

**FORUM THEATRE AS PERFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY IN THE
TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

In the subject of

Comparative Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR B SMIT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my parents for the gift of my life and all the bounty it contains. For your nurturing and support through all the years. You are an inspiration that I look to and where I find guidance.

Thank you to my children who have sacrificed many hours when I was unavailable for activities with you or even just to talk to all of you. You kept me going when I was feeling uninspired or unproductive. Michelle, thank you for patiently reading my chapters as I went along and being willing to talk to me about the content. Richard for helping me to sort out some of my technical challenges and for helping me to get started with sifting and sorting through all the piles of data that I had collected in the school. Annebelle and Nicholas for keeping the laughter alive when I sometimes felt down in the dumps during my journey with this thesis. Thank you to my loving extended family and friends who encouraged, showed an interest, and kept me motivated and engaged along the way.

Thank you to my two supervisors. Prof Eleanor Lemmer who supervised me during the first three years and set me such a sterling example. Besides guiding me on how to engage with the literature, you always inspired me. I really missed you when you went on retirement. I am grateful to Prof Brigitte Smit who was willing to take over my supervision and who challenged me in different ways. You encouraged me to work more independently and challenged me to be more interpretive and proficient at weaving in the academic discourse. You have both taught me a great deal, for which I am truly grateful.

My gratitude goes to all the participants in the study who gave of their energy and creativity with so much enthusiasm and who were so supportive of all my endeavours.

ABSTRACT

The South African school curriculum recognises the vital importance of life skills acquisition through the learning area, Life Orientation (referred to in the primary school as Life Skills). The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Life Skills (Creative Arts) for the Intermediate Phase promotes drama-based instruction in life skills learning. The curriculum links to Forum Theatre techniques which are aimed at the learner's holistic development through, among others, social game playing, improvised role-play and devising and performing a problem play which includes audience participation mediated by a 'Joker,' a facilitator role usually filled by an experienced and trained teacher. Children learn about the self, their peers and society through reality-based exploration and the conflicts that arise due to socialisation and power-based problems. Cognitive behavioural, existential and experiential learning theories and the theatrical theory and practice of Augusto Boal, who invented Forum Theatre as part of the Theatre of the Oppressed, formed the framework for this performative case study inquiry conducted in a South African primary school. A researcher-designed Forum Theatre intervention was implemented by the Grade 6 (Creative Arts) teacher with four Grade 6 classes over eight weeks in Life Skills (Creative Arts) classes, culminating in Forum Theatre performances by the four classes, respectively. Data were gathered through classroom observation in which the researcher assumed the role of observer-participant, conducted individual and focus group interviews with Grade 6 teachers, did interviews with Grade 6 learners, took video recordings of learners' classroom activities, recorded the Forum Theatre performances, and collected the learners' written reflections. The findings indicated: the process adjustments required to facilitate Forum Theatre activities in a primary school setting; effectiveness of experiential learning of life skills through game-playing and discovery; performative pedagogy fostered life skill acquisition; performative pedagogy harnessed non-verbal, embodied learning to build social insight; and describes the teacher experience in implementing a Forum Theatre intervention. Recommendations for practice include teacher training for experiential, explorative, and performance-based teaching in line with the CAPS document, which provides for a range of performative teaching and learning activities to promote effective life skills acquisition in primary school learners.

KEY TERMS

AUGUSTO BOAL

FORUM THEATRE

PERFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY

PERFORMATIVE INQUIRY

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

LIFE ORIENTATION

LIFE SKILLS

DECLARATION

I declare that “Forum Theatre as Performative Pedagogy in the Teaching and Learning of Life Orientation in Primary Schools in South Africa” (title of my thesis) is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND, PROBLEM FORMULATION, AND AIMS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Discovering how the world works, who you are, what talents you have and how you best fit within this world leads to an interesting voyage of discovery, and this journey holds valuable learning for every human being. Life Orientation (LO) as a learning area addresses several aspects integral to building up the knowledge and skills that every person needs for a grounded, balanced, and healthy life (Rooth 2005: 283). Life Orientation is a learning area in the South African education system that fits within that vision (Department of Basic Education [DBE] 2011a). The Life Orientation learning area enables learners to embark on a journey of discovery into what makes and equips them to be healthy, grounded human beings who are part of a community and larger society. Life Orientation teachers can guide, inspire, and explain where needed as learners explore for themselves how this human “landscape” of social engagement and interaction between people works. In my opinion, a good Life Orientation teacher will try to enrich her learners by exploring the subject matter through creative and innovative teaching methods; and encourage interaction with the other learners during group work to engage the talents, thoughts, and insights of the learners in the process of learning. Such a teacher can energise, engage, and draw out the enthusiasm of the children and thus can play a vital role in achieving personal growth through life skills development.

On the international front, the importance of life skills, which forms part of Life Orientation, has been recognised in various international protocols. In the year 2000, at the World Education Forum which was held in Dakar, a Framework for Action (UNICEF Report 2004:3) was adopted as

a possible framework for a life skills approach that fosters the acquisition of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills through the four pillars of learning by stating that all children, young people, and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be.

The World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO 2004: 29-31), amongst others, advocate the importance of teaching life skills to ground people and help them in their fight for survival. The need for teaching life skills was

discussed in-depth on an International level during a United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting held at the WHO headquarters in Geneva on 6-7 April 1998. This led to the publication of a document in 1999 (WHO 1999) which explains the relevance and meaning of life skills. The participants of this meeting defined life skills as skills “designed to facilitate the practice and strengthening of psychosocial skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way” (WHO 1999) to promote individual and social development and prevent health issues, avoid community conflict and protect human rights. They also agreed on five general learning areas which were seen to be relevant across cultures. These are “decision-making and problem-solving; creative thinking and critical thinking; communication and interpersonal skills; self-awareness and empathy; coping with emotions and coping with stress” (WHO 1999:1). The Inter-Agency meeting members also concluded that “life skills are generic skills, relevant to many diverse experiences throughout life” (WHO 1999:5).

Moreover, the WHO document states that life skills training should be aimed at developing healthy behaviour and mental well-being. Teachers should be an example that learners can follow and the classroom a safe environment, which is “conducive to the practice and reinforcement of skills” (WHO 1999:5). To substantiate further the document suggests participatory learning methods could ease life skills acquisition and are best taught by first hearing an explanation of the skill in question; then allowing observation of the skill (modelling) which is followed by practice of the skill in selected situations in a supportive learning environment; and lastly that it is important to also provide feedback about individual performance of skills (WHO 1999:5-6). The definition of life skills does not change fundamentally in the next decade. It is defined more concisely by UNICEF (2012: 1) as “a large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills that can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help lead to a healthy and productive life”.

In the past twenty years International children’s organisations such as UNICEF and UNESCO have been productive at improving the conditions of impoverished and struggling children in various part of the world. UNICEF have written about the importance of live skills training together with mathematical, science and language skills development, to assist children to rise out of their difficult situations. In the Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes published in 2012, an evaluation was done to ascertain “where, how and why progress is being made and the difference it is making in the lives of children, women, and communities around the world.” (UNICEF 2012). One of the findings out of this report is that teachers are not adequately supported with “professional development structures for teachers of life skills education” (UNICEF. 2012. ix). There also are indications that the current teacher training is not “adequately addressing important elements for life skills education delivery, such as the

psychosocial skills and attitudes of the teachers themselves” (UNICEF. 2012. ix). The other gap identified in the report is that there is a lack of “clear guidelines on life skills education assessment that could support the integration of effective life skills education assessment into education systems, schools and classrooms” (UNICEF. 2012. xi) and that UNICEF should help to develop such guidelines.

The practice of life skills can be assisted through “drama techniques such as role-play, image work, spotlighting, hot seating, and parallel play to provide a means to acquire, experience, and enhance the aspects of emotional intelligence” (Van de Water, M et al. 2015). These techniques assist when developing psychosocial and interpersonal skills by showing children in a pretended reality how their behaviour can have an impact on the outcome of a probable or possible situation. Life skill learning is enhanced by a pragmatic approach, such as when working through the various stages of reaching a decision. Furthermore, the WHO report (1999:6) stated that life skills learning is best achieved through “group work, discussion, debate, story-telling, peer-supported learning, and practical community development projects”. The team also advocated that life skill lessons should be fun and applicable. This could be supported by a dramatic techniques and games programme that creates awareness of body language and interpersonal dynamics to support psychosocial and interpersonal skills. This kind of learning is experiential and arises out of the concerns of the gathered group. In a school context it could give rise to a child based, explorative learning approach.

Further, WHO (1999:6) states that life skills learning cannot be facilitated based on information or discussion alone. It is not only an active learning process, but it must also include experiential learning, i.e., practical experience and reinforcement of the skills for each student in a supportive learning environment. The introduction of life skills education requires teacher training to promote effective implementation of the programme. Teacher training takes place in teacher training colleges and universities but is also possible through in-service training. The successful implementation of a life skills programme depends on well-developed training materials for teacher trainers; clear instruction booklets, provision of lesson plans, and a framework for a sequential, developmentally suitable programme. To keep standards and achievement levels high, teacher training and continuing support in the use of the programme materials are imperative.

The document (WHO 1999) also argues that life skills education should continue throughout the school career, from school entry (in South Africa, the year the child becomes seven) until school leaving age groups (usually at eighteen years). Life skills education penetrates the entire curriculum, works across the curriculum either as a separate subject, integrated into a subject or as a mix. It needs to be adjusted regularly to be aligned with the changes that take

place. The development of life skills education is “a dynamic and evolving process, which should involve children, parents and the local community in making decisions about the content of the programme” (WHO 1999:6).

Life Orientation as a learning area in South African schools was introduced as part of general curriculum renewal that occurred after the political changes ushered in 1994. The African National Congress (ANC) introduced Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) through Curriculum C2005. It was based on “an integrated knowledge system across eight learning areas, which was learner centred” (Rooth 2005: 20). The eight learning areas on which the curriculum was structured were Life Orientation, Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, and Economic and Management Sciences. The Life Orientation curriculum of the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE 2011a:4) is aimed at

...equipping learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country (Department of Basic Education 2011a:4).

The DBE (2011a) in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades R-12 indicates in the general aims of the Curriculum that Life Orientation should give “expression to the knowledge, skills, and values worth learning in South African schools.” This curriculum aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts while being sensitive to global imperatives.

Seven principles are mentioned to give context to the general aims for Life Orientation. For this research, these two principles are of relevance:

- Active and critical learning encourages an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths such as scientifically proven facts;
- Credibility, quality, and efficiency must be considered when providing an education that is comparable in quality, breadth, and depth to those of other countries. (DBE 2011a:4)

The NCS for Grades R-12 aims to produce problem solvers, critical but creative decision-makers, efficient individuals able to interact as organised, and responsible members of an effective team. Moreover, learners should have the ability to gather, analyse, arrange and critically appraise information and should be able to communicate by means of visual, symbolic and/or language skills; use science and technology effectively and critically showing

responsibility towards the environment and health of others; and lastly demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that a problem solving context does not exist in isolation” (DBE 2011a:5).

In the Intermediate Phase in South African schools the learning area, Life Orientation, is dealt with in the Grade 4-6 Life Skills¹ curriculum which comprises of three components: Personal Social Wellbeing (PSW), Creative Arts (CA), and Physical Education (PE) (DBE 2011b). The Creative Arts component (DBE 2011b:36) identifies the following four topics, among others, with suggested activities:

Topic 1: Warm up and play: includes different games involving trust and listening games, and posture games to highlight the learner’s awareness of the body;

Topic 2: Improvise and create: includes mime, role play, tableaux or ‘frozen pictures’ and the use of rhythm and melody;

Topic 3: Read, interpret and perform: includes building a drama which incorporates introducing and resolving a conflict, a dialogue, a storyline with characters and plot, tableaux at start and end of the play and limited dialogue;

Topic 4: Appreciate and reflect: includes a learner’s response to and consideration of one’s own and others’ performance.

The Grade 6 *Spot On Life Orientation* textbook used by many South African schools during life skills teaching and learning (Carstens et al. 2012) covers life skills such as personal and social well-being; caring for animals; caring for and being kind to people; nation-building and cultural heritage; gender stereotyping, sexism and abuse. Moreover, the Creative Arts (CA) section in the textbook engages learners in the warm-up and play activities, provides an opportunity to improvise and create, read, interpret, and perform a short play per the CAPS Grade 4-6 CA curriculum outlined in the foregoing section above.

The position of CA in the Grade 4-6 Life Skills curriculum (DBE 2011b) links directly to the central focus of this study: the role of dramatic arts in the teaching and learning of life skills. Dalrymple (2006: 202) maintains, “Drama workshops and public performances of theatre both have the potential to provide education and information and to stimulate action within young people and thus effect social change.” Moore (2009:85) concurs that drama can assist

¹ Note the change in terminology. The Intermediate Phase CAPS document (2011b) uses the term Life Skills. In the secondary phase, Life Orientation is used. However, in practice in many South African primary schools, teachers use the terms interchangeably. In this thesis I refer primarily to life skills in the Grade 6 context, the focus of the case study.

learners in developing “empathy and sensitivity” through “role-play, improvisation and extended improvised drama”. In her opinion, the dramatic arts in a teaching context “holds the potential to effect emotional and cognitive change and thus transforms the individual” (2009: 86). She (2009: 82-85) concludes that when people engage in the dramatic arts, the experience enhances social, language, and creative thinking skills. Through role-play, the participants can imagine what life is like for another person which increases their empathetic skills. Learners who participate in drama activities can gain more insight into themselves and their social group by means of the experience. In her study Moore (2009: 232-233) showed how tolerance, cultural competence and a better appreciation for diversity was instilled in the adolescent participants that took part in an arts-based inquiry in a South African secondary school.

Moore (2009: 248-249) concludes

Drama can be used as an effective instructional tool to improve understanding of diversity and facilitate a greater degree of cultural competency amongst learners and educators by specifically exploring and sharing awareness and sensitivity of individuals’ and their peers’ identity. Drama is an effective instructional tool for the facilitation of a more apt understanding and acceptance of individual identities within differing cultures.

Moore’s study (2009) demonstrated the value of drama as an instructional technique and made use of role-play, improvisation, ethno-drama, audience interaction and Forum Theatre. Researchers have also indicated that there are six aspects to drama instruction, as listed by Heras and Tabara (2014), that could hinder performative teaching activities. The limitations that would need to be addressed or overcome are the following. This type of instruction “maybe feasible only with small populations” which means small class sizes. In South African schools in 2019 the class sizes were pushed to the maximum and thus a teacher struggled to keep everyone focused during creative arts lessons. Drama instruction requires “theatrical and facilitation skills”. Few intermediate phase teachers are trained in these theatrical, drama, and performance skills. The product that arises out of the improvisation is very much “dependent upon facilitator skills” is another point raised by Heras and Tabara (2014). They share drama instruction is very time consuming for all the productive team persons and further is “dependent on the participants community agenda”. Finally, the cost of a production can be high when it is “dependent upon a theatrical facilitation team” (2014: 393). Much depends upon the expectations and resources of the school environment. All these aspects constrain a teacher when attempting to teach children social skills by means of a drama skill. The case study upon

which this thesis is based required a performance and improvisation-based teaching approach that culminated in a short theatrical performance presented and used within a forum theatre context.

Wong (2014) agrees that a drama programme requires extra input for teachers in his article on establishing a school-based drama programme. He points out that teachers with no prior experience with drama need to be trained to develop them as proficient users of drama and performance-based teaching. Performance based teaching or performative pedagogy in this thesis means teaching children by means of their played, pretended or improvised performances of roles and characters within the safe space of their creative arts drama classes. It further points to a short problem scene which each class created as a collective under guidance of their teacher for analysis and problem-solving purposes in a Forum theatre-based lesson culmination that occurred at the end of the third term. In the ensuing section, attention is given to Forum Theatre as a performative instructional strategy for promoting life skills acquisition in schools.

Due to many misunderstandings existing in the understanding around the presentation of a drama programme within a school it is important to understand the difference between a drama and a theatre activity. Drama refers to the activities close to the core dramatic tension in a situation or between people. In its simplest form it refers to when people act.

"[T]heatre" means "to gaze on" implying the presence of spectators, whereas "drama" is "a thing done" or an event in which those present are not so much onlookers as active participants. The distinction, then, is to some extent dependent on the nature and quality of the involvement in a specific activity or the degree and kind of participation in it (Baker, 1973)

Theatre generally is associated with the performance of a rehearsed show presented before an audience. Performance is defined by Schechner (1973: 8) as the:

whole constellation of events, most of them passing unnoticed, that takes place in both performers and audience from the time the first spectator enters the field of the performance – the precinct where the theatre takes place – to the time the last spectator leaves.

In the life skills training facilitated by means of drama games and playful activities that take place in the first stage, and the presentation and theatrical skills required in the second stage of a Forum theatre intervention, both drama and theatre skills are needed. The combination of the two is encapsulated in the term performance skills and hence performative pedagogy is required for a Forum Theatre intervention.

1.2 FORUM THEATRE AND LIFE SKILLS ACQUISITION

Forum Theatre techniques first developed by Augusto Boal (1979, 1992) are an appropriate means to promote effective teaching and learning. "Forum theatre is a theatrical game in which a problem is shown in an unsolved form, to which the audience is invited to suggest and enact solutions" (Jackson in Boal 2002: xxiv). "The aim is always to elicit an acted response to show different options and to help people become the heroes that bring about change in their own lives. (Jackson in Boal 2002: xxiv). Boal's contribution to the theatrical body of knowledge lies in the realm of theatre for change; change on a political level as well as on a more social and a personal level. Using his knowledge of the theatre, he took the theatrical process a step further, working with a community to make plays based on what oppresses them or takes away their own power, to help them. The theatrical experience helps a community to explore their issues and find ways in which they can change their circumstances, helping them to help themselves (McNiff 2004). When the resultant plays are then performed for the rest of their community, the audience can participate as a "spect-actor". This is the term for an audience member who engages with the enacted problem but understands the behaviour differently and to clarify steps onto the stage to replace an actor to show how they understand or would behave differently to the original actor in the role. Usually, the protagonist is replaced, but it can also be a bystander or the antagonist who is replaced. The aim is to clarify how a power construct between people appears and works. The spect-actor thus becomes a part of the theatrical engagement and participates in exploring the options for change. Boal's techniques have been embraced in many different contexts, from political protest to educational, therapeutic and health contexts, to name but a few areas of application.

What Boal (2002) understood very well was the value of the communication that occurs by means of the body and how a group of people has many answers to their problems in their collective pool of knowledge. These are waiting to be explored and discovered through the extended theatrical process which engages the insights of the audience as well. His Forum Theatre workshops begin with a series of exercises for the participants aimed at increasing the participant's physical awareness, to sensitise the body's expressivity and to rediscover the capabilities of the human body to communicate through body language. As people sum each other up in their first encounter, they daily make use of information which they see in the bodies of other human beings. However perhaps with greater levels of literacy gained through schooling, humans have begun to rely more on the use of language, both verbal and written, and thus have become over-dependent upon the use of words, with much less awareness placed upon body language which accompanies this. In my opinion, children use this "reading" of the behaviour of a person and incorporate what they observe in others in their responses as the body does not lie in the way words can. People do not always say what they are thinking

and thus might cover over a deeper not exposed truth. It is difficult to be economical with the truth through body language, and thus, body language often is an honest expression of the state of a person's soul. Boal suggests that his re-sensitising exercises for the body are mostly done in silence. However, there is space for talking about the experience after an exercise is completed by asking the participants, "How was it?" In Boal's book *Games for actors and non-actors* (2002), he describes a vast number of such exercises that can be used in the warm-up to a Forum Theatre exploration. Boal, in a magpie fashion, collected many of these "theatrical" games during his travels, many of them are games that are played by children (Boal 2002).

Exploring the body's expressivity and body language employing these games helps to make the participants aware of their physical limitations, abandoning habitual behaviour as well as exploring the possibilities offered through physical communication. The games sensitise players to how much they can communicate using their bodies. At the start of a Forum Theatre workshop, the participants experiment and explore their body's expressivity, mirroring each other and even sculpting through their bodies. In the later stages, the themes explored would spring from questions such as "What makes you feel powerless?" to visualise those matters which the participants feel oppress them. Members of the group would be encouraged to think about this question and to explore such moments through body language; making use of each other's bodies to display what such disempowering moments look like. The beauty of Boal's techniques is that they enable people to learn through exploration rather than by being told what they should do. Together the group discovers their options, seeing and exploring what the various reactions can solve or how to change an oppressive circumstance that they feel disempowered by (Boal 1995, 1998, 2002 and 2006).

Effective communication takes place when a sender's message is fully understood by the receiver. Such communication is only successful once a message is passed on from the person who wishes to say something to the person who is listening to the information. The transmitter is the person who passes on a message to another, and the person to whom the message is being given is the receiver. Communication is successful when a response is given back again to the transmitter to confirm that the receiver has indeed received and made sense of the message. Boal's Forum Theatre communication also closes the loop of communication with his theatrical approach as he does not just craft a message together with his workshop participants/actors to present on stage before an audience, (transmitting the message outwardly) he takes it a step further as it also engages the audience into the communication process (receiver of the message responds) to reflect how they have understood. He allows audience members to step onto the stage to take over the role of an actor if they feel there is something that should be added or changed to the portrayal of a role. In this manner, Boal (1979, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2006) has achieved a higher level of engagement with his

audience because he has made them part of the communication chain. He coined the term “spect-actors” for participating audience members, and by allowing them to go through the invisible fourth wall in a theatre which exists between the acting space and the audience, and move onto the stage, he gives a voice to all the members of a community. In this manner he helps them to find their own answers, options, and solutions to the situations that they find themselves in and that they identify are disempowering to them. It is not a free for all process but is managed by means of a “joker” who engages with the audience. The joker selects persons with a possible solution or with a viable idea to step on stage to try to change the dynamics of the scene performed to achieve a better outcome and solve the problem while on stage.

After creating short plays to describe disempowering circumstances in the group’s lives, the most poignant plays are presented to the audience made up of other community members. Boal (1995, 2002) introduced the “Joker” role in the Forum Theatre workshop to act as a catalyst. The Joker plays an essential role in facilitating the process of discovery and in encouraging the audience to engage and take part in the forum. Further, the Joker acts as a narrator who facilitates the theatrical process by giving commentary, setting the scene, explaining what is about to happen, and later elaborating to the audience that they may take part through suggestion or participation in the exploration of the themes in the play(s). As Babbage (2004) skilfully explains

Forum Theatre initially allows audiences the security of distance and then invites, inspires or provokes them to abandon this in favour of full involvement in the ‘theatrical game’ (Jackson in Boal 1992: xxi). Forum is competitive in that it presents its audience with the challenge of an unsolved problem; one that will matter to them since it impacts on their own lives, directly or indirectly. Its principles are simple. The play – or ‘anti-model,’ as it is sometimes termed – is performed once, so the audience can observe the oppression it illustrates in action and then repeated. On the second showing, the play will follow the same course until interrupted by a member of the audience, who takes over the role of the protagonist and attempts to redirect the action and ultimately to defeat the oppressors. ... [S]pontaneous and playful developments occur within a clearly established and essentially simple structure that should ensure that the process – overseen by a careful Joker – remains understandable and accessible to all (Babbage 2004: 68-69).

The dramatic skills and techniques as developed by Boal during a Forum Theatre workshop can potentially provide participants with better insight and holds an opportunity for learning, both for the educators and the learners. The experiential learning opportunity afforded by the

dramatic exposure can lead to improved personal insight and greater cultural empathy towards their fellow students as stated by Moore (2009: 85): “Theatre is a powerful mediator which illuminates the past and provides scope for reflection upon the self and society through dramatic expression.” A Forum Theatre workshop can assist learners with exploring and evaluating their collective insights and options on a wide variety of themes in instances where they feel that they are powerless. By exploring the themes which the group identifies during the Forum Theatre workshop, the participants gain insight into the complexities of the chosen theme. Such experiential learning leads participants to become more resilient through a dramatic exploration of the complexities encountered. As an explorative life skill learning technique, it can achieve more sustainable insights, strategies, and solutions for living in a multi-cultural society.

Rooth (2005: 289) in her thesis on the acquisition of life skills, recommends that “Experiential learning, facilitation and group work should be core methodologies for Life Orientation teaching, as they are especially suitable for Life Orientation teaching and learning. Transmission teaching or chalk and talk methodologies need to be used sparingly.” Teachers cannot avoid presenting some of the information to the class but should minimise such teaching. “Active learner participation should be normative” (Rooth 2005: 289). As a Forum Theatre exploration enables experiential learning, facilitation and group work, in the implementation of all four of the topics outlined above in the CAPS Grade 4-6 Life Skills curriculum (DBE 2011b), this approach fits well as a teaching and learning strategy for South African primary schools.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

Against the background of the discussion of Forum Theatre as performative pedagogy and its potential in teaching and learning life skills within the broader Life Orientation learning area in schools in South Africa, the main research question is formulated as follows:

How can Forum Theatre as performative pedagogy be used in the teaching and learning of Life Orientation in primary schools in South Africa?

The main research question has been divided into the following sub-questions:

- What knowledge and skill domains are included in the definition of life skills / Life Orientation? What are the theoretical underpinnings and the debate surrounding these concepts? How are life skills inculcated in South African schools and elsewhere via the learning area of Life Orientation? (Chapter 2)

- What is Forum Theatre? What were the major contributions and insights that Boal contributed to theatrical enactment with an emphasis on Forum Theatre? How may Forum Theatre be used as an instructional technique in a schooling context, to achieve effective teaching and learning of life skills in Life Orientation classes in primary schools in South Africa? What are the principles and practices of Forum Theatre? Who applied Forum theatre, how did they experience it, and how did they critique it after their application in a performative context? (Chapter 3)
- How can life skills be taught and learned during Life Orientation (Creative Arts) classes attended by selected Grade 6 learners at a primary school in Pretoria, South Africa through a Forum Theatre intervention? What are the principles and practices of Forum Theatre when applied during performative inquiry in a classroom context? (Chapter 4 and 5)
- Based on the findings of the literature study and the empirical inquiry, what recommendations can be made for the improvement of practice? (Chapter 6)

1.4 AIMS

The main aim of this study was to explore how Forum Theatre as performative pedagogy can be used in the teaching and learning of Life Orientation in primary schools in South Africa.

The main aim was subdivided into the following objectives:

- To define life skills according to different perspectives and determine which knowledge and skill domains are included in the definition of life skills; to explain theoretical underpinnings and cover the debate surrounding these concepts and; to describe how life skills are inculcated in South African schools via the learning area Life Orientation (Chapter 2);
- To describe the principles and practice of Forum Theatre; to describe the major contributions and insights of Boal and what he contributed to theatrical enactment with an emphasis on Forum Theatre; to describe how Forum Theatre may be used as an instructional technique in a South African primary school context with the particular aim of achieving effective teaching and learning of life skills; to describe the application of Forum Theatre in theatrical practice and how practitioners experienced application of it; to describe what the main critiques were after application in a performative context (Chapter 3);

- To explore the teaching and learning of life skills during Life Orientation (Creative Arts) classes attended by selected Grade 6 learners at a primary school in Pretoria, South Africa by means of a Forum Theatre intervention (Chapter 4 and 5);
- Based on the findings of the literature and the empirical study, to make recommendations for the improvement of practice. (Chapter 6)

1.5 THE POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

As a lecturer in the Department of English Studies, University of South Africa (UNISA), I wished to contribute to the body of knowledge, which supports drama and performative pedagogy as an educational approach in multicultural classrooms of South African primary schools. With an MA degree in Theatre Science (drama), I was well-positioned to do this study. The thesis completed for this degree was focused on South African Theatre, primarily when used to build up the community. I am aware of the power of drama as a means of self-discovery and discovery about others. Participation in the Forum Theatre exploration assists educators in improved understanding of learners in early adolescence as a developmental stage. Besides, I believe that theatre, which deals with relevant themes chosen by the learners enables a teaching approach that provides experiential learning opportunities. An arts-based performative inquiry is one of the qualitative methods which can be used to investigate how Forum Theatre used in the Life Orientation classroom could help learners (and their teachers who participate in the role of the “Joker”) arrive at better insights into themselves, their peers and the dynamics of social communication and thus acquire essential life skills. The data gathered could assist the participants and add to the body of knowledge in the educational arena. Hence, my position as a researcher is that of an observer-participant, interpreter, and facilitator in a collaborative method of data collection and analysis.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study fits within a qualitative arts-based approach to inquiry and data collection. The research questions of this study into life skills acquisition in Life Orientation and Forum Theatre as a performative pedagogy were addressed through a literature review and an empirical inquiry. Note that only a synopsis of the performative inquiry is presented in this section (cf. 1.6.2). The full detail is presented in Chapter 4 of this study.

1.6.1 Literature review

The literature study, which informs the qualitative inquiry, had a two-pronged approach. In Chapter 2, various psychological theories relevant to life skills acquisition were explored. Prominent attention was given to the Cognitive Behavioural school of thought. This discussion was followed by the Humanistic Existential Schools of thought, and lastly, attention was paid to Experiential Learning that is situated within Social Constructivist theories. In the second half of the chapter, various applications of life skills teaching were investigated to discover how best to teach life skills. The first application of Richard Nelson-Jones (2006, 2007) was within a coaching, counselling and therapeutic context, the second by Virginia and Redford Williams operated in an anger management context, the third by Byron Katie developed from self-inquiry and introspection into understanding own life problems, and last, the application of Botvin and Griffin (2004, 2010 and 2014), within an addiction prevention health care context. In the later application, life skills are used to protect adolescents against harmful social influences.

In Chapter 3, which is the second literature study chapter, Augusto Boal (1979, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2006) is introduced. This chapter describes who he was and introduces his 'arsenal' of theatrical techniques, which is the collective name for all the theatrical practices which Boal developed and collected during his lifetime. The chapter is focused particularly on Forum Theatre; it looks at how it has been applied in different contexts, and the chapter ends with a critique on the usefulness of Forum Theatre as experienced by various practitioners in the field.

The sources consulted included books, academic journal articles, websites, official documents, legislation, relevant policy documents, and multi-media sources where appropriate. The literature provided a conceptual framework for the ensuing empirical, arts-based performative inquiry.

1.6.2 Performative inquiry

The performative inquiry occurred by means of a case study and fits in with the domain of a qualitative research methodology. This study into Forum Theatre utilised to teach in an experiential and performative manner, was arts-based, and the performative inquiry fits within the applied drama field. "Performative inquiry recognises performance as an action site of learning" (Fels and McGivern 2002: 23) and with the involvement of the participants transforms the classroom into a site of research. During the creation of a performance, Intermediate

Phase learners can begin to explore, question, and understand their social context through a physical reaction to a problem of their own choice, which is being investigated. Participants gain valuable learning employing the lived experience which takes place during the preparation of a problem play and during the actual performance where Spect-actors could grasp and recognise possibilities for themselves. As Bigalot (2007:34) argues, a performative inquiry enables participants to explore different roles and different methods as a rehearsal for life.

1.6.3 Applied Theatre

Applied Theatre as defined by Prentki and Preston (2009: 9) describes “a broad set of theatrical practices and creative processes that take participants and audiences beyond the scope of conventional, mainstream theatre into the realm of a theatre that is responsive to ordinary people and their stories, local settings, and priorities.” They go on to posit that Applied Theatre is “Theatre ‘for ‘a community”, “Theatre ‘with ‘a community” and “Theatre ‘by ‘a community” (Prentki and Preston 2009: 10) and are an “interlocking set of practices based on some universal principles which can, to a degree, operate across the contexts in which these processes are applied”. According to Prentki and Preston (2009: 13), while working within this interactive paradigm, Boal became the “guru of applied theatre across the globe.” Applied theatre manifests in three primary fields of application which are “community theatre,” “Theatre in Education (TiE) and “Theatre for Development (TfD). The main intention is to “employ theatre processes in the service of self-development, well-being and social change.” They (2009: 14) write that this kind of theatre is:

...subject to differing interpretation and understanding by practitioners, and is influenced by context and the social, cultural or political landscapes which shape the artistic interventions that are created.

1.6.4 Selection of site and participants

An English medium, multicultural public primary school in Pretoria, South Africa near my work and home was selected through purposeful and convenience sampling as the site of the study. The selected school follows the CAPS Life Skills curriculum for Grades 4-6 (DBE 2011b) and has considerable prior experience in drama teaching and drama productions; thus, it offered an apt opportunity for the implementation of a performative inquiry and constituted an information-rich site. Purposefully selected participants were the four Grade 6 classes and the

Grade 6 (CA) teacher as well as the Life Orientation Head of Department (HOD) and other Grade 6 teachers (cf. Table 5.1). As indicated by extended long term research by Botvin and Griffin (2004, 2010 and 2014), Grade 6 learners are at an appropriate age as they are not yet in their full adolescence and are receptive to learning life skills. The hundred-and-thirty-three participating learners represented the full spectrum of official South African languages: English, Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Northern and Southern Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga, Venda, Swazi, and Afrikaans. The Grade 6 (CA) teacher was English and Afrikaans speaking and was very experienced, with thirty-seven years of teaching experience (cf. Table 4.1, par. 4.3.3).

1.6.5 Data collection

Data was collected over eleven weeks (July to September) in Term 3 of the school teaching calendar in 2016. Seven weeks out of the eleven-week period was spent in observing and supporting the implementation of a Forum Theatre intervention in the four Grade 6 CA classes under the tutelage of the Grade 6 (CA) teacher during a weekly CA lesson held for each class respectively. The lessons formed part of the compulsory Life Skills (CA) curriculum for Grades 4-6 (DBE 2011b) offered at the school. In the eighth week, the Forum Theatre intervention culminated in a Forum Theatre performance by each Grade 6 class (cf. Table 5.3) in which the Grade 6 (CA) teacher assumed the role of Joker. I made use of multiple qualitative data gathering techniques (individual and focus group interviews, observation, video recordings, audio recordings, reflexive diaries, documents and artefacts) (cf. 4.3.4).

1.6.6 Data analysis and presentation of findings

Interview transcripts, focus group sessions, and video recordings, the reflexive diaries (teacher and researcher), researcher field notes, documents, artefacts and the Forum Theatre performance video footage and transcripts formed the raw data. The content of the transcriptions was analysed to find dominant themes in the material. The identification of these significant data segments started the data coding process. The codes, in turn, were organised into categories that were analysed to determine patterns or relationships amongst categories. The trustworthiness of the data was enhanced by triangulation achieved through member checking with participants, by expert scrutiny of transcripts and by interpretation also by my supervisor, who is a relevantly trained, recognised academic.

1.6.7. Ethical considerations

The first step was to request approval to do doctoral study research from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). Ethical clearance for the study was also requested from the Unisa College of Education Ethical Committee. After permissions were granted, the school was approached to discuss further what would be possible within their structures and teaching curriculum. Letters were prepared for all the different role players at the school who were impacted by the study. The approval of the principal and the School Governing Body was obtained first, after which the Grade 6 teachers and HOD for Life Orientation granted written permission for the study. Parents of Grade 6 learners gave written permission and Grade 6 learners gave written assent. Participation was informed, voluntary and confidential with participants' rights to refuse to participate in any activities or to withdraw at any stage assured. Participants were also assured that the data and findings would be used for only academic purposes.

In summary, written permission was obtained from all interested and affected parties, as follows:

- i) Gauteng Department of Education (GDE); Appendix A
- ii) The ethics committee of the College of Education, UNISA, Appendix B
- iii) Principal, HOD (Life Orientation) and Grade 6 teachers; Appendix C
- iv) Grade 6 parents or guardians and Grade 6 learners who gave assent; Appendix D

1.6.8. Credibility of findings

In line with the recommendations put forward by Guba (1981), the research considered and included the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of data to enhance the quality of the findings (cf 4.3.6.1).

1.7. CLARIFICATION OF KEY TERMS

The following terms have been identified as key to an understanding of the study. Brief working definitions are given here, as the concepts are explored in great depth in the subsequent chapters.

1.7.1. *Life skills*

The Department of Basic Education of South Africa in their CAPS curriculum for Grades 4-6 defines the concept in the following manner; “Life Skills deals with the holistic development of the learner throughout childhood. It equips learners with knowledge, skills and values that assist them to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential. The subject encourages learners to acquire and practise life skills that will assist them to become independent and effective in responding to life’s challenges and to play an active and responsible role in society. The subject aims to develop learners through three different, but interrelated study areas, that is, Personal and Social Well-being, Physical Education and Creative Arts” (DBE 2011B).

1.7.2. *Life Orientation*

Life Orientation is one of eight learning areas that form part of the South African school curriculum. It covers five broad information areas, “namely health promotion, social development and citizenship education, personal development and life skills, physical education and movement, and career education” (Rooth 2005: 290).

1.7.3. *Forum Theatre*

“Forum Theatre is a theatrical game in which a problem is shown in an unsolved form, to which the audience, again ‘spect-actors’, is invited to suggest and enact solutions. ... Forum theatre’s aim “is always to stimulate debate (in the form of action, not just words), to show alternatives, to enable people to become protagonists of their own lives” (Jackson in Boal 2002: xxiv).

1.8. ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organised according to the following chapters.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study and includes problem formulation, aims, and methodology of the study.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework for an investigation into appropriate psychological theories relevant to the acquisition of life skills. In the second half of Chapter 2, four different applications of life skills teaching approaches are discussed.

Chapter 3 deals with Augusto Boal and the development of Forum Theatre. It describes how the technique is used by other theatre practitioners and ends with a critique by various performance practitioners on what they found problematic when using Forum Theatre in practice.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology and research design.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the research.

Chapter 6 provides a summary, discusses the parameters of the study, and offers recommendations for pedagogical practice and future research.

1.9. CONCLUSION

Life Orientation is a cross-disciplinary, broad subject which includes teaching using “cognitive skills, life skills, emotional literacy skills, and risk reductive behaviour [which] cannot be learned solely through transmission teaching” (Rooth 2005:251) to learners in South African schools. Dramatic techniques enable teaching of Life Orientation in a more interactive and fun manner in a classroom. In the process of engagement through drama, learners are supported in the development of their social, language, and cultural skills, which are much needed in the execution of improvisation, role play, and performance. This study aimed to explore Forum Theatre as performative pedagogy in the teaching and learning of life skills in Creative Arts (CA) lessons as part of the Life Orientation learning area in Grade 6 in a selected primary school in the Pretoria area. The study was done employing a qualitative, arts-based performative case study inquiry.

CHAPTER 2

THEORIES AND APPROACHES RELEVANT TO LIFE SKILLS ACQUISITION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

To lay a foundation for the teaching and learning of life skills in the classroom by means of performative pedagogy, and through Forum Theatre techniques, it is important to give an overview of appropriate psychological theories relevant to the acquisition of life skills. In this chapter, prominent attention is first given to the cognitive behavioural school and its usefulness to life skills education. Thereafter, Gestalt theory is discussed as representative of the humanistic-existential school of thought, and the last section of the theoretical overview of this chapter deals with experiential learning theory and the social constructivist foundations out of which this theory has developed.

After the theoretical overview, the focus of the chapter moves to individuals who have made major contributions to the development of life skills applications. The applications were chosen as they have in common that they aim to help people (especially older children, adolescents, and young adults) deal with their problems, build up their self-esteem, and seek to provide a healthier outlook to life. Richard Nelson-Jones (2006, 2007) focuses on life skills within a coaching, counselling, and therapy context. Life-skills acquisition is primarily used by Virginia and Redford Williams to help people change the way they deal with anger. Byron Katie teaches self-inquiry as a life skill to help people to deal with their own psychological problems. Lastly, Gilbert Botvin and Kenneth Griffin's (2004, 2010 and 2014) large-scale applications of life skills for schools aimed at protecting young people from the harmful effects of addiction are discussed.

2.2. COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURISM

The cognitive behavioural school of thought focuses on “changing observable behaviours by means of providing different or rewarding consequences” (Nelson-Jones 2006: 3) that result out of action taken or behaviour demonstrated. Teachers of life skills can help learners to develop a healthy approach to life by teaching them how sound direction, aims and suitable

content assists in coping with life's challenges. Within the cognitive behavioural school, Nelson-Jones (2006: 5) identifies four main branches:

- Behaviour theory (Ivan Pavlov, John Watson, Burrhus Skinner, Joseph Wolpe and Albert Bandura)
- Rational emotive behaviour theory (Albert Ellis)
- Cognitive therapeutic theory (Aaron Beck)
- Multimodal theory (Arnold Lazarus)

Following the above division, a short discussion follows on each of these theories: Behaviour theory by means of Pavlov's Classical Conditioning Theory, Skinners' Operant Behaviourism, Wolpe's Reciprocal Inhibition Theory and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory; Albert Ellis's Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy; Aaron Beck's Cognitive Therapy; and finally, the Multimodal approach as developed by Arnold Lazarus. Each discussion concludes with the implications for life skills acquisition.

2.2.1 Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849 – 1936): Classical Conditioning

Pavlov first gained recognition for his study of the nature and physiology of digestion for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize for Physiology and Medicine in 1904. He, however, is most famous for his work on salivary reflex conditioning, a study conducted with dogs as subjects. Pavlov noticed that living organisms behaved with predictable reactions or responses to stimuli, both internal and external, which he called reflexes. As Pavlov (1928: 97-110) stated, during a lecture presented at the Royal Society of London, these could be triggered by either "excitatory or inhibitory" stimuli. He (1927: 16) explained, "Such reflexes are regular casual connections between certain definite external stimuli acting on the organism and its necessary reflex reaction." With his research, he showed that dogs could be conditioned to start salivating with the suggestion of food through association with something else, the sight of food or in his case the sound of a ticking metronome. If the learned stimulus (the ticking metronome) is removed, the response also diminishes or becomes extinct. The learning of a conditioned response is commonly known in the literature as classical or respondent conditioning (Pavlov 1927) and has become the basis for the origin of behaviour therapy. If this finding is extrapolated to human beings, this would imply that learned behaviour which is harmful to an individual can also be altered when the stimulus for this behaviour is removed.

2.2.2 John Broadus Watson (1878-1958): Conditioned behaviourism

Watson's main contribution to the field of psychology springs from his endeavours to study behaviour in a purely scientific manner, in other words, to be objective and look only at what can be observed. He believed that studying a human being's consciousness belonged to the realm of the philosophers. Driven to think about human behaviour in much the same manner as animals are studied with no insight into their consciousness, he studied animal behaviour and how they learned to discover universal laws which apply to their behaviour. According to Watson (1913: 176), this means "the behaviour of man and the behaviour of animals must be considered on the same plane; as being equally essential to the general understanding of behaviour." As he considered studying human consciousness to be too subjective, he argued for a study of behaviour as there is "convincing proof of an ever-widening stream of behaviour" (Watson 1926: 456).

According to Watson (1926: 457), human beings instinctively respond from birth to 'love, fear, and rage' and these are unconditioned reflexes or responses. To deal with the environment in which they live, he postulated that humans develop three different habit systems; laryngeal or verbal, manual and visceral or emotional habits. Leading from that our human verbal abilities always form part of the development of any human skills and our 'memory' is a part of that verbal ability, which constitutes a habit (1926: 459). Words, as the human being develops, become the 'conditioned substitute' for the objects and actions that feature in our day to day living.

The famous behavioural experiments which Watson and his graduate student, Rosalie Rayner did with a baby called Albert, show that many of the phobias, which people exhibit are learned or conditioned responses, acquired in infancy and childhood. Just as they can be learned, they can also be unlearned (Watson and Rayner 1920).

Watson (1926: 455) stated, "*Order in the universe is merely a matter of conditioning*" (italics in the original). According to Watson, human beings are conditioned through training and who we are and become is the result of mostly learned behaviour. His approach was deterministic and focused on 'nurture' rather than 'nature' as he was of the opinion that if he was given any random baby, he would be able to train this person to become any particular type of person such as a medical expert, performer, beggar or a criminal and that inherited characteristics such as ability, gifting, temperament, mental strength do not actually exist but all these are dependent on training (Nelson Jones 2006: 256-257).

2.2.3 Burrhus Frederick Skinner (1904 – 1990): Operant behaviourism

Skinner was a behaviourist in that he too looked for the regular patterns based on facts that could be expressed as laws for human behaviour. He (Skinner 1948) was especially interested in the outcomes of behaviour and did much of his research by studying pigeons and rodents. Skinner studied the behaviour “contingent upon a *response*” and called these responses operant conditioning (Skinner 1953: 66). He (1953: 65) used operant as a term to describe the predictive responses since behaviour *operates* on the surroundings to bring about changes.

Skinner, with his operant behavioural approach, was different from Pavlov because he studied the response and the reinforcement of response behaviour. He states that operant reinforcement does more than build a range of behaviour as it enhances the efficiency of behaviour and maintains the strength of behaviour long after the initial acquisition or efficiency (Skinner 1953: 66). According to Skinner (1953: 108), the environment plays a role and influences the behaviour, and when observing behaviour in context, it is crucial to describe the stimulus and the situation to which a person responded, and which was followed by consequences that reinforced that response. He called the interaction between these three reinforcing behaviours the ‘contingency’ of behaviour.

Reinforcement in a situation can be either positive through a reward for the response given or negative by means of removal of a reaction. Removal of a positive reinforcer has the same effect as the introduction of a negative reinforcer. The primary, basic or unconditioned sources of reinforcement are food, water and sexual activity (Skinner 1953: 76); and money, approval and love are considered generalised conditioned reinforcers (Skinner 1953: 77).

Importantly, people can learn behaviour, but if that behaviour is not reinforced, then they will gradually stop behaving in this manner, and eventually, the behaviour becomes extinct. Skinner (1953) observed that where certain behaviour in people was no longer occurring because they are no longer in the habit, they will require treatment to begin executing this kind of behaviour again. Skinner (1953) also found that by rewarding behaviour that was similar to the required response, that this type of behaviour could still be formed. This supports teaching good habits in a school context to either introduce, reinforce and uphold good manners.

2.2.4 Joseph Wolpe (1915 -1997): Reciprocal inhibition

Wolpe is best known for his studies on how to overcome neurotic behaviour and anxiety disorders. Wolpe’s (1995: 23) discoveries and insights have helped many people to overcome

learned 'maladaptive learned behaviours' by assisting them with strategies to unlearn their fears and anxieties. In early work, Wolpe carried out laboratory-based research into the learning and unlearning of neurotic fears through a series of experiments with cats where he demonstrated that cats could unlearn their neurotic reactions. The reciprocal inhibition principle can be defined as "a response antagonistic to anxiety can be made to occur in the presence of anxiety-evoking stimuli and in consequence effects a complete or partial suppression of the anxiety response, the bond between these stimuli and the anxiety response is weakened" (Wolpe 1995: 24) so that the anxiety reaction to the stimuli is diminished.

In practice, this means that a fearful person can overcome their fear through exposure to their fear. The fearful person is helped to face their fear and move through it by means of competing responses that help to inhibit the unhealthy or overactive response. Wolpe (1995) proposed eight different means to effect behavioural change. A fearful person can utilise various responses to achieve desensitisation: by being more assertive, by making use of a sexual response, through relaxation, by means of a change in how they breathe (respiratory), through anxiety-relief by introducing competing 'motor' responses, or pleasant responses in the situation, by means of changed emotional reactions that could become a cathartic release through talking about pent up emotions so as to bring about their release. Relaxation is used most often, and just as it is achieved in yoga sessions, the relaxation is brought about by relaxing and tensing of the different tense muscles to bring about calmness in the face of anxiety-producing situations.

In conclusion, this section of Chapter 2 (cf. 2.1-2.4) dealing with behavioural theories posits that human behaviour and the capacity to acquire knowledge and skills shows that people can be conditioned to expect behaviour when confronted with certain stimuli as Pavlov has proved with his experiments. This means that positive and negative responses, such as rewards and punishment, lead to good routines and more disciplined behaviour. At the same time, such behaviour can also be unlearned when the stimulus is removed. Watson introduced the term conditioning for the taught and habituated behaviour that people are introduced to. Skinner took this a step further with his operant behaviourism by showing that good behaviour is reinforced through a reward system with incentives such as money, attention, approval, and affection that support internalisation of positive behaviour. Wolpe was able to demonstrate that by removing a bad stimulus, spontaneous recovery is possible. He also showed that people could be desensitised when they are fearful of something and thus can be helped to overcome their phobias. For teachers of life skills, this means that they can assist in helping children overcome their problems. It further means that an inappropriate response can be replaced by a positive response through penalty and reward systems. Further good behaviour can be

reinforced through repetition and encouragement. These earlier behaviourists focused only on changing the behaviour which could be observed.

The next section discusses the ideas of Albert Bandura on the socialisation of a child and how that has an influence on a child's ability to learn.

2.2.5 Albert Bandura (1925 -): Social cognitive theory

Albert Bandura formulated his social cognitive theory out of the insights he gained as a social cognitive psychologist associated with Stanford University. He became well known through a study he did in which he demonstrated how small children learn and imitate modelled aggressive behaviour just by observation. The children were exposed to vicarious reinforcement and vicarious punishment for the behaviour modelled in the experiment as well. Fortunately, the Bobo Doll study also showed that the learning of aggression was mediated by the disapproval response which was given to the behaviour as the children who saw aggressive behaviour being punished behaved much less aggressively than those who saw aggression being awarded (Bandura 1963: 211). The experiments also made evident that all the children were influenced by an offer of an attractive incentive for reproducing the behaviour they saw being modelled (Bandura 1963: 212).

Bandura (1989a: 21) further sees observational learning as a constant human activity and writes that "virtually all learning phenomena resulting from direct experience can occur vicariously by observing people's behavior and its consequences for them". He (1977b: 18) also states that "because learning by response consequences is largely a cognitive process, consequences generally produce little change in complex behaviour when there is no awareness of what is being reinforced". He, therefore, disagrees with an operant analysis of observational learning as there is no "discriminative stimulus, no overt responding, and no reinforcement" (Olsen and Hergenhahn 2009: 331).

Bandura has published prolifically on a wide range of psychological topics, from learning through observation and the power of role modelling, to the acquisition of fears, studies on aggression, the effect of the media, self-efficacy, moral development and human agency and how behaviour is regulated through cognition. In particular, Bandura (1978: 345) developed a theory called Reciprocal Determinism in which he advances that the person (P), the environment (E) and the person's behaviour (B) interact on each other. Meaning that people influence their environment by how they behave and the changing environment, in turn, can influence the behaviour which follows. This means that unpleasant people generate

unpleasant living space for themselves and similarly kind, caring people create a positive environment for themselves. Bandura (1978) explains that the three sides that influence a person's actions, that is, their behavioural factors, cognitive and personal factors and environmental influences, function together inter-dependently; they influence each other but do not happen in equal strength and can occur at different times.

Human beings can influence their futures because they contribute to the shaping of their own circumstances and Bandura (2006: 164-165) identifies four personal determinants for this human agency;

- Intentionality: ability to form intentions and make plans and strategies for their realisation;
- Forethought: the ability to visualise consequences to direct and motivate one towards the future;
- Self-reactiveness: the ability to plan and execute a course of action;
- Self-reflectiveness: the ability to self-reflect on own thinking and make adjustments where necessary.

Observational learning can include or exclude imitation as people learn information which they think about and use to their advantage. It, therefore, is more complex than just imitation, and he also believes people do not need reinforcement (Olson and Hergenhahn 2009: 329). People generally learn new insights by watching or observing others and then engage in doing the activities themselves. There are four main processes that have an impact on observational learning, as stated by Bandura (1989a: 23-24). These processes are:

1. Attentional: watching and paying attention to behaviour that is being modelled. Discriminative observation (Nelson Jones 2006: 269) is required in this learning process as the observer should pay attention to, notice and distinguish key aspects of what is being modelled,
2. Retentional: information is remembered in the imaginary and the verbal environment, and the abstraction to the symbolic environment is the reason why humans can learn so well from observation (Bandura 1977b: 25),
3. Behavioural: after learning through observation, people still need to practise their own performance. During the performance of the new behaviour, it is compared and adjusted against the symbolically stored memory until the execution is similar to the newly modelled activities, this is similar to a feedback loop that is guided by images and correction of the self,
4. Motivational: newly learned behaviour is reinforced and incentivised by seeing others who execute the observed behaviour being rewarded for this behaviour.

