Assertiveness and ‘Somebodyness’: Theatre Strategies and Resources to Enhance Achievement of African American Girls, K-12

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Abstract

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Theatre across the curriculum, is one of the innovations with a potential for positive achievement results for African American girls and our entire diverse population of students. In our drama and theatre work, a pluralistic perspective is one of the bridges to self-affirming visibility for all students. Since the pioneering efforts of Winifred Ward in the 1930s and 1940s, scholars have utilized drama in the classroom with young people at all grade levels to enhance knowledge and skills while promoting confidence and interpersonal skills (Headnote & Bolton, 1995; McCastlin, 2006; Ward, 1952; Way, 1967). Sharon Grady in Drama and Diversity (2000) poses apropos questions: “What informs the choices we make as we construct drama work? How do our choices open up areas of learning or close down areas of inquiry? What is the impact of our choices on our students?” (p. xiii) After reviewing the achievement dilemma of African American girls K-12, this discussion 1) highlights the literature documenting the effectiveness of using theatre across the curriculum to engage and push forward all students, 2) describes three theatre strategies for enhancing academic skills and self-esteem (creative drama, role-playing, readers theatre), and finally, 3) presents a representative sampling of resources for developing a cultural knowledge base related to African American females and African American culture. Theatre can provide the spark that will enrich content across the curriculum for all students. It is especially needed for children of color who are at risk for lower test scores and high dropout rates, and can make a positive difference for African American females in K-12 grades.

Keywords

creative dramatics, role-playing, readers theatre

Full Text:

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References

References


Grant, M. (1971). They keep coming. Don't bother me I can't cope (Broadway musical).


African American History for Kids
http://urbanext.illinois.edu/bhm/historyforkids.html

National Women’s History Month Project

Refbacks

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