Digikriebels

Project summary

Digital Tickle

Digikriebels is a project that focuses on vulnerable families, in particular parents or grandparents and their preschoolers. During a course of four lessons they are introduced to the website www.digikriebels.be, which contains a collection of educational games. In this way a dialogue on media literacy is initiated. In the last lesson the kids are invited to practice together with their parents or grandparents. The link with the classroom and the step towards primary school are continually monitored so as to enhance the prospects for a successful educational career and long-term impact.

In addition we offer schools Digiboxes. Every Digibox is filled with digital materials and a series of guidelines for practical 'doing' activities to discover multimedia and explore what the digital world has to offer. The boxes are developed for preschoolers and their parents. Schools can borrow the Digiboxes for free to organize an active day full of multimedia workshops for (grand)parents and their preschoolers. The Digiboxes are used as a teaser to trigger children and their parents to discover their digital talents, and also as a method to keep the project and the multimedia theme warm after the Digikriebels course has ended.

Aims: Digikriebels offers (grand)parents from vulnerable families both information and training. It aims to support them in their role as educators in a world filled with multimedia. More specifically, the project has three goals:

1. To enhance the children's opportunity to enjoy a successful educational career (long-term impact)

2. To reinforce the relationship between school and home

3. To help parents to develop ICT and media literacy skills

Target group(s): (grand) parents and preschoolers of vulnerable families

Media and methods

– Computer to support the parents; they are offered a safe space to practice and given insights into the developmental tasks of children

– Digiboxes are introduced to the parents, which include all kinds of digital media and multimedia tools like video materials, digital cameras, audio materials, Wii and games, digital schoolboard activities and tablets

Duration of project: Digikriebels provides five courses in five schools a year. The Digiboxes can be used all year long. The project has been running for 3.5 years. **Resources needed**: one person who is responsible for the project management, good connections to schools, a teacher who is experienced in step-by-step guidance of low-literacy parents, and technical support

Project description

Digikriebels is a successful project that started in 2010. Since then we have improved it each year, having learnt from our experiences. During one project year we can offer a Digikriebels course in five primary schools, focusing on (grand)parents with preschoolers. Over four lessons they are introduced to the website www.digikriebels.be, which contains a collection of links to educational games. In the last lesson the kids are invited to practice together with their (grand)parents.

Communication with parents takes a central role at school, because parental support and involvement promote educational success. In the third year of kindergarten, the transition to primary school is a recurrent theme for parents, children and teachers. By connecting this to the project, it is firmly embedded within the school's functioning. The link with the classroom and the step towards the first year of primary school are continually monitored so as to enhance the opportunity for successful educational career and long-term impact.

By working with other partners in the immediate vicinity of the families, we prevent this initiative from failing or succeeding depending on the initiators' efforts. From the beginning of this project we sought cooperation between partners. The project has been running for 3.5 years and the cooperation has operated very smoothly. Thanks to our partners' expertise we can set up and maintain an effective project. Digipolis offers the technical support and project management; Centrum voor Basiseducatie (adult education), provides a teacher experienced in step-by-step guidance of low-literacy parents; Brugfigurenproject is responsible for a direct link to the schools and smooth communication between all involved.

Method(s)

It is generally accepted that digital media are used at school as a digital tool, but using digital media as an educational tool to involve parents in the educational system and learning process of their children is a rather new development. In this project, the didactic use of digital media among deprived families is new, and schools integrate this in an innovative and inventive way. The link with the home situation is strongly underlined in our project.

The computer is the medium through which we support the parents. We offer them a safe space to practice and give them insights into the developmental goals of children. In this way we strengthen the parents' knowledge of and insights into their child's learning process. At the same time they improve their e-skills. Thus they have the chance to discover the possibilities of digital media as a learning tool. Practicing makes them more confident in using this medium. Working together with their children also stimulates the children in a positive way.

Exemplary description of one day/part of project

Because the media landscape is constantly evolving, we want to give schools and parents the chance to discover the opportunities that digital media can offer them to help their children practice educational skills. Therefore, in addition to the courses, we offer schools Digiboxes. Each Digibox is filled with digital materials and a series of guidelines for practical 'doing' activities to discover multimedia and explore what the digital world has to offer. By providing the Digiboxes, we introduce, next to the computer, all kinds of digital media and multimedia tools. In the Digiboxes there are video materials, digital cameras, audio materials, Wii and games, digital schoolboard activities and tablets.

Children discover together with their parents the opportunities of digital media in a fun way. Parents see that their children get more skilled in different educational subjects (mathematics, language, etc) by experimenting with multimedia, which is challenging and engaging. At the same time parents discover the educative advantages of digital media and become more self-confident when using digital media, which contributes to the children's digital support and education at home.

What needs special attention?

The home environment is the most determining factor in the upbringing of a child. Parents (and grandparents) have a very important role in supporting their children's educational career. That is why the project Digikriebels focuses on parents with young children. We want to get them involved in the world of educational digital media to give them more opportunities to support their children in making the transition to the first grade of primary school. We believe it is very important to get parents involved from the beginning. We want to give them the self-confidence and skills to support their children in learning different educational subjects (mathematics, language, etc) and to use digital media as a tool to practice educational skills.

Project implementation – difficulties and solutions

Three biggest challenges:

1) The most vulnerable families are often the most difficult to reach.

- We work together with the school and people who are close to the vulnerable families. The families trust them and in this way they are invited to participate. It is essential to do this.

2) Language (not speaking Dutch) and illiteracy.

- The lessons are given by a professional adult-education trainer experienced in working with people who have poor (digital) literacy skills. We also hire translators to make the lessons accessible for people who do not speak Dutch.

3) Too many schools want to participate (2015: 15 applications, but only five schools can participate)

- No solution found (yet :-))

Information about project organization

Initiator: Digipolis: Digitaal.Talent@Gent

Digipolis (www.digipolis.be) is the inter-municipal ICT services organization (governmental, strictly non-commercial) for the two largest cities in Flanders (Belgium): Ghent and Antwerp. *Digitaal.Talent@Gent* is a strategic program that initiates and coordinates projects in the city of Ghent with local stakeholders in order to work towards e-inclusion in a sustainable way. It involves cooperation between the City of Ghent and the Public Centre for Social Welfare of Ghent (OCMW) conducted by Digipolis. The strategic program is a best practice in Flanders and Belgium. See Mariën, I., Van Audenhove, L. (2012) *Towards a multi-stakeholders approach for digital inclusion: A case study of Ghent's 'Digitaal.Talent' policy program* (http://tinyurl.com/digitalinclusion2012).

Partner organizations

- **Centrum voor Basiseducatie, Leerpunt Gent-Meetjesland-Leieland vzw** (www.cbe11.be): organizes courses that focus mainly on the participant, to enhance their self-reliance on the social, educational and/or professional level. Adults can acquire and improve basic skills needed to function and participate independently in our society. The center's main goal and duty is to increase literacy in Flanders. Founding date: 1990.

- **Brugfigurenproject** (www.pbdgent.be/Brugfiguren/Algemene%20info): reinforces the connection between school, home and neighborhood to strengthen communication. Founding date: 1997.

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Sara Van Damme is an educational expert. She graduated from the University of Ghent and has specialized in ICT and e-inclusion. She has been working for Digipolis since 2010, first as a project leader and then taking on the function of e-inclusion program coordinator.

Link to website or social media

www.digikriebels.be

Quotes of participants (if possible)

"Digikriebels is all about learning, getting curious and being happy"

Information about the resource

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