Young children creating animated movies

A creative process with digital technology is a complex process consisting of traditional non-digital and new digital activities. It is important that educators use different pedagogical strategies when involving young children in the process. However, it is not enough to focus merely on the process – the finished product is also important to the children.

Published 25.04.2022
www.uis.no/filiorum

Photographer: Steinar Figved, Skylight

Why is this important?

Growing up in the 21st century, technology is an integral part of children's everyday life. In the Norwegian *Framework Plan for Kindergarten*, the educators' creative and inventive use of digital technology together with the children is emphasised. However, according to several reports, children's use of digital technology in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) institutions is limited, especially creative activities.

The video demonstrates step by step how educators can create a stop-motion animated movie together with groups of young children. An animated movie is a multi-media production where many still photos are played back in quick succession to create an illusion of movement.

Professional development

Aim: By using this resource, educators will learn how to create an animated movie, and how to involve the children in the process.

Useful for: Early childhood educators, e.g. at a staff meeting.

Recommended use of time: 60-90 minutes.

Tips for using this resource:
1. Watch the video.
2. Create a short animated movie to learn the process, e.g. in groups of 2-4 people.
3. Try some of the activities together with the children.
4. Share your experiences with each other at the next staff meeting. Reflect and discuss how you can use animation as a method together with the children in your group.

QR- code to the video and the resource

Central elements in the video

The process of creating an animated movie consists of several activities which might be spread over several days: traditional non-digital activities, such as creating a story and making props and new digital activities such as animating, editing and recording sound. It is most important for the children to *record sound* and *to share* the finished product.

The strategies mostly used by the teachers to involve the children in the creative process are: *inviting to dialogue*, *explaining the practical* and *instructing for results*. During the process, the children are encouraged to contribute with their own thoughts and ideas. The teachers explain what to do and why.

The study emphasises the importance of focusing on both the process and the final product in creative activities with digital technology together with young children. The study also highlights the importance of having an open mind to the magic in young children's creative processes.

Activity 1: Creating an animated movie

Create a short animated movie, e.g. in groups of 2-4 people.
Edit the movie and add sound. Try different effects.
Share the movies with each other. Explain briefly how it is done and what effects have been used. In that way you can learn from each other.

Activity 2: Animating together with the children

Create a short animated movie together with a few children.
Reflect on how you can acknowledge the children's ideas throughout the creation process.
Remember to give the children an opportunity to share the movie with their peers and parents.

Early childhood research from FILIORUM

This FILIORUM resource draws on the results from the following article-based doctoral thesis:

Undheim, M. (2020). *The Process Is Not Enough: Children and Teachers Creating Multimodal Digital Stories in Kindergarten*. University of Stavanger.

QR-code to the research

Aim: To contribute with research-based knowledge of digital technology used in a creation process with young children.
Research question:
- What emerges when early childhood teachers involve groups of young children (age 4-5 years) in technology-mediated story creation processes?

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