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Catch them young : using process drama for children's rights education.

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Abstract

In this study, I undertake to investigate how process drama can be used as a medium for childrenôs rights education. I enquire on how process drama can be used to teach childrenôs rights to young children in Grade three. The study investigates whether process drama can be deployed to bridge the gap between childrenôs rights and how the dramatic medium can be applied to teach those rights. The study is a quest to find out if the action that takes place between the dramatic world and the real world manages to yield óa change in understandingôor a shift in childrenôs perception about their rights. To investigate this function of process drama, a series of drama workshops were conducted with grade three learners at Supreme College in Johannesburg over a period of two months.

The study used a case study approach within the qualitative action research methodology. The idea was to break the abstract, complex concept of childrenôs rights down to participantsôlevel of understanding through dramatic interaction. This study was informed by drama in education paradigms combined with process drama as theory and as practice. The research particularly focuses on the process drama techniques and how these were applied for educational purposes in order for participants to learn childrenôs rights. These techniques were investigated as to what benefit or use they served for participants to learn their rights.

Reflective practitioner principles were used to analyze the data gathered. This means that the initial data gathered was used as a basis for better analysis to inform further ways of gathering more data. Each chapter focuses on a specific childrenôs right. All the rights focused herein where extracted from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, (UNCRC) of 1989, the South African Constitution of 1996 and the South African Child Care Act 74 of 1983. Process drama required learnersôinvolvement and active participation. An analysis of the workshops demonstrated that process drama techniques had the ability to engage children in problematic situations as a way of learning something about their rights. The results show that whilst participants were dealing with these human situations, they were within a dualistic process dealing with their rights. Results also indicate that whilst process drama was applied to teach childrenôs rights, it was also able to teach children a wide range of activities. This could be an indication that process drama has the ability to teach a wider range of skills in the classroom.