

Research on Children's Drawings

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"Humans are animals who use tools": as Benjamin Franklin has said, human beings have, as an extension of hand functions, come to make tools according to the purpose. And the tools are refined to become easier to use, and eventually, they led up to not only being used for the purpose of survival, but also to the act of "drawing pictures" in order to enrich life. Pictures indeed tell of the drawer's existence, thoughts, and inner self. As well, people enjoy drawing. This is because drawing stimulates the universal desire to express oneself. By expressing oneself, the heart is released.

At the same time that drawing is this kind of individual expression, it also has the value of communication. Drawing tends to recount far more things to the reader than language. Children do not yet have sufficient capabilities for abstract linguistic expression, but they have symbolic communication methods such as drawing. Through pictures, children make communication with familiar people, they develop skills for living, and build a sense of trust.

Drawing for children, at the same time as being an expression of the inner self and a communication method, is something that reveals the development that accompanies a child's age. Children's drawings have an order of development, and that accompanies the development of motor skills, emotional development,

psychosocial development and the development of perception. Children draw "what they know" in their own style. In other words, the perception functions, sensibility/emotions and motor functions interact, and there, the factor of social experience is added and the picture is drawn onto paper.

Research on children's drawings have arrived at the present day through developmental research phase (developmental approach), intellectual research phase (psychological measurement approach), and personality test phase (projection approach). In order to have an overall approach on the children's drawings, we must know about the above three researches.

When we think about the developmental approach, as we focus on a child's drawing activities, the child's drawing naturally changes according to age.

In order to draw what one is thinking, the skilled control and development of the fingers becomes necessary. As well, children draw what they know about. What they know, what they wish to communicate to others, these are expressed not simply as they are seen, but with the child's personal style. It follows that, the extent to which a child is conscious of the surroundings, in other words, the breadth of the child's world vision has a great influence on the contents of the drawing.

In addition, in order to draw something, there is a need to have an interest in familiar matters and events. Sensitivity toward matters, things, feelings such as joy, anger, sadness and contentment, as well as the development of emotions, enriches the drawing activity.

As noted above, the development of various skills promote the development of drawing expression. And, the fulfillment of life experience and the expansion of worldview are greatly influences for the furthering of drawing activities. By expressing these in pictures, the consciousness becomes entrenched in the child, it enriches the world of creativity, and expands the substance of daily life. From this, there arise correlating effects such as progressing the child's overall skills or development of drawing.

The development of children's drawing expression follows basically the same path for every child. In addition, although there exist some differences in lifestyle, at the infant stage, all children around the world show a universally shared development process. In children's pictures, there may be the primordial shapes and forms of drawing activity.

Again, in addition to the inherent individual differences such as those that were mentioned before, the culture and the state of the lifestyle environment that surround the children and the education methods, etc. also have an influence on the development of drawing.

As I have mentioned above, children's drawings, according to the development of their various skills, can be said to develop comprehensively on the two fronts of the inherent/universal factors that grow

according to an intrinsic development program, and of factors due to the lifestyle environment in which they live and the education culture environment.

When we think about the psychological measurement approach, in one sense, the drawing activity progresses along with the development of the intellect, it can be said that pictures could become a means of diagnosing intellectual development.

In the examination results presented in 1908 of the 9,746 drawings that were collected in Switzerland, it is said that among children who drew good pictures, the percentage of intellectually superior children was higher than the percentage of intellectually inferior children. In the early 1900s, many research methods were developed, such as the reproducing method that attempted to measure the development level of the drawer through reproduction, the completion test that completed a picture by drawing in the missing parts, etc..

Among these, the most well-known and the most often used is the DAM (Draw-a-Man), issued by Goodenough in 1926. It is an intelligence test that is measured using portrait drawings and using IQ (intelligence quotient) as a basis. Drawing a person is, at the same time as expressing a subject that belongs to the category of people, also to express what kind of being the self is. Consequently, portrait drawings are an image of the self and an image of others, and it is necessarily drawn based on various perceptive information such as self-acceptance information, visual information, knowledge acquired by learning, and actual experiences.

In Goodenough's test, the number of people who are precisely drawn with the outline of a head and the correct number of fingers, etc. is emphasized. Children who draw very numerous factors obtain a high score, but it is not to say that the children who draw the most detailed portraits are the children with the highest intellect. There are several parts that are insufficient in this measurement method, and the majority of researchers voice objections about the validity of this test. In spite of this, the reason why the use of this test has rapidly progressed is because this test had the following advantages. They are: being able to see the correlation with other intelligence tests, that it can be easily implemented, and that it promotes communication with children.

Because the DAM is an action test, it can be used to measure the intellectual level of linguistically-challenged children and hearing impaired children. In addition, if limited to subjects whose mental age (MA) is below 9 years old, expanded use is possible not only for children but also for mentally-challenged adults and for behaviorally-challenged adults.

