

The Traffic Environment as Predisposition to Child Road Safety Knowledge

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Abstract

The environment has influence on the development of a child and is largely determinant of child behaviour and learning. The environment exudes social, emotional, and physical inducement which are inseparable with the growth and development of the child. The physical traffic environment is testimony to the varied cognitive differences from groups of children from dissimilar environments. In the early formative years, children pick up sensory data from their traffic environment which builds into their cognitive development with which they grow. The study aims at establishing the traffic environment as an integral necessity of child road safety education. Art therapy was used to extract traffic imagery from the subconscious of child-respondents from three traffic environments from different geographical locations bearing distinct traffic features: Dublin, Republic of Ireland; Kumasi, Ghana, and Adikpo Dekuyo, Ghana; Child-respondents between age five and 10 in a classroom setting were asked to make illustrations freely from a story told them, on pedestrians crossing the street. Drawings from Ireland respondents contained 100% traffic features; Adjikpo Dekuyo respondents, 10%; and Kumasi respondents, 70%. There was one nominal score of emotional dissipation in a respondent's drawing from Ireland. The results showed that respondents' drawings portrayed what had been stored in their long-term memory in their daily encounter with the traffic environment. Europe, a relatively developed economy is advanced in traffic features than Africa. Respondents from Ireland poured out more traffic features than respondents in Africa. In Africa, urbanization has traffic dominance over that of the rural communities. Respondents' drawings from Kumasi showed more traffic features than Adjikpo Dekuyo. The study recommends enhancement in the traffic environment as aid to the child-learner.

Keywords: Art therapy, Child development, Drawings, Traffic environment, Traffic features