AJAMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.6, May-August, 2022 https://ajemates.org

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING AND THE ENGAGEMENT OF DRAMA IN EDUCATION: A STUDY OF TWO CLASSROOM THEATRE PROJECTS

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ABSTRACT
The discourse of child centered teaching and learning techniques is one that has continued to challenge educators the world over. For one, issues surrounding the development of the child prescribe for the continuity of human existence and choices that should be made for foster healthy and progressive development. This study draws its discourse from the dynamic process of child learning as well as the issues related to transformative engagements through drama. The study also underscores the importance of injecting new media especially from the plethora of indigenous African dramatic forms where this research is particularly domiciled. The qualitative research method is adopted for this study. This includes in-depth content analysis, review of related literature and participant observation for proper data evaluation and interpretation. Two classroom drama projects carried out by the students of the Department of Theatre and Film studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, were evaluated as the primary sources of data. The study finds that a possible union between the transformative learning theory as evidenced through constructivist and communicative mechanisms and indigenous dramatic forms such as folklore and so on, could be fostered to enhance a healthy development process for the growing child.

Keywords: Transformative Learning, Theatre in Education, Creative Drama, Applied Theatre Cognitive learning

Introduction

The concept of learning especially as it concerns the young is one that could be best described as dynamic. Scholars have overtime worked on concretized formats in not just what should be learnt as well as what is expected of the Teacher-facilitator in given situations but also on the question of what environment is befitting for child learning and development. Indeed, this concepts may vary from race to race and from one cultural enclave to the other but as is the case most times, have similar underlining features or even results. Theatre scholars have over time made contributions on the use of the Theatre in community and Human development. The questions on whether theatrical activities can be used to address social ills, reform mundane norms and even educate young minds have be answered with postulations from Theatre scholars the world over. Fields of study such as the Theatre in Education and Creative Dramatics are still being explored to shape the ideology of Child development using theatrical forms. Indeed, it would appear that the engagement of drama in educational establishments goes beyond the performance of a self contained play, or a one off theatrical event, but a co-ordinated and carefully researched pattern of activities, usually devised and researched by a group of facilitators around a topic of relevance both to the school curriculum and to the children's particular needs.

The Theatre also addresses psychological development in children from the educational perspective. Theatrical situations can be used to solve simple and complex problems as they relate to the immediate needs of the child. Nellie McCaslin corroborates this stating that.

> Few adults would deny the importance of the arts in the education of their children. To enjoy the arts and appreciate the richness they can add to human life, however some preparation is needed. For most children, the preparation is or should be given in school. In summary, the theatre arts are the least difficult of the arts to

implement, with the greatest potential for learning (4-5).

Theatre scholars in different studies have adjudged drama as a valuable tool for child education. Cited in several areas of research such as, Development drama, Creative drama, Drama therapy and so on, the underlining factor remains that child learning and education lies in the participatory nature where the child is involved in the art making process. As Nellie McCaslin further avers that:

> Through creative drama, an individual has a chance to develop and grow. This is also true of the group in which ideas are explored, evaluated, changed and used. As a group of any age works together under sensitive and skilled leadership, the members learn to accept, appreciate and stimulate each other (15).

Theatre informs that through art forms such as drama, the young mind develops academically, morally and socially. The use of creative drama thus exposes children not only in learning drama but to learn through drama. Charles Combs asserts that:

> While drama is informed by many of the ideas and practices of Theatre arts, it is principally valued as a learning medium rather than an art form and is governed and validated through criteria other than aesthetics, informal drama's goals are based on pedagogical, developmental and learning theory as much or more than they are art based; its objectives are manifold, but they are all directed toward the growth and development of the participant rather than the entertainment or simulation of the observer (9).

From the above assertion, it appears that the use of creative drama provides an enabling environment for child education. It could be seen as a viable instrument in bringing other art forms such as role playing, singing, dancing, improvisation, together in the learning process and to the consciousness of the developing child. As a relatively untapped educational tool, this method of learning engages the child in a wholesome, creative and practical experience that deviates from the age long teacher/pupil norm, where the child is said to be seen and not heard. The aim of creative drama thus, allows for the development of child, social, emotionally and psychologically as he grapples with the demands of formal education.

