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732. Rethinking the Quality of an Educational Philosophy Approach and the Methods Employed in Black Mountain College Regarding the Matter of the Hikikomori Phenomenon in Adulthood

Eriko Takeno

Royal College of Art, UK

ABSTRACT This paper will examine the importance of an art-centred liberal arts education method provided by the experimental college, Black Mountain College in North Carolina, to address the matter of the Hikikomori phenomenon. The College serves as a part of the process in its students' lives, and for their personal growth and understanding in the form of intellectual pursuits.¹ 'Hikikomori', which is originally a Japanese term, identifies a person who is self-isolated and has remained in their room for more than six months². It can in some cases extend to more than two decades. This paper mainly focuses on this phenomenon among adults. In adults, the condition can be caused by low self-esteem and low self-confidence, resulting from societal pressure, and experiences of anxiety and depression. To confront the phenomena, to instil a sense of responsibility and a competent of one's original skills and abilities are consequential.³ The paper uses the College as an example for orienting the philosophy and methods, which focus on encountering each student's unique identity⁴. Through a review of Hikikomori contexts, this research concludes that the quality of an art-centered higher education can serve as a means for illuminating the Hikikomori phenomenon in a way that can return self-esteem and self-confidence to adults, and help them to become autonomously engaged in society.

Keywords: 1* Hikikomori, self-isolation, art-centred education, higher education, education philosophy, self-esteem, self-confidence, anxiety and depression

[abstract only; no full paper]

¹ Harris, M. E. (1987). *The Arts at Black Mountain College*. The MIT Press, Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge Massachusetts.

² Tamaki S., translated by Angles J., (2013). *Hikikomori*. The University of Minnesota Press.

³ Tamaki Saito, translated by Angles Jeffrey, (2013). *Hikikomori*. The University of Minnesota Press.

⁴ Harris, Mary Emma. (1987). *The Arts at Black Mountain College*. The MIT Press, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge Massachusetts.