

Overview on the Meaning of Theatre-In-Education (Tie) in Nigeria

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Abstract

It is important to state that this paper is about the ability to understand the variety of meanings of Theatre-in-Education (TiE) and the nature of relationships that exists among Theatre, Drama and Education, most especially the role of theatre for education purposes. In this sense, the paper made an attempt to appraise the relationship that is going on between theatre and drama. In addition, the paper has been able to strike a balance in the relationship that exists among theatre, drama and education. The meaning of TiE is derived and operates within the confines of some scholarly definitions and views. The definitions and views coupled with some features of TiE discussed in this paper will aid in providing understanding to the quest of this paper which is overview on the meaning of TiE.

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Introduction

An attempt to illuminate the meaning of theatre-in-education is tied along to the task of exposing the relationship that is going on between theatre and drama. Theatre-in-education is perhaps a complex process; trying to understand it will mean examining many aspects of theatre, mainly drama. The issue of drama in theatre is significant and has been a matter of interest to those concerned with understanding theatre-in-education in Nigeria.

Often, theatre and drama do not operate in isolation. Therefore, there is a need to be cognizant of the main purpose of theatre, drama, and theatre-in-education, which is to entertain, educate, and provide information. In Nigeria, readers and listeners often express bafflement when confronted with the meaning of theatre and drama. This is so because the twin words imply different meanings but are used interchangeably in some places. Sometimes,

when people read or hear of theatre and dramatic acts they become overwhelmed with jokes and laughable images of issues that occurred in the past, present, or future.

People often talk of theatre and drama without fully understanding and appreciating the full meaning and significance of the separate terms. Literarily, the truth is that there is a tangled relationship between theatre and drama. This relationship is exhibited in terms of drama being a concrete part of theatre, and yet the terms often used interchangeably (Aliyu, 2020).

This little or no misconception will tilt the focus of this paper towards scholarly views that will lead to understanding the place of theatre and drama. Eventually, it will aid in providing a safe landing ground to the quest of this paper which is overview on the meaning of Theatre-in-Education.

The difference between Theatre and Drama

It appears that some theatre scholars see nothing wrong with using theatre and drama interchangeably. Eze (2011) argues that drama is the only performing arts that falls within the theatre category. This is so because drama is a subform of theatre and the two terms can be used interchangeably.

Theatre should not be confused with drama. Ibrahim, (2020). While contributing towards understanding the place of theatre and drama, it maintains that, theatre originated from the Greek word theatron; which simply refers to a place for viewing or theasthai; to look at, and Drama originated from the Greek word, Dran, which refers to action. Stories told through actions and words of actors could simply be drama, this impersonates the characters on stage. On the other hand, theatre encompasses the place where the dramatic text is put on stage.

In addition, he stated that theatre is the closest thing to reality since it incorporates all features of play production, including performers, directors, scene, costume, sound, and lighting designers, playwrights, and audiences. Normally, all of these components come together to create a unique production that gives the appearance of reality.

Over the years, a theatre bears the role of melting point of all arts and has always encompasses the whole aspects of art forms, including music, drama, folklore, folktale, puppetry, songs, dance and so on. Alongside entertainment, theatre has often been used to educate society on social ills and boost moral standard that will enhance positive change in the society.

In an attempt to capture views related to the concept of theatre within the context. Agofure, (2013). Note that theatre collaborates with other arts forms such as

drama to stage a performance on the experience of a real imagined event before a live audience in a specific place. The performer may combine gesture, speech, song, music, or dance, while elements of design and stagecraft are used to enhance the physicality, presence, and immediacy of the experience. In the same vein, theatre is where the performance occurs as described by the ancient Greek theatron, a place of viewing and theaomai, to see, to watch, to observe.

From another point of view, theatre is recognized as a tool with potentials and power for effective communication and mobilization. This is just a tip of the iceberg on the meaning of a theatre. Some features of theatre are further summarized as follows:

- i. Director
- ii. Theatre space
- iii. Design aspects: scenery, costume, lighting and sound.
- iv. Performers
- v. Audience
- vi. Text: This includes focus, purpose, point of view, dramatic structure and dramatic character.

