

DRAWINGS OF CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AND THEIR READING AND WRITING PROCESSES

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ABSTRACT

This work, based on Historical-Cultural Theory, seeks to analyze the drawing of children with visual impairment. Based on the Vygotskian assumption that drawing is a form of writing, we ask: what reading and writing processes are experienced by children with visual impairment when drawing? In order to answer this question, we present the experience of a storytelling and drawing workshop held at an institution specialized in visual impairment, with students aged between 7 and 11 years old, which took place in 2022. In our results, we highlight that children with visual impairment draw, when given the opportunity, revealing unique ways of abstracting and generalizing concepts. To this end, the children revealed: (a) distinct ways of meaning beyond the sense of sight; (b) the intriguing relation between verbal language and image production; (c) the importance of mediation in the drawing process. We conclude that drawing is, for children with visual impairment, an activity that engages the same functions observed in children without visual impairment, differing only in the mechanisms of access and performance of the activity, guided by specialized techniques and tools. This activity is established, above all, with the organization and recording of the child's thoughts, occupying an important space in the process of elaborating readings and writings about reality.

Keywords: drawing; historical-cultural theory; visual impairment

El dibujo de los niños con deficiencia visual y sus procesos de lecturas y escrituras

RESUMEN

Este estudio, fundamentado en la Teoría Histórico-Cultural, busca analizar el diseño del niño con deficiencia visual. Partiendo del presupuesto vigotskiano de que el dibujo es un modo de escritura, indagamos: ¿Cuáles procesos de lectura y escritura son experimentados por el niño con deficiencia visual al dibujar? Para contestar tal cuestionamiento, presentamos la experiencia de un taller de contaje de historias y de diseño realizado en una institución especializada en deficiencia visual, con estudiantes en la faja de edad entre 7 y 11 años, sucedida en el año de 2022. En nuestros resultados, destacamos que el niño con deficiencia visual diseña, cuando se presenta la oportunidad, revelando modos singulares de abstraer y generalizar conceptos. Para tanto, los niños apuntaron: (a) modos distintos de significación para más allá del sentido de la visión; (b) la intrigante relación entre lenguaje verbal y producción de la imagen; (c) la importancia de la mediación en el proceso de la actividad de diseñar. Concluimos que el diseño es, para el niño con deficiencia visual, una actividad que empeña las mismas funciones observadas en el niño sin deficiencia visual, diferenciándose solo por los mecanismos de acceso y realización de la actividad, orientada por técnicas y herramientas especializadas. Tal actividad se establece, sobre todo, con la organización y el registro del pensamiento del niño ocupando importante espacio en el proceso de elaboración de las lecturas y escrituras sobre lo real.

Palabras clave: diseño; teoría histórico-cultural; deficiencia visual

O desenho das crianças com deficiência visual e seus processos de leitura e escrita

RESUMO

Este trabalho, fundamentado na Teoria Histórico-Cultural, busca analisar o desenho da criança com deficiência visual. Partindo do pressuposto vigotskiano de que o desenho é um modo de escrita, indagamos: quais processos de *leitura e escrita* são experienciados pela criança com deficiência visual ao desenhar? Para respondermos a tal questionamento, apresentamos a experiência de uma oficina de contação de histórias e de desenho realizada em

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uma instituição especializada em deficiência visual, com estudantes na faixa etária entre 7 e 11 anos, ocorrida no ano de 2022. Em nossos resultados, destacamos que a criança com deficiência visual desenha, quando oportunizada, revelando modos singulares de abstrair e generalizar conceitos. Para tanto, as crianças revelaram: (a) modos distintos de significação para além do sentido da visão; (b) a intrigante relação entre linguagem verbal e produção da imagem; (c) a importância da mediação no processo da atividade de desenhar. Concluímos que o desenho é, para a criança com deficiência visual, uma atividade que empenha as mesmas funções observadas na criança sem deficiência visual, diferenciando-se apenas pelos mecanismos de acesso e realização da atividade, orientada por técnicas e ferramentas especializadas. Tal atividade se estabelece, sobretudo, com a organização e o registro do pensamento da criança ocupando importante espaço no processo de elaboração das *leituras e escritas sobre o real*.

Palavras-chave: desenho; teoria histórico-cultural; deficiência visual

INTRODUCTION

In this work, we seek to analyze the drawings of visually impaired children and their *unsystematic reading and writing processes* that they carry out about their surrounding universe. For the debate, we focus on the precepts of Historical-Cultural Theory.