Transformative Learning and Character Development

It would appear that the concept behind a transformative system of learning is one that does not view learning as a statutory and fixed exercise. Scholars have over time, formulated concepts on a variety of research enquires about ideal learning systems. Questions such as; who should learn? What should be learnt? How are learning environments created? What is expected in an appropriate teacher/learner relationship and how should the teacher/facilitator respond to certain needs of the learner, have contributed to the development of theories aimed at providing insight to the discourse of learning. "Learning theories have two chief values: one is in providing us with vocabulary and a conceptual framework for interpreting the examples of learning that we observe. The other is in suggesting where to look for solutions to practical problems" (Leonard, 17). This definition indicates that learning theories should create a spectrum for the analysis of certain variables rather than prescribe tailor-made solutions to learning needs. The thrust should be in bringing to the attention of researchers, knowledgeable facts and values needed for robust, indepth and analytical study on the subject of learning. Thus, some scholars have proposed that there exist three main conceptual frameworks where learning theories can be grouped. They are; Behaviorism, Cognitivism and Constructivism. The Behaviorist approach underscores those physical observable traits and aspects of Learning. Cognitivism evaluates the processes of psychologically induced learning and constructivism views learning from the process itself where new concepts and ideas are built upon.

"Transformative Learning is a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings and action" (Transformative Learning Centre, 2004). Developed by American Sociologist, Jack Mezirow from 1978, The Transformative learning theory was born out of the need to address, shifting behavioral patterns and thoughts due to internalized attitudes and perceptions. Orna Cohen et al, citing Mezirow submits that:

> Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and options that will prove true or justified to guide action. (270)

One perspective to transformation, it would seem occurs in shared or personal experiences such as the death of a loved one, loss of a job, the occurrence of a natural disaster and so on. These experiences may cause individuals to question hitherto held beliefs and even the essence of their existence. Edward Taylor observes that "learning experiences establish a common base from which each learner constructs meaning through personal reflections and group discussion" (6). Mezirow's Transformative learning theory has evolved into a comprehensive and complex description of how learners interpret and validate the meaning of their experience. Mezirow identifies ten phases for transformative learning which is a process of how given perspectives and structural meaning are changed or revised. These phases develop from feelings of disorienting dilemma, guilt or shame to critical assessments of social-cultural or psychic assumptions and then exploring new relationships and actions which ultimately should increase individual confidence and competence levels within these new roles. (Kitchenham, 105)

Recent studies however hold that these phases could be grouped into four elaborate broader steps for a better understanding of the prospective for transformation and more workable results. Orna Cohen et al submits that:

> These steps include experiencing a disorienting dilemma where the learner struggles with a conflict of views, because a current understanding of their frame of reference doesn't fit anymore. This leads to imitation or confusion, because meaningful solution cannot be found immediately to critically assessing assumptions such that the frame of reference is questioned. The learner is going through self-examination, assessing previously held assumptions to find ways out of the dilemma. The learner also acquires and implements while observing other people's reactions and behaviors; a rational dialogue evolves and he discovers new information, which is put into perspective with the old assumptions. And then the final stage where he or she explores options for new roles, relationship and actions: The learner practices the newly acquired skills and knowledge, finding new roles and competences. A new self- confidence evolves and new relationships build. As a result, the learner replaces "old views" and gains a new perspective. (270).

Scholars have argued that for a broader understanding of the transformative learning theory to be acquired, certain perspectives must be underscored to give credence to the research works being carried out in this area. These perspectives should be such that integrates psycho-analytic views such as the learning process of the individual; the state of understanding oneself, one's inner identity, persona, confidence, self-empowerment and responsibility. A psycho-developmental perspective is also critical in understanding the demand aspects of continuous, incremental and progressive growth as well as the appreciation for behavioral differences and the role of relationships.

