

# Pushing. Typing. Clicking. Primary School Children Playing with Writing Tools

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## Abstract

This article focuses on the writing processes of primary school children in the context of two different writing projects, in which typewriters, tablets and pens were used as writing tools. The children's written work was collected and the writing situations of 32 children were documented on video. In this article, we explore the research question of what potentials arise from playing with pens, typewriters and tablets for learning how to write texts. We draw on three theoretical concepts: the phenomenological understanding of writing as a corporeal activity (Herrmann, 2024a), the appeal of things (Stieve, 2010) and the qualitative dimension of play that lends passion and liveliness to activities (Huizinga, 1938/2017). In terms of research methodology, we are guided by key incident analysis (Kroon & Sturm, 2007) as well as procedures from phenomenological vignette research (Schratz et al., 2012), which we apply to the description of video data. Using key incidents, we show how learning takes place in the interplay between tools, people, and writing, and what potential arises from a play-tolerant or play-oriented didactic perspective for text writing in primary schools.

## 1. Quality in Writing Processes

In the current discourse on writing didactics, writing fluency and writing strategies are seen as prerequisites for being able to concentrate on content when writing texts and to complete tasks quickly and purposefully (Becker-Mrotzeck, 2021). The fact that writing tools also play a role in the quality of writing processes is being addressed against the backdrop of an increas-

ingly digitalized writing culture: Digital writing tools are examined in terms of their function as assistive technologies for achieving writing goals in the context of digital text production processes (Nolden, 2021). Another starting point is the idea that (digital and analog) writing tools, by slowing down, can open up spaces of experience which are important for the appreciation of writing processes, the promotion of independence, and for insights into the standardised use of writing (Ritter & Ritter, 2020). We build on this idea to explore a further qualitative dimension of writing processes: that of playing with writing tools. Our three research questions are: (1) What potential for learning to write text emerges from playing with pens, typewriters and tablets? (2) What significance does playing with writing tools have for the constitution of writing experiences? (3) How does learning manifest itself in the interplay of tools, people and writing? Based on our findings, we are interested in the potential of a play-tolerant or play-focused didactic perspective for writing (narrative) texts.

## 2. Theoretical Approaches

We consider the practice of playing with writing tools during the writing process from a phenomenological perspective. This chapter presents the theoretical approaches that guide this view. In relation to play, we focus particularly on its meaning-making dimension (Huizinga, 1938/2017). We connect the significance of writing tools with the *appeal of things* (Stieve, 2010), which we observe in writing processes. We understand writing as a corporeal activity, in which children engage in diverse writing gestures that establish a relationship with the world and with writing itself (Herrmann, 2024a).

### 2.1 Play

From an anthropological point of view, the unique feature of play compared to other everyday activities is its lack of purpose and function, although play proves to be useful both for the development of children and for living together in communities (Wulf, 2020, p. 4). In addition, there is a quality in play as an activity that is not functionally useful, but meaningful: In play, something “plays” that goes beyond the immediate urge to assert oneself and

gives meaning to the activity of living (Huizinga, 1938/2017, p. 9). Not playing is to be without inspiration. The freedom of play, of daring to do something whose outcome is uncertain, conveys liveliness. According to Huizinga, play is a prerequisite for culture; culture emerges from play, not vice versa. The fundamental nature of play therefore pervades all areas of social life. It is evident in the competitive aspects of legal disputes as well as in the performance of philosophers (Huizinga, 1938/2017, pp. 161–162). It is the passion, wit, pleasure, individuality and freedom in the play that give the activity its zest. It is this zest, the competition and wit that we look for in our data when we search for instances of playing with writing tools.

## 2.2 Things

From a phenomenological perspective, the things that surround us are not simply “there”. We are always in relation to them (Stieve, 2010). Each thing can be used in various ways, they are surrounded by a range of possibilities. They challenge us, telling us “what to do” (Stieve, 2010, pp. 259–260) or what we can do with them beyond conventional use. We know from young children how much they enjoy emptying boxes of pens and watching the pens roll away. Primary school children balance pens in their hands, feel the barrel of the pen (Herrmann, 2024a, p. 148) or the paper as they rustle it (Herrmann, 2024b, p. 238). Stieve (2010, p. 273) sees in the *appeal of things* essential moments of learning - moments from which learning arises. Especially when something cannot be integrated into familiar structures of experience and resists previous order, excess and ambiguity can emerge, creating the conditions for learning that leaves a person changed.

