

Immersive Narrative and Theatre Drama: A Cultural Planning Approach to Cultural Education

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ABSTRACT

Immersive narratives have been recognized as an independent form of participation in theatre drama for some time now; therefore, its impact on cultural dissemination differs from other forms such as traditional theatrical performance or classroom teaching. Examine the ways in which an immersive narrative and theatre drama, intended to serve as deliberate cultural education channels within cultural planning systems. Based on Dewey's concept of experiential learning, Boal's Theatre of the Oppression, Schechner's Environmental Theatres Theory and Cultural Planning Approach, along with data from UNESCO and the Themed Entertainment Association, this article analyses four aspects of immersive theatrical cultural education to propose an implementing system model. As shown in the results, immersively integrated into a systematic plan for cultural development, it has produced Forms of cultural understanding, social participation and multicultural competence other educational models are unable to form effectively.

KEYWORDS

Immersive Narrative; Theatre Drama; Cultural Education; Cultural Planning; Experiential Learning; Applied Theatre; Intercultural Competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Something inherent is lacking in watching the outside of the story rather than being inside one. This feeling, which is gradually taking shape systematically through the development of immersive narration as a form of art and educational approach. Compared to traditional theatres that separate actors from spectators clearly, immersion requires participants to become part of the Environment during Immersion narratives require Participants to interpret content emotionally engage and contribute directly creatively. An activity-type cultural experience is qualitatively different from passive observation; Teachers, cultural administrators, and others have started paying more attention to this way of achieving excellent cultural education in practice due to the urgency of making such educational progress.

The Scale of this Transformation Is Large. According to the Themed Entertainment Association, in 2019, the world-wide themed-entertainment market had a value of around \$24.2 billion, indicating continuous institutional and consumption interest in participation-based experiential forms far exceeding those of traditional art contexts [1]. Educational Institutions, Museums and urban cultural Planning Bodies have been initiating research on using immersive theatrical methods to promote cultural Education; However, Theoretical Frameworks or guidelines needed for such applications are not yet fully developed in academic Literature.

Cultural-oriented planning provides a way of analysing the problem in question here. Some scholars believe that cultural education should be seen less as a subject of pedagogy than as part of the entire design scheme for community development, resource allocation and political governance[2].

Therefore, from a broad perspective, does immersion necessarily mean that it will have an educational effect; rather, whether there are the underlying systems and Institutions conducive to long-term sustainable development of such immersive theatre culture-based educational activities is another issue.

This paper addresses this issue by reviewing the theoretical basis for immersion narratives and theatre dramas' connections with cultural education; Analyse empirical evidence of theatrical cultural education outcomes; And put forward a three-level implementation system based on cultural planning rules.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

Three theories that are highly beneficial in exploring immersive narratives within cultural planning contexts.

According to Dewey's educational idea, there can be no actual learning without some meaningful experience for learners[3]. Dewey believed that an educational object has no independent value; only continuous growth is truly valuable; interaction is how this change takes place in education. Immersive narratives can meet both conditions simultaneously in that traditional cultural education cannot. Place participants in stories with Environments requiring active Interpretation and personal reactions to create an ongoing sense of engagement similar to that found in educational experience by Dewey. Embodied, multisensory characters of immersivity are in line with current understandings that emotionally charged and physically involved learners' development is richer and more durable compared to passively absorbing information.

The theatre of Boal extends theatrical education to the realm of social action by arguing that theatrical performance is an exercise in rehearsing agency for social change [4]. The works of Boal include Forum Theatre, Image Theatre and Invisible Theatre, which are ways for non-professionals to investigate society through examination and reformation. In terms of cultural education, the proposed framework proposes that immersive theatrical activities should be treated as interactive Spaces to challenge the mainstream narrative of culture and construct new Cultural identities among diverse Communities that are underrepresented in mainstream cultural Institutions.

According to Schechner's environmental theatre theory, the Spatial organisation and relationships of performance directly influence participants' experiences and meanings in culture [9]. Environmental theatrical organisation eliminates passivity, replacing it with an active exploration of the space and encounter among people; Therefore, participants become agents in cultural experiences instead of mere receivers. Immersive narratives, therefore, have cultural education capabilities unavailable in traditional theatre or classrooms through a reorienting perspective.

Bianchini and Parkinson's cultural planning model integrates them into the context of governance and policies [3]. Cultural planning regards cultural resources as essential parts of the development strategy for communities and transforms cultural education from a teaching issue to an educational problem: How can deliberate creation of environmental conditions for sustainable, fair-immersive theatrical cultural education be carried out in different institutions?

2.2. Empirical Evidence

Catterall's long-term research based on the educational longitudinal survey of more than 25,000 Chinese school children showed that persistent participation in drama activities correlated positively with higher academic performance, a stronger sense of citizenship, and more pro-social behaviour; These benefits were especially apparent for students from disadvantaged economic backgrounds [5].

