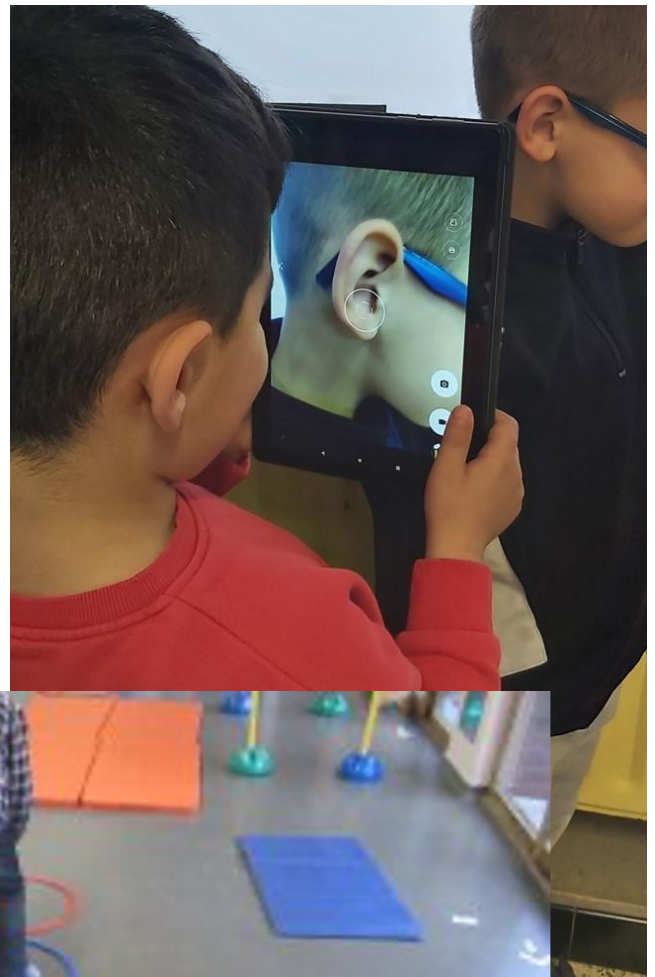# The Mysterious Friend

The Mysterious Friend

An idea from:

Laurence Vannerum, Gosselies Providence Fondamental School, Gosselies – Belgium and **Laurence Marchal**, École libre des 3 vallées, Viroinval – Belgium, in co-design with **Média Animation ASBL**

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Age: 5-6 years

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Keywords: #physicalactivity #photography #portrait #sport #mediaeducation

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Key question: *How can photography convey different messages?*

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General objectives:

- Understand that the content of a photograph is the result of a specific intention of the photographer
- Discover the notions of image framing, point of view and focus
- Discover how the same image may be repurposed or reinterpreted
- Develop the children's creative autonomy through the use of a camera
- Introduce the concept of image rights
- Use digital tools to supplement psychomotricity activities workshops
- Foster creativity through the invention of psychomotor exercises
- Foster intra-family discussions through the observation of photographs

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Time: 3 hours at school split over 7 activities, 4 activities with the family

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Materials

At school	At home
● Tablets (or camera, or offline smartphones) ● Photos to match and cropped photos (see examples) ● Projection system ● Drawing material ● Psychomotricity material ● Psychomotor activities exercise sheet	● Camera, or tablet or smartphone equipped to take photos ● Internet connection and device to receive the educator's instructions and share the productions

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Psychomotor activities exercise sheet

Many websites provide examples of psychomotor activities The platform www.winkl.com, for example, by selecting age group 3-5 years, then "physical development" and finally "overall motricity".
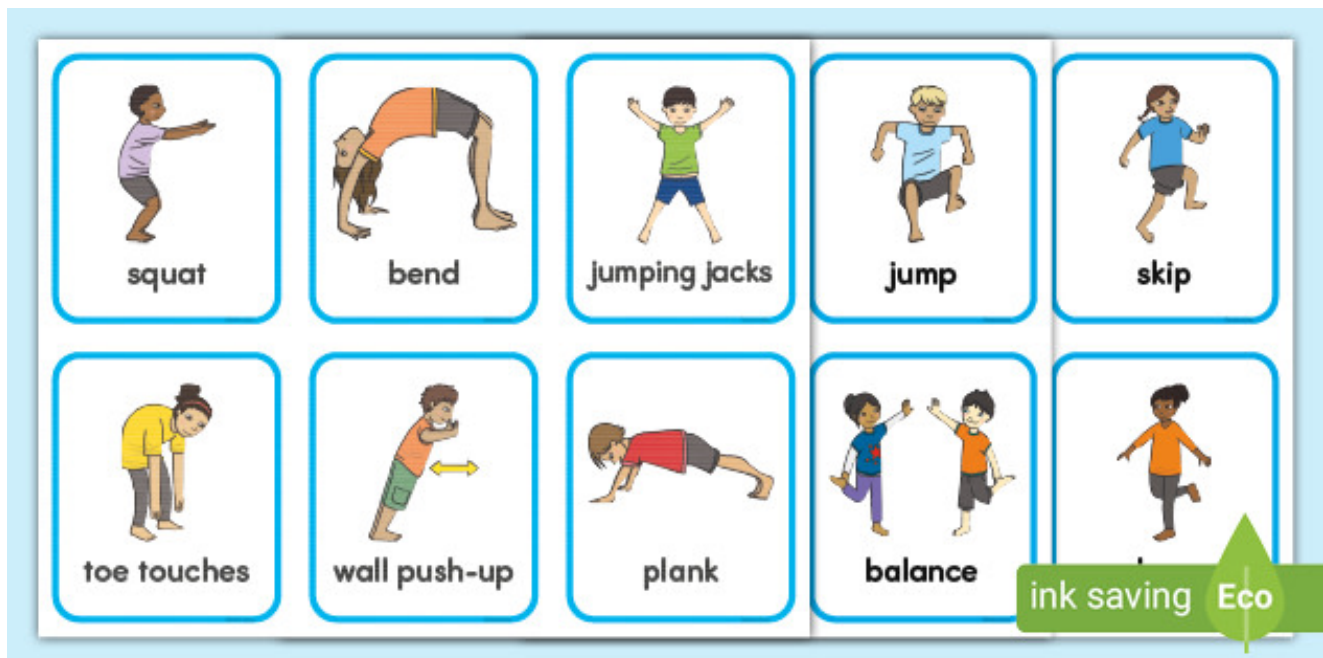
Sets of teaching cards are also available. For example, the "1,2,3… bougez" box, published by Averbode with 80 psychomotor activities sheets.