## 2.3 Writing

We understand writing as a corporeal activity that can be described as an experience based on individual writing processes in specific writing situations (Herrmann, 2023b). Writing experiences emerge in the interplay between the subject, materials, space, script, others, imagination, and the developing text (Herrmann, 2023a; Healey & Merga, 2017). In order to adopt this perspective, the phenomenological concepts of *activity*, *corporeality*, *responsiveness*, *experience*, and *subject* are important in relation to their significance for writing.

The term *activity* expresses the fact that writing is an unintended event that follows its own structure, which determines the act of writing (Dehn et al., 2011, p. 223). This means that a text can indeed be planned conceptually by collecting and organizing ideas and aspects (Dehn & Schöler, 2015, p. 6). However, the formulation and actual writing of the text on paper develop its own dynamic, which cannot be fully captured by the term action.

The term *corporeality* refers to the body as we live through and with it (MerleauPonty, 1966). Those who read do not see themselves reading, do not see themselves and the text, often do not even see the text. Whoever reads follows a thought, understands or imagines something (Schöler & Herrmann, 2024, p. 42). The same applies to writing. In writing situations, the subject reveals itself as something that produces and brings forth. Following a thought and reading one's own text creates traces on paper or in the software (Millutat, 2017). These traces, like the writing tools as things, generate *responses* from the subject (Waldenfels, 2016), some of which manifest as further traces in the written work. Describing this process and the *experience* that arises within is the focus of phenomenological writing research.

### 3. Methodological Background

Phenomenological research follows a "style" (Merleau Ponty, 1966, p. 4) that is expressed through particular attitudes. One of these attitudes is opposed to the methodization of research: The more strictly the scientist follows his method, the more rigorously the world is viewed and screened under specific aspects. He inspects, examines, registers, observes. The artist, on the other hand, pays attention to the fruitful new and allows himself to be surprised (Bräuer, 1966, p. 33). In phenomenological description, one aim is to describe precisely how an experience reveals itself in its development, meaning the accurate and exhaustive reproduction of the processes that take place within the consciousness of the learning child itself, even in various details of the experience (Fischer, 1972, p. 86). On the other hand, the corporeality of the researcher prevents access to the child's real experience, which remains inaccessible. Therefore, one can only speak of an approximation to the experience of others, which depends on a *subjective engagement*. The term "Anschauung"

(attentive observation) has been coined. It refers to a specific form of scientific observation as an attentive perception and the awareness of that perception (Reh, 2012, p. 22). This attitude is adopted in the presented study during the analysis of video recordings of children engaged in writing.

#### 4. Data Corpus and Methodological Approach

This article focuses on the writing processes of primary school children within two different writing projects in which writing tools such as pens, typewriters, and tablets were used. In three writing workshops conducted at the *Primary Education Research Lab* of the *Technische Universität Dresden* (Herrmann, 2023a) as well as in two teaching projects as part of Katharina Egerer's ongoing dissertation study *Click – Clack – Bing: Die Schreibmaschine im zeitgenössischen Bilderbuch* (Click – Clack – Bing: The Typewriter in Contemporary Picturebooks), a total of 88 children wrote in response to narrative cues (Schüler, 2019), using different writing tools. The children's works were collected, and the writing situations of 32 children were documented on video.

Based on our research questions, we selected specific video recordings from the collected material. We focused on situations in which the children interacted playfully with the writing tools in ways that appeared to open up their own distinctive spaces of meaning. For the chosen recordings of writing situations, we wrote videovignettes. By video vignettes, we mean textual forms created from the viewing of video recordings, following the approach of phenomenological vignette research (Herrmann, 2023b; Agostini et al., 2024). In this article, we use videovignettes as the core of *key incidents* (Kroon & Sturm, 2007). *Key incidents* are significant points in the data that indicate overarching patterns and are designed emblematically. Our presentation of examples follows this emblematic design in three parts: heading and context (1), videovignette (2), and interpretation (3).

## 5. Analyses

The following are three *key incidents* on playing with writing tools. Each focuses on the play of two children with the typewriter (Figure 1, A), with the pen (Figure 1, B) and with the tablet (Figure 1, C).

