

## Speech and Language Pathology - Session 1

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### Autistic Children's Drawings as Evidence of Visual Communication and Learning

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#### ABSTRACT

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From a post-modern perspective, drawings and visual images in general are regarded as documents. As such, they are carriers of meaning and therefore have a communicative role in post-modern human societies (Wolcott, 1996). Visual literacy, the ability to extract meaning and communicate successfully via visual images, develops in a way similar to verbal literacy, through exposure to visual stimuli over time, most often without any formal instruction. When working with children with autism spectrum disorders, where impairments in social interaction and communication are prevalent, the use of drawings can have multidimensional benefits for them as well as their educators. They function both as a means of communication and interaction among the autistic children and their peers and they provide their teachers with evidence of their interaction and learning. This project is based on five longitudinal case studies, with each one following the evolution of drawing by a child with autism influenced by other children with autism. The five children are pupils at a special education unit of an elementary school in Cyprus. The data analysis was based on the application of inductive methods for decoding the drawings made by each child, while using videos of the children being involved in the drawing process, as well as their oral descriptions of their drawings for triangulation purposes. Through a thorough examination of these children's spontaneous and non-spontaneous drawing production, the findings of this project reveal signs of unforced peer learning which occurs naturally, alongside the conventional class learning context. They also provide evidence that the use of drawing in the special unit classroom context and practice can foster the interaction among children and teachers and serve as tool of communication.

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### The Usage of Virtual Reality Systems in Process of Rehabilitation for Children with Disabilities

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#### ABSTRACT

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Virtual reality is computer based technology that allows children with disabilities new ways of rehabilitation and facilitates their process of integration in social activities. This paper will present review of researches on influence of virtual reality in process of rehabilitation for children with disabilities and it will put emphasis on advantages and methods for using models of virtual reality for improvement of life quality, learning abilities and inclusion in regular education system and community. Virtual reality enables formation of safe virtual environment where children with disabilities can conduct their therapy. This kind of technology enables learning, rehabilitation and interaction with virtual objects in real time and also stimulates, vision, audition, haptic sense and improves speech. With its possibilities and customized mode