A social-emancipatory perspective is also crucial in giving consideration to the role of social change in the transformative learning process. Scholars like Edward W. Taylor propose that the social-emancipatory perspective of Transformative learning gives a certain level of responsibility to the society in addressing

concerns faced by its individuals. Rooted primarily in the Freirean concept of *Conscientization*, which views people as subjects not objects, constantly reflecting on the transformation of their world, Taylor believes that the goal of social transformation could be enhanced by "demythicizing reality"(8)., thereby allowing the oppressed to develop a sense of critical consciousness. This process should not only engender critical reflection and engage dialogical methodologies but must also adopt a horizontal learner/teacher relationship to stimulate a participatory learning process. He observes that:

> Three teaching approaches are central to fostering emancipatory transformative learning. First is the centrality of critical reflection, with the purpose of rediscovering power and helping learners develop an awareness of agency to transform society and their own reality. Second, a liberating approach to teaching couched in "acts of cognition, not in transferal of information". It is a problem posing and dialogical methodology. Third is a horizontal students-teacher relationship where the teacher works as a political agent and on an equal footing with student. (8)

Thus, the role of society and indeed the teacher in this context forms an important factor in Transformative learning. The Freireian and likeminded schools of thought propose that teachers should educate for transformation; the Teacher should be adequately prepared to work through concerns and challenges the learning process may present and this includes creating new avenues where knowledge is not only built upon but co-created by the students.

However, there are other views which propose a slight departure from the constructivist approach to transformative learning. Further researches indicate that for transformation to occur, learning must progress beyond building on existing knowledge. Scholars like Janik, D. and Edward Taylor observe that neurobiological and cultural components are emerging in the field of transformation learning and that these components, when integrated into the process engenders learning that is 'brain based' and discovery driven. In this context the teacher/facilitator plays a supervisory and assisting role more effectively. Janik posits that:

> In simpler terms, the findings suggest that the brain structure usually changes during the learning process. These findings in turn bring into question traditional models of learning (behaviourism congitivism, Constructivism) and instead offer a distinctive neurobiological, physically based pathway to transformative learning. From this perspective, learning is seen as "volitional, curiosity based, discovery-driven and mentor-assisted" and most effective at higher cognitive levels. (144)

The introduction of Transformative learning in children poses a unique challenge for teachers and facilitators. The need to equip the developing child in facing the demands of society becomes imperative especially when certain present conditions appear to stunt the development process. Within African and indeed Nigeria, present economic realities indicate that today's growing child is currently faced with developmental needs that are crucial for holistic psychosocial growth and well being. The Nigeria Bureau of statistics reports that as at 2016, about 76% percent of Nigeria's population live below the poverty line. The Brooklyn's institution Report cited in Emmanuel Okogba's article on "Nigeria's deepening poverty misery" in the Vanguard issue of 2nd July, 2018, reveals that "at the end of may 2018, our trajectories support that Nigeria had about 87 million people in extreme poverty compared with India's 73 million, Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the largest number of extreme poor" (n.pag). This economic reality however is most likely to spiral down other social structures thereby causing corresponding increase in loss of jobs, disease outbreaks, broken marriages, deaths and so on. In these situations, the vulnerability of the growing child increases the tendency for him to become a causality of circumstance.

Transformative learning thus, should provide Educative and Rehabilitative institutions, the potential to equip the child adequately for present and possible future challenges. The child should not just be an active participant in the learning process, but should

be able to ask vital questions on what he has learnt, what he is being taught and how all these can help him formulate his own perceptions about his existence and his environment. Mezirow and Kitchenham cited by Zanchetta *et'al* submit that:

> The theory emphasizes principles that foster the development of critical consciousness, political liberation and awareness, beyond the usual outcomes of traditional teaching. The purpose of learning should be to develop autonomous, empowered thinkers, who are able to adopt to change, think critically and take action to change their lives by critically examining their experiences. (112)

