Case Study | Devya’s Story


Age group
2 and 5-year-olds

Group size
2 children

Session leader
Devya Patel, mother and qualified primary school teacher

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“It is a fantastic way to extend children’s coding skills to other learning areas in the curriculum.”

Devya Patel, 2017
Activity

We used Cubetto at home in an informal setting. Both my children, aged 2 and 5, enjoyed playing with Cubetto and taking him on different journeys both on and off the map. Leela, aged 5, began by exploring Cubetto’s functions for herself by playing around with the pieces and working out cause and effect, eventually working out what each of the piece does. She then moved on to using the instruction guide and storybook to apply her knowledge of Cubetto’s functions. Little Shayan (aged 2), enjoyed the sensory aspect of Cubetto, from Cubetto himself to the colourful blocks.

What was the outcome?

Cubetto goes a step further than existing coding toys by allowing children to see the sequence of instructions they are inputting. This visual element is ideal for debugging and retracing steps when things don’t go to plan. Leela often changed things around to ‘make it right again’. It took Leela a while to understand the function line and its purpose but she worked this out with experience.

What were the challenges?

Leela found putting in the blocks tricky, however once she figured out that the small indentation at the bottom of each piece could help her she was fine. Initially Leela was not interested in using the storybooks but later enjoyed the challenge of taking Cubetto on a journey. The maps and the books are a great idea but from a teaching point of view, children are not limited to these books and maps. They are a useful starting point for children to create their own maps, or even for teachers to create maps to support and extend learning across the curriculum. Once children learn how to use the playset, adding obstacles to knock down or go through would enhance the experience, as would exploring the other play maps. Other fun ideas are adding in a dice and using two Cubettos to race to a finish line in a maze.

What worked best?

Cubetto is a well-made and robust toy which gives young children a great introduction and platform to learn about coding. In terms of appearance it is very appealing as the lines are smooth and the colours are soft on the eye. The small details, such as the indentations in the block pieces to help children put pieces in correctly, make this a very well-thought out toy.

As a qualified teacher, how might you use Cubetto in schools?

I think Cubetto has a wide range of uses within a classroom setting. It is perfect for teaching coding but can be used in most areas of learning. It could be used on a large map for phonics where children have to code their way to the correct words, and even for teaching coordinates in maths. Children could write their own storybooks and maps, and then give them to their peers to work out the codes for the map. It is a great teaching tool and a fantastic way to extend children’s coding skills to other learning areas in the curriculum.