

The Connection between “Learning” and Living

Consideration of children’s reactions during certain educational practices

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Key words: Learning independently, mutual learning, “self formation”

“Learning” involves not only cognitive aspects but also mental and developmental aspects. This study aims to show exactly what “learning” is that enables children to develop a whole personality. Through questionnaires to children and through interviews, along with the observation of mathematics classes aiming to achieve an essential meaning, two points were considered: 1) what children feel about certain elements in the class; and 2) how “learning” from classes is connected with their life. As a result, five issues were found through this research. Firstly, the “attitudes of the teachers and the aids used regarding the method of teaching,” “a way of thinking in steps, from concrete phenomenon to conceptual thought,” and “questioning ‘why?’” were identified as effective elements. Secondly, from the three points above, bringing out deeper understanding, joy, and stronger interest, along with “mutual learning through communication among students,” was focused on. On the other hand, children experienced problems due to relaxing in such classes. Thirdly, it was showed that “the level of interest in the questions,” “the easiness of understanding through clarifying the essential meaning,” and “the joy of thinking” encouraged students to start learning independently. The reasons for them becoming encouraged are thought to be: the “attitudes of the teachers and the aids used regarding the method of teaching,” “a way of thinking in steps, from concrete phenomenon to conceptual thought,” and “mutual learning among students.” Fourthly, it was suggested that “mutual learning” improves relations among students and creates an atmosphere where they can consult with each other. Lastly, it was considered that independent learning advances the “self formation” of both the groups and the individuals. Additionally, expressing themselves independently is thought to lead to living with confidence in their own judgment. However, even though the students built good relationships with others in classes, they tended to be reserved in during daily life.