Indeed the child-learner should be encouraged through activities that will propel development. This can be through exercises that will not only sustain their interest but enable them confront given problems and proffer solutions to them. Children appear to enjoy learning where there is an attempt to make the process enthusiastic and lively. However, since a greater part of their thinking is still tied to what is seen and heard, the teacher/facilitator is challenged to employ deft skill within the educative endeavour to sustain their interest in the creative process. The Transformative learning theory in this context provides for learning that is both task-oriented and communicative. The essence is to allow for the learners to engage themselves constructively in the learning process as supervised by the teacher/facilitators while being able to communicate their feelings and needs. Scholars prescribe that for a holistic learning process to be achieved there should exist a detailed application of curricular content so as to ensure that the performance of the learners is appropriately evaluated. Richard Cullata posits that:

> Applying transformative theory to curriculum evaluation, one looks for evidence of critical reflection in terms of content, process and premise. Content reflection consists of curriculum mapping from students and faculty perspective; process reflection focuses best practices, literature-based indicators and self-efficacy measures; premise reflection would consider both content and process reflection to develop recommendations. (2)

Transformative learning with the aid of Drama and theatrical or performative activities appear to have a stake in child learning and development. The ability to utilize drama in mirroring society places the Theatre on a uniquely distinct plane in addressing issues of individual and social transformation. Drama allows us to understand the complexities of human behaviour; Relatively, Transformative learning as E.O. Sullivan observes "involves experiencing a shift, such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves, our location, our relationship with other humans and the natural world" (4). Indeed, scholars have proposed that educative processes even in the context of formal learning can be further enhanced with the integration of creative, dramatic activities. This has given rise to concepts such as Theatre in Education (TiE), Creative Dramatics, Drama in Education, Applied Theatre, Play-House Theatre and many others which among other things, propose for an engaging participatory frontier to learning in order to foster, creativity, spontaneity, ingenuity and propel positive social responses to the process of learning and development. Chiduo Obadiegwu further corroborates this, indicating that the qualitative research designs would be adequate in evaluating the level of participation in this area of study. He affirms that, "Since theatre education for transformative learning focuses on participation and exploration of voices of the learners, qualitative research designs is appropriate for children's real participation in the classroom". (29)

Theatre scholars seem to agree that concepts of drama within educational systems are capable of stimulating positive responses to learning challenges. Through creative play, children develop socially and begin to explore their imaginative tendencies on addressing simulated problems, institutions of learning provide. Drama achieves this through exercises of role playing and interpretation, thematic construction and so on. Fayose opines that "drama tells a story through actions and because the issues connected with the story are acted out by human beings, the message is brought more realistically home to the reader or viewer" (13).

Transformative learning thus, through drama could serve as an indispensable tool in facilitating the development of thinking and language skills in children. Through positive metacognitive development, children master rules for directing their own attention, thoughts and behaviour thereby fostering positive forms of expression.

Transformative Learning and Indigenous Education

In Nigeria, as well as in most Africa countries, scholars seem to agree that child development takes root from the indigenous or traditional education systems that are inherent within the various socio-cultural enclaves of the typical society. This further implies that unifying structures of indigenous norms, practices and language are usually activated to solve commimal issues. Mbachaga agrees when he says that:

> Participation on the one hand places priority on working with the people and using their own modes of communication to enable small communities look at their own problems with the aim of arousing and stimulating target groups to take desired steps to improve their wellbeing (87).

Thus, it is noteworthy to state that the immediate society of a developing child plays a more important role than it is generally perceived to. Even with the influx of western civilization and its many inventions, African theorists seem to agree that the immediate surroundings of the child go a long way in shaping his ideology towards life. The activities, therefore of his parents, relatives, teachers and other facilitators become an all important ingredient in the development of the child. Ezenwa Ohaeto observes that:

> The representation of childhood in African art has to be approached from the standpoint that the African concept of childhood is profoundly different from that of the western world (116).

