Session 2: Manipulating media…

The main aim of this session was for us to work on our collaborative group project of creating a book trailer. This will inform part of our assessment for this module and once finished, will be attached to my blog.

The first part of the session recapped our prior learning from the previous session; Ellie reminded us of our group task and the different ways that we could create our trailer.

Prior to the session, Amber, Chloe, Rebecca and I had decided as a group to use the story of Elmer as our focus for the book trailer video. Chloe brought to the session her own elephant puppet as well as colourful material. Rebecca brought the story book. So as to try and make the most of resources for the video, I went to the university’s school experience catalogue collection in the library and took out 2 elephant hand puppets and an Elmer story sack containing an Elmer soft toy. We wanted to use as many visual aids and resources as possible to give the video a more realistic effect, rather than using purely Internet images.

(Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

As we went away to start creating our video, we decided to assign ourselves different roles for the task. Chloe and Rebecca had experience using Windows Movie Maker and started creating the structure of our video. Amber and I collected resources, planned our steps and worked on the supporting documents for the presentation (presentation, lesson plan, mind maps etc.). After this point we all came back together to discuss our ideas and worked collaboratively to produce the video.

By the end of the session, we had managed to complete the basic outline and structure for our book trailer. In the coming weeks, before submission, we will ensure that we have edited and made the final amendments to the video. In next week’s session we will be presenting to the class our video and ideas so far. I will post a copy of our presentation into my next session post...

Below are some of our ideas…
I used Tagul to create this word cloud of our ideas for a lesson or session based around our book trailer. I saw this featured on Helen Caldwell’s blog, Helen on ICT (Caldwell, 2012) and wanted to create my own. I think that it is a really effective way of displaying thoughts and ideas. The image shown is an image of my tag cloud. It is possible to have tag clouds feature on web pages where the words written act as tags, taking you to the associated web search/page.

If used correctly and safely, I think that Tagul would be useful within a classroom environment; teachers could tag specific websites or webpages that they wanted children to explore.

The image of my tag cloud shows our ideas of what we could base our lesson or session around. At this point we had not decided whether to base our session around the Early Years Foundation Stage (Department for Education, 2012ab) or National Curriculum Curriculum (Department for Education and Employment, and Qualifications, Curriculum Authority, 1999) and so we had a mix of ideas for children aged 3-7 years.

Further reading and research...

Susan Brooks-Young...

Susan Brooks-Young’s blog post (Brooks-Young, 2012) explores different ways of stretching and challenging children’s thinking and learning. She shows 5 ways of doing this (see image below). One of the methods listed is through creating a 1 minute video to capture children’s attention and engage them in their learning. We discussed as a group how we might use our own book trailer video within the classroom. We have produced a lesson plan and map of our ideas as to how our video trailer could be used. As shown in the lesson plan, we decided that an effective way of hooking the children into the lesson would be to start by introducing them to the story through a video trailer. This would not only stimulate questions and the children’s thinking about the story but also capture their attention. (Photo courtesy of Susan Brooks-Young blog post)

Steeve Wheeler...

Steeve Wheeler’s blog (Wheeler, 2013) explores many issues and interesting ideas relating to education and technology. After looking through his blog, I came across a recent post titled ‘Is all learning social?’. Since we have just begun a collaborative ICT group work piece, I thought that this would be an interesting read! Wheeler explores the basic points of learning; it needs to be social, global and personal – he discusses how all of these elements can be easily achieved through media and technology. Wheeler makes reference to children’s learning journeys through the early years and how much of this journey comes from a social context; children learn through and from others, mimicking and imitating their parent/carer’s actions from birth. His argument is supported by referenced theorists of education including Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (1978) and Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (1977). It is now widely acknowledged that children learn from others and can be supported by peers and adults who scaffold their learning. Links can be made here to Easingwood (2007) who explores the communication aspect to ICT. He states:

‘It is the ‘C’ of ICT that is critical here. This stands for Communication, emphasizing the two-way, interactive nature of ICT. Interactivity is the most crucial aspect of using ICT: children must not be reduced to being passive recipients of information displayed on screen, but must have control of the computer’ (Easingwood, 2007, p.108).

I found Steeve Wheeler’s blog post really interesting and it helped me to think about how ICT can act as a supporting mechanism in making learning social; this links back to our discussion in session 1 about how ICT media can support group work in the classroom. I went away after reading this and came across Hazel Owen’s blog post about social learning and links to technology. She discusses how technology should not simply be seen as an add on to learning – it is an integral part of the classroom. She talks about the rise of social media and how some schools are now opting to incorporate social media and e-communication into the classroom. This is something I have seen on placement; children emailed each other in very basic terms through their Virtual Learning Environment. It is important to mention that this took place in a secure and controlled manner and when using the internet and any form of technological communication with children, Internet safety must always be considered, as the safety of all children is of number one priority.

Using digital images in the Early Years...

As Early Years is what I specialise in within sessions, I was interested to read this article and find out more about the different ways that ICT is used with younger children. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)
The article, by Van Scoter (2004) discusses some of the different ways that digital cameras can be used with children in the Early Years. Those discussed include:

- Children can keep a record of their work by taking a photograph – as Van Scoter (2004) highlights, this method of assessment and recording is often seen in the different areas of Early Years settings. It can be especially useful when children are working in the construction or junk modelling area, when models and crafts cannot always be kept.

- Digital cameras and microscopes encourage children to look more closely and observe their surroundings. They can be linked to computers so that children can print off their images or keep a record of their findings. Looking at their findings on-screen can also help to promote group work and children communicating collaboratively.

- Photographs and images provide links to promoting language and literacy development within the classroom – rather than just writing from memory, having photographs or images alongside can help to stimulate and engage children in their learning. Van Scoter (2004) suggests that combining words and pictures makes learning meaningful and relevant for children.

- Why not document children’s experiences during a learning or nature walk? This provides a solid record for the children to work from.

The ideas listed by Van Scoter (2004) all contribute to effective Early Years practice. I agree that digital cameras are an effective way of documenting and recording children’s experiences. As with ideas such as taking photographs to work from on learning or nature walks, I think that it is important to remember that children also need real-life, first-hand experiences to work from. Why not have photographs of un-accessible objects such as bark on trees, and take back to the classroom, smaller objects such as twigs and leaves?

In order for children to develop effective ICT skills, I think that children should be provided with ICT experiences from a young age. As ICT continually changes and develop, as will the children’s skills and progression.

References:


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