Learning Our results from three studies suggest that preschool children (3 to 5 years):
– are not confused or disturbed by the presence of a teachable agent,
– are able to keep their attention towards their TA when exposed to distractions,
– exhibit quite a mature understanding of a TA as a social entity.
Magical Garden seems to provide: (i) motivational scaffolding for preschool children, and (ii) cognitive scaffolding (e.g. scaffolding for “teaching behavior”).

Brain (and learning) A next step is to use the Magical Garden platform in long term intervention studies. Measurements will combine:
– neurocognitive measures (event-related potentials, ERPs),
– proficiency measures (behavioral tests),
– information gained from game logs.
We expect to find changes in the ERP effects that are not captured in the behavioral measures, i.e. changes that reflect pre-learning.
We also anticipate this material to shed light on the mechanisms behind “therapy resistance” (i.e., children who do not respond as expected to an intervention).

Culture (and learning) In cross-cultural studies (Sweden, Finland, US) with educational software we also explore “pedagogical cultural differences”.
– Pedagogical ideologies: different ideas about what kinds of preparation for school are adequate in preschool/Kindergarten (and not adequate).
– Cultures of learning: different conceptions and practices with respect to individualized learning, corrective feedback, collaboration, and competition.