Children develop socially, intellectually, morally and psychologically. And the cultural backgrounds of these children play important roles as it regards their learning capability. As it concerns traditional educational systems in Africa, scholars seem to agree that concepts such as Imaginative play begin from birth with the parents and other older relations playing the role of "leader' or 'teacher-animator'. From this point, children through creative play, develop socially and begin to explore their imaginative tendencies as can be expressed through role-playing where they take up roles like fathers, mothers, farmers, doctors and so on: other ideas could likewise be expressed through mime, music, dance and so on. The daily events of children comprise of their relationship with people around their environment, their parents, friends and relations. They meet people at home, at school, in church and these relationships help to shape the child's ideology about himself and his environment. Fayose notes that "children's interpersonal relationship depend on their ability to express themselves through speech and movement" (113). He further opines that:

> Drama tells a story through actions and because the issues connected with the story are acted out by human beings, the message is brought more realistically home to the reader or viewer. (113)

The use thus, of Transformative' learning through play in child education and development presents itself as an indispensable tool because it helps children learn social skills such as sharing and collaboration, it facilitates the development of thinking and language skills in children. Social interactions with others, particularly with adults as facilitators are the vehicle for exposure to concepts in instruction and for participation in the indicative and communicative function which becomes internalized. That additional activity of imaginative play then promotes metacognitive development. Children master rules for directing their own attention, thought and behavior and internalize this direction in the form of verbal expression. However, this mastery does not fully become conscious until the child with the aid of a guide becomes capable of performing mental functions of memory and attention.

DATA PRESENTATION

Precious Little Darlings

The 400 level students of the Department of Theatre and Film studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka embarked on a project in partial fulfillment of the course; Dramatic Techniques for the

Classroom. The students made an attempt to engage JSS2 students of the University High school, on the subject of Literature; out of which a novel in the school curriculum was chosen and adapted by the Theatre students for dramatic enactment on stage. The facilitators agreed that this would not just generate keen interest on the subject as well as ensure full participation of the students but would also allow for a better understanding of the novel and justify its choice as a prerequisite for students offering Literature as a subject. The Students-facilitators made preliminary visits to the school management and were granted access to the junior secondary 2 students for a period of six weeks at approximately four hours per week. Casting and rehearsals were carried out effectively and the eventual production held on Friday the 30^{r} of March 2019 in a hall within the school premises.

Synopsis of Precious little Darlings

The Novel is an 84 paged text written by Oladosu Adedeji. The book tells of the Williams, a couple who despite beings married for over seven years are yet to be able to have children of their own. The family members of the husband, Mr. Williams add to the pressure by insisting that he marries another wife. He however holds true to the love his has for his wife as well as the belief that children would come at God's own time. On the advice of his friend and colleague, Mr. Williams consults another Doctor with his wife and this time, she takes in and puts to bed to a healthy set of twins; boy and a girl. As the story progresses, we observe that the children grow up to be quite irresponsible and lazy and this largely due to the over indulging disposition of their mother. The situation worsens when their father meets his unexpected demise as a result of a fatal vehicle accident. On his dying bed in the hospital, he makes his wife promise that she would be more firm with the children and inculcate better morals into them. Mrs. Williams however fails in her promise to her husband. She indulges them even more, buying a Television and cable subscription for each of them and this gives them unsupervised access to x-rated entertainment that pollutes the mind. Eventually, their academic work suffers a great deal and their lifestyle even become much worse; so much so that by the time they get to SS 2. Taiwo, the boy, had become a heavy smoker and gang boy while his sister becomes obsessed with boys and wild fashion. The story hits its climax when the mother while on a hospital visit with her son to check his persistent coughing finds out that Taiwo has lung cancer evidently due to the many years of cigarette smoking and drug abuse. Mrs. Williams also discovers on the same day that her daughter had gotten herself pregnant. Both news totally shatters her as she suddenly realizes that her "precious little darlings" were not so precious after all and she could only but take the blame.

Story Development of "The Reward of your Action"

This project was undertaken by the 200 level 2018/2019 students of the Department of Theatre and film studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe university, Awka in partial fulfillment of the course; Children Theatre and TV programmes. The students/facilitators carried out the workshop at the Demonstration Primary School, Commissioners quarters, Awka and paid particular attention to pupils in primary four. They conducted preliminary visits with the school management; facilitated rehearsals with the contact-periods awarded them which lasted for a cumulative period of 6 weeks.