We know that for Vigotski (1896-1934), drawing consists of a stage prior to systematized written language and, from a psychological point of view, is characterized as a graphic language (Vigotski, 1928-1929/2021). In this sense, it is precisely based on this premise that we intend to follow.

In both phylogenesis and ontogenesis, every human relation is mediated by technical-semiotic instruments (Pino, 2005). On the other hand, in addition to being a mere psychological instrument, Vigotski (1934/2001) argued that the sign/word is the microcosm of consciousness and must be understood in its structural and semantic nature (Vigotski, 1934/2001). For him, it is in the word that we find the explanatory key to the formation of higher psychological functions (intrapersonal dimension), as well as the human being's ability to communicate (interpersonal dimension).

When we treat drawing as a prehistory of written language, Vigotski (1928-1929/2021) places it in the place of experience with the word and, therefore, in its relation with consciousness. Therefore, when we are dealing with children's drawing, we have implied the development of higher psychic functions. This means affirming that the processes of elaboration of the drawing by the child, in their graphic productions, result in transformations of their intrapsychological processes (Costa & Silva, 2022). Therefore, such processes reconfigure the child's ways of understanding themselves, others, and the universe in which they participate, as we will discuss throughout this work.

Drawing in the light of Historical-Cultural Theory

Associated with the visual arts, in our society drawing is especially taken for its aesthetic function (Barros, 2013). An expression of human art, drawing, made using different tools and materials, acts through processes, negotiates, and gains meaning in the conduction and interpretation of others, as well as creates social relations and gives them beauty (Boriollo, 2022).

Thus, it is important to note that it is a construction of the subject with itself, breathing in its construction imbued in the history of humanity, in its socially established relations (Barros, 2013, Boriollo, 2022, Vigotski, 1930/2018). Dialectically, in the movement between the inter and the intrapsychic, the drawing speaks of itself, of itself with the other, of itself with its entire world.

This expression of the subject's current relation with the drawn object follows the limits of the developmental stage in which the child finds himself. Preliminarily, scribbles are produced and, in addition to them, Vigotski (1930/2018, 1928-1929/2021) presented four other stages, as *presented by Kerschensteiner*. We will focus on the first two – that of schemes and that of shapes and lines –, because they characterize children in the first years of schooling, the focus of our study.

First, two questions about the emergence of children's drawings are considered: the first is that drawings only appear when the child reaches a certain stage of speech development, when "oral speech has already achieved great success and has become habitual" (Vigotski, 1928-1929/2021, p. 119). The conceptual form expressed in the drawing is, therefore, probed in the sign that the spoken word assumes about the object. A drawn shirt is the narrative or verbal form in which it appears in the child's thoughts. It is clear, then, that speech plays a fundamental role in the organization of the child's thoughts and in the appropriation of everything they experience in their relations (Vigotski, 1934/2001).

From a second perspective, drawing is initially a motor-tactile activity, in which the sense of sight is not dominant; on the contrary, it is secondary and subordinate. The motor-tactile activity is guided by the child's speech, not by the image of the object. In other words, their drawing "is more like speech than an image" (Vigotski, 1928-1929/2021, p. 119). Thus, the transition between stages reflects the relation of submission of the process between the child's action, of motor-tactile dominance, and the child's contemplation, of visual dominance (Vigotski, 1930/2018).

Initially, there is no direct relation between the line and the shapes of the object. The lines, called scribbles, indicate an impression of the object on the surface. The young child is dominated by the act of drawing itself:

movements, tools and materials, colors and textures, the exploration of the surface subjected to the tool (brush, pencil, etc.) guide the activity and designate the result, which is initially dissociated from its aesthetic effect. During this period, it is common for the announced object to be thought of after the work is completed (Vigotski, 1930/2017).

In the next two stages – shapes and lines – the drawing manifests, above all, a conceptual relation about the object, apprehending based on schemes. These are called memory drawings, and this is the period in which the child is most interested in the activity of drawing (Vigotski, 1930/2018).

In the scheme stage, only the aspects that most attract the child's attention appear in the drawing. When drawing a person, for example, this can be represented only by the head and legs; not because the other parts of the body are not perceived, but because the drawing is guided by its conceptual form. Here, the motor-tactile forms overlap the visual impressions, and not only in the drawing, and express the relationship that is established with the world in this period.