In affirmation to this submission, theatre is ascertained as the actual production of a play text on stage with the support of the entire theatre features identified earlier. In contrast, drama is the actual play's printed text. While, Some drama features are as follows:

- a. Theme/Thought
- b. Diction/Language
- c. Music
- d. Plot
- e. Character
- f. Spectacle

Theatre and Education

In order to understand and appreciate the meaning of TiE in the dynamics of theatre and education, it is important to consider the relationship that exist between theatre and education.

A layman can simply say that the aim of the collaboration between theatre and education is to use drama approaches to support learning in the classroom. Others will rely toward just putting a play or performance on stage to entertain the targeted audience within a school setting and curriculum content. However, none of these assumptions that are wrong, but the collaboration between theatre and education to attain TiE is far more than that, as theatre and education are not mutually exclusive. If education is about learning and learning is likely to take place through cooperation, interaction and participation. Therefore, perhaps it is obvious to say that, theatre strengthens the expression of those skills and interactive techniques to attain learning experience. In affirmation to this claim Norah and Juliana, (1994) stated that “We have come to recognized, through observation and analysis, that the teacher who, instinctively or deliberately, makes use of the devices of the art form (theatre elements and play structure) has a better chance of achieving her educational objectives”.

Perhaps, it is this balance mutual relationship between theatre and education that can be traced back to the very beginning of mankind, that inform the purpose of collaboration between theatre and education.

Similarly, according to the Nigerian National Policy on Education NPE (2013), teaching strategies in the primary schools shall be participatory, exploratory, experimental and child-centered. In the same vein, in accordance with

Nigeria’s National Policy on Education (2004) cited in Dare and Olubadewo (2013), defines education as “that process that helps to develop man (woman inclusive) physically, socially, politically, morally, mentally and technological to enable him function in any environment in which he finds himself”.

To this end, if the purpose of education alongside learning is to adopt a method of teaching that is participatory, exploratory, experimental, and child-centered, In addition, develop man (woman inclusive) physically, socially, politically, morally, mentally and technological to enable him function in any environment in which he finds himself. However, with regard to this, it is important to note that theatre serves as a tool for the educational process to be sound and effective.

The Meaning of Theatre-in-Education (TiE)

In recent years, Theatre-in-Education has been serving as a means for education and a platform for shaping targeted audience learning ability by exposing them, at a tender age, to issues affecting their existence. Through TiE as a creative process, taught targeted audience how to adapt and imbibe essential values, knowledge and skills that will help them to live successfully and communicate effectively in their societies and the world at large.

Theatre-in-Education (TiE) is defined in a number of ways. Hodgson and Banham (1973) reveal that Theatre-in-Education is the working in and putting on, eventually, for public performance, a play with all the associated things that happen, all the bits and pieces and all the various branches of its organization. At the end, the concern lies on setting standards and solving problems.

Jackson (1999) defines TiE in a brief and clearly expressed manner, as an

organised and strictly rehearsed activities, carefully thought and researched by a TiE company, around a topic of relevance both to the school curriculum and to the targeted audience own lives, presented in school involving the audience in an experience of the situations and problems that the topic bring up.

TiE, as defined by Stacey (2012), is a coordinated collection of theatre-based educational activities that are typically focused on a topic that is both relevant to children's lives and the school curriculum.

Victor (2013) explains that TiE appears to have inherited its ideas from Brecht. In order to stimulate audience participation as critical observers through empathy and subjectivity, it makes use of techniques borrowed from Brecht's Epic theatre.

Asen (2017) also viewed TiE as a specially designed dramatic performance before an audience of school children or any other target audience, which has an objective to impart one form of education or another.

However, from different definitions and scholarly views on the meaning of TiE, it appears that the most outstanding features of TiE is the fact that it involves more than production of a play, it is simply educational project. Based on this recognition, it is unbiased to state that through analysis and observation of the above definitions will reveal the following common features.

