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Kontakt / Contact:

peDOCS

DIPF | Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsforschung und Bildungsinformation

Informationszentrum (IZ) Bildung

E-Mail: pedocs@dipf.de

Internet: www.pedocs.de

Mitglied der


Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

Transformations of Digital to Analogue – Children Bringing Popular Culture Artefacts and Media into Swedish School-Age Educare

Lars Wallner, Magnus Jansson***

Abstract: This article explores children's use of digital popular culture as boundary objects, and the transmedial boundary work done in Swedish school-age educare (SAEC) centres. As children bring their experiences of digital media into everyday SAEC practices, they influence, and are influenced by, others around them, children as well as adults. Through field observations conducted in a Swedish SAEC centre in southern Sweden, we collected ethnographic field data, together with two groups of children in Years 2–3 (aged 8–9) and staff. In total, 47 children and 7 staff members took part in the study. Using Star and Griesemer's (1989) theory on boundary objects, we analyse how children's digital popular-cultural interests are brought into, and made relevant to, SAEC practice. The results show that children's use of digital media is transformed in SAEC activities into analogue content – drawing, dancing, etc. – and that these activities are ways for children to establish social relations by displaying and sharing their interests. These results have impact for the continued development of extended education, the use of digital media and its value for SAEC, as well as teachers' ongoing practice.

Keywords: boundary object, childhood, extended education, Fortnite, leisure, TikTok

Introduction

Working in Swedish school-age educare (SAEC) centres means working with a variety of materials and activities, with large child groups, in an institution that advocates children's own interests and initiatives. Children's interests revolve mainly around mass or popular culture such as music, film, social media, and TV – mainly digital media delivered through devices such as laptops, televisions or smartphones (Jansson & Wallner, 2023; Persson, 2000; Swedish Media Council [SMC], 2019). Popular culture is the culture of the masses, produced for, and consumed by, the majority population – although it is hardly homogenous (Ganetz, 2000; Persson, 2000). For young people,

popular culture generates capital, popcultural capital, that has value within the friend group. Limits are traversed. Children from all cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds share interests, understanding, images, icons, texts. The value of capital is set by children in the encounter with other children. (Fast, 2007, p. 128, our translation)

The way children spend their free time is more digitalised today than ever before (SMC, 2019), making it necessary for extended school institutions and SAEC centres to negotiate the relation between children's online and offline activities (Lindqvist Bergander, 2015), and how

* **Corresponding Author:** Linköping University, lars.wallner@liu.se

** Linköping University

institutional free time should be spent. Many SAEC institutions make digital devices available for children to use for different purposes (Klerfelt, 2007; Stenliden et al., 2022), but many cannot provide one-to-one solutions, meaning that children must sometimes choose other types of activities, share digital devices, and otherwise adapt after the circumstances. Other institutions choose instead to emphasise non-digital activities, e.g., to reduce the amount of time children spend in front of screens. Often, children are left to their own (digital) devices in SAEC, and many utilise entertainment websites, such as YouTube or Y8, something that can cause friction between children and teachers, as well as conflicts between children (Jansson & Wallner, 2023). In this article, we explore the use of digital popular cultural media and artefacts and how children interact around this in Swedish SAEC.

Almost half a million Swedish children ages 6–12 attend SAEC every week – roughly half of all children of that age – and this figure has been increasing steadily over the past ten years (Swedish National Agency for Education [SNAE], 2020). SAEC should “stimulate the pupils’ development and learning, as well as offer the pupils meaningful leisure time [...] based on the pupils’ needs, interests and experiences, while ensuring that the pupils are continuously challenged, by inspiring them to make new discoveries” (SNAE, 2011, p. 23). Thus, communication, creativity and different forms of expression are central components for SAEC (SNAE, 2011), and popular culture can play a key role in this. One important facet of children’s use of popular culture is that children, regardless of background, can, and do, share experiences of popular culture with each other (Falkner & Ludvigsson, 2016). Therefore, we are interested in children’s cultural capital, their knowledge of (popular) culture and (popular) cultural ability, and how this capital is managed by children (cf. Bourdieu, 1993). SAEC centres are cultural arenas where children use, and learn about, media, and different children use media differently. Thus, media use has the power to influence how children treat and view the world (Martínez & Olsson, 2021). Children’s media use in educational settings can be a source of conflict when adults and children do not share the same cultural arenas (Dunkels, 2005). Ågren (2015) argues that adults often set terms for children’s media culture based on adult’s ideas about what childhood should be, without taking into account children’s own views. As a result, adults may not view children’s media use as meaningful within the framework of the aims of SAEC (Dahl, 2014; Dunkels, 2005). For example, Martínez and Olsson (2021) point out that children are frequently forbidden from using their smartphones during school hours, including during SAEC, relegating the phone to home use.

