

Utilizing Artistic Engagements to Promote the Advancement of Oral Expression Development: An In-Depth Analysis of a Child with PTSD

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Abstract: Researchers, acknowledging these challenges, seek to address this issue by drawing from existing literature and enhancing social interaction. This endeavor is applicable both in North American and Asian contexts. Verbal expression serves as a vital conduit for conveying their emotions and viewpoints effectively. Consequently, fostering oral expression holds immense significance as a bridge for interaction among autistic children. Facilitating verbal communication poses challenges for children with autism, yet the ability to communicate verbally remains a crucial skill in their developmental journey. In group settings, these children often encounter difficulties in articulating their thoughts verbally. Their communication tends to be emotional in nature, which not only hinders their integration into groups but also increases the likelihood of misunderstandings.

Keywords: Social Interaction, Verbal Expression, PTSD

1. MOTIVATION BEHIND THE RESEARCH

The application of art therapy in aiding autistic children gained prominence during the 1960s and 1970s. Expressive art therapy, an established therapeutic approach, ceased to be novel, gaining traction in Europe and the United States by the seventies. Recent years have witnessed its increasing popularity in Asia as well. This therapy method is recognized by various names, including Creative Art Therapy and Expressive Therapy. Over time, its nomenclature has evolved into the current term: Expressive Arts Therapy (Saviola, Pappaianni, Monti, Grecucci, Jovicich, & De Pisapia, 2020).

Expressive art therapy employs an array of artistic mediums, including music, dance, drama, and painting, to access and tap into one's innermost thoughts, experiences, and emotions through a non-verbal conduit (Schweizer; Knorth; van Yperen & Spreen, 2019). Kramer, a trailblazing figure in American art therapy, contends that the act of engaging in artistic activities in itself holds healing qualities. Expressive art therapy encompasses music therapy, play therapy, and art therapy (Henley, 2000). For children with autism, it might prove simpler and more enjoyable to convey a straightforward message or depict the world they aspire to inhabit through creative expression, rather than direct verbal means.

In the context of this study, sessions were conducted twice a week, each spanning 30-40 minutes, encompassing a total of 8 consecutive activities. Through thoughtfully designed artistic tasks, children were encouraged to employ more oral language to articulate their personal ideas, thereby fostering their oral language proficiency. At the conclusion of each activity, an oral expression scale was utilized to assess the children's learning and growth during this phase of art-based intervention. Capitalizing on the attributes of expressive art therapy, the study presented images, books, and paintings to children who exhibited signs of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) with the aim of offering an alternative avenue to cultivate their oral expression capabilities (Martin, 2009).

2. THE ORIGINS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY

The inception and significance of Expressive Art Therapy can be traced back to Fenhamn and Fyrea's research in 1981, which highlighted the ancient use of artistic endeavors, dating back thousands of years, to aid mentally ill patients, as seen in the practices of ancient Egyptians. Similarly, Greeks from the early 1800s to 1900s integrated music and drama for therapeutic purposes. The concept of art as psychotherapy began emerging in the medical field. In 1926, Goodenough gained insights into children's cognitive development stages through the analysis of their artwork. In 1930, Naumburg formalized the model of art therapy. By the 1940s, various medical institutions recognized

the substantial assistance that artistic mediums such as art, music, and dance provided to individuals with mental illness. Consequently, these methods gradually found their way into established treatment models (Henley, 2000).

Within a therapeutic relationship, the act of conveying experiences and offering feedback through creative work profoundly contributes to personal development, prevention, diagnosis, and healing. Art therapy further extends into the realm of language, providing individuals with distinct avenues for self-expression through non-verbal means (Hong Yeting, 2014).

The term "Art Therapy" refers to a collaborative profession that merges creative artistic expression with psychotherapy. It differentiates itself from expressive art therapy in a broader context. Here, it pertains to the utilization of "visual" art therapy through artistic mediums such as painting, collage, sculpture, and other forms of creative expression. By employing these artistic mediums, individuals engage in the creation process, expressing their inner selves through mental imagery (Martin, 2009).

A defining feature of art therapy lies in the close connection between the form of painting or drawing and personality traits. Kramer (1993) posits that artwork not only showcases a child's artistic aptitude but also reveals their cognitive and personality development. Aspects such as content, color, form, and creativity within a piece of art offer insights into the creator's personality characteristics and developmental stage (Henley, 2000).