In this area, Bandura (1977b) made significant contributions as he stated that a person could observe the behaviour of another person, see what results come out of that behaviour, remember that and use it when it is beneficial to do so. This means that people who observe behaviour that will benefit them when attempting certain activities can imitate modelled behaviour when it is advantageous to do so.

This is supported and more likely to continue happening if the behaviour leads to rewards, is valued by the self and if the person observed has received rewards for executing the behaviour, and this is evident to the learner (Bandura 1989a: 24). In other words, positive behaviour outcomes lead to the new behaviour being continued, and those resulting in negative outcomes, are ignored. Modellers are more effective in passing on their knowledge when they also explain the reasons why they perform their actions the way they do. The explanation (cognitive transference) provided together with the modelled behaviour is more likely to be learned and retained in an observer's behaviour, than when they are exposed only to the modelled behaviour. Being aware of the rewards which can result from certain behaviour, before rather than after learning takes place, is a good incentive to support inclusion and adoption of new behaviour (Bandura 1977b: 88; 96).

2.2.5.1. Importance of self-efficacy and goal setting

According to Bandura (1977), efficacy is how effective a person is at producing the result that was intended. A human being's ability to achieve is supported by their skills and self-belief and their ability to deliver on a task. Competent people usually cope with challenging situations, will expend enough energy and effort and will be disciplined at completing a task. They also are not afraid of new experiences and are more resilient in the face of obstacles than those with low self-efficacy levels. Bandura (1977: 191) also added that performance-based procedures are the most powerful tool for affecting psychological change.

People have different efficacy expectations which are based on Bandura's (1977a: 195) "four major sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states." During their lives humans have varying levels of efficacy. When they are engaged in activities that increase their abilities and skills as time goes by, they will maintain and grow their self-efficacy levels. People learn by watching the modelled behaviour of other exemplary people, but they also can teach themselves and monitor their own effectiveness when trying out the new behaviour. 'Participant modelling' works through the support of a more skilled other who helps to enact new behaviour which the acquirer previously struggled with. When achieving success at a new skill or behaviour, the achieved success builds up an inner sense of efficacy, which over time builds up self-image and confidence. Modelling (live or symbolically) is also used to introduce the required behaviour

vicariously. By watching somebody perform tasks or actions without any negative consequences, a person can build up the self-belief that he/she can also perform a task or action. This happens especially well if the other person is also overcoming a difficult challenge rather than when watching a person who is already very proficient at the task.

Verbal persuasion can also be used to build up efficacy, and a person's physical and emotional state plays a role in three ways; a tense and anxious emotional space will diminish a person's sense of efficacy, a positive or a negative mood will enhance or diminish efficacy and when engaged in a strenuous task which is taxing to the body, fitness and strength levels will also have an influence (Bandura 1977a).

2.2.5.2. Goal setting as an intrinsic driver in human behaviour

People are motivated in two ways through the goals they set. Conceptualising and thinking about possible goals are the first steps to motivate a person. Secondly, their own assessment of performance in striving to achieve goals influences their behaviour. The first means an individual will set themselves a goal and will try to accomplish a new behaviour when they strive to attain a goal and, in the process, will correct their expectations as they attain their goal. Success leads to higher levels of confidence, and conversely, a lowering of expectations and confidence happens when a person is unsuccessful in achieving a goal (Bandura 1977a: 194).

2.2.6. *Implications of behavioural theory for life skills education*

In the above section, the theories of Pavlov, Skinner, Watson, Wolpe, and Bandura have briefly been sketched. The key insights gained from these behavioural theorists which are of relevance for the teaching of life skills follow.

The main contribution of Pavlov's research is that a person can be conditioned to expect behaviour when confronted by certain stimuli. This means that consistent reward (pleasant experiences) and punishment (unpleasant experiences) produce good routines and discipline. Conversely, when the negative conditioning (the trigger for that behaviour) is removed, the behaviour can also be unlearned. Thus, negative behaviour resulting from negative conditioning may also disappear. Similarly, according to Watson, people become who they are through their conditioning; in other words, through the behaviour that they are taught and habituated in through their emotional, verbal, and manual triggers. Just as we are taught responses, we can also be untaught or unconditioned, when the responses prove to be inappropriate. Operant behaviour is, as proposed by Skinner, teaches that behaviour is

reinforced through a reward system. Rewards such as money, attention, approval, and affection help to internalise the correct behaviour. Furthermore, a person who has developed neurotic fears can be treated and freed from the debilitating influences of their fear. According to Wolpe, there is a possibility of spontaneous recovery if the harmful stimulus or trigger is removed for a longer period, and old habits can be replaced by new ones. By identifying the stimuli that evoke fear, treatment can also be given to inhibit unhealthy responses to the neurotic anxiety of a person.

All three of these early behaviourists focus on the possibility of changing, modifying or learning entirely new behaviour through conditioning based on pleasant or unpleasant experiences. In terms of learning life skills, teachers can assist young people in identifying inappropriate responses to certain triggers and in replacing them with positive/negative responses by reward/penalty systems. Similarly, positive behaviour can be reinforced through repetition and encouragement. A limitation of this early work was that it focused mainly on bringing about changes in observable behaviour.

Bandura extended behaviourism beyond observable behaviour as emphasised by the early behaviourists, such as Pavlov, Skinner and Wolpe. He drew attention to the fact that internal cognitive processes which cannot be observed also have a powerful impact on the behaviour of people. This has led to the inclusion of cognitive processes within behavioural approaches to the psychological study of human behaviour. Cognitive insight supports the acquisition process, whereby new knowledge and skills are learned. In terms of life skills, teachers need to first explain to learners why they are being taught a skill and during the teaching process, provide reasons as to why something is done in a particular way while the process is modelled. Knowing what a skill can do provides a strong source of motivation for individuals before they begin to learn. Goal setting, visualisation of future gains and providing a context are all important aspects of the learning process.

The process of motivating and modelling the required behaviour first is an effective way of teaching necessary life skills. This stresses the role of the teacher as a role model who should demonstrate life skills by example. Similarly, teachers can introduce other role models to children in the classroom through stories about 'heroes' or by inviting exceptional guests to engage with children. A further contribution lies in Bandura's notion of self-efficacy. A person with high levels of efficacy will be more persistent, resilient, and adventurous when it comes to acquiring new skills or knowledge. Therefore, it is very important to develop the efficacy, abilities, and self-esteem of all learners in a class, particularly those children who lack the above qualities. Life skills teaching could be supported by means of drama activities linked to a Forum Theatre engagement in the learners' Creative Arts lessons. Once a child is successful

at a certain activity or skill level, their efficacy levels are, in turn, boosted. Thus, teachers should be on the look-out for moments where a child displays mastery of a skill or behaviour and then praise or reward them. They can also guide them by means of the discussions and spect-acting activities that take place during a Forum Theatre exploration

To finish off this section, social cognitive theory as developed by Albert Bandura focuses amongst others on observational learning, the need for exposure to correct modelling and the benefit of providing the reasons why something is being taught, as it sets a good context for the new learning. Developing good efficacy and self-esteem provides a fertile ground for learning to happen and knowledge to take root and develop. Teachers not only need to be exemplary with their own behaviour; they also need to praise and reward good behaviour when it occurs so that a positive learning spiral takes place. The ideal context for learning happens when children are happy to learn, aspire to improve themselves and revel in the development and growth of their peers. Modellers are more effective if they have respect, are competent, enjoy high status and have power. Teachers need to be skilful, able to demonstrate problem-solving strategies, set standards and apply the rules and principles guided by a moral code and need to be creative. While working with children, a basic prerequisite is awareness of the children's ability levels; how well they can communicate verbally and how far their motor and cognitive skills have developed. Observation of the consequences of the behaviour modelled by others further allows for vicarious learning. Paying attention, retaining, behaving correctly and being motivated all play a part in the learning process. A person's own perception of how well they can do a task either encourages or demotivates them. Reciprocal determinism means that there is constant interaction between the environment, behaviour and the person.

We move now from these key behavioural theorists to look at influential cognitive behavioural theorists who studied what people do in their thinking and understanding processes to better understand how to teach life skills to children and young adults.

2.2.7. Albert Ellis (1913 – 2007): Rational Emotive Behavioural Theory

Albert Ellis is well known for developing Rational Emotive Behavioural Theory (REBT) which has been adopted and applied widely in psychotherapy. The eight hundred articles and eighty books he has written are not based on academic research but rather on his clinical work and observations distilled out of what he found helped his clients. In 1982 he was the second most cited author in the United States (US). Ellis agreed with the approach of some stoic Greek philosophers and especially was influenced by Epictetus who said, "Men are not disturbed by things, but by the view which they take of them" (in Diguseppe, Doyle, Dryden and Backx

2014: 4). Epicurus also believed that pleasure is the greatest good, and the way to attain pleasure was to live in a modest way (Digiuseppe et al. 2014: 16). It was important for Ellis to make his clients face and accept the reality of their situation rather than their desire for how they perceived their world should be. When in client consultation, Ellis would work on an individual's personal belief systems as they would often be the root cause of the problems they were experiencing. Irrational beliefs, automatic thoughts, and dysfunctional attitudes surface out of the way people understand their world and conclusions they draw in response to what happened to them in the past. Adopting and applying whatever would be useful to healing and changing the dysfunctional behaviour of his clients, Ellis did not hold back from integrating other methodologies into his treatment regimen, and he would give clients homework to support the process of change (Digiuseppe et al. 2014: 5).

As a child, Ellis (2004a; 2004b) partially developed social phobias through having undergone long periods of illness. Feeling constrained by them, he forced himself at the age of nineteen, to deal with two of these phobias: his fear of public speaking and a fear of speaking to young women. He did so by forcing himself to give political speeches over a period of three months and by making himself speak to a hundred women, one after the other on a bench in the botanical gardens. This experience taught him the value of reasoning with himself and of persuading himself to try out and master different behaviour.

According to Ellis, humans have three fundamental goals (FG): "to survive, to be relatively free from pain, and to be reasonably satisfied or content" (Ellis 1991b: 142). Primary goals of humans are that they "want to be happy (1) when by themselves; (2) gregariously, with other humans; (3) intimately, with a few selected others; (4) informationally and educationally; (5) vocationally and economically; and (6) recreationally" (Ellis 1991b: 142). Ellis suggested that human emotions and their thinking processes are closely interwoven and occur together, so that "one's thinking *becomes* one's emotion and emoting *becomes* one's thought" (Ellis 1958: 36). This means that what people say to themselves in their own heads tends to become their thoughts or emotions. When people experience threatening events, they which lead them to feeling frustrated or sad but some people "choose to feel inappropriately panicked, depressed, and enraged and thereby neuroticize themselves" (Ellis 1991b: 143). People will tend to avoid those events that stop them from achieving their goals.

Ellis (1991b: 142-166) developed the ABC theory of personality to which he later added the letters G, D and E as well. The letters stand for the following:

G = Goals (cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and physiological);

A = Activating events;

B = Beliefs;

C = Consequences;

D = Dispute; and

E = Effective new philosophy, or sound set of preferential beliefs.

Thoughts, emotions and behaviours interact with one another. They are seldom experienced entirely in isolation. Similarly, goals, activating events, beliefs and consequences (G, A, B and C) work together with one another.

2.2.6.1. Ego disturbance and irrational beliefs

For Ellis, people are thinking in a rational manner when they have beliefs that are sensible and logical, can be supported with evidence, can be expressed in relative terms that fit within social reality, and generally can be expressed as preferences, desires and wants. (Digiuseppe et al. 2014: 53) This means that in a rational mode of thinking, people consider matters in terms of what they would prefer to see happening. However, when in an irrational mode of thinking people tend to have irrational beliefs that are “rigid, dogmatic, powerful demands and commands, usually expressed as musts, should, ought to’s, have to’s and got to’s” such as, “I absolutely must have my important goals unblocked and fulfilled!” (Ellis 1991b: 144). When thinking irrationally about adversity (A’s) which people experience which might stop or frustrate them from reaching their goals (G’s), people participate in dogmatic thinking.

Ellis (in Digiuseppe et al. 2014: 193) coined a few interesting terms which describe the dysfunctional beliefs: ‘*Masturbation*’ or demandingness describes the incidence when a person thinks along the lines of demands and commands. These are the ‘musts, shoulds, ought to’s, have to’s and got to’s’ in the language people use to talk about what is causing distress. Another one is ‘*Awfulizing*’ (Digiuseppe et al. 2014: 190) with which he means beliefs that trigger a response along the lines of ‘It is awful and bad if I do not attain all my important goals.’ ‘*I can’t-stand-it-it is,*’ or frustration intolerance (Digiuseppe et al. 2014: 190) is evident when a person is upset that all their goals are not fulfilled which comes to the fore through ‘I can’t stand it!’ statements. Lastly, some of his clients would damn themselves and others if they do not achieve all their goals and it leads to them saying ‘I’m a stupid, worthless person’ or ‘Others are bad people’ because they are stopping the client from reaching their important goals. This exaggerated behaviour is then extended by feeling bad about being miserable, and from there it moves to being anxious about being anxious, depressed about being depressed, guilty about feeling guilty and so forth which leads to a helix of negativity (Ellis 1991b: 144).

Striving to be the best at something can lead to ‘emotional disturbance’ (Ellis 1991b: 144). It shows itself in a dependency belief of always being the best to win the approval of others. Low frustration tolerance is linked to people thinking they are so special that conditions must be easy and satisfying for them. The behaviour is like when they were children and could

manipulate their parents into doing everything for them and it hinges on a selfish, childlike belief that is self-centred.

Ellis (1991b: 139-172) focuses on discovering how people maintain their beliefs. For him, human beings are the root cause of their own disturbances in feelings because they do not create and develop their ability to engage in rational choice. Humans become disturbed due to their own choices as they have the capacity to choose how they will react to social learning experiences. To change this manner of thinking is difficult as most people choose to satisfy their short-range hedonism and cling to their irrational beliefs. Often, they will find reasons and causes in their pasts to keep their belief(s) intact, but in fact, they have a choice and can change their thinking into more realistic insights which will change how they think about their future. Ellis (1991a: 454) uses role play to investigate and demonstrate irrational beliefs with his clients and uses role reversals to provide insight and clarity into their own behaviour. Changing irrational personal beliefs. Ellis (1991a: 452) states that any person can adjust their irrational beliefs by trying to alter their behaviour. They can do so by performing differently, going against their irrational thoughts by changing how they act, and even manage to transcend their fears. Because people are reticent to change the way in which they behave, their irrational self-beliefs are seldom challenged. They also do not change their behaviour because they might not understand their irrational beliefs and the emotional and behavioural consequences of their irrational belief. People are also not keen to change their beliefs because it requires them to try. They might lack clarity into what it is that they need to do or lack the skills, confidence, and support to bring about change and even though they might start to make changes, it is difficult to sustain the change when times are tough, and they are faced by setbacks. (Nelson Jones 2006: 315).

2.2.6.2. Change strategies for dealing with irrational beliefs and ego-disturbance

To be less disturbed Ellis (2004b: 75) advocates that people should achieve

- Unconditional self-acceptance
- Unconditional other acceptance
- Unconditional life acceptance and
- A life approach of high frustration tolerance

Unconditional life acceptance means people have a choice and they need to be aware that what they as an individual wish to see happen does not make it essential and when they find an obstacle in their path which might keep them from achieving their goals, this is not terrible but rather is only unpleasant for them. Moreover, a person can deal with something they do not like and aim to achieve today's enjoyment with an eye on the future. Interestingly this cognitive approach regularly leads a person to receive more of that which they desire and less of what they are averse to (Ellis 2004a).

Cognitively irrational beliefs can be detected through overt or implicit signs of demanding behaviour. Demand behaviour is indicated by the “‘musts’, ‘shoulds’, ‘oughts’, ‘have to’s’ thinking and expressions of ‘That is horrible!’ and ‘I can’t stand it’”, are pointers to where people entertain absolute and irrational beliefs. When taken too far, these personal beliefs can also lead to the experience of panic attacks and feelings of depression. The acknowledgement and discussion of these irrational thoughts achieved by challenging and questioning them can lead to the emergence of more rational beliefs (Ellis 2004a).

Role-playing and reverse role-playing is used by Ellis (1991a: 454) to show people where it is that they have incorrect thoughts on a situation and how that has an impact on their relationships with other people. Exploring a situation by taking on various roles in a simulated context helps a person to think more effectively in a situation. Reverse role play is another method also used by Ellis to assist in disputing irrational beliefs.

Behavioural interventions are supported by practising to change them. Ellis (2004a) had learned as a young adult that behaviour could change through the focused practice of ‘new’ behaviour, and he encourages people to practice until they master them. Ellis also suspects that a person’s anxiety is linked to their sense of “shame, guilt, embarrassment, and humiliation” and he would encourage them “to do things in public that they regard as particularly shameful or embarrassing” (Nelson-Jones 2006: 327). These “shame-attacking exercises” help people to learn that what they perceived to be shameful behaviour was not shameful or as bad as they had imagined. Facing our fears by experiencing them leads to less fear and, in this manner, we free ourselves from fear. In a therapy session, people are encouraged to attack their irrational beliefs together by sharing their bad experiences with each other so that they can collectively work at overcoming them. Role-play can assist people when practising new skills of assertion and different ways in which to communicate. Albert Ellis made an important contribution to the field by showing that people can overcome matters that initially disturbed them.

2.2.6.3. Implications of Albert Ellis’ insights for life skills acquisition

Albert Ellis states that thinking and emotions are closely linked and influence each other. When unfortunate circumstances take place, it is normal to be feeling sad or frustrated about them, but when they lead to panic, depression, rage, and neurotic behaviour, there is an imbalance. Teachers can be on the lookout for statements which contain “I must,” “I ought to” or “I should” and I “have to” and “got to” as they often give clues to what it is that makes a learner respond too strongly to adverse circumstances. ‘Masturbatory,’ ‘awfulising’ and ‘damning’ statements are indicators of a person’s irrational beliefs, and they go with inappropriate emotional and behavioural responses. Teachers should assist children in their care to identify their irrational

beliefs and help them to think about them in more rational terms. Ellis identified three groups of such behaviours; he found that this kind of response happens when a person needs approval from others, wants to be treated considerately and kindly and when they demand more comfortable and easy circumstances or living conditions. When their demands are not achieved, this can trigger a negative spiral in the individual as it can make them feel anxious or depressed, sometimes even feeling anxious about being anxious, depressed about feeling depressed et cetera. Children do not have to strive to be better than everybody else as this can lead to ego-disturbance. Teachers should rather encourage them to improve on their own performance over time gradually.

Ellis advises that people need to learn to accept themselves unconditionally, accept other people unconditionally and accept life unconditionally. This is a good ground rule in a classroom. Daily, a teacher can create awareness on the importance of rational thinking. For instance, they can encourage children to make new choices about their behaviour and how they react to their environment. When a child has an irrational belief, their 'faulty' thinking needs to be countered through discussion, by challenging and questioning the underlying belief to reveal the flaw in their thinking, be it about themselves, about others or about their world. A useful means for achieving changed thinking is humour, as laughter makes people relax and not take life too seriously. By showing a child that what they are thinking is a little absurd, they can through laughter defuse their tension. Ellis also suggests that anxiety is linked to a sense of "shame, guilt, embarrassment and humiliation" and thus he encourages shame-attacking exercises to illustrate that what is feared to be shameful is not as bad as it was imagined. Freedom from fear is achieved by facing the fear and by gradually desensitising and moving through and past the fears.

The life skills teaching that the above refers to is linked to better socialisation of the learners, improved communication, and enhanced integration. Less conflict will arise out of situations which can occur between young people who are still refining and learning new life skills together with those they interact with.

In a discussion on irrational beliefs, there is a real danger of an individual flooding or disclosing too much about their personal issues. There also is an inherent risk as it could expose an individual and make them prone to teasing or bullying. Question is if teachers need to shut down on the creation of shame in such situations and perhaps deal with a struggling individual in a more private, one-on-one space first? It is vitally important to create a safe space in class within which learners can explore the chains of actions leading to reactions in human behaviour. When an individual takes on a role a buffer is created as the role is not the individual who plays the role, and in this way, the attention can be focused on the processes rather than

the individuals. The topic or content chosen for discussion in a classroom is important too, especially when helping someone see that they need not be concerned about the approval of others too much when it comes to doing something which they fear, i.e. public speaking. It could be beneficial for learners to explore these dynamics when working in smaller intimate groups of individuals whom they feel comfortable with.

To conclude, Rational Emotive Behavioural theory, as developed by Albert Ellis, teaches that people's emotions are a core link to people's thinking. Too strong responses to adverse circumstances point to irrational underlying beliefs. He coined the terms; 'awfulising', 'I can't stand it-ism', and 'masturbatory' to draw attention to these kinds of behaviour and together with 'damning of self and others' type statements, they draw attention to a set of underlying beliefs which can lead to inappropriate behaviour. Such thoughts often are accompanied by inappropriate emotional and behavioural responses, such as anxiety and depression. People need to learn to accept themselves, to accept others and to accept life unconditionally. Irrational thought can be countered through discussion and by challenging and questioning beliefs so that the flaws in their thinking can be revealed. Laughter about the absurdity of some thinking helps to relieve the tension and to lighten the mood. Shame, guilt, embarrassment and humiliation are linked to anxiety, and by doing shame attacking exercises, these fears can be shown to be not as bad as they are feared to be, leading to a gradual desensitising and moving on to pass beyond these fears.

In the following section, the work of Aaron Beck is discussed in terms of his contribution to the understanding of how people can be taught to think soundly about their lives.

2.2.7 Aaron Beck (1921 -): Cognitive theory

Aaron Beck started to develop his Cognitive Theory in the 1960s during the period that he was with the University of Pennsylvania. He believed the key to helping and understanding other people lies in their cognition. Alford and Beck (1998: 14) define cognition as "that function that involves inferences about one's experiences and about the occurrence and control of future events". It is through their thinking or cognition that people make sense of their surroundings.

2.2.7.1. Schemas and controlling beliefs

Beck (1990: 4) explains, "Cognitive therapists work at dual levels of the symptom structures (manifest problems) and underlying schema (inferred structures)." Schemas, rules and basic beliefs are all similar concepts, the differences being that schemas are "cognitive structures

that organise experience and behaviour”, and beliefs and rules are “what determine[s] the content of the thinking, affect, and behaviour” (Beck, Rush, Shaw and Emery. 1979).

There are two categories of meaning-making that occur through schemas; an objective public understanding ascribed to an event and the more private personal meaning that an individual might assign to an event. Psychologically the meaning is controlled through four systems; the “behavioural, emotional, attentional and memory” (Nelson-Jones 2006: 338) systems and they can all be used to adjust and adapt to new circumstances. Schemas are developed early in life and are stable personal understandings about the world that people use to comprehend their surroundings. They come about through personal experiences and are influenced by association and linking to parents, caregivers and significant others. They are supported and re-enforced by new learning experiences that fit with the pattern and shows the schema to be valid.

2.2.7.2. Modes

According to Beck (1996: 2), a mode is defined as “a network of cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioural components. The modes, consisting of integrated sectors or suborganisations of personality, are designed to deal with specific demands or problems.” These modes are related to four underlying systems of personality (Beck 1996: 4-5):

- cognitive, i.e., linked to the perception of a threat and triggers fight or flight responses;
- affective, i.e., feelings of sadness, joy, anxiety or anger to induce action;
- motivational, i.e., the urge and desire to react (fight, flight, and freeze); and
- behavioural, i.e., the action itself.

Some of the modes operate at a ‘primal’ level and link to an individual’s continued existence and ability to pass on their genes to the next generation.

Beck (1996: 21) explains that the conscious system of a person is the most malleable and adjustable part of the personality system. It dominates the responses of a mode in four distinct ways:

- It takes precedence when there is a mismatch with the values and plans that an individual is aware of;
- It provides a wider view and understanding of a situation;
- It ensures a fit with reality and expectations of that reality; and
- Assists with the formulation of long term strategies, goals and plans.

Cognitive therapy adjusts modes which cause disturbance because altered thinking about a problematic thought by adopting more adaptive modes enables their disappearance and

neutralisation (Nelson-Jones 2006: 339). Cognitive therapy assists depressed people and counters recurrence through the alteration of the structure of the mode (Beck 1996: 22).

2.2.7.3. Cognitive vulnerability

This term refers to human beings being 'frail' when it comes to their cognition and their own individual understanding, characteristics and vulnerabilities, which sometimes makes them prone to distress. People tend to interpret behaviour of others they interact with on the basis of their own self-esteem and self-worth. Beck (1999: 50) states "a change in self-evaluation or self-esteem – generally triggers an emotional response: pleasure or pain, anger or anxiety." This is related to the difference between their own assessment of "what they should be" and how they see themselves at a time. Beck provides an example of out of his practice as a psychologist to clarify this. Sue, a patient with "dependent and avoidant personality disorders" (Beck 1990: 30) who was afraid of being rejected, when hearing her partner being noisy in the room next door attributed that noise to the thought that her partner is noisy "*because he's angry at me*" (Beck 1990: 30). An alternate explanation of excitement and enthusiasm does not occur to her because Sue was directed by her own belief and attribution of an angry response. This thought was based on a deeper belief that 'If people reject me, I will be all alone' and 'being alone will be devastating' (Beck 1990: 31). The root cause of this thinking pattern was Sue's "belief that she was unlovable" (Beck 1990: 31).

People are guided by preconscious thoughts which "often are at the periphery of awareness" (Beck 1967: 321) and it helps them to become conscious of these automatic thoughts to understand what drives their thinking and which triggers the negative emotions which plague them. Beck (1967: 321-329) explains that automatic thoughts are reflected in a person's interior monologue. They show themselves as pictures or in the chosen words. These thoughts occur very quickly and are just on the edge of conscious thought. They are linked to emotions, feelings and inhibitions and are based on people's interpretations rather than on the concrete actions triggering the emotions. These thoughts are experienced as accurate and therefore plausible, and they tend to reoccur even though the person tries to stop them. They reveal themselves in a person's tone of voice, their facial expressions and their gestures even if not acknowledged through their words and are associated with deeper, more subtle thoughts. Aaron Beck's daughter, Judith, also explains the process in her publication on cognitive therapy procedures by describing how people can be helped to identify their automatic thoughts and evaluate and assess their validity and with greater awareness can develop more rational and reasonable thought patterns (Beck 1995).

Psychological vulnerabilities can be acquired through childhood traumas that are incorporated into personal beliefs. To clarify a five-year-old child when returning after a family holiday to

find the dog had died, can develop an internal belief that something bad is going to happen when they are not physically close to their pet or somebody that they care about. Similarly, when the father of a seven-year-old left the family permanently after a marital fight developed, the underlying belief for their child might be that 'If I make others angry they will leave me' (Nelson-Jones 2006: 344). Furthermore, a parent that chronically criticises a child can develop a tendency for their offspring to engage in self-criticism.

2.2.7.5. Social learning

When helping others to adjust their behaviour Beck (1990: 90) writes that "behavioural rehearsal, modelling, assertiveness training, and role-playing for skill development" are beneficial strategies to learn to change behaviour which is ineffective. During reverse role play people develop more empathy for the perspectives of the other party in a conflict situation, which helps to defuse the tension previously driving the conflict situations. Role play can "mobilise affect and produce "mutation" of the schemas or core beliefs". Sometimes it may lead to "emotional catharsis in order to change their strong beliefs" (Beck 1990: 91). When situations which occurred in the past are re-enacted, an opportunity arises to change the understanding of a person regarding such troubling early experiences in life. "Re-experiencing the episode facilitates the emergence of dominant structures (the "hot" schemas) and makes them more accessible" (Beck 1990: 92) for adjustment or correction to take place. Treatment for disorders happens by means of reality testing and correcting of automatic thoughts, by identifying and modifying the underlying beliefs and through behavioural interventions.

Beck makes use of the strategies (cf. Nelson-Jones 2006: 357-358) outlined in the ensuing paragraph to show that situations are often not as black and white or extreme as they are feared to be. When applied to the learning situation, these strategies may teach children other perspectives by testing their understanding of their reality, and this can be achieved by means of engaging with them in the following ways:

1. Socratic dialogues where by means of asking questions the closed belief systems of a person are changed into open systems. Socratic questioning is systematic, disciplined, and deep and usually focuses on foundational concepts, principles, theories, issues, or problems (Paul and Elder 2007). First, by achieving awareness, then examining the cognitive distortions in their beliefs, substituting them with more balanced thoughts and then making plans to develop new thought processes.
2. Identify the automatic thoughts and cognitive distortions;
3. Decatastrophize by asking "So what if that happens?" By discussing the probability and severity of something happening, children's capacity to cope improves and by

indicating support factors, their ability to accept and deal with the worst possible outcomes also increases;

4. Reattribution processes can help children to assess their own responsibility, and the real cause of negative events and what the feared outcomes might be and in so doing alternative explanations for the occurrence of events can be pointed out;
5. Redefining problems by making them more concrete and by identifying what can be done is helpful so that the feared outcomes of behaviour for a child are given other vantage points;
6. Decentring to make a person aware that others are not focused on them all the time, and neither are they always focused on the activities of other people. This helps children to become aware of how limited their own observations are, and thus, they create awareness that others are similar in not being focussed upon them all the time either;
7. Forming more rational responses is beneficial in general;
8. Daily recording of their rational responses; and
9. Imagery techniques can help children gain more realistic perspectives, projections into the future and by looking back from present situations will help them to arrive at more realistic images.

There are three drivers underlying these beliefs, those of acceptance, competence and control. Cognitive therapy has over time proved to be a very effective and schema-focused approach and is a very important development. It is useful for treating a wide range of psychological disorders and leads to lower relapse rates.

2.2.7.5. Implications of Beck's cognitive approaches for life skills acquisition

As human beings make sense of their surroundings, they look for patterns and rules to improve their survival abilities. A better understanding of what is happening around them will help a person to either avoid a negative situation or to maximise a positive event. Beck called a person's stable thinking patterns schemas. These stable patterns are developed early in life with influences from parents and other significant caregivers. People are susceptible to primal responses when in survival threat situations such as attack or anger. Beck called these modes, and such modes usually are rigid primal responses to the world people live in. People who are feeling threatened tend to understand the world around them in ways which are detrimental to them; they make assumptions and interpret the behaviour of others incorrectly, often based on irrational thinking, negative self-appraisal, and they are governed by feelings of threat. Sometimes these insecurities are rooted in childhood traumas, sparked by events that took place onto which an incorrect belief has been built. For instance, a child who was often criticised can become self-critical as a result, and with a lack of communication between the

child and their family members, caregivers or friends, misunderstandings and frustrations in their relationships with others can arise.

Reality testing is an important way to identify and deal with unhelpful underlying beliefs. Teachers can ask questions to create awareness when they come across distorted thoughts. "So, what will happen if..." type questions can lead to a discovery that some fears might be highly unlikely. Teachers can sketch other possible outcomes to scenarios, give alternative explanations, and make children aware that other people are not as focused on them as they tend to believe, just as they as children are not focused on other people all the time. Visualisation and creation of other, more real-life images can help to defuse the tension that the dysfunctional belief can call up in a person. These techniques lead to better decision making about an assessment of the world in which a person lives through the creation of a sounder cognitive understanding of their world.

In a nutshell, Aaron Beck's cognitive theory teaches life orientation teachers another aspect of the human psyche; people use their cognitive abilities to make sense of their surroundings. In the early stages of life, people develop schema's that are stable cognitive patterns that they consider to be proven and true patterns in life. Automatic thoughts are linked to emotions, feelings, and inhibitions that are based on our interpretations rather than on the actions themselves. Anger and anxiety are survival strategies linked to our fight, flight, freeze, faint, and flock responses. Modelling is a key strategy within social learning, and parents model rules such as the 'should's and should not's' that they teach. Teaching children how to deal with adversity especially helps anxious individuals. Assertiveness skills are foundational in the development of self-esteem and lead to less occurrence of depression. Exposure to modelling of good communication skills within a child's living space and learning that there can be alternative explanations when wrong conclusions are drawn can assist in healthy development. Reality testing helps to identify unhelpful underlying beliefs and asking questions such as "what will happen if..." leads to the discovery of alternative explanations. In this way, problems can become less threatening because they are redefined, and the children are given other perspectives. Children need help to become aware that others are not focused only on them. More helpful and positive life images can assist with countering of dysfunctional beliefs about inadequacy in some children and thus can lead to a sounder more realistic cognitive understanding of their world.

The following section deals with Arnold Lazarus who made a significant contribution to the field of psychotherapy with his introduction of Multimodal therapy theory. Moreover, Lazarus, in his lifetime, developed an intensive questionnaire which is very helpful to assess an individual who is requesting help properly.

2.2.8. Arnold Lazarus (1913 – 2013): Multimodal theory

Multimodal therapy theory was developed by Arnold Lazarus as a response to the limitations of behavioural therapy. Lazarus (1989: 253,256) was focused on achieving success through focused, therapeutic interventions and in achieving results to specific problems and worked towards psychotherapy that was based on facts rather than determined by faith. To be effective, Lazarus added unique assessment procedures to standard behavioural therapy. As Dryden writes (1991: 4), Lazarus did a thorough analysis of “behaviours, affective processes, sensations, images, cognitions, interpersonal relationships, and biological functions” of his clients. Lazarus also advocated that each unique client be assessed properly by means of the multimodal assessment tools that he developed, and their treatment be tailored to focus on and suit their specific needs (Dryden 1991: 4).

Lazarus (Dryden 1991: 14-15) believes that a person should be judged on how much fun they had during their life on earth as their measure of success. The two major contributions Lazarus (1991: 3) made to the field of psychology are “his views on *technical eclecticism* and his development of *multimodal assessment procedures*” Lazarus (1989: 252) advocates using “prescriptive treatments based on empirical evidence and client need, rather than theoretical and personal predisposition.” Lazarus (Dryden 1991: 4) distinguishes seven different modalities that interact with each other. The list of modalities is known through the acronym BASIC ID. It is derived from the first letter of each modality, which also reminds users of the various items on the modality list.

2.2.8.1. The seven BASIC ID modalities

As Lazarus explains (1989: 256), his clients usually suffer from a multitude of psychological ailments and need to be treated with specific treatments; each disorder matched up with a relevant treatment protocol. “Each area of a client’s BASIC ID is addressed (B = Behaviour, A = Affect, S = Sensation, I = Imagery, C = Cognition, I = Interpersonal relationships, D = Drugs/Biological factors)” (Lazarus 1989: 256).

2.2.8.2. Seven constructs that shape and maintain the human personality

The constructs that have a big influence on human personality development, according to Lazarus (1992, 1997 in Nelson Jones. 2006: 374) are:

1. Associations and relations among events;
2. Modelling and imitation;
3. Non-conscious processes;
4. Defensive reactions;
5. Private events;

6. Meta-communications; and
7. Thresholds.

Lazarus agrees that classical or operant conditioning helps to shape personal aversions or preferences. Survival chances of humans improve greatly because of our ability to learn from observing and copying others, and our modelling and imitation abilities are important factors in the process of learning.

2.2.8.3. Defensive mechanisms

Bad experiences tend to keep people away from re-visiting situations which had bad outcomes in the past, and thus personal defensive mechanisms come about. Lazarus (1997: 41) writes that "(d)efensive reactions are "avoidance responses" that attenuate pain, discomfort, anxiety, depression, guilt, and shame."

People tend to respond to their perceived rather than their real worlds as their perceptions, and personal knowledge and experiences will filter the information they are exposed to. Factors which influence what is received and retained are (Lazarus 1997:40) "idiosyncratic use of language, semantics, problem-solving competencies, appraisals, attributions, self-efficacy, expectancies, goals, encoding, and selective attention." Lazarus (Dryden 1991: 9) believes that misinformation and missing information often lie at the root of personal emotional problems. Missing information examples would, for instance, be a lack of social skills such as lack of eye contact, being unable to hold a conversation or how to respond in a job interview situation. People also meta-communicate which means they talk with each other about what they said to improve their cognition on whether they comprehend the communication correctly to improve their mutual understanding. Other factors which contribute to maladaptive behaviour are "conflicting or ambivalent feelings or reactions, interpersonal inquietude and poor self-acceptance" (Dryden 1991: 13). People also have different thresholds or tolerance levels that they can handle.

Multimodal theory strives not to respond rigidly in all aspects of treatment, assessment, and goal setting. As the multimodal approach is very specifically geared to dealing with a client's needs, a practical goal with suitable effective treatment is identified. Two main questions are asked related to a client's needs; "What has led to the current situation?" and "Who are or what is maintaining it?" (Lazarus 1992) Therapists also find out what the expectations of the client are and what kind of relationship would work best for them as well as look out for the strengths and positive aspects of a person. By adjusting to the current position of the client and their preferred style of contact, it becomes easier to bond with and win the trust of the client.

Multimodal therapy “is an open system in which the principle of technical eclecticism encourages the constant introduction of new techniques and the refinement or elimination of existing ones, but never in a random or shotgun manner” (Nelson-Jones. 2006) The relationship with the client adapts to suit their expectancies and preferred modalities. Lazarus finds he achieves more when he adapts his approach to the readiness for change and the ability to react to each client. He also tries to bridge by slowly moving from a client’s preferred mode over to modalities that could be more productive. Clients are less resistant when they are approached in this fashion. Lazarus also encourages homework exercises to support the treatment process, and he encourages an active, initiative rich therapy approach. Therapists should make suggestions for their clients to utilise and try out.

2.2.8.4. Implications of Lazarus’ multi-modal theory for acquisition of life skills

Lazarus teaches that it is important to do a good assessment of the mental health or level of development of a person before attempting to help them. Lazarus advises that one starts with a series of tests to ascertain what the problems are before giving therapy. Similarly, a teacher would need to first put the finger on the pulse of the learners in a class before teaching life skills. Once the results of the assessment have been considered competently, a well thought through plan of action should be formulated that deals with only the aspects that are found to be troublesome for the persons in a group. This approach leads to focused attention on one or two problems only so that results can be achieved to remove these troubling aspects from their lives. Once teachers have assessed the need for a class, they need to select relevant lesson material to achieve the best results for most of the learners. Armed with good insight into the nature of their problems, a proper plan of action can be formulated, and appropriate techniques are chosen before an intervention or lesson is presented. This will improve the focus of a lesson and will result in a higher success rate as the life skills lesson is aimed at specific matters which learners need to learn. Thus, a pre-intervention “finger on the pulse” assessment of ‘needs’ makes it possible to work from empirical evidence to identify the best plan of action.

Teachers need to consider seven BASIC ID (Behaviour, Affect, Sensation, Imagery, Cognition, Interpersonal: interdependency, and less so Drugs/biology)” (Lazarus 1989: 256) modalities when thinking about the learner's needs. Furthermore, it is important to create a relationship with the learners at their level first, before teaching them life skills. The process of asking questions to discover the developmental needs and then structuring a lesson on relevant topics will ensure that there will be less resistance to the process of change. Teachers can thus present ideas, strategies, and solutions to learners on the topics being taught.

To summarise, Multimodal approaches as formulated by Lazarus teach us the importance of first doing a sound assessment of the problems to identify the most pressing ones and then focus on working on those to achieve results and make meaningful change happen. Teachers also need to identify those aspects relevant to most of the children in a class to bring about rational insight in a focused manner. The BASIC ID (Behaviour, affect, sensation, imagery, cognition, interpersonal, and drug avoidance/healthy) modalities all require consideration in the needs analysis. Building up a relationship with the children on their level assists in their acceptance of the life skills intervention. Relevant content for the children also aids openness to the process of change, making the solutions and strategies offered to them more acceptable.

Moving from cognitive behaviourist and social learning theories, we now move to an existential approach which is aimed at moving a person from receiving support from their environment over to self-support based on awareness residing within the person.

2.3 GESTALT THERAPEUTIC THEORY

2.3.1 Fritz Perls (1893 – 1970): Gestalt therapy

The Gestalt approach to life bestows a prominent place to living in the now and being more aware of how you live. Fritz Perls utilises role-play to assist people in gaining understanding in those situations which cause them distress. He also advocates achieving healthy awareness and living a balanced life. The fantasy and dreams of a person act as an existential guide to help people and find those matters which upset and cause emotional unrest in their spirits.

Perls (1969) described his Gestalt therapy approach as an existential approach which deals with the whole person. He (1969: 17) describes it as a philosophy aimed at achieving harmony with respect to all aspects of living in the reality of the present moment. Gestalt, when translated from German, means to form or shape and can also mean pattern, configuration or organised whole. Perls thought that in general people are not integrated and complete or whole. In Gestalt therapy sessions, the aim is to find the overall pattern of what is causing disruptions in this wholeness. Human beings always strive to achieve balance or homeostasis, which is disturbed either by environmental demands or internal needs of the individual. Homeostasis is a self-regulating living system that can adjust to keep stable and stay alive. A healthy person can restore their balance quickly, while an ill person stays in an out of balance state and is unable to satisfy his/her needs. When having to tend to survival, the individual will tend to deal with survival needs first before trying to tend to his or her self-actualisation needs.

During a person's life, they move through an infinite series of 'Gestalts': when one is finished, the next needs formation and the process of change and growth in awareness and reaching completion of such gestalts continues (Perls 1969: 16).

Perls (1951) encouraged people to take in what they need for their growth from their surroundings and to strive for awareness which is "characterised by *contact*, by *sensing*, by *excitement* and by *Gestalt* formation" (Perls 1951: viii). Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1973: 18) found that personal growth, integration and balance are found through understanding and completion of Gestalten, and this is an ongoing process. Only the completed 'gestalten' become fully integrated as a reflex after the gestalt formation process. (Perls 1951: ix). When people understand their situations, they are better able to cope with them. Perls (1970: 38) was also fond of saying: "So lose your mind and come to your senses".

2.3.1.1. Self-support through awareness

Perls advocated the development of self-support of the individual through better personal awareness. According to Perls (1970: 18), neurosis comes about when people are not willing to "produce (their) own support and where environmental support is not forthcoming" and then undergo the pain of the impasses, the "feeling of being stuck and lost." Gestalt therapy aims to help an individual discover the awareness continuum (Perls 1970: 17) and to move from reliance on the external environment to self-support. Gestalt therapy helps to develop awareness in people; it expects immersion into the present moment to reach an understanding about current "manipulations and contact boundary disturbances" (Nelson-Jones 2006: 130) and to revisit and integrate the unfinished problems arising from trauma rooted in their past. People are encouraged to be aware and in tune with the world and to use their senses to observe their reality to achieve a better state of awareness. "This ability to see is health" (Perls 1970: 19).

Perls identified five layers of neurosis:

- Phony layer – these are the superficial, social, as-if layers where people play roles and where they try to live up to a fantasy or to a concept or an ideal/curse of someone else's creation. This happens when an individual no longer tries to actualise him or herself and inherently leads to dissatisfaction because this person is no longer in touch with their authentic self. When the phoney layer is taken away, this leads to voids and emptiness and shows how the 'top-dog' that tortures the 'under-dog' through demanding behaviour (Perls 1970: 21). The top-dog takes on bully behaviour and forces the under-dog to follow orders, or there will be consequences. Both are frustrated and try to control each other, either by demands or by evasive behaviour.

- Phobic layer – In this instance, there is resistance, and this is where the should not's occur. This layer is built upon dissatisfaction.
- Impasse layer – The situation of the impasse is where people feel they are nothing.
- Implosive layer – The death or implosive layer can also be the fear of death because this is where paralysis of opposing forces happens, and it leads to a pulling together, compressing and implosion (Fiordo 1981: 104). A turn around occurs next where the implosion becomes an explosion. It is necessary for a person to move through the implosive layer to be in touch with their authentic self again (Perls 1970).
- Explosive layer – When a person moves through the implosion, an explosion occurs which ends in an authentic truth (Fiordo 1981: 104) and manifests into joy, grief, orgasm or anger responses.

Perls (1970: 22) writes that “Implosion becomes explosion, compression becomes expression.” It is awareness of the now, which is the key to moving through the impasse as awareness of the impasse leads to the impasse caving in to release into the explosive stage. Teachers should be aware of three psychological mechanisms as they are signallers of pending problems. They are retroflexion (looking back on), introflexion (taken in as a foreign element and not integrated or assimilated), and projection (something which is part of our own personality but is attributed to other objects or people) (Fiordo 1981: 104).

2.3.1.2. Frustration and the use of drama

Perls (1972: 86-87) explains that “one of the basic laws of gestalt formation – the tension arising out of the need for closure is called frustration, the closure is called satisfaction. Satis – enough; facere – to make” It means to fulfil the need until a state of being full or completed is reached. With reaching satisfaction, the out of kilter state is removed and then vanishes to close the incident. Confronting and moving through a frustration leads to the solution. The ultimate therapeutic aim is being able to deal with a problem by means of one's own abilities and self-help.

Perls noticed that the more alienated a person has become from his inner self, the more he makes use of nouns instead of verbs, and of the word ‘it’ (1970: 20). The word ‘it’ is convenient as it enables distance and avoidance of being truly alive. Change can be brought about when people move from a state of impasse to engage with the process of life and live in the now again.

In this regard, Perls used fantasy and drama to speed up the process of gaining insight. Drama and fantasy make use of both the ‘empty chair’ and the ‘hot seat.’ The individual is in the hot seat, and the empty chair is reserved for the characters and objects that play a role in the

dreams, nightmares, or fantasies which disturb a person. Individuals change seats as they shuttle between themselves and the different characters in their drama.

Resistance is great because the patient has been conditioned to manipulate his environment for support. He does this by acting helpless and stupid; he wheedles, bribes, and flatters. ... Top and Under Dogs are actually two clowns performing their weird and unnecessary plays on the stage of the tolerant and mute self. Integration can be achieved only when the need for mutual control between top and underdogs ceases" (Perls 1978: 77).

The person learns by going from the one to the other extreme to gain insight and understanding, which disarms and defuses the tension.

The dream world also has a role to play in the therapeutic journey in that dreams provide existential messages "coded in cryptic language" (Perls 1969: 129). One of the Gestaltist integration techniques is "dream work ... it is an existential message. It tells the patient what his situation in life is, and especially, how to change the nightmare of his existence into becoming aware of and taking his historical place in life" (Perls 1978: 77- 78). Repetitive dreams especially indicate something which is important for the client. There are four stages to this process:

- Sharing the dream;
- Retelling the dream in the present tense;
- Talking to the various actors in the dream by acting it out and by becoming the various actors in the dream;
- Conducting a dialogue between different elements in the dream (Nelson-Jones 2006: 134).

This 'dreamwork' involves identifying and reintegrating conflicts and alienated parts of the person and helps them with finding the 'holes' in their personality which show as voids and empty spaces linked to anxiousness and bewilderment. Perls required participants to recount the content in the first person and make use of verbs and first-person personal pronouns rather than using "it" and "they."

In Perls' dream therapy he encourages the individual to act out their dream in all its details and try to keep outside of that dream as the therapist knows less about what is relevant than the patient. The underlying assumption is that the dream is a projection and that the various parts of the dream are a part of the person's self. "Often the conflict is captured in the dual opposition of the top-dog and under-dog behaviour, which leads to inefficiency and spite. ... By integrating opposite traits, we make the person whole again; for instance, weakness and bullying integrate a silent firmness" (Perls 1978: 78 - 79).

When working with a group Perls (1970: 36-37) makes use of ground rules to manage the people interaction. They are:

- Be alert when you leave the now, and always go back to the now in the sense of both the open now and the hidden now of fantasies,
- Forbid the use of the word it,
- Encourage everyone to change nouns into verbs,
- Never gossip about a person who is not present. Bring the absent one into an encounter by having the speaker playing both roles;
- Never force a confession. Never force anyone to say something that he does not want to say or intrude into him. Merely deal with objections and have them expressed.
- Give support by helping the person find his own support by asking, 'How do you...?' rather than saying 'do this.' These are some of the attitudes that will facilitate maturation. ... 'Anything you can do to help the other person discover himself is always good. Only what we discover ourselves is truly learned.' Perls (1970: 36-37)

2.3.1.3. Implications of Perls' gestalt theory for life skills acquisition

Learners are a mix of many abilities that are in flux as they develop towards their adult being, and each one should be approached as a person consisting out of many parts. They are constantly developing and moving from one gestalt to the next. When a person is undergoing therapy with a gestalt approach, the focus is on finding the overall pattern of their present gestalt to find out what is disturbing the balance to reach an understanding before moving to the next gestalt in their development. When a teacher understands the developmental situations of the learners in their classes, and they allow those situations to control their content choices about teaching life skills, they will be able to help the young people in their care cope better with life. Important in this process is the mobilisation of both the sensory and the motor systems so that the young person can work towards satisfying their own personal needs.

Matters which disturb the process of reaching a person's current gestalt are introjection, projection, confluence, and retroflection. Perls says that possible disruptions of these gestalt formations need to be avoided. The aim of the life skills teaching process is to achieve genuine understanding and awareness in the learners; to assist them in being aware of their bodies, their breathing, their voice quality, their emotions, and their thoughts. Gestalt insights and learning could contribute to learners becoming more balanced and able to develop their current gestalt; being able to express what it is that they need, and mean, is the most important step in the process of their life skills development. People need to experience themselves, learn to listen to others, and avoid their own compulsive talking. It is also helpful for them to be aware

of their superego (parent voice = you should) and their intregio (child voice = defensive, apologetic voice) to balance these out against each and become more in touch with their “own orgasmic selves.”

Dreams and drama can be helpful in discovering what is important to a learner in their current state of development. Teachers could encourage learners to write an essay about their dreams, especially their recurring dreams, to arrive at a sense of what topics are of importance at a time. The tense of the language used in the essay should be the present tense, and each of the role players in the dream needs to be explored and shown as complex rather than flat characters. Exploring what the dialogue is between these different characters would also provide insight. This exercise could help a young person to discover the voids and empty spaces in themselves that are causing them to be anxious or bewildered and provide clues to teachers about what the learner’s concerns or hopes for the future might be. The technique of working in a role offers protection to the individuals playing the roles as they are portraying a role and how they experience a role rather than being on a stage as themselves.

To wrap up the main insights, Gestalt theory such as that postulated by Perls points to emotion is a significant indicator because it clarifies what is important to a person. Gestalt in a psychological context indicates that people move through a sequence of forming ‘whole’ stages of insight and understanding. As people move from one gestalt to another, they gain a more genuine understanding of their world and their own place within that world. Frustrations are the key for continued exploration until insight dawns on how a person holds back on their own resources through their expectations of catastrophe. People constantly strive to balance out the super-ego (parent-like authoritarian behaviour) against the intra-ego (childlike behaviour) as both are part of human make-up and need to be reconciled through gained awareness and understanding. Fantasy, drama and the dream world can all be engaged to achieve better insight into each gestalt that a person moves through, as they often reveal themes and messages of what is important to an individual. Seen against this backdrop, teachers can encourage children to embrace life and be open to learning about themselves and the world in which they live.

In the next section of the chapter on developmental theoretical foundations, the thinking of various experiential and social learning theorists will be discussed. They are Lev Vygotsky, Kurt Lewin, John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and David Kolb, all of whom have contributed to the understanding of experiential learning theories.

2.4 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

To provide a broader context for experiential learning, some insight gained from neurological research will be touched on in this paragraph.;

The cortex develops more slowly than the other brain parts. Within the cortex, the area that controls physical movements is the first to mature, followed next by the areas that control the senses (e.g., vision, hearing) and finally by those that control complex cognitive processes (e.g., language, thinking). For example, research indicates that the prefrontal cortex, which controls our impulses by means of reasoning, planning, or delay of gratification, can take up to twenty years to become fully developed (Weinberger in Moreno (2010:74).