Being unable to communicate on the same cultural arenas can cause friction in institutions such as SAEC centres, where teaching is primarily supposed to extend from children’s own interests (cf. Martínez & Olsson, 2021). With this in mind, there is good reason to explore whether, and how, children’s different cultures meet, and, possibly, what tools are used to facilitate these meetings. In the current study, we show how experiences of popular culture (Ganetz, 2000; Persson, 2000) taking place in the home are something that children also bring to the SAEC centres through transformations of experiences, from one social environment to another, and how popular culture becomes a boundary-crossing object carried by children and adults between different social arenas (Star & Griesemer, 1989). To limit the scope of this article, we will focus on children’s ways of constructing digital popular culture together with other children in an SAEC centre. With SAEC centres limiting children’s access to computers, tablets and smartphones (see, e.g., Jansson & Wallner, 2023), we were also interested in studying the relation between digital and analogue practices at the SAEC.

Research questions

To achieve these aims, we explore the following two questions:

- What role(s) do digital popular cultural media have in children’s interactions during SAEC?
- What is the relation between digital and analogue activity during SAEC?

Research on Swedish SAEC is so far limited (Falkner & Ludvigsson, 2016; Swedish Council for Educational Research, 2021), making this study a valuable contribution to knowledge on SAEC pedagogy, social relations in SAEC, the importance of (popular) culture for these relations, and digital and analogue activity in SAEC. The study contributes to an ongoing debate on the value of popular culture and children’s culture for educational purposes (see, e.g., Jansson & Wallner, 2023; Martinsson, 2018; Persson, 2000; Wallner, 2017), and demonstrates how popular culture can contribute to giving children and young people meaningful free time.

Review of the literature

Access to, and competency in, digital tools, and use of popular culture in SAEC create learning opportunities for children, and enable them to position themselves in social groups, connecting online practices and offline practices as a form of digital literacy and sociocultural practice (Dahl, 2014; Lindqvist Bergander, 2015). In a study based on the digital storytelling of two children in SAEC, Klerfelt (2006) explores how children create digital narratives, intertextuality and expressions of children’s voices. She emphasises the importance of considering what narratives are on offer in the institution, as limiting children’s access to a certain set of perspectives “could result in limiting stereotypes where traditional sex roles are conserved and restricted” (Klerfelt, 2006, p. 198). In her dissertation, Sparrman (2002) explores children’s popular cultural media practices, childhood, and children’s culture. Among other things, she demonstrates how a video game character such as *Sonic the Hedgehog* is made important to children, and is used as an intertextual knowledge base and as cultural capital in children’s interaction (Sparrman, 2002).

Lindqvist Bergander (2015) further demonstrates how children aged 10–13 utilise digital media in their free time to establish and maintain social relations and hobbies, as well as critically evaluate online media. Part of Jansson & Wallner’s (2023) study of children’s use of popular culture in SAEC demonstrates how children’s experiences of social media become topics of focus in everyday interaction at the SAEC centre, where children and teachers discuss relationships and the possible dangers of online communication. In this way, children’s experiences of digital popular cultural expressions create informal learning opportunities at the SAEC centre, experiences that would otherwise risk being marginalised or ignored completely (see, e.g., Hantson & Van de Velde, 2011; Jansson et al., 2016).

Theoretical Perspectives: Popular Cultural Media as a Boundary Object

In the current article, we study children's and teachers' interactions in SAEC, and their situated constructions of *culture*, meaning artefacts and concepts representing idea worlds and values, founded in social contexts (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1967). We utilise a social constructivist perspective where "people's ideas about different phenomena in the world and the meaning they put into them [phenomena] where culture is a constituting and important process, become party to the creation of these phenomena" (Haglund, 2016, p. 70, our translation). Thus, we study culture as a set of practices (see, e.g., Wenger, 1998), and the "understanding of everyday practice ... as constructed through the interaction between the people who are part of that practice and the meaning they put into this interaction" (Haglund, 2016, pp. 70–71, our translation).

