

Young children drawing at home, pre-school and school : the influence of the socio-cultural context

Ring, Kathryn Ann (2003) *Young children drawing at home, pre-school and school : the influence of the socio-cultural context*. EdD thesis, University of Leeds.

Abstract

The aim of the research was to explore the impact upon the young child's drawing behaviours of the cultural contexts and the views and beliefs of significant others across both home and preschool school settings. The theoretical framework was informed by four significant areas of recent research. Socio-cultural theory, (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978); Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of child development; Dyson's (1993a), identification of an important role for drawing as part of a continuum of symbol systems used by young children to communicate their intentions and Kress's (1997) recognition of the young child as a 'multi-modal meaning maker', and drawing as one of the available modes used to make sense of the world. Evidence was collected for one month, at beginning of the school year, about seven children's use of drawing across home, pre-school and school settings over a three-year period. Two key research approaches were used: 1. Booklets of each child's drawings and photographs of the activities and contexts in which they drew them, collected by the significant adults in each setting 2. Semi-structured interviews with significant adults and with the children. Contextual information was gathered via photographs/digital images taken in the home and pre-school school contexts and, during the first phase of the project, observations of the children in their settings. The views of adults and children were triangulated against the evidence of drawings and photographs. In the home context the findings particularly highlighted the impact upon drawing of gendered relationships, mothers' control over children's use of space and materials and the difference in experience for children with older or younger siblings. In Foundation Stage contexts drawing was a particularly meaningful activity for girls whilst boys spent more time in three-dimensional construction activity. In Key Stage One contexts the one art lesson each week was skill based and adult directed The study draws attention to the positioning of drawing, as part of a continuum of interrelated symbol systems, between play and writing. It argues for the recognition for its use by the young child within transformative meaning making and as a tool for thinking to be acknowledged in key policy documentation and through training provision for teachers

Metadata

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Identification Number/EthosID (e.g. uk.bl.ethos.123456):	uk.bl.ethos.402297
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Furthermore, what children learn at school is not exclusively academic content; schools are designed to make children productive citizens who are respectful of the diversity of their society. While there has been a great deal of research on the social and motivational determinants of school success for mainstream children, attention to these matters with regard to language-minority children has focused more on issues of mismatch between the social rules these children bring from home and those that obtain in the classroom. In this chapter, we identify some of the salient themes in research on The development of socio- cultural identity in primary school children through different learning projects leads them in learning about. different traditions and specificity of their country. The children were challenged by their teacher to make different. pedagogical, cognitive and socio-cultural guidance, as the development of the child first appears on the social and. scholastic level, then on a cognitive level and psychologically. The knowledge and skills the children need for their. Identity is a mere construct for young children who are just starting to develop. in a world where everything is new and excited. Along with the beginning of the school years this search for identity is seen. Unlike Piaget's notion that childrens' development must necessarily precede their learning, Vygotsky argued, "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (1978, p. 90). In other words, social learning tends to precede (i.e., come before) development. Vygotsky has developed a sociocultural approach to cognitive development. He developed his theories at around the same time as Jean Piaget was starting to develop his ideas (1920's and 30's), but he died at the age of 38, an