

Online

Storybooks UK— 'Andiswa, Fußballstar'

Brigette Manion reflects on the potential of digital storybooks for promoting inclusion in her modern language classroom

In this article, I consider how I might use a digital story from UK Storybooks¹ (see Bonny Norton and Liam Doherty's article in the cover feature) to promote inclusion in my language classrooms. The stories, originating in the African Storybook project feature a variety of narratives including, for example, animal stories, animal fables and tales of city life. All stories within the selection promote Storybook UK's "universal values", and this is reflected in the subject matter of certain works covering topics such as responsibility and gender equality.

One such example is *Andiswa Football Star*. This story is a simple but weighty narrative exploring gender equality. Female student Andiswa is excluded from a boys' football team, despite requesting to join in. One day, a team member is injured, and Andiswa is allowed to replace him. During the match, she scores the winning goal, and her achievements enable all female students to participate in future.

Tackling subjects including bullying, gender inequality and teamwork, this story would be a valuable tool for promoting inclusion in the classroom. Recounted in simple language, the story conveys a complex moral scenario in an accessible way to students. Further, the use of photographic imagery and the "real life" school setting of the story add to its accessibility – students may relate to the scenes due to the familiarity of the scenery, the school uniforms, and the age of the children pictured.

Taking the German translation of the text as an example, the text contains a limited repertoire

of sporting terms, and various recognisable cognates recur (Ball, Fußball, Netzbball, Trainer) making the story relatively easy to access in terms of vocabulary. However, the text's use of verb tenses and moods cover a range of more challenging grammatical points. At several points, for example, the story includes reported speech and expressions of wishes, both of which take the subjunctive (Konjunktiv I and II respectively) in German.

Such passages could be used to explore the correct use of both forms of the subjunctive in German - and extended by a teacher modelling the rules about when to use KI and KII, and how to form verbs accordingly. These models could then be applied in exercises, starting with an activity where students transform a series of sentences created by the teacher from direct into indirect speech e.g. „Aber ich bin eine sehr begabte Fußballspielerin, behauptete

Andiswa" ("But I'm a very talented footballer", said Andiswa"), or „Einer der Jungen sagte: „Du kannst leider nicht daran teilnehmen"" ("One of the boys said: "unfortunately you can't join in"). A second exercise could challenge students to translate expressions of wishes using KII from English into German e.g. "Andiswa wished that she could join in", "The boys hoped she would stop asking".

Then, to stress the story's moral more explicitly and foster an inclusive learning environment, students could be tasked with a writing exercise where they research and profile a feminist figure from history. In the profile, students would be asked to incorporate indirect speech and expressions of wishes using KI and KII though historical reports on, and "imagined wishes" of, the figures in question. For example, Sylvia Pankhurst could be profiled with the following phrases - "She wished that all women could vote", "Pankhurst stressed that women were just as politically engaged as men", and "The newspapers said she wasn't up to the job". Students would be encouraged to explore the stories of feminist figures from a range of nationalities and ethnicities to emphasise further the necessity for inclusion and anti-prejudice at the heart of Andiswa's story. ■



Die Jungen sagten, sie solle Netzbball spielen. Sie sagten, Netzbball sei für Mädchen und Fußball für Jungs.

Footnotes

¹<https://global-asp.github.io/storybooks-uk/about/>