3. ART THERAPY EMBODIES THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

1. Non-verbal communication is a fundamental aspect
2. Mental imagery often serves as a cognitive tool
3. Art therapy's communication approach integrates time and space
4. Created products possess specificity and permanence
5. Art therapy can lower defense mechanisms.
6. A wide range of artistic mediums are employed throughout the therapy process. During the creative journey, individuals can release energy and emotions through techniques like tearing, pasting, throwing, wiping, and smearing
7. Art therapy activities have the potential to enhance imagination and facilitate self-discovery, enabling individuals to find solutions within their creative endeavors. Games and multimedia stimulation allow for self-exploration and renewal (Lu, 2014; Wang, 2014; Hong, 2014).

4. EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY FOR CHILDREN WITH PTSD

Currently, a multitude of empirical studies examine the application of expressive art therapy in various special populations both domestically and internationally. This study primarily focuses on the integration of art therapy within expressive art therapy and applies it to empirical research involving children with PTSD. Expressive Art Therapy encompasses a range of modalities, including art therapy, music therapy, drama therapy, play therapy, and dance therapy. When any of these methods are employed in treatment, it falls under the umbrella of expressive art therapy. This approach is frequently utilized in specific fields or with special populations, such as ADHD, PTSD, autism, emotional disorders, learning disabilities, and other unique cases involving children, adolescents, and adults.

1. Sarid, O., & Huss, E. (2010). The objective of this paper is to initiate a comparative and theoretical examination of the mechanisms underlying cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) and art therapy concerning the acute stress disorder (ASD) phase of trauma. The existing literature on CBI, art therapy, and ASD will be succinctly reviewed. The paper will highlight the commonalities between these two seemingly distinct interventions, emphasizing how both CBI and art therapy can impact maladaptive and traumatic sensory processing, regulate emotional reactions, engage with explicit traumatic memories, and promote subsequent cognitive processes. The implications for mental health practitioners intervening during the adaptable ASD phase are also deliberated.
2. Orr, (2007). This paper is based on a comprehensive review of 31 sources, encompassing refereed journal articles, news articles, television interviews, and books. Each of these sources focuses on the utilization of art therapy with children following a disaster. A detailed analysis was conducted for each communication, covering

six key aspects: communication design, theoretical foundation of the conducted art therapy, the therapeutic environment, the art therapist's role, the client's involvement, and the resulting artwork. Through this analysis, certain recurring patterns were identified: only two communications fulfilled the criteria for research studies; the descriptions of art therapy covered both short-term crisis interventions and extended therapeutic approaches; the practice of art therapy in this context requires individuals who possess resilience, resourcefulness, compassion, and strength; the spectrum of art interventions ranged from open-ended creative activities to more structured craft-based exercises; no predominant theory regarding art therapy with disaster-affected children emerged. In conclusion, semi-structured art interventions appear effective within this population, yet further rigorous research and planning are necessary to enhance our understanding of working with children after a disaster.

3. Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick (2007). Art therapy uses creative expression to provide individuals with a safe outlet for expressing thoughts and emotions to successfully facilitate recovery from psychological distress. The present study reviews the efficacy of art therapy as a method for treating traumatized children. Published, peer-reviewed literature that focused exclusively on the use of art therapy for treating children who had experienced a traumatic event was included in this review. This study found that art therapy was used successfully in a variety of contexts as a treatment regimen for traumatized children. Several methodological and statistical issues are discussed and suggestions for future research are provided in this review.
4. Durrani, H. (2020). Broadening the Scope of Art Therapy to Address Impaired Attachment in Children with ASD and Comorbid SID. This study focuses on a 5-year-old boy with co-existing sensory integration dysfunction (SID) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The boy exhibited limited responsiveness and strong fixation on a single subject. Despite possessing language skills, his communication lacked directed intent. Art therapy emerges as a means to foster attachment between children and therapists through multisensory experiences within a relational setting. Researchers leverage the subjective qualities of art materials to modulate sensory experiences in children with autism, facilitating healthy relationship formation through sensory-based collaborative art creation. This article contributes to the discourse on attachment in children with SID and ASD, showcasing art therapy's capacity to address sensory issues and attachment challenges by promoting sensory modulation via artistic engagement and combining kinesthetic and nonverbal processes within a relational context.

5. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH: A CASE STUDY PERSPECTIVE

This study adopts a qualitative research approach grounded in interpretive analysis, eschewing numerical data in favor of focusing on social phenomena. Qualitative research underscores the importance of comprehensive data collection techniques such as case studies, personal life histories, historical retrospectives, interviews, observations, interactions, or visual data within natural contexts. The aim is to comprehend the sociocultural significance of the research subject's behaviors. Qualitative researchers often engage closely with their subjects in natural settings, employing one or more data collection methods, all while striving to attain a deep and holistic understanding of the phenomena under scrutiny.

The Case Study Method in Qualitative Research: This case study delves into a distinct individual, family, group, institution, tribe, or community as the primary research focus. Alternatively, it might encompass two or more cases, groups, or organizations. In this approach, a thorough exploration is conducted, involving extensive data collection and problem analysis to ultimately propose suitable problem-solving methods. The case study method primarily employs a comprehensive research strategy, necessitating the researcher's deep immersion in the life context of the subjects throughout the study. The quality of the research hinges upon the researcher's expertise and skill. Comprehensive mastery of the research process is crucial, as is the ethical sharing of findings with those under study (Pan, 2003).

Merriam (1998) outlined three crucial attributes of case studies: specificity, descriptiveness, and enlightening insights. Specificity underscores the focused and delimited nature of the phenomenon examined; descriptiveness entails richly informative case study reports with detailed portrayals; enlightenment implies that the case study report should offer readers the opportunity to learn, uncover meaning, and attain a deeper understanding to broaden their experiential knowledge.

The comprehensive nature of the case study methodology is evident. The researchers seek to grasp the impact of expressive arts on the oral expression of children with PTSD through meticulous observation of real teaching scenarios and thorough data collection. This study employs a case study approach to engage a six-year-old child suspected of PTSD in expressive art activities. Each session spans approximately 60 minutes, totaling eight sessions. This study employs a multi-faceted approach to data collection and analysis, striving to achieve the research's effectiveness and objectives.

6. RESEARCH FOCUS AND SCOPE

This qualitative research is structured as a case study. The research's focal point is children within a Chinese school located in Markham, Ontario. According to information from the Mandarin class teacher, the research subject suspected of having PTSD. The child loses her parents at the same time about 10 months ago, nowadays, her grandparents take care of her. The researchers intend to assess the progress of the child's oral expression through observation, documentation, and an exploration of oral expression's effectiveness, serving as the impetus for this study.

7. BACKGROUND DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE

The subject of this study is a child in the senior class of a Chinese school located in Markham, Ontario. This child was referred based on the teacher's evaluation. However, as the subject has not received an official diagnosis from relevant medical institutions. The child displays characteristics of inattentiveness, weak concentration, and impulsive behavior that impacts daily life and learning situations. After a thorough assessment by the class teachers, the child's learning status within the class was further analyzed:

1. The child maintains a good school routine but struggles with concentration in class, often losing focus. One-on-one teaching is more suitable for the research subject. During classes, the child occasionally becomes absorbed in their own world, making sounds and movements.
2. The child exhibits keen interest in books about animals and vehicles.
3. Oral expression skills are reasonably developed, allowing for active communication with others. However, due to the research subject's abnormal pronunciation, peers sometimes struggle to comprehend their expressions, resulting in communication barriers and weaker social relationships.
4. The child occasionally refrains from communicating with others and avoids expressing personal thoughts. Sulking and a reluctance to engage in communication are observed.
5. The child has low tolerance for setbacks, tending to give up quickly when dissatisfied or facing challenges.
6. The child's attention span is limited. However, when engaged in activities they enjoy, their focus is more sustained and concentrated. According to the teacher's analysis, the child maintains a routine school life but struggles to maintain attention, leading to frequent distractions.

8. TEACHER INTERVIEWS BEFORE THE ART ACTIVITIES

Employing the qualitative case study approach, the researcher assumes the roles of both teacher and observer, focusing on real teaching interactions and observations. Videos are utilized to record and analyze the subjects' works and activities, making the researchers themselves integral to the research process.

The primary objective is to comprehend and discuss the distinctions between the initial and later stages of the subjects' engagement with expressive art activities. This analysis encompasses aspects of oral expression such as daily interactions, peer relationships, social skills, and classroom responses. The interviewees in this research are the two class teachers who possess a deeper understanding of the children's daily lives, social interactions, and classroom dynamics.