When advancing to the stage of shapes and lines, there is greater attention to the relations among the shapes of the object. In addition to the essential elements, there is a greater number of elements and a better relation among the drawn parts, resulting in images that are closer to reality (Vigotski, 1928-1929/2021). Therefore, drawing does not have its only function in aesthetics, but mainly expresses the dialectic of the child's relation with the world, by creating with thought and organizing it, creating by organizing and organizing by creating. The signs entangled in stories and daily experiences can finally become memory and recorded communication. Drawing, therefore, is capable of communicating thought, recording it in another materiality, through another activity, through another technique.

DRAWINGS BY CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN HISTORICAL-CULTURAL THEORY

In light of our reflections listed above, we believe it is important to conduct a bibliographical survey to outline an overview of the work developed about the subject. To this end, we focused on theses and dissertations in the areas of Education and Psychology. We searched for studies available in the Google Scholar database, based on Historical-Cultural Theory and produced in the last ten years (2014-2024). We used the descriptors: "*deficiência visual/cegueira, desenho, alfabetização*", "*deficiência visual/cegueira, desenho, escrita*", "*deficiência visual/cegueira, desenho, braile/Braille*"¹. We found five

¹ "*visual impairment/blindness, drawing, literacy*", "*visual impairment/blindness, drawing, writing*", "*visual impairment/blindness, drawing, Braille/Braille*"

investigations, including two dissertations and three theses, namely: two dissertations and two theses in the area of Education, and one thesis in Psychology.

In this context of inclusion, Oliveira Neto (2015), based on Bakhtinian and Vigotskian assumptions, proposes an intervention research in visual arts aimed at people with and without visual impairments. The research was conducted in a public school in Natal (RN), in a regular 7th grade class, with the participation of art teachers and using a multifunctional resource room. Observations were carried out and described in the field diary, interviews, photographs and didactic sequences in the format of workshops, which focused on corporal, tactile and graphic expressions.

Oliveira Neto (2015) highlights multisensory pedagogical workshops as strategies that provide opportunities for interaction between sighted and non-sighted students. He also points out that such workshops, experienced in corporal, tactile and graphic expressions, reverberate in the process of exchanging cultural experiences and, consequently, in the creation of each student's own drawing. The author demonstrates the possibility of visually impaired students drawing, considering that teacher mediation and appropriate materials to be provided to the student are essential.

In her theoretical research, anchored in Historical-Cultural Theory and Historical-Critical Pedagogy, Silva (2015) dedicates her work to the processes of appropriation of reading and writing by visually impaired students, focusing on children's drawing. The researcher divides the bibliographic survey into three parts: (a) questions about learning and human development; (b) school education and the reading and writing processes themselves; (c) the reading and writing processes of visually impaired people, as well as the importance of teacher mediation and materials provided.

Silva (2015) points out the relevance of drawings in the appropriation of reading, writing and the complex processes of abstraction and generalization that constitute them. For children with visual impairments to have the opportunity to design and develop their reading and writing processes, it is necessary to have: qualified and ongoing training, the understanding that students with disabilities are also part of the teaching-learning process, and the involvement of the entire teaching team.

Batista (2018) presents a debate about the relation among the decline in Braille teaching in schools, the pedagogy of learning to learn, paradigms related to literacy and literacy processes, recent technologies, and public policies for inclusive education. A recurring theme of the author, the data were constructed in three moments: (a) interviews conducted during the master's degree; (b) observation of two blind children in a public school in Piracicaba (SP), during the doctorate period; (c) review of the literature on the subject.

When discussing the literacy process, Batista (2018) indicates that teaching prioritized a mechanistic didactic, centered on the acquisition of motor skills. Reading and writing have been reduced to a trivial process of decoding and developing the skills needed for proper movement of hands, fingers, and instruments. Gestures, drawings, and pretend play, which make up the reading and writing processes themselves, are ignored. In general, for the author, errors derived from constructivism and the pedagogy of learning to learn generate the non-use of braille practices in schools. So-called innovative technologies aimed at learning Braille do not enable literacy, and existing public policies do not guarantee effective inclusion in schools.

Mendes (2021) also investigates the development of blind children's writing based on drawings and letters and texts. The research took place over a period of two years, in a service center for people with visual impairments in São Paulo. The participating child was 6 years old and enrolled in a regular school. Literacy activities were carried out, and the respective impressions and reflections were described in a field diary.

