



Itinerary #12

Unravel The wires between us



Competences



- 2.1 Interacting through digital technologies
- 2.2 Sharing through digital technologies
- 2.4 Collaborating through digital technologies



- 3.1 Developing digital content
- 3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating digital content



- 5.3 Creatively using digital technologies

Tags

- Friendship
- Communications
- Bullying

Time frame

6-9 hours

Audience

Age 11 - 17

Overview

This itinerary permits to students to reflect on the necessity of relationships as fundamental in each life: the two balls of wool (protagonists of the *Unravel 2* video game) have to face various obstacles together to get to the end of the story. The greatest risk for players is to remain "alone" and separate from each other: in this way they cannot overcome the various difficulties that the game presents (for a more detailed description of the video game, see the Required media section). The itinerary provides students with insights on the importance of friendship, on the possibility to share thoughts and emotions, on the individual/group relationships: every word or gesture made has an impact on the others.

In this activity, the video game *Unravel 2* is proposed as a starting point. *Unravel 2* is a video game in which two people can play simultaneously. Their avatars are constantly tied by a thread, and the challenges must be overcome by joining forces, waiting for the other, helping each other. The thread metaphor offers cause for reflection for students: to how many and which people do we feel connected by "a thread"? If I start pulling this thread, what happens? Can I consider myself completely alone and free to perform the actions I want? Or what I do always influence others in some way? With this itinerary we can start from some aspects raised by the game to talk about it with the students and stimulate a collective discussion. We can ask them to tell us about their threads-relations, if they are many or few, how they perceive them; we can ask if they agree in saying that each person weaves a dense network of

relationships with others, or if they believe that everyone acts only by following their own decisions and therefore also facing possible consequences on their own. In this workshop, practical-manual activities are alternated to viewing or playing of the video game: it is important to play the video game, just as it is important to watch a movie or read a reference book for an educational path. As a reference work, it is precisely from its use that impressions, readings and subsequent important and fundamental reasoning for the conduct of the activity can arise. It is interesting to see how students react in real time to game stimuli, and what thoughts can arise from their observations. Playing (together) thus becomes a moment of collective reflection, and simultaneously stimulates the critical observation of a work (in this case an interactive work of art). Learning the language of a video game, its mechanisms, narrative potential also allows them to build their own critical sense, very useful in discerning poor quality products from true works of intellect capable of communicating a lot, to excite, to make people think. The world of video games is full, saturated, with low quality products with the sole purpose of selling and creating young consumers; but there are also many high-quality, poetic, artistic video games, capable of offering hours of immersion and excitement. The most important practical part involves making some stop-motion movies, inspired by the things seen in the video game and discussed together.

Context

The itinerary is quite adaptable to the context of the class. The topics can be easily reshaped to meet the specificity of the group: if the issue of hate speech online is problematic to be addressed, it's possible to approach only general themes as friendship and communication; if, on the other hand, the group allows us to tackle hate speech, we can proceed with the structure as described here.

Cautions: it is important to take into account the experience of the class: whether or not there have been cases of hate speech, racism, bullying within the class, this must be a consideration in order to possibly remodel the itinerary; if the class is predisposed to listening, or if this predisposition has not been cultivated; if the class has the ability to set a goal and achieve it (for example, some moments provide a different control over individual students, an element that could enhance them but also deconstruct the group and risk not completing the objectives); the availability of teachers to work on the topic; technological availability: this atelier requires the use of digital tools, and the class may not have it, or the teacher may not feel prepared about it. You could collaborate with a more experienced teacher, or put the students' knowledge and skills in the field, so that they can help organize the atelier from a technological point of view.

Objective

The activity aims:

- Learn to communicate specific aspects of a question/problem like emotions and friendship.
- Knowing how to design and make a short stop motion product.
- Learn to read video games critically.

Required Media

Unravel 2 is a paid video game developed for PlayStation 4, Nintendo Switch, Xbox One, Microsoft Windows. If none of these media is available in the classroom, it may be useful to prepare videos of gameplay in advance, and show them to the students. Also printed pictures of the game could be useful to help students to figure out the graphics, the gameplay and the structure.