During that developmental progression, parents and teachers play an important role in the cognitive and emotional development of the children in their care. They assist with “helping children to regulate and plan their behaviour” (Meece in Moreno (2010:74) . Learner-centred teaching approaches link to “students’ mastery goals, cognitive engagement, and achievement” (Meece in Moreno (2010:74) and assists young people to perform better when in middle school. Understanding how to do that has been influenced by countless theoretical approaches developed by many different thinkers over time, as human beings have tried to understand the complex functioning of the brain and our human behaviour. The following thinkers have done so from the perspective of learning through experience and social influences on that experience.

2.4.1 Lev S. Vygotsky (1896- 1934) Sociocultural view of development

Vygotsky “believed that thinking is a function of both social and cultural forces” (Moreno 2010: 88). In his understanding, the two driving forces that are focused on the development of cognition are social interaction and language development. Language and culture are acquired within a community through social interaction, and it is through the activities that children take part in within their social context that they arrive at an understanding of their world. Children also learn about their environment through mediation which happens when a more able individual understands what a child wants and helps them to transform it into a shared “representation” that has the same meaning to the child as it has to others in their social environment (Moreno 2010: 89).

Through observation of children, Vygotsky concluded that language has a self-regulatory function in the development of cognition. According to him, people develop inner speech,

which is the egocentric speech of an individual, i.e., when people talk to themselves. This inner speech is used from the age of three to seven when children speak out loud to themselves as a thinking support tool; it provides effective support when children are engaged in problem-solving as it helps them to stay focused and carry out the task in a better manner (Moreno 2010: 90).

2.4.1.1. Zone of proximal development

When a child can do a task well on their own, they are doing so in the zone of their actual development. When they can perform a task with the help of an adult or a friend who knows a little more than they do, they are working in their zone of proximal development (ZPD). The zone of proximal development “is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky 1978: 86). This approach also considers the processes of the mind which are developing, the potential ability which is busy emerging and maturing. Children can also only imitate that which lies inside their developmental level. “What children can do with the assistance of others might be in some sense, even more, indicative of their mental development than what they do alone” (Vygotsky 1978: 85). Tasks which are still too difficult, lie outside a child's ZPD.

2.4.1.2. Role of language in development

Language plays a role in the developmental process as children often use their inner speech when they are working in their ZPD. Often, they will repeat the words that they were offered by the more accomplished person who was teaching them. To Vygotsky, this is a demonstration of the first step of cognitive growth in a child. He (1978: 24) wrote, “the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge.” Moreover, Vygotsky found that those who do use their inner voice develop faster than those who do not. Children's “speech and action are part of one and the same complex psychological function, directed toward the solution of the problem at hand” (Vygotsky 1978: 25) and his studies showed him that “children solve practical tasks with the help of their speech, as well as their eyes and hands” (Vygotsky 1978: 26). Speech also assists children to plan and create a structure for solving a problem or task. Upon mastery of a difficult task, the inner voice of a child becomes silent, and the child moves that skill or ability into the zone of actual development.

Vygotsky recognised the role of scaffolding in learning. Scaffolding was first introduced as an instructional term by Jerome Bruner in the 1960s. It refers to the time in the learning process

when a child first learns to do something new by first watching a teacher or peer who already can do a task and then is helped by the teacher when necessary until they understand the new concept and then the scaffold can be removed. The scaffolding is only needed when they are still uncertain, and as they become more proficient at a task, the support is no longer needed and can fade away. “Guided participation” is another instructional method that Vygotsky supported. Here a parent or a teacher helps or mediates in the process of learning a skill such as “doing research on the internet or planning a trip” where adult guidance gradually fades away as the learner has developed enough skill for them to do it themselves. He also recognised apprenticeship as a method of instruction where “an inexperienced person is paired with a more experienced one, which is often called a mentor or tutor” (Moreno 2010: 92).

Vygotsky (1978: 51) stated that in a child’s psychological development, their memory rather than abstract thinking ability plays a bigger role when they are young and still developing their thinking ability. While studying memory, it has become evident that towards the end of childhood, the inter-functional relations involving memory reverse their direction. This means that while still a child the thinking process is driven by the ability to remember and when they become adolescents remembering something from the past is part of their thinking (“For the young child, to think means to recall; but for the adolescent, to recall means to think”) (Vygotsky 1978: 51). It is at this point of the child’s journey into adulthood that all ideas, concepts and cerebral constructs are no longer an extension of how they behaved in their family home and context and they move towards abstract ideas and thoughts (Vygotsky 1978: 51).

2.4.1.3. Limitation of Vygotsky’s approach

A substantial limitation of Vygotsky’s approach is that “it fails to explain the mechanisms underlying cognitive development, such as the thinking processes” that allow children of different ages to move from their zone of actual development to their ZPD. In fact, the “main criticism of Vygotsky’s cognitive development theory is that it is too general and, consequently, difficult to test” (Moreno 2010: 95). This is related to Vygotsky’s death at a young age and not having had the time to refine, further test and prove the details underpinning his observations and thoughts.

2.4.1.4. Implications of Vygotsky’s theory for life skills acquisition

Human beings are social beings and significant others such as parents, teachers and slightly more knowledgeable peers can play an important role in the learning process as they demonstrate and assist in the assimilation of a new concept or skill. Humans learn in a social context and language assists in the process. By watching others who can already do a task, a person can see how this works. During this process, verbal support can be given through

explanations along the lines of how, why, what, where, when and by whom something is done, in the same ways as a scaffold or the process of guided participation, can provide support. In this manner, new insight and abilities move from the zone of proximal development to the zone of actual development once the learning has been internalised, and they have become competent or proficient at the task or skill. Children will still ‘think to recall’ new information, only when they become adolescents, do they start to ‘recall to think.’ The learning of life skills therefore also should happen together with more knowledgeable adults such as teachers, parents, grandparents, significant others and members of the peer group who are slightly ahead in their understanding and abilities regarding a life skill. Teachers of life skills play a vital role in helping their class to attain higher levels of development through their guidance, support, and modelling through their behaviour.

2.4.2 David A. Kolb (1939 –) *Experiential learning and development theory*

Experiential learning encompasses a “holistic, integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behaviour” (Kolb 1984: 21). It is a process-oriented approach which explains how “knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb 2005: 194). Experiential learning theory (ELT) has its origins in the work of Kurt Lewin, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget. It is different from “Rational cognitive learning theories that tend to give primary emphasis to acquisition, manipulation, and recall of abstract symbols” and “behavioural learning theories that deny any role for consciousness and subjective experience in the learning process” (Kolb 1984: 20). “Ideas are not fixed, and immutable elements of thought but are formed and reformed through experience” (Kolb 1984: 26).

The following brief overviews of Lewin, Dewey, and Piaget provide insight into how they influenced Kolb’s thinking; their theories are provided in the ensuing sections as context.

2.4.2.1 Kurt Lewin (1890 – 1947) *Action Research and Laboratory training*

According to Kolb (1984: 21), Lewin believed that learning, change, and growth develops out of ‘here and now’ experiences, which are followed by the collection of data and observations about their concrete experience. An analysis of that data takes place as a next step, and any conclusions which come out of the analysis are fed back to the actors in that experience. The process can either lead to modification of behaviour or to a choice of new experiences, which can be used to test the implications of new insights or concepts in a new situation.

'Here and now,' concrete experience is used to validate and test abstract concepts. It is a personal process of learning through experience which is shared with others; both on concrete and an abstract level of understanding that lead to new insights. Kolb (1984: 22) states that action research makes use of feedback processes which "provides the basis for a continuous process of goal-directed action and consequences of that action." The aim of the process is to do research which is balanced towards both information gathering practices and at the same time gives attention to the decision making and action step processes which ensue out of the research.

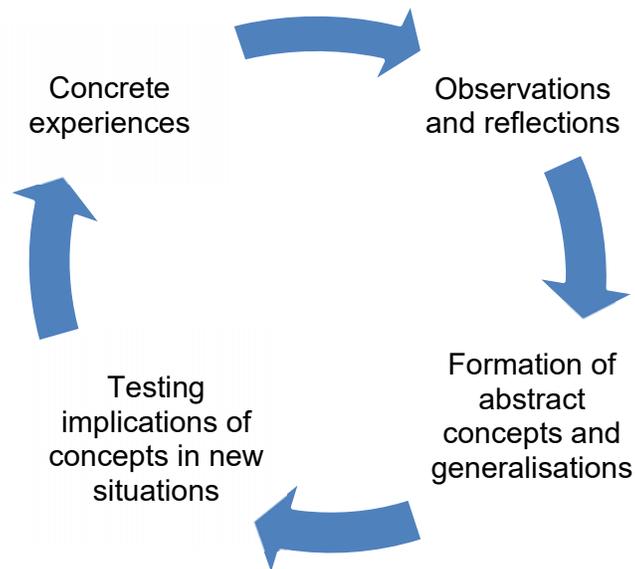


Figure 2.1 The Lewinian Experiential Learning Model (Kolb 1984:21)

2.4.2.2. John Dewey (1859 – 1952) Experiential education

Dewey (1938) was in favour of a developmental approach to learning that transforms the impulses, feelings and desires of concrete experience into higher-order purposeful action.

This is achieved through

1. observation of surrounding conditions;
2. knowledge of what has happened in similar situations in the past through recollection, and by means of the experience of other people; and
3. the judgment that is woven in through joining together of observed and recalled information to see what they indicate.

The purpose has in it a plan and method of action based upon foresight and the consequences of action under given observed conditions in a certain way; foresight is not enough; accurate prediction is the aim. "The intellectual anticipation, the idea of consequences, must blend with

desire and impulse to acquire moving forces. It then gives direction to what otherwise is blind, while desire gives ideas, impetus and momentum” (Dewey 1938: 69 in Kolb 1984: 22). As Kolb (1984: 22) explains, the focus is on learning as a

dialectic process of integrating experience and concepts, observations, and action. The impulse of experience gives ideas their moving force and ideas give direction to impulse. Postponement of immediate action is essential for observation and judgement to intervene, and action is essential for the achievement of purpose.

This process leads to mature purpose developing out of blind impulse.

2.4.2.3. Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980) Genetic epistemology

A key thinker of the past century on how children learn and develop was Jean Piaget. He believed that even though children are quick to learn a wide variety of things, there are certain concepts that they need to mature for first. It is when they reach the right developmental stage that children are ready to learn those concepts. “Piaget argued that all organisms have a need to organize and adapt to the demands of the physical environment to find equilibrium. In the case of humans, maturation, activity, and social experiences” must “interact to help children develop their changes in thinking” (Piaget 1970 in Kolb 1984: 23).

The development of a person, from infancy to adulthood, moves from a concrete phenomenal view of the world to an abstract constructionist view, and from an active egocentric view to a reflexive internalised mode of knowing. Learning and development take place in a cycle of interaction between the individual and the environment. Sometimes people accommodate new concepts or schemas from their experience in the world, and on other occasions, they assimilate events and experiences from the world into existing concepts and schemas. Kolb (1984: 23) emphasises that “Intelligent adaptation results from a balanced tension between these two processes” as when accommodation processes are stronger than those of assimilation, this leads to imitation and when the opposite occurs, it leads to playing. The process of learning tends to move through a cyclical pattern from concrete to abstract, from active to reflective; only to begin again at a higher level of understanding and cognitive functioning.

2.4.2.4. Piaget’s four stages of cognitive growth in children

a) **Sensorimotor (age 0-2) - Cognitive characteristics of this stage are:**

- Dependent thinking processes and understanding of sensory and motor processing through activities such as tasting, touching, handling;
- Goal-oriented behaviour;

- Limited to only a few schemas into which to assimilate events so at this stage mostly accommodative learning processes;
- The environment has a significant role in shaping ideas and intentions;
- Learning-based mostly on stimulus-response associations;
- Object permanence arises at the end of this stage. "Object permanence is the understanding that objects remain in the environment even when they cannot be seen or perceived by the other senses" (Moreno 2010: 81).

b) **Representational stage/Preoperational (age 2-7) - Cognitive characteristics are:**

- Still in concrete orientation stage but begins to develop a reflective orientation
- Reliance on thinking processes on perception more than logic
- Learning becomes iconic in nature, through play manipulates images of the world and can view the world from different perspectives.
- Begins to use symbols such as learning of, i.e. language, numbers, and images
- Imaginary play
- Animism
- Egocentrism
- Divergent stance

At this stage of their development when asked which is bigger, a lump of clay versus three small balls of clay which actually are the same in weight; or when needing to compare a tall glass and short glass with same content, or a group of chips which are more spread out and the same amount lying closer together, children perceive the group of balls, the taller glass and more spread out chips to be a larger quantity. This is because children focus on the most obvious visual aspect or feature of an object; they cannot yet understand reversibility or transformation.

c. **Concrete operational (age 7-11) - Cognitive characteristics of this stage are:**

- Development of abstract symbolic powers
- The logic of classes and relations governs their learning process
- Use of mental operations to solve concrete problems through the development of inductive powers
- Learning style has become more assimilative
- Uses concepts and theories to give shape to their experiences
- Can show conservation, transformation and reversibility
- Use classification, seriation, and transitivity to test if a child fits into this stage of development.

- d) **Formal operations stage (age 11+) - Cognitive characteristics of this stage are:**
- Occurs at the onset of adolescence
 - A child moves from symbolic processes based on concrete operations to a symbolic level of processing based on representational logic
 - Returns to a more active orientation modified by the reflective and abstract ability that they have gained in the previous stage
 - Propositional logic
 - Can engage in hypothetical-deductive reasoning – usually develops after puberty or even adulthood
 - Analogical reasoning
 - Combinatorial reasoning
 - Probability and proportional reasoning
 - Develops possible implications of their own theories and begins to test through an experiment which of them are true, and
 - Convergent learning style

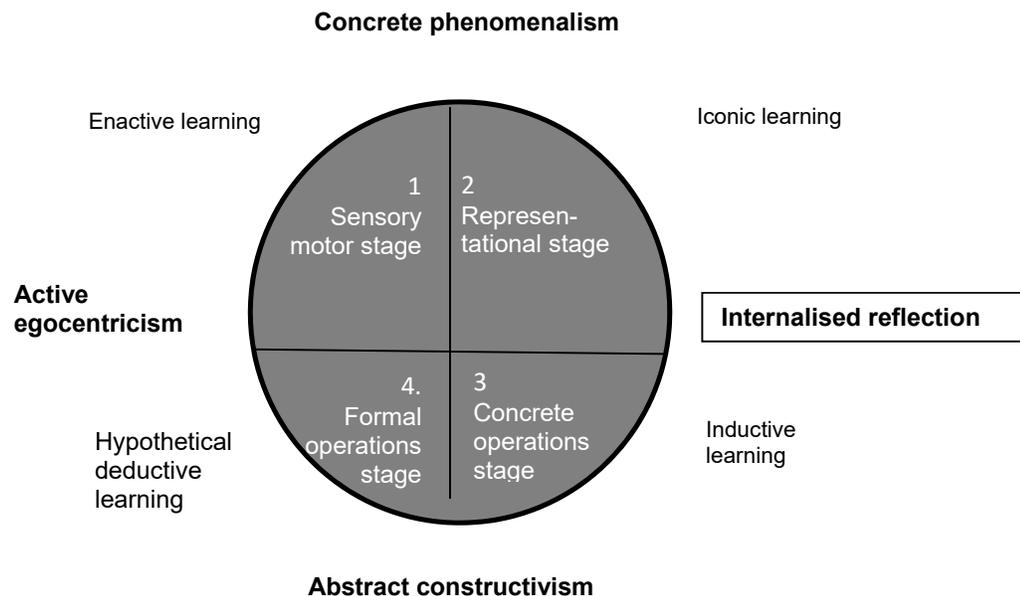


Figure 2.2 Piaget's Model of Learning and Cognitive Development (Kolb 1984:25)

The basic cognitive-developmental theory developed by Piaget shows us the foundations of the learning process that adults build their further learning processes on. David Kolb has researched how that takes place and his ideas captured in the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) he developed. It builds on the foundations provided by Lewin, Dewey and Piaget and is briefly outlined in the next section of this chapter.

2.4.2.5. Experiential learning and development process

The experiential learning process is “an idealised learning cycle or spiral where the learner ‘touches all the bases’ – experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting – in a recursive process that is responsive to the learning situation and what is being learned.” (Kolb 2005: 194). Kolb mentions in his article on learning styles and spaces that the biologist, James Zull, suggests that this process is like the functioning of the brain and states:

concrete experiences come through the sensory cortex, reflective observation involves the integrative cortex at the back, creating new abstract concepts occurs in the frontal integrative cortex, and active testing involves the motor brain. In other words, the learning cycle arises from the structure of the brain (Zull 2002: 18-19).

a) Three stages in human development in his ELT developmental model

1. “Acquisition: from birth to adolescence when basic abilities and cognitive structures develop
2. Specialisation: from formal schooling through the early work and personal experiences of adulthood, where social, educational, and organizational socialisation forces shape the development of a specialised learning style, and
3. Integration: in midcareer and later life, where non-dominant modes of learning are expressed in work and personal life” [...]

“Development is conceived as multilinear, based on an individual’s particular learning style and life path – development of CE (concrete experience) increases affective complexity, [development] of RO (reflective observation) increases perceptual complexity, [development] of AC (abstract conceptualisation) increases symbolic complexity, and [development] of AE (active experimentation) increases behavioural complexity” (Kolb 2005: 195).

b) Six characteristics of experiential learning, which Kolb states are:

1. Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes
2. Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience
3. The process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world.
4. Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world
5. Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment
6. Learning is the process of creating knowledge (Kolb and Kolb 2005:193-194).

He (2005) further concluded that effective learners need to embrace four different and opposing abilities to grasp their reality adequately. These abilities are:

- Concrete experience abilities (CE) and reflective observation abilities (RO) which are on either end of one continuum and
- Abstract conceptualisation abilities (AC) and active experimentation abilities (AE), which are opposites on another continuum.

All the models on learning convey that learning is a process full of tension and conflict as new knowledge, skills and attitudes come about through contrasting abilities. All learners need to apply and incorporate all the above abilities; so that on one continuum, they can experience events at a concrete level and can think in terms of abstract concepts while on the other continuum they can engage in active experimentation as well as do reflective observation (Kolb 2005).

The learning process of different people with preferences for different learning styles such as accommodating, diverging, assimilating and converging, are part of a system that sees learning happening along a (N-S) feeling – thinking dialectic and a (W-E) acting – reflecting dialectic.

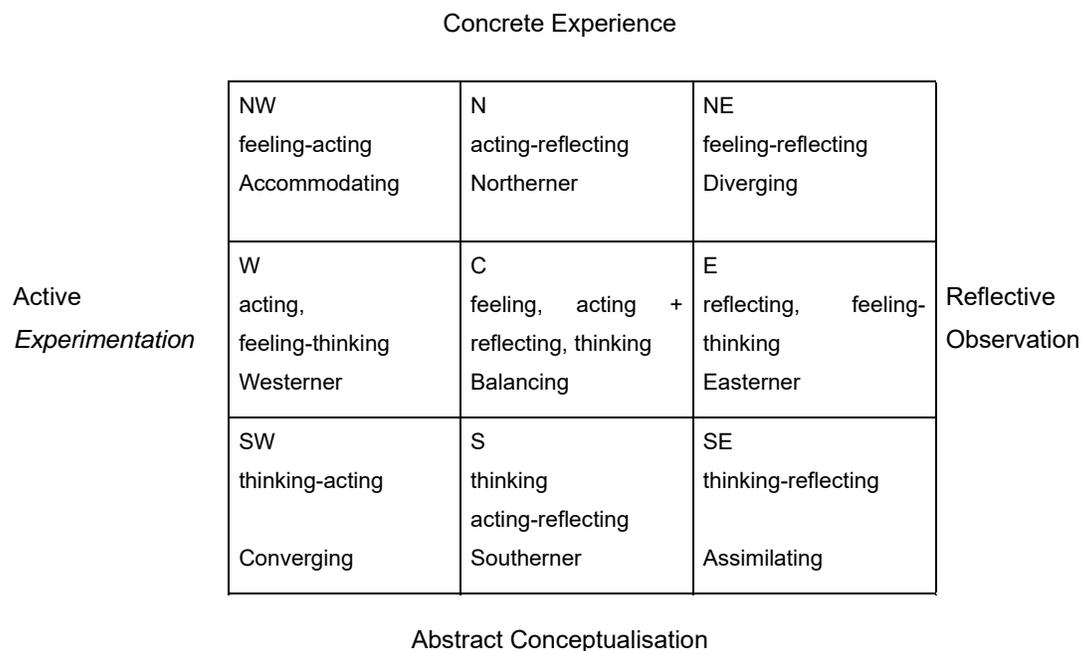


Figure 2.3 Kolb's Nine-Region Learning Style Type Grid (Kolb and Kolb 2005:198)

The different styles are explained in a little more detail below:

- Diverging style: Persons with this style are best at viewing concrete situations from many points of view;
- Assimilating style: Best at understanding a wide range of information and putting it into a concise, logical form;
- Converging style: Best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories;

- Accommodating style: Best able to learn from primary “hands-on” experience;
- Northerner: Capacity for deep involvement while being comfortable in the outer world of action and the inner world of reflection;
- Easterner: Capacity for deep reflection informed by the ability to be both feeling oriented and conceptual;
- Southerner: Highly developed conceptual and analytical capabilities informed by both reflection and action;
- Westerner: Highly developed action skills that are informed by both conceptual analysis and intuitive experience; and
- Balancing: Integrates all the styles, more adaptively flexible learners (Kolb 2005: 196-198).

People seldom are purely dominant in the one or the other style, so one should not treat this as an approach where people are categorised or put in a box of being either this or that style but rather should be somewhere along the continuum between on the two dialectic orientations. This is good as “[c]omplexity, and the integration of dialectic conflicts among the adaptive modes are the hallmarks of true creativity and growth” (Kolb 1984: 31).

“To learn is not the special province of a single specialised realm of human functioning such as cognition or perception. It involves the integrated functioning of the total organism – thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving” (Kolb 1984: 31).

Learning is the major process of human adaptation [...] It encompasses all life stages, from childhood to adolescence, to middle and old age. Therefore, it encompasses other, more limited adaptive concepts such as creativity, problem-solving, decision making, and attitude change that focus heavily on one or another of the basic aspects of adaptation. Thus, creativity research has tended to focus on the divergent (concrete and reflective) factors in adaptation such as tolerance for ambiguity, metaphorical thinking, and flexibility, whereas research on decision making has emphasized more convergent (abstract and active) adaptive factors such as the rational evaluation of solution alternatives (Kolb 1984: 32).

Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb 1984: 38). Experiential learning processes focus on:

- “the process of adaptation and learning as opposed to content or outcomes.
- knowledge is a transformation process being continuously created and recreated, not as an independent entity to be acquired or transmitted.
- learning transforms the experience in both its objective and subjective forms

- to understand learning, we must understand the nature of learning, and visa versa (Kolb 1984: 38).

2.4.2.6. Implications of Kolb's experiential process of life skills acquisition

The main contribution brought about by the experiential learning theory of Kolb is the introduction of a multi-linear approach beyond that acquiring knowledge and learning lie purely in rational thinking but rather are a process rooted in experience. According to him the process of learning and acquiring knowledge moves through three stages; that of acquisition which typically happens from birth through to adolescence, which is followed by a period of specialisation that takes place during the period of formal schooling and progresses from there to early work and events in adulthood. Integration is the last stage which occurs during a mid-career and later life stage. The process of learning is multi-linear, is impacted on through an individual's learning style and through their life path. It also takes place through the development of concrete experience, on which people will reflect and observe. This leads to the development of abstract concepts after which active experimentation happens, and this, in turn, leads to new experiences. Learning then is a process and does not happen easily as new knowledge, skills, and attitudes grow out of abilities that often lie opposite each other on two continuums; that of "concrete experience abilities (CE) and reflective observation abilities (RO)" which lie on one range and "abstract conceptualisation (AC) and active experimentation (AE) that are on another". Learning also takes place in the tension created between our "feelings and our thinking as well as that between our acting (behaving) and reflecting (perceiving) abilities" (Kolb 1984). People have different natural learning styles, and thus, we tend to be better at some of these stages than others. For teachers, this means that they need to be aware that learners in a class are naturally gifted with different learning approaches and that they need to bring in a mix of concrete and active activities together with opportunities for reflection and theorising.

To conclude, Kolb's experiential learning theory teaches that the process of learning involves the integrated functioning of the total person, with their thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving faculties all playing a part in the process. An artist will approach a problem more from a divergent perspective, while a business executive will use convergent thinking when trying to make decisions. Kolb has developed nine ability "regions" to indicate different human learning styles which lie on a continuum between concrete experience and abstract conceptualisation on one dialectic and active experimentation and reflective observation on the other dialectic. Learning requires people to give attention to a mix of these activities on an on-going basis. New knowledge, skills, and attributes come about through contrasting abilities being applied. In the first years of life, people are more focused on acquisition processes of learning, later this is followed by specialisation activities, and in the last life stages integration

of prior learning and experience takes place. When working with young learners, the area of emphasis of this study, the focus will be mostly on the acquisition stage of acquiring life skills.

2.5 KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO LIFE SKILLS APPLICATIONS

A preliminary introduction to the concept of life skills and its place within life orientation training has been provided in the first chapter (cf 1.1; 1.6.1; 1.6.2). In this section, different broad approaches to life skills and life skills training made by key individuals in this area of application are discussed. Life-skills for the general foundation of people is a very wide and multifaceted topic which is defined differently by various scholars who are in a wide range of disciplines: psychology, health education, counselling psychology, sports education, and neurological physiology, to name a few. Thus, categorising approaches to life skills and life skills training is a challenging endeavour. It is acknowledged that there is considerable overlap among the different approaches; however, for analysis, categorisation has been made, and scholars have been linked to certain approaches according to their distinctive and dominant foci.

2.5.1 *Richard Nelson-Jones: Coaching, counselling, and therapy*

Richard Nelson-Jones (2006, 2007) is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society and of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Currently, he serves as a Director of the Cognitive Humanistic Institute, Chiang Mai, in Thailand. As a researcher, he has studied life skills and has contributed to the field from a cognitive behavioural knowledge base within the field of psychotherapy. He approaches life skills from a counselling perspective, and in his book *Life Coaching Skills: How to develop skilled clients*; he devotes a chapter to life skills and what they are. In this chapter, he states that one of the most important insights, as developed by Ellis and Beck, is that “thoughts or cognitions mediate behaviour.” This means that by working with clients, life coaches can help to build up their “clients’ communications/actions, thoughts and mental processes” in order “to influence how they feel and physically react” (Nelson-Jones 2007: 26).

In the context of life skills acquisition, Nelson-Jones (2007: 11-12) uses the following three categories from which to approach thinking about and developing life skills;

1. Areas of skill (Listening skills or disclosing skills);
2. Levels of competence (Good versus poor skill levels); and

3. Knowledge and sequence of choices (The ability to implement sequences of choices to achieve objectives).

He further categorises life skills by breaking them down into either a “communication and action skill” or a “mind skill”.

2.5.1.1. Communication and action skills

1. Verbal communication skills - these are word-based messages
2. Vocal communication skills – the messages sent by means of the voice (such as volume, articulation, pitch, emphasis and speech rate)
3. Bodily communication skills – the messages sent by the body (gaze, eye contact, facial expression, posture, gestures, physical proximity, clothes and grooming)
4. Touch communication - refers to which part of the body is touched and how gentle or firm is the touching
5. Acting - the messages which happen when not face to face with others

Nelson-Jones (2007: 12 -16) also states that cultural differences do have a role to play and will influence the above communication and action skills.

2.5.1.2. Mind skills

In the category of mind skills, Nelson-Jones (2007) suggests a further break down into the following cognitive approaches to building beneficial life skills in coaching clients:

1. Beliefs or preferential rules skills (expressed as preferences rather than rules)
2. Perception skills (how accurately one perceived oneself rather than how accurately one perceives others)
3. Self-talk skills (stop, think, I can choose how to act, calm down and just take one step at a time)
4. Visual images skills (use affirming visual pictures together with affirming self-talk)
5. Explanations skills (look for causes on the inside before blaming issues on outside factors)
6. Expectations skills (often caused by inaccurately estimating the “downside” of their communication and actions) (Nelson-Jones 2007: 17 – 23).

Other important life skills aspects are:

7. Realistic goal settings skills (goals can be short, medium or long term about relationships, study, work, recreation, health and finances and should reflect values, be realistic, specific and have clear time frames)

8. Realistic decision-making skills. (First confronting and making decisions and secondly implementing and evaluating them) (Nelson-Jones 2007: 24-25).

It is important for life coaches to improve client's awareness firstly of their own feelings, secondly how they experience, express and manage these feelings and thirdly to recognise their physical sensations or reactions which form part of their biological nature (Nelson-Jones 2007: 26). Nelson Jones has written prolifically on counselling and therapy approaches and provides a good overview of what a person needs to be aware of when helping others to acquire life skills.

The next section describes how Redford and Virginia Williams applied life skills primarily from a health improvement context within the medical field. Their aim was to teach people to respond differently to life's challenges, learning to avoid hostile and angry responses as this makes them prone to coronary heart disease.

2.5.2 Virginia and Redford Williams: Four crucial questions in anger management

For twenty years, Dr Redford Williams (MD) studied the effects of hostility and anger as a medical scientist in the behavioural Medicine Research Centre at Duke University. Virginia Williams, his wife, is a historian. Together they developed workshops to teach people better ways to control their hostile behaviour. The skills the participants learn to help them to build better relationships with other people. Initially, Redford and Virginia identified seventeen such skills, and over time, they honed it back to ten essential learnable skills. These form the core of their approach. In their co-authored work *Lifeskills: Eight simple ways to build stronger relationships, communicate more clearly and improve your health* (Williams and Williams 2010), these relational skills are referred to as life skills.

Life-skills aims to help people understand themselves and others better and assist those that use them, to have more effective relationships. Williams and Williams (2010: 15) medical research has

...found that getting angry, whether that anger is expressed or held in, harms the body. People who exhibit a hostile personality in their twenties are more likely to be dead – from all causes – by their fifties. These health problems appear to stem from frequent and pronounced fight-or-flight responses, as well as risky health behaviours – like smoking, excessive alcohol use, and overeating, habits that angry people are more likely to adopt.

Moreover, he is confident that with self-awareness and the ability to adjust to how you engage and treat others, and they treat you, can promote health and happiness. The life skills they teach are transferable and help for more than just those who struggle with hostility behaviour problems. Building better relationships helps individuals to understand their options and change their behaviour when needed” (Williams and Williams 2010: 14-15). Later he realised that people with hostile personalities share characteristics with those that suffer from depression. By removing the social isolation and lessening the depression, one also extends life expectancy. Furthermore, Redford Williams has an interest in looking at children. He suspects that how a child is raised has an impact on their biological make-up and their future life expectancy. Good nurturing behaviour and being raised in a loving home gives the individual a better outlook in later life. Based on insight gained after years of medical research and from observations made in their hostility workshops, the Williams couple believes that people who grew up in loving homes have better stress responses in dangerous situations as they have more protective serotonin in their bodies. The high serotonin levels have a beneficial effect on the nervous system, and much of that can be relayed back to having better coping mechanisms which were learned in their loving family environments.

In chapter five of their book, Virginia and Redford Williams (2010) explain their basic life skills approach. To move towards others with better insight into themselves, they advocate people should first assess the situation before acting on the situation they are in.

2.5.2.1. Steps to follow when in an emotionally charged space:

1. *“Identify your thoughts and feelings.* Observe what you are thinking and be aware of” the emotions you are experiencing.
2. *“Evaluate negative thoughts, negative feelings, and options.* Is the situation important? ... [I]s taking action worth it?
3. *Communicate better.* Listen carefully when another is speaking; speak up to share your feelings and thoughts.
4. *Empathize with and understand others’ behaviour.* In a caring manner, look at a situation from the perspective of the other person.

Once the stage is set, four additional basic skills will help you to act effectively:

5. *Solve problems* – this is effective on those occasions when it is a *situation*, rather than another person, that is the source of distress.
6. *Practice assertion* – to get another person to behave as you wish or to practice self-protection.
7. *Practice acceptance* – if you decide the needs of others are more important.

8. *Emphasize the positive* – keeping a high ratio of affirmations to negations in each relationship.” (Williams and Williams 2010: 115)

To clarify, they explain in the following manner – thoughts are like the words we think, and our feelings are like how we experience music. Both aspects are important parts of people’s responses to situations which they encounter. Step one of the life skills process (Williams and Williams 2010: 118) is to “determine *exactly* what it is you are feeling,” then to think about the possible responses and then to act in a manner best suited to remedy that situation. As this process requires a little practice, they advise that people first do some record-keeping of their inner thoughts and the accompanying feelings. “By reviewing them, you can evaluate what triggers your positive and negative feelings, look for patterns in how you subsequently act and evaluate those actions” (Williams and Williams 2010: 120). This process works best with people who are close to you, and less well for the impersonal contacts. To improve a person’s insight, the Williams couple suggests a process of recording the thoughts, feelings, and actions which you experience. Capture “the scene where the behaviour took place, the thoughts and feelings experienced each as a separate group, the subsequent actions taken and the consequences thereof” (Williams and Williams 2010: 122).

After a few days of increasing awareness, the step of examination and reflection can begin to find out what the underlying patterns might be. In the reflection stage, people should consider if their responses were appropriate, if some of their responses were more difficult than others, if their actions were helpful or detrimental to the relationships, if they feel supported by others who are close to them, and if they provide support in turn? This counts for more distant relationships as well as for closer relationships (Williams and Williams 2010: 125).

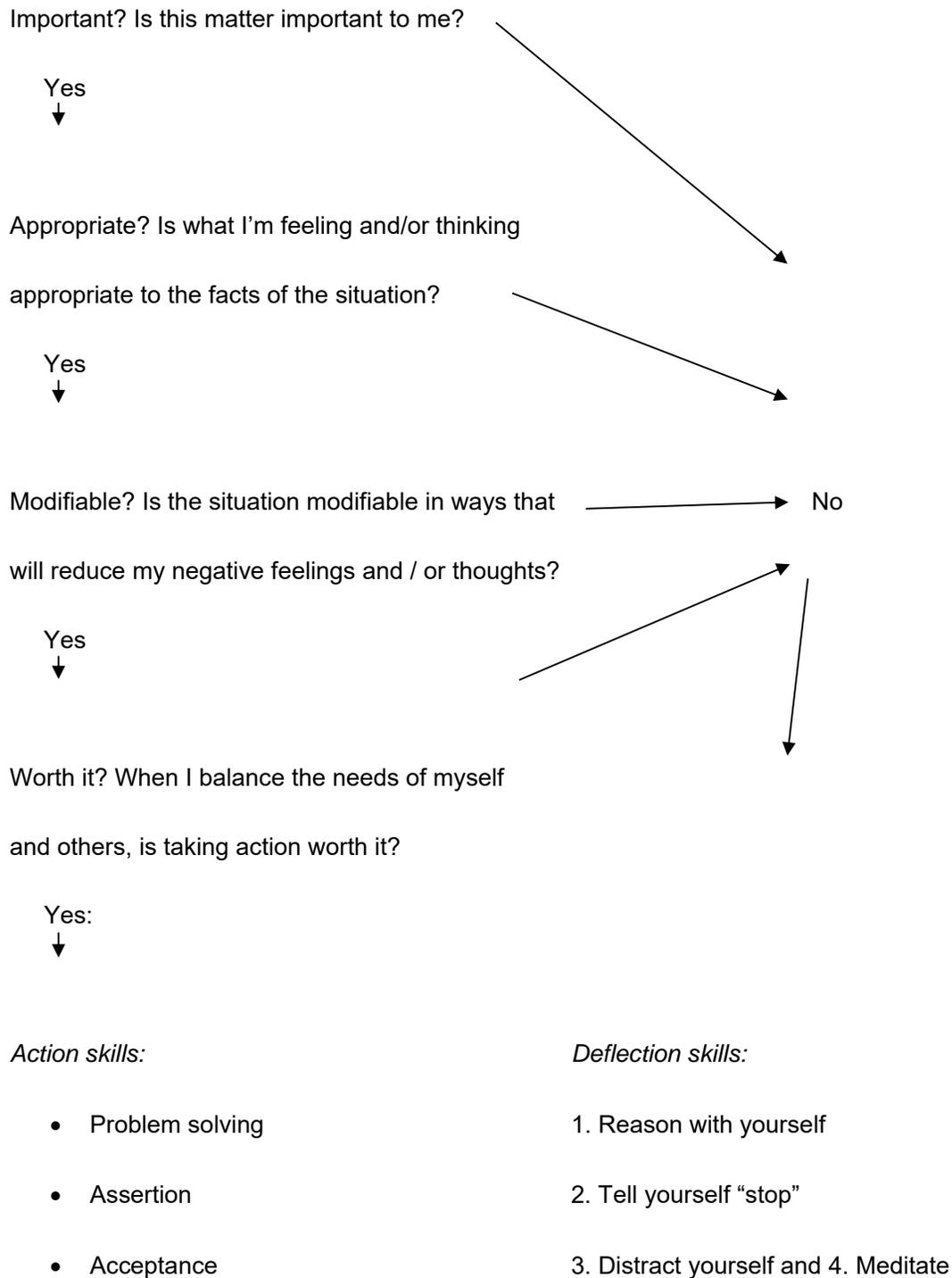


Figure 2.4 Williams' understanding others and being understood by them approach (Williams and Williams. 2010: e-book - see Chapter 5)

When four yes results come out of the self-reflection, it becomes important to act, and this is best achieved when you assess downbeat thoughts, unhelpful feelings, and review your options. The core of acting in a suitable manner is summed up in the following figure (Williams and Williams 2010: 158).

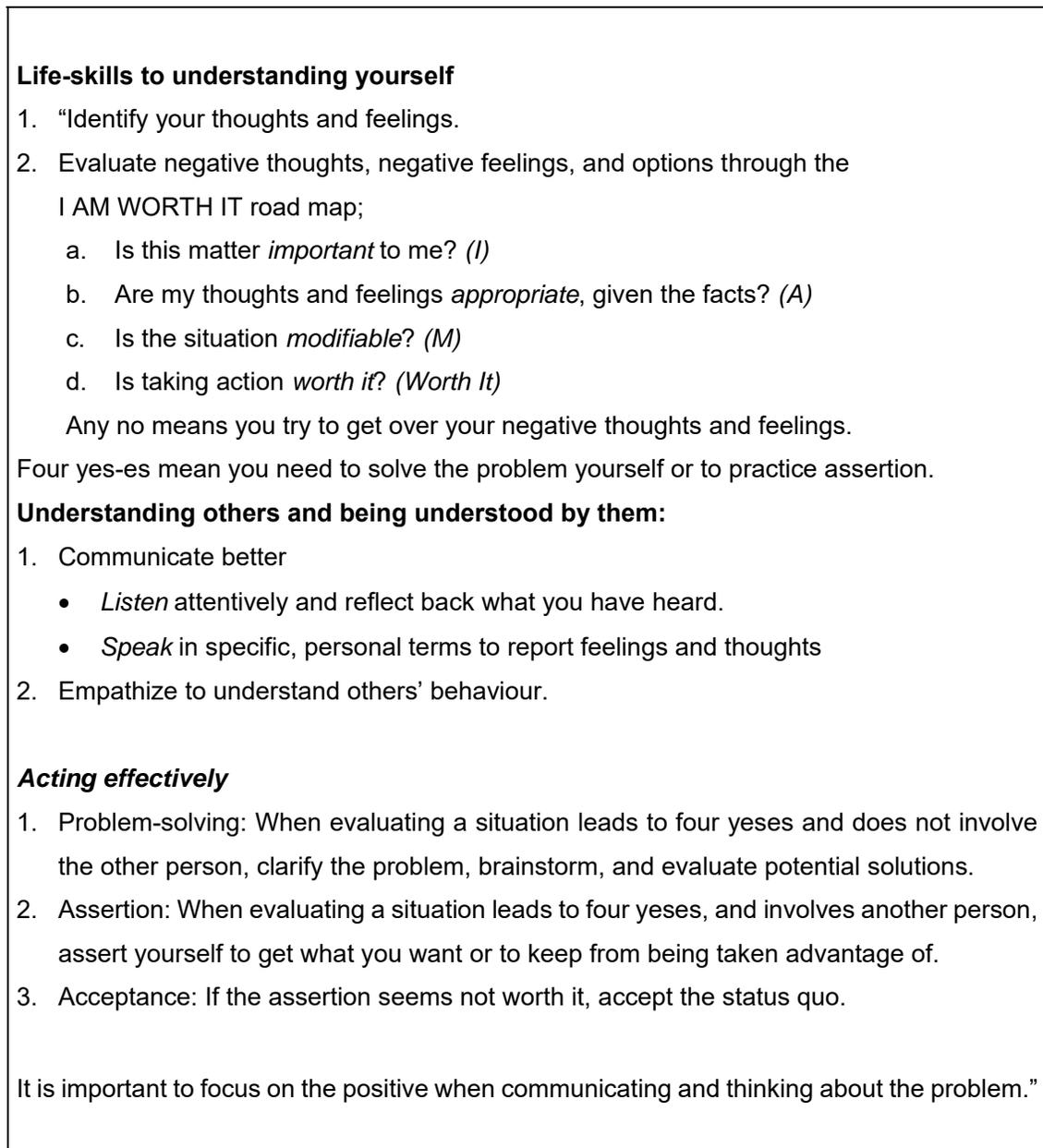


Figure 2.5. Williams and Williams (2010) list of steps for life skills to understand yourself

Listening skills involves remaining quiet until the other person has finished speaking while having body language that shows you are interested in the person who is speaking. This is followed by repeating back what you have understood (active listening) without adding any

information, judging or offering advice. Lastly, the listener must be prepared to be changed by what they have listened to. (Williams and Williams 2010: 136-137)

After having done this, it becomes the listeners' turn to speak so that talking becomes a conversation rather than a monologue. When it is the listener's turn to speak, it is important to articulate thoughts by means of "I-statements," to report own feelings and to speak out of own personal experiences. Also, to be exact and contribute with appropriate body language messages when sharing a view on a matter. Both parties need to respect the other and give each other time to speak and should be empathetic and try to understand the other's behaviour.

If stagnation occurs, Williams and Williams (2010: 160) advise that a person should rather withdraw and say they are taking time out to first think about their response to a situation. He suggests that one should only participate again when a greater awareness of one's feelings has been gained. Then it becomes possible to consider one's options and choose an intentional course of action, dealing with one relationship at a time.

2.5.2.2. Different life stages require different approaches

The Williams life-skills book goes on to discuss various life stages and how best to interact with people who are in different life stages to your own, to interact with them appropriately. Regarding the younger child, Williams and William focus on positive parenting skills and the importance of good modelling. Considering the topic of this study, greater attention is given to Williams and Williams' (2010) discussion on the teenager.

A teenager is seen as someone who is

focused on him or herself, who is adjusting to a rapidly changing body, who wishes to be accepted by his friends, is becoming independent, is figuring out what kind of person he wants to grow into, is searching for values that feel worthwhile and is looking for answers about the meaning of life (Williams and Williams 2010: 256).

Williams presents adolescence as a life stage term used to describe young people moving from their childhood into an adult stage of their lives. Society expects them to become well educated. This means teens need to perform at school to achieve high grades. Otherwise, they will not be able to enter institutes of higher learning. After acquiring their education, they need to compete for positions in the market place and subsequent promotions. During this life stage, they are financially dependent on their parents and especially girls are vulnerable to media images which portray a "nearly unattainable physical perfection," which few people can match. Unfortunately, the girls often judge themselves as being inadequate, which can lead to eating disorders (Williams and Williams 2010: 260).

In a society where most mothers are working, their children tend to lack healthy support from their family and community, and these teens are more exposed to influences from their peers. The example a parent sets their children and how they treat them will affect how they grow up. It is normal for teens to rebel as they need to become a “grownup person” who as an adult is able to “question authority and seize initiative” in an acceptable manner (Williams and Williams 2010: 261). Teens need moral and spiritual guidance and need to be shown how to behave and live, which is not happening adequately in a society where the parents are protective and screen their children from exactly those experiences which they need. The middle ground needs to be found between on the one hand self-expression and academic rigour at school, and on the other, with finding a balance between clear guidelines and too much discipline in the home. “Children need a balance between structure and freedom, communication, and control. There needs to be a healthy respect for the child or teen while being committed to adult standards” (Williams and Williams 2010: 262).

Teens need exposure to demanding challenges and doing service for others. These are two important foundations for a playing field in which young people can thrive. This is where they can “establish their sense of competence and their sense of social responsibility.” Children who are spared such exposure get incorrect messages – that “they are incapable of accomplishing anything which belies their intelligence and hardiness” on the one hand and on the other that “they are living only for themselves, which goes against the grain of what it means to be a fully developed human being” (Damon 1995).

A teen will copy the life skills that they are exposed to, so it is highly important to model the right behaviour with your child as self-confident assertion helps them to say no to offers of drugs, smoking, weapons, and unwanted sexual advances. Moreover, as it takes a village to raise a child, it is important that the village is also caring and built on the right foundations. Williams and Williams (2010) share a story about an aunt of Virginia that demonstrates this well. She was called Mildred Evans Barnes and was much loved by members of the community in which she lived. She had an interesting observation about what it is that makes communities function well.

Ms Barnes was unusual in that she was a very happy member of her community. She worked as a history teacher at a local school and was involved in her church. Near the end of her life, she had suggested to her vicar that he preached a sermon about bridges and shared that the most important elements of a bridge were the pillars that held it up. After she died, they found an index card next to her bed entitled “Bridges.” “Just five words appeared beneath that title: Honesty, kindness, compassion, tolerance and patience” (Williams and Williams 2010: 369-370). These were virtues that she believed were like the pillars of a bridge as they form the

foundation for maintaining good community spirit. This was good insight and suggests that children need to be raised valuing and living with those values close to their hearts; they need to know that it is important, to be honest, and kind, be able to show compassion, have tolerance for others and have patience. Parents who raise children would do well to model this behaviour and live by these values to instil them in their children. The younger generation cannot live these values out if their role models do not exemplify this behaviour. For those children who do not have the benefit of having parents who demonstrate this, significant others, such as their teachers could model this behaviour for them and their peers. They need to be shown how they behave and respond through role-play and dramatic encounters in their classroom.

To conclude this section of the chapter, Virginia and Redford Williams have found that acquiring life skills can help people build better relationships with other people and develop more acceptable behaviour in those who strive to acquire such life skills. The Williams couple encourages participants in their life skills courses to first consider four steps before responding to an activity or to the behaviour of other people. The first step is raising awareness of personal, emotive responses in an emotionally charged situation. Secondly, to focus on important activities, listen carefully and ask questions to clarify understanding of a situation and show empathy with another person. In case of an event, problem-solving abilities will come into play. When the behaviour of another person plays a role, then assertion or acceptance skills are needed. In incidents where a person is unable to change or do something about the circumstance they are in, or when something is important to another person, then acceptance is vital. It is essential to remain aware of the positive outcomes which could flow from the circumstance that triggers the angry response. Just by considering and first evaluating the anger evoking circumstance, a person is held back from rash and ill-considered responses commonly seen as being hot-headed.

Other important skills to learn are the ability to reason with their 'self', to develop an inner voice that tells them to stop, and lastly try to distract or to meditate rather than respond to the situation that causes such an angry response. Redford Williams also believes that the way a child is raised by their parents has a big role to play. This points to a focus on 'nurture' rather than a 'nature' based understanding and places emphasis on the socialisation of human beings. Teachers as important socialisation agents thus can play a major role in improving a child's socialisation, especially if this has not been built effectively by the child's early caregivers.

The next section of the chapter deals with self-inquiry, as presented by Byron Katie, and is a practical approach to life skills acquisition.

2.5.3 *Byron Katie: Self-inquiry approach to application of life skills*

The personal “investigative inquiry” approach of Byron Katie (2002), or Byron Kathleen Mitchell as she is also known, is a non-academic approach. Katie started sharing her insights after requests for her to relate what brought about her dramatic turnaround. She makes a pragmatic contribution which benefits many people through introspection by means of a process of personal inquiry. The worth of her methodology lies in the demonstrated value of those who find a solution to their conflict through the interrogation of their situation. Katie Byron (with husband Steven Mitchell) wrote her first book called “*Loving what is*” in 2002. It tells the story about how she came to her insight and method of inquiry called the “Work” (Byron Katie International website, 2019) and described seventeen scenarios of how this is accomplished in different contexts. She has helped Holocaust survivors, rape and incest survivors, people whose children suffer from addiction, those who struggle with anger, fear of life, fear of death, grief, terrorism, etc. To clarify what “The work” entails she says: “If you loved your life, would you want to change it? There is nothing more exciting than loving what is.” (Katie, 2002)

Katie (2002) calls her self-inquiry approach “the work”. She distinguishes different spaces in which people think their thoughts. “Me” space is where you think about yourself. When you are thinking about others, you are in “you” space and the third space is called “God and nature” space as that is where thoughts about matters such as natural disasters and acts of God reside, matters which we humans can do nothing about as they just happen in the world in which we live.

To do “the work,” as Katie calls it, people are asked to fill in a “Judge your neighbour worksheet” (Katie, 2002) by writing down in as vivid as possible detail what it is that another person is doing that is causing your suffering. Next, you do the work on these thoughts by means of answering the following questions:

1. “Ask yourself ‘Is this true?’ (If the answer is “no” move to step # 3).
2. Can you absolutely know that this it’s true?
3. How do you react? What happens, when you believe that thought?
4. Who would you be without that thought?
5. Turn the thought around.
6. Find a genuine example for the turnaround.
7. Can you find other turnarounds?
8. Give genuine examples for each turnaround.

(available on the Katie Byron website in 2019:

http://www.thework.com/downloads/worksheets/facilitationguide_Eng.pdf”).

She realised that inquiring by means of these questions to reach an understanding about why something makes her suffer, has helped her to achieve peace in her life. Accepting facts and her reality as it is made a big difference.

Katie's (2002) approach demonstrates an effective way of doing self-inquiry and applying introspection before going over to action. She encourages people to keep their thoughts focused on their own space and not to be thinking about other people and thus being in their space. The third thinking space she distinguishes is called "God's space," and that is where all matters that you have no control over such as natural disasters and acts of God reside. Her approach to life encourages people to take their subjective thinking out of their situations and to focus on acceptance of their reality and to work with objective facts. Her approach to solving people's inner conflicts is controversial in some circles, and there are people who have written negative critiques on her approach. It does, however, help people to gain a different perspective on their internal thinking, and therefore it has been included as a practice-based perspective on problem-solving and how we think about and can resolve, problems of the mind.

From a personal approach of changed thinking about life's problem's the focus now moves to one where the emphasis lies on protection and avoiding harmful influences such as various forms of addiction that was carried out by Gilbert Botvin and others that he worked with at Cornell University.

2.5.4 GJ Botvin and KW Griffin: Large scale school-based application of life skills

Effective protection of adolescent youth against harmful addictions during the period in which they are most susceptible to them through Life-skills Training (LST), has been proven through extensive research executed in the US by Botvin and Griffin (2004; 2010; 2014), Griffin (2010), Griffin, Bang and Botvin (2010), Lynne-Landsman (2011a; 2011b), Rogers, Nichols and Botvin (2011), Griffen, Scheier, Acevedo, Grenard, and Botvin (2012), Acevedo, Lowe, Griffin, and Botvin (2013), and Lowe, Acevedo, Griffin, and Botvin (2013). These cognitive behavioural longitudinal studies were carried out over three decades at Cornell University. Solid research was completed on the value of life skills teaching, comparing different variables in different settings looking at a variety of participant groups in successive tests. Furthermore, the participants were also compared against a similar control group and varied within predominantly Eurocentric, Hispanic and African-American etc. cultural groups, who live in either urban or suburban contexts in New York. The participants were taught life skills related to various addictive substances ranging from tobacco to alcohol, marijuana and other drugs.

