

Classroom Play as a Tool in Developing Children's Moral Standard: A Study of the Faithful Servant

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Abstract

The use of classroom play as a tool for teaching and developing the childrens' moral standard is not new. It is central to the childrens' physical, psychological, moral and social well-being. Through classroom play children experience real emotions, create their own uncertainty, experience the unexpected, respond to new situations and adapt to a wide variety situations. The misinterpretation of essence of classroom play as a mere play, fun for fun alone and a mere form of relaxation is what this paper will redress and present classroom play as a tool to use in developing independent learning, build confidence, self-esteem and self efficacy in children. This paper will critically analysis the thematic essence of classroom play in developing children's moral standard using "The Faithful Servant" as a paradigm.

Introduction

Classroom play enables children to form friendship and attachments to adults, to places and also helps in development of familiarity and intimacy among themselves in classroom. Armitage Andrew states that;

Classroom playing away from adult supervision is equally important, it allows the children to acquire independent mobility, explore the world on their own terms and create their own identities (37)

Children through classroom play recognize familiar stimuli, respond to cues and show condition responses in the early stage of life. Gestalt Luckaes is of the opinion that;

In cognitive development, cognitive process show how children demonstrate their cognitive skills in many ways and by doing so explores the wealth of information accumulated and this helps the way their thinking develops beyond infancy (24)

In classroom play, there is an easy flow of communication to the children at all levels of education and awareness of education, awareness of beliefs, history and thought system. It also enables the child to gain an elementary knowledge of physical as well as the moral properties of the society in which they live. Ifekandu Chinedu states that;

Classroom play enhances a common heritage of the society, teaching the child to improve on morality or language and the child learns other good things (3).

For classroom play to communicate effectively to the children, the play must be relevant to the society.

The Essence of Play to Children

Play in classroom has remained an indispensable art in developing the children both morally, socially and religiously. The use of play in classroom has gone beyond mere dramatic action, rendering of lines and aesthetic, into a serious educative tool aimed at sensitizing the children towards the ills in the society and its aftermath. Josic Gleave states that;

All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate; play is biological, psychological and social necessity and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individual and communities (3).

Play involves children doing as they wish in their own time and in their own way and it is this component of play that is the key to understanding the positive outcomes of playing throughout childhood. Issy Cole is of the opinion that;

Play is a process that is firmly chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play by following their own instinct, ideas and interests in their own way for their own reasons (4).

Playing comes instinctively to all children, without the support of parents, policy makers and the wider community to make play a priority; children will be denied the freedom, space and time to themselves to act on their natural instincts.

Characteristics of Classroom Play

The characteristics of classroom play will help to present classroom play beyond mere performance by children in classroom; rather it will project it as a serious indispensable tool in teaching. A well understanding of the essence of classroom play will help the children to appreciate the three major characteristics of classroom play

which are;

- a. Learning through activity
- b. Problem resolution in the classroom
- c. Revealing hidden meanings through self-experience

Developmental Games in Classroom play

Last Man Standing

This works as a game for a quiz or text in classroom play. All the children simply stand at their desk and a general question is thrown at them based on their standing rows. So the first child on the left front is the first child to play and so forth. If any child gets the question correct he/she remains standing, if not, he/she sits down. The last man standing wins.

Move Ahead

This classroom game is played using the square tiles on the classroom floor. A tape will be used to divide the children into teams of starting line and finish line. The teacher in charge of the game will ask two questions, the first among the two groups to raise their hands will move ahead to ask the question, while the second will remain motionless. The essence of this classroom game is to test the children alertness and full consideration in classroom.

Silent speed ball

This classroom game aims to work on the children's level of consideration and focus. The children would be given balls to aim at a square hole without talking; whoever that gets balls into the hole without talking is the winner, while whoever that talks/without enough balls in square hole fails.

Piaget's ideology in learning through classroom play

Piaget's learning theory through classroom play is based on stages that children go through in order to learn. In each stage, the learning process is different and a little more complex. Lisa Babers states that;

In classroom children should play, experiment and reason in order to learn. Experience in classroom play enables children to create schemes, which are mental models and then the schemes may be altered assimilation, accommodation and equilibrium. (45)

Based on the Piaget ideology in classroom play, physically acting the experiment out, instead of just reading it in a book, children will understand and process the information so that they retain it and learn from it.

The Importance of Classroom Play

Classroom play is enjoyable for all but often underestimated for its unique way of positively influencing the children in the classroom both, cognitive, physical and psychosocial development. Classroom play offers the children vast opportunities to learn themselves, moral, others and the environment in which they live. The importance of classroom can be classified under the following;

Physical

Classroom play helps to increase strength, overall fitness, motor development and health in children.

Cognitive

It helps in increasing skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, planning, language and overall academic success.

Social and Emotional

Classroom play enhances development of cooperation, sharing, turn taking, less egocentrism, increase in pre-social values and self esteem, practice of appropriate social roles and team work.

