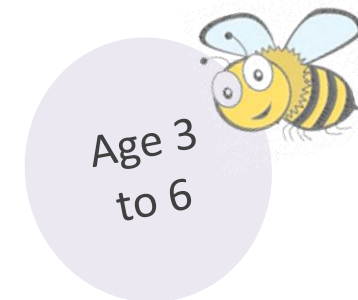
Reasons for choosing the project:

- To create cohesion and establish French as the language of communication in the classroom
- To promote the multilingualism of the children in the class and their families
- To allow children to discover new foreign languages
- To recognise that different languages have common features

Description of the project:

- The project was explained to families during an information meeting
- A number of sessions were conducted to introduce the children to the stories in French. The children's task was to identify the key characters and words in each of the stories (→active language learning).

This is an output of the project "Inspiring language learning in the early years – Why it matters and what it looks like for children age 3-12" (2016-2019) of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). The ECML is a Council of Europe institution promoting excellence in language education in its member states. www.ecml.at/inspiringearlylearning



- After these sessions the children voted for their favourite stories and selected "Little Red Riding Hood", "The Three Little Pigs" and "Puss in Boots"
- The families were then invited into the classroom to come and complete the reference word cards and agree which of the three books they were going to read. Together with the children and the teacher they then created a class library of books in different languages (→continuous and coherent language learning).
- A total of 21 families took part in this activity. All languages were represented. Some of the stories were read more than once in the same language.
- Each of the reading sessions started by a verbal exploration of the key words in the story in that language. This allowed the children to have a reference point when the story was read (→relying on linguistic repertoires).
- A film was made, edited and shown.



Additional points:

- Traditional tales lend themselves to this type of project as they allow the culture of each family to be recognised.
- The temporary library which was used for this project was made possible thanks to the families lending books to the school and thus supported a link between the school and the family.
- The sessions all followed the same format; an introduction to the parent and to the language in which the story was going to be told. The children were then introduced to the key words in the story using the cards, after a discussion of these words, the story was told and discussed.

Observations:

- The children were able to make links between the languages (e.g. the Spanish word for house, casa, is pronounced the same in Romanian (casă) and the word 'oup' can easily be recognised in different languages as it is similar to lobo in Spanish, lup in Romanian and lupo in Italian)
- At the end of the project the children could identify the other languages spoken in the class and could identify the key words from the stories in French
- All the children successfully participated in staging the fairy tales.

These are examples of an activity that is carried out in parallel with this project. For this activity the children have to pretend that they are the wolf, writing to the little pigs.



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