Mendes' work (2021) emphasizes the articulation between drawings and letters/texts in the process of appropriation of writing by children with visual impairment. According to the author, the drawing developed by the child is linked to verbal language and is characterized as a language. Mendes (2021) emphasizes that enabling the creation of drawings and texts initially, without prior guidance, is essential for the development of drawing and writing activities.

Costa (2018), in the field of Psychology, investigates the creative activities of playing, narrating and drawing by children with visual impairment, based on the body-mind unit. The research took place in a public school in the Central-West region of Brazil, intended for blind and visually impaired students, in a class composed of four children aged 6 years. Observations, video recordings and workshops were carried out in order to problematize the creative activities with the participating children.

In her studies, Costa (2018) reaffirms the idea that playing, narrating and drawing are activities interconnected with each other. The imaginative functioning and creative processes of children with visual impairments reveal important particularities that need to be understood. The way children play, narrate and draw reveals that their linguistic resources are linked to body expressions and unique movements imbued with senses and meanings. The times and spaces in which creative activities occur are not static; they acquire other configurations and change during their development, based on the scenarios and times created by the children themselves. The researcher points out that, when they play at seeing, other ways of signifying the world are presented by children.

The studies outlined reveal the importance of

drawing for children with visual impairments. More than portraying children's ability to draw, the research demonstrates the relevance of drawing in any school subject, more specifically in the processes of appropriation of reading and writing. Drawing is conceived as a process of signification, which is constituted by a complex development of abstraction and generalization. Thus, it is also agreed among researchers that, in order for drawing activities to be possible for children with visual impairments, qualified teacher training and adequate materials are essential.

WORKSHOP METHOD AND DATA

The epistemological basis that underpins Historical-Cultural Theory, historical-dialectical materialism, understands that according to Marxist thought, the method cannot be thought of as a compilation of "formal rules that 'apply' to an object that has been selected for a specific investigation, nor, even less, as a set of rules that the research subject chooses, according to his/her will, to 'frame' his/her object of investigation". (Netto, 2011, p. 5, 2 author's highlights).

In this way, the phenomenon is understood as a historical and social process, according to Zanella, Reis, Titon, Urnau and Dassoler (2007). The authors explain that it is important to consider that social reality is objectified in a unique way for each person and how, dialectically, this reality is transformed, constituted in this singular form of expression. Considering that the data observed by the researcher go beyond appearances (Netto, 2011), this study presents the results of an ethnographic study that aimed to analyze the drawings of visually impaired children and their reading and writing processes.

Initially, the activity consisted of a storytelling workshop, proposed to the school management group by the second author of this article, as a teacher at that institution. We emphasize that, at the aforementioned institution, she integrates the proposition of extracurricular collective activities into her teaching work. The researcher proposed the workshop to students in the early years of Elementary School in a 6th grade class, because she coordinated a literacy project. However, the teachers in the final years were interested in the proposal, so the workshop also included students from that segment. The workshop, therefore, had the participation of approximately 50 students. At the time, as there was no objective to conduct research, the control of student attendance was done only by the teachers who accompanied the classes, and it was not possible to specify the number of participants.

We emphasize that this research is based on data obtained from a proposal common to the teaching activities carried out by one of the authors of the article. She invited the first author to tell a story from a book she had written, and both agreed to enrich the workshop with a drawing activity followed by the

storytelling, encouraging participants to take notes of their impressions about the story and create their own stories, recording them through drawing. After the workshop, the authors observed the students' productions and began to study them, which generated the idea of systematizing the data based on the elaboration of a scientific research².

The activity took place in a public school, located in Rio de Janeiro, aimed at people with visual impairments. The classroom was large and the workshop took place in two sessions of 3 hours and 20 minutes each, one on June 30, and the other on July 1, 2022. The sessions were led by the researchers, with support from the teachers who accompanied the classes. In the first session, the storytelling and drawing workshop was held with students from 5th to 7th grade; in the second session, with students from 1st to 4th grade.

The sessions were organized in two moments. In the first moment, during the storytelling, the children's book "*O dragão cinza e o amigo gafanhoto*" was read, written by Marina Costa, published by Appris. After the storytelling, the students explored the characters made in *amigurumi* (a technique for producing handmade crochet dolls) from a three-dimensional perspective and, in *EVA*, from a two-dimensional perspective.