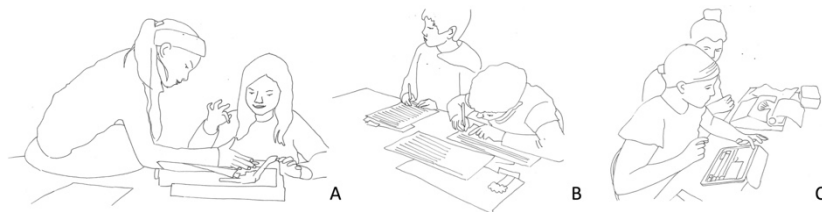


Figure 1 – Children playing with writing tools. Copyright 2024 by Katharina Egerer

### 5.1 Playing With the Typewriter – Alex and Enja – Pretended Play

#### 5.1.1 Context

In Katharina Egerer's writing project at a primary school in Dresden, Alex and Enja (Figure 1, A) choose a writing task based on the book "Der unglaubliche Bücherfresser" [The Incredible Book Eating Boy] (2007) by Oliver Jeffers. The task is to write a text that the book-eater Henry simply cannot resist. The two girls write their text as a text in a book for the protagonist Henry, who loves to eat books. They write: "Dear Henry, we have a three-meter-long book in red for you." They use a typewriter as a writing tool. When writing with a typewriter, type levers, which carry the letter stamps, swing out from a type basket. The letter stamp strikes the inserted paper with an inked ribbon in between, leaving an imprint.

#### 5.1.2 Description

Enja gently moves her fingers over the keys of the typewriter. She keeps two keys pressed. Slowly, she presses even further, even deeper. Two type levers fold out of the type basket, move slowly forward and stop in mid-air. Enja watches their slight movements (Figure 2, A).

Suddenly she releases both keys. With a metallic clatter, the letter stamps disappear back into the type basket. Alex sits bent over the typewriter next

to Enja on the table. She presses the Shift key. Enja looks at Alex's hand on the Shift key. Enja grabs Alex's hand and lifts it away from the Shift key (Figure 2, B).

Alex leans backwards away from the typewriter. She asks, "Well, what else would you write?" [22:03] While Alex crosses her legs, Enja wildly and quickly presses different letters with both hands so that the type levers rustle in the type basket (Figure 2, C).

Alex raises her hand and guides it toward the type basket as if to prevent the type lever from reaching the paper (Figure 2, D).

Enja pauses and smiles: "Well, 'Dear Henry', that sounds funny." [22:07] Then she says quietly, "Attention" [22:08]. She presses a letter key quickly and firmly with her right index finger. The letter stamp hits the palm of Alex's hand. Enja laughs. She presses another letter. Both girls laugh (Figure 2, E).

Alex turns her hand. She formulates an alternative writing idea: "Dear Henry, would you like to eat a book?" [22:19] Enja places the fingers of both hands back on the keyboard and types softly, causing the type levers to rustle softly. The letter stamps hit Alex's hand. Enja runs her hand over the whole keyboard (Figure 2, F).

She comments on Alex's writing idea, stretching it out: "No - n. 'Dear Henry', that sounds strange, do you know why? Because we're supposed to write a text that's in a book, and the person who invented the book doesn't know that it's for Henry" [22:26].

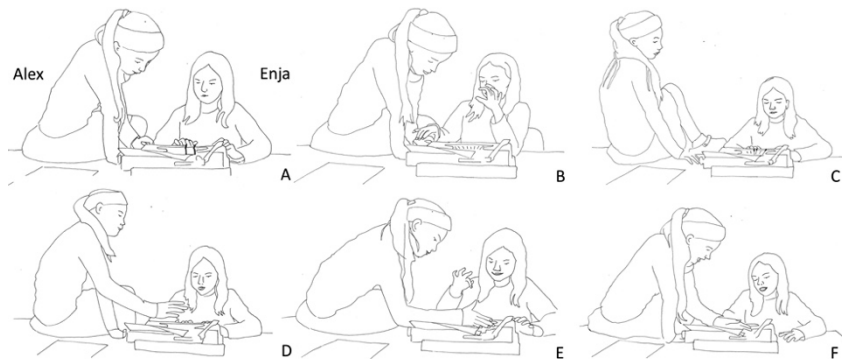


Figure 2 – Alex and Enja playing with the typewriter. Copyright 2024 by Katharina Egerer

