Empowering the Learner through Digital Animated Storytelling – Developing Innovative Learning Designs for the Multimodal Classroom

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In the schools of the 21st century there is a need for learning approaches and educational designs that addresses the development of storytelling skills and multimodal literacies. There is also a need for approaches that addresses differences in the learning and communication preferences of the learners, and that make it possible for teachers to differentiate in the classroom. This calls for the development of new didactic multimodal tools that will enhance the media literacies of the learners, in order to enable them to better understand and express themselves using new media in an inclusive classroom. One of the important media for expression is digital animation, and teaching young people to express themselves through animation is a way of empowering them, and giving them adequate tools for developing multimodal literacies. In the production of digital animations the learners are learning to tell stories drawing on different modalities, using visual as well as auditory modes of expression and learning to collaborate within a narrative framework.

The Animation and Literacies project is a European LLLP project, that builds on two previous successful LLLP projects on developing on-line learning environments for teachers in primary and secondary school, that guides them on how to implement animation as a learning tool.

This paper will report on the narrative aspects of the Animation and Literacy project. The project has looked at literacy and learning in different contexts and classrooms. It will report on a case study from a Danish school and drawing on this and findings from previous research on animation and learning look at its implications for digital storytelling through animation in relation to the creativity, engagement and motivation of the learner.

A socio-cultural perspective on learning and identity emphasizes the role of narrative and storytelling (Bruner 1994) in the processes of meaning making. Since meanings are communicated by specific media, it is important to learn to communicate and tell stories by multimodal media like digital animation.