

The Visual And Tactile Appeal Of Puppets As Educational Tool In South Africa

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When puppets are used at the foundation phase of education, children gleam with radiance as they escape into the unrestrained arena of playful fantasy. Through the use of puppetry as an educational tool, children learn while they are playing in a way that is unrestrictive and non-threatening. Puppets contribute greatly to the development of a child's learning by providing the child with opportunities to assemble, discover and comprehend a wide range of concepts, knowledge, skills, and situations. Puppetry also provides a stimulus for, and reinforcement of, the child's learning as he/she engages in a wealth of concrete experiences, which are linked to a purposeful activity (Currell, 1976: 55). The presence of puppets in South African schools is noticeable in Pre-primary, Primary and High schools and puppets are constantly being utilised in diverse disciplines in the education of people of all age groups. However, the manner in which puppets are presented and utilised has a significant impact on the way they are perceived by learners. This paper attempts to evaluate the impact of puppetry as an educational tool. Using participatory action research methodology, the researchers embark on an exploratory study of the visual and tactile appeal of puppets on learners at the foundation phase level in South African educational institutions. The research also excavates the perception of educators on the value of puppets that are used for educational purposes.