

Embodied Communication - Examining Multimodal Actions in a Digital Primary School Project

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Abstract : Today in Sweden and in other countries, a variety of digital artefacts, such as laptops, tablets, interactive whiteboards, are being used at all school levels. From an educational perspective, digital artefacts challenge traditional teaching because they provide a range of modes for expression and communication and are not limited to the traditional medium of paper. Digital technologies offer new opportunities for representations and physical interactions with objects, which put forward the role of the body in interaction and learning. From a multimodal perspective the emphasis is on the use of multiple semiotic resources for meaning-making and the study presented here has examined the differential use of semiotic resources by pupils interacting in a digitally designed task in a primary school context. The instances analyzed in this paper come from a case study where the learning task was to create an advertising film in a film-software. The study in focus involves the analysis of a single case with the emphasis on the examination of the classroom setting. The research design used in this paper was based on a micro ethnographic perspective and the empirical material was collected through video recordings of small-group work in order to explore pupils' communication within the group activity. The designed task described here allowed students to build, share, collaborate upon and publish the redesigned products. The analysis illustrates the variety of communicative modes such as body position, gestures, visualizations, speech and the interaction between these modes and the representations made by the pupils. The findings pointed out the importance of embodied communication during the small-group processes from a learning perspective as well as a pedagogical understanding of pupils' representations, which were similar from a cultural literacy perspective. These findings open up for discussions with further implications for the school practice concerning the small- group processes as well as the redesigned products. Wider, the findings could point out how multimodal interactions shape the learning experience in the meaning-making processes taking into account that language in a globalized society is more than reading and writing skills.

Keywords : communicative learning, interactive learning environments, pedagogical issues, primary school education

Conference Title : ICMI 2016 : International Conference on Multimodal Interaction

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : January 18-19, 2016