

Dramatization in play for preschoolers in Play-shop of KODOMO project

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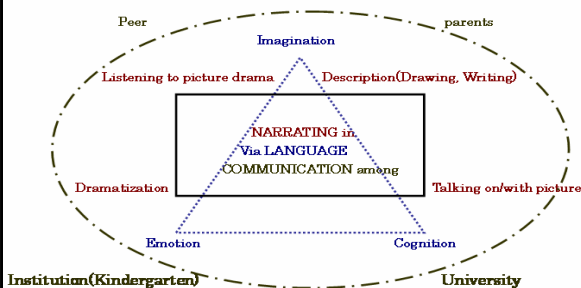
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What's the play-shop?

- It belongs to KODOMO project.
- It is the experimental research site to study on preschooler's after-school program and psychological role of play.
- It is practically a place for play for participants with an emergent or situated negotiating curriculum.
- It is held once a week for about two hours program in after-preschool program for the KODOMO club members who are volunteering to participate in Play-shop.
- The graduate students and undergraduate ones have participated into the play-shop for their research on their own research interests.

three dimensions in Play-shop

Conceptual Map of Three Dimensions on Psychological, Practical, and Human Resources in Play-shop of KODOMO Project



Notes: Triangle indicates the dimension of psychological relationship among mental functions
Rectangle indicates the dimension of practical or expressive mode in Play-shop
Circle indicates the dimension of human resources to participate in play-shop

Play-shop consists of four activities

- 1st phase: listening to the drama picture
- 2nd phase: dramatization
- 3rd phase: drawing,
- 4th phase: talking with drawn pictures (improvisational story-making in reporting)

Four activities on "Magic Lamp" in 2005 school year.



Fig.1: The first phase: Listening to the original picture drama



Fig.2: They go to the fantasy world from the real world via the flight of a magic carpet.
(Transitive phase from the real world to the fantasy one via a magic carpet as a transitive artifact.)



Fig.3: In the second phase, adult participants invite children to the fantasy world through their dramatization at first.



Fig.4: Children participate in the fantasy world with adult staffs.



Fig. 5: In the third phase, children draw pictures with adult staffs.



Fig.6: in the fourth phase, they talk about their pictures in peers' presence with their parents.

The activities are mainly related to three psychological functions:

- Imagination
- Cognition
- emotion

Play is the source of development and creates ZPD (Vygotsky,1933)

- "a child's behavior is always guided by meaning,
- play also creates the zone of proximal development of the child. In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself.
- Play is the source of development and creates the zone of proximal development. Action in the imaginative sphere, in an imaginary situation, the creation of voluntary intentions and the formation of real-life plans and volitional motives – all appear in play and make it the highest level of preschool development.
- The child moves forward essentially through play activity. Only in this sense can play be termed a leading activity that determines the child's development."
- In play-shop, I would like to know what kind of development can be created in comparison in child's daily activities.

The views for play

- “Play as reproductive activity”
- “the role play” (Leont’ev, Elkonin)

* “the role play” is not the terminology of Vygotsky (Lindqvist, 1995).

“Play as creative and artful activity

Imagination in play

- In fantasy play, the inter-animation between emotion and cognition should be inquired.
- Vygotsky (1932) wrote that imaginative act is a rich emotional activity. The triangle relation in the conceptual map indicates there is a specific inter-connective relationship between them.

Imagination is constructed socially

- in Vygotsky’s idea (1932). Therefore, imagination is a mental functioning which is constructed socially.
- *“The imaginative activity has the activity, which has a direction in the meaning that we are fully aware of the purpose and the motive to pursue the imagination activity. It is not unconscious activity. It is turned to a certain specific purpose; the action plan of the child to affect the future “etc.*

Imagination is constructed socially

- a child can find the new meaning at the known things and events.
- If the imagination is evoked in a purposeful activity, the educator should set such the activity setting which requires children to activate their emotion and cognition socially.
- Collective discussion to interpret the troublesome affairs and solve them is very useful for children. Imagination is executed in a higher mental functioning mediated by language. An intensive discussion would bring the development of a communicative ability with language. Dramatization can do it.