The psychological measurement approach, which DAM represents, is effective depending on its method of use. Again, it has a large significance for eventually giving rise to a projection method, Machover. K's Personality Projection in the Drawing of the Human Figure.

The projection approach is a method that can close in on the interiority of the drawer. The drawing tells more about the drawer himself or herself rather than the subject that was drawn. Even when drawing a tree, more than the tree itself, which is the subject of the

drawing, the psychological state of the drawer is drawn into this. This tendency is especially strong in children.

Drawing is a symbolic expression of the inner psyche (the unconscious). The unconscious part of the psyche can appear through symbols (drawing). Drawing is a direct communication from the unconscious, and it cannot be camouflaged as easily as in the case of communication with words. When a drawing appears from the unconscious, a vast amount of psychological information is generated, and the depths of the drawer's psyche can be felt through the drawing.

In order to read into pictures, firstly, it is important to constantly pay attention to the first impression of a drawing. Rather than interpreting a picture, it is more important to emphasize the first feeling that the reader had. The person who interprets must become conscious of the impression that he or she feels, and must keep this information until much later. Sometimes, there is a possibility that the first impression that was felt means that there was close contact with the drawer's unconscious world. Also, instead of putting the focus on finding symbols, there is a need to look at the picture as a whole. The integrated whole is larger than a total sum of its parts. This is called the "preeminence of the whole".

At an early age, the themes of the drawings are secondary, and the drawing activities are performed in a dimension where the entirely psychological and physical activities are united. However, when children become slightly older, the theme becomes more important. When a single symbol or theme appears repeatedly in a single drawing, it merits attention, and there are instances in which there are hidden meanings behind them. This is because unconscious thoughts,

feelings, and actions are the root source of symbols and themes.

As well, with regard to free drawing, the interests and needs in the depths of the child's heart can be understood by how the themes are chosen.

In a study in Florence, the drawings of children from grade 1 to grade 5 were studied, and an interesting tendency was found. According to this, "houses" were depicted in 60% of the free drawings drawn by children aged 6 and 7, and in these drawings, there were very few objects depicted other than the "house" (such as trees and flowers). What the "house" symbolizes is the "emotions and stability that are achieved by life in the home, a place where basic needs are pursued", and in the childhood in which the home accounts for a large portion of one's life, the "house" is often depicted. And by 10, 11 years old, the "house" becomes only one item in a wide composition that includes "trees", "flowers", and the "sun", which symbolize needs of the world that extends beyond the range of the home. It can be understood that this kind of smooth transition takes place because, as the range of interests grows wider and that needs that extend beyond the home arise, they are gradually released from the strong family ties of childhood.

As well, the drawings that have a characteristic of projection are, at the same time as being an analytical tool, also an effective diagnostic and treatment method.

Researchers who take a scientific stance have held doubts about the projection method. In truth, it cannot be denied that the subjective factors of the reader have a great influence when analyzing the pictures. However, although the projection method certainly cannot satisfy the standards of reliability and validity as a

psychological analysis, it is an important tool for experienced clinicians. Once one becomes accustomed to its usage, it becomes possible to pursue clues that cannot be compensated by standardized tests, and at the clinical site, the therapist can, at the same time as creating a rapport with the drawer with the pictures as a medium, the therapist can also understand the personality of the drawer.

For the drawer as well, drawing pictures is an effective method to release one's mind. The symbols help the state of the mind to transfer from the unconscious level to the conscious. Pictures that are symbols recount something extremely deep and complex, so with a consciousness that, itself has limits, it cannot immediately understand everything. It is normal for the symbol (drawing) to carry aspects that are unknown or indecipherable, and there are times that the drawer himself or herself cannot understand the drawing that he or she drew. However, by using pictures, it is possible to exchange information within the realms of the mind that are expressed or repressed. Drawings release mental energy that was unconsciously repressed. From this mental energy, even people faced with difficulties may be able to overcome their problems. It could be said that it is basis for which drawing is used as a psychological treatment. However, the therapist is dealing with an individual and the pictures are only a medium for communication.

The analysis of pictures is a system that allows people to become more conscious, and if the conscience is expanded, the contents of unconscious would be spared from being abused and ignored. They would be valued, and be integrated into the lifestyle. If that were to happen, people would be able to establish characteristics that suit themselves and live their

remaining time as more complete human beings.

As above, I have discussed children's drawings from 3 perspectives

One drawing suggests, truly, many things. In undertaking this research, I have witnessed how pictures articulately tell of the children themselves. This may be the aspect of the development of children, or of their inner side. And through the pictures, I was able to be closer to the children. For us, pictures can be a useful communication tool if used effectively.

Reference

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