Africa Oral Traditions: Riddles among the Haya of Northwestern Tanzania

Johnson M. Ishengoma

Abstract

This study argues for the integration of African oral traditions and other elements of traditional learning into the modern school curriculum. It thus contributes to supporting the increased relevance of education to local communities. In particular, using the example of riddles collected from one of the main ethnic groups in Northwestern Tanzania, the Haya people, the present study challenges the views of those social and cultural anthropologists who hold that African riddles have no substantially meaningful educational value. Instead, it is maintained that riddles make an important contribution to children's full participation in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of African communities, especially by fostering critical thinking and transmitting indigenous knowledge.