Moi, j'attends is an App developed for the Apple smartphone and tablets. As for the video game, if no iPhone or iPad is available in the classroom, a selection of videos could be useful.



Unravel 2

Unravel 2 is a puzzle-platformer video game developed by Swedish studio Coldwood Interactive and published by Electronic Arts. In this game, players play two characters made up of wool. You can play alone or in pairs, controlling one character each. The two characters are constantly tied by a thread of wool, which prevents them from going too far, and which forces them to take some precautions along the way. For example, at some point, they must help each other to overcome precipices, to climb over obstacles, to dangle on their own rope, relying on each other. Level after level (there are 7 chapters to play) the two “Yarnys” reach the end of the game. At the end some words conclude the experience: “Love forms bonds between us, but not to hold us back. They’re meant to save us if we fall, or help us all climb higher. Yes, things break beyond repair sometimes, but we can always build anew. If our fire fades, it just takes a single spark to set it

off again. No matter how dark things get, we can all help light the way. We can make this life beautiful, for ourselves and for each other. And we all deserve to be here, whatever shape or color we come in”

Moi, j’attends

Moi, j’attends is an interactive story developed by Serge Bloch and David Cali, digital version of an illustrated book by the same authors, with the same title. In this app, we follow the story of a child who grows up and faces various situations during his life, until he becomes elderly. The interaction is very simple and poetic: in each scene a red woolen thread allows us to interact with the story and move it forward. This red thread accompanies the player until the end of the story. The theme is that of waiting, in various forms: waiting for something reassuring like the good night kiss; wait for the other to apologize; wait for the birth of a child; wait for important news; wait for Christmas to come. *Moi, j’attends* is a beautiful App that can stimulate many different reflections on the meaning of waiting and the relationship with others.

Stop Motion Studio

Stop Motion Studio is an App for making movies with the stop motion technique, for iOS and Android. There are two versions: *Stop Motion Studio* (free) and *Stop Motion Studio Pro* (paid).

After starting a new project, the App shows its basic interface; essentially it is required to take various photographs, one after the other, in order to be able to see them in rapid succession and thus create the effect of movement. To take the photos we press the red button: we first position the elements in the scene and then we shoot. We move (slightly) the elements, to create the effect of the movement, and we shoot again. With the “play” button we can see the sequence of images that scroll and make up the video. The App allows you to change the playback times, to use a timer for photos, to apply filters, music and much more. It is suggested to use a tripod to have a fixed shot, and to pay close attention to the lights and shadows of those who are making the video. Once the video is finished, you can export it, and continue editing it later.

Working Methods

Students are involved through the use of media closer to their daily lives: video games and apps, and their smartphones. The proposed themes are very close to them: friendship, relationships, emotions. The possibility of talking about it freely, through stories and tales, is for them a stimulus to expressiveness. Students are involved in an activity that allows them to create digital content, especially videos with a very fun animation technique. It is important to show them that digital can be an excellent creative and sharing tool, where you can tell stories in a poetic and engaging way. And it is important to understand that not only words can

be used to narrate and express one's thoughts, but also stories, images. During the itinerary we will reason about the fact that all of us are linked by a network of relationships, and that what we do or say in some way always influences others. This is why sometimes very heavy gestures and words – like hate speech – can upset the web of relationships (especially in a classroom). The activities of this path lead students to think about the fact that actions and words towards others must be well thought out and that we cannot underestimate the weight they can have for some.

SEGMENT 1

Overview

In this segment students starts with an ice breaker game, then they play the video game *Unravel 2*.

Time: 2-3 hours

Media

Unravel 2

Methods

The initial activity serves to gain confidence and get into the topic playing an ice breaker game. It is important that everyone participates and that they are stimulated to say something about their companions, trying not to repeat what has already been said, and trying to offer something distinctive and specific (avoiding the simple "it's nice").

