ABILITY LEVELS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN APPLYING SIMPLE PRINTMAKING TECHNIQUES

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Abstract

Art fields, which have been used as a treatment tool since ancient times, are still used today to support the well-being of individuals. In applications where art is used as a psychoeducational intervention method in schools, the techniques frequently preferred are pastel, watercolor, oil painting, drawing with acrylic paint, sculpture, ceramic making, and printmaking techniques. This study aimed to determine the application levels of simple printmaking techniques applied by children with special needs during art activities and to guide special education teachers and families while performing these applications with children through the results of this study. The research was conducted with 40 children aged between 4-13 who were receiving education in a special education center in Nicosia, selected by the purposeful sampling method. The research method is qualitative research and has a case study design. The data recording form developed by the researchers was used as the data collection tool in the research. The data were analyzed in 5 categories: simple printmaking techniques, techniques that children can do without needing support, techniques that they need support for, what kind of support they need, their reactions to the drawing activity, and whether the application tells its story. As a result, it was determined that children can perform techniques that they apply with direct contacts, such as hand printing and fingerprinting, without needing support, that they need support in techniques such as citrus printing, leaf printing, potato printing, and paper printing, that they need more support such as modeling and physical guidance, that they participate in activities with pleasure, and that they use mostly emotional nonverbal expressions in telling their stories due to their language developmental disabilities.

Keywords: Art education, developmental disability, printmaking, psychoeducational intervention.

1. Introduction

Hand prints made on cave walls by early humans thousands of years ago can be considered archetypes of printmaking art. While printmaking is used as an original art form in Japan and China, in Europe it is mostly considered as a reproduction. The art of printmaking is directly related to technique and material. Technical developments and innovations in these areas affect printmaking in terms of both aesthetic and technical success (Grabowski & Fick, 2012). Art fields have been used as a means of treatment and healing since ancient times. Art activities are also included in the curriculum in education both to support development and as a psychoeducational intervention tool. In this context, one of the important points to be considered is that the materials and tools of the technique to be applied are suitable for the development of the target audience (Yazgin, 2010). Art activities should be an integral part of absolute education as a psychoeducational intervention tool in schools (Rihter & Potočnik, 2022). The techniques frequently preferred in education are drawing with charcoal, pastel, watercolor, oil painting, acrylic painting, sculpture, marbling art, ceramic making, tile painting and printmaking techniques. Based on the knowledge that art activities in education are effective in supporting the development of the individual the main problem of this research is the application level of simple printmaking techniques applied by children with special needs who are studying in a private special education school during their art activities. This research is important in different aspects as it concerns the best interests of the child in education. Education is for everyone. It is known that art activities in both art education and general education are effective in ensuring the balanced development of people in all aspects. Art activities are a mechanism that keeps intuitions and memories in the memory. It eliminates despair by keeping beautiful and pleasing things in mind. It helps to cope with difficulties. It acts as an emotional regulator. It serves to concretize the ideas that the child cannot verbalize or define. It expands the child's vocabulary and allows him to gain

perspective (Botton & Armstrong, 2013). However, since the techniques and practices mentioned are not suitable for the development of children, there will be negative consequences such as failure, disappointment and loss of self-confidence, it is important to underline that the results of this research will provide guidance to parents and teachers.

1.1. Limitations

This study was conducted with children with special needs. During the applications conducted for the purpose of collecting data, the researcher, who was a printmaking expert, could not be directly involved in the process. Since working with people they do not know, who are a sensitive group, would have negative effects, the applications and information about the techniques were conveyed to the special education teachers by the printmaking expert. The applications were carried out by special education teachers. While this caused a limitation in one respect, the fact that they worked with their own teachers also had a positive effect. Another limitation was that during the period when the applications for the purpose of collecting data began, education was interrupted several times, albeit briefly, due to intense Covid-19 cases.

2. Materials and methods

In accordance with the ethical procedure of the research, the ethics committee (Near East University) permission was obtained first. After obtaining the ethics committee permission, the school administration and a teacher were informed about the research procedure and the families were informed and their consents were obtained through the school administration. The research method is qualitative research and has a case study design. The data recording form developed by the researchers was used as the data collection tool in the research. The data were analyzed in 5 categories: simple printmaking techniques, techniques that children can do without needing support, techniques that they need, story.

2.1. Participants

The research was conducted with 40 children aged between 4-13 who were receiving education in a special education center in Nicosia, selected by the purposeful sampling method. A classification of the types and levels of special needs of individuals is grouped under four main headings: neurodevelopmental disorders, neurological disorders, comorbid disorders, and speech and language disorders. There is also a category of genetics and special conditions.

2.2. Data analysis

The order of techniques in the data record list is; from those that do not require formatting template material, from those that are easy to format templates to those that are difficult to format. The order is made in the form of techniques with low to high variety of tools and equipment, while the tools used are ranked from easy to difficult in terms of use. The grouping is made from simple to complex. In the order made by taking these criteria into consideration, simple printmaking techniques are in the following order:

Prints made without material

- Hand print
- Finger print
 - Prints made by tools
- Steel wool print
- Sponge print
- Paper print
- Fabric printing
- Brush print (1.5/2 inch.)
- Brush print (15/20 no.)
- Stencil print
- Rope print
 - Printing with natural materials
- Citrus print
- Onion press
- Apple print
- Leaf print
- Potato print

3. Results

A classification of the types and levels of needs of the children included in the study is grouped under four main headings: neurodevelopmental disorders, neurological disorders, mixed (comorbid) disorders and language and speech disorders. There is also a genetic and special conditions category.

