RESISTANCE TOWARDS THE USE OF DRAMA AMONG ESL LECTURERS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN KUCHING

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate a case study on ESL teachers’ resistance towards the use of drama in selected institutions of higher learning in Kuching. The benefits that emanate from the use of drama are unquestionable. There are many success stories or researches done that verify the goodness and benefit of drama in ESL classes. However, there are many teachers who are reluctant to use drama as a tool to improve students’ communication and enhance their confidence. With that said, this case study is created with three objectives in mind; to find the causes of resistance towards drama, to determine whether teachers’ teaching strategies affect their planning of the lessons that cause the resistance and to seek alternatives to drama in the case where teachers totally resist its use. Ten ESL teachers (lecturers) are selected and then interviewed via real-time online interview. Based on the interview, the answers to the three research questions are answered and deeper insights into teachers’ point of view are shown. In the final chapter, four categories of teachers are categorised based on their resisting ways; teachers who have used drama and found drama successful and thus continued its usage, teachers who have used drama but found it difficult to be incorporated into the current syllabus and ceased its usage, teachers who have never used drama and would not use it in the future and finally teachers who have never used drama but eventually tried it and continued its usage. Finally, recommendations are then given at the final chapter to assist the four categories of teachers further.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 1

1.1 Background of the Study ......................................................................................... 2

1.2 Statement of the Problem ......................................................................................... 3

1.3 Research Questions .................................................................................................. 4

1.4 Objectives of the Study ........................................................................................... 5

1.5 Significance of the Research Study .......................................................................... 5

1.6 Scope of Study ......................................................................................................... 6

1.7 Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 7

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 8

2.1 Drama ........................................................................................................................ 8

2.1.1 What is Drama? .................................................................................................... 8

2.1.2 The Benefits of Drama in ESL Classes ................................................................. 9

2.2 Resistance ................................................................................................................ 11

2.2.1 Theories of Resistance to Change ..................................................................... 11

2.2.1 Teachers’ Resistance towards Drama ................................................................. 12

vi
Resistance towards the use of DRAMA among ESL lecturers at
Institutions of Higher Learning in Kuching

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is abundance of benefits for using drama in the English classrooms. Drama is a special communication situation which makes considerable demands in the flexibility and skills of the teacher (Kao, 1998). DRAMA not only provides an excellent platform for exploring theoretical and practical aspects of the English language (Whiteson, 1996), but also has the potential of making the learning experience fun for the students and even memorable because it is interactive and visual (Boudreault, 2010). Additionally, drama has the potential to empower students, give them many opportunities to have pride in their work, it teaches them responsibility, problem solving, management and directing proficiencies (Boudreault, 2010). Although drama has the potential to improve the sense of confidence in the student in his or her ability to learn the target language (Wessels, 1987), many ESL lecturers at Institutions of Higher Learning in Kuching are hesitant to use drama in their classrooms. In view of the many benefits for using drama, there is a need to find the causes of teachers’ reluctance towards the use of drama in ESL classes. These causes will be supported by a Theory of Resistance to Change (Chapter 2) that explains why humans are prone to resisting ideas. Their causes of resistance, teaching strategies, and alternatives for teaching are the three major scopes for this study that focuses on the use of drama in teaching English.
1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As an educator of close to 15 years, many teaching strategies and methodologies have been tried and tested. Most of the time, the outcome has always been phenomenal. Nevertheless, that feat has not limited my experimentation in using different methods of teaching. It is during this time that a lot of reflection on my past experiences in university was done. During university, the exposure to drama had shaped me into a drama enthusiast. At first the idea of incorporating drama in the lessons was exciting but after a while it was not as easy as it seemed. All the same, the effect of drama on my teaching and students were astounding that despite all the difficulties, the effort has to be continued. And it was during this time a lot of silent observation on my teaching colleagues had taken place. It was discovered that drama was not a really popular teaching tool among teachers. I was the only ESL teacher (in the English department) at that time that used drama in my lessons.

Ironically, most of the other ESL colleagues would be excited if they were invited to watch a mini play at the end of the semester. Compliments and congratulatory remarks were made and questions were asked on how the preparations came through. There were times where we would sit down and discuss on various methods on how to motivate students to use the language in a colourful way and most of them would love the idea of using drama in their lessons but despite all these, none of them were motivated enough to ACTUALLY try it out. After a while it has dawned upon me that there was and still is a resistance in incorporating drama in their lessons. I have since moved on to a new teaching place and to my dismay I am still the ONLY one incorporating drama into my lessons. My question is why are they resisting a teaching