### 5.1.3 Interpretation

In this scene, the play is a tactile exploration of the typewriter and its keys as a pretended play of writing. Enja first explores the range of motion of the letter keys and the protruding type levers by slowly pressing them. Alex explores the Shift key. This exploration goes hand in hand with negotiating a common writing idea. When Alex asks: “So, what else would you write?” [22:03], Enja “plays” with writing. She taps passionately on the keyboard, but not a single type lever comes out of the type basket and ends up on paper. This “as if” play expresses something: Enja wants to write, but not what Alex suggests. Alex takes the risk of putting her hand in the type basket. She sees and feels Enja typing as the type lever hits her hand with the letter stamp. With an “Attention” [22:08], Enja begins this new kind of play: tapping letters on Alex’s hand. Both girls laugh and their conversation becomes more relaxed. Then they are completely absorbed in the joint planning process again. They continue to play, now with fixed roles: Enja types as if she were writing, and Alex offers her hand over to the gentle strokes of the letter stamps.

The scene is full of energy, moving dynamically between the girls, the typewriter, and the process of planning their text. The typewriter is directly involved in the girls’ conversation about their unwritten text. They are in contact with it and express themselves by playing with it. This expression is created through gestures, not through written text. What initially appears to be an exploration of the keystroke turns into pretend writing and then seems to become a different kind of play – a game with fixed rules: Enja is allowed to type, but not to write. This opens up a lively and vibrant exchange of ideas about the shared text. Playing with the typewriter gives this exchange a momentum and a certain tension which constantly pushes towards real writing. This moment of typing, but not writing, creates opportunities for learning:

1. Space to formulate: Both girls can first think about and articulate what they want to write.
2. Space for reflection: Enja is given space to reflect on why “Dear Henry” seems strange to her as the beginning of a book. This also allows Alex to gain a new perspective on the target audience of books.
3. Becoming familiar with the typewriter: Both girls become familiar with the typewriter as a writing instrument through their tactile experience with it and their constant observing of it, and implicitly learn how it works.



4. Insight into writing processes: Being able to type, but not to write, gives both girls an important experience about writing processes. They learn that the planning discussion is part of collaborative writing. For Enja, it may feel like writing when she presses the keys, just like in real writing. And this reveals a special feature of using the typewriter: with another writing tool, the pen or the tablet, this experience of writing and yet not writing would not be so easily possible.

Playing with the typewriter does not stand alone. It is (seriously) connected to the writing process to be mastered and supports it through its dynamics and direct reference to the writing tool. In doing so, the play goes beyond the conventional use of the typewriter and does not follow any method for planning texts. In this unique quality, it reveals to us the potential of the typewriter for writing texts, which we might never have realized otherwise.

## 5.2 Playing with the Pen – Toni and Nicolai – Writing Without Looking

### 5.2.1. Context

In Franziska Herrmann's writing project at the Primary Education Research Lab at Technische Universität Dresden, Toni and Nicolai (Figure 1, B) each write their own story about a little wolf who has experienced something terrible and receives help (Herrmann, 2023a). Before writing, they collected ideas as a group and created a drawing of what might have happened to the little wolf. The drawings lie on the table in front of them. While Toni is writing his first draft text, Nicolai is already finalising his text by copying it through.

### 5.2.2 Description

With their heads bent low and close together, Toni and Nicolai write their texts (Figure 3, A).

Both are writing with their right hand, each keeps their left index finger close to the text. Their eyes follow what they are writing. Their pens move swiftly across the paper. Suddenly, Toni straightens up. His gaze drifts out into the room, but his pen continues to write as if on its own (Figure 3, B).

Toni turns to Nicolai and says: "I wrote 'a' (in German: 'ein') without looking" [00:21]. Nicolai looks at his own text and does not respond (Figure 3, C).

Toni looks for the spot in the text where he can continue writing. After finding it, he glances around the room as he writes.

He looks briefly at the paper.

Then away again.

At the sheet.

And away again.

Back to the sheet.

He turns to Nicolai and says: "I can write this without looking!" [17:43]. Nicolai has just finished writing the sentence: "They called the vet." and started a new sentence at the end of the line: "Then." He turns slightly left to continue writing the sentence he started on the new line. Then he looks at Toni's text and asks: "What?" [17:45] (Figure 3, D).

