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An opportunity to introduce drama in education: a case study of Children's Theatre Project in Tanzania

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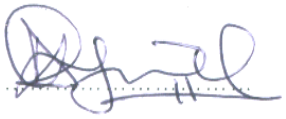
ABSTRACT

In the 1989/90 academic year the Department of Fine and Performing Arts (DFPA), University of Dar es Salaam, established the Children's Theatre Project (CTP) which involved pupils in a number of primary schools in Tanzania. The project was carried out in two phases. Phase one centred on training teachers in skills to organise and run children's groups through workshops. The second phase focused on the use of Theatre as a Teaching Methodology. This study is a critical examination of Theatre as a Teaching Methodology in Tanzanian, formal primary schools. It investigates two key questions: Firstly, In what way might the CTPs Theatre as a Teaching Methodology work together with Drama in Education methodology? and secondly, What effects might the integration of Drama in Education pedagogy have on CTP? The theoretical framework to this study is informed by Drama in Education pedagogy which considers the use of theatre elements as essential in achieving both its 'pedagogical objective' and its 'artistic objective' (Bolton, 1993). The critical pedagogy theory which focuses on reconstructing the experience of students and which claims that 'reality is neither objective nor subjective but a complex combination of both perspectives' (Carroll, 1996, p. 76) is applied to this study. The study utilises a qualitative research methodology, in particular a case study approach to data collection and consists of three kinds of data collection instruments; observation, in-depth open-ended interviews, and written documents from the CTP's records. It was noted that while Drama in Education focuses on the process rather that on the product, Theatre as a Teaching Methodology is largely concerned with the concept of using classroom drama and traditional theatre forms to perform within the classroom. The findings demonstrate that both approaches under study are particular to learning and teaching, and resonate with a critical pedagogy in which learning and teaching are child centred. Though there is a distinction between Theatre as a Teaching Methodology and Drama in Education, the tools are the same: the elements of theatre crafts

(Wagner, 1980). However, it was revealed that there is no clearly articulated structure for Theatre as a Teaching Methodology, thus a need to integrate the Drama in Education structure is inevitable. These structures and their effectiveness have been proved both inside and outside Africa (O'Toole, 1992; Nebe, 1991, 2008; Simpson and Heap, 2002; and Carter and Westaway, 2001). The study recommends the CTP and education authorities in Tanzania to explicitly consider the theoretical foundations which underpin their claim of child centeredness by providing proper formalised education to all pre-service teachers. In other words, the inclusion of accredited drama and theatre pedagogical courses in teachers' training colleges is needed rather than ad-hoc, tailor-made courses and workshops.

DECLARATION

I, Delphine Njewele**,** declare that this dissertation is my own original work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts (Dramatic Arts) to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and that it has not been presented to any other university for a similar or any other degree award.

Signature 

Delphine C. Njewele

25 day of August 2009

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ABBREVIATIONS

CTP-	Children's Theatre Project
DFPA-	Department of Fine and Performing Arts
DIE-	Drama in Education
Ed-SDP-	Education Sector Development Programme
EFA-	Education for All
EPF-	Education Programme Fund
ETP-	Education Training Policy
MoEC-	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoEVT-	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
PEDP-	Primary Education Development Plan
Sida-	Swedish International Development Agency
TIE-	Theatre in Education
TFD-	Theatre for Development
UPE-	Universal Primary Education
UDSM-	University of Dar es Salaam

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