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The significance of participation in educational theatre for young audiences: the case study of Themba Interactive Theatre Company

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Abstract

This study examined the significance of participation in educational theatre for young audiences with specific focus on the Interactive Themba Theatre (ITT) Company. The paucity of literature on theatre for young audiences coupled with the controversy surrounding the notion of participation motivated this research. The conceptual framework was based on selected paradigms of participation such as popular, dialogical, extrinsic, peripheral, and integral participation. These paradigms helped young learners to take initiative and to bridge the subject-object distinctions that are often characteristic of the classroom learning process. They enabled learners to be at the center of the learning process. The significance of participation in unpacking themes associated with sexual relationships, peer pressure and teenage pregnancy was revealed through ITT's educational theatre performances targeted at young audiences, namely *The Right Time, Virtual Dynamics*, and *Is That You*?