The focus of the article is to illustrate the key processes taking place via cross-border transformations. As a theoretical starting point, we use the concept of boundary objects, described as:

[...] both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual-site use. These objects may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation. (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 393)

Our analysis is grounded in the fact that children's experiences of informal learning in the home may be tied to the same object (e.g., the computer game *Fortnite*), but their understanding of this object, its values and affects, is changeable and influenced by their meetings with others. In "the crossing of different social worlds" (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 393), the object's social plasticity allows it to change as children encounter new ideas around it, offering examples of the "stuff of action" (Star, 2010, p. 603) – opportunities for children to encounter, value, and handle objects differently. Meaningful leisure time requires agency whereby children can exercise control over what can be perceived as meaningful in the activity (Stenliden et al., 2022). The institutional structures of SAEC can create possibilities for the child to negotiate and act within these structures, allowing the child to manage what their leisure time is, and can be. The data in this study contain examples of children using experiences that they have gained at home in different ways, for example by playing digital games.

Research Methods

The current study is interested in situated social constructions of digital and analogue popular culture, and how children utilise their cultural capital to do this in the SAEC centre (Fangen, 2005; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). The material collected for this study thus needed to focus on participants' interactions around popular culture in SAEC, rather than, say, participants' experiences or opinions. Therefore, a qualitative small-case study was conducted (cf. Dahl, 2014; Fangen, 2005; Fast 2007), in which material was collected at an SAEC centre in southern Sweden, together with two groups of children in Years 2–3, aged 8–9, and their teachers and other staff. With a wide research interest in popular culture, and a scarcity of

research on this topic (Falkner & Ludvigsson, 2016; Swedish Council for Educational Research, 2021), a small-case study was considered a good entry onto the field, in order to scope out children's and teachers' interest in, and use of, popular culture. In total, 47 children (22 girls, 25 boys) and 7 staff (4 men, 3 women) took part in the study. Rather than give a comprehensive, generalisable, view of digital and analogue practices in SAEC, this study aims to show examples of these kinds of practices and discuss possible ways of understanding them.

After the head of the school and the SAEC centre staff had approved the study, oral and written information was given to caregivers and children, through the SAEC centre's weekly blog. We informed the child groups about the study, where they also had the opportunity to ask questions. The children were given a printed information letter and consent form to be taken home and signed by themselves and their caregivers, in accordance with the ethical guidelines set by the Swedish Research Council (2017). As the study involved children, we have been observant of their mood and feelings towards our presence, practising continuous consent (Swedish Research Council, 2017), where if a child seemed uncomfortable with our presence, we would leave them alone. Names used in the article are pseudonyms to protect participants' identity.

SAEC centres are complex research environments, with a multitude of different, highly mobile and active participants, often moving in and out of different environments, including inside and outside settings. This makes studies difficult, and it is necessary to be highly methodologically flexible. Therefore, we chose to utilise qualitative field observations, taking notes and on some occasions taking pictures of environments and artefacts (besides our own ethical considerations, the SAEC centre had a general rule that no one was allowed to take pictures of any person, and we respected this). These are common research methods for studying SAEC practices (see, e.g., Dahl, 2014; Sparrman, 2002, and others), and these research methods create flexibility for researchers, staff and children. Furthermore, since popular culture concerns a wide array of cultural practices, interests, and ways of communicating – it was essential to be physically open and flexible, as well as receptive to changes in the everyday life of the SAEC centre (cf. Dahl, 2014). Pictures were mainly used to coordinate field notes, rather than as data in themselves. Thus, the current study is ethnographically inspired, investigating an environment where the participants use their own experience and interpretations to construct their social world (Fangen, 2005; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Like Dahl (2014), our intention was to be a non-disruptive presence, which meant being sensitive to the wants and needs of both children and staff at the SAEC centre, and not being an inconvenience, nor intruding on personal integrity (see, e.g., Corsaro, 2005).

Field observations took place from April 25 to June 16. We visited the SAEC centre 1–3 days a week, sometimes for two hours during the afternoon, and sometimes a full six-hour day. The total study time was about 52 hours. We made, in total, 43 different sets of field notes, making up a total of 46 typed A4 pages, describing actions, talk and environments. These field notes make up the data for the current study, and reflect short instances of interaction, focusing on children's and teachers' use of, and talk about, popular culture. Field notes have been analysed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006), inductively searching for latent meaning in the data. We coded the field notes (e.g., "Fortnite", "dancing and music"), formed labels (e.g., "digital tools", "movement"), and then developed these into categories (e.g., "children's knowledge production") (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the process of devel-

oping these categories, they have been described, compared and grouped thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

In the following sections, we will present the results of our analysis of the data collected during our time at the SAEC centre, and our observations of children's interactions and the ways in which they talk about, and use, digital popular culture during SAEC.

