

Guidelines for the Drawing the Ideal School technique

Introduction:

The Drawing the Ideal School technique has been adapted from an approach developed by Moran (2001). Heather Moran has been a teacher and educational psychologist and now works as a clinical psychologist. The technique enables children to become actively involved in understanding themselves and expressing their views. It is based on ideas from Personal Construct Psychology, which was introduced by Kelly in 1955. This approach seeks to explore children's important or core constructs about themselves and how they view the world. Children (and adults) behave in a way that makes sense to them according to their own view of the world. We are likely to understand children (and the sort of provision that is most likely to help them) more fully if they are able to express these core constructs to us.

In summary this type of work attempts to:

“understand the child's unique perspective on life through the careful use of questions and extremely sensitive note of the child's answers.” (Moran, 2001)

The technique itself is simple to use once the child understands what is expected. This sheet gives guidelines for the adult completing the technique to follow and the next two pages list how to complete the technique.

Guidelines for use:

1. Equipment needed: a black pen and two sheets of plain A4 sized paper.
2. Allow about an hour to complete the activity, perhaps with a short break if necessary.
3. Explain to the pupil that you are going to be doing the writing today, acting as scribe. This is to take the pressure off the pupil and keep the process moving.
4. The pupil is asked to make quick drawings or sketches (rather than detailed drawings). Reassure the pupil that it doesn't matter if an error is made.
5. It is important to record **exactly** what the pupil says using their own words
6. If the pupil is overly anxious about drawing, either model stick people drawings first or just record the pupil's verbal responses.
7. Allow time for the pupil to process the requests – repeat/reword/simplify the questions if not understood.
8. Provide reassurance that there are no right or wrong answers or responses.
9. Provide encouragement and praise for the pupil's involvement with the activity.
10. Be sensitive about sharing the drawings with others, ask the child's permission and ensure that other adults understand that the child has trusted you in revealing such views, which must be respected
11. Talk to other colleagues about planning any follow- up work that might be indicated.

Part 1: Drawing the kind of school you would not like

The school

Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of this paper.

Tell me three things about this school. What kind of school is this?

The classroom

Think about the sort of classroom you would not like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in the school.

Draw some of the things in this classroom.

The children

Think about some of the children at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children.

The adults

Think about some of the adults at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these adults.

What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

Me

Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me three things about the way you feel at this school.

Part 2: Drawing the kind of school you would like

The school

Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of this paper.

Tell me three things about this school. What kind of school is this?

The classroom

Think about the sort of classroom you would like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in the school.

Draw some of the things in this classroom.

The children

Think about some of the children at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children.

The adults

Think about some of the adults at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these adults.

What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

Me

Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me 3 things you might be feeling at this school.