Short Presentation

This workshop provides an introduction to photography and to the concepts of point of view and framing. The children shall start by observing the photos in class and at home, then they will be given opportunities to learn how to take photos on their own. They will practice portrayal by taking pictures of their classmates, from an overall portrait to a single small detail, before visually preparing a psychomotricity exercise to be carried out in class.

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Step by step

Preparatory step	*The educator prepares two photo selections: photos of various elements (monument, plants, portrait, object, etc.) taken with a wide angle and photos that zoom in on details of these elements. See examples below.*

Step 1
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 At school
	Discovering the notion of point of view
	 The educator projects several pairs of differently framed photos and asks pupils to match the photos.
	 The educator asks the pupils about the difference in framing and the photographer's intention:
	    - *Did the photographer take both photos the same way?*
	    - *What are the differences?*
	    - *Why did he/she take this photo? What did he/she want to show?*
	
	 Pupils are encouraged to react, with the educator's help, so that they may become aware not only of the variety of possible point of views when photographing but also that a photo is a media/a means that conveys a message.
	
	 Examples:

For distance learning
The educator forwards several pairs of differently framed photos to parents.
Pupils are invited to match the photos and to discuss the differences between each photo with a parent:
- *Did the photographer take both photos the same way?*
- *What are the differences?*
- *Why did he/she take this photo? What did he/she want to show?*

Step 2 --- *At home*	**Observing family photos** Parents are invited to look at photos with their child (family photos, holiday photos, selfies, etc.) in an album, on a smartphone, printed photos… and to trigger a discussion using the following guiding questions: - *On the photos showing people, is there one or several persons?* - *Which photos are "group photos"?* - *Find me a "portrait", that's to say a photo that represents only one person.* - *Do the portraits show the whole body or only part of the body? Only the face?* - *Are there any hidden elements?*
Step 3 --- *At school*	**Elements out of shot** The educator projects several "cropped" photos for the pupils and asks them to imagine elements that are out of shot, either verbally or through a drawing. Then, the group checks the reality of the photo and discusses the photographer's intent. This step is meant to highlight the polysemic nature of photographs. The children understand that the content of an image can be diverted or modified to suit the author's intention. Examples using cropped photos:

Imagine où se trouvent les mouettes

Imagine où se trouve le dauphin

Non cropped photos:

		For distance learning
		The educator provides families with "cropped" photos on paper and asks the children to draw any "out of shot" elements they imagine.
		
		Then, the families are invited to discover the non-cropped photos and to discuss the following:
		    - *Was the information on this image understood?*
		    - *Does the framing change how the photo is perceived? Why?*
		    - *What emotions are triggered by this new perspective?*

Step 4
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At school
		Handling the tablet and the camera feature
		The educator shows the children how to use a tablet optimally, starting by how to switch it on and off and how to handle it.
		    - *Where do you press to turn this tablet on?*
		    - *You must leave this button pressed down for a little while. Up to how much do you need to count?*
		    - *What button must you press on to switch it off?*
		    - *To use the tablet once it's switched on, there are several useful gestures: sweeping, lightly touching, brushing, etc.*
		Then, the educator explores the camera feature with the children:
		    - *How should the tablet be positioned? How should it be held?*
		    - *Where do you press to take a picture?*
		    - *How do you zoom in or zoom out?*
		    - *How do you see the picture taken?*
		The children handle the tablet on their own.
		