The greatest impact was achieved through teaching life skills in “social resistance and enhancing social and personal competence” (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 211) through an LST course. This article provides excellent insight regarding the link between life skills training programmes and the protective effects it has for the young people who are exposed to it. The research clearly showed that “substance abuse results from a complex interaction of several different factors including cognitive, attitudinal, social, personality, pharmacological, biological, and developmental factors” (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 213). The most significant impact came from teaching young adolescents generic social and personal skills in addition to resistance skills. Examples of the kind of competence skills included in this prevention approach are “decision-making skills, interpersonal communication skills, assertiveness skills, and skills for coping with anxiety and anger” (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 215). Surprisingly, the research showed that “social influences and competence enhancement approaches are more effective than traditional didactic approaches” (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 215). The extensive research carried out proved the effectiveness of LST as a preventative approach with over 50% effectiveness, and thus, it garnered approval and endorsement from a multitude of medical, psychological and legal institutions in America.

The LST prevention programme consists of three major components. The first component is designed to teach students a set of general self-management skills, and the second focuses on general social skills. These two components are designed to enhance personal and social competence and to decrease motivations to use drugs and vulnerability to social influences that support drug use. The third component of LST focuses on information and skills that are specific to drug use to promote drug resistance skills, antidrug attitudes, and antidrug norms (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 216).

Learning to control themselves more effectively is the primary goal of the personal self-management skills in which young people are taught how to identify a problem, set a goal, think about the consequences of their actions and what they can do to rectify the wrong behaviour. Besides that, they are taught how to deal with the emotions of anxiety, anger, and frustration and how to go about improving themselves, they learn to deal with success as well as failure, all to improve their self-esteem (Botvin and Griffin 2004). On a social level, the life skills taught focusses on overcoming shyness, learning how to be assertive, how to engage with others, to be more socially adept and behave with acceptable manners.

About the skills needed for resisting harmful substances, the LST programme focuses on the following six steps:

1. the short-term consequences of drug use;

2. knowledge about the actual levels of drug use among adolescents and adults to correct normative expectations about drug use;
3. information about the declining social acceptability of cigarette smoking and other drug use;
4. information and class exercises demonstrating the immediate physiological effects of cigarette smoking; and
5. material concerning peer and media pressures to smoke, drink or use drugs and techniques for resisting these pressures. (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 217).

Princeton Health Press has developed a teacher's manual and student guide for use in Grade 7 with a follow-up booster set of lessons for Grades 8 and 9. There are fifteen lessons of forty-five-minute duration in Grade 7, and in the subsequent years, they provide another ten supporting lessons. They are constructed on cognitive-behavioural skills training approaches:

The material is most effectively taught through facilitated group discussions and skills training exercise ... using a combination of instruction, demonstration, behavioural research, feedback, social reinforcement, and extended practice in the form of behavioural homework assignments (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 217-218).

The research has also contributed largely to clarifying much about what the causes are and how life skills protect people when they are taught to them. The three main findings of the Botvin and Griffin studies indicate that participants gain most

1. by increasing psychological well-being;
2. by reducing positive expectancies regarding social benefits of drug use; and
3. by increasing refusal assertiveness (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 222).

Well-being comes out as the core protective aspect, which makes an individual less interested and susceptible to the use of tobacco, marijuana, or alcohol. The research provides convincing data that competence abilities help youth to protect and resist the lure of substances by improving their psychological well-being. Moreover, interventions which are focused on the acquisition of interpersonal skills and increased social competence could reduce early adoption of and experimentation with harmful substances and present young people with more suitable ways of "gaining approval from peers" (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 223). The beauty of teaching life skills is that they protect the youth from many harmful influences as it is a skill set that can be applied to a multiple of triggers and thus cushions young people and helps them to cope better with many challenges that life will confront them with.

Botvin and Griffin (2004) indicate that there still are gaps which need to be researched, and they want to have more insight into how to bring the LST program into the nation's classrooms

effectively. They (2004: 228) are interested in the “diffusion of innovations model,” which was developed by Rogers in 1995 as they suspect it will be useful for “conceptualising the process of bringing effective prevention programs to scale.” Roger’s model proposes “four stages: dissemination, adoption, implementation, and maintenance.” The two latter stages are of interest when bringing the LST program to scale; it has become evident that the implementation rates vary widely and are not always achieved. Analysis and further research have shown that only 68% of the material was covered in classrooms and teachers implemented less than 60% of the important points of the lessons when the materials were rolled out to schools on a larger scale. Moreover, urban school settings were the least efficient (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 228). Teacher effectiveness plays a major part in this as they are “not trained well or monitored when providing the program” (Botvin and Griffin 2004: 228).

The trends which emerge out of these studies show that pre-adolescent life skills training programmes are beneficial in keeping large numbers of adolescents from becoming addicted to harmful substances. Especially during a period of their lives where they are prone to the risks of being exposed to peer pressure-induced temptations. New policies have sprung out of the evidenced-based studies that “offer the potential to reduce the mortality and morbidity associated with [...] health problems such as heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, and chronic obstructive lung disease that are now viewed as being largely preventable” (Botvin and Griffin 2010: 632). The aim of most of the preventative programs is to delay the onset of experimentation and early use to stop the early start of a progressive process of using more and more harmful substances. Botvin and Griffin (2010: 633) state that “because adolescence marks the beginning of a critical period of increased risk, most interventions to reduce youth drug use target middle school or junior high school students to deter initial experimentation.”

In the 1970s American research into the root causes of adolescent smoking indicated that the process often begins in early adolescence with peer pressure and are strengthened by positive contexts that contribute toward smoking. This suggests that social issues play a key role. Bandura’s social learning theory insights were instrumental in raising awareness of the role that “modelling, imitation, reinforcement, and vicarious learning” (Botvin and Griffin 2010: 634) play in this regard. In the 1980s insight was gained that “external locus of control, low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, and anxiety” (2010: 634) played a role in an individual’s susceptibility to harmful substances. Jessor and Jessor’s (1977 in Botvin and Griffin 2010: 634) proposed:

... that values, expectations, beliefs, and attitudes that support the behaviour (e.g., rejection of conventional norms or expression of independence from parental control);

and personality factors such as sensitivity to social criticism, higher alienation, lower self-esteem, and greater tolerance of deviance all play a role.

Thus, research carried out by Botvin and Griffin (2010: 641) has proved that better competence skills have a protective impact on adolescent substance use. [Y]outh who were more socially confident, assertive and had better communication skills reported less smoking and drinking” (Griffin, Epstein, Botvin, and Spoth, 2001 in Botvin and Griffin 2010: 642).

The research shows that children who are taught life skills effectively in Grades 7, 8, and 9 had a 58% chance of not becoming addicted to a harmful substance or behaviour in their adolescence. Enabled with stronger assertion skills, they were focused on healthy goals and were equipped with good decision-making skills, which helped them to resist temptation. The ability to resist, in turn, improved their self-esteem. The results of this research potentially can make a major impact on a country’s health care situation, and thus, it is important to incorporate life skills teaching into the school curriculum, especially before they enter their adolescence. Researchers currently are working towards discovering how best to roll out their LST program to classrooms across the US and perhaps also into classrooms in other countries across the globe.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 covered psychological theories that underpin life skills acquisition, ranging from behaviourist theories, social cognitive theory, rational-emotive behavioural theory, cognitive theory, multimodal theory, gestalt therapeutic theory, and experiential learning to discovering more about different approaches and applications of learning life skills. Four key applications were chosen. They are those of Richard Nelson-Jones (2006, 2007) within a coaching, counselling, and therapeutic context. Virginia and Redford Williams who use life skills training as a means of helping individuals deal with their anger responses. Byron Katie who illustrates how self-inquiry can change an individual’s thinking about their life problems. Gilbert Botvin and Kenneth Griffin (2004, 2010 and 2014), and others, studied and designed life skills training programmes for the middle school to protect adolescents when they are in a vulnerable stage of their lives within a preventative health care context in the US.

Chapter 3 examines the contribution of Augusto Boal in the development of his theatrical techniques, especially that of Forum Theatre.

CHAPTER 3

AUGUSTO BOAL (1931 – 2009) AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORUM THEATRE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the work of Augusto Boal with relevance to the development of Forum Theatre. Firstly, a brief biography of his life will be sketched (3.2), after which the major contributions and insights which Boal made to theatrical enactment will be discussed with emphasis on Forum Theatre (cf. 3.3). The chapter concludes with a critique of Boal's work (cf. 3.4).

3.2 BOAL: LIFE AND TIMES

This section draws on Boal's major works: *Hamlet and the Baker's Son*, his autobiography (Boal 2001), *The Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal 1989), *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (Boal 1992, 2nd edition in 2002), *The Rainbow of Desire* (Boal 1995), *Legislative Theatre* (Boal 1998) and *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed* (Boal 2006). As many of Boal's insights came to him "as a series of epiphanies" (Jackson in Boal, 1995: xviii) gained while he was working with people and making use of his theatrical knowledge, it is interesting to trace the line of this development over time as it clarifies how Boal's arsenal of the oppressed, that includes Image- and Forum Theatre, came into existence. Not many books have been written about Boal yet and the most insightful sources I have found so far are the works of Babbage (2004) and Schutzmann and Cohen Cruz (1994). Paterson (2015) has also shared his biographical knowledge of the later years of Boal's life via the Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed (PTO) website. Boal is best known for his theory or arsenal of the Oppressed of which Forum Theatre forms a part. How Forum Theatre fits within the greater scheme of Boal's thinking, is shown in Figure 3.1 and discussed in detail in Section 3.3. The most insightful sources on Boal that I have found so far are the works of Babbage (2004) and Schutzmann and Cohen Cruz (1994). Paterson (2015) has also shared his biographical knowledge of the later years of Boal's life via the Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed (PTO) website. One of Boal's aims was to use "theatre to stimulate debate, getting people to question issues in a public forum". (Jackson in Boal. 1992: xx-xxi) Boal became famous for his politically and socially engaged work with communities to help break through oppression. His techniques helped people to

alter their cognition and practise new strategies, on stage as spect-actors in a rehearsal for change, to gain liberation from social systems that oppress or make them feel powerless. As Boal put it “all these experiments of a people’s theatre have the same objective – the liberation of the spectator, on whom the world has imposed finished versions of the world. ... The spectator frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself! Theatre is action! (Boal 1979: 155).

3.2.1 Early life

Stemming from a Portuguese heritage, Augusto Boal was born in Rio, Brazil in 1931. Theatrical expression was already evident from a young age. He (2001:75) liked to make plays in his parental home as a young boy in which his family were asked to perform the various roles. The roles in his dramas were interchangeable as they were passed from one family member to another as and when their activities allowed them to entertain his wishes.

Siblings and cousins were the actors. As there were many characters, each person had to play a variety of roles. Perhaps then I began to imagine the ‘Coringa’ [Joker] System: the same character was represented by various siblings, as well as each playing several other characters. There was no private ownership of the characters by the actors: each scene was told by whoever was available, all the characters interpreted by whoever liked them most. Here already I was using the form ‘Arena tells of ...’ and ‘The Boal brothers and their cousins tell of ...’ (Boal 2001:75).

The entire theatrical ritual was observed, including the buying of tickets. Basing his plays on the story lines found in his mother’s weekly reading material, Boal fulfilled the role of director and prompter to make sure the author’s text was respected while the brothers preferred to improvise which inevitably led to disagreements and the need for negotiation and compromise. Even as a young boy Boal was a keen observer of people and would be able to typify and copy the behaviour of the various clients who frequented his father’s bakery.

3.2.1.1. Choice of career

When it came to him choosing a career his father encouraged him to study chemistry. His father explained that from an earning perspective, the person in charge of producing yeast (a necessity in his father’s bakery) made far more money than the person who physically sold it to the bakery. Wanting to please his father and ensuring a fall-back option if his artistic aspirations should fail, Boal solved his dilemma by doing both. He gave as much of his energy to learning all about the world of chemical substances as he did to that of the theatre. Successfully he combined the two interests, managing to pass his grades as a Chemical

Engineering student at the National School of Chemistry, Rio de Janeiro while at the same time pursuing his theatrical aspirations through the student body of this school. He also took on the role of the Cultural Director of their student organisation which worked well as he was expected to organise “conferences, exhibitions, debates” (Boal 2001:107). This enabled him to achieve two of his aims: “the opportunity to meet important people I admired and the opportunity to get into the theatres free” (Boal 2001:108). Frustrated that this only made it possible to see the work of many influential international and local artists, he decided to interview the writers, actors and directors he admired (Boal 2001: 108; Babbage, 2005: 5). It led to the development of a friendship with Nelson Rodrigues, a local playwright who wrote about Brazilian people, and with Abdias Nascimento who was a “crucial friend at the beginning of my career”. The latter instilled in him an admiration for black people who faced and excelled despite prejudice. As Boal (2001:112) put it: “I began to like subversives, heroic characters, fighters.”

3.2.1.2. Sojourn in New York

Boal's siblings studied a year longer than Boal so his father, fair in how he treated each of his children, gave him an extra year to specialise and study in the US (Boal 2001:117). Investigating his options Boal wrote to drama critic, historian and artist-producer, John Gassner (1902–1966), to enquire if he could study playwriting under him. Gassner wrote back that he would be teaching at Columbia University in New York the next year (Boal 2001:117). So, in 1952, this young aspirant playwright went to study playwriting in New York (Babbage 2005:5). According to Babbage, Boal was influenced by Gassner's ‘The Duality of Theatre’, in which he states that the theatre practices “both illusion and anti-illusion”. Gassner taught him that the audience can be exposed to both modalities as they can appreciate realism and understand a theatrical effect that follows straight after that (Babbage 2005:8).

While working with Gassner he first encountered the work of Bertolt Brecht, (German playwright famous for Epic Theatre, known for emphasising the theatrical medium to the audience and for the *verfremdungseffekt*) which “meant: seeing from a distance, without involving oneself” (Boal 2006:73). Gassner also introduced him to the work of Constantin Stanislavski (Russian actor and theatre director who developed psychological realism; where an actor taps into emotional memory for character portrayal and is known for method acting) and the Actor's Studio. Due to those sessions, Boal developed enormous respect for the art of being a good actor who brings to life their character. “To see an actor transform him/herself, giving life to his/her dormant potentialities, is marvellous. It is the best way to understand the human being: seeing an actor create” (Boal 2001:129).

Having to hold his own in a foreign country employing a language he had not yet mastered sufficiently, Boal became extra aware that “the language of words is but one of the languages we use in our dialogues. There are the languages of the voice, of the body, of movement, and then there are the unconscious languages.” As the language of words was failing him in a second language context, he “paid attention to the rest” (Boal 2001:124). Over a period, his command of English improved.

Through his friend Nascimento he also met with American poet Langston Hughes who made him aware of the Black Experimental Theatre in Harlem and who introduced him to The Writer’s Group in Brooklyn (Boal 2001:129; Babbage 2005:6). Over the years he read and re-read Cervantes *Don Quixote* and Shakespeare plays. They became a constant in his life. (Boal 2001:130). His first attempt at directing his own plays led to “*The Horse and the Saint and the House across the Street*” (Boal 2001) being staged together with his playwriting friends from the Brooklyn Writer’s group. Although none of these actors were professionals, they performed with gusto in 1955 in the Marlin theatre, on Broadway, just before Boal was to return home to Rio de Janeiro.

3.2.2 *Theatrical era*

As Boal (2001: 140) states, his life seemed to run its course in sections of fifteen years each: “fifteen years with Arena, fifteen in exile, fifteen back in Brazil”. Upon his return to Brazil he initially made a living as a translator. At the time, Brazilian theatre followed a European model. Boal’s first break came with the offer of a director’s post at the Arena Theatre in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1956. The stage of this theatre was small and close-up which did not deter Boal (2001: 143) who believed:

The truth of all theatre is the interaction between actors, between two human beings. It is the passion which burns between them. This is the essence of theatre – after which it can dress itself up with all manner of ornament.

When working as a director in the theatre, Boal’s (2001: 145/146) point of reference initially was the approach of Stanislavski: a theatre in the round and working in proximity with the audience, which requires the actors to work truthfully. “The truth of all theatre is the interrelation between actors, between two human beings. It is the passion that burns between them. This is the essence of theatre” (Boal 2001:143). So actors need to consider their impact on the audience from all directions. “The foundation of any show has always been two actors looking at each other ... Actors must always offer each other their gaze. ... It is in the gaze that the

characters are born. It is in the gaze that one discovers the truth.” A director’s role in this is to ask the right questions so that the actor can discover what he needs to know within himself. In this manner the director helps “the actors *give birth* to characters (Boal 2001: 147).” Following Stanislavski, Boal (2001: 148/150) taught his actors to look for “the idea that governs a character’s action” as emotion springs forth out of the discovery, does not arise out of ignorance and leads to the essential triad of theatre: “idea-emotion-form.”

3.2.2.1. Plays produced with Arena Theatre

The first play under his direction was *of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck for which he won a Director Award (Babbage 2005: 10). In response to others asking that he share with them what he had learned in New York, he (2001: 153) started the “Laboratory of Acting” in 1956 followed a year later by the “Playwriting Seminar”. Boal (2001: 153) was influenced and driven by scientific thinking also when working in the theatre and wrote that his training in the sciences laid a good foundation of rigour and provided him with systems to underpin his work. Passing on what he knew led to fresh new scripts for staging that were written by young, local writers who took part in the Playwriting Seminar. The first of these new local Brazilian play options that Arena staged was *They Don’t wear Black-Tie* by local Brazilian playwright Gianfrancesco Guarnieri. It was a success and local audiences responded well to the home-grown content.

It was during this time that Boal became politically involved and motivated. A Russian theatre troupe toured and performed in Sao Paulo and challenged the thinking of the local actors. Boal and others discussed the purpose of theatre with many foreign actors. Asking for their ideas and input, not as a member of a political party, but ideologically driven from the need to make more relevant plays for the normal, working class people of Brazil. The audience of mostly middleclass to rich people was where the rub lay. The working man generally could not afford to pay the ticket prices. As Boal put it

Our discussions turned more on the political than the aesthetic: To whom should our theatre be addressed? Our audience was middle class. Workers and peasants were our characters (in itself and advance!) but not our spectators. (2001:175)

Arena began to stage local playwrights’ work and wished to stage more relevant plays. They experimented with form this developed into the ‘Joker’ system of stage production. According to Babbage (2005: 13), as Artistic Director of the Arena theatre, Boal utilized four main theatrical approaches when staging his productions:

1. Characters and actors were not strictly matched as all the actors could play any of the roles;

2. To highlight the “collective ownership of the history” of the Brazilian nation interwoven into the Arena play, the narrator role was shared;
3. Styles were not sacred and whatever worked to communicate the message best was utilized making use of “farce, melodrama, music and docudrama” depending on which style best kept the audience engrossed and “critically engaged”;
4. Music as the language of emotion was “harnessed to reinforce ideological meaning.

3.2.2.2. Plays for the people

Ideologically driven to create more relevant Brazilian productions they began making plays for the people rather than for the middle class. The Arena theatre troupe began to stage politically motivated plays dealing with the lives of ordinary people. The problem was that ‘the people’ did not frequent the theatre so the Arena theatre troupe needed a solution on how to reach their intended real audience. This dilemma led to the troupe travelling to where these audiences were living in the Brazilian countryside. They found however that attendance was still low as locals rather spent their hard-earned cash on more essential needs.

A formative incident for Boal (2001: 194) explains why he did not like prescribing to the audience what political and social action they should take to bring about change in their lives. After a show about landowners and the landless played in a country setting, Boal was invited by Virgilio, an audience member, to join in a local uprising against the landowners and the army. Boal explained that the actors and he could not bring their guns as they were pretend guns on stage, only to be told by a member of his audience they could give him a gun; he must just come and fight. Having to decline, Boal was embarrassed by this incident as it made him aware not to ask an audience to do what he personally was reticent to do. From then onwards he respected the positions and reality of the audience members. The change should arise out of the audience rather than be instigated by actors telling the audience through the artistry of a theatrical production what they should do. It altered the way Boal made his productions from then onwards.

During a weekly playwriting seminar to which Boal was invited by the Metalworkers Trade Union of Santo André, Brazil, Boal (2001: 204) experienced another definitive incident. A man in the audience challenged an actor on stage as he did not agree with how the character was being depicted. Obviously identifying with the character on stage, he was driven by his need to communicate his own insights and thus was keen to step onto the stage to take over the role to show how he saw the reality being portrayed. The boundary between audience and stage was not a hindrance to the man in the audience. He insisted on showing his version of events wanting to replace the character in the scene. Both people refused to budge, and it

ended with the character saying his lines and the spectator then giving his version of the reality as he saw it happen.

The incident fascinated Boal (2001: 205) who “learned a lesson there about *living, reliving* and *experiencing*” as it was about a human being seeing a character that he identified with and then contending with the character. This showed

the man against his image; an image of him that another man was showing. Struggling against himself, or part of himself, in the other. A man wanting to present an image of himself, to construct the image live, but all the while being, himself, at that very moment another image: the builder of images. He was neither the image he was presenting, nor that which the other presented of him. He was the image of the maker of images. He was also, to some extent, all those images”.

It brought out the duality between reality and the representation of that ‘reality’ and the “truth of fiction” interpreting the “fiction of truth”.

3.2.2.3. Using metaphor to create layered meaning

By taking on a different character or behaviour on a stage, a person can “express their own desires in metaphor”. Boal (2001: 209) and the Arena actors discovered that by means of using “metaphor”, they could let go of “realism in search of reality.” Boal (2001: 211) explains that there is a triangular relationship between the author’s reality which exists or has existed, the “organicity” of the chosen story [a fable] and the reality of the lives of the audience.

To earn a living, Boal (2001: 218) and his actors needed to present plays which would draw an audience. However, at the same time, he as a playwright wished “to bear witness – and I do not want anyone to interfere!” and “as a teacher, I want to teach – they bear witness, and I have no desire to interfere.” In 1961 at the age of thirty, Boal (2001: 184) married an Arena actress called Albertina Costa. The marriage lasted only two years.

3.2.2.4. Military regimes and oppression

Brazil moved into a political era of enforced repression when it was ruled for twenty years by a series of military dictatorships from 31 March 1964 onwards. The takeover was driven by a fear of Brazil becoming a communistic state (Breneman, 1995). The military took over power to oust the left-wing government which was at the helm until then. Attempting to silence and disempower Brazilian citizens, the military dictatorship banned all “Centres of Popular Culture ... the peasant leagues, the trade unions, the student unions, [and] any form of dialogue” (Boal 2001: 232) was stopped.

Boal during that time lived in the mountains in a friend's house to avoid the State police. While in isolation he read books and watched films at the local cinema. As he was very much a people's person who functions well in a group, this was a difficult time for him. Inspired by movies, Boal (2001: 232/233) decided to create "truth-theatre" in the same vein as "truth-cinema" documentaries where "characters are played by the very people who inspired the story". He wanted to stage Kafka's, *The Trail*, in this "truth-theatre" manner. Even though the actors he approached loved the idea, nobody was willing to perform in it. *The Trail* later became the foundation for *Opinion* where the performers told their own stories through song. In the meantime, he produced Moliere's *Tartuffe*, which went down very well.

After staging *Opinion*, Arena presented their most successful show ever called *Zumbi* in which the *Sistema Coringa* (Joker system) was used to act as the core structure that held the production together. This means that the character parts were played interchangeably by any actor or actress. They could all step into any of the characters and play him/her just as a Joker in a pack of cards that can represent any other card out of the deck at any moment. In this musical production, Boal (2001: 242) took Brecht's *verfremdungseffekt* to "its ultimate consequences" because the essentials of a character could be performed by any of the actors/actresses in the troop. He did this to emphasise that they are just playing a character which was needed for the drama to unfold. By doing so the audience cannot lose themselves in the drama but remain aware of the artifice which had been created. The show also had a narrator called the Joker who according to Boal (2001: 242) was

... master of ceremonies, explainer, director of the scene, stage-manager, like the Kabuki's kurogo – he could play any character, when necessary. He explained hidden meanings. The Joker – always the same actor – represented us, Arena. This was the beginning of the dialogue with the audience, which I would later develop fully with the Theatre of the Oppressed. The presence of the Joker allowed us to embrace aesthetic chaos: all theatre styles and genres would be allowed within the same show.

Once again Arena resorted to metaphor to communicate their more profound meaning. Texts taken from newspapers were incorporated word for word into the script. The censor cut out every element which could be interpreted as being critical of the military regime. Despite the censorship challenges, this production became highly successful, drawing audiences to fill the auditorium to its capacity, night after night. The show was a cross-over of a play, musical and 'revue' with acrobatics, dancing and singing performed by the actors. Boal has elsewhere shared that he loved the circus where a wide variety of elements are presented to entertain the audience (Driskell 1975: 72). The show did not fit into any conventional theatrical categories but points to Boal's love of the theatrical medium, the need to put on a good show

while at the same time appealing to the audience to consider situations shown on stage on a deeper level. *Zumbi* was followed by *The Government Inspector* by Gogol. Once again making use of a “skin-tight” (Boal 2001: 247) metaphor where the historical reality portrayed on stage closely mirrored the reality the audience was living in, the metaphor was used to communicate the deeper message indirectly. The show worked and was sold out night after night.

3.2.2.5. Trip to Argentina

While ‘*The Government Inspector*’ drew audiences for the Arena Theatre, Boal was invited to direct a play in Buenos Aires, Argentina at the Jewish Theatre. During this time, he met Cecília Thumin. After the play had run its course, he returned home with a family; Cecília, his “wife, and Fabián Silbert, [his] son” (Boal 2001: 248). Fabian, the son had adopted him and called him daddy, and as Boal (2001: 248) writes “I set out alone and returned to Brazil as a family”.

3.2.2.6. Theatrical experiments

Arena actors and Boal (2001:249) continued to experiment with the distancing between the character and the actor playing the character. Concerned about losing “empathy and its tremendous power to convince”, it was decided that the same actor should play the protagonist throughout and the other actors would be free to exchange their parts as their roles performed a function and any one of the actors could play that role. The protagonist would be the only character that maintained the empathetic link with the audience. Boal explains you want “the audience to feel for the protagonist who is in trouble” and “the actor should make use of Stanislavskian interpretation” as he is “the slice of life” (2001:180-181). Due to the high level of abstraction brought about in the story, Boal, the director, needed to establish an empathetic link (ethos) with the audience and this was achieved through the protagonist.

The Joker (*dianoia*) is “a magical reality; he creates it. ... The “Joker” is polyvalent; his function is the only one that can perform any role in the play.” ... “on stage he functions as a master of ceremonies, raisonneur, kurogo, etc. He makes all the explanations, verified in the structure of the performance” and can be assisted by the other actors who are like the chorus in a Greek play. (Boal 1979:182) The “Joker” provided the critical explanation or interpretation to guide the audience and acted as the bridge between the audience and the actors performing the characters, providing onlookers with explanations to ensure that the social and political situation would be clear. When it was necessary to show the inside of the character, the Joker could “stop the action momentarily so that the character can explain his reasons” (1979:186) to hold an interview with a character who stayed in his character to provide reasons. (Boal 1979: 186). It was a clever way of avoiding asides or replacing monologues and was a warmer way to share the character’s motivation with the audience.

Not wishing to utilise the “hero” effect used in American Dramaturgy because its “main function is to tranquilize and sedate” (1979:187), Boal shows the influence of Brecht in his approach to playwrighting and directing. Utilising a distancing effect, “Brecht debunks heroes” and “censures certain concepts of heroism” (1979:188-189). The behaviour of heroes tends to become mythicized as historical figures and the events tend to become magnified. “The essential facts are magnified while the circumstantial ones are eliminated” (Boal 1979: 189). When resorting to using metaphor to communicate an essential truth to the audience in his plays about Brazilian heroic figures, as he did in the play *Tiradentes* without alerting the forces of repression ruling the country, it was also important to have awareness of the difference between myths and mystification. As Boal put it, “Myth is the simplification of the historical individual, retaining the fundamental traits of his character, his essence ... which becomes magnified.” Mystification happens when non-essential circumstances of the hero figure are magnified and what is important is discarded into the “waste bin of history”. In the process, the principle is lost (Boal 2001: 250). The essence of either creating a myth or practising mystification lies in the choices an artist makes in what he or she wishes to show in the performance. Boal aimed for the creation of a myth as he searched for the deeper truth in the production of *Tiradentes*.

3.2.2.7. Censorship conditions

The political climate in Brazil became increasingly repressive towards the later part of the 1960's and censorship-imposed restrictions which became increasingly severe as to what content was possible for performing artists and creative people to select. The armed struggle took place between the ruling military dictatorship, established under first Castello Branco and Costa e Silva, and later under the leadership of Medici and Geisel, and ordinary people of Brazil. It began in 1966 and even the religious people joined in the struggle. The repression became more intense in the late 1960's forcing university lecturers to “denounce” their students, and the state-enforced “compulsory retirements, the annulments of civil rights, kidnappings, tortures and assassinations” (Boal 2001: 264) to retain their position. Under conditions such as this, much confusion exists as to what to do and there were many opinions on what would be best to do. Boal and the Arena actors decided to perform a *Feira paulista de opinião* (*São Paulo's Fair of Opinions*) which centred on “where we were, who we were, where we wanted to go” (Boal 2001: 264). The frustrations of censorship led to open defiance of the military regime. Artists from all the city's theatres came to attend the opening performance of the *Fair of Opinions*. The *Feira* was performed “without permission, disrespecting censorship, which would not be recognised from that day forward” (Boal 2001: 266). As a response the theatre was surrounded by the police at the next performance. So, the actors quietly told the audience that the subsequent performance would be at another

theatre. However, the day after all the theatres were surrounded by soldiers and marines, so the acting troupe moved to a theatre in the neighbouring town of Santo André. The press called it the “Theatre’s Guerrilla War”. Around this period the “physical aggression, kidnappings and raids” began.

3.2.2.8. Newspaper Theatre

Always creative in developing new forms to further the message, Boal suggested a show where newspaper articles that can be turned into theatre are selected in the morning, rehearsed in the afternoon and performed in the evening. Every evening the cast would be presenting a new show. It was called Newspaper Theatre. The actors wished to share their tools and craft with the audience, “if we did not know what to say, we did know how to teach people to say what they wanted ... we had lost plays, theatre, grants, costumes, everything, except our dreams” (Boal 2001: 282). Newspaper Theatre groups sprung up everywhere. There were more than thirty of them performing in places that would evade the notice of the military. The production turnaround time was quick as within two to three hours a show would be ready for performance and would include the audience in the performance. The aim was to share the theatrical techniques so that everyone could use the “richest of all languages” (Boal 2001: 282).

3.2.2.9. Arrest and torture

In 1971, during the Vargas dictatorship, while he was working on an adaptation of Brecht’s *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, Boal was kidnapped off the street while walking home after rehearsals. Imprisoned in a maximum-security cell Boal walked the infinite figure of eight (∞) countless times. Sadly, he was interrogated and tortured while in prison (Boal 2001: 290).

Albertino, Boal’s oldest brother, looked for him for seven nights and days and eventually managed to find him. They had incarcerated Boal under the name Francisco de Souza. Thanks to Albertino the story made it to the newspapers and made international news. Arthur Miller in the USA drafted a letter that was published in the *New York Times* to demand his release. It led to long lists of famous artists writing to embassies, signing protest demands and to the sending of telegrams, even from as far away as Japan. “If artists were concerned about me even in Japan... I must be extremely important!” wrote Boal (2001: 292).

His case was speedily heard a month later. In the court, he was accused of having delivered a letter, brought along by him from Cuba to support the Brazilian cause. The prosecution’s aim was to find him guilty of being a guerrilla. He denied delivering such a letter. The scribe wrote that Boal had admitted that he had not delivered the letter to the leader. The judge ruled that

by implication he, therefore, had admitted to bringing along the letter. The semantics of what the scribe wrote led the judge to conclude that he was guilty. It taught Boal to always say clearly what he wanted to see published or written in statements.

Another two months in jail was laid down but now Boal was in a collective cell with fifteen cellmates. The cell was political and organised – they planned their time and scheduled their activities. Each member of the group taught the others something: skills such as playing the guitar, teaching history, theatre (Boal's contribution), philosophy, cooking; all these activities were aimed at passing the time constructively.

While in prison, there was much time for reflection. Boal writes in his autobiography that “the Theatre of the Oppressed was born in prison” (Boal 2001: 298). It was there that he realised that man can consider his past and create his future, turning the stage into “a place of study; and the theatre can be a fit instrument, a proper language for that discourse, that quest for oneself” (Boal 2001: 298). It is in the theatre that it becomes possible to “accomplish the task of teaching people to learn through action” (Boal 2001: 298).

3.2.3. Exile

On the day of Boal's hearing, the two men who had accused him gave a different version of events when they were no longer afraid of torture. Once acquitted, Boal could travel to Nancy, France to join the Arena group who were on tour and performing at the time. He only returned to Brazil again in December 1979 after amnesty was signed (Boal 2001: 294). Next, he staged *Torquemada*, which he had written while in prison, with the students of New York University.

3.2.3.1. Productive writing period in Argentina

No longer welcome in Brazil, Boal with his wife and son made their permanent abode in Buenos Aires, Argentina in a furnished flat owed by Cecelia's parents. Being unable to go home to Brazil made it impossible for him to feel at home, neither in Argentina nor in Portugal. “Buenos Aires did not need me ... I felt invisible” (Boal 2001: 299). He was unable to find work in the theatre industry in Argentina, so he spent his time either teaching or writing books. From 1973 to 1976 while in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Boal wrote nine manuscripts in which he captured his insights. The most famous of these was the *Theatre of the Oppressed* published in Spanish in 1974. The translated version was published in English in 1979. He also penned the *Techniques of Latin American People's Theatre, 200 Hundred Exercises and Games for the Actor and the Non-Actor Wishing to Say Something Through Theatre* and *Popular Theatre Round Tables* books and wrote a few plays; an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

(the tale as seen from the perspective of Caliban) *The Destabilisation of Uncle Scrooge MacDuck, Torquemada and Juan Pérez, who are you voting for?* (Drisdell, 1975: 75).

3.2.3.2. Invisible theatre

It was during this time that Boal and his students prepared a scene in a restaurant which was about introducing a law which “allowed any hungry person to” have a meal in a “restaurant” (Boal 2001: 303) if they produced their ID. Unable to risk causing trouble and being deported back to Brazil, Boal could not even entertain the idea of watching the performance of this piece. One of the student actors suggested it be performed in a restaurant as ‘invisible theatre’. “Spectators would see the show, without seeing it as a show” (Boal 2001: 304). The performance in the restaurant led to a passionate debate - “if there is food, then why are people dying of hunger?” (Boal 2001: 304). At the end of the engagement the actors paid for their meals, and everything ended peacefully. Newspaper Theatre became the first form of his Theatre of the Oppressed. Boal developed Invisible Theatre’ next as the second form. Image Theatre and Forum Theatre are the third and fourth forms in the process of the Theatre of the Oppressed. They followed on the games section and were conceived and developed in Peru in 1973. The other forms of expression that result out of the Theatre of the Oppressed are ‘Rainbow of Desire’, ‘Legislative Theatre’ and ‘Direct Action’. (cf. fig 3.1).

3.2.3.3. Theatre as part of a literacy programme in Peru

In August 1993 Boal directed a theatre workshop as part of a literacy programme called the Integral Literacy Operation (ALFIN) literacy project in Lima and Chiclayo, Peru. It was during this time he met Paolo Freire, the South American educationist famous for his critical thinking approach to education. Freire argued that people bring their own experiences and knowledge into the education process and should be the basis for learning rather than a banking system of education where an educator deposits the ideas into a learner’s head. Freire and Boal became friends, and Boal was influenced by Freire (1970) through his book *Pedagogy for the Oppressed*.

In Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* he advocates that learning happens best through the processes of inquiry rather than by being told how by the teacher who deposits knowledge into their learners’ heads. The methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed and in particular, Forum Theatre, follow these processes of exploration and investigation to develop insight into oppressive and power-based situations. This is relevant to life skills acquisition because if social conventions are taught to people, they can also be altered and adjusted through the processes of learning.

Image Theatre came about as the Peruvian people attending the literacy programme spoke a multitude of different languages among them, but all were learning Spanish. So, he asked them to show by means of their bodies what their reality looked like, what their desired reality resembled and how they imagined they could move from the one to the other reality. (Boal 2001: 310). During an improvisation about marital abuse, a woman (cf. 3.2.2.3.) from the audience was invited onto the stage to show what she meant rather than just describe it from her chair in the audience. When she walked on to the stage, she took “on the role of the character, dividing herself: she and the character”. It was then that Boal realised “[d]oing is the best way of saying!” as he saw her “concretise her truth” (Boal 2001: 309). From then onwards Boal began making “the theatre of questions” and the answers would come from the audience who would be “Spect-actors” when they performed their ideas and solutions as part of the enactment (Boal 2001: 310).

3.2.3.4. Image and Forum Theatre techniques

At this stage when living in Santo André, Brazil, Boal (2001: 205) started thinking about the images which people make about their lives. However, the first real ‘Forum Theatre’ event happened in Peru in 1973. Boal was presenting a workshop there about popular forms of theatre. An audience member complained that she did not agree with the solutions shown on stage about how a woman should deal with her wayward husband’s behaviour. Only by stepping onto the stage and taking over the part of the protagonist was the spectator able to explain what she meant by “having a conversation with the husband.” She meant the character of the wife should give her cheating husband a good thrashing and then forgive him. Where words had failed her, action and doing revealed exactly what she wanted to have done.

Boal (2001: 207) adopted this Forum Theatre way of working, “explaining that the spectators are free to do as they wish as long as they refrained from harming the cast” as “within the fiction of theatre” it becomes possible for a spectator to step into the action to demonstrate their understanding of a scenario by becoming part of the performance. When a spectator steps on stage and acts out their ideas they are called a Spect-actor, which is a term coined by Boal and is integral to his methodology of Forum Theatre. A Spect-actor when he steps into the onstage activities to test his option for change will demonstrate to other members in the audience as well as try out “actions for later use in his real life.”

3.2.3.5. Portugal and France

On the invitation of Carlos Porto, “a respected Portuguese critic” (Boal 2001: 331) the Boal family moved to Lisbon, Portugal in 1976. To acquire a new passport, it took a court case against the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For two years they struggled to make a living in Portugal due to a change in government which meant certain agreements fell through.

Finally, they relocated to Paris (Taussig and Schechner, 1990: 58). Boal began teaching about the Theatre of the Oppressed while holding a specially created chair at the Sorbonne University.

He also started a Centre of the Theatre of the Oppressed (CTO) in Paris in 1978. The Centre aimed to train the Theatre of the Oppressed workshop facilitators who could present Forum Theatre sessions (Boal 1998: 7). The popularity of the techniques grew and “in 1981 he organized the first International Festival of Theatre of the Oppressed in Paris” (Paterson, 2015). In 1992 when he published *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* he provided a “basic introduction to the entire range of TO [Theatre of the Oppressed] theory and practice” (Paterson, 2015).

Boal and “his wife Cecilia, who was now trained as a psychoanalyst” (Paterson, 2015), began to hold *La Flic dans la Tête* (The Cop in the Head) workshops where they worked with internalized forms of oppression. It was during this period that he wrote *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy*, published in 1995.

3.2.4 Return to Brazil

After a fourteen-year exile, Boal returned to Brazil in 1986 where he began the Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio de Janeiro (Boal 1998). Their efforts were mainly directed at the children living in the city’s slums (Babbage 2005: 26). In 1992 Boal (1998) was talked into standing for local government election in Rio de Janeiro, which much to his surprise led to him being elected. Always able to see opportunities Boal began his legislative theatre strategies. Nineteen theatre groups were started and together they managed to pass thirteen new laws about a wide range of topics from a “standard fee for motel rooms to stop sexual discrimination”, to laws to assist the elderly and blind people and witnesses of crimes protection unit (Boal 1998:102-113). After their first terms in office, no left-wing councillors, including Boal, were re-elected in 1996. The team lost their financial and political foundation and even though they were disappointed, Boal and the cultural facilitators continued to present their theatrical workshops.

Boal travelled to England in 1977 to work on a Royal Shakespeare Company production of Hamlet where much emphasis was given to the marginal characters, those without much power. In August 1997 Boal was awarded the Career Achievement Award by the Association for Theatre in Higher Education in Chicago. Continuing to travel the world to present his theatrical workshops his last presentation was at “a three-day legislative theatre workshop”

held from “19 – 21” May 2008 in Omaha on the campus of University of Nebraska Omaha (Paterson 2015):

It was a very large, overflow audience in the 250-seat auditorium with a rich mixture of city, university, and [Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed] PTO Conference people in attendance. Elected officials from Omaha comprised the “dais” group that watched the Forum scenes and, in a wonderful image, gathered and sorted the laws that came from the Spect-actor/audience. Julian Boal co-jokered the session with Boal, and the event sparkled with vigorous discussion and debate (Paterson 2015).

In France, Boal’s health deteriorated while he was actively planning for a ‘Jokers’ gathering’ which was planned in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He returned home to Rio de Janeiro and on 2 May 2009 passed away in his sleep. He left the world having contributed much through his work into the transformative power of a theatre for change and liberation.

The methods Boal developed to enrich the spectrum and application of theatrical techniques flow directly out of his life trajectory. ‘Necessity being the mother of invention’ lay at the root of many of the insights he had. His solutions sprang out of his fascination with people and with finding ways in which he could improve other people’s lives through the medium of theatrical enactment. The repression and subsequent exile from Brazil during the time of the military juntas forced him to explore other means by which he could use theatrical enactment to add value to his society. He understood that the richness of enacted images as a visual language can help people to recognise the nature of human behaviour and to see the power-play happening between them. Through the insight and understanding that ensues, positive change is made possible in the lives of oppressed, frustrated and marginalised people.

3.3 FORUM THEATRE: MAJOR IMPACT ON THEATRE FOR CHANGE

In this section, the major contributions and insights which Boal made to theatrical enactment will be discussed. Theatre of the Oppressed (3.3.1) is the collective name for all the techniques and forms of theatre that Boal developed throughout his life’s trajectory (cf. figure 3.1). The focus of this thesis will be mostly on Forum Theatre, which is one of the methods used in the process of working within the Theatre of the Oppressed. It is a means of investigating the power relations and behaviour between people with the aim of bringing about change and liberation in people’s lives. By means of experiencing and practising the possibilities for change, the protagonist learns what the results of a behavioural change are. The techniques of the Theatre of the Oppressed through Image and Forum work can result in Newspaper

Theatre, Direct Actions, Legislative Theatre, Invisible Theatre and Rainbow of Desire as forms of expression. A list of Boal's games, as narrowed down by Saldaña (2005), because they work well with younger participants, were incorporated into the lesson plans to ascertain how well they work to support the children in preparation for a Forum Theatre workshop (3.3.2.).

Thereafter, Boal's theatrical theory and the essential elements of the language of the theatre are touched on briefly (3.3.3.). Three properties of the theatre and the role of the senses is discussed next and so are the fundamental principles of osmosis, metaxis and analogical induction explained (3.3.4.). Attention is given to the various ways in which an improvised scene can be enriched by a director (3.3.4.). The procedure followed during a Forum Theatre intervention is briefly described in the next section (3.3.5.). Boal's form of catharsis is juxtaposed to the other ways in which catharsis can be brought about (3.3.6.). The following sections guide both the Jokers (3.3.7.) and the Spect-actors (3.3.8.) as they are key role players in a Forum Theatre performance. Finally, a brief step by step procedure for Forum Theatre (3.3.9.) is included.

3.3.1 Forum theatre, a subset of the Theatre of the Oppressed

Tree of the Theatre of the Oppressed

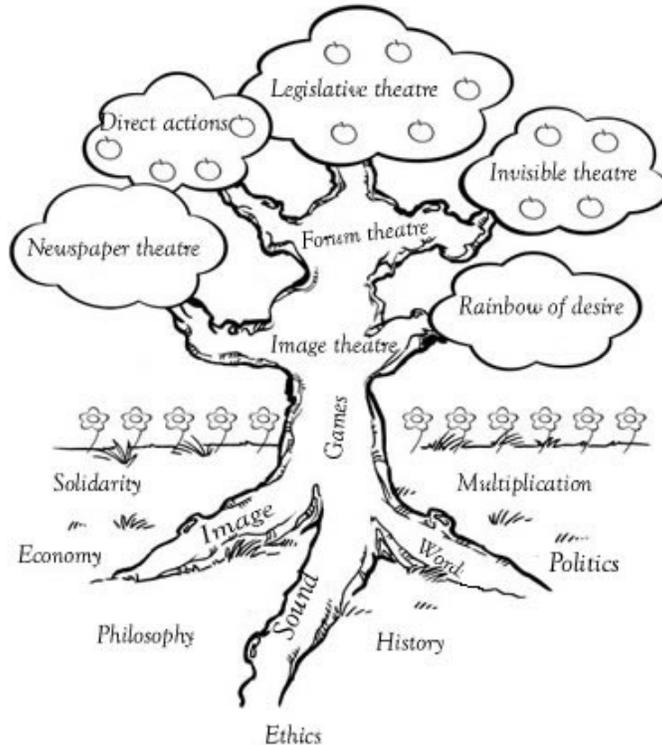


Figure 3.1. The tree of life to depict the Theatre of the Oppressed and its sub-divisions including Forum Theatre (Thompson 2015).

Boal published his book *Games for Actors and Non-actors* in 1992. It contains an extensive collection of theatrical games (188 pages dedicated to theatrical games) which can be used to lead in the first stage of a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop (cf. 3.3.2.). These games heighten awareness of how the body communicates, and many of the games demonstrate how one person has power over another. The games are the first step in the preparation of the improvised scene, which stands at the basis of Simultaneous Dramaturgy, Image Theatre, and Forum Theatre methods of intervention with participants. The games are used to increase awareness of how the body communicates, over and above what words communicate. During the game playing stage trust is built between the participants and they also become more skilful in using their bodies as instruments to communicate.

When Boal worked with a community to help them deal with their problems and oppression he prepared the participants for improvisation and performing a role on stage. The first 'preparatory' steps were to get to know and control their bodies better so that it could be more expressive (Boal.1979: 125).

First Stage – Knowing the body

During this stage the participant would get to know their "body, its limitations and possibilities, its social distortions and possibilities of rehabilitation" (Boal.1979: 126). In the case study the first lesson contained 'circle dash', 'cover the space' and 'tilt'. These are exercises that heighten the awareness of sight, and the space containing other people.

Second stage – Making the body expressive

In this stage the participants play "a series of games" that assist with making the body more expressive and shaking off "habitual forms of expression". The games also create physical awareness of their own body in relationship to the others in the space and that they can communicate without saying a word. In this study, we played the machine of rhythms where in teams of six the learners built an interactive living moving "machine" that required their creativity and co-operation. Each lesson also had a warm up activity at the start. The other warm-ups were "String puppet" (Boal 2002: 139); "The antiquated telephone exchange" (Boal 2002: 144) or "The French telephone" (Boal 1992: 134) as it was called as well; and "The Bear of Portiers" (Boal 2002: 78).

In this study the machine of rhythms (and variation) (Boal 2002: 94), was very successfully played but The Glass Cobra (Boal. 2002:118) not tried. The teacher avoided this game and left it out as she thought the children might touch each other inappropriately. Perhaps if we had played it by splitting them into their gender groups (boys on one side and girls on the other), she might have been more at ease.

To bridge to the next stage, we played Environment (Rhod. 1998: 51-53) and Two Revelations (Rhod. 1998: 57-59) as suggested by Rhod.

Third Stage – The theatre as language

During this stage awareness is brought about that language is a living entity and active in the present.

- First degree: Simultaneous dramaturgy is when the spectators write together with the acting of the actors. In this study the children improvised different types of handshakes and tried to tell a story by means of a few characters in a simple fairy tale type of story. Further they performed many improvisational scenes to find examples of where they felt powerless.
- Second degree: Image Theatre, here the spect-ators take part “speaking through images made with the actors as per sculpting (Boal 1992: 127 – 129) and image theatre activities (Boal 1992: 164 – 180). In this study this class was the most successful both from the learner engagement and teacher experience perspectives due to the high energy and commitment that was experienced.
- Third degree: Forum Theatre: the spectators intervene directly, Spectators are part of the action and act on stage. In this study each class performed a play before another class and thus also was the audience group for another group.

Fourth Stage: Theatre as discourse

In this study the last stage of Boal’s approach was not engaged with beyond the Forum Theatre event took place at the end of the term as lesson ten (Boal. 1992: 224-247).

Instead of training the teachers during the winter holidays, the school requested that I prepare lesson plans before the start of the third term. This happened in a period of three weeks in which I created nine lessons for teaching after my regular working hours. The case study would kick-off at the start of the 3rd term. Due to this time constraint, I was guided in the lesson structure by four sources. One of these was written by Boal and others were authors who had worked with Boal’s Arsenal of the Oppressed; *Games for Actors and Non Actors*, the Rhod training manual, an article by Saldaña, The Spot On Life Orientation text book with included the CA lesson materials, and I looked at, but did not source from, a method used by Unesco-CCIVS called *Act, Learn and Teach: Theatre, HIV and AIDS toolkit for youth in Africa* (2001).

At a Drama conference, I was advised to use the Rhod book for the practical execution of my research by professors in the USA. While I was still doing my literature study, I presented my initial plans and findings at the NADTA – North American Drama Therapy Association’s

annual conference held at Yosemite in 2014. The professors advised I should use the Rhod book as it is a practical 'How to' manual developed for HIV and AIDS awareness workshops. Rhod worked mostly with adolescents when he presented his workshops and the training manual resulted out of this work. Rhod used Boal's approach to community theatre and applied Image and Forum Theatre techniques. The training manual is called *Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue*. Further, the Saldaña 2005 article was relevant as he advises that certain Boal games work well for children in Middle school. By utilising these sources, I was able to do the lesson plans much quicker. I presented them to the HOD during the July holiday and explained my methods and what the outcomes for the various lessons would be. The HOD was happy with the content and it was agreed that I could teach these during the Grade 6 creative arts lessons.

During the lessons the children were taught in an experiential, performative teaching manner which made use of games, improvisation and the creation of images. Images are used extensively in Rainbow of Desire interventions, which were aimed more at therapeutic investigations. Here Boal states that images, (the reality of the image rather than the image of reality) are the main vocabulary for psycho-therapeutic investigation (Boal. 1995: foreword). They are used to work with those matters that hold people back from developing and living their lives to their full potential. The book, *The Rainbow of Desire*, was developed in France, Boal (1995: xviii) and in it he gives his most detailed explanation of his theatrical theory. The next sections deal with aspects of this theory in greater detail. It should be noted that Figure 3.1 makes a clear distinction between the subcomponents of Theatre of the Oppressed. However, in Boal's works certain features found in these subcomponents, overlap.

The Rainbow of Desire book describes how to "harness the power of 'the aesthetic space' to examine the internalised oppressions" in contexts where "there was no visible, tangible, present oppressor" (1995: xix). The workshops Boal did in France also began with playing the theatre games and then participants would be tasked to create an image where they, as a protagonist, show a situation in which they feel powerless. This image then forms the kick-off point for the investigation into the meaning contained within the image. The image is meaningful to both the individual and the group who observe it as it can provide multiple perspectives to the image under scrutiny. The observer's different responses add to the depth of meaning and finding the commonalities in these responses helps to reveal what is universal in the experience shown.

