

Erasmus+ project „The Children of Sheherazade“

Germany – Year 3 (2023–24) – Storyteller’s Report

School: GGS Düppelstraße, Aachen, Germany

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In this final year of the project, the artist will not be telling the story. This is just about the students telling the story or making up stories. Since I announced this at the end of the last school year, they were all waiting eagerly to see how they could find stories and tell them. Some children said that I must speak good German for that. But I reassured them that this was not necessary and that they could all make up stories.

Method 1

Method 1 consists of rhyming words.

I gave the word „*Stein*“ (stone) and the students came up with rhyming words that went with it: *dein, mein, Bein, kein, Rhein, nein* (your, my, leg, no, Rhine, no). From these, the following story was created: Once upon a time there was a stone with one leg that said „No!“ to the Rhine because it took its leg. „Oh no!“ laughed the Rhine. „Your leg is mine now!“ This story was a collaborative effort by the whole class.

Now we had a story, but how could it be told? Groups formed to think of something or someone worked alone. Asli (Bulgaria/Turkey), who has no grammar and cannot say or repeat a proper German sentence, sang the story flawlessly. Beni, a little Roma who doesn’t like school at all but loves Tuesday because he likes stories, rapped it. Ecrin (Serbia) and Maja (Bulgaria) developed a sketch. They took turns telling the story and used non-verbal communication. The stone first begged, then demanded. The river laughed, mocked, then threatened. In 60 minutes, 3 stories were invented that were coherent.

Method 2

Method 2: develop a story from 3 rhyming words each, whereby these words always have to come at the end to get the rhyme.

Klaus-Mouse-House was my instruction. The children then invented *Kopf-Knopf-Topf* (head-button-pot) and there was also *Wurm-Turm-Sturm* (worm-tower-storm). Then it was time to switch from the rhyme to a normal story. Everyone developed a story using adjectives and descriptions. This was explained using the word storm. What kind of storm is there or could there be? Thunderstorm, thunderstorm, sandstorm, rainbow storm. The children started to invent fantastic things. They had fun putting words together and developing something crazy and new.

After everyone had invented a story, the question was how is it told? How do I bring a story to the stage? What do I do? We worked with mime, pantomime and gestures.

Method 3

Method 3: develop a story from the words „fortunately“ and „unfortunately“, which always alternate.

We stood in a circle and I began with: Once upon a time there were two siblings who lived with their parents in a city. School was over and now they were on their way home. Fortunately ...

From this beginning came the story of Finn and Hannah entitled: „The Brain Worms“. 2–4 teams developed characters and drawings. At the end, everyone received their own copy of the story. The story was then performed twice as a play.

During the school year there were other methods that were tried out and from which stories emerged, e.g. Crazy Worlds: a word is created from a prefix and a noun. The title for the story! This is how the „Anhaus“ (added house), the „Halbtisch“ (half table), the „Zerrtuch“ (destructive cloth) came about, among other things. Everyone made up a story and wrote it down. There are a few examples in the appendix.

Then there was the invented street: Once upon a time there was a street in Rome that had a bakery. As in the game „I’m packing my suitcase“, each child contributes something. The invented street was drawn and then told. Once from a first-person perspective. I have to tell why I’m in Rome,... Then from the perspective of an object or a person who is in the picture. The children had a lot of fun making things up and said so over and over again. Some had a hard time at the beginning and when I asked why, they said they didn’t know the German words. But then they said it would help them learn German. Others said they could say their ideas or get some.

We ended this project with individual interviews, which they really liked. „I feel welcomed,“ said Louis (Vietnam).

„Like in fairy tales, if you don’t see the little thing, you don’t get any further.“ Axel (Cameroon).

It was hard for all of us to say goodbye to each other.

“But Mrs. Sommer, you carry on. And tell stories with new children!”

“Yes!”

“That’s good!”