

SPRITIVITY PRIMER

The term **Spritivity** is derived from Sprites+ activity.

It is a process involving collaborative creative activity by groups of participants. The (ideal group size is about six members (a larger group can federate into small groups and exchange results in audio-visual presentations).

It is grounded in reality – addressing a specific context- at both ends of the spritivity process– it promotes collaborative innovative action, by the participants, informed by the results of the creative Spritivity process in the real context it addresses.

The creative process is like theatre: the participants engage in collaborative authoring and production of dramatic scenes, in a theatrical world, addressing in a creative metaphorical way the real context in which it is grounded. By animating the sprites as “actors in the “play”, the participants create and produce, in the performance medium of their choice, a dramatic skit , audio-visual screenplay, picture-book story, etc. that is acted out not by themselves but by the sprites they create.

Sprites

The etymology of *sprite* is threaded though being characterise that are particularly active and have a mind of their own (in common parlance, an old person may be described as “sprightly” to indicate that he/she still possesses these characteristics).

Each Sprite has an embodied form, which lives in a symbolic world, constructed somewhere between reality and fantasy: in fairyland sprites are particularly active and mischievous fairies.

"Sprite" also exists in IT terminology. For example, Adobe's (ex Macromedia) Director software is based on a “theatre metaphor”, where a set of “cast members” is each characterised by various (having and being) attributes. In Director's “run” mode, the action is played out on the stage in the sequence described in the (multi-layered) timeline. Mise-en-scene is effected by placing instances of the cast characters on the stage, when are then activated according to the process defined in the timeline. The instances are called *sprites*.

Within the Spritivity process, sprites are animated according to a similar metaphor that is employed in Director, but in a richer and wider creative process with opportunities for creative input from the participants through the process, founded on collaborative authoring.

Spritivity Parameters:

In designing a specific Spritivity process for an event or workshop, the table below gives some of the key parameters that should be decided upon and set:

Parameter	Mode	Example instantiation
Sprite Grounding: Key motivating question “what kind of sprite lives here”? (i.e.in this specific context)	<Set by event designers chosen by participants>	<Photograph of context (can be close-up) painting depicting a “real” or imaginary world context labyrinth inside one’s mind (as drawn by participants)>
Sprite form (Avatar)	<Set by event designers chosen by creators>	<Drawing (graphic) cut-out mask (worn by participant) puppet marionette avatar (e.g created in Anime Studio software,)>
Sprite improvisation	Collaborative authoring by participants in small groups	<Story construction mise-en-scene>
Performance Medium	< First Person (Participants themselves perform in sprite roles themselves) Third person (Sprites overseen, controlled by participants, with or without a proscenium arch” barrier /frontier to the stage) Pre-recorded (and edited)>	<Live theatre (skit) audio-visual sequence (recorded) picture book story (cartoon)>

Case Example

The video case study “Spritivity workshops: London-Beijing”, which you can watch on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/88511999>) tells the story of a Spritivity workshop for children (aged 9-10) at Jubilee Primary School, East London, making picture books whose pages illustrate scenes from the stories, where sprite-drawings playing characters in the story are placed in contexts (also drawn by the participants).

The story books made by the Jubilee school children then travelled to Beijing where a group of Chinese children participated in a workshop at the National Museum of Art of China, making their own sprite drawings and picture books, where they also incorporate sprites and story-elements from the Jubilee School picture books. Then the Chinese participants made shadow puppets from the sprites in their stories and used them to improvise new shadow-puppet dramas.

Finally the Chinese Sprite-puppets and Spritivity picture books travelled back to England, and were employed by the Jubilee School children as resources in a

workshop where they made new sprite story picture books that had their casts of sprites and storylines enriched through the collaboration on Sprite story-making with the Chinese children.

How the parameters were set in this Case Study:

1. Sprite Grounding: photographs of Sprite contexts taken by participants
2. Sprite form: a drawing (full body portrait) and spoken/written description of sprites extracted from the original contexts); duplicated onto sheets of adhesive-backed paper (Sprite stickers)
3. Sprite Improvisation: Picture-book stories; sprite Stickers are placed on backgrounds drawn on each page of the story book
4. Performance medium: read /view book (for Chinese Students: also shadow puppet performance (Sprite as puppets) improvising on the picture book stories)
5. Performance mode: Third Person (Sprites overseen, proscenium barrier in place, i.e., book page frames, and shadow-projection frame in the case of shadow puppet performances`)