According to Nicholson's research on applied theatre in community settings, participatory theatrical experiences were found to be far more engaging for cultural learning outcomes compared with traditional presentations[6]; moreover, the participants showed greater attention and elaboration during their reflections[7]. The Rohd's Community Theatre research documented how theatrical participation provides special Conditions for Cross-Cultural Communication and Interpersonal Understanding not easily reached through traditional multicultural Education Approach. Edmiston's research into dramatic engagement shows that, although triggered by theatrical works to an extent, people's perceptions of Values and culture tend not to be long-lasting[10].

3. METHODOLOGY

Synthesise the theory-based analysis, publically available cultural sector data and peer reviewed empirical research results together. Quantitative data on cultural participation and immersive entertainment market are obtained from the public available industry report of themed entertainment association [1] and Cultural Development indicators set by UNESCO [8]; Both methods offer empirically rigorous, continuous-collected cultural sector trend data in multiple countries and regions internationally. The above-selected sources provide the broadest possible access to publicly available data related to the research conclusions of this paper to ensure the independent verifiability of all quantitative evidence.

The empirical literature studied covers foundation theories at the middle of this century until recently's applied theatre and immersion experiences' researches; therefore, it can be traced as a whole line of thinking from both theoretical development and current practical evidence. Selected studies had been published in peer review journals, directly related to theatre drama or immersive narratives in educational and public contexts, involved different research methods, and the purpose was not limited to obtaining a monolithic body of knowledge through a singular methodology. According to Dewey's principle of experience-based learning, Boal's concept of participation theatre and the ideas of environment-theatre by Schechner, Bianchini and Parkinson, combined with these four theories at once can help interpret empirical data presented in Chapters 3-4, ultimately forming a systemised implementation plan.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The Contemporary Landscape

According to UNESCO data, there are still some deficiencies in cultural activities across different social classes; low-income individuals tend not to participate more formally and regularly. Not only are there deficiencies in finance[8], but also deep-seated differences exist in culture that separate institutional presentations from actual life among many community residents. Due to its stronger participation and embodiment, immersive narration provides a wider channel for uninvolved people in the general public to enter traditional higher-culture.

There are numerous institutions present now. According to TEA data, the worldwide Immersive Experience industry exceeded \$24.2 billion in 2019; therefore, immersive forms have entered mainstream culture consumption and institutional programmes [1]. The education institution and cultural centre have introduced immersion-based drama activities into their course contents recently, but the training on how to enhance students' comprehension of culture via those activities is typically fragmented. With digital technology integration to a greater degree, there has been an increase in complexity: AR (augmented reality), interactive projections, and dynamic environment-responsive Design enable unprecedented richness; However, it is prone to sacrificing education for showmanship, requiring meticulous cultural-plan positioning.

4.2. How Immersive Narrative Produces Cultural Education Outcomes

Four mutually linked Dimensions constitute the unique quality of the empirical study's document of theatrical cultural education.

Cultural experience-based engagement refers to the Quality of learning produced by participant agency in cultural environment construction activities. According to Dewey, why this matter educationally; requiring the demand for an individual sense of meaning-making in experience, which can generate genuine knowledge rather than simple absorption of external information. Immersive theatrical Environment Achieves These Goals Through Situation-Setting That Requires Participants to Have Agency.

Immersive experience-based narrative identity creation allows people to have more profound understanding of the cultural Identity beyond their actual circumstances. Edmiston's research shows that dramatic immersion can shape cultural self- perception and ethical judgment over time after the event [10]. Immersive Theatre calls for imagination when encountering strange Cultures, and such experiences are expected to help cultivate narrativist Empathy required by intercultural Education for better Understanding Others.

The cultural participation of communities refers to how well-immersive practice can involve residents in generating their own culture. Based on Boal's participatory ideas, [4] immersive Practices rooted in community narrative and history have the power to transform cultural education from one of information transmission into generative Community practice where Cultural meaning is produced actively by people, thus achieving democracy among institutional systems often missing this capability.

Regarding the importance of cultivating cross-cultural Communication skills in various education environments differs. Rohd's research shows that through the process of participatory theatre, there are Conditions For Genuine Inter-cultural Dialogue That Conventional Multicultural Education Cannot Generate. The collaborative problem in building immersive narratives requires individuals from different cultural backgrounds to work collaboratively sincerely so as to form a kind of practical interpersonal skills known as intercultural competence.

4.3. What Gets in the Way

Although all models have some culture-education function in different aspects; However, none has been able to achieve this goal completely after being implemented for a long time because many barriers were encountered when using cultural planning techniques.