For the second moment, paper of different sizes and textures (brown paper, cardboard, sulfite), paint, crayons, brushes, *EVA* sheets of different colors and a drawing board were provided. The researchers encouraged the students to draw what most interested them in the story or even produce a free drawing, exploring the materials provided.

Part of the activity was recorded by audio and video recording (for later transcription in the form of an episode); in addition, the drawings produced in the workshop were considered. From the records, we specifically took for analysis the drawings of two students, articulated with what they said about their productions when questioned. They are (fictitious names): Sandro, a blind boy (episode 1: "Rainbow Flower") and Leila, a girl with low vision (episode 2: "The Cursed House"), both 7 years old and respectively enrolled in the 1st and 2nd grades of Elementary School.

For this article, we considered presenting in detail the

productions of a blind child and a child with low vision, instead of discussing the set of productions obtained. In this sense, the selection of productions observed the following criteria: (a) productions that contained audio and/or audio recording of the presentations actions/explanations made by the students themselves about their drawings, since there was no intention of conducting scientific research, not all productions were recorded by the researchers; (b) productions in which the students presented greater detail about their creation; (c) individual productions, since there were materials produced collectively. In episode 2, there is also the participation of a teacher who accompanied the activity.

RESULTS AND THE DATA DISCUSSION

In the episodes "Rainbow Flower" and "The Cursed House", the children were seated at individual tables, grouped into four or five students. The crayons and markers were placed in the center of each group's tables, and were accessible to all the children. Each child chose the paper they would like to draw on and decided whether the drawing would be done in a group or individually. The boards (specific for children with visual impairments), the papers, the cardboards and the *EVA* material were placed on a central table and, as the children chose, they received the desired material. When they chose to draw on the white sheets, these were fixed to drawing boards (with one side made of mosquito netting), so that the children could draw in high relief.

The children listened attentively to the story and, sometimes, participated in it by making one or two comments. During the drawing activity, the children talked among themselves. At the end of the activity, we asked about their drawings in order to understand what each one had created and what they had to say about their own drawing.

Episode 1: Rainbow Flower

Figure 1: *Rainbow Flower*



² In this sense, observing Resolution No. 510/2016 (Brazil, 2016) regarding the "standards applicable to research in Human and Social Sciences whose methodological procedures involve the use of data directly obtained from participants or identifiable information or that may entail greater risks than those existing in everyday life", this research follows the system of the Research Ethics Committee and the National Research Ethics Commission (CEP/CONEP), which defines in the sole paragraph of art. 1: "The following will not be registered or evaluated by the CEP/CONEP system: [...] VII – research that aims at the theoretical deepening of situations that emerge spontaneously and contingently in professional practice, as long as they do not reveal data that may identify the subject".

Image description: Drawing on a white background, with a circular shape in yellow in the upper center, with some lines outside the circle and the words "PORTAL DO SOL". Below it, vertical lines form two columns in blue and yellow with red scribbles on the side, where you can read "FLOR ARCO-IRIS", written in pencil. Other yellow lines extend to the lower corner, where there is also a circular shape in shades of red and blue.

The researchers walk around the room. Sandro is sitting in his chair and has already finished drawing. He is sitting at a table with other children. One of the researchers stops next to him and says:

- Tell us what you did in your drawing.

Sandro touches one of the parts of his drawing (the one that represents the flower), indicating it, and explains:

- I made a rainbow flower.

The researcher is surprised:

- Rainbow flower... huh...

Sandro responds excitedly, pointing to each part of his drawing:

- A rainbow bush, the stem, the rainbow stem, the yellow sun door...

The researcher asks:

- The yellow sun door?

Sandro emphatically states:

- Yep!!!!

The researcher emphasizes:

- Wow! How new age, huh?

Sandro explains slowly:

- So the bush can be pro-tec-ted!

The researcher praises:

- Awesome!

(...)

The Episode 1 shows us that the blind person, in the case in question, is not immersed in darkness, as Vigotski (undated/2019) argues. The theorist explains that the comparison between a sighted person blindfolded and a blind person is unequivocal. This is not something restricted to the field of vision, but rather how the blind person presents another way of seeing and signifying the surrounding universe. In the story heard by the children, among other senses developed in the plot, Sandro, in his imaginative functioning and his creative process, combines and recombines the elements of reality (Vigotski, 1930/2018) and creates his drawing with elements of colors and light. The child draws a "rainbow flower" and a "yellow portal of the sun". It is not just any flower or portal, but a rainbow flower, a flower in

the color of the combination of the seven colors, and a portal that presents a specific color. Interestingly, Sandro says "yellow of the sun" – the sun that shines, the light that may seem like an incomprehensible concept to the blind person. Sandro's drawing presents elements that, at first, could be understood as restricted to the visual aspects. The child abstracts and generalizes the colors, discriminating each one of them.