Digital popular culture as boundary crossing between home and SAEC

In this study, a key social process is the boundary crossing of a popular cultural object (here, activities are also treated as objects) between the home and the SAEC centre. This is a social and interest-driven crossing, based on children carrying their free-time interests with them into the centre. Some social groups found at the centre seemed to be based around particular free-time interests, as shown below.

[D]uring our visits [we see that] the children spend time in certain groups. The group of boys who play Fortnite speak a lot about this (they are not allowed to play the game at the SAEC centre), the group of girls who talk about TikTok (even though they are not allowed to use their smartphones here), and so on. The Fortnite boys put up a tournament ladder to demonstrate their interest in the game, while logos and symbols on hats, t-shirts and other things also display this. Otherwise, there are not many public displays of popular culture [posters, performances, etc.]. [May 6]

Since the objects themselves are not present in a physical capacity, the children's understanding of, and experience of, e.g., the game *Fortnite* creates boundary-crossing opportunities, i.e., "stuff of action": to gather in social groups and exchange experiences of the game and gaming. The SAEC creates these opportunities where children with similar interests can meet, and where children can also gain new interests from others and their displays of these interests. The gender norms demonstrated in the above passage, where girls take an interest in social media and boys in video games, are not consistent throughout the data – there are plenty of girls who play video games, and boys on social media – rather, this example demonstrates how these interests are brought from the home (after all, they are not allowed in the SAEC centre) and into the SAEC practice as aspects of social relations. The sharing of experiences around the boundary object is central to partaking in these social arenas.

Thus, the everyday interactions between children at the SAEC centre display the boundaries between social groups – boundaries maintained through popular culture. In the passage below, the children demonstrate knowledge about who is a potential ally and who is not, based on social interactions through gaming.

Some children, and one of the SAEC teachers, linger in the schoolyard. We [the researchers] go to the dining room where one of the staff is, and some children in Year 2. I sit down at a table with only boys. I barely have time to sit down before Henry asks: "What do you know about Fortnite?". I don't have time to answer before Henry adds, "It's a popular game". Quickly, he turns around and points at my colleague, and adds: "He knows Fortnite". Henry then tells us that he plays Fortnite every day and describes how "I usually eat snacks when I get home from school and then I start playing". I ask him if he usually plays with others in the class. He points to others sitting in the dining room and

says, “Him, him, him, him, and him”, indicating five other boys in the class. Furthermore, Henry says that his brother has 100 ‘skins’ but that he himself is not allowed to borrow them. [May 13]

Many of the conversations observed in the dining hall touched upon different border crossings of popular culture, one clear border being that between the home and the SAEC centre. *Fortnite* is a game that the children are not allowed to play at the centre, and they are aware of this. The recommended European age limit for *Fortnite* is 12, so from a societal perspective, the children are considered too young to play it at all; however, they display varying experiences from home, where some are allowed to play, and some are not. In the above example, the child, Henry, is quick to point out who is included in the social group, even including one of the researchers, despite never speaking to him about it. However, Henry also displays a sense of exclusion even within the gaming group, as his brother’s *Fortnite* activities stand apart from his own, and the brother does not share his ‘skins’ with Henry.

Falkner (2007) writes about computer gaming that “[d]espite being alone in our interpretations we can, through dialogue, meet others, and this way partly expand our own context for understanding” (p. 237). The examples above regarding *Fortnite* demonstrate the boundary crossing that this popular culture object does as a three-part process between home and the SAEC centre: 1) personal interest as driving force for action, 2) shared community in interpretation of action, and 3) dialogue contributing to personal action. In this process, participants utilise the popular cultural object of *Fortnite* first as a game action in the home, where they play individually (as well as socialise online). They then bring these experiences to the SAEC centre as a conversational topic, sharing experiences with others and visually demonstrating their interest in the game and competitive successes through drawing and posting an analogue tournament ladder on the wall of the SAEC centre. These interactions then contribute to further individual gaming experiences, connections to other players, meeting and recruiting more players from the centre, etc. This is similar to the process of reading groups where, among others, Appleyard (1991) argues that “reading begins as a social activity, as an initiation into a community and into a communal vision of human life … a reader changes and develops through a dialectic of self and culture” (p. 190). The video game activity starts in the home as a (mostly) individual activity – but in the SAEC centre it becomes a shared, social activity where conversations and activities contribute to the individual experience.