Implementation of Art Activities, Observation, Teaching Reflection, and Post-Class Teacher Observation

This section details the execution and observation of art activities within the study. The activities are structured as follows: Art 1, 3, 5 and 7 sessions centered around a picture book (picture books about family). The 7 sessions as a pre-test (to assess and review). Art 2, 4, 6 and 8 sessions, similarly centered around a picture book (picture books

about me). The eight session serves as a pre-test (final review). Comprehensive observation and recording of all activities take place, accompanied by reflections on teaching experiences and post-class teacher observations

9. OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL SITUATIONS DURING ACTIVITIES

Two distinct situations were observed during the activities. Insights were gained through Mandarin teacher and family member interviews and pre-test observations, revealing tendencies towards restlessness and distraction among the subjects in this study. Throughout the activities, the researcher needed to remain attentive to signs of distraction or daze exhibited by the children. The observation records are as follows:

1. During the storytelling phase, all subjects displayed high engagement with the plot in the initial half, promptly responding to the narrative and laughing at amusing moments. However, some children began to wander midway through the story. To rekindle their focus, the researcher identified captivating elements within the story to draw the children's attention back.
2. Following the story, the children were instructed to create art inspired by the picture book. The researcher and the children discussed the artistic content before proceeding to draw story-related images

10. RESEARCH RESULT

1. Storytelling Proficiency: As the story unfolds, the initial tension is replaced by natural interactions
2. Refining Questioning Techniques: Child's difficulty in recalling story details led to a reconsideration of the final story review's questioning approach. To facilitate comprehension, the researcher proposed employing a question-based method in upcoming activities. Children in what time Willingness to try to recall the storyline after an event no longer resists.
3. Pronunciation and Articulation Practice: Through pre-activity observations, interviews with teachers and family members, discover the child's pronunciation and articulation problems. It may be due to the degeneration caused by PTSD, but with the company of school teachers and family members, this person is still slowly improving his pronunciation.
4. Encouraging slower speech or requesting repetition: Effective strategies arose when communication was hurried. In such instances, the child was retrained from verbalizing or making eye contact.
5. Insights and Recommendations: The child refrains from using words such as family, parents, father, mother, me, home, and subsequently falls into silence. Art activities encountered a similar issue – while the initial instructions were clear, some children deviated from prescribed content, drawing unrelated elements. after reminders, children began to willingly draw different colors and shapes to represent the characters in the family.

11. TWO RECOMMENDATION FOR EDUCATORS AND FAMILY:

1. Carefully Select Teaching Materials and Design Engaging Activities: When designing PTSD artistic activities, focus on creating engaging experiences that align with children's preferences.
2. Variety in activity design and media selection: such as natural materials, watercolors, and crayons, can foster creativity and encourage active oral expression among children.
3. By tailoring activities: To capture child's attention, family and educators can enhance the effectiveness of both guiding and expression.
4. Foster Collaborative Research Teams for Enhanced Teaching: Establishing PTSD research teams allows educators and family members to collectively address shortcomings in activity design, refine research topics, and enhance communication skills and intimacy.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. **Diversify Teaching Materials:** Consider introducing activities that alternate between active and reflective periods, exploring how children's oral expression skills evolve over time through various creative engagements.
2. **Broaden Research Scope:** This expansion can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how diverse children benefit from expressive art activities, offering alternative learning avenues for various learners.
3. **Enhance Research Tools:** Gathering perspectives from parents can offer valuable input into the efficacy of expressive art activities and their impact on children's oral expression skills.
4. **Extend Research Duration:** Longer-term studies may reveal the sustained effects of artistic interventions on children's oral expression abilities.

13. RESEARCH REFLECTION

This journey was characterized by emotional depth and challenges. The initial theme selection process was not without its difficulties. While considering different options, there was contemplation about whether to include "suspected" cases. Ultimately, this choice aimed to provide an alternative learning path for children facing potential challenges, highlighting the researchers' commitment to equitable education opportunities.

These educators collaborated with parents, suggesting speech and physical therapy interventions to support the children's development. It was evident that both teachers and parents were determined to facilitate their children's progress. Additionally, the researchers recommended professional evaluations from medical institutions to optimize development outcomes. This experience underscored the significant influence families and schools exert on young children. Positive teacher engagement contributes to an enriched support network, while a lack of proactive involvement can inadvertently marginalize children within society.

14. REFERENCES

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