Equipment

Red wool yarn, pens, post-it

We begin the itinerary with a short questionnaire, consisting of 5 questions, on the topic of hate speech online, with particular regard to the world of video games. We can prepare these questions printed on photocopies, or ask the students to write them on sheets. If the topic is not well known to students, we can try to understand – together with them – what it means, and then perhaps search together a shared definition. See the Annex "Unravel Interview" for the questionnaire.

We ask students to form couples and give them the questions. They interview each other, submitting the questions, and then take turns: one student asks the questions and notes the answers of the other, and then vice versa. We ask students not to limit themselves to simple "yes" or "no" and to propose elaborate answers instead: let them understand that their opinion is important, and that we are

Working Methods

really interested in knowing what they think about the topic.

After the double interview, we ask students to read some significant answers, which they find particularly interesting. We stimulate the constructive comparison and the expression of the various opinions, we share experiences and impressions. We write down the reflections that seem most important to us, we could talk about them during the itinerary.

After the interview, students are involved in an ice breaker game. In a circle, they must throw a red wool yarn to a classmate, holding the thread in one hand. While they throw the yarn, they say something gentle or positive about that person. The person who receive the yarn must do the same, and so on, until all of them have thrown and received the yarn. At the end of the game, a web of woolen thread will have been created in the center of the students. What is this web? Try to pull a little; what happens? If you pull too much, your classmates must move towards you and vice versa. This is the web of your relations, of your opinions and friendships. You are not alone, and every action you decide to do, have an influence on the others. This happens on a general level, but also specifically; for example if we offend someone, their attitude can change, and others may be involved. Discussion and reflections about the topics emerged.

We can offer students some questions to stimulate discussion and get into the subject:

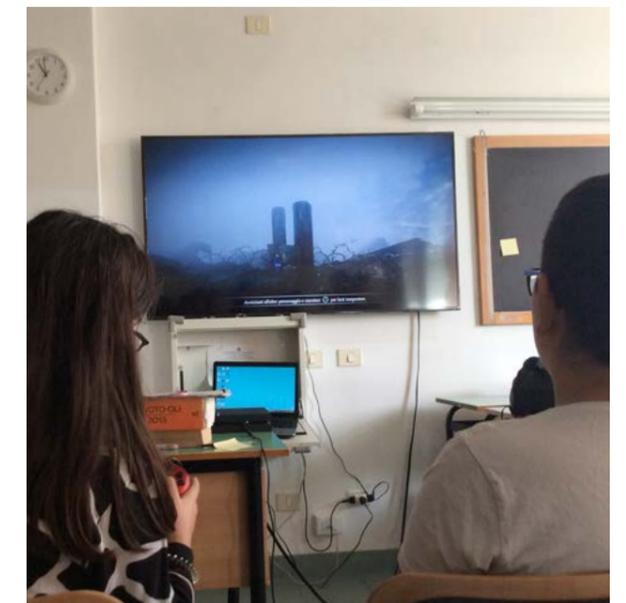
- when did you pull the rope too much in everyday life? (when you exaggerate

with words or with your way of communicating?)

- what affect you most of the verbal confrontations you read on social networks?
- how could you better choose words to avoid verbal confrontations?

After the game with the thread, students get to know the video game *Unravel 2*. This could be done though a session with a console or a computer, or through a selection of videos. During the gameplay (or the vision) students are asked to write on a post-it what the video game suggest them: what's the main theme? Who are the characters? Why they are connected? Ask the students to observe with attention and think about why the game designers decided to develop a game like this.

At the end collect the post-it and read it, asking if someone wants to explain what he wrote.



