

Emotions in Digital and Traditional Child Art: Message above Medium

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Abstract

Visual communication is the dominant mode of 21st century exchange of ideas and feelings for children and young adults. Most elementary schoolchildren have several tools to create and share digital pictures while traditional imaging techniques seem to be in decline. Art education has to adapt to this new expressive repertoire and, in order to develop authentic methods of development of visual and digital literacy at the same time, research is needed to uncover new features of “digital child art”. The Four Narrative Drawing Tasks developed by A. Kárpáti (2015, 2016) present inspiring themes that can be realised both through traditional and digital media.

The assessment system of the narrative tasks is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Visual Literacy (ENViL, <http://www.envil.eu/>). In a longitudinal study launched in 2014, more than 300 students in 15 classes, aged 6-10 of two primary schools in Kecskemét, Hungary performed the tasks through digital and traditional media. The young creators described their images in video interviews, and their explanations were used to interpret their symbolic use of colour and form.

This presentation shares results of Task 2 by children aged 6-10, picturing two contrasting emotions through self-portraits. Facial features, hair style, body posture and garments offer a wide range of expressive means and, at the same time, provide a catalyst for symbolisation and representation emotional content specific for youth subcultures. Our results show how media and theme, sex and age all affect drawing skills level and communicative value of the works.

Keywords

Digital and traditional media image, Drawing skills, Symbolisation.