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Report by Dr Becky Parry, University of Nottingham, Centre for Research into Arts, Creativity and Literacy of a Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) for Cost Action: THE DIGITAL LITERACY AND MULTIMODAL PRACTICES OF YOUNG CHILDREN (DIGILITEY).

### **Objectives**

My proposed programme of work sought to contribute to the following objectives from the DigilitEY stated aims.

- *To identify emergent digital technologies and applications relevant to young children and appraise their strengths and weaknesses in use in order to inform future research, policy and practice.*

By following the daily digital lives of early years educators it has been possible to identify those digital technologies and applications that are currently in use and to explore the learning opportunities they offer.

- *To identify best practice in digital and multimodal literacy learning and teaching in kindergartens and primary schools across Europe through a review of relevant research and consider the implications for policy and practice, in addition to identifying the practical and theoretical implications for teacher and early years' practitioner training.*

The schools identified in the UK and by the host institutions in Finland were selected as examples of good practice in relation to digital literacy, learning and playfulness. It is therefore possible to contribute to the body of knowledge being created in the network about what is currently being identified as best practice.

- *To exchange knowledge on appropriate methodologies and ethical issues when researching young children's digital literacy and multimodal practices and to foster innovation in this area.*

Discussions with key members of the network and their colleagues in each institution focused on methodological and ethical issues in relation to researching young children's multiliteracies.

- *To engage actively with a range of stakeholders, early years practitioners, and the children's media industry in order to explore the implications of research outcomes for policy, practice, curricula, pedagogy and community-based learning.*

Visiting early years settings as well as children's media and arts organisations in each of the two cities in Finland has established links which will enable more active future engagement with these key stakeholders, especially that focused on the role of the moving image and digital storytelling in young children's lives.

### **Activities Completed**

Two visits to universities in Finland (Tampere and Helsinki), active members of this Cost Action network, were undertaken. Both were able to share their well established programmes of work focused on multiliteracy, digital literacy, learning and playfulness. During the visits I undertook the following activities:

- I undertook data collection for the 'Day in the Digital Life' of early years teachers in three EY settings.

I undertook the proposed data collection for a 'Day in the Digital Life' of early years teachers in both the UK (two in Sheffield) and in Finland (two in Helsinki and one in Tampere.) This involved:

- following each teacher throughout their teaching day (one day), observing the role of the digital in their practice.
- interviewing the teachers about their social or informal uses of digital media.
- taking photos of key spaces and digital artefacts used during the day (no images of children will be taken).

Informed consent was successfully sought in Helsinki and Tampere, providing me with an opportunity familiarise myself with some ethical guidelines and practises required in Finland to conduct research in early childhood education institutions with teachers and children.

This data will now be analysed and written up, using thematic coding and will form the basis of an original academic journal article for inclusion in the Media Education Research Journal special edition, focusing on early years.

This work also complements the 'Day in the Digital Life of Children' project currently being undertaken by Workstream One and this application has been welcomed by Professor Julia Gillen<sup>1</sup> who is leading this project.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://digilitey.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/A-Day-in-the-Life-intro-paper-COST.pdf>

- I undertook meetings and discussions with key members of the network and their colleagues in each institution. In Helsinki this included:

The National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI) who acquire, restore and preserve film and film-related materials, conduct and support film research and promote and disseminate knowledge about cinema. KAVI also promotes media education, children's media skills and the development of safe media environment for children in cooperation with other authorities and corporations in the sector. The agency is subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Culture. <https://kavi.fi/>  
Salomaa Saara: Saara.Salomaa@kavi.fi

Finnish Media Education Centre Metka, NGO with long traditions of facilitating media education, especially film education, workshops for children and in-service training for practitioners. <http://mediametka.fi/>  
Karoliina Leisti: ([karoliina.leisti@mediametka.fi](mailto:karoliina.leisti@mediametka.fi)) is a coordinator responsible for international issues and also "My movie"-event, targeted to young film makers.

Koulukino (School Cinema Association) promotes pupils possibilities to visit cinema and to discuss films afterwards with their services and materials:  
<http://www.koulukino.net/>  
Producer Marjo Kovanen: [mario.kovanen@koulukino.fi](mailto:mario.kovanen@koulukino.fi)

Finnish Society on Media Education <http://www.mediaeducation.fi/>.  
Emmi Huhtanen: emmi.huhtanen@mediakasvatus.fi

In Tampere this included:

The Tampere Short Film Festival: <https://tamperefilmfestival.fi/in-english/>

- I presented my own work on film and digital storytelling at the Playful Learning Center at the University of Helsinki and The School of Education at Tampere University: (Abstract attached.)

### **Seminar Abstract**

"Stories in our Heads"

Assistant Professor Becky Parry, University of Nottingham, School of Education will give a talk about film and media in developing children's understanding of narrative.

*"I can think of a story in my head, but I'm not that good at writing": Working with film to help children tell the stories 'in their heads'*

Becky Parry will share data from her research, investigating the role of film and media in developing children's understandings of narrative. Taking as a focus one of the children, Connor, Becky will share a telling case of the gap found between children's knowledge and experience of narrative and what they were able to express in their school-based writing. Becky examines the pedagogical spaces which successfully prompt children to use their experiences of media in their storytelling and aims to prompt a practical discussion of the many ways that children can be supported to draw on their understandings of one media form to create stories in another.

Dr Becky Parry is an Assistant Professor at the University of Nottingham, in the School of Education, and is a member of the Centre for Research in Arts, Literacy and Creativity. Becky is also a member of the research team for [TALE](https://researchtale.net) (Tracking Arts Learning and Engagement) (<https://researchtale.net>). Becky's independent research focuses on the stories created by children and for children in different media. Becky is also interested in popular culture, digital media and playful approaches to the teaching and learning of literacy. Her doctoral research focuses particularly on children's films, children's filmmaking and film education. She is author of 'Children, Film and Literacy' published by Palgrave Macmillan and also summarized in animated form (<https://vimeo.com/69974898>). Becky was formerly a teacher and cinema educator and has worked on numerous creative production projects with children and young people. She has a strong interest in participatory and arts-based approaches to research.

Dr. Parry is a visitor from DigiLitEY COST-action at the Faculty of Education and MULTI research group. More information about the action: <http://digilitey.eu>

- I visited arts organisations in each of the two cities in Finland to gain an understanding of the informal learning opportunities available to children and their families in relation to digital media and play.
  - Helsinki Art Museum
  - Tampere Art Museum

### **Direct Outputs**

2 seminar presentations (complete)

1 journal article (June 2017)

1 report (attached)

6 blog / social media entries recording my reflections on the experience (Completed by end of March)

### **Longer Term Impacts**

Sustainable links with Tampere and Helsinki in order to develop further European research collaboration and cross-school / setting links.