A total of 24 children are included in the neurodevelopmental disorders category. The most common condition in this group (n=12) is autism. Autism is followed by attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) with 3 children. Developmental delay, hearing impairment/disability, mental disability/disability and attachment disorder-attention deficit conditions are each present in 2 children. Learning disability was detected at a lower rate in 1 child. There are 2 children diagnosed with epilepsy in the neurological disorders category. There are 11 children in the mixed (comorbid) disorders category. The most common combination in this group is autism and ADHD (n=4). Other combinations included ADHD and epilepsy (n=1), ADHD and developmental delay (n=1 individual), epilepsy, ADHD and autism (n=1), epilepsy and developmental delay (n=1). There was only 1 child in the genetic and special conditions category, who was diagnosed with Down syndrome. Finally, 2 children were diagnosed with delayed speech in the speech and language disorders category.

3.1. Findings regarding prints made without tools, with tools, with natural materials

In general, children's autonomy levels and motivation levels were important determinants of success in hand and finger print art applications. The failure rate increased significantly in applications requiring support. On the other hand, the success rate was high in children who practiced with excitement or enthusiasm. This situation shows that children's emotional and physical support needs in technical applications should be evaluated correctly. Encouraging children's autonomy and increasing their motivation in hand print technique can be considered as an effective strategy in increasing the success rate. Three of the children among the participants refused to apply these techniques.

		Techniques applied without needing support	Techniques applied with needing support	Techniques applied with excitement/eagerness
	Application Success	n	n	n
Hand printing	Successful	35	14	30
	Unsuccessful	5	26	10
Finger print	Successful	34	14	28
	Unsuccessful	6	26	12

Table 1. Results of printing without using any tools.

Table 2. Findings regarding the printing done by children with special needs using tools.

		Techniques applied without needing support	Techniques applied with needing support	Techniques applied with excitement/eagerness
	Application Success	n	n	n
	Successful	21	11	12
Steel wool print	Unsuccessful	19	29	28
Sponge print	Successful	31	11	21
	Unsuccessful	9	29	19

Donor print	Successful	24	12	13
raper print	Unsuccessful	16	28	27
Fabric print	Successful	22	14	10
	Unsuccessful	18	26	30
Brush print	Successful	10	12	3
(1.5/2 inch)	Unsuccessful	30	28	37
Brush print	Successful	11	12	3
(15/20 no.)	Unsuccessful	29	28	37
Store :1	Successful	3	7	8
Stench	Unsuccessful	37	33	32
Pone print	Successful	25	15	14
Kope print	Unsuccessful	15	25	26

Sponge printing, paper printing and rope printing were techniques that children practiced more successfully than other techniques, had higher levels of excitement and desire, and required less support.

Table 3. Finding	s regarding	the printing	with natura	l materials.
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		Techniques applied without needing support	Techniques applied with needing support	Techniques applied with excitement/eagerness
	Application Success	n	n	n
Citaria amint	Successful	11	8	5
Citrus print	Unsuccessful	29	32	35
	Successful	17	11	11
Onion print	Unsuccessful	23	29	29
	Successful	17	10	11
Apple print	Unsuccessful	23	30	29
Leaf print	Successful	23	15	15
	Unsuccessful	17	25	25
Potato print	Successful	28	15	20
	Unsuccessful	12	25	20

Figure 1. Examples of children's prints.



Among the printing techniques where natural materials are used as tools, the techniques that children prefer the most and have successfully applied are leaf printing and potato printing techniques.

As a result, when the average durations of the activities on which children spend the most time among all printing techniques are examined, it is seen that the highest rates are hand, finger, potato and sponge prints, while the least time is spent on stencil, citrus and apple prints.

4. Discussion

All fields that can be applied without being a professional in art can be used as psychoeducational intervention tools in schools. In this context, one of the important points to consider is that the materials and tools of the technique to be applied are suitable for the development of the children (Yazgın, 2010). In this study, 12 different printmaking techniques in three categories were presented for the use of children with special needs. Various studies in the literature indicate that the printmaking art can be an effective tool for art therapies in terms of helping with spontaneity and expression of emotions the themes of this multi-step process align with the three Rs of recovery: remediation, restoration, and reconnection, as well as its underlying precondition of hope. (Morton, 2019; Paddock, 2020). In this study, children participated in the majority of the 12 different printmaking techniques with excitement, curiosity and desire, and expressed their pleasure and happiness by patiently painting, with gestures such as applauding. White (2002), outlined the historical, educational, and healing contexts of printmaking. As a result of this research, children's high level of participation and satisfaction in printmaking activities using both their hands and fingers and various tools and natural materials can guide teachers in making more place for printmaking art activities in the education programs of children with special needs. Since human society began, the arts have helped humans reconcile the eternal conflict between their instincts and the demands of society. Therefore, the arts are therapeutic in the broadest sense of the word. School should be a place that prioritizes the well-being of the child. Therefore, art serves as a qualified tool in education.

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