3.3.2 Warm-up exercises suited for middle school

The range of introductory games for the first sections of Forum Theatre is extensive, and many of them have been collected from many cultures across the globe. They often are used to illustrate power-play situations between humans (cf. 3.4.5.). Saldaña (2005: 132) indicates in his research that he found primary school children between the ages of 10 and 14, especially enjoyed certain games out of Boal's collection as indicated by "their responses and requests for replaying". They are: "The Bear of Portiers" (Boal 2002: 78), "Colombian hypnosis" (Boal 2002: 51), "One person we fear, one person is our protector" (Boal 1992: 132, 2002: 141), "The machine of rhythms (and variation)" (Boal 2002: 94), "Person to person, Quebec style" (Boal 2002: 77), "Complete the image" (Boal 2002: 139), "The vampire of Strasbourg" (Boal 2002: 120); "Recognising the 'Aaah!'" (Boal 2002: 127) or "Who said 'Ah'?" (Boal 1992: 115); "The glass cobra" (Boal 2002: 118); "String puppet" (Boal 2002: 139); "The antiquated telephone exchange" (Boal 2002: 144) or "The French telephone" (Boal 1992: 134); and "The great game of power" (Boal 2002: 163)".

3.3.3 Defining theatre: Essential elements of the theatrical experience

Boal (1995:13) says "Theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself; when it discovers that, in the act of seeing, it can see itself – see itself in situ: see itself seeing." Human beings are tri-dimensional in that they can be aware of an 'I which looks around him or herself', the 'I in a particular situation' and the 'other person' (not I) who just observes the situation' that the 'I' is in. Only people have this ability to see themselves as if they can see themselves in a mirror. Humans also can "create symbolic languages such as painting, music and words" (1995:14) to give expression to their feelings and thoughts. Boal's (1995:16) theory is captured in the following Figure 3.2.

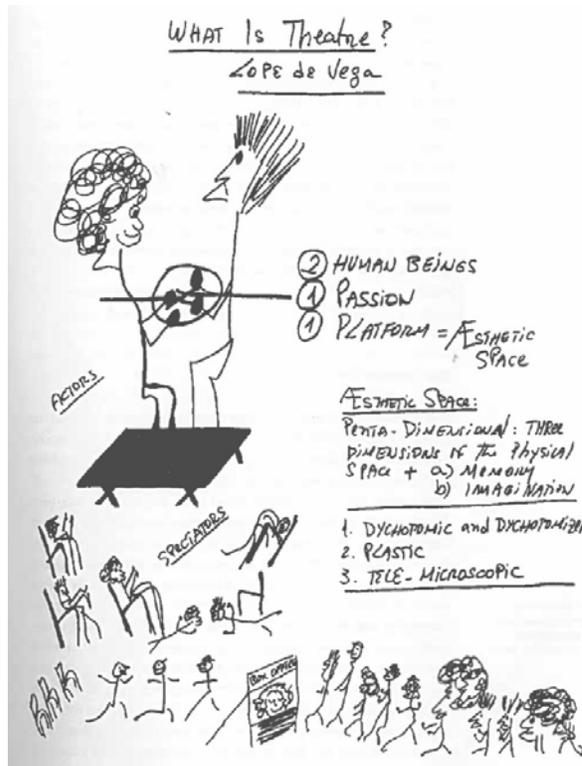


Figure 3.2 Boal's depiction of theatre (Boal 1995:17).

First, he concurs with sixteen-century Spanish dramatist Lope de Vega's definition of theatre, understanding that theatre is "a passionate combat of two human beings on a platform." For theatre to happen there needs to be a passion for something that means more to us than our own life and it needs a platform or aesthetic space where representation of this passionate wish or need can take place. The theatrical space further has five dimensions. Its objective dimensions are: [1.] width, [2.] length and [3.] height. Its "subjective dimensions are: [4.] an affective dimension and [5.] an oneric (dreamlike) dimension" (Boal 1995:18).

It is the floor or platform on which the stagecraft takes place that separates the actor from the audience. This aesthetic space contains both the one side used for acting and the other side which is used for observing. In this aesthetic space, memory influences the affective and imagination stimulates the oneric aspects of our being. The aesthetic space exists thanks to the gaze of those that watch the 'theatre platform' on which liberties may be taken regarding the travelling of time and due to the acting, which occurs in it. "Actor and spectator can be two different people; they can also *coincide in the same person*" (Boal 1995:19). This means that a spectator can become an actor. Boal (1995:19-20) goes on to explain that:

...for theatre to exist, neither stage or spectators are necessary. And we affirm that not even actors ... are necessary to it, since aesthetic activity, which emanates from the aesthetic space, is 'vocational', it belongs to all human beings and manifests itself

constantly in our relations to other people and other objects. This activity is made a thousand times and a thousand-fold more intense in what we call theatre or performance.

The aesthetic space possesses “properties which stimulate knowledge and discovery, cognition and recognition: properties which stimulate the process of learning by experience” (Boal 1995: 20). In a theatrical experience, it is possible to experience “dichotomic [contrasting], plastic and telescopic or microscopic effects”. The aesthetic space transfers and communicates knowledge and has flexibility for time and space, therefore, it can be “condensed and stretched at will”. Regarding objects and people, it can “coalesce or dissolve, divide or multiply.” This flexibility of the theatrical medium supports and makes creativity in its widest sense possible.

3.3.3.1. Three properties of the theatrical that enhance knowledge transfer

Boal (1995:28) explains the three properties in a theatrical experience which enhance the transfer of knowledge as follows.

- a) The plasticity of the medium. This allows for introduction of memory and imagination and enables flexibility also when it comes to the experience of time (past and future).
- b) The dichotomic nature of acting on a stage. This aspect points to the possibility of experiencing the real world and the imagined world at the same time because “on stage, the actor is who he is and also who he seems to be” (Boal 1995: 23),
- c) The telemicroscopic property of the aesthetic space (Boal 1995: 27).

As a physical person he is real and at the same time, he is the character that he is pretending to be.

In a Forum Theatre show, “spectators acquire voice and movement, sound and colour, and thus become able to demonstrate their ideas and desires”. Boal (1995:24) also explains that the actor has a dualistic relationship with his character as usually there is an “attraction and repulsion, fusion and dissociation” between the actor and the persona that he will embody when he is on stage. Actors are always aware of who they are as a person and who they are representing when they take on a character to represent on the stage. This means that an actor or Spect-actor could play the part of an oppressor for the sake of the performance and take on a persona that they would in their real-life be repelled by.

When in a therapeutic context, Boal (1995: 24) states that this dynamic is also present. The aim of the energy, however, is different as the “patient-actor ... reproduces her thoughts and

releases anew her emotions and her own sentiments (which are recognised and declared as being her own).” A patient demonstrates through embodiment what they mean when they tell a story through acting out of the scenario and in the process achieves “concretisation of her desires, as they were realised or frustrated at that time.” By making it more concrete to all in the room, the enactment of a scene by a ‘patient-actor’ makes it possible to study, discover and change the experience shown. Boal (1995: 24-25) also states that by demonstrating, it becomes possible to process “overt desires” as well as “unconscious, covert desires” and make them real. The two “I’s” force the protagonist-patient to “choose who [s]he is”, the ‘I-before’ or the ‘I-now’ and therein lies the therapeutic value since “all therapy, before proposing the exercise of choice, must consist of an inventory of possible alternatives”.

The patient becomes aware of the ‘self’ and of the action, which causes the ‘self’ distress. On stage awareness comes about of both the “subject and the object”, and the patient becomes “conscious of himself and his action” (Boal 1995: 25). The ‘actor-patient’ becomes aware of the ‘self’ in action and can see the ‘self’ who is showing a situation. Concurrently, the patient simultaneously can see and listen to the ‘self’. This requires a little more distancing even though it occurs within the ‘self’.

The opposite happens with respect to the observer as they watch a scene they become empowered to penetrate into his ... lived experience and they travel within this protagonist, feeling his emotions and perceiving analogies between their own lives and his, when they exist – and they almost always do exist. ... In this theatric therapy, the patient does the work, assisted ... by the multiple mirrors of the observant gaze of all the participants (Boal 1995: 26-27).

The third, tele-microscopic characteristic. According to Boal (1995: 27) the tele- microscopic provides knowledge through the aesthetic space of a stage is that it works as a strong telescope or microscope because it magnifies and highlights so that everything on a stage “acquires new dimensions” and the words spoken tend to “become larger, clearer, more empathetic” as nothing can be hidden from view and the actions of the human are observed in all its detail.

3.3.3.2. The importance of the senses

When being creative or in the aesthetic space, knowledge is acquired not only by means of thoughts but also through the senses. According to Boal (1995: 28-29), the “specific therapeutic function of the theatre resides in this: seeing and hearing”. When engaging in a theatrical exploration the protagonist starts doing and acquires knowledge of the self. An individual who engages in this process will work with their ‘ideas’ as well as their ‘emotions and sensations’ and will see their psyche by means of the theatrical event like when one sees

oneself in a mirror. The change which comes about within any session with the Theatre of the Oppressed framework (cf. figure 3.1) is that the person can also now enter and alter the 'image' by means of greater knowledge and insight that is gained through the theatrical process.

According to Boal (1995: 29-30) the body of the human has five main properties in that it is "sensitive, emotive, rational, has a sex and has mobility". These are interlinked and influence each other in both directions. Sensations lead to emotions which trigger thoughts and at the same time thoughts trigger emotions and these in turn trigger sensations. Concurrently a human being also has conscious, verbalised and unconscious areas in the brain that have an impact on their thoughts, emotions and sensations. The unconscious parts of our brains are hard to reach, but through a theatrical exploration, this could be achieved.

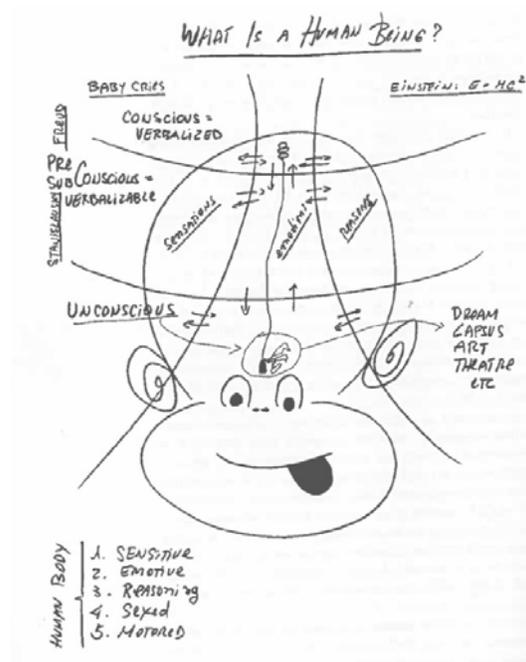


Figure 3.3 – Boal's impression of the parts of the brain and their interconnectedness (Boal 1995: 32).

In the theatre, Boal (1995: 38) points out, actors portray characters or personages which usually are not healthy as it is the "asocial tendencies, unacceptable desires, forbidden behaviours and unhealthy feelings which [are] allowed in the scene presented. On stage all is permissible, nothing is forbidden." The exploration of such matters would lead to catharsis that helps to restore "health and equilibrium" in the audience as well as the actor.

The Rainbow of Desire techniques aim to assist people plagued by self-censorship or as he called it "cops in the head" type of problems. The unhealthy aspects of a person's psyche could be altered and integrated to restore and "awaken healthy personages ... in the hope of

mixing them into his personality". So, in an inverse manner, the theatrical techniques have the potential to restore a person who is ill, back into good health (Boal 1995: 39).

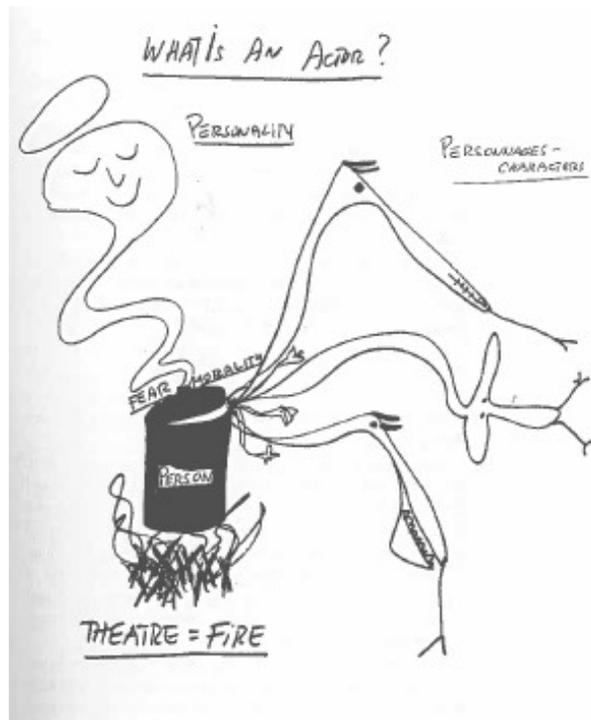


Figure 3.4. Key elements of being an actor (Boal 1995: 33).

In the above sketch (Figure 3.4) Boal explains that an actor taps into both the personality traits and the controlled behaviour of the regular social persona that a person shows the world, as well as the internal devils – the *dramatis personae*, those hidden characters that can also be coaxed out in the theatre.

3.3.3.3. Fundamental principles of the Theatre of the Oppressed

The Theatre of the Oppressed is built on two baseline principles: firstly, to “help the ‘Spect-actor’ transform himself into a protagonist of the dramatic action and rehearse alternatives for his situation” so that secondly what is learned during the process can be “extrapolate[d] into his real life” (Boal 1995: 40). The dramatic enactment becomes the rehearsal space for possible new behaviour options for the protagonist to use in his reality.

Boal’s early training in the sciences is evident in how he formulates his understanding of the power of transformation achieved through the medium of the theatre. He poses three hypotheses focused on

- osmosis,
- metaxis and

- analogical induction,

which form the foundation for the objectives of Theatre of the Oppressed. These forms are now expounded in the ensuing paragraphs.

3.3.3.4. Osmosis explored

Boal (1995: 40-41) calls “the propagation of ideas, of values, of tastes” osmosis due to the similarities it has with the scientific term for the movement of particles through a membrane. There is an interpenetration at work as even the smallest ‘cells’ which make up our “social organisation (the couple, the family, the neighbourhood, the school, the office, the factory, etc.) and equally the smallest incidents of our social life (an accident at the corner of the street, the checking of identity papers in the metro, a visit to the doctor, etc.)” have incorporated within them “all the moral and political values of a society ... All the singular elements of the individual story must acquire a *symbolic* character, and shed the constraints of singularity, uniqueness. Thus, by generalisation, and not by singularisation, we abandon a terrain which is more apt for psychotherapists and limit ourselves to that which is our terrain and our privilege: the art of the theatre” (1995:40). In finding out what the common aspects for the group are within the individual story, generalisation becomes a symbol for the overall experience and becomes evident through both the forces of “repression” and of “attraction”. The aim of a Theatre of the Oppressed experience is to break down the distance between the actor on stage and the audience watching the stage with the aim of transforming both the audience and the action taking place on stage. There are two kinds of response which come about out of oppression: “submission and subversion” (Boal 1995: 42). The goal of the Theatre of the Oppressed experience is to “dynamise” so that submission can disappear, and subversion is activated.

3.3.3.5. Metaxis effect

Metaxis means “the state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different, autonomous worlds: the image of reality and the reality of the image” (Boal 1995: 43). Normally in the theatre, we experience the action shown on stage vicariously and we empathise with the actors - “*em*, inside, *pathos*, emotion” (Boal 1995: 42). In the Theatre of the Oppressed the actor who creates a character and shows an image on stage by means of the role they perform on stage belongs to both realities simultaneously as the oppression shown on stage is drawn out of their own reality. The audience member when assuming the role of the protagonist on stage becomes the creator of other images that communicate the oppressive reality in which (s)he lives, making this person part of both realities, that of the stage and of the world lived in. The next step is for the originator to play with the reality of the image (s)he has created to move it from a social to a fictitious reality and show its transubstantiated form which means it has changed in substance. After that the artist makes a “second extrapolation” back towards

the social world. By means of playing with the image the image creator practises in the “aesthetic” world to bring about change in the social reality without referring to the original world which sparked the formation of the image. In this manner the general truth in the image is sought so that a larger group can relate to the core of the image.

As Boal explains the metaxis dynamic in a Theatre of the Oppressed conflict situation performance, the scene is related to differently by a person who just feels empathy rather than a person who relates and feels sympathy (sym – with, pathos – emotion). The role play creates a space where who have a similar experience to the protagonist can explore behavioural solutions as he did during simultaneous dramaturgy as well. Social learning is enabled by means of the role and is triggered by the depicted situation and images. For Boal the crux is if the spectator relates or not. Boal also speaks about the subject perspective on the enacted scene;

I am not penetrated by the emotions of others, instead I project my own. I guide my own actions. I am the subject. Or else someone like me guides the action: we are both subjects. In the first case, [traditional show of empathetic theatre] the shifting stage sweeps me along with it, in the second, it is I that shift it” [sympathetic theatre] (1995:42-43).

As Boal (1995: 44) wrote the image must become autonomous so that “*the image of the real is real as [the] image*”. Based on sympathy rather than empathy only, due to sharing the same living reality as the actor, the spectator can enact in a manner whereby the “scene, the stage, becomes the rehearsal space for real life.”

3.3.3.6. Analogical induction effect

This refers to the similarities between the participants because the group who are the spectators of the image formation share a commonality with the actor as they belong to the same community. This means that “the individual account of a single person will immediately be pluralised: the oppression of the one is the oppression of all” (Boal 1995: 45), automatically generating sympathy. This part of the Theatre of the Oppressed engagement serves to bring about a “distanced analysis, to offer several perspectives, to multiply the possible points of view from which one can consider each situation” (Boal 1995: 45). It provides opportunities for all to contribute their own alternatives and possibilities. This results in reflection about the image and leads to action being taken. The result is that the protagonist can practise in the aesthetic space the “theatrical fiction” to empower him “to activate himself to perform it in his real life” As Boal emphasises, “this hypothesis expressly contradicts the theory of catharsis, according to which the ‘vicarious’ attitude of the spectator produces in him a voiding of the

emotions which he has experienced during the show" (Boal 1995: 46), and thus a rejection of crowd appeasing Aristotelian catharsis based theatre experience.

3.3.3.7 Relevance of games in Theatre of the Oppressed

To assist the person who leads the theatrical process of discovery of the participants, it is necessary for them to have strategies available to assist them in finding images and to help with the transformation of the images. Therefore, any Theatre of the Oppressed session (or workshop) begins with a series of physical games and exercises. The aim of these is to have fun and for the members of the group to become more aware of their body's expressivity.

3.3.3.8 Relevance of images in the Theatre of the Oppressed

Participants initially work in smaller groups. They each brainstorm around what they experience to be oppressive situations in which they feel powerless. They are then asked to construct an image of a genuine and true state of oppression which exists for them. The protagonist of each image sculpts the other people's bodies in this image without talking but can mirror the expressions that are needed on various character's faces. The physical image created is rich as it contains many more possible explanations than when the scene is described in words because of the polysemy (many meanings) of an image.

All the images from the groups are then shown in succession, each followed by a short opportunity to respond to what was shown. The director has a guiding role through the way in which (s)he selected the Boalian games and techniques and how (s)he underlines and guides finding what was common in the various images. After observing each other's images, the group democratically chooses one scenario as being most representative and relevant to them all. The drama coordinator who facilitates the process has a guiding role in how that is resolved as they choose who may respond to questions, thus has an influence by means of selection.

3.3.3.9. Problem displayed by means of a theatrical improvisation

The chosen scene is developed by the whole group, matching actors to characters making sure that the person playing a part feels they can relate to and play this character. The result of their collaboration becomes a scene that will be performed to the community. Supportive images can be added to the main image but not too many as it may become a little more complex but not become overly complicated. Next, it is checked with the group to see if they still recognise and resonate with the image presented.

Those who relate to their character remain in their parts while others are encouraged to move out. Those watching are then asked if any of them can identify to replace the vacated roles. If there are still some characters without an actor, the groups are asked if anyone can recognise

the person and if that does not work, if anyone can resonate with this/these characters. Only when all the participants can connect to their characters in the image, does the next step begin.

Characters are asked to say aloud the thoughts of their character for three minutes. They need to be warned that this is very difficult. Next, they can enter a dialogue with one of the other characters, also for three minutes. Lastly, the participants are required to move around, showing the desire of their character without speaking.

Directors or drama coordinators of a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop need to be able to assist the participants to develop their characters in more depth. The next section contains various strategies that can be used to develop the central improvisation into a better performance.

3.3.4 Improvisation enrichment techniques

A theatrical exploration is only interesting when it is about a conflict situation. To make the improvisations more interesting, Boal (1995: 58-67) suggests the use of ten modes as auxiliary techniques to aid in discovery and understanding of the situation and the interaction between the characters in the scene which will be explored. The ten modes are: a) Normal mode; b) Breaking of oppression; c) Stop and think; d) Softly, softly; e) Lightning forum; f) Agora, g) Fair; h) Three wishes; i) Dissociation; and j) Playing to the deaf modes. These are briefly explained below.

3.3.4.1. Normal mode

The director needs to make sure that the improvisation is as “dynamic as possible” (Boal 1995: 58). He/she must also ensure that each person in the scene which is being explored knows what is desired and intensely wanted by the character during the improvisation. The intense desire is what drives the dramatic action and automatically leads to the conflict situation wherein a choice must be made called the “point of crisis” (Boal 1995: 59). In this moment lie the various possibilities. “Usually it is in ... this hotbed of conflict that the most important elements of the structure of relations between the characters are to be found. It is, therefore, this point of crisis which must be studied, analysed, intensified.”

3.3.4.2. Breaking the oppression mode

By suggestion of improvisation the protagonist shows his/her desire to revisit a conflict, to explore its possibilities and attempt to alter it and unravel the knot that it contains. Usually, the protagonist does not immediately show the rest of what is essential to them in the

improvisation. It helps to ask the protagonist of the story to show what they think “could have happened or” can perhaps “happen in the future” (Boal 1995: 60) rather than what really happened.

3.3.4.3. Stop and think mode

Human thoughts and ideas happen much faster than we can express them in words. Because of that, many ideas are never expressed. So, whenever the improvisation is happening and the director observing the action feels that something is not being expressed or shown, he or she should call, “Stop!” and then the actors must “freeze their movements in mid-action” (Boal 1995: 61). He or she then calls, “Think!” which is the sign for when they should speak out loud all the inner thoughts that their character has at that moment. The actors will all do that at the same time, not listening to each other but rather becoming aware of what their own character is experiencing at that moment. This technique assists in bringing out the “taboo” thoughts which carry potential consequences and helps to bring forward the “hidden, the diluted, the hitherto imperceptible” (Boal 1995: 62).

3.3.4.4. ‘Softly softly’ (slow and low) mode

This technique works when there is too much action and violence in the improvisation. Everyone goes into slow motion when the director says, “Softly, softly”. By doing this, the actors can observe themselves and their actions better, and the effect is that it magnifies the gestures and the words to show their “true content” (Boal 1995: 63) and helps to make the actors more sensitive to what they are doing and how they interact with other actors.

3.3.4.5. Lightning forum mode

To help the protagonist, this improvisation mode is aimed at showing alternatives providing “a palette of possibilities” (Boal 1995: 63). The ideas presented need not be precisely shown because this allows the protagonist the opportunity of altering the suggestions to suit the actual circumstance. The alternatives are presented in quick succession where each person quickly takes over the protagonist role to demonstrate various alternatives and the antagonists respond to each alternative as intensely as possible. This approach helps to widen the scope for the protagonist to operate in.

3.3.4.6. Agora mode

This mode is concerned with the internal conflict happening inside the protagonist when he or she is resting. The protagonist is taken out of the scene and the other characters are asked to interact with each other without the role of the protagonist. This illustrates how the antagonists are fighting with each other and what the resultant structures are and who becomes an ally of whom. The protagonist can observe from the side-line how certain behaviour will happen

irrespective of their involvement, which situates their 'part' of a conflict situation into a bigger field of human interaction (Boal 1995: 64).

3.3.4.7. Fair mode

Here the group is split into subsets. Each group performs a variation of the improvisation at the same time within the same room. It helps to lessen the pressure brought about by a watching audience. It forces the actors to concentrate and focus just on the actors they are interacting with and thus aids their concentration and enhances their creativity (Boal 1995:64-65).

3.3.4.8. Three wishes mode

This mode starts with the protagonist constructing a frozen image and then allowing her three wishes which can become real. Each time the protagonist can alter the image he/she can sculpt substantially without assistance from any of the other actors. If necessary, more wishes can be granted. Boal writes that in his experience the protagonist stops after the third or fourth wish. The overriding aim is to eliminate something which is troubling him/her (Boal 1995: 65-66).

3.3.4.9. Dissociation mode

This approach is used by the director of the Forum Theatre improvisation when there is a "discrepancy between the characters' declared desires and their inner wishes". It enables the inconsistencies that exist between the words which are inside a person's head and what happens on the outside. So, there is an interior monologue opposed to their exterior behaviour; either in their dialogue or in what they do; their "desire for action". This is achieved by first allowing just the verbalisation of the thoughts. Next, the focus is only on the dialogue, while the movement is still frozen. After that the group can be asked to show the action only. Separating the sequence into its parts will make the inconsistencies clear and bring to the fore where the discrepancies lie to move from current to the desired state which is expressed only through body movement (Boal 1995: 66).

3.3.4.10. Playing to the deaf mode

This mode gives motion to a scene which is too dependent on words by emphasising what people do rather than say in that situation. The actors are requested to perform the scene without any words being spoken which forces the actors to think about what they are doing and how that looks, which brings much more expression to the bodies of the actors (Boal 1995: 66-67).

The above are all tools available to the Theatre of the Oppressed workshop director or leader when working on the improvisation of the scene of the oppression under scrutiny. We now move to the time in the Forum Theatre performance where the audience is invited in to view the improvised scene which has been prepared up to this point. The Joker is chosen and has the responsibility to help bridge between the actors (participants of this workshop) and audience members (rest of the community who did not take part in the first image forming steps of the Forum Theatre workshop). At this junction of the Forum Theatre performance, the audience is invited to participate on stage as Spect-actors.

3.3.5. Procedure of a Forum Theatre performance

Once the central improvisation has been “fleshed out” the next step of searching for novel solutions through the theatrical medium in a Forum Theatre presentation can begin. A Joker needs to be chosen. The Joker is the glue in a forum theatre event who will guide the process of engagement and is a mix of a mediator, master of ceremonies and decision maker who will act as a central point between the actors and spectators. For instance, before presenting the improvised scene, the Joker needs to explain what will be happening to mediate between the audience and the actors. The Joker as a Socratic questioner asks guiding and difficult questions to establish a relationship with the audience. It is his/her task to ensure smooth running of the Forum Theatre performance and he/she will in a jovial manner set the scene, introduce the theme and explain procedures to clarify what will be happening (Jackson in Boal 1992: xxiv). The Joker also involves the audience in an activity to warm them up and make them feel more at ease. This is followed by an introduction of the prepared but improvised scene and a welcoming of the actors onto the stage.

After the performance of the theatrical scene, the Joker again engages with the audience to ask if they recognise the scenario presented to them and if they experience it to be “real”. The Joker is also tasked with adding depth to the Forum Theatre exploration and will ask Socratic questions to stimulate engagement and critical thinking. Boal also called the Joker the ‘difficultor’ for this reason. He/she asks the audience to consider alternative ideas on how the scene could perhaps lead to a more positive outcome.

The audience is given some time to discuss possibilities with each other in smaller groups. A discussion facilitated by the Joker follows. The Joker seeks feedback from the audience and when good ideas emerge, he/she invites those people up onto the stage to engage with the actors. The scene is replayed, and the selected individual is asked to call ‘stop’ when they feel their ideas or approach could perhaps lead to a different sequence of events. Boal explains

that the spectator becomes a 'Spect-actor' when they become involved in the action within the make-believe world. Through enactment, they move from a passive state to a reactive engaged state.

The safe theatrical space gives people the opportunity to pretend to be somebody else for the sake of exploring human dynamics. By taking on a role the individual can show how they perceive a character's behaviour and options within a situation. After a different option has been explored the Joker once again asks the audience if the scenario was realistic and if they believe the new scenario offers a plausible solution to the dilemma of the protagonist. The process can be repeated numerous times to try out other ideas also until all the possibilities have been exhausted or the available time has run out.

The play-acted scenarios reveal human interactions within various situations to reveal the relationships of power and the chains of action-reaction which exist between people. The Forum Theatre experience allows the audience members to change their vision of the world 'as is' to the world as it 'could be'. It further provides insight into the personal and social problems of the collective and can assist all the participants to investigate and search for realistic solutions to their problems and challenges (Boal 1995: 15).

3.3.5.1 Points to consider

Boal (1995: 67-68) draws attention to a few means by which a better success rate can be achieved. He says that proceedings will flow more effectively when the facilitator of the devising artistic activities of the image making section makes sure certain basic conditions are in place before the final improvisation is presented in the Forum. The most important of these are as follows:

1. The protagonist of the performance scene needs to make the initial choice about who the actor for each character will be. This is important as the process of choosing is very revealing.
2. The protagonist should inform the group selected as a dramaturg would, what the conflict is about, to describe the scenario and explain who the various characters are and what their personalities are like, also making sure that it is clear what the conflict is and what the main movements in the scene are.
3. The director or workshop leader of the devising process and the performers should make sure that there is enough movement in the scene to show through body movement the rituals of this oppression.
4. Each character must know what their character wants as their main guiding principle.

5. There must be a clear conflict of wills to drive the action in the scene that will be presented.

In general, the Theatre of the Oppressed improvisation must be about states of oppression rather than those of aggression (Boal 1992: 255). When confronted with situations of aggression, there are very few options available for the various role players to change this situation. The change opportunities generally lie earlier in the sequence of events. Moreover, Boal (1995: 68) stresses that there are “just three types of relationship between actor and image that will lead to fruitful and creative results.”

These are:

- 1) Identification – where the actor identifies completely with the character they are portraying (I am exactly like that);
- 2) Recognition – where the actor(res) can relate to the character as they recognise the behaviour of the ‘other’ person. (I recognise that behaviour); and
- 3) Resonance – where the character or role evokes feelings and emotions in the player of that character. The more intensely the response is felt, the better the execution of the behaviour of the character becomes. (I know what that feels like).

3.3.6. Four types of catharsis

Boal (1995: 68) identifies four types of catharsis (purification or cleaning) that can happen in the theatre. They each achieve different outcomes.

- 1) **Medical catharsis** is related to physically expelling of a physical, psychological or psychosomatic element which causes the patient suffering. This is achieved for instance through a purgative or by means of rhythmical dancing on a beat of the music.
- 2) **Moreno catharsis** occurs when healing and integration takes place in a person by expelling a negative aspect of their being through the experience of playing a role.
- 3) **Aristotelian catharsis** happens where the audience watches actors show them a tragic fault in the hero which the audience can recognise, as the fault also resides inside them. Initially, happiness is shown because the fault brings about a better reality for the character but then it moves into a state of unhappiness, caused by the results that the fault has ultimately brought about. The theatrical process ends with the hero confessing their mistake or fault, with which the audience feels empathy and culminates in the catastrophe which was evoked by the actions of the character. This

kind of catharsis is aimed at warning the audience not to behave in a similar fashion to the tragic hero as it leads to disastrous consequences. It also upholds the status quo of a society of people. Boal rejects this form of catharsis in his theatrical work.

- 4) **Catharsis in the Theatre of the Oppressed** is focused on upsetting the current equilibrium to change the circumstances of politically and socially powerless or oppressed people by helping them gain insight into the circumstances and enable them to practise for a different reality. The aim is to 'dynamise' a situation and lead on to action which destroys the blocks holding the status quo in place. It is the "[c]atharsis of detrimental blocks" (Boal 1995: 73) and leads to liberation from these blocks.

3.3.7. *Guidance for Jokers*

Jokers are of cardinal importance to the success of a Forum Theatre engagement (cf. Par. 3.3.5). They set the atmosphere and interact with the audience through a general explanation of what is going to happen. The Joker explains the rules that everyone needs to adhere to. In 2001 Boal (2002:261-262) formulated a list of rules for the Jokers to follow in a Forum Theatre performance. The most relevant of these are included below:

1. Jokers should avoid all actions which could manipulate or influence the audience" and must begin by asking open ended questions to draw a response beyond a yes or no.
2. Jokers do not make any personal decisions. They explain the rules of the game knowing that the audience can alter the rules if they need to study the subject placed on the table.
3. Jokers plant the seeds of doubt asking the audience if a proposal is real, correct or wrong? Can it work? Has the solution proposed conquered the forces of oppression? Only if the audience agrees that the oppression has been overcome, then may they take over the roles of the oppressors in the scene.
4. Jokers must be on the lookout for "magic" or inadequate solutions and ask the audience if they think a solution being proposed is realistic or belongs in the realm of make-believe or is not enough.
5. Jokers need to be confident and dynamic without influencing the outcome of the action. They may not allow their doubts or timidity to show through.
6. Jokers must be Socratic and help the audience to gather their thoughts by means of questions and by expressing doubts to prepare for the action. They need to assist in the birth of new ideas and questions such that they "avoid any form of manipulation of the participants (Boal 1992: 260-262).

In making the improvisation as theatrical as possible, Boal encourages the use of costumes, incorporating song and dance and allowing for the use of colour. Working out the movement and placement of the various characters at different moments is also beneficial to the enactment. The performance should be as entertaining and engaging as possible.

3.3.8. Guidance for Spect-actors

Equally essential to the success of any session is an understanding of the role of the Spect-actors. Note a clear distinction must be made between the term spectators as understood in everyday discourse and Spect-actors as used in Boal's theory of theatre. Simply defined the Spect-actors are members of the audience who willingly take over one of the characters in the play and step into the action to perform the role and replace a character on stage by behaving in a different way (cf. Par. 3.2.2.3.). The Spect-actor needs to keep the given social circumstances intact and remain true to the motivation that drives the character (Boal 2002: 267-268). Spect-actors who are victims of the same oppression and "who identify by analogy" (Boal 2002:269) are best positioned to replace the oppressed protagonist. He explains "we have to be oppressed by the same oppression to know what we can really and safely do in a precise situation – we must have precise knowledge of all circumstances", but in working with a more general scenario and less specific oppressions, any person may take over the role of any other person because the subject matter is "dealing with feelings, sentiments, subjectivities, impressions". Boal states that there are two rules that cannot be altered in Theatre of the Oppressed work: "the Spect-actors must be the protagonists of the dramatic action, and these Spect-actors must prepare themselves to be the protagonists of their own lives" (Boal 2002: 270).

3.3.9. Forum Theatre steps summary

There are two ways in which a Forum Theatre event can be approached. Either based on a play performed by actors and devised outside the context of the audience group. It is however introduced, performed, discussed and analysed with the guidance of the Joker. The second approach is the longer workshopped route that is referred to below.

In 2001 the Theatre of the Oppressed model of engagement was spreading very fast. A "simple system of preparation of the Forum Theatre model" was formulated by Boal (2005: 272-273):

1. The participant group in its entirety “chooses a theme or central idea, or subject matter” to work on and then explores the theme in smaller sub-groups.
2. “Each subgroup makes an image of the theme, which is a general” or “abstract image” to which all the members respond.
3. “The actors inside the image, at a sign from the director, show the logical movement of that image” to emphasise the movements of each of the “characters inside the image” to which a response is invited.
4. Each smaller unit then chooses a storyline which they improvise movements to and rehearse in a similar manner as “Kurosawa’s multi-perspective narrative (as seen in the film *Rashomon* 1950)” (Cohen-Cruz and Schultzman, 2002: 149) and “Screen image” (Boal 1995:167), these are then performed before the general group to help identify a suitable powerless or oppressed situation for development and staging later in the Forum.
5. “The image of the things – everything on stage speaks”. What is shown on stage always speaks through the medium of the body. “On stage, we are always saying things with our bodies even when we don’t want to say anything.” The group must even consider the props and objects they wish to use as those choices also have meaning. Change the familiar object in some manner “to show an ideological object, an object with a meaning” that makes clearer the meaning of the object for the viewer as “everything must have meanings, connotations, ideas, emotions”.
6. The “kinetic image” is used to clarify the “movements that their character makes in ‘real’ life” and once again comments are invited out of the group to make their feelings clear and to share what they saw happening.
7. “The group must make the image of the Chinese crisis,” [in Chinese the character for crisis means both danger and opportunity for development] ... “the image of the crucial moment when the protagonist has to take the irreversible action or to say the irreversible word that will determine the outcome of the scene.”
8. “The actors inside the image, at a sign from the director, should all at the same time speak the monologue of their desire – what each of them desires in concrete terms.”
9. “The image of the desire in action – the actors should show in slow motion their desires in action.”

Once these parts of the process are completed, a “total *improvisation*” (Boal 2002: 272-273) can be performed.

This ends a condensed overview of Boal’s theory. For an example of how Boal handled the Joker role and works with the audience, please view a sequence of five filmed sections of a

Forum Theatre performance that took place in Harvard in 2003. I provide a link to the first one of the sequence of recordings here: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l71sLJ-j5LE>). At the end of the Games for Actors and Non-actors book Boal describes a few of his own Forum Theatre experiences (Boal 2002: 245-252).

The next section of this thesis deals with how other researchers and theatre makers have experienced applying Forum Theatre as a pedagogical technique. The aim of Section 3.4 is to share what other people who have used the technique have found useful and effective. It also lists where shortfalls occurred and why this came about.

3.4 CRITIQUES AND CHALLENGES IN FORUM THEATRE APPLICATIONS

In section 3.4, I discuss the application of Boal's methodology and this section deals with Forum Theatre (cf. 3.3.1. and fig 3.1.). Forum Theatre forms part of the 'Arsenal' of the Theatre of the Oppressed and holds pedagogical enrichment potential for exploration and learning in a variety of settings. I examine its application in an educational setting (cf. 3.4.1.), discuss the learning gained regarding the particular skills of the Joker (cf. 3.4.2.), how engagement of the Spect-actor is experienced by practitioners in this field (cf. 3.4.3.), what the drawbacks are of only partial application of the Forum Theatre methodology (cf. 3.4.4.), and how to create a safe learning space (cf. 3.4.5.) for a Forum Theatre engagement.

Forum Theatre has been well researched and applied with adults, adolescents and primary school participants. Articles describing Forum Theatre interventions come from across the world: in the US (Mitchell and Freitag 2011; Gourd and Gourd 2011; Saldaña 2005; Paterson 1994; Taussig and Schechner 1990); in Ireland, (Houston, Magill, Mc Collum and Spratt 2001; Poulter 1995); in England, (Hammond 2013; Day 2002; Babbage 1995; Ball 1995); in Australia (Dwyer 2004); and in South Africa (Baxter 2005; Dalrymple 2006; Durden and Nduhuna 2007) among others. Much can be learned from the numerous articles that have been written about the application experience of these researchers, especially when they applied Forum Theatre in a school context.

3.4.1 Application of Forum Theatre in an educational setting

The content of this section foregrounds the following aspects and insights related to applying Forum Theatre as a pedagogical approach in educational settings.

3.4.1.1. Intricacies of terminology

As explained in section 3.2. Boal developed the Theatre of the Oppressed methodology as a sequence of “ah-ha moments” as a theatre-maker while working in Brazil under oppressive circumstances. In that social context the words “fighting oppression” make perfect sense but in politically stable environments, the word oppression is harder for participants to relate to. In a first-world setting where democracy is practised, ‘oppression’ may have a heavy connotation which can block some people from wanting to explore the dramatic techniques because their life experience does not make them feel that they are being oppressed. Using other terminology can help to avoid this association (Spry in *Playing Boal* 1994: 172).

To address problems in terminology, different strategies have been followed. In a study with middle school children, Saldaña (2005: 124) found that some of Boal’s games as described in his book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (cf. 3.3.1.) worked well as warm-ups and as a way of introducing new ideas in the class discussions. They were useful “metaphors for enacting and reflecting on power relationships” (2005: 124). The research team used “power” terminology to make clear to the class what “oppression” is and used mainly the “Columbian Hypnosis” (Boal 2002: 51) game (This is a game where one person, as if hypnotised, follows the hand of the other person with their head only a few centimetres away from the leading hand) to give insight into what is meant by the terms “oppressor and the oppressed”.

Poulter (1995: 19) prefers to adjust the terminology when she works with Boal’s approach by turning “power over” into “responsibility for” and “by giving a different emphasis within the instructions” with the aim to grow the basis of “support and awareness” (Poulter 1995: 19) in the group. She also finds the Columbian hypnosis game helpful. Poulter finds the game illustrates having power versus having no power in a relationship very well. By adding in extra instructions when playing this game, the leader is made aware that they need to develop the movements together with their partner and be responsible for their partner’s safety.

In “Bolivian Mimosas” (Boal 2002: 105), a game for a pair, one person plays a mimosa flower and the other a human being. “the person touches some part of the body of the mimosa, who must start moving rhythmically, first the part of the body which has been touched, then enlarging the movement till eventually it takes in the whole body” (Poulter 1995: 20) This is a game aimed at “making a fool of oneself ... in public” (Poulter 1995: 20), she emphasises that it helps to first build the confidence of individual group members “by using low focus exercises” (Poulter 1995: 20) before moving onto such a high focus experience. She also has made the experience loser in structure where the Mimosa “plants” in a make-belief garden are visited by various people who can either start or stop the trembling of the fictitious Mimosa plant by touching them.

When her groups play the 'President's bodyguards', (Boal 2002: 104) (where the guards need to mimic the movements of the president) she instructs the president to look after his guards so that they don't come to any harm in a collision and can move around safely as "power brings ... responsibility!" (Poulter 1995: 21). The 'basic group skills' that need to be developed in the workshops are "observation, attention to detail, playfulness, interest in each other and mutual support" (Poulter 1995: 21). So, for her, it is crucial that adapting material dealing with 'oppression' out of the arsenal of Theatre of the Oppressed needs to be done with skill.

As the Forum Theatre model explores social power relations between people, it is recommended that instead of asking a class of learners to make an image to show what oppresses them, they can be asked to show situations in which they feel powerless. Boal later said he wished he had rather emphasised the liberation that comes about the Theatre of the Oppressed as it describes the change it brings about more clearly (Spry 1994: 174). Moving from terminology considerations, the focus of this section now moves to aspects of time and space. As explained earlier in this chapter, Forum Theatre is an interactive process which encourages participation and experiential learning in various social and community settings. Through this method, important life skills can be learned in a safe space while exploring human social behaviour. The effectiveness of the Forum Theatre method hinges on a few key aspects. Teachers who wish to apply this method of interrogation should have enough time available to follow all the steps, have access to a suitable space, acquire the essential Joker skills so that they are able to apply Socratic questioning to act as a 'difficultator' (Boal 1995; Baxter 2005: 115) and make the correct choices about which suggestions are suitable for Spect-actor engagement.

3.4.1.2. Aspects of time and space

Engaging a class on a topic of interest through Forum Theatre as a teacher/facilitator requires enough time and adequate space for movement. The group needs exposure to the origination part of the process for a long enough period to do the steps correctly so that the participants can learn about the expressivity of their body through the Boal games, to become comfortable with each other and aware of imagery as a rich means of communication. When applying Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre in an educational setting, enough time should be given to complete the process of the activity and it needs to be fitted into the time table of the educational institution (Ball 1995). This forms a realistic challenge as it is not always easy to manipulate the timetable to fit enough of these sessions in. Hammond (2013: 14) calls for further research to explore if the Forum Theatre process can be condensed into a shorter period. Ball (1995: 84) points out that during the forum exploration various individuals want to try out their solution, but time pressures often limit it to one individual fully exploring his/her

“solution”. Spending less time on the various steps of the process will severely limit what can be achieved.

Ball (1995: 84) highlights a problem he encountered when using Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed methods due to time allocation choices that had to be made. They chose to maximise the time they had available in schools by skipping the games and image-making part and only presenting a ready-made play. The playset the scenario from where they did a Forum Theatre exploration of change opportunities by means of the Joker and Spect-actor engagement. The play was created by actors outside the school and then presented in the Forum. His experience and research bring to the fore the following parameters of using Forum Theatre in schools:

- The school timetable sets parameters which make it impossible to go through all the steps of Boal’s approach.
- It is easy to oversimplify and reinforce stereotypes.
- He noticed that the actors struggled to deliver “an engaging piece of performance for the audience”. This is a downside of entering a Forum theatre exploration through a ready-made drama rather than co-creating it with members of the target group on a topic which they are passionate about.
- There is not time to explore all options presented fully so that an “individual can resolve a conflict or seek a solution”.
- “Distancing and reflection” do not feature as the focus is on “responsibility and action” which have more focus in this approach.
- Some believe participation cannot change things (Dort 1983 in Ball 1995) as participants do not move their learning out of the stage setting into their own realities.
- Spect-actors need to have “considerable confidence” for them “to actively intervene” and some see this as an “opportunity to display their acting abilities at the expense of focussing on the “nature of the problem under investigation”.
- Too much emphasis is given to the “personal and social issues” and does not explore “economic and political factors” that play a role in people’s lives (Ball 1995: 84-85).

Poulter (1995: 15) also addresses the issue of time within the school programme for Forum Theatre. She recommends using Forum Theatre techniques to create plays and finds the techniques especially useful when “devising an actual show”, developing “a group’s theatre-making skills” (Poulter 1995: 15) and for developing the group and the individual abilities of the group members. She used the techniques in various settings.

Poulter became part of a research project by Dr Mona Moore, who was interested in finding out how effective a theatre piece is as a way of “reducing the incidence of bullying in schools” (Poulter 1995: 14). While devising a play with her students for this purpose, Poulter used image making skills to unlock their “own memories and experiences of being bullied – and of being bullies” (Poulter 1995: 14) which made a strong connection happen with the theme. Their performance work became committed and “based on a personal memory of injustice and oppression” (Poulter 1995: 14). Together with her students, she created several short performance sequences that worked very well when performed for first-year high school learners. In turn it unlocked responses in the high school learners who were eager to share out of their own experiences. The performance was presented to five groups of high school learners in various schools in Dublin. Each of the sessions lasted for forty minutes. This forum experience stood out for her because the learners became so eager to share what they knew about the nature of bullying in their own schools and related freely out of their own experiences. The expectation had been that there would be an unwillingness to talk about it as that is part of the “bullying syndrome”. The drama performed broke down barriers and led to forum discussions and questions around ‘if the bullying in their school was going to be stopped’? The learners also corrected the bullying versions shown in the performance. They addressed the real ‘retribution’ threat of ‘I’ll get you later’ making all in the room aware that it was not a simple case of being oppressed and being shown a solution but also pointed out that the bullying reached further and had implications for a much wider group; “the teacher, the parent, the friend, the class-mate and the bullies’ mate” (Poulter 1995: 15).

In the light of the above discussion, a possible solution to finding enough time in the school time table could happen if the project is tackled as an activity which stretches across various subjects in the curriculum. Language, art and life orientation teachers could all gain from such an intervention as the improvised creative process, the discussions and the improvised role-play all contribute to improving the language abilities of the participants. The Forum Theatre experience can heighten participant creativity and can add to the learning of essential life skills, social consciousness and improvement of their cognitive abilities.

Rohd (1998: 132/142) addresses issues of both time and space for Forum Theatre (physical and emotional space) in his book *Theatre for Community, Conflict and Dialogue*. Firstly, about time, he recommends that applied community or educational work would ideally need to be offered over a longer period. He worked with adolescents along time-lines of two sessions a week, for two to three hours over a period of six weeks. He also suggests the size of the group should range from ten to fifty participants, the ideal being twenty to thirty individuals. As a minimum, he recommends working sessions with a minimum of forty-five minutes over ten weeks when the engagement happens in a school setting.

Rohd (1998: xvi) further recommends that such interventions work best when there is a big enough space to enable movement activities. Rohd (1998: 130-131) similarly suggests that a safe and pleasant working space can be established by discussing the following list of ground rules with all the participants;

- To protect the participants, it is good to agree that everyone respects each other's confidentiality and agree to keep what is spoken about within the room.
- Members of the group should agree to be non-judgemental and allow for disagreement between them, respecting each other's differences.
- It is important to be open and share what is possible.
- Agreement on honesty as more is achieved when it is based on the truth.
- Every member has the right to say "pass" when what is being asked makes them uncomfortable.

Rohd (1998) makes use of the cloak of anonymity to protect participants who wish to raise a sensitive issue through the following approach. He encourages people to contribute sensitive ideas and topics without disclosing who they are by writing down ideas on paper and placing them in an agreed place without disclosing their names on the suggestions made.

Rules such as these help to develop deeper trust between the group members and they can enrich the process of sharing ideas and insights within the group." Rohd (1998: 28) suggests "A safe space is developed through physical trust work, sensory work, and storytelling exercises designed to help individuals know each other in new surprising ways." 'Safety' is also created with fictional characters who interact in situations that are truthful to the group who created them and shows fictionalised ideas to an audience to engage them around these ideas. Themes which often received attention in Rohd's (1998: xvii) theatrical interventions when dealing with the youth are violence, substance abuse and teen pregnancies.

Finally, Rohd's 'little red book', mentioned above, is a very practical book on community theatre activities. It incorporates Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed knowledge especially the Image and Forum work. Rohd includes six of Boal's games for use in the introductory section. He has worked with Boal in a workshop context and recognises Boal as a source of knowledge that gave him 'affirmation, clarification, ideas, and impetus to move forward and grow" (Rohd 1998: xx). However, his approach casts the net wider than Boal's methods only and includes the work of other 'activists' for social change. This practical resource provides much guidance on how to structure an applied theatre intervention in a school or community setting with peer group involvement.

3.4.1.3. Ascesis: Finding the underlying truth

For the play to be depicted as a general situation, the individual story needs to be true to many people watching and it needs to contain content that the audience can relate to because they recognise it in their own context too. Such generally understood and recognisable human situations can be approached best through imagery and body language used in the initial devising stages in preparation for a Forum Theatre performance. Boal (1995: 26) called this process of finding the general principles within the individual's original story of powerlessness: ascesis. To explore this in more depth the following section deals with what can be achieved through the physical, visual and emotional communication of body language.

As mentioned the games which are played at the beginning of a forum session build trust and make people more comfortable with using body language. Shank and Schirch (2008: 14) indicate that people use body language, facial expression and tone of voice, to communicate most (65% to 93%) of what they wish to say. "Art can explain emotions, ideas, or feelings that words alone cannot. Many art forms communicate through symbols, the non-verbal, the human body, the senses, and the experience and expression of emotion" (Shank and Schirch 2008: 14). They also share that art can "reclaim the body (alienated by oppression, abuse, violence) and is an important tool in liberating, transforming, and revolutionizing individuals, relationships, and societies" (Shank and Schirch 2008:14).

Clarity is improved when in the exploration of the created image a discussion happens in a group of people to discover what an image means to them individually. Sharing the diversity leads to an understanding of where the different experiences and associations overlap. That could increase the relevance for the audience. Moving the story to an aesthetic context further helps in audience recognition and understanding of what is shown to be a problem on stage. The smaller nucleus of actors who created the problem scenario present their show to an audience community that share the same or similar cultural or social context. The audience who did not take part in the creative process will understand the image more easily and thus what is similar or general for the group is obtained with body language and images as members of the group or community from which the play arises all have this language in common. Boal used the term 'universal core' in his theory but perhaps 'common to the group' would have been a better way of describing the situation. Some problems are more likely understood by all human beings while others are specific to a culture. The cultural and social context of what is understood as anger for instance could trigger different reactions in the spectators. The images are an essential step in finding the core truth in a common disempowered situation with members of the same group participating in the Forum Theatre event. In a different cultural context, the same image might call up different common responses for that group.

