Cinderella to Shrek: Developing Intercultural Competence through Fables and Fairy Tales in a Training Context

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Little Red Riding Hood Manga
Campari (Italy)
Fairy Tales Defined

• Folk tale/fables:
  – “oral traditions to express wishes to attain better living conditions …through struggles..”

• Fairy tale:
  – sub-genre of folk tale, using elements of folklore to criticize emerging bourgeois audience….. (Zipes, J. 1975)

• May see all used interchangeably
Power of Fairy Tales

• Key elements:
  – trials and tribulations
  – good versus evil
  – problem solving
  – magic

• Universal themes:
  – Courage, honesty, hard work, truth etc.

• Perspectives:
  – Cultural, sociological, feminist, psychological, and historical
Cultural and Multicultural Perspectives

• Cultural:
  – Gender, family, hierarchy, wealth, status, etc.
  – One archetype, i.e. Cinderella across one similar origin, i.e. Europe

• Multicultural:
  – Fairy tales from different countries within a multicultural classroom
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Cinderella

- Over 300 variations historically and globally
- First recorded version 1st century BC, Greco-Egyptian
- Earliest European version, “Hearth Cat” Italy 1634
- Most popular version, Charles Perrault 1697
- Disney version based on this one
Group Discussions

• Cinderella (Charles Perrault, 1697)
• Conkiajgharuna, the Little Rag Girl (Georgian Tale, 1894?)
• Story of the Black Cow (Himalayan Tale, 1906?)
• Indian Cinderella (Canadian Wonder tales, 1920)

http://www.surlalunefairytales.com
Influence on Values and Viewpoints
Fairy Tales in the Multicultural Classroom

Two Case Studies
Fables and ICT: Intercultural Communication and E-Language Teaching

- University of Naples workshop
- Teaching second languages in a multicultural classroom in a secondary school
- Use of the universal narrative genre of fairy tales to join people of diverse cultures
Methodology

• Discovery & comparison of different fables
• Understanding of cultural differences while trying to avoid hierarchical judgments
• Inventing new fables to encourage cooperation, exchanges of experiences & achievement of a common goal
Inspiring Principles

- Sense of belonging
- Decentralization capacity
- Awareness of conventions
- Tendency towards unity
- Interaction capacity
- Awareness of diversity
Beyond Shrek: Fairy Tale magic in the multicultural classroom

• Junior secondary English class in New Zealand
• Critical reading and composition of fairy tales
• Investigated stereotyping in actual fairy tales and through the film “Shrek”
Methodology

• Students chose fairy tales from 13 different countries
• Compared them to show differences and similarities
• Analyzed stereotypes in the movie Shrek
Comparisons of Multi-cultural Dimensions: Shrek vs. Fairy Tales

• Fairy Tale Prince: Always good looking, tall, dark and handsome
  – *Shrek: Ugly from the start and an ogre*

• FT Princesses: slim, long hair, fair or tanned skin
  – *Fiona: Beautiful but changes to an ogre at night*
Fallen Princesses
Melissa Clothing (Brazil)
“When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than any talent for abstract, positive thinking.”

Albert Einstein
References & Resources

- http://www.coloribus.com/focus/geroi_detskih_skazok_v_reklame/
- http://www.fallenprincesses.com/
- http://www.surlalunefairytales.com
References & Resources


References & Resources

- Zipes, Jack David (1991) *Fairy Tales and The Art of Subversion*