Findings:

Replies to Research questions

- 3.1 What did children experience through four different play activities?
- 3.2 Were there emotional learning besides cognitive learning during play activities? What is it?

What did children experience through four different play activities?

- Children seems to have a rich experience on the fantasy world in the former two phases.
- They feel sympathy for the characters in the drama, and then they would like to participate into the drama.
- But they often detach their excited feeling aroused in the drama play from their mind in drawing and reporting.
- Why?

Were there emotional learning besides cognitive learning during play activities?

- Episode 1: Even young years old children aged three who made a noise before the phase 1 could sit quietly to hear it. They could concentrate on the staff's voice and the story in the picture drama.



Fig.7: One picture for picture drama in "Moon explore 2005."

Were there emotional learning besides cognitive learning during play activities?

- In the play-shop, the content in the picture in the first phase drama leads the story which will be developed in dramatizing in the second phase.
- When the regular members listened to the picture drama in the first phase, they might easily expect the similar plot or the similar characters in the next dramatization phase.
- For example, in the series of "moon explore," some of children exited when they listened to the picture drama, then they said anything about the related matters on it.
- This fact indicates the picture drama triggered unique ideas from some of children. There were emotional leap to cognition in them.

Were there emotional learning besides cognitive learning during play activities?

- Episode2: In the series of 'moon explore,' one five years old boy in the middle age class of three age grades kindergarten arrangement of the kindergarten said "Here we are in the room of our kindergarten because I can see the blackboard belonging to our regular classroom. He felt fear in the moon ground so that he invented the reason to make him feel relieved. It is a case for self-control for his mind shocked by the impulse in the situation. Dewey (1938) described that "impulses and desires that are not ordered by intelligence are under the control of accidental circumstances. The child could inhibit the impulse under his intelligence.

Were there emotional learning besides cognitive learning during play activities?

In comparison with the 5 aged boy,

the three or four age group children were often thrown into confusion in the situation. Some of them cried and clung to the teacher as one of staffs. They could not control their feeling by cognitive work.



Fig.8:Children helped the senior explore in the moon ground in "Moon explore 2005."

Were there emotional learning besides cognitive learning during play activities?

- 5 years old children took a hypothesis
- He reported the details in the room. He pointed at the blackboard, the posters and so on which were in the room of the kindergarten. He did not talk on uncertain matters to inhibit his fear. He had a hypothesis on "where he is" and searched the evidences to verify his hypothesis. He actually felt fear but he could find pleasure to be there because of his cognitive works.
- Few young grade children could not even "be there" for their upsurge of emotion at the situation.

Were there emotional learning besides cognitive learning during play activities?

- Episode 3: A hypothesis or a narrative reflects their world-view in dramatizing.
- For example, the children who were the lamp nymph in the second course of 2005 should obey a witch with the lamp because there was a strict rules of that the person who has the lamp was the master for lamp nymphs. But they would not like to do so. There was a bid dilemma for them. They had a long discussion about it. They reformulate the rule of the obedience. They actually obeyed to the witch but they strongly expressed angry to her.
- They changed the meaning of the obedience from the "inevitable obedience" to the occupational duty. Their attitude expressed their discomfort feeling for the witch and it implied that they did not obey her in mind. They created collectively a new story after their discussion. This experience might contribute to their personal development, too.

Concluding remarks on learning and play of play-shop

- the significance on the setting of the drama-based play activity such as play-shop.
- The main purpose of play-shop is not to give children a feeling of pleasure. It is not the play for getting a cheap comfortable mind. It is not an entertaining play.
- We do not set the play-shop as a preparing site for children's academic development in their future. A Commercial phrase such as "Learn in fun" is not adopted here.

Concluding remarks on learning and play of play-shop

- Some of children invented his or her original scribbles by his or her desire to communicate with the other peers.
- The private scribbles indicates the future appearance of letters. But the acquisition of the literacy is not the goal of play-shop.

Concluding remarks on learning and play of play-shop

- It is important to set the necessary condition to foster a complex social activity for children.
- The issue on "what the children participating into play-shop experience" is a central one for designing play-shop.
- I can not reply to the big issue now. But the "criteria of experience" described by Dewey (1938) is very suggestive.
- It consists of the following two principles; the "experiential continuity" and "interaction."