The play revolves around two women in a village, one had a daughter who was quite hardworking and obedient, the other had a daughter too, but she was lazy and stubborn. On visiting her friend one day, the woman whose daughter was lazy, couldn't help but notice how tidy and well kept her friend's house was courtesy of the hardworking daughter. This fills the woman with so much jealously and envy and she immediately begins to conceive ideas of how to make her friend's house as untidy and grubby as hers. On another visit therefore, she tells her friend of a magical Hen she had bought; this Hen was capable of cooking, cleaning and doing every other thing she commanded it to do. She goes further to say that with an animal like that, one wouldn't need a daughter, she eventually convinces their friend to kill her daughter and get the magical Hen in her place. The woman foolishly agrees and does as she is told. However, even when she acquires the hen and leaves

instructions for it to do house chores before leaving for the market, the spirit of her daughter comes into the home and does all the house chores before her mother comes home. This continues for a while until a palm wine tapper uncovers the incident while on his tapping rounds and promptly informs the king. Eventually the two women are summoned to the palace and banished from the Kingdom.

Transformative Learning in *Pretty Little Darlings* and *Beware of your Action*

It was quite evident from the researcher's observation that the approach adopted by each facilitating group was quite different but however had a common objective in achieving a sense of character remodeling amongst the participation children. In the workshop *Pretty little darlings*, the students/facilitators adapted a written work of prose into play. This, the researcher observed, created an enabling learning environment between the facilitator and the students because the original work was part of their school work and so the idea that it could be translated into a live performance, interested the students. Another interesting point is that the children were actively incorporated into each production process. The facilitators were able to communicate appropriately to the students through the processes of scene by scene selection as an aspect of adaptation. Through this, the students were inadvertently exposed to what made up the adaptable elements in the original work and how they could be translated on stage. The students were also exposed to the importance of dialogue as a crucial aspect of the play production process. This was given further accentuation by the improvisation technique adopted by the facilitators; it thus allowed the facilitators to engage a number of students who indicated interest in playing the role of one character or the other of their choice.

The researcher also observed that during the developmental stages of the workshop, the facilitators endeavoured to adhere to themes raised by the author of the original material as this must have been instrumental to the choice of the book by the state government for secondary schools. The Author, Oladosu Ayedeji appeared to have dwelt heavily on two central themes; one being the act of over indulgence of children by the parents and the other being the effect of over exposure of the Television to young minds. Closer observation however, revealed that the facilitators relied more on the first theme as this was evidenced in the eventual dramatic re-enactment. Perhaps, this was as a result of the short contact period they had with the children, or the technicality in following through with the second. For instance, from the opening of the play, just like in the book, we are taken into the travails of childlessness that the Williams go through before they are blessed with a set of twins. The joy and excitement that welcomes this development sets the tone for the rest of the production.



Mr. and Mrs. Williams in a joyful mood after the birth of their children

As the play progresses, we see how Mrs. Williams continues to pamper and over indulge the children, so much so that by the time they get to secondary school, they have become so engrossed in Adult entertainment being portrayed on the Television with total disregard for their academic work or home chores. A couple of .scenes depict how the twins come from school everyday only to throw their bags and clothes all over the place for the house help to sort out and immediately get into the business of watching their fashion and music idols on Television. Even when their father intervenes in one instance, it is quite evident that this was coming too little, too late.



Mr. Williams expresses worry as to how his wife over indulges the children

The similarity between Prose and Play seem to be very slim at this point. The author of the original text, gives full emphasis on the effect of long hours of Television exposure on children. He supports this by making reference to known devices and gadgets that are being used in present times for the reader's better understanding of the subject matter. Addressing the character of Mrs. Williams, especially after the demise of her husband. He says:

> First, she bought each of them a television set in their rooms, to make up for lost time. For Kehinde, she bought a DVD player and a small laptop computer, while she bought a play station and big laptop for her brother. She also restored the DSTV decoder to the sitting room with full subscription to all the channels so they could have various channels to choose from. In fact, they had more their ninety channels to watch (64).

