



AN INVESTIGATION OF THE COGNITIVE SKILLS REFLECTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DRAWINGS

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Children's drawings tell us about their psychological and physical development. Children cannot express themselves using words which is why drawings play an important role in communication. This study investigated how children in early childhood displayed cognitive abilities through their drawings. The main objective of this study was to identify cognitive skills shown through the drawings made according to the themes assigned by teachers. The study used the qualitative research method. The participants involved were pre-school children (N=12) and teachers (N=3) in the Maharagama Education zone, Western Province in Sri Lanka. Data was collected by the direct involvement of the researcher in the observation of children and studying the behaviours and responses of children and teachers. The data relevant to the study comprised friendly interviews, recorded information, photographs and pictures drawn by the children. With the assistance of educationalists well-versed in the field, the data was descriptively and comparatively analysed. One important finding of this study was that the drawings made by the children involved in the study contained not only real-life experiences, but also a combination of imaginative ideas. A large number could express themselves verbally. As a medium that can be used to promote speaking ability in children, most of these children had independently expressed creative ideas both verbally and non-verbally through their drawings. Moreover, most of the children manifested abilities related to basic mathematical concepts of objects and expressing spatial ability and using language relevant to spatial relationships. The study concluded that in early childhood, these children expressed their cognitive skills such as imagination, speech ability and basic mathematical concept through their drawings. However, the teachers should enhance their perspective and awareness towards their children's drawing to promote cognitive development.

Keywords: Basic mathematical concepts, Children's drawings, Cognitive abilities, Early childhood, Imagination, Speech ability

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