Physical imagery or tableaux are tapped into as a way of showing each other what they have experienced and what a person is thinking about a specific topic. When asking people to share their stories and experiences of when they felt powerless or oppressed, it works best to first explore these themes in smaller groups. The common themes resonating within each group can be explored through the images they create. Participants are requested to show by means of physical images created through the arrangement of their bodies what these themes are. After discussing the various images, the most representative story in each of the smaller working groups is chosen and shared with other groups. Narrowing down the possibilities and by focusing them more and more, the groups eventually choose the images which most of them can resonate with. Depending on time constraints and the size of the group, one or two stories are chosen democratically to serve as material for the next part. The Forum Theatre improvised dramatic scene evolves out of this. The director will remind the participants before they choose to also consider if the basic scenario of their story contains a strong enough conflict situation between the antagonist and the protagonist. A moment of conflict is essential to the success of the forum, so the improvised story/stories must contain a strong clash of wills (Boal 1995: 59; Baxter 2005: 113).

Boal (1995: 59) named the crisis experienced in drama a Chinese Crisis as the word for crisis in Chinese is written with both the character for danger and for opportunity. He believed that within the crisis moment there is both danger and an opportunity for development. Participants need to be emotionally touched by the Chinese Crisis enacted to explore avenues of change via the Spect-actor - Joker engagement that leads to physical replacement of the characters on stage. Boal explains in his first book how the Arena group experimented with theatrical form. After doing away with many of the theatrical "trappings" the group had developed a method called the 'Joker system'. All actors except the protagonist were interchangeable. A single actor portrays a single protagonist: Here empathy occurs". ... You want the audience to feel for the protagonist who is in trouble. "The actor should make use of Stanislavskian interpretation" (1979:180). "His existence is never interrupted" as he is "the slice of life", ...the living documentary, the minutiae, the detail, the apparent truth, the real thing" (Boal 1979: 180-181). This function attempts to reconquer the 'empathy that is lost every time a performance tends towards a high degree of abstraction. ... The character whom the author wishes to link empathically with the public performs the protagonic function." (1979:181).

The other essential role was that of "the "Joker" who is polyvalent" (Boal 1979:182), is more "knowledgeable of beginnings, middles, and ends." ... "He is omniscient." On stage he functions as a master of ceremonies", ... "He makes all the explanations, verified in the structure of the performance" and "when necessary, he can be assisted by the ... choral orchestra". The Joker explained to keep the audience informed about what was happening on

stage. This was how Boal saw the Joker system when he still worked as a playwright and director of the Arena theatre group in Sao Paulo. Forum theatre as a method in the Arsenal of the Theatre of the Oppressed was developed over time and now is understood to be an theatrical event around a problem situation that is under scrutiny and where the Joker acts as the “difficulter” before an audience member is invited to become a spect-actors on stage to take part in the drama and influence the behaviour in the Forum. The process of trying out suitable alternative modes of behaviour aiming to break through the oppressive moment of crisis is where the insight develops in the participants. Jokers need to make sure in Forum Theatre intervention that attention is given to showing up the power play mechanisms in the development of the dramatic scene, so that many members of the audience will be able to relate to this dramatic scene.

Using a physical frozen image to show others what a powerless moment looks like in the early workshop stage, is the first step in the process from where the image must be developed. This is done so that spectators later can see and recognise their own similar experiences in the image. Achieving this helps to move the discussions on to a more general level because what is shown does not only apply to one individual but rather holds true in more general human terms. Being involved in such activities leads to social, psychological, and language skills development in the participants.

The power of using Boal's techniques for Poulter (1995: 11) “lies in the way in which an image can by-pass words and avoid problems of verbal debate”. She states that images created in workshops are taken more seriously and others also challenge them less as the ‘reality of the image’ transcends the individuals’ experience. Images in a state of moving from one to another state, are lively, humorous, and can be paired up with music, movement and dance to create more entertaining performances. “Image and Forum Theatre” have the “ability to share ownership and explore possibilities” states Poulter (1995: 14). The images also unlock “powerful memories” and make the performance more personal.

Prendergast and Saxton (2015: 282) warn that when making applied theatre such as Forum Theatre with a community, it is crucial to lift the personal stories to a higher general level to show the common denominator, pattern or truth within the collection of stories. When the audience is shown what a real event was like this tends to create more distance with spectators as they think this situation “has already happened and therefore cannot be changed” (Prendergast and Saxton 2015:282). They emphasise that “[t]he power of theatre lies in the very fact that it is *not* real, we can use real stories to create content in which ‘my’ story becomes ‘our’ story” (Prendergast and Saxton 2015:282). Therefore, to protect the originator of a story it is important to alter a story such that it becomes more generally applicable to all. Working

in such a manner also ensures the anonymity of the research participants. Prendergast and Saxton remind us there are risks involved in making co-created theatre and “maintenance of a safe working space is paramount” (Prendergast and Saxton 2015: 283) (cf. 3.4.6). Bringing the fictional aspect into the process of applied theatre makes the stories more “like clay to be moulded, not cut-glass to be protected” (Prendergast and Saxton 2015:283). The overall purpose is to enable the forging of connections between various stories and to display what is common to all participants. This also supports the need for the workshop phase at the beginning of the process where participants share their individual stories and together look for the general or general trends to create the fictional depiction of what was common to them all.

3.4.1.4. Creativity development

Fryer emphasises the importance of teachers being willing to learn “alongside their students to understand, question and debate” because this process makes it possible for students to “gain a sense of self-worth and of their own potential power” (Fryer 2015: 332). This drive is matched well in drama interventions such as Forum Theatre. Students become more aware of what resides inside themselves through these communication and creativity processes. This happens because “art is most powerful when it allows a new relationship to be created in the moment of enactment, with the meaning being open to negotiation” (Fryer 2015:333). This happens particularly well in the Forum Theatre dramatic exploration which is supported by debate and inquiry.

Teaching creatively in a classroom allows for more engagement by the learners. A well-prepared teacher who knows the content of their lesson well will be able to use improvisation to engage with the students in the class says Shem-Tov and a “pre-service teacher [is more likely to] feel free to improvise creatively in the classroom because they feel safe in coming back to the anchors they have already placed before” (Shem-Tov 2015: 306). There are substantial benefits in approaching teaching based on improving the creativity of the learners. Creativity enables “*divergent thinking, ideational fluency, originality and flexibility*” (Torrance 2008 in Shem-Tov 2015: 307) as abilities and drama teaching can “be a tool to exercise and acquire the learners’ creative abilities” (Shem-Tov 2015: 307-308) and should not be blocked or avoided.

3.4.1.5. Development of life skills

Generally, children along their journey towards becoming adults need to learn to work together, to become aware of how their own behaviour elicits responses in others, and in so doing develop their life skills. Acquiring socially acceptable manners, building up moral values, acquiring more acceptable forms of assertive behaviour and developing their self-esteem are

but a few such life skills (cf. 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.6.1; 1.6.2; 1.6.3; 2.1; 2.2; 2.2.4; 2.2.6; 2.2.6.4; 2.2.7.5; 2.2.8.4; 2.3.1.3; 2.4.1.4; 2.4.2.6; 2.5; 2.5.2; 2.5.2.2; 2.5.3; 2.5.4 and 2.6).

Forum Theatre was used in a study by Rutten et al. (2010: 65) to investigate if the method could bring about positive change in “moral team atmosphere, moral reasoning, fair play attitudes and on- and off-field anti-social and prosocial behaviour in male adolescent soccer players” in the age group of ten to eighteen-year-olds. Their findings showed an improvement in moral atmosphere but not in moral reasoning or fair play attitude. The researchers made use of a pre-made play about “soccer-specific moral dilemmas”. It was performed by professional actors as a lead in to the Forum Theatre discussions mediated by a Joker. An opportunity for engagement with and between the boys in the soccer teams was lost here. By building up the scenarios for discussion from inside the ranks of the boys, by making use of their own experiences, the sessions could have created more depth. There also is scope for personal development with the boys during the creative early step of the process of a Forum Theatre intervention. The development of personal insight in the first part of the Forum Theatre process was not utilised.

The study proved that only “on-field antisocial behaviour changed” (Rutten et al. 2010: 73) after the Forum Theatre intervention. This research article points out that the social context is important as in a school environment the setting generally has a positive impact on outcomes. Placing focus on “positive moral climate” with emphasis on “mastery” instead of “performance orientation”) does lead to increased “levels of moral reasoning” and brings about less “antisocial behaviour in adolescent male soccer players” (Rutten et al. 2010: 67). Parameters that were found through this study, point out that a single forum intervention is too little and insufficient “to affect the moral cognitive structure of the athlete in itself” (Rutten et al. 2010: 73). This can be linked to an attitude being more difficult to change as it is built on “an affective, a cognitive and a behavioural component” (Ajzen in Rutten et al. 2010: 73). This is in line with the findings of Saldaña (2005) where the change in understanding and attitude of all the children as the new insight learned did not always carry through to the playground. (cf. Par.3.4.1.7) This kind of activity needs to be repeated more regularly before the moral behaviour and sense of fair play could be developed.

Rutten et al. also find that even though there are three areas where participants are learning (on-stage as a spect-actor, as a participant in the discussions and as an observer only) the effectivity of the social learning (cf. Par. 2.2.5. (Bandura), 2.2.6.1., 2.2.7.5., 2.5.4.), is dependent upon the role played by the participant during the Forum Theatre performance. (Rutten 2010: 74). Rutten et al. (2010: 74) suggest to fully understand Forum Theatre’s

effectivity, the “differences between effects on adolescent” observers versus those that take on the spect-actor role, should be further investigated.

The learning opportunity in the creative, formative, first stage of a Forum Theatre performance was not explored by Rutten et al. They only indicate that the “content of the performance should be carefully compiled” (Rutten et al. 2010). In my opinion, by using the participants from the same community as the target audience, and utilising their life experiences to create the improvisation, more engagement could be achieved. The improvised performance scene that comes about through the “image-making” activities can elicit more awareness and interest in the participants from the target community. Perhaps through understanding why this is harmful, more can be achieved in getting people to refrain from being anti-social on the sports field. The more in-depth creative participation and discussion steps of a full Forum Theatre performance could encourage the “affective, cognitive and behavioural” aspects of “changing an attitude”. Interest in a need for fair play and ethical development could be enabled by participants devising their own improvised scene that stands at the centre of the Forum Theatre engagement. Whole Forum Theatre process engagement could assist with better absorption of moral reasoning, the development of a fair play attitude and could also assist with building a more moral team atmosphere (Rutten et al. 2010: 66). Investigation of whether full versus partial participation makes a difference, would be valuable for a more thorough understanding of the value of Forum Theatre as a teaching tool and warrants further investigation.

Hammond (2013: 2) states that Forum Theatre was able to develop (life) skills in the children taking part in his study which used “FT to elicit and advocate children’s views”. He writes “

During these [Forum Theatre] workshops a variety of techniques were used to empower non-actor participants to share their voice through performance. Specific skills such as improvisation were introduced alongside exercises which aimed to develop skills such as teamwork; muscular and sensory awareness; cognition such as memory, concentration and problem solving; as well as emotional awareness and imagination (Hammond, 2013: 2).

Children often are powerless in their relationships with adults who, from the perspective of adults being the caregivers and providers, have the dominant position in the relationship. However, to achieve growth of self-esteem and confidence in children, it is vital for them to develop their own voice and for their ideas to be seen and heard. Children benefit from developing their self-esteem and need to be assertive enough to be able to avoid harmful behaviour. This ability to resist harmful influences needs to be fostered.

Day (2002: 22 - 33) describes a Forum Theatre intervention she did which focused on bullying of young refugees in British schools. Any person can land in a situation where they lose their home due to a natural calamity or when the political circumstance they live in polarises and forces them to flee to another country. The adjustment of refugees to the cultural and social norms of their new home environment is not easy. The new people they now live with do not understand how they as refugees are different; or why for instance they do not have a home to live in.

To help bridge the divide between the homeless refugees and regular society, a dramatic scene was prepared. The played scene needed to create awareness before moving to the Forum Theatre exploration of options available to refugees. Day and her group of actors used their rehearsed scene about refugees and homeless persons, to demonstrate what the lives of homeless refugees were like; to illustrate what their struggles to assimilate and be accepted into their new society were like. The performance focused on developing moral attitudes and stimulated students' thinking about bullying of such persons who they went to school with. The project took place in three state secondary schools in London. The actors who played in the initial performance were homeless youth with no acting experience and the others were refugee actors. These actors were trained and went through the initial parts of a Forum Theatre workshop and incorporated their life experiences into the play which was then taken into schools. The students were only exposed to the later parts of a Forum Theatre intervention; the performance of the problem scenario, the Joker led discussions and where spect-actors may step into a scene to try and change the outcome of the scene. Empathy was raised with the plight of refugees and homeless people through this intervention. Follow-up discussions revealed that the students found a behavioural change hard to sustain as the rest of the people in their environment, who had not taken part in the intervention, still harboured their negative attitudes towards the homeless and refugee persons. (Day 2002: 27-28) Students gave feedback that they only realised how difficult it was to bring about real change in the circumstance of homeless and refugee persons once they were in the protagonists' shoes and acting out of their situation and circumstance.

Her experience and intervention brought to the fore a need for more information of a factual kind such as teaching more about "the rights of refugees and the homeless, their economic and accommodation position and their legal status" (Day 2002: 28). A member of the teaching staff indicated "that Forum Theatre deals with" the behaviour needed at a particular moment but does not "explore the social, the political, the universal." Some students tried to reach out after the event to help people caught in these situations but were unable to sustain their initiatives to raise funds and did not know where to send the money that they had raised. (Day, 2002: 29). The follow-up interview which took place after the Forum Theatre performance

indicated high levels of frustration as except for raising awareness no concrete change had been brought about in the lives of the student participants. Some had changed the way they behaved towards refugees whom they went to school with. Another person had broken off a friendship with a bully because of the performance and the discussions it provoked.

As Day (2002: 29) explains “They transferred the empathy they felt for” the fictional “character to refugee students they knew at school and considered their histories”. The drama teachers who were involved in inviting the theatre group to the schools felt that the content belonged with the “Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE)” (Day 2002: 31) subject matter and classes so they did not follow up on the theme and build on the interest which the play had raised. (PSHE is the British equivalent of Life Orientation in South African schools). The other teachers in the school had not been included in the initiative, and thus an opportunity for cross-curriculum teaching in the participating schools was also lost (Day 2002: 32). The Teacher’s Guide which had been developed to assist with the follow-up activities after the play was not used as the demands of the regular curriculum did not allow for it (Day 2002: 30).

The theatre company became aware that they need to interact with both the drama and the PSHE teachers “when marketing the workshop” (Day 2002: 33) as an opportunity to teach about “moral reasoning and moral action” and also “inform the schools at the beginning of the academic year” about the “topics” that would “be covered in their workshop, so they could adapt their syllabus” sequence to match the Forum Theatre performance with the content being taught in class” (Day 2002: 33) better. The study also highlights the benefits that can be brought about when the overlap in content between these subjects and applied drama could be realised and utilised.

The Forum Theatre engagement of Day had, unfortunately (cf. 3.4.1.5) brought about no real change except for more empathy and sensitivity in the behaviour of the students. This begs the question whether this initiative is a ‘rehearsal of defeat’ then as it entrenches the thinking on this topic. Students in the school were unable to bring about any real change to the lives of refugees and homeless people within their society after being part of the Forum Theatre performance. In such a case does the initiative only achieve new awareness on the topic in the participants but misses the opportunity for the audience to practise for reality, vicariously or in person?

Dalrymple (2006: 212) and her students were involved in a big screen DramAidE production called ‘Act Alive’ which dealt with the topic of HIV/AIDS and the gender roles which play a role in this. Women, for instance, shy away from protecting themselves adequately as traditionally they have a subservient cultural role within their Zulu culture. The Forum Theatre performance was part of a bigger Drama in Education and Process Drama Programme, and it tried to

address the spread of HIV/AIDS. Dalrymple writes that it is challenging to prove that these interventions can diminish the HIV infection rates. However, in the focus group and stakeholder interviews which were done after this Forum Theatre performance, staged at “Durban Institute of Technology in 2003” (Dalrymple 2006:211), it became clear that students felt they could “cope better” and were more able “to look after themselves within the context of HIV/AIDS” (Dalrymple 2006:212). The interviewees also indicated that it helped to see how “actors and ‘Spect-actors’ worked out consequences attached to choices and this enabled them to critically reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour” (Dalrymple 2006: 213). The Forum Theatre performance had made them “aware that they have choices” (Dalrymple 2006:213).

3.4.1.6. Rehearsal of defeat

Some applications of the Forum Theatre have not been as successful as their original intention had been. In this regard Baxter (2005: 134) coins the phrase: “rehearsal of defeat”. She explains that if the oppression in the scenario which is played out in the theatrical scene is too entrenched to be broken, it will lead to the oppression being “a rehearsal of defeat”. To address this situation, Baxter makes several recommendations. Firstly, in a situation of this nature, the Joker needs to engage once again with the “Arsenal of the Oppressed” (Boal 1992, 1995) techniques and revert to an earlier part of the model. This is achieved by doing activities such as “Image theatre, rehearsal and introspection” (Baxter 2005: 135) and applying them around activities in the process that have led to the oppression. For example, ‘Stop and think’ (Boal 1992: 227) and the ‘Hanover Variation’ (Boal 1992: 228), described in Boal’s *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, was used successfully by Baxter when she acted as Joker in a Forum Theatre investigation into why rape occurs in a student setting. She was working at University of KwaZulu-Natal, and this activity took place on their campus in 2003. She managed to avoid the stalemate, more entrenched stage of progression by going back to earlier parts in the process. By doing this she gave insight to the participants that the root of the problem is not only with the behaviour of the protagonist but also rests in social norms such as the rules around student accommodation. Keeping the male students out of women’s residential rooms would protect the female students so that they would be less prone to abuse (Baxter 2005: 135-136). By reverting to an earlier development stage in the drama enacted, she made it possible to question the power mechanisms, the social context and the thinking of the antagonist and protagonist. It also kept the interest levels of the Spect-actors, and their engagement high by means of the problem solving that occurs in the “entertaining but revealing exercises” (Baxter 2005: 136) of the Theatre of the Oppressed arsenal which she put into practice.

Similarly, Hammond (2013) raises the question of whether it is ethical to develop confidence in children through Theatre of the Oppressed activities when they are not able to utilise in the

real world. One benefit of Forum Theatre is the potential to develop confidence, yet it is unknown if this confidence is generalised beyond the Forum Theatre performance. The most worrying alternative outcome of “the development of confidence is that [this] ... may lead to confidence that cannot be realised in the real world. ... Thus, participants attempting challenges in real life may be faced with power imbalances which may overpower their initial feelings of increased confidence” (Hammond 2013: 14) and even lead to less confidence, thus entrenching the oppression even further.

3.4.1.7. Engagement in Problem interrogation

In critique of Boal’s approach, Vine adds perspective on the usefulness of engaging in problem interrogation by means of Boal’s approach. When working with school children, Vine (1993: 113) experienced that Boal’s interactive strategies, were very effective as they revealed:

...the discrepancies that arise between what people say they will do (in theory) and what they actually do when confronted with the immediacy of a situation. The learners became emotionally involved and felt very keenly the dilemmas that arose.

The discrepancies which arose in this way often were surprising to the participants and led Vine to realise that from an educational perspective, this approach to working with children came with a methodological challenge in having to find “a method to help them examine, objectively, after the experience, the forces which had been at work on them and which had pre-conditioned many of their responses.” Furthermore, Vine states that the interactive way of exploring a problem was most taxing for the Joker role. To enable the actor-teacher to carry the load better, their acting ensemble chose to have two people work in the role of the Joker. Their experience showed that it is important that the “joker must make the aims and procedures of the Forum clear, and then set the process in motion”. When mediating between the audience and the spect-actors the Joker must make choices as “not all interventions are equally productive and not all suggestions can be pursued”. Further, the Joker needs to “[s]upport the spect-actors and actors, challenge the spect-actors, know when to listen, when to speak and when to insist on action”. An effective joker will “transmit energy, excitement and enthusiasm for tackling the problems” and the Joker “must carry the overall responsibility for structuring and deepening the learning experience as it is unfolding” (Vine, 1993: 117-118).

Vine (1993: 118) found the Joker skill was akin to “the responsibility and skills required of the drama teacher who, working alone, strives from moment to moment to structure and deepen the learning of the group and each individual pupil within it”. He also finds that “Forum Theatre techniques could be applied to develop decision making, self-assertion and advocacy skills” (1993: 122) in young people. However, Vine also pointed out some weaknesses, which they encountered in the approach developed by Boal. In order not to become a “theatre of

alternatives”, the guiding role of the joker and the choices which the Joker makes has the consequence that “not all points of view are equally valid” and therefore Vine (1993: 125) came to the realisation that

It is a great fallacy of democracy that choice itself is beneficial: unless people are equipped to understand the true nature of the choices given, and can create their agendas, the existence of alternatives is meaningless.

Vine finds that Boal’s work seems to have ignored this fundamental problem and concludes that Boal’s interventionist theatre either becomes “a theatre of alternatives at a cognitive level and a theatre of therapy at the affective level” (1993: 125). Lacking the foundation of drama therapy or a degree in psychology, the research is not focused on the therapeutic treatment of children within a school context. For my study, a theatre of alternatives is just what is needed as the learners participating in learning life skills through a Forum Theatre intervention, with the guidance of the teacher, need to become aware of the opportunities for positive change that exist in the learners perceived problem situations.

3.4.1.8. Age appropriate ability and developmental readiness

At which age are children ready and able to relate through Forum Theatre techniques? Teachers and community facilitators can benefit if they were to know at what age and stage of development children will be able to grasp and learn by means of a Forum Theatre intervention on oppression. This was one of the aims of Saldaña’s (2005: 118) study where the content centred on bullying and racism themes. He wanted to ascertain if youth between the ages of nine and eleven in an American primary school can engage on social issues through a Forum Theatre exploration. The study was done over eight weeks, and the sessions were an hour-long, happened on a weekly basis and were aimed at “creating positive behavioural change”. They investigated firstly “what oppressions encountered by children (e.g. bullies, teasing and verbal abuse, teachers as oppressors) can serve as content for Image and Forum Theatre work” (Saldaña 2005: 118), secondly if they can be taught about “social concepts and terms” such as “oppression, antagonist, [and] agency” (Saldaña 2005: 118) though the Theatre of the Oppressed methodology, thirdly if much modification would be needed in the techniques when working with this age group, how it would influence these children, and if there would be any “developmental and gender differences” (Saldaña 2005: 119) in the responses of this particular age group.

No “race, ethnicity and social class” differences were observed. The children were sensitive to gender oppression and this was where the “primary sources of conflict” (Saldaña 2005: 120) occurred. Girls spoke about their “feelings” of being hurt, while the boys spoke about being “forced” to do something they did not want to do. Usually, the ‘weird’ children that behaved

differently to the norm would be the ones who suffered most due to bullying. Children indicated that they wanted to learn “*conflict resolution strategies*” and “individual problem-solving tactics” and “what to do when they became victims of oppression”. Teachers were interested in teaching the children about matters such as “respect” and “graciousness” ... “anger management”, “dealing with negativity”, and “feeling good about themselves” (Saldaña 2005: 122). The principal of the school where the study took place wanted to develop their “literacy more than their social skills” (Saldaña 2005: 123). The team running the forum sessions wanted the children to “find out ... new and different ways of overcoming oppression” (Saldaña 2005: 123).

The Saldaña (2005: 125) study showed that the grouping game used was very revealing and demonstrated how the social fabric among the children looked. It mattered a great deal to them who they were with when forming groups. It was especially revealing when they needed to be in groups of four, boys clustering with boys and girls with girls. It became an excellent opportunity to teach the class about “respect” and that it is essential to “include everybody, regardless of who they are”.

Maintaining a “frozen image” physically was difficult for these younger participants. Taking pictures with cameras was a beneficial way to encourage them to hold still the image created as a sculpture so that it could be observed by others. Moving on to bringing the sculpture into motion towards another state was also tricky for them. “Counting as they moved” seemed to assist them to progress the image towards another stage. Counting to five worked better than from one to ten. Using a “thought balloon” to identify what was happening between the two ‘states’ helped the children to communicate what was happening. They were able to interpret the body language in the images even though they lacked the “emotional vocabulary”. It was clear “they trusted their intuitive and tacit knowledge and showed developmentally appropriate skills at inference making, reading subtextual cues, and interpreting the nuances and intentions of the image creators” (Saldaña 2005: 126).

Saldaña (2005: 126) concludes that “children were highly engaged with Forum Theatre’s spontaneity, the intrigue of a puzzle to be solved, and the recognition of their own reality dramatized”. He noticed that the Grade 4 class were not as proficient at vocalising their responses as the Grade 5’s. Responding to the body language used to communicate the problem was easy enough for both groups. The Grade 5 children were also able to write their own short “Forum Theatre scenarios in small groups and perform as protagonists, antagonists, and Spect-actors with the teacher in the role of the Joker” (Saldaña 2005: 127). The research team were also able to encourage the classmates to use “critical reflection” and “go beyond

the “fight or flight” options they presented and to find more proactive solutions to the problem” (Saldaña 2005: 128).

In this age group, the Forum Theatre sessions and the warm-up theatre games “reveals the interpersonal social systems and power hierarchies within a classroom microculture” revealing the “leaders, followers, and resisters; who is influential and who is ignored” (Saldaña 2005: 131). The research team also became aware that this type of drama activity can be advantageous but has a shadow side because when not dealt with carefully it can be dangerous as even though a drive to build a community spirit in the class might be the ideal strived for, not everyone feels compelled to support such a goal. Saldaña (2005: 131) states his research showed that even though on a cognitive level the children would tell their friends “to combat oppression”, they did not yet show a change in behaviour when they played on the playground. Altering social behaviour takes time and continued effort. An awareness of power-play dynamics between children had been brought about through the Forum Theatre project, and new insights were gained on how they could choose to respond differently.

In the Forum Theatre project undertaken by Hammond (2013: 9) about bullying with children, it became clear that there is much creative potential as “[c]hildren are likely to be able to bring novel ideas to the table, drawing on their own histories and views of the world”. He also found that even though their vocabulary was not yet that developed, young children can respond as

...the youngest participant to challenge oppression in a bullying scene was only four years old. It is possible that the ability to draw on embodied and non-verbal expression allows children to communicate how they might deal with the oppression in question (e.g. Clark, 1998; Shapiro, 2011). Clearly, such communication would be difficult if not impossible to demonstrate in any other way (Hammond, 2013: 9).

Gourd and Gourd (2011: 415) did a study to gauge Forum Theatre’s suitability as a tool to engage with eighth-grade learners on the topic of bullying. They found the method worked well and elicited responses which showed higher ability to

... understand themselves as “interconnected beings,” as individuals with a “thirst for justice,” as people struggling with “practical judgement” to balance contradictory desires goals and needs, and as skilled technicians able to dialogue, deliberate about controversial issues, question and listen. They were able to direct their learning and to connect their personal actions to others.

The eighth-graders were not able to discuss and analyse what was happening in the situation they had prepared for the intervention on a higher cognitive level as they could not yet respond to issues of social inequities such as “race, class, and gender oppression in U.S. society”

(Gourd and Gourd 2011: 416). The researchers concluded that if they wished to discuss these, they needed to teach these concepts first and provide adequate “scaffolding to develop the vocabulary, knowledge, and confidence to engage in dialogue that explicitly addresses social injustices”. In this study some focus had also been placed on the role of the bystanders in the dynamics which take place in a bully scenario as they ‘were particularly interested in preparing all students, including the privileged, in being more than passive bystanders of incidents of bullying” (Gourd and Gourd, 2011: 405).

3.4.1.9. Potential benefits of a Forum Theatre session

Information without the power to act is not enough, and hence, theatrical engagements have a role to play in providing chances for people to learn a variety of skills. Rohd (1998) lists the following potential benefits and growth opportunities for participants that can be gained from a Forum Theatre performance. It:

- provides a safe space for learning and development;
- enables dialogue on a topic of interest;
- becomes possible to explore choices and the consequences they can bring;
- permits possibilities to practice for real-life;
- enhances participants communication skills and develops decision-making abilities;
- gives insight into understanding how self-esteem affects moments of decision;
- enables risk-taking in fictional worlds with the potential to learn rather than fail;
- leads to taking action and being the protagonist with the potential to have learning carry over to one’s own life;
- enables critical and visceral analysis of life situations and one’s responses in those situations;
- utilises the multiple perspectives different individuals bring to every interaction as a positive tool for problem-solving (Rohd 1998: xvii-xviii).

According to Rohd (1998: xix), “We have no better way to work together, to learn about each other, to heal, and to grow” than through the theatre.

3.4.2. Role of the Joker

It is important to discuss what researchers have learned about the role of the Joker as the purpose of my study is to explore how the Forum Theatre process can be utilised in a school context in which the teacher will play a crucial role. Prentki (2015: 345) writes that the Joker

(cf. 3.3.7) needs to create excitement for the topic under scrutiny by “combining the roles of teacher, director and community animator”. The Joker is the central figure who makes decisions about the contributions volunteered by the audience. Decisions need to be made about which contributions will just be given recognition, which will be dealt with through discussion and mostly what will be deemed central enough to the learning and exploration of the group to be acted out on stage during the Forum Theatre process.

Chris Vine (2013) and the Greenwich Young People’s Theatre (GYPT) group were actively working with Theatre in Education (TIE) when they first came across Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed methodologies. Their group started using his ideas as they found them beneficial and added them into the mix of TIE strategies they were already using. They at the time inspired many other TIE groups to also begin using Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed approach. At a later stage when they had the opportunity to work with Boal in person, they realised they initially did not fully understand how Boal’s method worked in practice. They found inspiration in “the twin convictions that human behaviour and institutions are formed through social activity and can, therefore, be changed, and audiences, as potential agents for change, should be active participants in their own learning” (Vine 2013: 63).

Applying Theatre of the Oppressed thinking proved to be challenging for both the actors and the Joker roles. Actors needed to be “very clear about the motivation of their characters and pursue their objectives truthfully” while also keeping in mind their pedagogical role of revealing the “motivations” of their characters, “both social and personal” to make clear the “means at their disposal” to “achieve their objectives” as required (Vine 2013: 68). Jokers have an even more burdensome task to carry out as they are the central hub around which the entire activity takes place. They are responsible for encouraging the audience to intervene and to make clear before the practical exploration that the participant knew clearly what the “situation” was, and what “their intentions” were. The actors need to know what the Spect-actor wanted and where the “intervention was to begin, [and] which characters were present”, before replaying an improvised scene on stage (Vine 2013: 69).

Jokers need to first follow up the action with many questions aimed at the Spect-actor who had taken part, then secondly to gauge the responses of the other actors, and thirdly draw out reactions from the audience. Jokers have a demanding task as they were responsible for either the “success or failure of the whole forum” (Vine 2013: 70). They make choices about which “line of enquiry” to follow as not all suggestions can be followed. There is a need to keep the audience attention focused on the central problems, to encourage debate, and challenge the audience, know which questions to ask, and when to say, “do not tell me - show me!” Through all of this, they need to be enthusiastic, vibrant and interested in the audience’s contributions.

Most importantly they need to be “deepening the learning experience as it is unfolding” (Vine 2013: 70). In a nutshell Jokers have a central and crucial task to fulfil.

Vine also shares that they learned from their work with the methods of Boal that Forum Theatre can easily become a “theatre of alternatives that failed to offer any criteria for choosing between them” (Vine 2013: 71). There needs to be a discussion of the effectiveness of the suggested solutions, and the Joker needs to “challenge the perceptions of the audience and help them towards an analysis of the inherent contradictions of the real world” so that a more “profound learning process would become a possibility”. The Joker “should ... accept the pedagogical responsibility to challenge assumptions, highlight contradictions and pursue disagreements”. As he/she plays a role in achieving shared learning through jointly exploring the social realities, he/she cannot remain neutral as Boal suggests in his books. If the interrogation does not take place the Spect-actor can at best achieve a “therapeutic” experience, and at worst the Forum Theatre performance can become “depressively negative, circumscribed by the strengths and weaknesses of each individual’s isolated attempt to solve what may be a misapprehended problem” (Vine 2013: 76).

Prentki (2015) highlights the humorous role that the Joker brings to the Forum Theatre performance. He shares that engagement can be elicited more smoothly when this occurs through humour, with the willingness to also explore the “capacity for folly” through provocation, as a trickster would. Then it becomes possible to “open up the spaces of contradiction that force participants ... to confront the assumptions that operate as a barrier to individual and community self-development” (Prentki 2015: 345). The Joker thus mediates between “stage and auditorium”. Prentki (2015) states that a teacher aspiring to use Forum Theatre in her classroom does well to also explore the dynamics of foolish behaviour to open and stimulate engagement in the classroom.

As explained in a previous section (cf. 3.2.2.3.), Boal needed to stimulate thinking about the deeper levels of meaning in the content of the production and introduce “social critique” which led to the concept of using the fool in his stage production. The Joker was empowered as (s)he ... was able to “play by a different set of rules” (Prentki 2015: 346) in the proceedings. The Joker is neutral towards all the participants but has the purpose to stimulate discovery, to make participants think by asking pertinent questions and raising doubt and a Joker needs to make the exploration around the topic develop with more depth and substance and not operate from a position of “abstention” (Boal in Prentki 2015: 104).

Prentki (2015: 347) cautions that there are two main aims for Forum Theatre as applied theatre. One is to assist participants in adapting to their social reality within a safe space. The other task of the teacher using Forum Theatre techniques concerns liberation. Liberation would

be achieved more easily when approached as a jester or a fool from the need to test the normative status quo, to assess the daily challenges of people and consider the bigger picture in which they operate. Jokers need to be “agents of political and social change” and do so “in a spirit of humility, self-awareness and jokiness” (Prentki 2015: 348).

Rohd (1998: 113-115) from his experience with applying Forum Theatre provides a teacher, who might use Forum Theatre as an interrogative technique in their class, with efficient, detailed guidance on how the Joker engagement process should happen. As Jokers are the guiding force which moves the Forum Theatre process forward through various sections they will start by asking questions after watching the performance. To make this happen more easily, and as an alternative approach to Vine’s advice, Rohd (1998) suggests nine questions to ask after the first intervention:

- Was the scene realistic?
- Who was the main character?
- What did the main character want?
- How did the main character go about trying to get what (s)he wanted?
- Did he get what (s)he wanted?
- Did (s)he make the decision she wanted to make?
- What prevented him/her from making the choice based on the decision (s)he wanted to make?
- What else could she have done to get what (s)he wanted in this situation?
- What other choices did (s)he have?” (Rohd 1998: 116-117)

After this initial establishment of the groundwork to clarify what the performance was trying to show the audience, the Joker gives one person an opportunity to try a replacement. Each replacement needs to be processed and acknowledged with some applause. Similar questions are asked after trying another approach. Summarising what was different and asking the audience if they agree with the proposed solution is an excellent way to lead in the discussion of what was seen and experienced. Even if an approach worked in one replacement, it is still good to attempt other solutions as well because what works for one person does not necessarily work for another. Playing devil’s advocate with a sense of humour helps to lighten the mood and keeps motivation levels high. In such a space more individuals take part to explore the options. Complimenting participation and good depiction of a character, especially the antagonists, is also important.

Rohd (1998: 120-127) also identifies several issues that may happen during the facilitation process of the Joker. Sometimes the audience might feel that the protagonist does not need to be replaced as the antagonist is to blame and then they wish to change the antagonist’s

behaviour. The Joker then needs to clarify that it is about helping a protagonist who faces a problem and needs the audience to help them. There also is no scene if there is no conflict. It can be difficult for the antagonist to remain in their role and to stay “creative, strong and unafraid to play tough with participants new to the scene” as well as be able to respond truthfully and be affected by a solution when an effective approach is followed.

It is important that the Joker remains the person who directs the “traffic” in the debate, remaining in control of the process and participants should not begin to debate with each other. The Joker also keeps the energy levels engaged and once this starts to dissipate after the group has tried a few replacements, there are several ways in which the exploration can be made more interesting again. The Joker can, for instance, ask if there are other issues happening in the scene beyond the obvious main theme. A new aspect can be highlighted by introducing a controversial thought which was expressed earlier and which has not received attention yet and now consider this aspect more closely. More in-depth questions about matters such as support and what that is more specifically can offer new avenues of exploration. Another way to redirect the investigation is to change the context of the protagonist and antagonist slightly which changes the dynamics as maybe they know each other in other ways that compound it for the protagonist. The Joker can suggest doing a gender flip, making the female role male and the other way around, or using two males or two females in the same situation, how does that impact on the oppression? The Joker can choose to look at the inner “life” of the protagonist. However, the Joker should not attempt to “wrap-up” the scene too early as the work is only finished when all the options have been played out that can be harnessed from within the participants gathered together.

Rohd (1998: 127) also emphasises that the success with this work lies in being energetic as a Joker, in demanding focus and making the experience fun. The Joker needs to be authentic to their own style, be caring, honest and able to listen to others, be willing to learn from the audience, trust the dialogue, stay focused on the problem solving, explore communication, search for all the choices that are available and what the implications of each of those choices might be.

In Hammond’s (2013:13) experience several suggestions are volunteered after the performance and much discussion and role replacement takes place encouraged by the Joker.

[T]he facilitator has to be skilled in group mediation, picking out subdued as well as dominant stories. The facilitator also has to be attuned to the potential of unheard voices; this is a particular problem with very young children who may speak softly.

The Joker helps to focus and place emphasis on the suggested solutions and to identify which were more effective. The audience votes and their questions can also be considered to find “which solution might be useful in each particular incidence; this was often determined by hot-seating characters to explore their motivation” (cf. 3.3.7. and 3.4.2). A Joker’s role is to “ignite debate, highlight the shades of grey which exist in the complexities of real-life situations and leave the audience with an array of potentially useful and relevant solutions” (Hammond 2013: 13).

Dwyer (2004:203-205) wrote an article on his experiences in which he questions and highlights the role of the Joker in the Forum Theatre process. He measured the time used to discuss and the actual time that people enacted a role on stage as a Spect-actor. In the events which he studied, the talking took more time than the ‘acting’ time when they used their bodies to show what they meant. Jokers make choices out of the options presented as to who is allowed to be a Spect-actor and step on stage and show what the idea put forward means and how this has an impact on the outcomes. The Joker in his mediation between actors and spectators fulfils a teaching role. A good Joker can ask Socratic questions (cf. 2.3.7.5) which will make the audience think about the options available to change the dilemma under scrutiny. This Joker also needs to balance the amount of time allowed for discussion with the time that solutions are tried out on stage.

Dwyer (2004:203-204) also observed how trainee Jokers were guided as they were instructed to try to keep the time used for discussion shorter than the time spent acting on stage. They needed to judge the suggestions of the spectators’ ideas; some suggestions would be recognised as valuable comments and the person suggesting that would be thanked for their input. Other times they would identify ideas which might be interesting to enact and then invite that Spect-actor onto the stage. Dwyer (2004: 204) shares a similar approach to Vine and based on the project that he studied, he recommended that trainee Jokers work as follows:

1. interview the Spect-actor (e.g. ‘Did you get what you wanted?’);
2. interview the actors (e.g. ‘What changed for your character? Could your character take that kind of action?’) and
3. make a brief summary for the audience (e.g. ‘So what we learn from this intervention seems to be...’).”

In the Forum Theatre performance presented in the project studied by Dwyer, the Joker ignored the potential contribution of two rape crisis counsellors who were present at the event he studied. The counsellors could have made a valuable contribution, but the Joker only gave them time to share their insight at the end of the event. They had indicated earlier that they wanted to contribute their insights. When they eventually were given an opportunity to speak,

they explained that from their experience the women are usually blamed for not having done the right things and yet they know from their experience that it is never the woman's fault. They pointed out that the culture they live in is a sexist one built on a cultural hierarchy in which this type of oppression occurs. This means there is a systemic root to the problem where the focus of exploration should lie. They also shared that the responsibility is never placed on the assaulters and rapists. Even though this was clearly explained, and the Joker acknowledged the contribution, it did not lead to a different focus and no "debate on male sexual violence that was being engaged" (Dwyer 2004: 207). As they were only given the opportunity to contribute at the end, time had run out for this event and the group, as a result, could not engage with the valuable input given. Had the Joker taken the request of these two counsellors to contribute more seriously, it could have been presented earlier in the process and have had a significant impact on the suggested outcomes from the audience. In this case due to a Joker's choice about whom he gave speaking time to and whom he ignored, these 'resources' of knowledge only came to the fore much later. This had a marked impact on the outcomes and explorations of this Forum Theatre intervention.

The event also demonstrated that it is never clear if the 'rehearsed strategies' could work in the 'real world'. Dwyer (2004: 209) states in the light of this point "we may reasonably consider any evidence of a discursive struggle in a given Forum Theatre performance as, in and of itself, evidence of a struggle to transform (or maintain) existing social structures". The context in which this happens might not be entirely "value-neutral" and Forum Theatre takes place in a "precise context, wherein the participants" ... "are engaged in multiple ... forms of ideological struggle". Best results would be achieved when these 'struggles' are noticed and taken seriously so that they can be addressed before the event is over.

Rohd from his experience also provides experienced advice to Jokers. Dwyer (2004: 199 - 210) states that a good Joker / facilitator is:

- Energetic and enthusiastic and can create an energetic environment that brings up the audience's level of energy;
- A good listener who shows that they "care about the thoughts and responses" of the audience and that they "are willing to learn" from them;
- Non-judgemental as a facilitator is there to assist the participants and not to serve their own agenda or opinions. The Joker makes sure it is a safe creative space in which to explore and will allow a dialogue to take place, will ask the group what they are thinking and if they agree with a point of view, with what is shown or being explored (e.g. Is it real?);

- Able to deepen the discussion and move the event forward by asking various questions to show that “options, angles and situations can be considered in new ways ... by sharing observations, looking for consensus, and challenging apathy or surface responses”;
- Confident as the tone-setter and guide, as they need to keep the process safe. The audience needs to be able to trust a facilitator who is in the role of the leader of the process and who serves the group’s needs for dialogue and interaction;
- Aware of the dynamics in the room the Joker allocates time to as many persons as possible, not allowing one person to dominate;
- Able to understand that some people are unwilling participants; they might not engage as “a defence mechanism” and might wish to participate later;
- Able to ask questions and is interested in hearing the answer to “move forward from the response” given and is willing to listen (Rohd 1998: 113-115).

3.4.3. Role of the Spect-actor

In most instances, the protagonist character will be replaced by a Spect-actor in the conflict situation portrayed on stage to try to solve their dilemma (cf. 3.3.8). However, in Boal’s first book, the seminal text on his thinking regarding Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal (1979: 139) writes

... any participant in the audience has the right to replace any actor and lead the action in the direction that seems to him most appropriate. ... Anyone may propose any solution, but it must be done on stage, working, acting, doing things, and not from the comfort of his seat.” Because it is then that the Spect-actor “realizes that things are not so easy when he himself has to practise what he suggests.

The value of replacing other supporting roles as Spect-actors to explore and model alternative behaviour is discussed in the next section.

3.4.3.1. Bystander engagement

Focussing on the role of bystanders, a group of researchers in the US are finding Forum Theatre techniques useful when working with gender-based violence. Mitchell and Freitag have found in their research on gender violence prevention that ‘bystanders’ have an important role to play in avoiding the occurrence of gender violence. “Forum Theatre for Bystanders (FTB) model of gender violence prevention” (Mitchell and Freitag 2011: 1) offers a community-based approach that increases bystander responsibility and reduces victim-blaming”.

After many interventions to change society over the past two decades, incidents of gender-based violence still have not been eradicated. The perpetrators are a small percentage of men, and the issue remains problematic. Prevention through risk reduction and self-defence training for women is insufficient. As in a society of people all carry the responsibility to eradicate gender-based violence, Mitchell and Freitag's thinking is now geared towards involving and educating bystanders on how they can contribute and "enact broad social change on the [patriarchal] culture" (Mitchell and Freitag 2011: 2). They combine Forum Theatre with the bystander intervention approach. This is in line with Freire's thoughts on education and his concept of authentic thinking. Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques enable people to "become responsible for their own learning, and that of those around them" as they can through these methods become "a community of problem-solvers" (Mitchell and Freitag 2011: 4-5). In their article they indicate that even though only "a relatively small proportion of men are responsible for many rapes and interpersonal crimes" ... "all men can have an influence on the culture and environment that allows other men to be perpetrators" (Berkowitz in Mitchell and Freitag 2011: 6-7). Berkowitz defines "a bystander as someone who witnesses problem behaviour and does not do anything about it" (Berkowitz in Mitchell and Freitag 2011).

Bystanders can play a significant role in changing the culture and thus be instrumental in avoiding numerous gender-focused transgressions. This is brought about by helping to evade violations ranging from physical attacks on women, by objecting to derogatory comments about women, and by squashing incidents of victim-blaming and thus stopping other men from being demeaning about women. They can spot initial signals pointing towards potential violence and can also report behaviour of men who resort to violent behaviour against women.

Forum Theatre activities, in this type of societal problem arena, can enable modelling of better bystander behaviour, teach intervention skills and grow self-confidence in being able to step in to help as bystanders. By making bystanders aware that they can make a difference, the occurrence of this type of violence can be brought down. Furthermore, it encourages empathy for the victims of such crimes and reduces victim-blaming behaviour.

Jokers in such a Forum Theatre engagement would ideally make the audience aware and would focus the attention on how the bystanders can make an impact on changing people's behaviour by no longer condoning gender violence in their direct surroundings. Aiming the interventions only at the men creates a defensive response and alienates male audience members. More is achieved by generally stating clearly that this type of behaviour is unacceptable and thus we want to explore what we can do to change it together. 'Hot seating' (where a character in a performance is asked questions to reveal their thinking) is used to interrogate the motivational factors for the violence. Jokers use 'red-flagging' to draw attention

to moments when a bystander can choose to behave differently. These techniques help to teach the audience other ways of responding to such a situation. The “spontaneous peer modelling is more effective” (Mitchell and Freitag, 2011) than if actors were to show how it should be done as Spect-actors come out of the audience itself (cf. 2.2.5. social learning, Bandura). After such a session “Participants walk away ... with a skill set for intervention” (Mitchell and Freitag, 2011: 16).

3.4.3.2. Different levels of learning

As pointed out by Rutten (2010:74), the learning gained out of a Forum Theatre process differs for the various audience members. Some members of the audience become real role players in the drama when they become Spect-actors. For me as researcher, a spect-actor has a far more intense experience than those audience members who only take part in the discussion. Those who only observe remain, spectators, as they only engage by trying to think of things to say or do which might make a difference. Everyone in the audience can learn vicariously from the experience. Just watching is a more passive role and if an individual is not paying attention their learning will be minimal. Teachers and facilitators in the light of the above should try to give everyone in class a turn at being the Spect-actor during a year so that they all can learn from the experience experientially. Jokers also need to try to draw the passive audience members into the discussion if possible.

The Spect-actor plays a key role in the forum event as it is through them that everyone will learn something new. The person daring enough to explore a new idea or approach will experience the situation as if it took place in real life. However, less is at stake if the solution fails as it will not have an impact on their day to day reality. As happens with brainstorming, one idea will lead to another, and within the general exploration possibly the group will find a new behavioural option to counter the oppression they experience. It also is more than just a discussion of ideas as the new idea is put to the test on stage for all to learn from.

Ball (1995: 84) points out that the method does not benefit everyone as only those members of the audience who are confident will be daring enough to engage in taking over a role on stage. Others will learn vicariously from observing, but it makes less impact on them than on those who play-act out a scenario as a Spect-actor.

3.4.3.3. Gendered response

Durden and Nduhura (2007) encountered a problem of a gendered application of the spectator role. In their study (2007: 68), which use a performance created by a group of actors and was played before an adult audience to heighten awareness on HIV/AIDS issues in the workplace. They found that there was less participation by the audience after the performance. The data

collected in focus groups which took place a few days after the performance indicated that the women in the audience felt that all the roles in the play were for men. “[W]e did not participate because the roles were basically created for men”. The research team had expected Spect-actors to take part from both genders. “The alienation of the woman from the forum was entirely unintended, and an oversight in the theatre creation and facilitation process.” This could have also occurred because an already constructed play was created before applying the discursive and participative processes of the Forum Theatre.

Their experience illustrates how the audience is less involved in the performance when the performed material does not spring out of their own realities. The early sections of the Theatre of the Oppressed process wherein the community participants raise their own powerless or oppressed stories through the warm-up games and image-making processes, provides a stronger basis for recognition of the situation portrayed to the community and can be more compelling so that audience members are more inclined to step in as Spect-actors and/or suggest change strategies to the oppressed protagonist’s unsolved problem more efficiently.

3.4.4. Drawbacks of partial application of Forum Theatre

Poulter (1995) cautions against a partial application of Forum theatre. She finds it is essential to follow all the steps of Theatre of the Oppressed as the image-making part is so powerful for identification with the theme under investigation. It assists with “group-building and skill-building that prepares the players to perform in a show that they have created about themselves” (Poulter 1995: 16). The images draw out the discussions and they appeal to the creative abilities of the players. Moreover, it develops the player’s abilities to “think sound and vision”. When doing Theatre of the Oppressed work, she also guards against using the spoken word because body language and use of the physical space are so important.

Boal’s sequence of games is focused on oppression, and as she finds this too limiting, Poulter (1995: 17) adapts these games to be more focused on building trust and cohesion. She also emphasises the importance of sharing the ownership of ideas to allow others to change and develop them, so they can also explore the possibilities inherent in the material.

3.4.5. Learning in a safe space

Poulter (1995: 17) emphasises the tolerance, respect and interest need to be ensured in the group when “creative ensemble work” is expected. She finds these values are built in

participants when they provide each other with “support, listening, [and] trust”. In her workshops, she makes sure that adequate ground rules are in place. The “unwritten rules” of a workshop are “participation, mutual trust, listening, patience, [and] non-sexist / non-racist language” (Poulter 1995: 18). These engagement rules need to be upheld by the group. When using Boal’s techniques “inexperienced leaders or ... players may need more explanation and even protection” (Poulter 1995: 19).

Hammond (2013: 10) agrees with the need for ground rules and states “FT [Forum Theatre] can allow for potentially contentious issues to be shared and explored safely”. These rules need to be established at the outset when doing the initial creative sections of Theatre of the Oppressed activities.

3.4.6. Applied Theatre

In critique of Boal’s approach, Vine adds perspective on the usefulness of engaging in problem interrogation by means of Boal’s approach. When working with school children, Vine (1993: 113) experienced that Boal’s interactive strategies, were very effective as they revealed:

...the discrepancies that arise between what people say they will do (in theory) and what they actually do when confronted with the immediacy of a situation. The learners became emotionally involved and felt very keenly the dilemmas that arose.

The discrepancies which arose in this way often were surprising to the participants and led Vine to realise that from an educational perspective this approach to working with children came with a methodological challenge in having to find “a method to help them examine, objectively, after the experience, the forces which had been at work on them and which had pre-conditioned many of their responses.” Furthermore, Vine states that the interactive way of exploring a problem was most taxing for the Joker role. To enable the actor-teacher to carry the load better, their acting ensemble chose to have two people work in the role of the Joker. Their experience showed that it is important that the “joker must make the aims and procedures of the Forum clear, and then set the process in motion”. When mediating between the audience and the spect-actors the Joker must make choices as “not all interventions are equally productive and not all suggestions can be pursued”. Further, the Joker needs to “[s]upport the spect-actors and actors, challenge the spect-actors, know when to listen, when to speak and when to insist on action”. An effective joker will “transmit energy, excitement and enthusiasm for tackling the problems” and the Joker “must carry the overall responsibility for structuring and deepening the learning experience as it is unfolding” (Vine, 1993: 117-118).