The facilitators, however with the help of the students endeavoured to drive home the need for character remodeling among secondary school students. This was quite evident during the post production evaluation. Students identified and expressed that there was a nexus between the Novel and the Drama and seemed to agree that the dramatic enactment brought the characters on the pages of the book to life. This was further given credence as most of the characters of the play production such as. *Mrs. Williams, Taiwo* and *Kehinde* were played by the school students themselves. The school management also expressed delight at the production. The vice principal in her closing remarks, intimated members of the audience that the play would be represented during the next PTA meeting of the school.

However, on the other production, 'The reward of your Action", the facilitators adopted a different approach in addressing the issue of character remodeling. On one regard, there was a heavy reliance on indigenous forms such as Folklore, Songs and Dance in driving home the agenda of the story as well as engendering the participation of the pupils. To achieve this, the facilitators simulated a simultaneous staging arrangement and integrated the character of an old woman on the left of the stage to play the role of a village story teller who gathered children every evening to tell them stories. She also doubled as the Narrator of the production thereby incorporating the other members of the audience as a larger part of her listeners while the performance continued at the right side of the stage.



The story teller in her role as narrator

The facilitators agreed to address the themes of Contentment, Jealousy and Greed and this was further given accentuation as the casting and rehearsals progressed. Worthy of note also, was the use of a Mascot during the production. A Hen-Mascot was designed and sewn by the students and worn by one of the pupils during the production. This particular fantastic characterization appeared to have arrested as well as sustained the interest of the audience and may

have ensured that the message behind the elaborate use of an out of ordinary character, was not lost.

The students/facilitators revealed that the whole exercise was particularly eventful for themselves and the pupils. During the preliminary visits, the students engaged the class teachers in interviews to find out which pupils had particular behavioural or social challenges as well as what subjects posed greater problems. On the part of the pupils, the facilitators worked extensively with many of them and were even able to convince one of them, who had been reported by her teachers to have had timidity issues around people and was of slow speech, to play the lead role of the hardworking daughter. The group leader, Oluchukwu Azubuogu subsequently reports that:

We noticed that a lot of the kids were having challenges with self esteem and speech which made it impossible for them to express themselves in the midst of a large number of people. For example, the little girl that played the good role had that problem but to our delight and that of her teachers as the workshop progressed, she overcame that challenge and started expressing herself very well.

The facilitators also incorporated folksongs, dance routines and games into the rehearsals process and even in the eventual production and this allowed more pupils to participate in the whole process.

Conclusion

The need for a participatory approach to learning may indeed be critical to child development. It so appears that even with the call by many scholars to incorporate dramatic forms into the learning 'space' particularly within the African educational system, there is still an over reliance on the banking system of education where learning is imposed on the learner, thus stunting any opportunity of gainful interaction and consequently, development. Scholars like Paulo Freire indeed have termed this module of education as "an instrument of oppression"(3).

As both experiments by the students of the Department of Theatre and film studies seem to have established, the need for adequate research into how genuine transformation could be engendered is paramount and very critical to holistic educational processes. As we have seen, the essence is not to do away completely with the formalized structure which the classroom or school environment provides, but to incorporate transformative elements through drama in addressing given situations as well as, particularizing each child's needs where the Teacher may switch roles from time to time into those of a Facilitator and Animator as the need arises, while the pupil becomes a more active participant in the learning process.

The need to also incorporate indigenous dramatic forms that are inherent in each particular society is also crucial to character transformation and development. The story telling tradition which has been given immense significance in dramatic sequence through the characterization of the narrator, proved to be an invaluable addition to this process. Both experiments utilized the distinct feature of narration in driving home salient points. In the production, *Precious Little Darling*, which was adapted from a Novel, facilitators included the character of a narrator which obviously was not included in the original material, to fill in the missing gaps and ensure that the children were carried along in the story. In the other production, the Narrator/Storyteller occupied a permanent place on one side of the stage in full view of the audience and assisted in scene changes. The importance of African indigenous forms such as the folk culture even as a learning aid cannot be over emphasized, perhaps because of its peculiar characteristics of engagement and investigation. Indeed, the incorporation of these concepts could be helpful in addressing the rising cases of juvenile delinquency and psychological disorders in children.

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