Handout

Photo stories with senior citizens

Based on the project in Berlin Treptow-Köpenick

"Mein Kiez; Mein Leben; Meine Geschichte" ("My neighbourhood; my life; my story")

1. Concept

Goal

"Increasing media competence in senior citizens"

According to relevant media statistics senior citizens are the age group with the highest media consumption[1]. For example, in 2009 the average amount of daily television viewing among those over 65 was 312 minutes in the east of Germany and 279 minutes in the west. On top of this there are considerably less opportunities for reflection on what has been viewed or any encouragement to discuss media content and its possible consequences. In the face of society's great fear concerning children and their media consumption older generations often get overlooked. There are many senior citizens who engage actively with new media technologies, but this often lacks any critical appraisal.

This handout was written to show how you can start a structured and constructive media-educational dialogue with senior citizens using the simple concept of "Digital Stories".

The project is based on our long-standing experience with video education and especially uses the idea from the viducate project "When I was 16" from the year 2011. [2]

Overview of the project

The media educational focus is activity-based and biographical. Short photo stories are used with the goal of inspiring people to think about their personal life and history, but at the same time to think about their own "media-biography". The participants are required to use the media technology themselves and through this become stronger in reflection. They collect and visualise ideas, explore digital photography, learn about how images are processed and the idea of video editing. Each productive step opens up opportunities for reflection. It is also in the reflection where we apply our long-standing experience video education.

The project is modular and offers time and space for questions about the modern media world. This includes, for example, the question of hidden motives in television, the presentation (and non-presentation) of certain ways of life as well as issues such as respecting privacy and the question of data protection while surfing the internet.

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[1] http://www.ard.de/intern/basisdaten/fernsehnutzung/sehdauer_20pro_20tag_20in_20deutschland_20west_20und/-/id=55040/xwrqaa/index.html

[2] http://viducate.net/themes/video-and-intercultural-communication.html

Stages of the Project

Course of events	Reflection
Discovery phase: First conversations about the course of the participants' lives, personal geography and media experience.	Space for questions about media consumption (radio, TV, internet,…) and the role played by the media with certain memories
Planning phase: Storyboarding - collecting visual ideas, archive material, ideas for photos to take themselves, compilation of a first script as a preparation for the recording	Reflection on „mental" images; discussion about the messages created by images and what are their intentions
Recording the images: Planning, recording and watching digital photos (after an introduction to the technology), final selection	Joint reflection on the photos (in groups of three), the effect photos have, photo design, discussion of a possible differentiated reception of the same photos
Recording the sound: Finalising the script, recording the sound (together with the media-educators); further effects / GEMA-free music can be added	Reflection on the presentation of their own voice, on the impact of sound effects and of using different music with the same images
Editing workshop: Assembling the photos and the sound recording (together with the media educators)	Discussion about different possible results of different editing choices (image and sound combinations); links to film and TV
Presentation: Presenting the results within the whole group, publication, discussion about possible distribution	Evaluation of the whole project and its potential for learning; suggestions for improvement if the project were continued.

The productions themselves are based on the wider concept of "Digital Stories": Personal photo stories with added audio narrative.

2. Practical Implementation

`Flexible Implementation`

The experience gained during the pilot project quickly showed that flexibility in the implementation is of the essence. The interests of the participants varied greatly - an interest in photos and images, in actual content or in the technology. It was seldom the case that people had a combined interest in all three areas, and the 12 pilot stories therefore developed very differently.

It was important to us that a reciprocal dialogue developed. Our experience had been mainly from school projects where (in the classroom) there is much less flexibility. So with the pilot project there was a much greater need to include and be open for the different wishes and conceptions of the participants. Each of the photo stories was very differently executed.

`Creative Collection of Material`

The stories offered great space for using photos from vastly different biographies. These were partly pictures from personal collections but also new shots from the respective neighbourhoods. So, for example, lovely old photos of people's childhoods, pictures from the village neighbourhood (hand-painted pictures by the participants themselves) and family photos from the past were collected. But as well archived press material from a variety of local newspapers appeared which was appropriately added to the stories.

The built-in effects (in even the most basic video editing programmes) offered digital movement effects which made the photos come alive again. It was therefore possible to create nice-looking, animated photo stories with little effort.