Features of TiE

- i. Theatre-in-Education (TiE) is a scripted dialogue stage for a targeted audience.
- ii. Audience/learners participation is controlled or otherwise term as critical observers.

- iii. Theatre-in-Education (TiE) can be deploying as technique, strategy or even method to achieve a desire goal.
- iv. Theater-in-Education (TiE) is mostly a full blown Educational Project.
- v. Theatre-in-Education (TiE) includes a team of professionals, highly trained and experienced actor-teachers who prepare and rehearses relevant material or project to be presented (production) in schools.
- vi. Performers, create open-ended stories that require audience participation.
- vii. Theatre-in-Education (TiE) creatively involves the audience in the central dilemma of performance, leaving them with the task of reaching conclusions by solving a problem or deciding on a position as characters themselves within the play.
- viii. Theatre-in-Education (TiE) as technique etc utilizes various theatre forms such as puppetry, music, dance, role-play, storytelling and drama, among others, to improve learning activities.

TiE programmes depend heavily on actor-teachers' key roles (rehearsals and production). In spite of the fact that audience participation in TiE programmes is paramount in solving problems, However, audience involvement in TiE productions is fully coordinated by the actor-teachers. Digression from this norm will not only render the process contrary to the TiE practice obtainable elsewhere but also cause it to be graded unprofessionally.

With regards to audience involvement in TiE production, there are crucial pointers to indicate and direct the audience participation during and after TiE programme. TiE presents different approaches, which often engages and challenges targeted audience to discussions, making contributions, question issues and

encourages creativity. It provides a clear distinct responsibility between actor-teachers and the targeted audience by providing fun during performance to encourage audience participation through the actor-teachers.

Sykes (2005:11) observes that, there are often activities within TiE performances such as 'Freeze Framing,' an opportunity to put the performance on hold and direct the actions of performers. 'Hot Seating or Truth Seating' is an opportunity for the audience to interrogate performers about their actions or demand factual answers about issues in the performance. Performers, create open-ended stories that require audience participation.

It was noted that Follow up Questions about a performance in between scenes has attracted success in TiE programmes through effective objective that promote enthusiasm and spark dialogue about the performance. Also, several TiE programmes that have utilized Hot-Seating, encourage audience discussion during the performance and post-performance, and promote Roleplaying and counselling have positively influenced attitudes, knowledge and motivation.

For example, Stacey (2012) explains the significant role of actor-teacher and that of the audience through a play that is an adaptation of *Three Little Pigs*' story.

However, the '-Big Bad Wolf' a character was unable to blow down the house because he smoked. The play went on to present dialogue about the consequences of negative effect of smoking and offered suggestions on how to quit. At the end, audience were encouraged to play the role of the "Big Bad Wolf" and because they were nonsmokers, they were successful in blowing down the house.

At this point, it is pertinent to bear in mind that the role of actor-teachers and that

of audience is clearly spelt out this implies, TiE is meant to be performed by actor-teachers and never intended to be performed by targeted audience; there is a thin line between actor-teacher and the targeted audience.

Findings

The quest to understand the parameters, within which TiE operates, forms the basis in which the meaning of TiE is derived. Therefore, it is observed that there is a nexus between theatre and education to attain TiE. The main purpose for this union is to achieve educational experience with cognizance of roles of theatre, drama and education to improve educational programme.

Recommendations

The Federal Ministry of Education through the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) should introduce a backup policy that will specifically ensure the integration of TiE as full fledge course in cultural and creative Arts Curriculum. Such consideration will make TiE function easier and effective.

Universities and Colleges of Education awarding degrees and NCEs' in Theatre and Performing Arts should be encouraged to create awareness of students' need to utilize TiE. However, graduating students could serve as actor-teacher under a certified registered TiE company. This will enhance creativity and foster career opportunities for Theatre and Performing Arts graduates.

Conclusion

TiE encompasses theatre and education to teach skills, educate, entertain, mobilize audience and disseminate information in and outside the classroom with the actor-teachers controlling audience involvement in the whole process.

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