Working Methods

SEGMENT 2

Overview

In this segment students make stop motion video

Time: 2-3 hours

Media

Unravel 2, Moi, j'attends

Methods

In this segment it is important to create balanced groups. It is also important to rely on students' skills and knowledge regarding tools and techniques: it is likely that someone will have already experienced stop-motion, that someone is very good at drawing, someone else at directing, etc ...2

Equipment

A tablet with an App for making stop-motion video, an easel, sheets of paper, red wool yarn, pencils, pens

In the second part of the itinerary, students are asked to create stop-motion video. At the beginning could be useful to show them a selection of video in order to understand what the stop-motion technique is. After this, they play (or watch) the App *Moi, j'attends* and try to figure out what the story is about. They can discuss together or write their thoughts. After that, students were asked to divide into groups to start working on their stop-motion.

First of all they must think about a story, or a character, that is related to the themes viewed in *Unravel 2* and *Moi*,

j'attends: friendship, love, relations, etc. It could be the story of a child or an adult, a metaphor or a realistic story. They could be stories related to the hate speech: a friendship ended because of bullying and hate speech, the will to apologize, a difficult childhood because of the offenses. After deciding on the theme, the plot, the characters, the setting, the dialogues, the scenes, the objects, they can draw the storyboard. A storyboard is a visual and written representation of a story, a fundamental tool used by all video makers. They are "visual notes" to keep track of the story and prepare the scenes to be shot, represented by simple drawings. It is recommended to divide a sheet into equal rectangles; students must identify which are the main scenes of their story, and represent them with simple drawings, sequentially, inside the rectangles. They can help themselves with writing (e.g. "the character enters the scene"). This tool will be very useful for shooting the video. After they can move on to the preparation of the necessary drawings and materials, and shoot their video.

To make the videos, it is suggested to use *Stop Motion Studio*, a very intuitive free App that allows you to get excellent results (see the Required media section for more information on the App and how it works). The stop motion technique allows you to create animated videos by combining many images (in this case photos taken by us) one after the other. By scrolling through these images quickly, the illusion

Working Methods

of movement is created and short stories or entire films can be made. These images can be entirely drawn, or you can use cutouts, objects and more. For example, the characters of the stories can be drawn on a sheet and then cut out, so as to have a kind of "puppet" to move. The dialogues can be written inside balloons that will appear and disappear in the scene. One important thing is to take a lot of photos, with each small modification of the scene: the characters who walk, for example, have to move a little, take the photo, move a little more, take the photo, and so on. Each photo represents a frame of the story, so the more photos we make, the smoother the animations.

Once the storyboard is established, we divide the tasks into the group: someone will devote themselves to moving the elements, someone will take the photos, someone else will insert the dialogues, another will direct the group. This work is an excellent opportunity to stimulate students' individual aptitudes and abilities, and at the same time to involve them through teamwork. It is important first of all to prepare a clear and well-lit work surface: on this surface the students will move their characters, objects, dialogues. It is advisable to get a tripod, or at least something that allows you to keep the tablet always in the same position, perpendicular to the plane, at the right distance. Simply holding it in your hand compromises the quality of the final result. Even the lights must be under control, avoiding to change them during shooting. If you have more tablets and more tripods, you can make several groups work in

parallel, so as not to create dead waiting times.

After shooting, you can add some effects, such as music, sound effects, fades. When everything is ready, you can export the videos and save them in a folder or share them. It is important to watch videos from all groups together; students can thus observe how their classmates dealt with the theme, what story they invented, what technical solutions they adopted. A moment of comparison on the videos made is desirable.

Working Methods

SEGMENT 3

Overview

In this segment, students complete a letter and create a collective installation

Time: 2-3 hours

Equipment

Smartphones, pens, smartphones, a large sheet of paper (like wrapping paper), red wool yarn

After completing the video, each group is assigned a letter. It is not a complete letter, but only the beginning, as if time had ruined a letter from a few years ago. It is important to follow the stop-motion creation process, because these letters must be related to the stories created by the students. It could be a letter found by the protagonist of the story, now an adult, that he had received as a boy; or a letter never send and remained in the drawer. Students read the incipit and complete the letter: how does it go on? How does it end? After writing it, students can also record an audio in which they read it. The possibilities can be many: to deal with the theme of hate speech, it could be a letter written by the protagonists of the stories (the bully, the victim) when they were young, or a reflection made once they became adults.