In the case of Sandro's drawing, articulated with what he says about his production, the child reveals to us particular modes of signification. When talking about his drawing, he enumerates and indicates with his fingers each part of it, touches and explains what he drew and how the elements are part of the same scenario. The drawings represent something that the child wants to say, as we discussed previously, but the drawings can only say something of what the child knows, which is part of his cultural repertoire. Sandro draws and shows us that he can abstract and generalize both what is tangible (a flower, a bush, a portal, for example) and what can be understood through a means other than visual and/or tactile (such as a rainbow). In this authorial creation, Sandro's drawing reveals particular modes of abstraction and generalization that constitute his processes of reading and writing about the surrounding environment. His drawing is not a pile of lines devoid of meaning. On the contrary, Sandro knows what he drew.

Previous studies (Batista, 2018, Costa, 2018, Mendes, 2021, Oliveira Neto, 2015) highlight the connection between verbal language and the production of drawings. Sandro uses different colors of crayons to represent the rainbow flower and yellow for the sun portal. There was a discretionary choice of the crayons to be used in the recording, that is, they were not used randomly. His concern is not tied to an aesthetic of what is acceptable as beautiful, but to the expression of what he decided to draw, as we pointed out in the introduction to this text.

Another interesting element is that there is a concern with the bush. The sun portal was created so that it could protect it. The child emphasizes by slowly saying each syllable of the word: "pro-te-gi-do". Protect it from what? Would the drawing still be in process even though it was already drawn? It seems to us that there is an implicit record. Ideas come to fruition (Costa, Silva, & Souza, 2013), and this becomes more evident in the next episode.

We will see that some points are repeated as we enter the cursed house. For this reason, so that the discussion does not become repetitive, some aspects will be revisited below, in dialogue with episode 2.

Episode 2: The Cursed House

Figure 2: *The Cursed House*



Image description: Drawing where semi-curved lines, sometimes thin, sometimes thick, predominate in the center of the sheet, in the colors yellow, red, pink, brown and blue. The background of the sheet is marked by the color pink, but with gaps.

The researchers walk around the room. The children are organizing themselves to return to their respective classes.

The researcher approaches the table where Leila is standing and says:

– It's beautiful, huh, Leila! Come on, tell me, what did you draw? Go on.

Leila, holding her drawing in her hands, says:

– Something scary!

– Huh? – asks the researcher, surprised.

Leila says again:

– Something scary!

– Oh... Tell me! Put it here so I can see! Show it to Nair! Nair, look how much Leila did! – says the researcher, asking the child to put the paper on the table and show it to the teacher.

Nair approaches the table and greets the child:

– Hi, Leila!

– What did you do there, Leila? Tell us! – insists the researcher.

The child talks about her drawing:

– I made a house... But they are entering a cursed house.

– Cursed? – asks teacher Nair.

Leila continues:

– And the ceiling was collapsing...

– The ceiling was collapsing? – asks Nair.

The researcher says in surprise:

– My God!

Teacher Nair asks:

– But why was the ceiling collapsing?

Without hesitation, Leila answers:

– Because the house is very old.

– Ahhhhh, it's because the house is very old.

It's not because the house is cursed! – says the teacher.

Leila explains:

– It's not! It's haunted! – Ahhhh, haunted! – say the researcher and the teacher.

(...)

In "The Cursed House", we can see another way of articulating verbal language and Leila's written image production, when compared to the previous episode. In another context, Vigotski (1925/1999), when discussing fables and the characters that compose them, explains that children are not always interested in those who are considered morally correct in the plot. For example, in "The Ant and the Grasshopper", children often show a preference for the grasshopper, the one that sings all summer (and her work of singing is not considered). We can also remember how the witch is an interesting character for children. In Leila's drawing, it is not about discussing morality and a specific character, but about something that scares. The house is not presented as a place of family and safety, as children usually draw it. Leila's house is a scary thing.