He looks at Toni's hand. Toni swings his pen in the air above the spot in the text: "Well, here's 'tree', and 'a'" [17:46]. Nicolai responds: "I can do that too" [17:50]. With a cheerful expression, he stretches his arms toward his draft sheet. A blank, white, rectangular area remains on it, where nothing has been written yet. He holds the edge of the page with his left index finger. His gaze directed straight ahead into the room, not at his page. With his right hand, he writes three letters with sweeping movements: "ein" (Figure 3, E).

Now he looks down at the page, smiling. Toni also looks curiously at what is being written (Figure 3, F).

Nicolai remarks: "Very big, hm" [17:51]. Sophie, the research student sitting with the boys at the table, whispers quietly to Toni and Nicolai: "You're doing great. But now keep writing your story!" [17:53]. Nicolai whispers back: "Yes, I'm almost done" [17:55]. He looks at his text and pauses for a moment. Suddenly he whispers "a" [18:04] and rushes to the page. He writes: "a few minutes later the vet arrived." Nicolai revises his draft while copying "(His friends came and called the vet. The vet bandaged Rolf's leg)." Now he writes: "His friends came. They called the vet. Then a few minutes later the vet arrived. [...] The vet bandaged Rolf's leg."

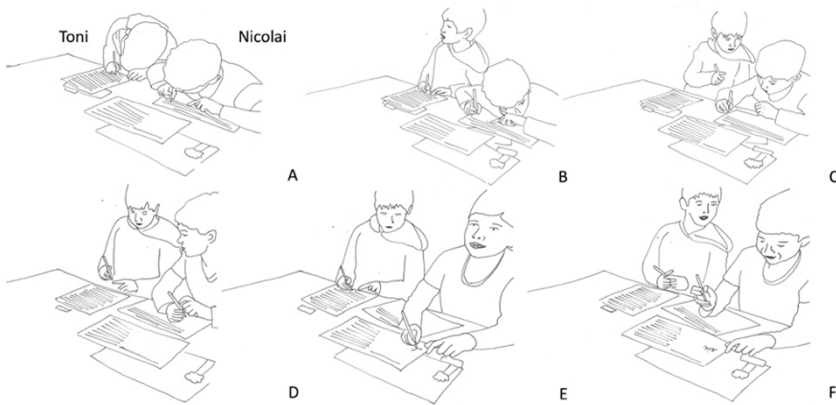


Figure 3 – Toni and Nicolai playing with the pen. Copyright 2024 by Katharina Egerer

### 5.2.3 Interpretation

In this scene, play manifests itself as demonstration and imitation. An impulse is captured and transformed into something new. Toni discovers by chance that he is writing something without looking at it directly. This arouses his interest. Toni finds it so exciting that he immediately wants to tell his neighbor Nicolai. But Nicolai is busy copying his text and doesn't react. Toni now begins to play with this new way of writing. He deliberately looks away from the text and writes without looking. Then a glance down to check. Then he looks away again. He tries something out, explores the limits of writing without visual control. However, this playful writing is not outsourced into a break. Nicolai's text continues to emerge as he explores the possibilities of looking away. Toni plays in the middle of the act of writing.

When Toni talks to Nicolai for the second time, Nicolai's curiosity is awakened. He breaks away from the text he has been so absorbed in. He asks: "What?" [17:45] and says: "I can do that too" [17:50]. Unlike Toni, he moves the play aside. He uses an empty space on the draft sheet to try out writing without looking. His neatly copied text is initially untouched by the play. He copies Toni's word on the draft sheet in large letters. Looking straight ahead and with a cheerful expression on his face, he boldly writes with sweeping movements: "a" (in German: "ein"). But what happens next? The two boys are interrupted while they are playing. The research student reminds them to focus on their writing. Then Nicolai has an idea. Even though the playful inter-

ruption of his copying only lasted a few seconds, he now changes his original text and writes: “a few minutes later the vet came.”

Things are surrounded by a realm of possibilities (Stieve, 2010, p. 259 f.), including pens when writing. According to Stieve, it is the *appeal of things* that makes learning possible. We rarely realize that writing doesn't solely involve our hands. In the middle of writing a text, Toni shares this insight - unimportant in the context of the task of writing a story, but significant. Toni wants to know more about this and is now specifically trying to write without looking at his draft page. He gets a bit further without looking, but then he has to look at what he has written. At this moment, it's not about the story, it's already made up, nor is it about the wording or the spelling. It's about the writing itself, about the particularity and the condition of this activity that creates the text on paper.