For the latter activity, students should be asked in advance to prepare images. We ask them (maybe at the end of the second segment) to bring pictures on their smartphones. These images must

be images that are important to them, which perhaps portray a significant place or moment. To these images they can associate a memory, an emotion, a feeling, a thought. They can be images that have already been taken, or students can create them specifically for the activity. A large sheet of wrapping paper is laid on the ground, and the students stand around it. In turn, each of them places their smartphone with an image (maybe a photo taken by them) that they wish to share with others. We can ask some questions to stimulate reflection on the images: what does this image mean to you? Why did you choose it? How do you think it can have interesting content to share with others? The smartphone is "tied" to one end of the yarn and placed on the sheet. Now another student has to place their phone and tie it to the previous one. The students propose their own image so that it "binds" to the previous one: it could express the same feeling, the same emotion, complete or broaden in some way the thought of the classmate. Are there any images that can link with the previous one? How do they have to do? What does it mean to share an image? It continues like this, joining the various smartphones with the thread through a game of thematic links. At the end of the activity, the final result is observed and commented on. What is the sense of sharing these images? What kind of images do you prefer to share, and why? Other questions may emerge from the observation of the installation.

Working Methods

With questions and reflections, we can bring students to reason on hate speech related to image sharing. For example, it is often the images posted on social networks that become the excuse for offenses and unmotivated attacks or with disrespectful tones from the other. Reflecting on images, discussing them together, disambiguating them ("why do you think this image might attract certain comments?") is a fundamental work.



In a nutshell

Often the need for friendship, social approval and the risk of becoming a victim of hatred are not so easy to distinguish and separate in what is right / what is wrong: trying to attract attention can have unexpected consequences but it is also an impetus normal and necessary in adolescence. Working on the collective dimension, cultivating respect, listening and mutual care becomes an indispensable job.

Sources / Links

- *Unravel 2* trailer: www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2TmLrTI6gs
- *Moi, j'attends* trailer: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab-ynlLmgLw
- Here is a video showing some laboratory activities: www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-aGezcclU

Here are two examples of letters written by students after making their stop motion videos.

*Dear William,
I thought about what happened to me, I wanted to tell you about it in person but I didn't find the courage. This is why I am writing this letter to you, because I want to be the first to apologize, because I don't think that such a beautiful friendship can end so tragically. I hope you will read this letter and that we will restore what we once were.
With love, Goofy.*

*Hi,
I am looking back on our friendship these days. I'm very sorry for the little bear, I never wanted something like that to happen. There is one thing I would like to talk to you about: I want to make peace because I missed you so much, I remember all the beautiful moments we spent together. True friendship is a very important thing for every person's life. A true friend never gets angry about stupid things, a friend is always there, not only in times of need. I wish we were still friends.*

ESSENTIAL MATERIALS

Unravel – Interview

1.1

Do you think video games can be a way to learn?

Yes No

1.2

If you answered "Yes", could you explain what you learned by playing? (some examples to help you understand the question: learn to manage the tension, to trust that you could do it, you discovered a historical episode or an architecture you didn't expect ...)

2.1

Do you agree with the censorship of hate speech / hate groups on gaming platforms? Censorship occurs in various ways: the ban (expulsion) of a user, the automatic cancellation of some words, the possibility to "silence" or "mute" another user.

Yes No

2.2

Has this ever happened to you? Do you have any other proposals to reduce or eliminate hate speech from gaming platforms?

3.1

Do you believe that hate speech can be totally eliminated?

Yes No

3.2

Why do you think so?

4.1

Do you believe that video games can educate players not to practice hate speech?

Ye No

4.2

If you answered "Yes", do you have any idea for a video game with this goal? How could video games educate people not to practice hate speech online?

5.1

Do you think hate speech should be taken seriously? Do you think it's something that can affect everyday life?

Yes No

5.2

If you answered "Yes", could you explain how, in your opinion, hate speech can influence everyday life?

5.3

If you answered "No", can you give any motivation to support your point of view?

