Currently, analysis is being conducted on a study into the effect of robot embodiment for a child learning task.

Once the effects of robot embodiment are known, further research will be carried out to investigate the impact on the interaction of the role and social behaviours of the robot.

Future Plans

Pilots and Observations:

Two pilot studies were conducted using the Sandtray and a sorting task; a child-child pilot in a school and a teacher-child / robot-child pilot in a pleasant University lab. These studies have provided the following insights:

- Children treat a robot as a social peer when interacting over a mediator
- Two very distinct interaction styles emerge when child-child dyads engage in a learning task with a single-touch mediator:
  1. One child monopolises the mediator
  2. The dyad adopts a very strict single move turn-taking policy
- A teacher will shift their focus between the mediator and the child more frequently when a child is unsure or hesitant in attempting moves in a task

It is hypothesised that, because of its enhanced social presence, a physical robot will provide a stronger social interaction than an on-screen character. An experiment exploring the effects of embodiment in the context of a learning task has been conducted and video analysis is ongoing.

Video analysis from the aforementioned experiment will subsequently be used as a starting point for more studies into the effect of varying the social cues that a robot can use when teaching. It is proposed that a robot which utilises more social cues will result in greater learning for the child.