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Pupils creating digital animations in the early years of schooling
Kristina Danielsson (Stockholm University), Marina Wernholm (Linnaeus University), Andreas Ebbelind (Linnaeus University), Hanna Palmér (Linnaeus University), Emelie Patron (Linnaeus university)

The use of computers and other digital tools such as tablets, smartboards and game consoles is rapidly becoming a reality in early-childhood educational settings and the early years of schooling. Thus, an important question is what potential digital tools and digital resources has - when integrated in educational practices - to increase pupils’ meaning making. Therefore, the aim of this project is to explore ‘what’s happening’ and ‘what’s possible’ when pupils (6–8 years) are part of teaching and learning practices involving digital tools, in this case when jointly creating multimodal digital animations to communicate ideas and tell stories in the subjects Mathematics, Science, and Swedish.

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The theoretical base is Designs for Learning (DfL) (Björklund Boistrup & Selander 2022), where teaching and learning are seen as a form of multimodal design. According to that perspective, the teacher designs learning activities, giving the pupils access to different resources to enable meaning making, while the pupils’ meaning making process is seen as a kind of re-design, based on, e.g., available resources, interests and previous experiences. In our analysis, we utilize the Learning Design Sequence (LDS) model, developed within DfL.

To enable fine-tuned detailed analysis of pupils’ multimodal interaction, classroom activities with pupils working in pairs were video-recorded. Moreover, the pupils’ multimodal texts (writing, drawings, digital animations, etc.) were collected. The analysis revealed, e.g., that the different material resources provided in the teachers’ design for learning (e.g., paper, pencils, crayons, or digital tools) to a great extent steered what happened and became possible for the pupils in terms of negotiating, contributing, making suggestions, and making conscious choices of signs to use in their multimodal texts (both paper-based and digital).

Keywords: designs for learning, digital tools in education, multimodality, early schooling