

Abstract

The principal aim of this research study was the identification of cognitive abilities displayed through drawings by Early Childhood Children. The study was undertaken with the specific objectives of identifying imaginative skills shown through the drawings made according to the themes assigned by teachers and speech abilities and basic mathematical skills displayed by way of the same by the Early Childhood Children and how teachers assist these children to display their cognitive skills through drawings.

The researcher used qualitative research methodology as the most appropriate method for the study. A sample of pre-school children and the sample of pre-school teachers were selected to collect data. The sample of children comprised 12 children belonging to the age group of 4-5 years and randomly selected four each from three pre-schools in Maharagama Education Division in the Maharagama Educational Zone in Colombo District. Three teachers working with the children of the 4-5-year age group in those pre-schools were also included in the sample.

As the data relating to this study were more qualitative in nature than quantitative, data were collected by the direct involvement of the researcher in the observation of children and studying the behaviours and responses of children and teachers. An observation schedule and an interview schedule were used as data collecting instruments. The data relevant to the study comprised friendly interviews, recorded information, photographs and pictures drawn by children. With the assistance of an educationalists well-versed in the field, the data were descriptively and comparatively analysed. Comparing the results obtained by data analysis with information gathered by literature review as per the objectives of the study, conclusion and suggestions were presented on a rational basis while giving implications for further research.

One important finding of this research study was that the drawings made by children involved in the study contained not only real-life experiences but also a combination of imaginative ideas created by mind. A majority of the children displayed imaginative skills through their drawings and a large number has the ability to express them verbally. As a medium that can be used to promote speaking ability in the early childhood, child art permits children to express idea and contributes to increase the number of words added to the vocabulary of the early childhood children. A majority of these children had independently expressed creative ideas both verbally and non-verbally. Moreover, most of the early childhood children involved in this study manifested abilities related to basic mathematical concepts such as identifying and stating colours in drawings, counting, quantifying objects, use of symbols, comparison of objects and expressing spatial ability and using language relevant to spatial relationships. However, though some of the teachers used drawings in relation to various themes, they had just taken it as a perfunctory, daily activity.

In the teachers who were involved in the study, the understanding about how child art can be used as a teaching aid paying attention to their quality and developmental aspects was poor. In spite of those teachers gave necessary guidance for children to develop their speaking abilities thorough the drawings, the essential guidance given for the development of basic mathematical concepts was minimal. Therefor this study suggested that it is indispensable to investigate in to the role of child art in the holistic development during the early childhood, discover the factors that affect the drawings of children in the early childhood and conduct research studies about the teachers' role in contributing to the development of different aspects of children in the early childhood.