Case Study | Victoria’s Story

Victoria Casey, London, Summer 2016

Age group
2 and 5-year-olds

Group size
2 children

Session leader
Victoria Casey

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Victoria Casey, 2016
Activity

Five-year-old T enjoys programming Cubetto and watching the effect of his actions. He especially enjoys using Cubetto on one of the beautiful World Maps (playmats). Ru (age 2) is very young so mostly likes trying to get puzzle bits in the holes in any random order or position, pressing the button and frequently turning the robot over to watch the wheels move in response to the pressing of the button. Ru does not yet understand the concept of where puzzle pieces need to be placed. At his young age he finds it hard to put pieces in but feels very satisfied when he manages it. He likes watching T succeed. T likes putting pieces in and watching Cubetto move. With the playmat he enjoys planning and is happy to review the situation when and if the destination is not reached in one go. We have a very play-based approach to learning so will do what the kids want and like, but I will purchase, borrow and strew about things according to what I feel would benefit them. We have Cubetto visible on a shelf so that they may grab it when they want and start playing.

How was Cubetto used?

Not to teach as such but we do count out blocks. We have not used the Storybooks yet. The maps definitely promote discussion of interesting topics and will enable and inspire further learning with regards to outer space, for instance. I prefer not to use instructions and to learn how things work by experimenting. It is easy for the adult and child alike to do this with Cubetto. We learnt skills such as spatial awareness, watching, taking turns and sharing.

What worked best?

I think the set is brilliant. It is proper coding, as verified by my husband who codes for a job, with options to debug and do iterative functions, so there are layers of learning to get out of it. Used alone it is interesting but it is with the maps that it shines. I feel the maps are necessary to feed back visually to the operator - it is much easier to track movements and compare them to the board with the maps. They are also fun, beautiful, interesting and spark off imaginative play rather than it being a pure task: our scenarios included Cubetto wanting to go to the shop because he has had a long journey and needs ice cream, and so on.

What was challenging?

Patience, comfort with failure and cementing failure as a crucial step in learning. The knowledge that there are many different routes to a solution or destination (not one right or wrong way), planning and terminology.

How did pupils respond?

T said it is super fun. He also said he liked it so much he didn’t want to stop playing with it, ever. He has said he likes being able to code like his daddy.