Vine (1993: 118) found the Joker skill was akin to “the responsibility and skills required of the drama teacher who, working alone, strives from moment to moment to structure and deepen the learning of the group and each individual pupil within it”. He also finds that “Forum Theatre techniques could be applied to develop decision making, self-assertion and advocacy skills” (1993: 122) in young people. However, Vine also pointed out some weaknesses, which they encountered in the approach developed by Boal. In order not to become a “theatre of alternatives” the guiding role of the joker and the choices which the Joker makes has the consequence that “not all points of view are equally valid” and therefore Vine (1993: 125) came to the realisation that

It is a great fallacy of democracy that choice itself is beneficial: unless people are equipped to understand the true nature of the choices given, and can create their agendas, the existence of alternatives is meaningless.

Vine finds that Boal’s work seems to have ignored this fundamental problem and concludes that Boal’s interventionist theatre either becomes “a theatre of alternatives at a cognitive level and a theatre of therapy at the affective level” (1993: 125). Lacking the foundation of drama therapy or a degree in psychology, the research is not focused on the therapeutic treatment of children within a school context. For my study, a theatre of alternatives is just what is needed as the learners participating in learning life skills through a Forum Theatre intervention, with the guidance of the teacher need to become aware of the opportunities for positive change that exist in the learners perceived problem situations.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Driven by a love of the dramatic arts and a desire to help others, Augusto Boal used drama, which for him was the richest of all languages, to explore how best to assist people to discover, understand and liberate themselves so that they could achieve their desires and gain their freedom. Boal developed the Arsenal of the Theatre of the Oppressed through a series of insights he gained while working with the theatrical language and performance modes of expression. Challenged by the adverse political conditions of living in Brazil while governed by military rule and dictatorship, and subsequently having to live in exile but still using his expertise as a theatre director, Boal wrote a series of books documenting his insights.

By engaging the audience members as Spect-actors, and co-ordinating the inquiry process through a mediating Joker, who guides discussions between actors and spectators, Boal used applied drama to explore the dynamics of human oppression and power play. His Forum

Theatre model is exceptionally well positioned as an approach through which to gain better understanding of human dynamics. Spect-actors taking part in a Forum Theatre experience, an experiment in a safe space and explore how to break oppressive behaviour patterns and thus learn to bring about change in their reality. Young people in this way can learn essential life skills and gain insight into oppressive behaviour that can harm them.

Forum Theatre has much potential as a pedagogical method to stimulate inquiry into power-based problem scenarios. It can be harnessed to develop understanding through discussion and enables experiential and vicarious learning to gain insight into human power play behaviour. The process requires a teacher or facilitator who is trained and skilled at fulfilling the 'Joker' role and can ask Socratic questions to bring out the more difficult complexities of the issue under the loop of investigation. Such leaders of a Forum Theatre performance might need to adjust the terminology that Boal used ('oppression' can be replaced by 'power over') so that it is more applicable to the circumstance and understanding of the learners.

Enough time needs to be put aside to be able to apply all the required steps and do the full sequence of activities. A big enough space is needed to accommodate the physical movement needs of playing the theatrical games and for the image-making and improvisation section.

Attention must be given to lifting the general truth out of the individual stories to protect the individuals who shared their stories. Finding this truth also helps to make the content more relevant to the audience. Through the creative exploration and inquiry around the central conflict situation, much is learned and discovered by the participants about their own abilities and the group behaviour that can occur in that context.

There is a danger in that some forms of oppression can become more entrenched, thus leading to a rehearsal of defeat. To avoid this, teachers need to be aware and flexible so that they can move back to an earlier time in the process under scrutiny to discover other change of behaviour opportunities. Teachers as leaders (directors and Jokers) of a Forum Theatre performance should ensure that the experience breaks rather than entrenches exploitation. Topics which arise out of the participating group's interests are more likely to engage the group and can lead to more participation.

Younger children can handle the process of Forum Theatre but would require more scaffolding as they often still lack adequate context and vocabulary. Teachers need to encourage as many learners as possible to take on the Spect-actor role as this is where experiential learning takes place. Ideas are tested, ingenuity and creativity are fostered, and honing of important life skills such as better communication skills, assertiveness, and confidence, is made possible. The

experience also leads to insight into power play activities between humans in their relational and social interactions.

The following chapter deals with the research design for the qualitative performative inquiry into a Forum Theatre intervention as performative pedagogy in teaching and learning Life Skills (CA) in Grade 6 in a selected primary school in South Africa.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the research design and methodology, which was employed to guide the research data gathering and analysis activities for this thesis. I did a qualitative performative case study in a public primary school in a suburban area in Pretoria (South Africa) to investigate Forum Theatre as performative pedagogy to teach and learn life skills to Grade 6 children in CA lessons. This chapter discusses explicitly the approach, the design type and the research methodology, including sampling techniques, data collection and analysis strategies and aspects of rigour and trustworthiness. I also address matters of researcher reflexivity.

4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH: A QUALITATIVE PERFORMATIVE INQUIRY

Various methodologies inform the content of this research project into the value of using Forum Theatre as performative pedagogy in teaching and learning life skills within the learning area of Life Orientation in a South African school context. This inquiry was executed in a single primary school, within multiple Grade 6 classes, as a single qualitative case study using multiple data collection techniques.

4.2.1 *Forum Theatre*

As described in chapter three, Forum Theatre is a collective exploration after the performance of a problem scenario to an audience (cf. 3.3.5). The aim is to invite discussion and problem-solving activities, to find solutions for the performed problem with the assistance of a Joker and by invitation of contributions from Spect-actors out of the audience. Of relevance are the previous sections on the Joker (cf. 3.3.7 and 3.4.2) and the Spect-actor (cf. 3.3.8 and 3.4.3). The pitfalls of using Forum Theatre as a means of building insight of participants involved in the process have been described in section 3.4.4, and the importance of creating a safe learning space has been discussed in section 3.4.5.

4.2.2 Case study

This study was an intrinsic ethnographic case study executed to ascertain the suitability of performative teaching to develop life skills through the Life Orientation curricula in Grade 6 children in a South African classroom. The case was chosen to ascertain if Forum Theatre could be a useful technique for a creative arts teacher to instil life skills. Creswell (2012: 464) explains that a case study is one of the forms of ethnographic research. He defines a “case” as a “specific, unique, bounded system”, (Creswell in McMillan and Schumacher 2013) and a “case study” as an “in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., an activity, an event, a process, or an individual) based on extensive data collection” (2013: 465). Denzin (in Hays and Singh 1989) states that a case study is the best research tradition to utilise when “(1) councillors and educators are trying to answer “how” and “why” questions, (2) control over events is limited, and (3) a phenomenon can be studied in its natural context.”

A researcher benefits from imposing boundaries on the size and scope of the case (bounded system) as this helps to contain the magnitude of the data collected for processing. Stake (1995: 8) explains that by getting to know a “particular case and come to know it well” the researcher can become familiar with “what it is” and “what it does”. A case study is pre-selected, and the primary focus is “on the case” (Stake 1995: 77). In a case study, “there is little interest in generalising” as the “abiding interest is in the particular case” (Stake 1995: 3) intending to study “a part of a whole, seeking to understand what the specimen is, how the specimen works”.

To choose the correct type of case study, Stake (1995: 6) advises making use of an *intrinsic case study* when the “opportunity to learn is of primary importance”, and the “aim is to understand that particular case” (Stake 1995: 3). The researcher needs to keep “curiosities and special interests” in check and “try to discern and pursue issues critical to the case”. When the focus is on a particular case to “understand something else” and the case “is instrumental to accomplishing something other” than the “particular” than an *instrumental case study* is a correct choice. It is chosen when more can be learned from the “unusual situation”, or from “an issue”, or if the researcher wishes “to refine a theory” (Stake, 1995: 4, 18). To clarify McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 371) emphasise that in the intrinsic case study, the emphasis is to study “unusual or unique individuals, group, or events” while with the instrumental case study the emphasis is on “providing insight into a specific theme or issue” to gain “in-depth understanding of the entity, issue or theme”. Baxter and Jack (2008: 550) advise, “If you are interested in a unique situation according to Stake, conduct an *intrinsic case study*” but if “the intent is to gain insight and understanding of a particular situation or phenomenon, then Stake would suggest that you use an *instrumental case study* to gain

understanding". The third possible case study approach is a "*collective, multiple, or multi-site* case study" where "more than one example or setting is used" (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014: 371). In the latter type of case study "various cases" are considered, there is more "concern on representation" and "balance and variety are important" (Stake, 1995: 6).

McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 349) write that a "case study design is appropriate for explanatory- and discovery-oriented research" and that the aim is to "elaborate a concept, develop a model with its related subcomponents, or suggest propositions." As little is known about whether appropriate life skills can be taught to primary school children in a South African classroom using performative techniques culminating in a Forum Theatre exploration, this study explored the viability of this approach. Performance techniques were used to explore a problem relevant to and chosen by the participants. A problem play was created to explore if the unsolved problem demonstrated in performance could be solved by Grade 6 children in a Forum Theatre performance led by the teacher as Joker. After the problem-play performance by one class, another class was led in their discussion of the play after first performance and the event culminated in the role-played explorations used to test various Spect-actor solutions.

In my study the emphasis was on understanding how a Forum Theatre intervention could be implemented in a typical multicultural South African primary school classroom. I was interested in how the teacher would embrace and apply Boal's dramatic approach in situations where children say they feel powerless. Secondly, I wanted to know if Grade 6 learners would be able to engage with and handle a Forum Theatre intervention and would they be able to create a short problem play to learn life skills during their creative arts lessons. This meant that an intrinsic case study format would suit most of the activities in my study. However, there were elements of the instrumental case study as the problem plays also explored the effectiveness of a Forum Theatre performance to teach learners life skills. The lesson plan also had elements of an instrument case study but as the lesson plan was flexible in its application and the emphasis was more on learning how it worked, the intrinsic case study approach was more appropriate.

The set of lesson plans (cf. Appendix G) were used by the same Grade 6 (CA) teacher in four different Grade 6 classes (6A, 6B, 6C and 6D) over a period of eleven weeks of which seven weeks were focused on the case study research. The Grade 6 (CA) teacher interpreted the lesson plan, taught the content and then adapted her teaching if she found an activity was not working. When it did not work, she would explore if a slightly different approach would work better in the next class. The aim over the seven weeks was to teach children life skills while they improvised, danced, sang and created their class problem play or skit. (A skit either is a satiric comment, comedy or "a short, serious dramatic piece; especially: one done by

amateurs" [Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 2016]). During this period the class became aware of each other, their talents, and the communicative ability of their bodies and faces to be expressive when playing a role. The theatrical games they played taught them to observe in detail, to use body language and facial expressions to communicate without words, to make three-dimensional sculptures by creating images with their bodies. They also learned about human behaviour as we searched for moments and situations where they as a class felt they were powerless. To return to the relevance of case study research, Flyvbjerg had much to add to my understanding. The Forum Theatre intervention implemented over the seven lessons culminated in the eighth week in Forum Theatre performances given by each of the four Grade 6 classes in which the Grade 6 (CA) teacher assumed the role of Joker.

Flyvbjerg (2013: 169 – 204) discusses the merits of doing case study research and states not only is it a useful way in which to hone qualitative researcher's skills in doing data collection for their research, it also keeps the data close to "real-life situations and its multiple wealth of details" contributes towards creation of a "nuanced view of reality" where "human behaviour" is more than just "rule-governed acts" (Flyvbjerg 2013: 174). The learning, which arises from the research, is based on the reality of life and in "proximity to the studied reality and via feedback from those under scrutiny." Such research offers "concrete (context-dependent) case knowledge" (Flyvbjerg 2013: 175). Flyvbjerg (2013: 197) further emphasises that the "main strength of the case study is depth – detail, richness, completeness, and within-case variance" where quantitative, statistical approaches to research, tend to display "breadth."

George and Bennett (2005: 6-9) also recommend case studies as they enable insight into "links, causes, and outcomes" of the process under scrutiny; lead to "detailed exploration of the hypothesized causal mechanisms"; are useful in testing historical developmental explanations; make understanding the connections between "concepts" and their "context" possible; and can lead to further hypotheses and questions to study". The downside of choosing to do a case study is that there is an "absence of structured guidelines" (Hays and Singh 2012: 47).

4.2.3 Bricolage representation

In the same manner, as a quilt maker constructs a new quilt out of various pieces of material, and montage is used by a filmmaker, a qualitative researcher also combines several insights and approaches to anchor or ground the research they are engaged in. Bricolage has been written about by various qualitative researchers (Claude Lévi-Strauss 1966; Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Lévi-Strauss (1966: 16-17) introduced the French word "bricoleur" in his book

The Savage Mind. The word has two meanings. One comes from ball games where the player “swerves from their original course to avoid an obstacle” and the other as “a man who understands odd jobs and is a jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself man, ... but of a different standing”. Lévi-Strauss (1966: 16) explains that a ‘bricoleur’ is a craftsperson who makes use of what he has available to construct a solution for the task at hand.

His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions.

In line with Levi-Strauss (1966), Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 4) explain that the “interpretive *bricoleur* produces a bricolage – that is a pieced-together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation”. The other image they use to clarify how the qualitative researcher uses bricolage is through montage; as “like a quilt maker or a jazz improviser, the quilter stitches, edits, and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity – a pattern – to an interpretive experience” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 5).

Kincheloe and Berry (2004) use bricolage as a means of incorporating knowledge from various relevant disciplines to integrate knowledge. Human life also does not happen in separate silos but is complex. “Bricoleurs act on the concept that theory is not an explanation of nature – it is more an explanation of our relationship to nature” (Kincheloe and Berry 2004: 168). To do justice to what happens in a living process that is being studied, they argue for an approach that is open to knowledge integration. “An awareness of diverse ways of understanding and constructing the social world is necessary knowledge for bricoleurs in their pursuit of rigour” (Kincheloe and Berry 2004: 35). The researcher, like a bricoleur, applies the appropriate methods they know and have available to them, to do the research justice.

Metaphors abound ... as the work of the bricoleur is compared to that of a jazz musician, quilt maker, and producer of pictorial montage. In all these processes, different dynamics are brought together in ways that produce a synergistic interaction. The whole is greater than the parts (Kincheloe and Berry 2004: 85).

Kincheloe and Berry (2004: 101-102) list nine characteristic Bricolage principles, stating first that bricoleurs provide a “richer insight into the text” and it “constructs an interconnected and cohesive portrait of a phenomenon”. This approach thirdly “grants access to new possibilities

of meaning”, “benefits marginalised groups in their struggle for empowerment” and “fits the phenomenon under study”. The sixth point is that it “generates insight gained from the recognition of the dialectic of particularity and generalisation or wholes and parts”. This type of research creates “an awareness of the forces that have constructed it”. Further due to the more inclusive character of this research, people who “come from diverse social locations” that inform a study have their “perspectives” included. Lastly, the research generally “catalyses just, intelligent, and worthwhile action”. Using Laurel Richardson’s image of the crystal, Berry (2004: 22) further explains that bricolage:

...expands, mutates, and alters while at the same time reflecting and refracting the ‘light’ of the social world. New patterns emerge and new shapes dance on the pages of the texts produced by the bricoleur – images unanticipated before the process took place.

Bricoleurs make use of feedback loops as they “allow for new insights and ideas to emerge as concepts are viewed in light of new perspectives and different ways of making meaning” (Berry 2004: 27). The qualitative traditions that are relevant to this performative case study research are a hybrid of ethnography, performative inquiry and applied theatre, also known as ‘theatre in action.’ The relevance of each of these is explained in the next few sections.

4.2.4 Ethnography

Saldaña (2011: 4) states that “Ethnography is the observation and documentation of social life to render an account of a group’s culture.” Ethnodrama, Performance Ethnography or Performative Inquiry as it is also known, is “the scripting and theatrical staging of qualitative research.” It “actively reconstructs fieldwork data into monologue and dialogue to resemble a traditionally mounted play for an audience” (Saldaña 2011: 130). In this study, the exploration of the children around issues, which made them feel powerless, was presented by each class in a short play, which was performed at the end of the intervention during a Forum Theatre performance (cf. 4.2.5). The short dramatic problem scenes formed the basis for learning, exploration, and discussion. The children learned about themselves when they engaged in the games and improvisations and were allowed to present their collective insights and talents to the other classes during the Forum Event. Being creative together as a class also brought them closer together as they discovered each other’s talents and saw new aspects in their classmates. They found that they had more in common than they thought and experienced that working together can be fun and is rewarding.

4.2.5 Performative inquiry

“In performance, the emphasis is on *doing*,” says Finley (2011: 442) and the kind of research that flows out of arts-based research is based on “affective experiences, senses, and emotions (2011: 444). She (2011: 443) explains:

[f]rom within the liminal openings that are created by the performance/practice of arts-based inquiry, ordinary people, researchers as participants and as audiences can imagine new visions of dignity, care, democracy, and other decolonising ways of being in the world. Once it has been imagined, it can be acted upon, or performed.

In this manner the unheard, marginalised can move out of a position of dependence into that of motivated, energised and focused individuals. People claim their own needs for change and with the vision of knowing what they are aiming to achieve, they are more focused and thus likely to achieve and utilise their opportunities. In some conservative qualitative research circles, an arts-based inquiry is not taken seriously, as there is criticism of the amateur nature of the artistic expression displayed in the final product. The counter-argument to that discourse is that the product represented to the audience is authentic; as it makes use of the language of the people represented in the performed scenes and presents their outlook on life. It enables marginalised voices to be heard and researchers such as Finley (2011: 444) “seek opportunities to locate work within the local communities and subscribe to participants’ everyday language and vernacular in discourse”.

Pointing out how the arts add value to gaining a more in-depth understanding, McNiff (2008: 30) writes that “art-based methods” tap into an individual’s “creative intelligence” to “generate valuable information that often feels more accurate, original, and intelligent than more conventional descriptions” when communicating a person’s insight and point of view. McNiff (2008: 44-46), in this context, puts forward the following ten good reasons for using arts-related visual images in research. The most substantial reason is that the non-verbal message is captured in a picture which can “capture the ineffaceable, the hard-to-put-into-words.” The images bring a freshness to the content and “make us pay attention to things in new ways” because images aid the memory, they “communicate more holistically, incorporate multiple layers, and evoke stories or questions” and they can “enhance empathetic understanding and generalizability.” Sometimes the image is created in the minds’ eye when a “metaphor and symbol” are used and in this manner ideas and theory can be communicated “elegantly and eloquently.” Furthermore, images capture “embodied knowledge”, are easy to understand, spark new thinking and reflection, and can “provoke action for social justice.” As young adolescents are known to be challenging when trying to communicate their thoughts and

feelings, I expected that the use of images to communicate would help them to engage with each other and their teacher around matters, which cause them distress.

In line with McNiff, Pelias (2008: 186) also argues for adding value through performative inquiry as he states, “performance itself is a way of knowing...[it] rests upon the faith in the embodiment, in the power of giving voice and physicality to words, in the body as a site of knowledge.” To him performative inquiry “is an embodied practice” where “the knowing body, then finds its power in the cognitive, affective, and intuitive coming together to form a sense of what it has to say”. The only way in which this can be released it through participation in performance.

Stolz (2014:474) agrees and discusses the mind-body divide often experienced in education, where the emphasis frequently is on the learning of knowledge as an intellectual endeavour of the mind, in his article *Embodied Learning*. He believes education needs to integrate learning more so that “the whole person is treated as a whole being, permitting the person to experience him or herself as a holistic and synthesized acting, feeling, thinking being-in-the-world, rather than as separate physical and mental qualities which bear no relation to each other.” He advocates for a classroom where teachers assist their learners to “come to a greater understanding of the embodied experience developed in the educational context.” (Stolz. 2014: 482).

Lindgren and Johnson-Glenberg (2013:446) “focus specifically on research findings showing that cognitive processes involved in learning, such as conceptual development and comprehension, are built upon a foundation of physical embodiment.” Our cognitive mind, our emotional heart and our active body are an integrated whole, learning happens in an integrated embodied manner. Their findings indicate that there is higher retention of the learned information when it was supported by “high levels of embodiment”. They further propose that when learning was provided in a “more immersive, embodied, and praxis centered” manner, “so too should the instruments that one uses to assess them” make use of these holistic approaches to learning.

“Learning is an embodied act, our brain, emotions, and physiology constantly connect to each other, interpreting information we receive from stimuli around us” write van der Water, McAvoy and Hunt (2015:19). Immordino-Yang supports this when she writes that “we perceive and understand other people’s feelings and actions in relation to own beliefs and goals and *vicariously* experience these feelings and actions as if they were our own”. (Immordino-Yang in van de Water et al. 2015). It is by means of the empathy and sympathy that we feel for others and in that way, we can learn by extension.

Faced with the challenge of turning her dramatic arts experiences into data to be used for research purposes, Fels (2012: 58) coined the term 'performative inquiry' to describe her dramatic arts research activities. To her performative inquiry:

...is a way of being in inquiry and sharing what we learn in a language that speaks to the integrity and spirit and ambitions and hopes of our quest in the arts. It is a language of the body, heart, mind, spirit embodied in flight, in exploration, in moments of yearning, curiosity, surprise, delight.

As an approach to doing research, performative inquiry lacks an easy recipe, which can simply be followed. Within a specific context and moment in time it "rather offers researchers and educators a way of inquiring into what matters, as we engage in drama or theatre activities, or indeed in any creative process or activity that is an action site of inquiry" (Fels 2012: 51). The pedagogical relevance of performative inquiry is the attention, which it gives to the "emergent moment" wherein active learning happens (Fels 2012: 53). To be able to notice such moments of performative inquiry she advises practitioners to be aware of "four key things: to listen deeply, to be present in the moment, to identify stops that interrupt or illuminate our practice or understanding, and to reflect on those stops, in terms of their significance, implications, and why they matter" (Fels, 2012: 53). In line with Kolb's experiential learning studies, performative inquiry tries to capture and engage with the processes that take place when people learn through their experiences (cf. 2.4.2).

Studying performance as a way of witnessing that which has been understood, Soyini Madison (2015: 269) writes that "performance invites us to understand the body as its own evidence ... as the "utopian performative" moment "bears the responsibility of witnessing, and it does not simply participate but embodies performance within a deeply felt sensing empathy". This act of witnessing as she points out is "a form of truth" and also relates to "a doing that transforms reality". Engaging in performance allows the participants to 'show' rather than 'tell' how they experience reality and through the act of watching it enables those who watch to respond to the presented reality in a more engaged and empathetic manner.

4.2.6 Applied theatre

Performative Inquiry as a performance approach falls under the umbrella term Applied Theatre; also called Theatre for Social Change or Theatre in Action. Aspects of Applied Theatre provide guidance when researching how children acquire life skills through performance techniques. I discuss the relevant issues in more detail below.

To study if learning new life skills using a Forum Theatre intervention, arts-based qualitative research can be useful. It utilises various artistic ways to study and represent the data collected while in the field. An artistic performance, for instance, can give expression to the knowledge gained, enabling the researcher to communicate their research results and insights artistically. The content can be captured in various ways, for instance, using performance, i.e. a dramatic scene, such as a skit (cf. 4.2.2). The gambit of artistic choices reaches wider than “a case study article, a confessional tale, critical inquiry, ethnography, poetry, [or] narrative short story” (Saldaña, 2011) as it can also serve as a communication avenue. As mentioned earlier, in this study the children’s understanding is represented as a performance and acts as a step in the process and is a form of performative inquiry. The data emerging out of the research will not be presented in its final presentation in an arts-based manner. It differs from other arts based performative inquiry presentation as the results are not reflected using a dramatic, performed dialogue, dance or poem, but instead through the performances created by the school children that are foundational to the research (cf. 4.2.2).

Each of the Grade 6 classes that participated in this study produced a short improvisational performance during their Life Orientation lessons in the third term of 2016. These performances formed the basis for the Forum Theatre performance, which was held in the last week of their third term at school. In this study, the dramatic text was created by the children through improvisation where each class demonstrated a conflict situation of their choosing. Video footage of some of the “skits” as performed by the learners in the Forum event is available but as the identity of the children is clear in the footage, you need to contact me if you would like to view the footage. I will not be making it publicly available. You can contact the researcher at mcbettman@gmail.com to make arrangements should you wish to view the evidence contained in the footage.

4.2.7 Reflection of the researcher

Before doing this D Ed thesis, I achieved two Master’s Degrees; one in English Language and Literature as a second language, and the other in Theatre Science. Both degrees were obtained at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. The two Masters theses were an extension of each other and were focused on South African theatre. The latter explored how theatre can be used to inform and build up a community of people and if the plays I encountered in South Africa at the time, conformed to a set of characteristics identified for political theatre by van Erven (1988). It was during a study module presented by van Erven on political theatre that I first read Augusto Boal’s (1979) book, *The Theatre of the Oppressed*.

My Theatre Science Degree has laid a good foundation for my understanding of the theatrical process.

My English Degree was also linked to achieving a teaching qualification. After acquiring my degrees, I taught at a language institute in the Netherlands and later taught for a while at a secondary school in South Africa. More recently, I assisted with teaching the PST210G module of the Language, Arts and Culture Department of the College of Education, UNISA. This module discusses how to teach Art, Music, Speech, and Drama in the Intermediate and Senior Phase of Primary and Secondary schools. Currently, I am working as a lecturer in the English Studies Department of UNISA. Before working at UNISA, I worked for twenty years in communication and marketing context, mostly with the creation of in-house newsletters, either via web-based news dissemination or through printed copies.

In a private capacity, during my student years, I was a founding member of the Students of Utrecht Dramatic Society (SUDS) and was involved in the production of their amateur theatre productions for five years. The experience has provided practical insight into the process of staging a play for performance. I believe live performance is a reliable vehicle for communication because of its immediacy. Together in one room, both the actor and the audience engage in direct communication within one space. The actor steps on stage to share and bring to life their thoughts and ideas on a character within a topic of interest and importance. The audience watches, listens and tries to understand the staged communication to process the message. Certain protocols and rituals are maintained in the space, such as a bow to indicate the end of the performance and hand clapping from the audience to show their appreciation. Even though the magic “what if” conditions of make-belief come to an end after the performance, the actors and audience are still able to speak to each other and extend on the engagement afterwards if they so wish.

Speech, drama and toastmaster activities build confidence and provide participants with exposure to performing before an audience. Over the years, I have witnessed how drama activities build people up; not only as actors but also as singers, musicians, dancers and artists. Artistic talent is utilised in a variety of ways, as staging a play does not only require the participants’ acting abilities. Some people are involved in the process by creating publicity materials, programme booklets, stage backdrops, props, makeup, costumes etc. Lastly, technical skills can be developed through the avenue of sound and lighting, which are required to stage a show. Therefore a drama performance builds skill across the curriculum and leads to the growth of confidence and discovery of abilities. Through my drama involvement, I have experienced how much fun the process of creating a play can be, how it leads to the formation

of new skills and enhances the abilities of the participants through their participation, and how it builds group cohesion and friendships.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.3.1 *Selection of site*

The English medium multicultural public primary school in my local area was a logical first port of call for me. Peace Haven Primary School (pseudonym) was conveniently situated; I am familiar with the grounds and know the principal. This made entry to the school easier. I had an initial exploratory telephonic discussion about my intended study for my D Ed degree with the deputy principal. She was very enthusiastic and said I was welcome to speak to the Head of Department (HOD) for Life Orientation and that the school would gladly support me. Subsequently, I made an appointment to talk to the HOD for Life Orientation to discuss the finer details of what I intended doing as an intervention at their school.

Thus, the site was chosen because of a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 152) indicate that purposeful sampling is used:

... when a researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest ... and a judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research.

In this study, the school met the following selection criteria for purposeful sampling: Life Skills (Life Orientation) was part of the formal curriculum for all grades and in Grade 6 Life Skills consists of three components (Personal Social Wellbeing (PSW), Creative Arts (CA), and Physical Education (PE) (DBE 2011b) (cf.1.1). The school has a history of staging excellent school theatre productions and actively promotes the performing arts. Thus, the school offered the appropriate opportunity for the implementation of a performative inquiry using Forum Theatre and constituted an information-rich site. Convenience sampling is “a qualitative sampling procedure in which the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied” (Creswell 2012: 619). It was convenient that the school was located close to my home and was readily available to me, as implementation would require intensive fieldwork. I spent eleven weeks at the school during Term 3 of 2016. The school was within easy travelling distance of my home and workplace and was thus accessible in terms of travelling and the time constraints imposed by my personal circumstances (cf. 4.3.3.5.)

4.3.1.1. Description of the school

The Peace Haven Primary School is a well-established English medium multicultural public school with a long teaching history. There are four classes of thirty-six learners in each grade. The learner enrolment is multicultural, and at the time of the study, there was an average of 134 learners per grade, ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 7. The staff component is made up of forty teachers, twenty-five Gauteng Department of Education staff members and fifteen governing body appointed teachers, seven administrative and twelve ground staff members, two teachers for the computer centre, a sport organiser, one person who oversees the tuck shop and a deputy principal and a principal to head up the school. School fees levied in 2016, were set at R11 870 per year. The Grade R class has lower enrolment numbers as each class has both a teacher and an assistant, which increases the cost per year. Grade R fees at this stage were set at R18 300 per year for 2016. Exemptions to paying school fees at the time were lying at 10%.

4.3.2 Gaining entry into the site

During my first meeting with the Head of Department (HOD) for Life Orientation, I explained that my purpose was to introduce performative pedagogy in teaching and learning life skills in line with the Grade 4-6 Life Skills Creative Arts curriculum (DBE 2011b) through Boal's technique called Forum Theatre. I clarified what Forum Theatre is and how it works. We also discussed which grade would be the most suitable as both Grade 6 or 7 classes would have worked for my field study. I explained what I had learned from my literature study regarding the choice of the developmental stage for a life skills intervention. The Botvin Life Skills Programme indicated that the intermediate phase of schooling in the US was suitable for life skills training (cf. 2.5.4) and therefore I wished to work with this age group as well. In the South African context, this would be children in Grades 6, 7 and 8. My expectation was that the children would be in Stage 2 of the Kohlberg and Hersh (1977: 4) model of moral development. The "instrumental-relativist orientation" stage is where the individual sees:

The right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Human relations are viewed in terms like those of the marketplace. Elements of fairness, of reciprocity, and of equal sharing are present, but they are always interpreted in a physical, pragmatic way. Reciprocity is a matter of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," not of loyalty, gratitude, or justice.

It was thus assumed that life skills training through experientially exploring a problem of their choosing would challenge the children and encourage them to move to the next level in their

moral development wherein they reach Stage 3. This is where the “interpersonal concordance or “good boy - nice girl” orientation is in place, and good “behaviour is that which pleases or helps others and is approved by them” (Kohlberg and Hersh 1977:4).

The HOD initially suggested that I work with the Grade 7 year. These learners are not expected to write Annual National Assessments (ANA) and other benchmarking tests set by the government (DBE 2011) and thus the Grade 7 year (13 years old) is less taxing than the Grade 6 year academically. The learners would also be abler to participate as they were a year older. On second thoughts, the HOD shared that the Grade 7 Life Orientation teacher was currently enrolled in further studies and as a result, might not be keen to be involved. From that perspective, the HOD decided that it would be better to work with the Grade 6 classes.

Having agreed in principle to allow me to do my research at the school, the HOD for Life Orientation undertook to arrange an information session where I could present my study to all the Life Orientation Intermediate Phase teachers. At this meeting, I explained my purpose in the hope that the teachers would see opportunities for their growth and skills development. The HOD and all four teachers who teach Life Orientation classes across Grades 5-7 attended the information session on 10 June 2016. I first explained the background and context of my research and reviewed the content, format, and structure of Forum Theatre as a dramatic technique. After the presentation, the teachers were invited to participate in the implementation of the performative approach to teaching life skills and to the Forum Theatre intervention wherein they would act as Jokers. The problem plays that would be developed during the term needed to be based on issues identified by the learners to be relevant to them when the Forum Theatre intervention took place.

After my presentation to the teachers, the HOD and the teachers had a meeting to discuss the proposed study. The HOD called me telephonically and requested that I create a series of lesson plans for the Grade 6 (CA) teacher to follow. The teacher asked for the lesson plans to have more clarity on what steps needed to be followed to create a problem play for the Forum Theatre performance. In response, I created a series of nine lesson plans (cf. Appendix G) which came in the place of the information and teaching session for the teachers that I had originally envisaged. As time was limited, I was guided mostly by the Rohd (1998) *Theatre for community, conflict and dialogue: the hope is a vital training manual*, which provides a practical step-by-step guide on how to work with teenagers in a Forum Theatre process (cf. 4.3.3).

During the second week of the winter school holidays, I met with the HOD to explain in a step by step manner how the lessons were planned and would work. She was pleased with the content and said it would work well. The HOD had agreed with the Grade 6 Creative Arts teacher Alice that she would work with me in the third term. It was a pity that Alice, (cf. Table.

4.1) was not able to attend this meeting as well. I asked the HOD if I would still be able to work with the teachers before the term started. She said this was not possible as they were away and would only return at the start of the new term. During the ethical clearance, the GDE indicated that research in public schools should take place after hours and should not interfere with the teaching of the curriculum. I mentioned this to the HOD, who said she preferred that the research is incorporated into their regular CA classes. Judging from the content of the lesson plans and what was prescribed in the textbook, she was comfortable to allow my research to happen during school hours.

I was also not able to work with Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, on the first day of term, as she is also responsible for the library at the school. The library had been freshly painted, and a new floor had been put in during the holidays. The teacher had worked hard together with some of the parents to add decorations to the library space, which had undergone a major transformation. She only received the lesson plans (Appendix G) that I had created on the first morning when I came to work with her at the school. The permission letters for the parents and the children were also distributed at the start of the third term.

4.3.3 Selection and modification of life-skills programme for Forum Theatre

Peaceful Haven School uses the *Spot On*, a range of Life Orientation textbooks (Carstens et al. 2012) to teach the children. The content of the curriculum for the third term was used as the foundation for the lesson plans I created (cf. Appendix G). The Forum Theatre performative approach I adopted was based on the various books of Augusto Boal (1979, 1995, 2002); the *Theatre for Community, Conflict and Dialogue: Hope is Vital Training Manual* by Micheal Rohd; and the UNESCO CCIVS Project toolkit (2006) called *Learn, Act and Teach: Theatre, HIV and AIDS Toolkit for Youth in Africa*.

The life skills I wished to improve using a performative approach and a Forum Theatre intervention were:

- to build better self-esteem;
- develop higher levels of confidence;
- gain better insight into the cultural differences existing in the classes;
- learn the value of approaching others with more kindness and understanding;
- understand the importance of practising self-restraint, and
- discover different ways of responding to 'difficult' social situations as chosen by the children.

4.3.3.1 Lesson content as per the textbook for Term 3

Performative teaching provides an opportunity for integrated learning, as the construction of a performed problem play works across many of the elements prescribed in the *Spot On Life Skills* textbook for Grade 6 (cf.4.3.2). For the creative arts component of the Life Orientation classes the children were expected to experience warm-up activities; do improvisation exercises; read and create a dialogue about a conflict situation; learn how to interpret and perform the text; make a dance or movement sequence; learn to about three-dimensional sculpting; explore songs from two different cultures of South Africa; and to analyse an artwork. The various skills and dramatic elements that the curriculum content (cf. DBE 2011b:36; par.1.1) aimed to expose the learners to, could easily be incorporated and developed in a lesson sequence, which culminates in a short dramatic scene. In this manner the various elements can be integrated into a useful performance, which gathers them all together. All the elements combined result in four short improvised problem plays, one from each class. These problem plays are utilised in the final Forum Theatre performance.

4.3.3.2. Forum theatre skills development sessions

I had planned to work with Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, and the other Grade 6 teachers (cf. Table 4.1) for a day at the end of the July holidays to prepare them for my research project. I wanted to explain how Image and Forum Theatre work and how we would be working with the children who would be able to explore how to express themselves through body language and images. This, however, was not possible due to the teachers not being available over the July school holidays.

4.3.4 Selection of participants

The sampling was purposeful, and the selection is described in the ensuing paragraphs. As already mentioned, I contacted an appropriate primary school close to my home, where I knew the principal. After explaining my purpose, the HOD for Life Orientation allowed me to work with four Grade 6 classes which were all taught Creative Arts by one teacher (Alice) (cf. Table 4.1 and par. 4.3.4.1).

4.3.4.1 Teacher participants

As facilitation of the programme was seen to be a valuable professional development activity, all Grade 6 teachers (Table 4.1) employed in the school were invited to attend the initial information session. I had hoped that all the Grade 6 teachers would participate as all could benefit from learning about Forum Theatre. They would all be appropriate facilitators since

they were all well qualified and knowledgeable about teaching life skills and had worked with the Grade 6 learners enrolled in the school. As only one teacher taught Creative Arts (Alice) to all the Grade 6 classes, she was asked if she would be willing to work with me on the Forum Theatre intervention. The Grade 6 PSW teacher (Steven) was prepared to support. As we would be making use of music and singing, the music teacher at the school also attended our weekly focus group sessions. I invited the HOD to join us for the focus group discussions. Unfortunately, this was not possible at the time, which suited the PSW, CA, and Music teacher fell at a time when the HOD was teaching Grade 7 classes.

Table 4.1 Characteristics of participating teachers

Name	Gender	Age	Teaching Subject	Qualifications	Teaching Years
Alice	F	59	Creative Arts and Library	Higher Primary Education Diploma (HPED)	38
Steven	M	27	PSW, Computer Lab and Sports Coordinator	BA Theology, BA (Hons) Theology in Practical Theology and MA in Practical Theology	3
Beatrix	F	50	Head of Department for Life Orientation and Creative Arts, Mathematics	Higher Diploma in Education (HDE), a Further Diploma in Education (FDE) and for Head of Department (HOD)	29
Sally	F	23	Register teacher for Class 6D, Natural Science		
Silvia	F	25	Register teacher for Class 6B, Mathematics		
Lydia	F	24	Register teacher for Class 6C, English Language		
Joan	F	36	Register teacher for Class 6A, Afrikaans Language		

Alice (pseudonym) as the Grade 6 (CA) was the main teacher participant. She taught CA to all four participating Grade 6 classes (see below). She is a fifty-nine-year-old female Creative Arts teacher and Librarian at the school. She has thirty-eight years of teaching experience. Her qualification is a four year Higher Primary Education Diploma (HPED) qualification. She has taught English, Afrikaans, Life Orientation, History and Geography, Art, Biblical Studies and Library. She has been a teacher, subject head, acting HOD, head of the support service and ran a remedial centre for six years. She has taught at both secondary and primary schools where she worked with Grade 3 – 7. Most of the years she taught were spent working with Grade 6 and 7. She has also started two libraries from scratch and has received merits from the Department of Education twice.

Beatrix (pseudonym) is the Head of Department (HOD) for Life Orientation (LO) and CA and Mathematics at the school. She is a 50-year-old female teacher. Her qualifications include a Higher Diploma in Education (HDE), a Further Diploma in Education (FDE) and for Head of Department (HOD). She teaches Mathematics and LO now. She is also in charge of discipline at the school.

Steven (pseudonym) is a twenty-seven-year-old male teacher who teaches PSW and PE to the four Grade 6 classes that took part in the research programme. He is one of two teachers who oversees the computer centre. After hours, he is very involved in soccer activities at the school. His qualifications are BA Theology, BA (Hons) Theology in Practical Theology and MA in Practical Theology. Currently, he is studying for a PhD at the University of Pretoria. His position at the school is a post level 1 Educator, and he has two years and ten months of teaching experience. The computer centre is adjacent to the library, and thus he was very aware of the activities happening during my research. He attended the weekly focus group sessions.

The four remaining teachers: Joan (Grade 6A), Sylvia (Grade 6B), Lydia (Grade 6C) and Sally (Grade 6D), who are registered class teachers for the four Grade 6 class respectively.

4.3.4.2. Learner participants

Learning from the experience of the Botvin Life Skills Programme researchers (cf. 2.5.4), Grade 6 learners who generally turn twelve in Grade 6 were my first choice for learner participants. Developmentally they are pre-adolescent, and as such, the literature suggests they would be more open to learning life skills.

Thus, the four Grade 6 classes at the school were selected as learner participants. The classes were given the following pseudonyms to distinguish them from each other: Class 6A, Class 6B, Class 6C, Class 6D. All were taught CA on the same day by the same Grade 6 teacher,

Alice (Table 4.1). The demographic profile of the Grade 6 learners enrolled showed they were from homes where various languages are spoken. The children represented a mix of a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, and therefore, the school was representative of the multicultural nature of South African society. According to school admission records for 2016, at the beginning of the year, the Grade 6 participants had the following home language breakdown: English, Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Swazi, South Sotho, North Sotho, Tshwane, Tsonga, Venda, Afrikaans, Portuguese and one other which was not specified. In the third term there were 58 boys and 75 girls in Grade 6 which gave a total of 133 learners spread over the four classes. The average class size was 35 learners per class. All Grade 6 learners took Life Skills as a compulsory subject in the curriculum. As mentioned, it consisted of three components; Physical Education (PE), Personal Social Well-being (PSW) and Creative Arts (CA) (cf. 1.1).

4.3.5 Data gathering

I spent in total eleven weeks at the school doing my fieldwork during Term 3, 2016. For the first two weeks of the eleven-week period Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, completed two lessons that she had initially planned for Term 3. Activities carried out in these lessons were assessed to provide the learners with marks. During this period, I attended the classes, generally supported the teacher and admired the creative work that the children had been asked to do during their holidays. In the first lesson, children displayed their efforts in re-purposing an old VHS box. In the second week, they executed a line dance as a group. They had to interpret instructions and work as a team to make their group dance which they had prepared for during breaks. This period was invaluable to me as the researcher as it enabled me to build up rapport with the Grade 6 children and the Grade 6 (CA) teacher.

After that, the Forum Theatre intervention was implemented over eight weeks (August to September). The HOD (Beatrix) and I took responsibility for the overall supervision of the implementation. For seven weeks, I observed and participated along with the Grade 6 (CA) teacher in one Life skills (C) lesson per Grade 6 class each week. The lesson (a 'double' lesson) lasted 60 minutes. Thus, each Grade 6 class attended seven weekly classes in total; there were 32 double lessons in total (cf. Table 5.2, par. 5.2.1). The eighth lesson comprised of the culminating Forum Theatre performances by each respective class (cf. Table 5.3 for an overview of the performances).

Data were collected through classroom observations, individual interviews, focus group interviews, self-reflexive diaries kept by Grade 6 (CA) teacher (Alice) and myself, video

recordings of the classroom activities and the learners' writing assignments. The practical performative work performed in the classroom and during the culminating Forum Theatre performances were videotaped. Interviews were digitally recorded, and verbatim transcriptions made.

4.3.5.1. Multiple data collection processes

In preparation for the research project, I had intended training all the Grade 6 teachers about the relevance of theatrical games, how to make use of image theatre, what the role of a Joker is and how a Forum Theatre process works. I also had intended to introduce the Grade 6 teachers to Augusto Boal, his work with literacy programmes and how he used his training as a theatre director to teach using drama. As language is linked to the communication needs of the participants, the literacy teaching Boal did in Peru evolved into teaching people to identify what makes them powerless and then use the theatrical medium try to help them find ways to be more empowered. In Boal's interactions, a small problem play would become the vehicle for a community to explore and find new solutions within the pretend theatrical space. After the teacher training sessions that I had initially planned, we were going to discuss how we would prepare the learners to make a short improvisational problem play in their classes and how we would arrange the culminating Forum Theatre performance.

Unfortunately, this was not possible due to the teachers not being available during the holidays. Instead, I had to give the necessary explanations mentioned above either at the end of a teaching day, or at the start of the next teaching day, or whenever the teacher(s) asked for more information. This is when I explained the next steps in the performative sequence to the Grade 6 (CA) teacher (Alice) before she taught each of the classes. We also discussed what worked or did not work and what needed to happen between classes or during the focus group sessions. We further talked about what was happening in class each week in the focus group sessions (cf. 4.3.4 - 6). The weekly focus groups preceded the four Grade 6 CA lessons that were scheduled for that day.

A particularly helpful moment occurred in one of the weekly focus group sessions when I showed the teachers (Alice and Steven) a YouTube video of a Theatre in Action project focused on bullying that was done at the school in the US (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hi1h979m5IM>). This was very useful as it inspired confidence particularly in Alice and practically showed her how to approach the performative teaching. It also helped to demonstrate how other schools use this performative approach to teach the children new skills and insight. Based on the success of this approach, I adopted this YouTube video approach more often after this and each subsequent week I presented a short clip of YouTube footage that was relevant to the stage we were at, as a way of providing

support to the teacher. It helped to watch how performative pedagogy was done rather than be told only using words. It appeared that watching was more powerful than listening as a way of learning for Alice too.

Each lesson with the Grade 6 classes focused on capturing how life skills were acquired through Boal's (2002) games and through the creative process of making a problem play. The improvisational role-play activities gave insight into what made the children feel powerless. In each class, the insight gained out of the performative exploration led to the creation of a short, improvised scene around an unsolved problem. The scenes were created by the children under the guidance of Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, and myself as additional support to her in her teaching.

The lesson plans (cf. Appendix G) I had prepared provided guidance and gave the structure to the lessons along which the learners were led to discover, learn and go about creating a small problem play around a topic of their choosing. Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher had asked for lesson plans for the intervention I was doing at the school to help her understand what it was that I wanted to do each week. She used these lesson plans as a baseline and adapted the materials to suit her teaching style and insight. Initially, she did not see the point to Boal's theatrical games and was reluctant to use them as she felt they took up too much time. Only after playing the games did she see what the games taught the children and her advice to me was to add information to the lesson plan to clarify that aspect for the teacher. Ironically, the information was already in the lesson plan, but she had not found it helpful then. Teaching was adjusted after every class. Certain approaches did not work which the teacher then modified and changed in the ensuing classes. In general, the activities worked well. Children could learn about the expressivity of their bodies through theatre games and image-making. The group dynamics of the class was enriched by the performative activities of the participants. Furthermore, during the seven weeks before the Forum Theatre performance (that occurred in the eighth week), Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher engaged in a more performative approach to teaching and gained experience with shaping short improvisational scenes as a vehicle for learning about life. The improvisations also gave the teacher insight into the social realities of the children.

At the end of Term 3 (i.e., the whole eight-week period), the best performance ideas, which originated out of each of the participating classes, were incorporated in the staged Forum Theatre performance. Class 6A performed a scene called 'Unfair Accusation', Class 6B performed one called 'Sandwich Stealing', Class 6C performed 'Family Trouble' and Class 6D performed 'Cyber Pressure.' Each Grade 6 class performed their own problem play before one of the other classes in a Forum Theatre intervention that included discussions with the

audience and role-played Spect-actor explorations by certain children (cf. Table 5.3). The Forum Theatre enabled some Spect-actors from the “audience” class to try out their solutions in an attempt to alter the performed powerless situation enacted by the “performing” class. This happened on stage during a replay of the original chain of events in the dramatic scene as it had been performed by the performing Grade 6 class during the Forum Theatre. The Forum enabled some learners to learn experientially when they took over a role as a Spect-actor within the safe theatrical space. Alice, the Grade 6 teacher-guided and facilitated the Forum Theatre performances (one per class) in the role of a Joker. She gained Joker skills as she experienced how to facilitate the interaction between the ‘performance’ class and the ‘audience’ class.

After the Forum Theatre performances, I captured the experience of the Grade 6 (CA) teacher and the HOD and selected learners from each Grade 6 class through follow-up interviews. The interviews were held five days after the Forum Theatre performance.

4.3.5.2. Data gathering with teachers

Data from the teachers was collected through individual and focus group interviews held in the natural setting of the school. Interviews were digitally recorded, field notes were made, and I typed verbatim transcriptions of the recorded interviews.

a) Individual interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held at the start and the end of the field study with the HOD, Beatrix, and the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, Alice. These were structured around a flexible interview guide (cf. Appendix F). I also did a semi-structured interview with the Grade 6 register teachers (Joan, Sylvia, Lydia and Sally) and the Grade 6 PSW teacher (Steven) at the end of the fieldwork to explore how they had experienced the Forum Theatre activities. Field notes were made, interviews recorded, and verbatim transcriptions were made. Transcriptions were returned to all participants for checking.

b) Focus group interviews

To inform and to gain the support of the LO learning area teachers, Steven, the PSW and LO teacher and the music teacher, were invited to attend the weekly focus group together with Alice and myself as a researcher. I first needed to establish a relationship with these teachers before they were willing to take part in a focus group. The focus group sessions were held during the first class of the day on which the CA lesson was presented by Alice. During these meetings, the teachers and I discussed progress, what was deemed successful, or was causing problems while teaching in a performative manner. The reason was to enable

adjustments when Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, encountered challenges. The focus group was also intended to inspire, support and maintain the enthusiasm of the teachers.

The focus group assisted with improving the outcomes of the study, as the questions which the other teachers asked, helped Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher to understand better what was expected and needed in the lessons. It also meant that she could share her discoveries and learn as well as incorporate insight gained by the other two teachers. The focus group meeting was a good place to discuss successes and challenges and it helped to solve matters, which arose during the teaching week. Two focus groups were digitally recorded. Verbatim transcripts were typed up for these recorded discussions. Field notes were made during the other focus groups.

c) Reflexive journal

I kept a hand-written reflexive journal for the duration of the study. Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher also kept a reflexive journal in which she jotted down her experiences during the study but chose to keep the written contents private. She did, however, share her reflections with me verbally.

4.3.5.3 Data gathering with learners

Data from the learners were collected through classroom observation, individual interviews with thirteen learners, selected artefacts in the form of drawings, written dialogues and notes and all the Grade 6 learners' written reflections made before the culminating Forum Theatre performances. Interviews were digitally recorded, field notes were made, and I typed verbatim transcriptions of the recorded interviews. Classroom activities were regularly captured on video.

a) Classroom observation

Data from the learners were collected through observation of the class sessions. I used a flexible observation guide (see Appendix E) and made descriptive field notes.

I assumed the role of observer-participant defined by Schumacher and McMillan (1993:415) as one in which "the ethnographer receives permission to create the role for the sole purpose of data collection...the role would not be established except for the study." Traditionally the ethnographer does not participate in the social system observed; however, in certain instances, as in this study, I participated as a support to the teacher during the activities at her request. I was encouraged by Alice to demonstrate some activities and thereby gained the first-hand experience of how my lesson plans worked (cf. Appendix G). In the role of observer-participant, observer effect (Schumacher and McMillan 1993: 393) on the learners (and the

teacher) was a clear possibility. This was reduced by my prolonged fieldwork (11 weeks at the school and eight weeks in the classroom) which gave me time to establish a relationship with participants. The learners accepted and enjoyed my presence in the classroom, greeted me when they met me on the school premises and asked my feedback and help during lessons.

b) Learners' notes and drawings

All the artefacts produced by the children during the CA lessons were collected and copied. A list of what causes conflict between children and their parents, their siblings and their friends were filled in by the children at the beginning of Term 3 to identify possible topics and content for the improvisations that were done in class.

