Youth, Theatre, Radical Hope and the Ethical Imaginary: An Intercultural Investigation of Drama Pedagogy, Performance and Civic Engagement

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PURPOSE

The lives and lifeworlds of young people have been destabilized by global economic and political uncertainty. Social and educational development as well as cultural and historical representations of youth, are often contextually lacking youth perspectives and understandings. This project seeks to fill in knowledge gaps in studies of youth and a broader set of actors involved in improving opportunities for young people. Our project was to produce knowledge of how youth are learning as well as the social and cultural practices, relationships, discourses, and values that orient young people towards, and support them in, engaged citizenship.

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

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KEY IDEA OF THE PROJECT

The project makes a significant contribution to knowledge in the field of research methodologies by both using, and representing critical to fostering hope. Trusting this process is critical to caring for the self and others. This understanding is also powerfully corroborated by the multi-site survey – the drama space is appreciated for its ability to address certain deficits youth may experience in other relationships.

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

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Project website: www.oise.utoronto.ca/drwww.towardsyouth.com

UNIQUE FINDINGS WITHIN SITES

In this paper, we present some of the key findings from the project. We discuss the role of drama education in shaping the identity of young people and the way it contributes to their sense of agency and democratic participation. We also explore the ways in which drama can help young people develop critical thinking skills and engage in social justice activism.

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CREATIVE OUTPUTS

Toward Youth, the play based on our Radical Hope research project, written by Andrew Kushnir and co-produced by Project: Humanity and Crow’s Theatre, illustrates beautifully how young people in the drama classroom are making sense of their dreams, their lives, and the world. And it is a stunning example of our collaboration and shared vision.

Toward Youth emphasizes on human solidarity and it is an exciting concept to have a production that would be otherwise impossible to fulfill in the intimacy of a shared space. The Toward Youth production is an intricate video design, a theater experience, and a digital experience that serves the digital age and the demands of today’s youth.

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