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Børn og kultur – det æstetiskes betydning?
25. – 27. oktober 2007

1. Undertema:

Det æstetiskes betydning i medier, kunst og kultur for børn?

I mødet med: teater

2. Physical theatre as a communicative practice for meaning making in the multilingual youth encounter context

The overriding aim of my drama educational case study was to deepen the understanding of meaning making in a creative intercultural youth theatre process and to examine it in the context of the 10th European Children's Theatre Encounter. The research material (transcribed interviews, coded questionnaire answers and videotaped process) were gathered from 12 to 15 years old children and their leaders coming from 18 different countries. The context of this intercultural leisure time event was multilingual. The participants of the two weeks' Encounter used lingua franca English as well as 17 other languages. The creative aesthetic process by means of theatre and the sharing of the performances is in the focus of the Encounters. The concept aesthetic in my study refers to the arts field hence the wide aesthetic concept where all sensory experiences are aesthetic is not in use. The ethnographical research site was regarded as a theatrical event. The analysis of the theatrical event was divided into four segments: cultural contexts, contextual theatricality, theatrical playing and playing culture. The purpose of the presentation is to concentrate on the segment called theatrical playing. This segment is connected with a research question: What are some of the key phases and characteristics in a creative practice? The interpretive question concerns identity and community (re)construction. How are the categories, 'community' and 'child' constructed in an intercultural drama practice? The creative physical theatre workshop has the same phases as a research process. The results of my doctoral thesis point out that there are eight inter-related phases and aspects in the intercultural theatre workshop. The eight inter-related phases of a creative process are embodied presence in time and space, seduction, psychophysical theme and form work, dramaturgical theme and form work, free play-time, negotiation and combination of parts, rehearsing and performing the message to the audience. The eight inter-related aspects of a creative process are creative atmosphere, cultural production, dialogic and polylogic relations, dramatic meaning making, combination of the physical and the imaginative, story, paradoxical communication and site specificity.

These phases and aspects will be discussed in the presentation. The most important thing seemed to be to work with the physical and the imaginative aspects during the whole process. The starting point is the work for developing the sense of a joined body, to work

with body awareness and presence. The language of physical theatre is based on body images, movement and music. Through the embodied language of physical theatre it is possible to express the feelings and experiences of young people, because meaning making in physical theatre is close to their own everyday symbolic language. In a multilingual context, where the verbal languages are secondary, physical theatre offers an embodied language for communication.

3. English presentation, form: powerpoint and dvd

The presentation is based on the results of my doctoral thesis.

Aaltonen, Heli (2006). *Intercultural Bridges in Teenagers' Theatrical Events: Performing Self and Constructing Cultural Identity through a Creative Drama Process*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press.

The thesis will also be found in the following net base:

<http://www.doria.fi/abodiss/>