		The educator suggests taking pictures of specific objects distributed to the pupils or groups of pupils.
		    - *How do you take a picture to properly represent what you want to show?*

- *Where should you stand to frame the picture?*
- *How do you take a wide shot?*
- *How do you photograph a detail? By zooming in or coming closer?*
- *Is it interesting to photograph the object from above or below? Framing, wide shot/details, high-angle/low-angle shot, etc.)*

Pupils understand that the content of a photo is not random but that it is the result of a specific intention (choice of the angle of view, framing, etc.). At this point, pupils are not expected to use the proper terminology (framing, wide shot, close-up) but to be able to talk about them in their own words.

Step 5 --- *At school*	**The Mysterious Friend** The educator forms pairs within the group and asks the children to take two photos of their partner, based on a first example: - A "mystery" photo of a detail as a clue for recognising the person without revealing them completely (very narrow frame) - An "answer" photo that clearly identifies the person (wide frame) The educator collects the photos to prepare a photo montage for the next session.
	For distance learning With the help of an adult and using a first example provided, the children are invited to take two photos of a family member: - A "mystery" photo of a detail as a clue for recognising the person without revealing them completely (very narrow frame) – An "answer" photo that clearly identifies the person (wide frame)

Step 6 --- At school	**Observing the portraits and the notion of image rights**

Observing the portraits and the notion of image rights

The educator projects the photos taken in class and invites the group to react to the framing choices, to the details chosen and to the quality of the photo.
- *Was the detail easy to recognise?*
- *Was the photo taken in an optimal way? Was it taken too close up? Too far away? Is it too dark? Is it too blurry? Is it properly framed? etc.*
- *What should have been improved?*

The educator invites each pupil photographed to express her/himself and to cast a critical eye on her/his photo:
- *Do you like the photo?*
- *Do you agree to keeping it?*
- *Do you agree to showing it to other people?*
- *What might people think when they see this photo?*

This step is meant to help the pupils learn about social context. It is essential that each child should be given a choice to keep their photo or not. Just because they are young doesn't mean that children don't have the right to decide how their likeness is used. It helps raise awareness about the concept of image rights: "whether or not people should see me on a photo is my choice."

Step 7

At home

The mystery photo

With the help of their parents, the pupils are invited to take 2 pictures (animal, cuddly toy, toy, etc.) The first photo will show a detail while the second one will be a wide shot.

Parents then forward the photos to the educator.

In case some pupils were unable to carry out the activity at home, the educator will suggest they carry out this activity using an object or a piece of furniture at school.

Step 8

At school

Projecting the mystery photos

The educator collects all the photo pairs and projects them in class (or shows them on a tablet). The pupils are invited to guess what they represent.
- *What do you see?*
- *Can you recognise the detail?*
- *Is the photo sufficiently clear to guess (lighting, focus, framing, etc.)*

	Each child explains which photo they took and why.
Step 9 --- *At school*	**Psychomotor exercises using illustrated instructions** The educator organises a psychomotricity session at school using learning cards with specific exercises. Several exercise stations are organised throughout the classroom with the necessary equipment. The educator explains each exercise using the illustration or the photo presented on the activities card. Then, the group moves around freely (rotating through the exercises) and reproduces the exercises following the illustrated instructions.
Step 10 --- *At school*	**Inventing an exercise at home** Each child goes home with a card showing a few illustrations of the psychomotricity activities carried out at school. The educator includes some instructions inviting parents to help their child invent a new psychomotricity exercise. This exercise may use material (a ball, hoop, mat, etc.) or not. This exercise may be represented with a single photo or with several photos (however, using the video feature is not allowed). The child stages the exercise and a parent takes the photos. - *Which exercise will we perform?* - *What material will we need?* - *What pictures should we take to explain what we did to our classmates?*

Parents and children examine the photos they took, start over if needed and choose the best ones together:
- *Is the sequence of movements clear?*
- *Is it in focus? Is it properly framed?*
- *Should we add one or the other photo?*

The children understand that producing a photo, like any other media content, requires proper "writing" work. They become aware that the content may be organised in a way that meets the author's intentions

The photo(s) taken with the parents' help are then forwarded to the educator.

Step 11 *At school*	**The mystery exercises** At school, the educator projects the families' photos of the exercises and asks the children to perform the sequences. In the process, and depending on how well they understand the exercises, they experience the need for accuracy in the message conveyed. If the exercise could not be performed, why? What information is missing to understand it? They complete or do the photo sequence over again if needed.
Step 12 *At home*	**Psychomotricity session at home** The educator collects all the photos of the exercises imagined by the children to make an album with Book Creator for the families. It is forwarded digitally or as a hard copy. The children are invited to reproduce the exercises imagined by their classmates at home.

Conclusion

This workshop aims to help children understand how to take a photo and the importance of precision in a photo when it comes to conveying a message. Through the exercises emphasising the impact of framing, head shots or close-ups and photographing the psychomotricity instructions, the children experience with photo shooting, define their intentions and practise specifying what they want to communicate. From now on, no more taking photos at random! The class may repeat the process in many occasions: school outing, to prepare an exhibition or simply to photograph their learning objects (i.e. photo of a cooking recipe, photos of the different steps to making a piece of craft, etc.))

Presence	Virtual
Creating a manual with all the psychomotricity exercises imagined by the pupils and inviting pupils from other classes to perform these exercises.	Creating and sharing an album made using Book Creator which includes all the photos taken by the children at home.