When Nicolai finally joins in, the play becomes bigger and deserves its own space on paper. But even at this moment, text is being created, Nicolai's story is growing. The subplot on the extra sheet expands the text, enriches the story. When the play is over, Nicolai writes about time that has passed: “a few minutes later”. This phrase does not appear in his first draft (Herrmann, 2023a, p. 190).

This serendipitous learning shows that there are things to be learned about writing that we might feel are not worth teaching; perhaps because we take them for granted or perhaps because we do not yet know them. It also shows that we don't have to stage everything, not even play for the sake of learning; sometimes, it finds its own way.

### 5.3 Playing With the Tablet – Ella and Kate – Discovering a Foreign Text

#### 5.3.1 Context

As part of Katharina Egerer's writing project at a primary school in Dresden, Ella is sitting at a table with Kate. Kate is seated at a typewriter, while a tablet stands upright in its case on the table in front of Ella (Figure 1, C). The app Hanx Writer (Hitcents.com, Inc., 2017), a digital simulation of a typewriter, is open on the tablet. For the past ten minutes, Ella has been typing a text about the picture book “Agatha Christie” (Sánchez Vegara & Munsó, 2016/2019).

### 5.3.2 Description

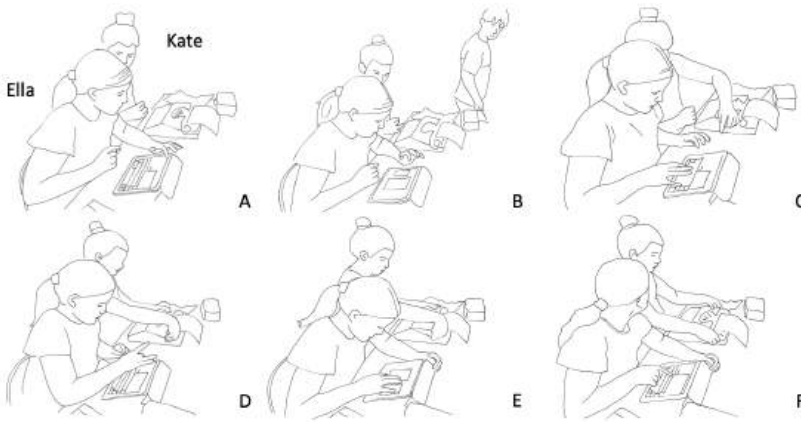


Figure 4 – Ella and Kate playing with the tablet. Copyright 2024 by Katharina Egerer

Ella claps her hands and says loudly: “There, I’m done!” [09:47]. She touches the smooth outer edges of the tablet on the right and left and examines what she has written. After a moment of looking, she nods, and quietly confirms: “Yes, I’m done!” [09:51]. She looks around the room and stretches her right arm upward. Turning to her neighbor Kate, she smiles and announces: “I don’t know how to save this.” [09:56] She places her left arm on the table and taps a button in the top left-hand corner of the tablet with her index finger (Figure 4, A).

The screen changes. Ella makes a high-pitched sound: “Uah!” [10:00]. While the typewriter keyboard with the clamped sheet of paper was visible a moment ago, two white pages with text in typewriter typeface now appear side by side. The right-hand page is larger than the left and shows Ella’s text. The left-hand page is smaller and displays the text of another child who is passing by the girls’ table at that moment (Figure 4, B).

Ella touches the larger, right-hand page with her right index finger and drags it further to the right across the screen. The left-hand side enlarges with this movement. It is now the same size as the right-hand page and then grows even larger. Ella slides the pages back to the left to restore the original view. Kate, sitting beside her, has observed Ella’s backandforthsliding of the texts and points her index finger toward the text on the left (Figure 4, C).

She says, "Wait, I think that's..." [10:02]. Ella taps on the right-hand text page. The view changes again: her text appears as if set in a typewriter with a keyboard, while the other child's text disappears from view. Ella tilts her head slightly towards Kate and says: "No, Ben" [10:06]. She touches a button on the tablet and the text scrolls up. Below the text she has written so far, she types delicately: "*by Ella*". She then presses the button in the top left-hand corner of the tablet. In a determined tone, she says: "Like this!" [10:15] (Figure 4, D).

