Children's peer interaction while playing the digital emotion detectives game

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16 children aged 5–6 years at three day care centres in Finland

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# Abstract

Collaborative learning and collaborative use of digital technologies are essential skills in the twenty-first century. The aim of this study was to explore the features and types of interaction that can be identified during children’s digital gameplay while playing in pairs. The following research questions were addressed: 1) What are the interactional play features that characterize the play sessions? 2) Which play types can be identified based on these interactional play features? 3) How do the interactional features and play types change during the eight-week play period? In this study, 16 children aged 5–6 years played the Emotion Detectives (ED) game in pairs at day care centres for 15–30 minutes per week. During the eight-week period, the children’s gameplay was video-recorded, and three play sessions from each pair were explored using content analysis. The results of this study deepen our understanding of the features of children’s playing in pairs and extend our knowledge of the suitability of the ED game for joint gameplay. On this basis, we make some recommendations for educational settings.

# Outcome

"The data demonstrated that by playing the ED game in pairs, children had the opportunity to learn and strengthen their collaboration skills, as they were required to negotiate their answers and turn-taking, make compromises in selecting tasks and answers and wait for their turn or take advice from another child with regard to using the touchpad. Playing with a peer also has the potential to strengthen children’s problem-solving skills, because they must resolve disagreements and conflicts in a responsible manner while playing."