

Needs of Omani Children in First Grade during Their Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School: An Ethnographic Study

Authors : Zainab Algharibi, Julie McAdam, Catherine Fagan

Abstract : The purpose of this paper is to shed light on how Omani children in the first grade experience their needs during their transition to primary school. Theoretically, the paper was built on two perspectives: Dewey's concept of continuity of experience and the boundary objects introduced by Vygotsky (CHAT). The methodology of the study is based on the crucial role of children's agency which is a very important activity as an educational tool to enhance the child's participation in the learning process and develop their ability to face various issues in their life. Thus, the data were obtained from 45 children in grade one from 4 different primary schools using drawing and visual narrative activities, in addition to researcher observations during the start of the first weeks of the academic year for the first grade. As the study dealt with children, all of the necessary ethical laws were followed. This paper is considered original since it seeks to deal with the issue of children's transition from kindergarten to primary school in Oman, if not in the Arab region. Therefore, it is expected to fill an important gap in this field and present a proposal that will be a door for researchers to enter this research field later. The analysis of drawing and visual narrative was performed according to the social semiotics approach in two phases. The first is to read out the surface message "denotation," while the second is to go in-depth via the symbolism obtained from children while they talked and drew letters and signs. This stage is known as "signified"; a video was recorded of each child talking about their drawing and expressing themselves. Then, the data were organised and classified according to a cross-data network. Regarding the researcher observation analyses, the collected data were analysed according to the model was developed for the "grounded theory". It is based on comparing the recent data collected from observations with data previously encoded by other methods in which children were drawing alongside the visual narrative in the current study, in order to identify the similarities and differences, and also to clarify the meaning of the accessed categories and to identify sub-categories of them with a description of possible links between them. This is a kind of triangulation in data collection. The study came up with a set of findings, the most vital being that the children's greatest interest goes to their social and psychological needs, such as friends, their teacher, and playing. Also, their biggest fears are a new place, a new teacher, and not having friends, while they showed less concern for their need for educational knowledge and skills.

Keywords : children's academic needs, children's social needs, transition, primary school

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