The view changes, and the two white sheets reappear on the screen. Ella swiftly moves the right-hand sheet with her own text to the right, enlarging the view of the left-hand sheet. She leans her face close to the device and scrutinizes the other person's text (Figure 4, E).

She taps on it with her index finger, and Ben's text now appears enlarged as if it's clamped into a typewriter. Ella points to the text with her index finger and says: "Look, Ben" [10:18]. Upon noticing that Kate doesn't respond, she looks directly at her and says again: "Here, Ben" [10:20] (Figure 4, F).

Ella taps the button again to change the view. She drags both texts far to the right and far to the left, as if searching for more texts in the app. She then grabs the device with both hands and stands up.

### 5.3.3 Interpretation

The scene begins with Ella finishing her typing on the tablet. A visible and audible clap marks the end of her typing activity. She picks up her tablet as if it were a sheet of paper and reviews her text. Then she confirms: "Yes, I'm done!" [09:51]. But how do you finalize a digital writing process? You might put a sheet of paper aside, hand it in, or file it. Ella already knows that she now needs to save her text. However, she doesn't know how to do this, so she waits for the teacher to help her. Then, something unexpected and unintended happens: Ella notices a button and taps on it. Her astonishment suggests that she didn't know where this tap would take her or what view she would be presented with. On the one hand, this tentative tapping demonstrates her confidence that the tablet offers many possibilities, that it can reveal something new. On the other hand, it also shows a risk that Ella is taking, because her typed text could have been deleted or unintentionally changed by this action. However, something else happens, something that Ella continues to explore in her writing. The view changes, and she can now see her text as a

whole, presented on a page. But not only that. Another text becomes visible, one that was previously written and saved on the tablet by another child. Both texts appear side by side and can be resized in relation to each other by sliding. Ella performs this sliding in a fluid motion and seems to have an important realization while comparing the texts. She returns to the editing view, where she can edit her text, and writes her name beneath it. Her neighbor Kate has become curious and makes a guess as to whom the other text could belong. Ella knows the answer: it's Ben. She knows this because she has read his name under his text; he wrote it there himself. Later, she shows it to Kate, "Here, Ben" [10:20].

There is something significant, a serious realization, in this play with different views, the gentle typing and shifting of text sizes: Ella's text reveals itself as one text among others. In this context, labeling her authorship becomes meaningful.

Playing with the tablet in an unplanned way enables this accidental discovery, which is only possible in this form with a digital medium. Texts can be saved invisibly, reopened, and made visible again. They can be arranged in different sizes, allowing them to be viewed and focused upon.

In this example, learning appears as a moment in which many things become visible at once. The view of both texts, which was not didactically intended in this situation, shows Ella her text as one among others. Through Ben's text, she realizes that her text is not yet complete: only when her name is added can others clearly know that she is the author. At this moment, Ella also learns something about how the app works: the written texts are visible to others, and her text could also be viewed and read by other children.

## 6. Potential for a Play-Tolerant and Game-Oriented Didactic Perspective

The example of Ella shows how allowing and tolerating trial and error enables children to make discoveries that go beyond the didactic intention of the task, such as engaging with a picture book through writing. They learn something about writing itself. In addition to familiarizing themselves with writing tools, the children gain important insights into writing text: by inter-

acting with the typewriter, Alex and Enja experience that planning and formulating are integral parts of writing, even if no text appears on paper at that moment. Toni observes the visual aspects of writing, and Nicolai develops a new writing idea through play, which enriches his text.

Playing with the writing tools was not the intention of the writing tasks, but these tasks provided the space for such exploration. What Ella and Kate discover through the functionality of the app is a fundamental principle of writing: texts emerge among texts and offer inspiration to others (Dehn et al., 2011). Ella experiences this directly when she sees Ben's text in the app, which she immediately uses as an example.

All three examples demonstrate the value of something that might not be planned and yet can spontaneously happen. These experiences are made possible by allowing children to try out and use the writing tools beyond their intended use. From a didactic point of view, this means that it is essential to tolerate playing with the writing tools to avoid hindering discoveries. This approach is closely linked to trust in the children's ability to apply their discoveries to text writing, a trust that is both necessary and possible.

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