Three Possible Implementations (in order of difficulty)

| 1. Photo story without narration	"My neighbourhood Rahnsdorf"
 http://youtu.be/7lfLm5S4LMs	A good introduction: Putting titles with the photos. The participants can explore their own neighbourhood with a photo camera and then combine the photos using a video editing programme. MovieMaker, for example, offers ready-made effects. In only a short time you can achieve your goal. These photo stories are well-suited to participants who have concerns regarding publication.
2. Photo story with narration	"An old tree shouldn't be transplanted"
 http://youtu.be/GdWvvL-irz0	One level higher is the classical „Digital Story": an audio track made by the participants themselves is added to the photos. This audio track can be first created using a video editing programme and the photos are then added later. Additional titles can extend or strengthen the messages.
3. Video story	"Portrait: Monika Niendorf"
 http://youtu.be/fjhsEsW-SYY	A possible continuation: the photo story develops into a video documentation. Interviews can be combined in the editing programme. For this editing software with more possibilities than Movie Maker is necessary. Additional music can also be added with such software.

The Question of Technology

The technical competence of the participants in the pilot projects varied greatly as did also the interest in the technology. After a short introduction all participants were able to use photo cameras without any problems. The post-production was flexible: short workshops dealt with the sound and voice recordings and the superimposing of texts according to needs of each individual project. Those who wanted to could record a pre-written text with an audio recorder or could work only with the overlaying of texts.

The following technology was used:

- Simple photo cameras
- Audio recorder
- Notebook with Windows Movie Maker and headphones
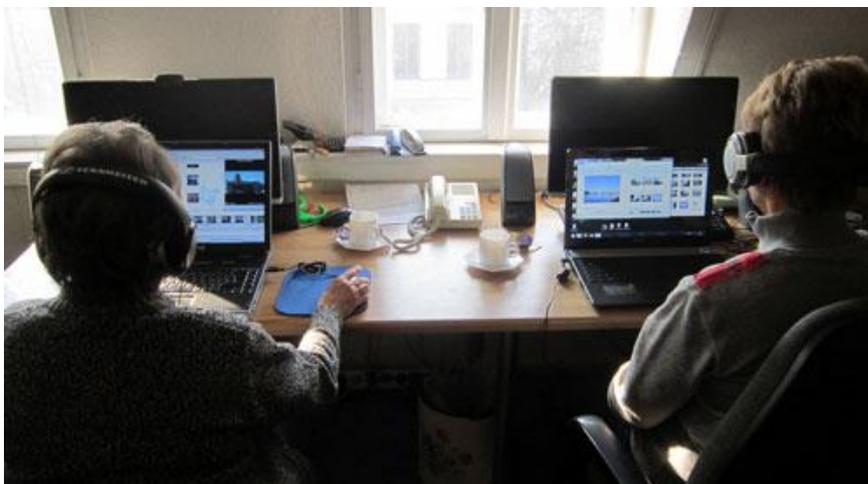
The Question of Publication

The question of publication is an important one in the project process: What do I want to relate? How far do I want to present myself in public and how much information about my own biography do I want to divulge? It became clear over the course of the project that there is an interest to use media but at the same time a sensitivity when the publication of one's own person via photos and the mention of one's name in the internet is concerned.

Possiblities for further development

The basic concept of the photo story can be combined with almost any theme. Many participants expressed the wish to produce a story about their hobby. This would be easier regarding the issue of publication. Of course this issue could also be simplified by just not publishing the story. This pre-requisite made the execution of the pilot project more difficult.

3. Further information

`Project Blog`

All video examples, short news about the development of the project and a pdf file of this handout can be found here:

http://kiezreporter.wordpress.com/

`Further Kulturring media projects`

The Media Education department of the Kulturring has been developing media projects, mainly for schools in Berlin and Europe, for nearly 20 years. There are links to many school subjects:

http://23muskeltiere.de (Berlin video project)
http://mediaeducation.net (general European Media Education project)
http://speechbubbles.net (Video project about the languages in Europe, for primary school children)
http://divisproject.eu (Video project for language teachers)
http://viducate.net (European network for Video education)

Current news can be found on our Twitter channel: www.twitter.com/viducate

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