We realize the importance of this activity especially when other researchers (Batista, 2018, Oliveira Neto, 2014, Silva, 2015) show us that drawing is not an activity commonly offered to people with visual impairments. Teacher training and the lack of adequate materials to be made available to children, as pointed out, accentuate this problem. Furthermore, the conception, derived from years of history, of the blind person as poor, invalid (Vigotski, n/d/2019) reverberates pedagogical practices summarized for the student with visual impairment, including in the processes of appropriation of reading and writing. Such practices often prioritize teaching through the remaining senses – touch and hearing –, as if there were a replacement of the sense organs, a premise denied by Vigotski (2019). Far from being a mechanical replacement, the condition of disability, depending on the culture in which the child is inserted, reorganizes, potentially or not, the psyche as a whole.

In the Episode 2, the researcher insists on knowing more about this "scary thing" and, when she calls another teacher who was passing by the table, asks Leila to talk more about her drawing. The child explains that it is a cursed house. The word "cursed" refers to a characteristic of the house, which requires a complex abstraction to be represented through images and verbal language.

Unlike Episode 1, in which Sandro lists the parts of his drawing for the researcher, Leila, when talking about her graphic production, creates a story. In both cases, verbal language is fundamental to the meaning when the child draws, according to Vigotskian thought, as we presented earlier. The cursed house is not empty. Leila says that someone is entering. If, in the first episode, Sandro made a portal to protect the bush and there is an implicit

scene in the drawing, here there is a scene occurring in the present, in the now. This is what the child says when talking about her drawing: “*They are entering*”. A story begins to be told. The narrative and the drawing are interconnected (Costa, 2018, Costa, Silva, & Souza, 2013). A drawing – graphic language – also becomes a story, it becomes a text, in which ideas are presented in a specific logical sequence. The explanation of what is meant, the vocabulary and the structure in which the idea is presented make up the child’s narrated text (Rangel, 2023, Rangel & Víctor 2016). In the dialogue, the researcher’s mediation is crucial for the child to express what he/she has drawn. Drawing is also a way of writing and, therefore, its social function is constituted in it, just as in writing (Vigotski, 1934/2001).

The child says that the ceiling is collapsing. The characters enter the cursed house and the ceiling collapses because the house is very old, says the child. The ideas continue to come out of the paper, as in episode 1. Vigotski’s (1930/2018) maxim that narrative provokes drawing and vice versa is perceived here even when the drawing is “apparently” finished. Drawing and narrative make up the process of meaning of the child in their processes of reading and writing about reality.

In both episodes, we attest to reading and writing processes involved in the activity of drawing, both in the articulation between verbal language and drawing and in the drawing itself. These are complex processes of abstracting and generalizing concepts understood as restricted to visual aspects (colors and light) and concrete and abstract concepts (flower, sun, house, scary, cursed), which reveal ways of writing an idea, a thought/feeling. It is a form of communication between what the child thinks and feels about the culture in which he or she participates and about his or her own actions in the culture.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this work, we seek to analyze the drawings of visually impaired children and their *reading and writing* processes that emerge in the drawings. To this end, we present two episodes in which we analyze the graphic production carried out by the children, in conjunction with what they said about their productions. In both, there is a relationship between verbal language and the production of the drawings, even though these have already been graphically finalized.

In the Episode 1, the child draws elements related *a priori* to the visual field, such as colors and light. She not only says that she drew a “rainbow flower,” but also chooses different colors to represent it. Furthermore, she talks about the drawing that implicitly appears in the scene when he says that his flower needs to be protected – however, he does not clearly explain what it is about. The drawing is represented on paper and through verbal language. In the Episode 2, there is an important component. When the child begins to talk about his/her

drawing, he/she begins a story. It is a story woven in the present moment. In this sense, narrative and drawing are interconnected in the process of *unsystematic reading and writing* presented by the child.

We believe that drawing performs the same functions observed in children with and without visual impairment, differing only in the mechanisms of access and performance of the activity. Guided by specialized techniques and tools, the activity of drawing is established, above all, in its form of organization and in the recording of the child’s thoughts.

Therefore, it is necessary, first of all, to overcome the paradigm that maintains that drawing is not relevant in the development of children with visual impairment. Consequently, it is important that this creative activity be provided to these children and that it occur recurrently in teaching. From this, there is a need for new research that can debate and enrich the understanding of the subject, reverberating dialectically and potentially, the ways of reading and writing of blind and visually impaired children.

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Note

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Data availability

Research data are available in the document.

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