Resource intensity can reflect one kind of structure directly. High-Quality Immersive Theatrical Experiences need to be built with substantial investments in Spatial Design, technological Infrastructure, practitioners' skills, and continuous programme Development beyond the capacity of most educational and cultural organisations facing tight budgets [2]. If there is no specific and continuous funding mechanism, immersion theatre cultural education may remain within the scope of high-end institutions' resources and groups, repeating problems instead of solving them in cultural planning frameworks.

The practitioner's ability must also be considered separately. Immersive narratives and application-theatre processes need effective facilitation to be realised; thus, an individual must possess multiple skills: theatrical techniques, education-facilitation ability, cultural knowledge and community-activation capability. This combination of difficulties is actually unmanageable for development, especially harder to concentrate among a small number of individuals; Therefore, scaling immersive theatrical cultural education requires an all-encompassing investment in the cultivation pathway of practitioners that many cultural and educational institutions have yet to build.

There is also an evaluation problem. Most culturally-education-related outcomes distinct to an immersive-theatrical experience setting are difficult to quantify via traditional educational assessment tools due to their non-representable nature in quantitative data form. This is why it can be difficult to prove the impact of the programme at institutional managers' and policy funds' eyes; due to the uniformity of evaluation criteria, they cannot show tangible results for their work in evaluating whether the programmes have brought real benefits.

5. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Based on cultural planning ideas, this paper designs a three-level structure system aiming to overcome the limitations revealed in the study of section four and provide structural guarantees for the sustainable operation and fair implementation of immersive theatre culture education under different institution and social environment settings.

The first level is institutional construction. Cultural organisations, educational institutes and local government departments in cities should build independent programme systems and ensure continuous resources for immersive theatrical culture education beyond project grants; They do not produce a single performance but lack institutional learning outcomes or community relationship building. Developing or improving physical space for supporting an immersion-type theatre format; Establishing practitioner development channels to enhance the specialist facilitation capability needed by this form of performance; Embedding immersive theatrical culture education into a larger system of cultural strategy in institutions, connecting particular programmes with recognised community cultural demands. Based on the cultural planning principles proposed by Bianchini and Parkinson [2], infrastructural investment Activities are intended to achieve actual education or social goals in the community rather than to safeguard an institution's private interest.

The second level is programme Design and community Co-creation. Immersion narratives, theatre drama programmes with real cultural education potential that can't be created within institutions and received by passively acting communities are not feasible. Based on Boal's participatory principle [4] and Schechner's environmental-theatre framework [9], an effective programme should be designed collaboratively to involve the community in its construction as co-creators; The core of these programmes is derived from the rich cultural content such as stories, history, identities within communities. The community co-creation process, on the other hand, is neither an individual participation mechanism nor a way to obtain cultural authenticity and community ownership in order for immersive theatrical experience to resonate with audiences authentically and educate them effectively as institutions' cultural products. The evaluation model should be developed in conjunction with this; it is necessary to combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches through various means; there must be grounds for proving that these forms have contributed educational value.

The third category, that is to say, a policy-and-advisory level of operation. To realise the educational value in immersive narratives and theatre drama with a significant audience needs to establish policy systems that treat them as acceptable forms of culture-based education, providing necessary support systematically. UNESCO's culture-for-development concept offers international reference for positioning cultural education within the larger scope of sustainable development objectives [8]; thus, providing support in policy advocacy that recognises its status as an essential part of global discourse on educational inclusiveness. Cultural, educational and community development policy departments need to work closely together at a cross-sectional level across multiple fronts to create an institutional environment where immersive theatrical cultural education has the space to grow healthily; otherwise, each of these programmes may end up operating independently without connection to others.

6. CONCLUSION

Immersive narration and theatre drama have an advantage over many traditional culture-based educational methods in providing people with a sense of being immersed in a cultural world directly, without merely acting as observers. According to the review of relevant evidence, there is indeed a tangible effect on these aspects of education through this type of experiential difference: culture-experience, identification-narrative experience, society-participation, social-culture competence-building. These are not the accidental products but consequences of an individualised method of participation caused by immersion in theatre works; They have also received recognition from other theorists as part of this process ever since its inception.

Converting this potential into actual, accessible and fair cultural education practices is not limited to having enthusiastic forms. To create an institutional infrastructure, a community co-design process, a practitioner training pathway, and supporting policies for cultural planning practices can be designed to produce them. In this paper, based on the theory of building an integrated three-tier system to achieve education through immersive drama and under a realistic examination of the limitations affecting its realisation systematically, we have put forward our own proposal.

Future studies need to conduct long-term evaluations of immersive theatrical cultural education programmes in different communities to explore issues related to equity and the environments that help such programs better serve communities whose cultural backgrounds are historically marginalised by traditional educational systems.

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