AN ANALYSIS ON THE FAITHFUL SERVANT: A CLASSROOM PLAY

A Brief Summary

The faithful servant is a classroom play that centers on greed, false accusation and abuse of ritual power. In the play the servant was so much loved by the king and he took him as his own child since he has no child. One day the Chief Priest sensed that the king might one day make the servant an heir to his throne, so he wrongly accused the servant of stealing the King's jewelry. The reason for this is the servant was an orphan; the Chief Priest did not want the king to make him an heir to his throne because he wanted his son to be an heir to the throne. The level of the accusation was so much that the Chief Priest made the villagers to believe that the servant stole the king's jewelry and forced them with his magical powers to demand for the servant to be killed or buried alive, since stealing is a great offense in their community and punishment is instant death. The Chief Priest who was supposed to be the custodian of the truth was insisting that the servant must be killed or the wraths of the gods would befall the entire community. But the king who has the final say to pass verdict of life or death on the servant was not yet convinced that his servant, who is obedient, hardworking, truthful and humble to him and his wife, stole his missing jewelry and deserves to die. It was a very difficult task for the king to pass judgment on him as a thief and must die. But based on the servant's good qualities, the king refuse to pass the verdict of death on him rather he chose himself to die on his behalf. The king's declaration to die on behalf of the servant caused problem and worries among the indigenes of the community that the queen threatened to kill herself if the king

dies in place of a mere servant. But all her threatening was to no avail, because the king blessed the servant and pronounces him the heir to his throne, while he followed the Chief Priest to sacrifice himself in place of the faithful servant.

THE LESSON'S IN THE CLASSROOM PLAY (THE FAITHFUL SERVANT) TOWARDS DEVELOPING THE CHILDREN'S MORAL STANDARD

Lies

The play faithful servant taught the children the disadvantages of lying. Had it been that the servant was a liar at any point in the play, the king would have believed the Chief Priest and villagers when they told him that the servant stole his jewelry and must die. But the king did not believe their lies against the servant because he knows him as a truthful servant.

Greed

Greed is a very bad virtue in the play "the faithful servant". Greed can make a person do what he/she does not want to do. For instance because of greed the Chief Priest who is meant to be the custodian of truth lied against the servant because he sensed the king might make the servant an heir to his throne and he want his son to be the heir to the throne since the king does not have a child. To show his highest level of greed, he wants the servant to be killed.

False witness

This is another bad virtue in play; the Chief Priest was able to convince the villagers with his magical powers that the servant stole the king's jewelry. The villagers did not see or witness when the servant stole the jewelry, but they all took it upon themselves that they all saw him when it happened and must be killed, if not the wraths of gods will befall on them. So they all echo for his death just to satisfy the selfish aim of the chief priest.

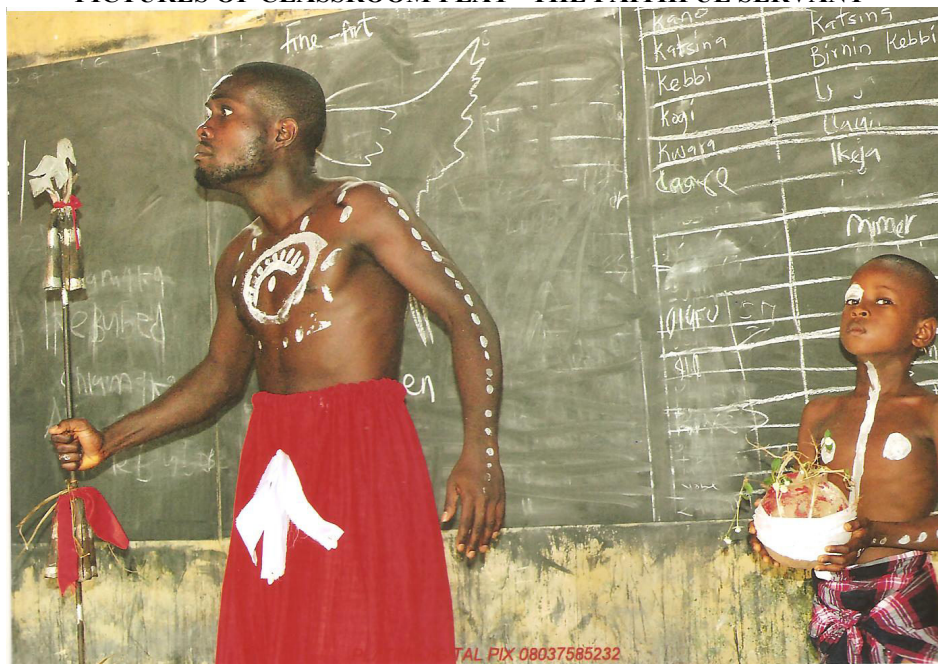
All these evil virtues in the classroom play "The Faithful Servant" was used to warn the children that watched the play not to live such life in real life, because if they do God almighty will hate them, punish them and when they die they will go to hell fire. So for them to be good children in future they should imitate the faithful servant by always saying the truth, be hardworking, obedient and humble.

Conclusion

One of the most frequently stated aims of classroom play is the maximal growth of the children as an individual and as a member of a society. Classroom plays have really helped in impacting moral standard in children. The children at this level are no longer entertained through plays only rather the classroom play teaches and impacts morals in them to be future good citizens in their various communities. With aid of didactic classroom plays, the children will understand the social, economic and religious situation of their immediate society, thereby giving them room to make better choices of refusing evil and accepting the good.

Conclusively, classroom play as a tool in developing children's moral standard using "the faithful servant" as a paradigm really sensitized the children against some of the societal bad virtues and seriously warn them to deviate from it and embrace the good deeds.

PICTURES OF CLASSROOM PLAY "THE FAITHFUL SERVANT"



The chief priest with his son whom he wants to be an heir to the king's throne pronouncing falsely that the servant must die for stealing the king's jewelry.



The queen is thinking on how to convince her husband the king in killing the faithful servant.



The king finds it difficult to accept the message from the palace guard that his faithful servant is a thief.



The king not accepting the wife's conviction that the faithful servant is a thief and must die



The king has finally accepted to die on behalf of the faithful servant, while he lives to be an heir to his throne.



The king with his two palace guards and the faithful servant, here the king is about to give him his final blessing and pronounce him the heir to his throne.

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