Popular culture as a boundary-crossing object between digital and analogue SAEC practices

Another aspect of boundary crossing in the SAEC centre is exemplified by a group of girls who utilise online instructional videos from YouTube to draw Kawaii art, a Japanese style of drawing.

Three of the girls take colour pens and Chrome Books and sit in the middle of the kitchen area. They bring up YouTube and videos of instructions for drawing “Kawaii”. One child is very skilled at drawing these types of pictures and seems to have made it a habit to draw pictures for another, younger, girl. Two of the others at the table make a contest out of the drawing activity by randomly selecting colours, bringing up a design on YouTube, and seeing who can draw this design the best. [May 11]

In one of the small rooms, four children have made an exhibit of Kawaii drawings, done by one of the children. Notes on the closed door encourage other children to stay out of the room, and to knock before entering. After a while, a new

note is posted on the door, inviting others to enter and vote for their favourite drawing, and giving details on how to vote. They then bring in small groups of children, or individuals, at a time, for a “tour” of the “gallery”. [June 15]

The example above demonstrates a transformative progression in the activities of the three girls and the Kawaii drawing. Here, we see how the act of drawing is transformed from a digital practice (an art instructional video on YouTube) to an analogue practice (the three girls drawing, creating, talking), transforming novice users into expert users. The use of YouTube and similar sources for informal learning is not new (Fendler & Miño Puigcercós, 2015). However, in this case, the process does not stop there. During a later visit to the centre, we find that the object of Kawaii has been further repurposed into an exhibition, where the girls have taken their favourite pictures and put them on display in a small room repurposed as an art gallery. They take on different roles as curators, artist and bouncer – keeping other children out during the morning as they set things up, and later giving tours and allowing children to vote on their favourite pictures during the afternoon. Thus, the object of Kawaii makes several boundary-crossing actions within the SAEC centre, as the group of girls perform different social actions, utilising both the popular culture object and digital and analogue activities to their own ends. In this work, one girl is made into a skilled artist who can transfer Kawaii from digital media onto paper. In the following, another group of girls put on a dance performance where they displayed different levels of skill:

Mary comes running out of a classroom calling for me to come and watch a group of girls dancing. I follow her into the room where she and four others are preparing a show. All at once, with differing degrees of confidence, they start to explain how they have practised the dance, and what they are going to do. They explain that Jen is the one that “knows” the dance, and the others are trying to learn from her. They line up, Jen facing me, and the others in front of her, facing her, as the music starts playing from the Smart board, where a YouTube video for the song *Despacito* plays, with dancers and musicians performing. The girls move carefully, but with a certain level of confidence, staring intently at each other, while continuously talking, commenting on the moves: someone wants to do things differently, someone has learned other moves that they could do, someone knows a part of the dance particularly well, etc. It is obvious that Jen’s role as leader is being challenged by the others. After *Despacito*, they move on to another video that they start dancing to. [June 10]

In their dance routine, the five girls demonstrate how they utilise a digital practice (a YouTube video shown on a Smartboard) to transform what takes place on the screen into an analogue practice of dancing themselves. This boundary crossing also demonstrates the construction of a complex social practice. The girls must coordinate physically with each other, both in controlling their own bodies (each individual needs to be able to do the movements) and controlling the physical environment (avoiding bumping into each other or objects in the room); but it is also a social coordination and negotiation of who decides what movements should be done (how closely to follow the dance moves from the video), and how the dancers should be positioned (the performance will look different if someone with greater skill is in front). In this practice, they utilise many different things at their disposal: the online video (chiefly the music and the movements of the dancers), the physical environment of the room and placement of different things (as an audience, the researcher’s placement in the room dictates how the performers need to be positioned in order to be seen – or, sometimes, not be seen), and the individual girls engaged in the dance (their individual skills, but also their physical appearance – someone tall cannot be in front of someone short). The social, cultural capital of the dance (cf. Bourdieu, 1993) is something to be developed, and leadership and knowledge of the dance are here constantly negotiated and challenged. Even the authority of

the digital video is challenged, as some of the girls have different experiences of performing the dance in other contexts, where some of the moves are different.

