

# **The Quest for Glocalising Drama Education: A Case Study of Training Hong Kong Early Childhood Teachers**

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## **Summary**

Drama education was brought to Hong Kong by the British practitioners in the 80's. In the past thirty years, it has been developing progressively. Since the teaching practice is of western origin, local social culture, education values and cultural identity have definitely an impact on its passing on and practice. Currently, the development of drama education seems to be marginalized by the mainstream educational value and core curriculum. With reference to Ronald Robertson's theory of glocalisation, the author, serving a propagator of drama education and relating to her teaching training experience, hoped to first capture how this globally adopted teaching model has clashed and negotiated with local factors, from which she reflected and explored more on the fashion of glocalisation, particularly in relation to drama education training and its exhibition of promoting transformation in the mainstream education.

The author started teaching an early childhood drama education course for a bachelor degree of early childhood education since 2012. The course content and teaching mode were of 'western origin'. The content was mostly based on the British and Australian form of drama education by using picture books along with drama conventions to encourage students to master relevant basic theories, teaching plan designs and teaching strategies. The course took 30 teaching hours and was carried out through experiential teaching and learning in workshops which allowed the students to first experience the teaching mode and skills of drama education, and then to analyze, discuss and reflect on the related teaching principles and issues in the debriefing. After the workshops, the students had to design teaching plans which were to be presented in later lectures or put into actual practice in their schools, and to write up the

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reflection on their teaching. The author collected 147 students' teaching plans and interviewed 14 of these students. It was found that the students' reception of drama education was shallow and fragmented, in particular in the understanding and application of drama conventions. The details are as follows: (1) Misinterpreting drama conventions (92, 35%); (2) Not being able to use the drama conventions appropriately (74, 28.1%); (3) Restricting the children's participation and imagination (37, 14.1%); (4) Overlooking the flow of drama experience (24, 9.1%); (5) Teaching objectives are unclear (21, 8%); (6) Not being able to fully utilize drama forms and ways (15, 5.7%). In the interviews, the author further realized that though the students agreed unanimously that drama education is capable of promoting transformation, they have always been under the constraints of their prevailing teaching beliefs and practices. Moreover, with inadequate training and scarce resources available in Hong Kong, the students have misinterpreted and misused drama conventions which brought forth merely a form of drama education, but never its spirits. This demonstrated the localization of drama education has been marginalized, and to a certain extent, the problem may surface as early as in the training phase. As a propagator, the author should reflect on the 'originally westernized' training mode, particularly when it was applied on mainstream teachers and those students who do not bear much knowledge about drama or experience of drama education.

Based on the suggestions about the training mode made by the students such as more workshops, increasing more chances to emulate and exchange teaching experience with other practitioners, and providing guidance and feedback on the spot, drama education training is noted to be similar to apprenticeship. However, in the Hong Kong context, the local factors and limitations of the general teacher training have demanded some rectification of the training mode. The author has revealed the limitations of the workshop mode of experiential teaching and learning and borrowed the local elements of teacher-centred approach, knowledge structure and direct instruction to reconstruct and hybridise the training modes and methods corresponding to glocalisation. This hybridisation aims at helping the students establish a basic and standard knowledge framework of drama conventions, and thus incorporate it systematically to practical experience in the hope that drama education would take its promising transformation effect and keep passing on in Hong Kong.

**Keywords: glocalisation, teaching training, roles of propagator, drama education, drama conventions**