

Bar Ilan University

**Learning to Understand Emotions by Drawing Facial
Expressions among Kindergarten Children in the Arab Society
in Israel**

Joron Khateeb Abeer

I.D. 033864588

Ramat Gan, Israel

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Abstract:

The current study dealt with the learning process of understanding mixed emotions as expressed in short stories that involves naming the emotions by drawing matching facial expressions.

Studies that have examined the role of motor training in identifying letter-like graphic symbols have shown that motor learning and training by writing versus typing lead to a better recall and identification of letters. We therefore hypothesized that there would be differences in identifying mixed emotions between children practicing the drawing of facial expression and children practicing stamping, with an advantage of practice through drawing over practice through stamping. Furthermore, we examined the coupling of training (drawing/stamping) to naming the emotion.

It was hypothesized that training by drawing mixed emotion symbols while naming the emotions involved would foster the understanding of the mixed emotions more than drawing without naming and more than a training that includes stamping facial expression with/ without naming the emotions.

We also hypothesized that due to the specificity of learning processes, the advantage of the group that has practiced mixed emotions with naming would exist only in tests that involve mixed emotion expressions similar to those practiced.

To test these hypotheses four groups of 20 students aged 5 practiced different learning conditions: drawing/stamping mixed-emotion facial expressions, with/without naming the emotions. The training included one session per week for 3 weeks.

The findings of the study indicated the advantage of the practice of drawing with naming in improving the ability to understand and produce mixed emotions. It was found that the improvement in identifying mixed emotions in the group that practiced drawing with naming was higher than for the group that practiced drawing only. There were also significant differences between the groups in identifying mixed emotions in a transfer test for an emotion not learned in the intervention, so that the achievements of the group that trained in the drawing with naming condition were higher than the group that practiced stamping with/without a name.

There were also significant differences between the groups in the ability to produce emotions including in a transfer test. The ability to draw the mixed emotions in the groups that practiced drawing and drawing with naming was found to be better than the groups that practiced stamping and stamping with a name. The ability of the group that practiced stamping with a name was better than of the group that practiced stamping only, but less than the group that practiced drawing with naming. There was no difference between the groups in the ability to stamp.

The findings of this study support findings of previous studies in which they found that motor learning has an advantage in practicing drawing and writing over passive typing or stamping.