Discussion

The SAEC centre is a place where children should be offered “meaningful leisure time [...] based on the pupils’ needs, interests and experiences” (SNAE, 2011, p. 23). The boundary-crossing process studied here demonstrates how children’s home practices of digital gaming or watching YouTube videos cross into the institutional SAEC practice. Through talking, drawing or dancing, children contribute their individual experiences of popular culture to the SAEC centre in different ways. The results of the current study show that children utilise their popular cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993) to both contribute to and receive new experiences, for example new dancing or drawing skills, in their community of practice at the SAEC centre (Wenger, 1998). Following Falkner (2007), these communal experiences in the SAEC centre are then further utilised by the children in their continuing practice. In our results, this is exemplified by how the “Kawaii girls” develop their drawing practice into an art gallery exhibit. As such, this should be viewed as an ongoing boundary process, a crossing back and forth between children’s homes and the institutional arena of the SAEC, of digital and analogue practices. In this process, personal interest is an initial driving force for activity, the sharing of interests in a community of interpretation further develops this activity, which then contributes to a reciprocal dialogue, furthering personal action and interest. This process is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The cycle of children’s activity as it crosses social and institutional boundaries



Fiske (1992) writes that “fans often turn this semiotic productivity into some form of textual production that can circulate among – and thus help to define – the fan community” (p. 30), and the social processes that we observe in the SAEC centre confirm this idea. Children bring their experiences from digital popular culture into SAEC, utilise a semiotic productivity in

which the interest is made analogue in keeping with the traditions of the SAEC practice, and this builds a fan community within the friend group at the SAEC centre.

Rather than simply consuming popular culture, children in SAEC are producers of culture, through their dances, drawings, and gaming interactions. Normative understandings of childhood, health and productivity influence the work of SAEC, and school culture is often defined by *production*: children constantly produce test results, texts, etc. for teachers to evaluate and assess. The SAEC curriculum emphasises the promotion of “all-round personal development of pupils into *active*, creative, competent and responsible individuals” (SNAE, p. 7, *our emphasis*), and especially the benefits of physical activity are referred to throughout the curriculum. From this perspective, non-productive uses of popular culture (TV, film, and, to a certain extent, video games) could be seen as passive leisure time, and thus as something less valuable than “active”, productive time (Cartmel et al., 2023). As Cartmel et al. (2023) point out, “educators may find that quiet, productive activities like Lego align more with their understandings about what is ‘okay’ for children and be reluctant to include passive leisure in their programming” (p. 11). Our study indicates that what could easily be dismissed as non-productive activity, could in fact be utilised productively in SAEC practice. For teachers, this means having to engage more actively with children’s interests around popular culture and discussing and negotiating around how popular culture could become a more active, natural part of the SAEC (cf. Ågren, 2015). Naturally, not all popular culture, in all its forms, is beneficial for children’s social and pedagogical development, but we would argue that one can always learn from a reading, and critique of, popular culture – and many teachers and caregivers would prefer this reading to be supervised. Since not all children have the advantage of being supervised while engaging with popular culture in their home environments, this puts emphasis on SAEC as a democratising institution where children can practice “safe and responsible communication … express needs, emotions, knowledge and opinions, [and] interpret and discuss different forms of aesthetic expression” (SNAE, 2011, p. 25).

If one is inclined to search for activities with “pedagogical value”, our study indicates that, if *treated* as children’s cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993) with a pedagogical and social value, popular culture could be utilised to improve children’s skills, provide new experiences, and increase interest for children, and thereby help them develop ‘new’ capital in the SAEC centre (cf. Sparrman, 2002). At the same time, not all culture produced at the SAEC centre is made for teachers’ (judging, assessing) eyes. For example, the dancing that we observed was not a physical production in the sense that it will remain – this moment would have been lost forever to anyone but the participants, had it not been noted down in field observations – and this is one of the key elements of children’s production in SAEC: it is most often *not* permanent, but it nevertheless makes a difference in children’s lives – giving it value. Fast (2007) demonstrates that, for SAEC, the social, informal, communal learning of popular culture, rather than the formal pedagogy, is preferable, and often unavoidable, since the adults working in SAEC are often not familiar with the knowledge worlds surrounding children’s popular culture, and therefore have trouble planning for and executing pedagogical activities surrounding it. In the current study, children bring their free-time activities and interests into the SAEC centre, and activities in the centre transform these cultural objects, which cross over from digital practice to analogue practice and from home activity to SAEC activity. In this way, children can bring media interests that might otherwise be unacceptable (such as violent video games) into SAEC and create content that is more suitable for the SAEC pedagogy, while still retaining their initial interest in the media. This demonstrates that it is not necessarily the violence of a video

game that is the important part of it for children, but rather the sharing of stories, experiences, and joy with others – and the SAEC centre is an important place for this.

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