In the seventh lesson (which preceded the Forum Theatre performance), I received feedback from the children through a reflection, which they wrote about the research project. The Grade 6 (CA) teacher, Alice, at the end of every term always asks the learners to reflect on the content of the lessons by writing a short reflection on their experience. In this reflection, they could express what they had enjoyed as well as what they had not liked doing during the CA lessons. The children were also asked to share how they felt and what they had learned. The children each wrote down their thoughts on the performative creative stage of their lessons.

c) Video recordings

Every week in all Grade 6 CA classes I made video recordings of learners' creative endeavours leading up to the Forum Theatre session. The four Forum Theatre performances (cf. Table 5.3) were also recorded. There were some battery problems and during the recordings of some of these scenes, the apparatus failed. Verbatim transcriptions were made of the text of the recorded sessions that did record correctly (Appendix M).

d) Learner interviews

A week after the Forum Theatre performance, I did a semi-structured interview based on a flexible interview guide (see Appendix F) with 13 Grade 6 learners. These learners were chosen because they had taken part as a Spect-actor in the Forum Theatre interventions. The learners were asked questions about their experience when they stepped into the drama to try to change the powerless moment shown in the performance of the other class. The interviews took part voluntarily. These interviews took about fifteen minutes to complete, were conducted at the school and were recorded on a digital recorder. Verbatim transcriptions were made of the recorded interviews.

4.3.6 Data analysis

4.3.6.1. Organisation of data

Transcripts of digitally recorded interviews and focus group sessions, the researcher diary, researcher field notes, written information, drawings gathered from the children during the lessons and the Forum Theatre performance video footage and transcripts formed the raw data. The content of the transcriptions was analysed to find dominant themes in the material. Identifying these significant data segments started the data coding process. The codes, in turn, were organised into categories that were analysed to determine patterns or relationships amongst categories. Stake (1995: 45) searches for “patterns” to assist the readers of his reports “to understand the case better”. Trustworthiness of the data was enhanced by triangulation achieved by means of member checking with participants, by expert scrutiny of transcripts and by interpretation also by my supervisor who is a relevantly trained, recognised academic. She also coded the more poignant footage and recordings to increase the credibility of the findings.

4.3.6.2 Qualitative content analysis approach

To make sense of the relevance of collected research data, it is crucial to reduce the information to the crux of the relevant parts that serve to support the research engaged in. To make more sense of the data, Saldaña (2017: 3) states the researcher needs to find coherent “patterns” in the materials, bring together information that initially seems unrelated. They should be able to trace “action, reaction, and interaction” of relevant social processes and be cognisant of the “routines, rituals, rules, roles and relationships of social life”. By assigning a condensing or summarising code, category or theme to the main passages in the data, the information is brought back to its essence. Saldaña (2017: 9) writes that when searching for patterns in the data, it is beneficial to be able to utilise the processes of “induction”, “abduction” and “deduction”. The scrutiny of the data also needs to identify aspects that bring out the “interrelationships” in the data and promotes insight into how the underlying processes are meaningful.

The coding strategies that I employed to analyse my data, as described by Saldaña (2017, 2011), were the following: Attribute coding (2009: 55), Structural coding (2009: 66), Descriptive coding (2009: 70), In Vivo coding (2009: 74), Process coding (2009: 77), Initial coding (2009: 81), Values coding (2009: 89), Emotion coding (2009: 86) and Dramaturgical coding (2009: 102) processes. Where relevant, I also wrote analytic memos to provide a deeper understanding of parts of the data. These initial coding strategies led to categories and themes that arose out of the scrutiny of the data.

4.3.6.3. Storage and dissemination of data

The hard data, including the electronic data on DVD are kept in a locked cupboard in my locked office at Unisa and will be retained for fifteen years. Similarly, electronic documents are stored on my password locked computer for the same period. An executive summary of the research will be made available to school after the successful examination of the thesis. The results reflected will be presented at suitable academic conferences and as articles in peer-reviewed academic journals.

4.3.7 Measures to ensure trustworthiness of data

Guba (1981) suggests researchers should use four criteria to enhance the trustworthiness of their data collection process by considering the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability when designing their research method.

4.3.7.1. Credibility

For this research project, the research was guided by one case study involving four different Grade 6 classes in the same primary school. This guaranteed that children from a similar social group were represented across all classes. The culture of learning was the same across the participating classes as the school traditions, and modus operandi was the same as well. The general management approach adopted within the school was the same across all the Grade 6 classes. An extensive period of reading preceded the fieldwork and has been reflected in literature study chapters of this thesis (Chapters 2 and 3). This was necessary for me as a researcher to consider and be open to the “examination of previous research findings” (Shenton 2004: 69) when for instance studying the literature of other research executed in the context of this study.

To increase the credibility of the research data, Shenton (2004: 64), in line with Guba's (1981) recommendations, encourages researchers to follow various steps to increase the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of their research data. In line with Shenton (2004: 64-69) advice, the credibility of the findings was increased in the following way. To lay a foundation to this research “recognised and frequently used “research methods” were utilised. The performative inquiry is an established research method (cf. Saldaña (2009, 2011, 2017); Denzin and Lincoln (2011) in the qualitative genre. To develop “early familiarity with the culture of participating organisations” intensive negotiation and visits to the school began three months before fieldwork (cf. 4.3.2).

Moreover, the selected school was within my community and I knew the principal. To “confirm the validity of deductions”, approaches to “triangulation” were adopted, as data were captured using a variety of means. Observations, self-reflexive diary entries, interviews, and a collection of documents and video recordings were gathered and recorded. The participation and contributions of the teachers and the children were voluntary to “help ensure honesty in informants”: No participants were forced to participate, and this encouraged more truthful and honest participation in my participants. Moreover, permission was requested from all the participants using permission letters. When there was uncertainty about what the person who was interviewed intended to say, the information was run past the participant again to ask for more details to clarify (cf. 4.3.8). This increased the honesty of the responses and when in doubt, “iterative questioning” was used to confirm the information.

In line with the recommendations of Tracy (2010: 837-851) care was also taken to ensure the data were collected in a sincere and credible manner as every effort has been made to disclose “subjective values, biases and personal inclinations of the researcher” and to be “transparent about the methods and challenges”. Credibility was improved through providing “thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (non-textual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling” (Tracy 2010: 840) (cf. Chapter 5). Besides ascribing to methods of triangulation to increase the validity of the findings, Tracy also introduces the term “crystallisation” as proposed by Ellingson and Richardson (2000b in Tracy 2010: 843-4) as like “crystals grow, change, alter”, they also:

... are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, and arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose.

The analogy of a crystal encourages a “more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue” and highlights that the researcher always, even though striving for objectivity, will act as a filter. To counter for the partiality of the researcher, it is advantageous to “open up a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue” (Tracy 2010: 844).

To comply with triangulation, crystallisation, “multivocality” and “member reflection recommendations” as offered by Tracy (2010), I included the voices of other participants in the study. Not only the perspectives of the Grade 6 CA teacher, Alice, but also the perspectives of Steven, the Grade 6 (PSW) teacher and all four of the Grade 6 register teachers have been included (cf. Table 4.1) to inquire how they experienced the learners during the third term. These interviews took place at the end of the third term. A great deal of video footage was taken during the term to capture how the children responded to the activities in the lesson

plans. Three children out of each class as mentioned above were also asked to share their experiences during a short interview after the Forum Theatre performances. All the Grade 6's further wrote down their reflections on the process of creating a problem play.

To minimise the researcher's interpretive bias, frequent debriefing sessions were held between the researcher and the supervisor assigned to the research. Every week, my supervisor and I spoke about the progress that was being made, and I regularly had an informal chat to the HOD to also keep her informed about the progress, which was being made in the CA classes. To meet the requirement of openness to peer scrutiny of the research project, the results of the research captured in this thesis will, after examination, be available in the Unisa library, presented at conferences and submitted for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals. During this research project, I kept a self-reflective diary to capture the reflective commentary. As a researcher, I have provided an open disclosure of my background, qualifications and experience in paragraph 4.2.6.

Member checks (Shenton 2004: 68) were done to verify the transcriptions of interviews. Participants could read the transcriptions of interviews to check the correctness of the transcriptions and to confirm that the content was indeed what they had intended to say during the interview. To ensure a "thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny" (Shenton 2004: 69) every relevant document generated by the children during this research has been collected. Furthermore, many hours of video footage were taken during the third term. Interviews were recorded with the teaching staff and children. The children out of each class, who were interviewed after the Forum Theatre performance, were chosen either because they had ventured on stage as Spect-actors or they had been selected on a random basis by the teacher. The Grade 6 (CA) teacher (Alice) and the HOD were given the write-up of the research to ensure a truer reflection of the process that was adopted and of the results.

4.3.7.2. Transferability

To meet the criterion of transferability, the context of the study should be checked to make sure that the reflection that is given is valid. Phenomena should be described in detail "to allow comparisons to be made" (Shenton 2004: 73). The study can be repeated in similar circumstances albeit with modification since a clear audit trail has been given (par 4.3.1 - 4.3.4.3) as well as through the availability of the lesson plans on which implementation was based (Appendix G). By providing a detailed description of what occurred, other researchers could transfer "to other situations the results and conclusions presented" (Shenton 2004: 70). In line with the advice of Shenton (2004: 70), I have disclosed that only one school took part in the study and where it is located. There were no conscious restrictions imposed on who in the participating classes could provide data to the research. The number of participants

involved in the fieldwork has been recorded, and the various data collection methods that were utilised have been listed. The number and length of the data collection sessions has been disclosed and the period over which the data was collected has also been revealed (cf. 4.3.4 and 4.3.5).

4.3.7.3. Dependability

Dependability increases when methods overlap and when the methods followed are described in detail. Validity increases when data is confirmed from various sources through triangulation to counter investigator bias and is mitigated through the admission of my own beliefs and assumptions. Shenton (2004: 71-72) recommended that the research design and its implementation describe “what was planned and executed on a strategic level; the operational detail of data gathering” was shared with respect to the actual fieldwork that was carried out; and “reflective appraisal of the project” is disclosed to judge how effective the study process has been. Every attempt has been made to comply with these recommendations in the write-up of the results that happened at the school where this study was done and by sharing the data with teacher participants to confirm the meaning attributed.

4.3.7.4. Confirmability

Through acknowledgement of the shortcomings of the methods, the effects thereof, by revealing the audit trail, and by providing an in-depth methodological description of the steps followed, the confirmability of a study will be ensured (Shenton 2004: 73). The focus of the data described in this thesis was guided by the responses of the participants in this study rather than by what I as the researcher preferred to have achieved. To minimise researcher bias, my personal experience and position has been revealed where possible (cf. 4.2.6). All efforts have been made to record objectively what transpired during the fieldwork period at Peace Haven School through multiple methods of data collection.

4.3.8 Ethical measures

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) approved my request to conduct research at a Gauteng primary school on 13 May 2016 (Appendix A). My project’s ethical clearance documentation was submitted to the Ethical Clearance Committee of the College of Education, University of South Africa and approval was granted (Appendix B). Thereafter, a letter was emailed to the principal of Peace Haven School explaining the aim, scope and planned research (Appendix C). He presented the information to the School Governing Body who approved my proposal. During my preliminary discussion with the HOD for Life Orientation, I

explained the following ethical measures: participation of teachers and learners was voluntary; the identity of all participants would be kept anonymous with the use of pseudonyms, and any identifying detail would be omitted. Participants were free to withdraw from the programme at any time should they have wished to do so without penalty. The study's aim and the ethical measures were explained to the teachers (cf. Table 4.1) prior to fieldwork commencing. The HOD gave written permission for the study (Appendix C). The Grade 6 (CA) teacher gave her written consent (Appendix C). The parents of the Grade 6 learners gave written permission for their child's participation (Appendix D) and the learners gave written assent (Appendix D).

No participant at the school was placed under any obligation to accept the invitation to participate in the intervention. The methods of recording data were explained, and the assurance was given that the data would only be used for research purposes. The lesson plan sequence on which the creative process of the problem play creation was based is available in Appendix G.

4.3.9 Parameters of research

This case study research project attempted to investigate the usefulness of Forum Theatre as a performative pedagogical approach to the teaching and learning of life skills within the Grade 6 Life Skills Creative Arts curriculum (DBE 2011b) and fits within a qualitative research methodology. This ethnographic case study of a small sample of Grade 6 (CA) classes offers insight into how this can be achieved and reveals the advantages and parameters intrinsic to such an intervention in Grade 6 (CA) classes.

However, the small sample size is a limitation, and no generalisations can be drawn from the results. However, it is hoped that the insight gained through this research can in future inform teachers on how to prepare a small problem play and how to do a Forum Theatre engagement in the classroom with the view to teaching and learning life skills. Teachers can use theatrical games, image-making, and improvisational performance skills training to prepare learners for the performance of a problem play and, in this way, experientially teach life skills in schools. Some of the data, which were gathered, was captured on a DVD, and this requires the potential viewer of the materials to have access to a DVD player. The research project was exploratory in its approach. It was based on data gathered through observation of the lessons, on semi-structured teacher interviews and the teacher's experiences as revealed during discussions with the teacher. The responses of the learners have also been captured and reflected. The data were not quantified and have been presented only in descriptive terms.

No attempt was made to predict behaviour or to establish cause and effect relationships under experimental conditions; neither was an attempt made to prove or disprove the theory. The research was focused on understanding the experience of the participants and to add insight into what can be gained from engaging the children through performance elements. Further, the thesis attempts to ascertain if this way of teaching leads to more active participation and learning of life skills during performative teaching classes which culminated in a Forum Theatre performance. The purposeful participant selection method by convenience was not based on enough objective data to ensure the study could be replicated exactly.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the methodological foundations on which the research of this thesis was based. It mentioned all the participants that took part in it. Furthermore, it reflected all the procedural steps, which were taken during the fieldwork stage of this research. It also described the design of the study and how the data were analysed. In the next chapter, the results of the analysis will be presented.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

"Tell me, and I forget. Teach me, and I remember. Involve me, and I learn." — Xun Kuang

The coding of the case study data, collected during the third term of 2016, assisted with the analyses of the performative teaching which was the preparation for a Forum Theatre performance by four Grade 6 CA classes at a South African public primary school. The analysis made use of descriptive, interactive, in-vivo, emotive, and process coding as explained and described in Saldaña's (2009) manual on qualitative coding approaches. Five themes emerged out of the data collected from both the participating learners and the teachers. This discussion has been divided into five sections to facilitate the understanding of the findings.

Theme 1 looks at the performative teaching process and the adjustment made by the Grade 6 (CA) teacher when teaching a Forum Theatre set of lesson plans in a South African primary school environment. Information about the three learners' themes is interwoven with this discussion. The second, third, and fourth themes are related to the learners' experiences. The second theme is an analysis of how the performative activities and the Forum Theatre intervention allowed Grade 6 learners to learn life skills experientially through play. The third theme examined how performative learning processes support life skill acquisition by the learners. The fourth theme that emerged scrutinised the importance of non-verbal and embodied communication within performative and experiential learning that occurred during the Forum Theatre intervention. The last theme, theme five, moves back to the teachers' perspectives (Theme 5). It indicates how the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, the other Grade 6 teachers and the HOD experienced the Forum Theatre intervention and what director – educator skills a teacher would need to learn to present a Forum Theatre intervention at Grade 6 level.

<p>Theme 1 (Teacher related theme)</p>	<p>Forum Theatre process adjustments within a school setting to work as an intervention for children Forum Theatre requires process adjustments when presenting such an intervention in a South African primary school environment. – The teacher-guided the experiential learning of the children</p>	<p>Supporting literature Saldaña, 2005. Boal, 1979, 1995, 2002; 2006. Day, 2002. Rutten et al, 2010. Durden, 2007. Williams and Williams, 2010. Hammond, 2015. Kolb, 1984. Kolb and Kolb, 2005. Zull, 2002, 2012. Beck, 1990. Perls, 1970, 1972. Ellis, 1991. Bandura, 1977. Vygotsky, 1978. Noddings, 2010, 2013. Wong, J. 2014. Botvin and Griffin, 2004, 2010, 2014.</p>
<p>Theme 2 (Learner related theme)</p>	<p>Experiential learning and discovery through play Children learned through their experiences when they played games and did activities, they learned to improvise, to use physical images and explore through role-play within a pretend reality to discover more about conflict and powerless feelings in social situations with the aim to find solutions to such problems through introduction of a different behaviour in the Forum.</p>	<p>Poulter, 1995. Kolb. 1984. Kolb and Kolb, 2010. Dieleman and Huisingsh, 2006. Bandura, 1977. Zull, 2002, 2012. Botvin and Griffin, 2004. Boal, 1979, 1995, 2001, 2002, 2006. Saldaña, 2005. Rutten et al. 2010. Schroeder-Arce, 2018. Beck, 1976. Whitebread et al. 2009. Henry, 2000. Slade, 1954.</p>
<p>Theme 3 (Learner related theme)</p>	<p>Performance activities foster life skills acquisition Performative activities and teaching fostered life-skill acquisition by children as per the Experiential learning theory of Kolb and the learning cycle of Zull.</p>	<p>Mitchell and Freitag, 2011. Saldaña, 2005. Kolb, 1984. Kolb and Kolb, 2005. Zull, 2002. Nonaka and Konno, 1998. Poulter, 2018. Bandura, 1977. Burton, 2010. Usakli, 2012. Perls, 1970. Ellis 1991. Schaefer et al., 2011. Eccles, 1999. Boal 2001, 2002. Malm and Löfgren, 2007.</p>

<p>Theme 4 (Learner related theme)</p>	<p>Non-verbal, embodied learning harnessed by Forum Theatre to build social insight Non-verbal, embodied communication is harnessed by Forum Theatre to develop children’s insight into themselves and their social situations.</p>	<p>Boal, 2001, 2002. Poulter, 1995, 2018. Zull, 2002, 2012. Kolb, 1984. Kolb and Kolb, 2005, 2010. Beck, 1979, 1984. Wolpe, 1995, 1958. Malm and Löfgren, 2007. Basourakos, 1999. Henry, 2000. Gallagher (2001, in Belliveau 2007), Smit and Scherman, 2016. Noddings, 2013.</p>
<p>Theme 5 (Teacher related theme)</p>	<p>Forum Theatre performative teaching experiences Performative teaching will need bridging through teacher training. Training is needed to enable a teacher to present a successful Forum Theatre intervention. What is the director – educator skillset a teacher would need to learn to be able to create a class performance and then present a Forum Theatre intervention at a school? These are: know how to guide the experiential creative phase and acquire Joker skills needed to facilitate the engagement of the audience group into problem-solving of a performed dramatic scene. A teacher requires an understanding of performance-driven experiential teaching to know how to guide the children.</p>	<p>Allen, T.T. and Williams, L.D. 2012. Boal, 1979, 1995, 2002, 2006. Catterall, J.S. 2007. Downey, J.A. 2008. Evjáková, D. 2017. Hammond, 2015. Neelands (in Innes, M. Moss, T and Smigiel, H. 2001), Joronen, K. Häkämies, A and Åstedt-Kurki, P. 2011. Noddings, 2013. Williams and Williams, 2010. Katie and Mitchell, 2002; Botvin and Griffin, 2004, 2010, 2014. Shapiro 2011. Midha 2010. Bandura, 1977. Perls, 1970. Ellis, 1991. Rohd, 1998. Winston, J. 2001. Wong, J. 2014.</p>

Table 5.1 Overview of the five themes and which authors were referenced in each discussion

In this case study research, the aim was to ascertain how Grade 6 learners would respond to the entire scope of Boal’s (1979, 1995, 2002) Forum Theatre as a workshop approach and explore how it would assist them with learning new life skills and dealing with conflict through the Forum’s problem-solving approach.

In the explorative stage of the workshop, the Boal theatrical games introduce and hone various performance skills in the participants. Boal’s games increased awareness of how the body communicates, developed trust between participants and made them more able to use their

bodies as instruments to communicate (cf. 3.3.1). The activities also built self-esteem to support the participants, either when performing in the class problem play or when they were invited to step onto the stage to try and effect a change. The creative process and the group dynamic improvements that happened while engaging with the games and activities during the case study indicate that improvement occurred in the social dynamics of the class. When asked to provide feedback after the exploration stage, 132 out of 133 children responded that they had learned a variety of skills:

- Thirty-three learners stated they had learned improvisation skills;
- Nineteen learners became aware of their ability to communicate with their face and body;
- Eighteen learners reported improved confidence or had overcome their shyness;
- Twelve learners reported stimulation of their creativity;
- Forty-seven learners wrote and said they enjoyed the process, nine said they loved it, and sixty-three learners wrote they had fun and wished to learn in this manner again;
- Two learners wrote that less fighting was happening in their class;
- Eleven learners reported they had made new friends.

In contrast, eight learners stated:

- They had learned nothing from playing theatrical games and had found them boring;
- Three learners indicated they did not enjoy the eye contact activity. One did not like this game as they found it creepy.

The case study intervention ran over eight weeks of the eleven-week Term 3. Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher with my support worked with the classes in a performative manner for six weeks in which the learners created the problem play under adult guidance. During class in the seventh week of the programme, the learners wrote their feedback on the creative experience. In the final and eighth week, the four Grade 6 classes performed their problem plays respectively before another Grade 6 class who formed the audience for the Forum Theatre performance (cf. Table 5.3). The data used to describe the learners' learning experiences comes from various sources: the feedback on the creative process written by the 133 learners enrolled in Grade 6; the one on one interviews after the Forum Theatre performance with thirteen learners; interviews with the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, the register teachers of the Grade 6 classes (cf. Table 4.1) and HOD for Life Orientation as an overarching subject area; and the video footage recorded during the case study period. The next few sections describe what the learners reported learning in the workshop phase of the case study when they explored a topic and then created their class' performance on a topic which they found difficult to solve.

During class, I initially demonstrated the games to show Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, how I would use the games, and then she taught the games in the next classes. I made video recordings of the learners' responses to see how they would learn in the problem exploration and creative stage of the process. Secondly, I wished to record the reactions and responses of the learners after the performance of another Grade 6 Forum Theatre problem play. I wanted to find out if the learners would engage, suggest solutions and test the viability of the ideas through performance in the problem-solving stage of Boal's Forum Theatre methodology (Boal 1979, 1995, 2002).

The literature study, which preceded the case study research indicated that there were two main approaches when theatre-makers applied Forum Theatre techniques. The first approach was for a full community-based, workshopped Forum Theatre approach as envisioned by Boal (1979, 1995, 2002) with both a devising, preparation section, and a problem-solving section. The second approach was the shorter partial, application based on the Joker led discussions and problem-solving solution exploration after the performance of an already created problem play. This case study followed the full workshop process approach to Forum Theatre in a school context. The learners first played games and explored themes to identify a suitable problem for their class performance scene in which their protagonist has a problem they cannot solve. The literature indicates the shorter performance-focused approach has been explored more extensively in schools and has parameters. Theatre makers (Day 2002; Rutten et al. 2010; Durden and Nduhuna 2007) generally choose to apply the shorter approach as it is less time consuming, and they employed professional actors to act in the problem play. The disadvantage of this choice is a diminished identification by the audience with the performance on stage as the target community as the audience engages less easily when the scene does not originate from within the community.

Boal's interventions would allow members from a community to first participate in the creative process, to be a part of getting to understand the dynamics of a core social problem. The amateur actors performed the resulting play arising from the group's explorations before their community. The benefits of the workshop approach are that the audience identifies more easily with the actors. When the audience is presented only with the performance of a problem and the debate and spect-acting stage of a forum intervention, under the guidance of a Joker (Rutten et al. 2010), the identification of the audience with the problem presented on stage could be less intense. Similarly, Day (2002) took a play into schools that dealt with the life of refugee children now living in England. In this instance, homeless youth and refugee actors who had first-hand experiences inspired the content of the performance. The performance was created outside of the school and then presented as a Forum Theatre performance with Joker guidance for various groups of school children.

5.2. THEME 1 - PROCESS ADJUSTMENTS WITHIN A SCHOOL SETTING.

The first theme describes and discusses the teaching process followed during this case study and adjustments made in a school setting. It discusses the devising, creative activities, and then looks at the decision-making exploration that occurred during the Forum Theatre performance on the last day of the case study.

At the request of the school, I drew up nine lesson plans for Beatrix, the HOD for Life Orientation, and Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher. The lesson plans (Appendix G – lesson plans) aimed to provide clarity and structure to the CA lessons, needed to prepare the Grade 6 learners for the four stages of a Forum Theatre workshop. The “first stage is “knowing the body,” the second is “Making the body expressive, the third is “Theatre as language,” and the fourth is “Theatre as discourse” (Boal. 1979: 126). The focus of the first two stages is on preparing the bodies of the participants by making them more aware and expressive as actors in a role. The third stage moves the devising process “from passivity to action,” and the fourth stage is the performance that takes place in the Forum where “the participant has to intervene decisively in the dramatic action and change it” (Boal. 1979: 126). When the learners were playing games, they were busy with embodied learning and acquiring improvisation skills to help them devise, as a class, a problem scene or performance that would form the basis of their Forum Theatre explorations for solutions. During the spect-acting process, the learners also use their bodies and improvisation abilities to demonstrate through the performance of a role what they mean to communicate about the kind of behaviour that will solve the dilemma for the protagonist.

The process described in each lesson plan clarifies the steps to be taken. The lesson plan explains what the games aim to achieve and how the activities assist with, i.e., characterisation and image-making. The lessons follow a more performative, experiential teaching approach. During these performative teaching, experientially driven lessons (including the Forum), the learners could explore and experience human behaviour and situations through role-play, improvisation, image-making, three-dimensional sculpting, characterisation, and storytelling. As is evident in the discussion of the three central themes, the activities enhanced the social understanding of the learners, taught them life skills and an awareness of how their bodies communicate. The last day of the case study aimed to establish if the learners and their teacher would be able to engage within a Forum Theatre exploration to find a solution for each of the protagonists or victims who feature in the problem plays.

5.2.1. Overview of the activities that took place

The first six CA lessons presented to the four Grade 6 classes respectively during the case study aimed at devising four problem plays. These short scenes were then performed before the other Grade 6 learners to enable a Forum Theatre problem-solving exploration. During this Forum, the learners were asked to search for solutions to help the protagonist deal with the central conflict or problem presented in the short scenes. Under the guidance of the Joker, played by the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, possible solutions needed to be found by the learners in the audience. After suggesting a viable plan, the audience member gets to test their idea in the re-run of the problem play. Spect-actors actively try out their solution by stepping into a role and then attempting to solve the problem causing the conflict situation. Their idea was tested behaviourally through performance to check the viability of the solution.

Date	Activity	Aim
Early June 2016	Gained permission to do my research component at this SA Primary school	I had a discussion with the HOD of Life Orientation at the school to explain my intended case study.
17 June 2016	Initial presentation to teachers at the primary school	HOD and Grade 5, 6 and 7 Life Orientation teachers attended
23 June 2016	Request to draw up lesson plans	Provided clarity about what I wanted to do in the various lessons taught at the school
12 July 2016	Lesson plans handover to HOD at the school	Discussed the content of the lessons I had created for the creation of a problem play for presentation at a Forum Theatre day
19 July 2016 – Day 1 of Term 3	Lesson A – marking of old VHS box repurposing task.	Marked the creative project, it was a project done over the holidays
26 July 2016	Lesson B – Line dancing lesson in the school hall	Line dancing activities and marking of group dance performances
2 August 2016	Performance lesson 1	Establishing ground rules, improvisation training and establishing trust
9 August 2016	Women's' day	Public holiday
16 August 2016	Performance lesson 2	Activation of imagination and improvisation training
23 August 2016	Performance lesson 3	Activation of imagination and focus on non-verbal communication and values clarification

30 August 2016	Performance lesson 4	Image making and 'sculpting' with physical bodies
6 Sept. 2016	Performance lesson 5	Improvisation, introduction of dialogue into played scenarios and completing an image
13 Sept. 2016	Performance lesson 6	Created a dance sequence, a song or a drawing to compliment the problem play
14 Sept. 2016	Lesson 7	Children wrote their reflections on the creative process
21 Sept. 2016	Last performance lesson (no 8): Forum Theatre Events	Attempted using Forum Theatre to solve a problem presented in each class performance
27 Sept. 2016	Interviews with learners and teachers	Collect data from the learners and teachers to find out how they experienced the lessons and the Forum Theatre performance.
28 Sept. 2016	Exit Interviews with the CA teacher and HOD for Life Orientation.	Collect data from the HOD and teachers to find out how they experienced the lessons and the Forum Theatre performance

Table 5.2 Overview of activities that took place at the school before and during the third term

5.2.2. Experiential learning challenges

While working with Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, it became clear to me that she approached the intervention from a traditional, script-based, school play production perspective. It was not evident to her when I explained in my initial presentation at the school that we were going to create and devise our plays with each class and that the topic of the conflict situation was going to come from the learners. She was also not aware that the teaching approach would be experiential. Preferring her teaching approach, she continuously tried to teach the classes traditionally by first explaining the theory and then allowing the learners to try it out. She was also very concerned about how she would be assessing them on their ability to execute tasks. We had already allocated marks to the learners at the start of the term. The learners were not assessed on their drama abilities, nor on their levels of contribution or participation during the case study. The assessment part was also not incorporated as part of the lesson plans as the focus was more to see if the learners would be able to manage the process and make meaningful contributions. There were very high levels of participation and enjoyment and judging from the feedback on the devising part of the process, most of the learners indicated

they had learned something from the experience. Just as the children were different individuals, their learning varied and linked to their own context, background and experiences.

The teaching required in the case study was performance-based, experiential teaching where children discover the knowledge or skill they need to learn through activities and games, not through a teacher's explanation of the theory supported by a textbook as is customary in a school. Because the lessons were different, Alice said:

I had to get my head around something that I had no clue of. It is no secret that I am no drama queen. ... I must say when you explained to me what it was all about; I didn't understand it. ... I did not know what you wanted, and it made me quite fearful because I didn't know where I have to go with this. ... I could not connect the games with the [problem] play. (Exit interview).

Wong (2014:2) did a research project which included a wish to develop the subject and pedagogical knowledge of his non-drama trained colleagues. He came to realise that the content was not the issue that was problematic for his colleagues. "Rather, it was their lack of confidence in facilitating activities in the drama classroom given that the teacher-student relationship or dynamics very much differ from what they were accustomed to." The teachers associated drama teaching with confidence and extroverted behaviour and a "loss of authority as a teacher due to the shift in power dynamics in a drama classroom" (Wong 2014:3). CA lessons are participative and active, very different from when a teacher is explaining abstract cognitive, mathematical, or scientific principles to a child. The discomfort that Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, experienced was partly due to the different dynamics occurring when teaching drama. She was also uncertain about how to deal with the experiential way in which she had to teach in a large class size of thirty-five children.

Daunted by having to trust the creative process of devising to arrive at a scene together with the learners, Alice pushed to find a topic and scene for each class to perform at the Forum Theatre performance as soon as possible. To accommodate her need for clarity on the topic, we asked children to write down what caused conflict for them. Their feedback helped us with a brainstorming activity that eventually led to scenarios we could use in our class plays.

Life skills acquisition is related to moral education in that it assists children with acquiring good manners. Williams and Williams (2010: 369-370; cf. 2.5.2.) in their book about learning life skills emphasise that children need to establish ethical values such as honesty, kindness, compassion, tolerance, and patience (cf. 2.5.2.2). In the Williams and Williams (2010) life skills course, participants are encouraged to apply self-restraint and introspection when facing a problem. Their method teaches participants to hold back on angry responses and first access

a situation to develop better insight into their feelings to gain more self-knowledge. They also appeal to the inner voice that reasons with the self, to reflect on other people's perspectives (Williams and Williams 2010: 115; cf. 2.5.2.1). Such introspection into another person's perspective came into play in the many scenarios enacted and explored through improvisation during the performative CA classes held during this case study. The children could observe how their own lives were either similar or different from what they saw demonstrated in class.

Alice often indicated that the aims of the games were not clear enough for her. However, the lesson plans indicate the aims of the games. Lesson plan one stated that the children would "[p]lay games to introduce dramatic improvisation and scene creation activities" (Lesson 1.1.2). The games aimed to develop cohesion, building up of life skills, establishing trust, awareness, and ease with improvisation and embodied communication. Further, the lesson plans mention the games help to improve the ability of the children to focus, increase their participation, build up their discipline, and their awareness of each other. The third game also "reduce[d] the self-consciousness of the children." "Circle dash" focused them on eye contact and on the reading of the other person's facial expressions and how body language can be used to communicate. "Cover the space" gave awareness of others in the space, developed their concentration, challenged them to listen and to respond to instructions. The 'Minefield' game helped the children to develop trust, be more playful, and improve group communication. When considering the reflections of the learners, their feedback shows some had understood what skill they were applying in each game.

Hammond (2015: location 790 of 2469) explains that the creative exercises of a Forum Theatre process "develop emotional awareness, memory, teamwork, imagination, and muscular, body and sensory awareness." He also explains that the devising part of creating a problem play helps the children to discover more about the topic during play, and through such "theatre activities, they are empowered to share their feelings and thoughts through carefully constructed characters and scenarios. Role-play allows [them] a safe space" ... "in which their concerns are raised and approached indirectly" (Hammond 2015: location 555 of 2469). This process of devising is "known as externalisation" (White and Epston 1990 in Hammond 2015). It functions such that a participant can work with concepts addressed in the artistic space outside and "external from ourselves. Externalisation is the key psychological process used in the workshops in which children are creating their own plays" (Hammond 2015: location 555 of 2469).

As discussed in Chapter 2, Kolb (1984: 23) "emphasizes that when accommodation processes (ability to learn from a hands-on experience) are stronger than those of assimilation (understanding a wide range of information and condensing it into a concise, logical form), this

leads to imitation." However, when the opposite occurs, it leads to playing. Both imitation and playing processes were experienced during the case study lessons. For example, after seeing the teacher demonstrate how a human rhythm machine can be built up together with the actions of other children in the class, the learners could also explore the activity. At first, they could imitate what they had observed, after which they added in their movement ideas. In groups of six children, they were able to create their rhythm machine playfully. As Kolb explains, the process of experiential learning tends to move through a cyclical pattern with concrete experiences to abstract thoughts on one continuum and active behaviour to reflective thought on another continuum, for a cycle or spiral that then begins all over again, the next time at a higher level of understanding and cognitive functioning. So, with the rhythm machine exercise, the children could see what the teacher was doing, understand what they saw happening and based on their understanding thereof, think of their movements, which they then executed. A sequence of other children's observations, understanding, thoughts led to deciding what they could do in response to the first movement and actions before they added their movement to the rhythm machine of the group. It was challenging, especially for the last two or three participants, who found it more challenging to find a gap in the interaction where they needed to add another movement to the machine. Keeping the first movements going till everyone in the group had contributed, on the other hand, was physically demanding for the first contributors of each rhythm machine (See section 2.4.2.5).

As Zull (2002, 2012) explains the nature of learning, people will process input related to "experience, reflection, hypothesis, and active testing" in four specific areas of the brain, "the sensory, reflective, abstracting, and acting brain" (Zull 2002: 27). The experience-driven learning process is closer to the human learning cycle, as explained by Zull, as it requires the teacher to approach teaching differently: beginning with sensory experiences, then aiding or enabling the process of reflection, such as 'what did I experience?' and 'what does that mean?' then moving on to thinking in an abstract manner to 'what can I do with the insight gained?' This insight develops into a plan and then goes over into being active when executing the idea. Playing games or doing activities offers children such experiences. Children try to discover how it works through doing and this links to performative inquiry where children learn experientially through their explorations by means of the games, activities and improvisations they do during their performative experiences in a Boalian structured drama class.

I observed how Alice and the class worked with what the experience activates in ideas and plans; she could thus aid the cycle of creative and social learning for children in the CA classroom. The rhythm machine was such an example. The first child in the group thinks of a movement he or she can do for a while, such as standing and lifting a foot, lower leg, and knee and then placing them down on the floor again. The next child sees the movement, considers

what that means for a range of possible movements, reflects on how he or she can add to that, then decides to swing the leg into the gap created by the lifting leg of the other child and swinging it back before the leg movement goes down again. Thus, the learners created their new idea and plan of action, after which they added their movement to the first person's movement. It requires them to be mindful of the other person too. In this manner, the machine is built collectively by a third, fourth, fifth and sixth person also going through this cycle of seeing what is already happening, then reflecting on what this means, then planning to add to the collective movement and contributing their action to the collective machine. Such activity fosters co-operation with others and requires creative thought, the ability to plan and to contribute to the success of the group.

The games and improvisation experiences are processes in which the learners are learning and applying their understanding of the various roles in the collective improvised and role-played experience. How one child would respond in an improvised scene was not necessarily the same for another child, but they had in common that they were exploring their physical embodied and creative responses to the challenges given. The games and activities assisted in this process. The experiential learning in these activities helped the learners to listen, observe, stay focused, and be adaptive in responding to another person within their pretended reality.

In another lesson, Alice asked the learners to demonstrate different kinds of handshakes, such as those between two friends, or two colleagues, or an older and a younger person. She decided that the learners should demonstrate their handshakes in succession rather than in parallel, as had been suggested in the lesson plan. The lesson plan approach would allow for a few groups to do this at the same time. She also did not link one handshake to the next one as the "complete the image" activity had suggested. Instead, everyone in the class showed a different type of handshake. Actively demonstrating their greeting sequence did not lead to an interactive chain of greetings. The original plan was for two people to greet each other, followed by a frozen moment where the second person would remain frozen, and the first person would step out of the scene. A third person would then respond with a handshake appropriate to the stance of the second person. Instead, in the actual lessons, after each handshake, the class had to identify what type of greeting they had seen in the demonstration, and then two new learners would demonstrate a handshake.

By making these changes, Alice appeared to seek to maintain class discipline better as everyone focused on a central space where the activities were happening. The choice to avoid the sequential part limited the learners in groups being able to try out different variations themselves and left less time to add more depth to the various characters the learners had

presented. Rather than trying various handshakes and related characters out in parallel in smaller groups, everyone in the class focused on the central activity, and the observers were only aware of their non-verbal communication ability indirectly as they could not try them out through their own experiences in smaller groups. In this case, the way the learners learned was more vicarious than experiential.

The lesson plan had intended the “complete the image” activity to show an interactive sequence of different handshakes. After a handshake was recognised and understood, another child was supposed to respond to the first frozen image with a new handshake, which again ended in a frozen way. Then the second handshake idea could be analysed and discussed while it was frozen. The pattern repeats in this way. Freezing the action to analyse it, helps to train the learners for the calling “Stop!” and then replacement of a role that happens later in the final Forum performance. The structure of the activity was not always clear to the teacher, so she adjusted the lesson from an experiential approach to her teaching style and comfort zone of a more observant, cognitive approach to teaching. Possibly this was to make the sizeable class behave in a calmer, quieter, and disciplined manner. The consequence was that the learners did not practise the ‘freeze’ moment as a preparation for the Forum Theatre performance held at the end of the case study. The learners also did not play ‘The glass cobra, the string puppet or the Columbian Hypnosis’ games (Boal 2002) that Saldaña (2005) had recommended as suitable games for playing with young children (cf. 3.3.3).

However, during the handshake activity, I observed numerous sequential greetings; greetings between friends, more formal ones between a principal and a teacher, or a child; snooty middle-aged ladies greeting each other, a gangster greeting, a salute, a bow with the hands together as done in Thailand, and an angry or hostile greeting. The sequence made the children aware of how something as simple as a greeting between two people can communicate a great deal more. This activity explained how they could employ body language to communicate without words what kind of person they are showing to other people.

Another activity was called “values clarification.” The learners enjoyed the activity, and it led to the insight that they could have different responses to a situation. Reading a statement out loud, the learners had to choose where they wanted to stand in response to the statement. They had to decide if they ‘agreed,’ ‘were unsure’ or ‘disagreed.’ The children loved the activity probably because they were all able to make choices, respond to the statements, demonstrate and explain why they chose their position. Everyone was involved physically by moving to a dedicated space in a low exposure manner, and they had to consider why they had moved there.

Moral development also occurred during the lesson sequence as during one of the statements, “Dishonest behaviour is okay as long as you do it in secret,” a lively discussion came about between the class and their teacher. Some children could see nothing wrong with resorting to dishonesty if their transgression remained secret. They were very resistant to the counter-arguments of the rest of the class who tried to convince them that it was not acceptable behaviour. The activity had explicitly said that no-one was to pass judgment on another person as it was intended to show how different the people in their class are. The aim was to teach the life skill of tolerance. The strong response to react came from the teacher, Alice, and the most prominent group who felt it was wrong to be dishonest. The few girls, however, refused to budge from their position and said, “But everyone is doing it.” The teacher reacted strongly to their stance by telling them that this behaviour is morally wrong. Some children wrote in their feedback reflections it had taught them the value of being honest in life (See life skills discussion in theme 3; cf. 5.4.5). Once again, learners’ personal experience, their feelings, and thoughts on the topic, and choosing to take a position triggered the learning in the activity. They also needed to be able to motivate why they chose the agree, unsure, or disagree position. A child sometimes changed his or her mind and moved to another group after listening to another person’s perspective on a statement, as they gained a better understanding.

The fourth lesson on image-making was a very successful performative and experiential learning class. A contributing factor was Alice and I opened the space by moving the tables away so that the children were seated in a circle. It was much easier for them to stand up and step into the creative space when the teacher invited them to do so. During the three-dimensional sculpting activity, the learners demonstrated various situations rather than telling about them. High levels of engagement resulted from this physically active and demonstrative lesson. The image-making experiences were highly engaging. As Beck (1990:90) writes, imagery techniques can help children gain more realistic perspectives on the situations through the images they make; they can explore them and arrive at ones that are more realistic in their social context.

In one instance, after the bell had gone for a break, the Grade 6 C class, as one big group, remained seated and asked if they could continue into their break time. In all the years of teaching, Alice had never experienced anything like this. She was amazed and commented children always wanted to go for their break. Alice and I discussed the positive imaging lesson with the PSW teacher (Simon) after the children had left. Inspired and intrigued, he was keen also to experience what we did in the class, so we tried it out in his next Grade 7 class. It did not work as well there most likely because these learners lacked the experiential learning

which the Grade 6 children had benefited from in performative games and activities of the previous lessons that had led up to the image-making class.

Boal's understanding of how the theatrical language enhances knowledge transfer is dealt with in section 3.3.3.1. To recap, the performed story told on a stage allows for plasticity as it includes both memory and imagination in the telling of a story. The theatrical space also is dichotomic because the real and the imagined can occur at the same time. The actor is himself and simultaneously is the character role that he plays while he performs on stage. How the audience experiences the story can be influenced as elements of the story can also be seen in telescopic and in microscopic detail. For instance, an idea can become more significant by lifting the small minimal matter out and making it more visible. For Boal the "specific therapeutic function of the theatre resides in seeing and hearing" (cf. 3.3.3.2). We can also look at a situation with more distance (telescopic), and then we can change the internal image through greater insight that is gained by the theatrical image. Further, the dramatic enactment becomes the rehearsal space for new behaviour options that can be used. The 'image of the real' is also 'real as image', and this is how the pretend reality on stage enables the rehearsal space for real life. Theatre can coax out the hidden parts of the characters that are studied and shown on stage (cf. 3.3.3.2).

In the first dialogue and story development lesson (Appendix G, lesson 5) presented to the Grade 6 (CA) class (i.e., Class 6A), Alice also deviated from the prepared lesson plan to take a more theoretical approach. She began the class by teaching the children what the elements of a good story are. Teaching this information would normally happen at the beginning of a creative writing exercise. The elements she taught them were the following: a good story needs a clear time and place where it occurs. The introduction of the characters, and the conflict between them should be indicated. The conflict amongst these fictional personalities is central to a drama and a story. A good plot leads to a crisis or conflict moment, which is the climax of a story. The ending of a good story contains a twist, a tragedy, a crisis, or an obstacle that needs overcoming. The creator of a story must define a reason 'why?' to build up to the climax moment after which a resolution can be brought about. All the loose ends of the story should be tied up at the end. The story can result in the main character being successful or unsuccessful, punishment or reward can ensue, and the hero or heroine can be victorious or can suffer defeat. At the end of the story, it works well to leave the listener with a message. Themes can be ideas that cross over time and cultures because they deal with matters such as love, hate, perseverance, and determination. A good story can also leave you with a moral lesson that comes out of the story. According to the above information, she taught the Grade 6 learners the theory behind good storytelling.

To apply the abstract theory described above in a concrete manner, the teacher tried to get a storytelling chain going amongst the children, but each time when the story came to the point where they needed to work out a plot, the story would die. The children also had to be coached and taught how to describe the time in more detail and to identify the setting to help build up the story. As an example, she demonstrated how a story works by telling her rendition of Little Red Riding Hood and added in a few novel twists.

After the lesson, I together with Alice concluded that the children did not struggle to indicate time, place, or character but were unable to weave a plot for a story supported by what they knew and what she had taught them with her verbal explanation. In response, Alice decided to try a different approach in the same lesson presented to the next Grade 6 (CA) class (i.e., Class 6B). Both of us were not sure why the storytelling process had stalled. Alice surmised the children were not yet able to tell a story from a third person's perspective.

In hindsight, I think it had to do not giving the children enough time to develop the characters of the protagonist and the antagonist first and then identifying the kind of conflict that could occur between them to investigate what would lead them onto a path of conflict. After that, the setting or space where their story and conflict took place can be fleshed out. To support the story, the other characters (bystanders or allies of the protagonist or antagonist) also need to be developed. A dialogue develops authentically after all the characters are in place. Possibly the learners were not supported in creating realistic characters first, doing that rather would naturally have led them to a relevant conflict situation between them. The characterisation activity and thinking about what would cause conflict between a protagonist and an antagonist could then form the basis for the dialogue in the ensuing problem play.

The lesson plan (Appendix G, Lesson 5) that deals with characterisation needed more information about developing the characters in more depth. An actor needs to know what his/her character desires intensely, and the point of crisis between the antagonist and the protagonist should be studied so that the danger in the conflict is clear as well as the opportunity for development because the knot between them is unravelled and understood by the actors on stage. Boal provides a list of activities that can be utilised to deepen the understanding of the characters (Boal 1995: 59).

During the same lesson presented to the third Grade 6 (CA) class (i.e., Class 6C), Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, asked the learners to work in groups of six to develop a short scene with a protagonist (victim), an antagonist (villain/perpetrator), and a person to whom they would relate their story (bystander). This strategy was much more successful and led to the improvisation of some exciting scenes. After a scene was played out, Alice asked the rest of the class what it was they had seen happening in the scene. In general, the descriptions of the

children matched what was happening well. It was interesting to watch, and the characters were authentic and believable.

Alice then took each character from a good scene around the circle of seated children asking them to describe what type of character each person was playing. The class indicated very accurately what kind of social background each character had. They said two bullies were “thugs” who had no self-respect. Surprisingly this class (Class 6 B) also had the insight to identify that the playground teacher (a character in the story produced by this class) was inexperienced. The class read the social fabric of the performed scene very well. Therefore, beginning the improvised scene instruction by indicating to the children the need for an antagonist, protagonist, and a bystander worked much better than the theory introducing characterisation as had happened in the first Grade 6 lesson (i.e., Class 6A). The children were able to come up with realistic characters and relevant scenes in which such characters would naturally occur. In this example, the experiential learning approach worked better than the cognitive theoretical approach.

In the final problem plays that were presented as Forum Theatre performances, as many children were involved as possible. This was done by allocating as many roles (actors, dancers, rap singers, mimes, stage managers, and directors) as possible. Everyone who was not yet on stage became directors for their classmates and were tasked to write down improvement tips for the stage performers.

5.2.3. Forum Theatre exploration for solutions

The Forum Theatre performances took place in the eighth week (21 September 2016). The initial plan had been to allow the four Grade 6 classes to perform their problem plays before all the other Grade 6 children in the hall. On the day, the school hall unexpectedly was no longer available, necessitating us to relocate. Instead, we allowed each class to perform their play in the CA classroom before another class as an audience. All the children experienced both sides of the Forum, but they only saw their play explored in the Forum and then also acted as the audience who searched for solutions for the performed problem play of another Grade 6 class. The solution kept the audience numbers smaller and made it more manageable for Alice who performed the role of the Joker in the Forum.

Period 3 and 4	Class 6A – performed <i>Unfair Accusation</i>	Class 6C - Audience
Period 5 and 6	Class 6B – performed <i>Sandwich Stealing</i>	Class 6D - Audience
Period 7 and 8	Class 6C – performed <i>Family Trouble</i>	Class 6B - Audience
Period 9 and 10	Class 6D – performed <i>Cyber Pressure</i>	Class 6A - Audience

Table 5.3 Overview of which performing class and which audience class worked together in each Forum Theatre session

From the first attempt, Alice and I realised how important it was to do a warm-up activity to engage the audience in the search for solutions. The learners were tepid in engaging with spect-acting and showed us it was not wise to cut the warmup activity out for the sake of expediency. In the second class (Class 6B - ‘*Sandwich Stealing*’), the initial audience game had the desired effect as it made the audience class more expressive and willing to contribute. As Boal teaches, it is important to allow a little time for discussion between audience members as they need to establish their responses first before suggesting solutions to the problem placed before them.

5.2.3.1. First Forum Theatre exploration: Class 6A, ‘Unfair accusation’

Class 6A was the first to perform their play about an *Unfair Accusation* where child A is being accused falsely of stealing money from child B just because she had done so once in the past. This time child A was innocent as she had learned from her prior transgression, but her peers had not yet forgiven her or allowed her past to rest, so the earlier transgression continued to haunt her. Child A was unable to prove her innocence. Alice first discussed the content of the performance with the class and established who the victims were. In this case, they established that both child B, who lost her money, and child A, the unfairly blamed child, are the victims. She asked the audience to discuss how they could help the victims (Clip 2140) amongst themselves. In the first replacement, the change put forward was that the friend of child B reminds her that she cannot accuse another person of theft unless she has clear proof. The friend also suggests they first find out with the camera footage, which person took the money from her schoolbag (Clip 2143).

During the first spect-acting attempt, problem-solving, Alice, the teacher, was still very uncertain about the followed procedure. Initially, she allowed replacing all the roles, after which

we saw the children replay the same scene with no meaningful change. The children just wanted the opportunity to perform in character rolls to show how they would play the character. For them bringing about change seemed to be interpreted as how to play the same role differently but as an actor of the role. The discussion, before Alice allowed spect-actors on stage, had also not led to a good idea being offered and explored first before allowing a child to step on stage to bring about meaningful change for the victims. Alice had not yet fully understood what it was she needed to do in her role as Joker to facilitate between the characters in the pretend reality on stage and the audience.

Hammond (2015), with his innovative application strategies in how to explore the merits of a suggested idea with children first, could have been helpful. His solutions help the audience to engage and clarify the children's thoughts and ideas more clearly during the discussions. As a qualified psychologist, he recommends the discussion should motivate the audience to use their cognition, their emotions, and their understanding of life to engage with the content. When he did a Forum Theatre workshop, he "told the spect-actors they could shout 'stop!' as soon as they saw or heard anything that might represent a challenge to the protagonist" (Hammond 2015: location 1338 of 2469). For more on the Spect-actor, see section 3.3.8 in Chapter 3.

Moreover, Hammond provided scaffolding to the children as they would first practise the process of shouting 'stop' before they began the replay of a scene. After the 'stop!' the facilitator would first ask why the child had called out 'stop.' The reason for this was to make sure first if it was clear what the prospective spect-actor knew about who was being 'challenged' and who was doing the 'challenging,' or otherwise to establish if there was a different way of explaining the situation shown on stage. Hammond (2015) also introduced techniques such as 'hot seating' (a concept that was initially developed by Perls (1970, 1972) (cf. 2.3.2) in his Gestalt therapy), and 'role reversal' (first introduced by Ellis (1991:454) (cf. 2.2.6) in Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy) in the Forum. 'Hot seating' means a character sits in a chair and is asked questions while in role to clarify the perspective and motivation of that character. 'Role reversal' means people exchange roles so an individual could imagine how a situation looked from the perspective of the other person before the new character or behaviour became introduced on stage as a response arising from the suggestions of the audience. These are ways that assist children with creating clarity about the motivations of the various characters and with discovering their perception of the central conflict. Before replay, Hammond (2015) would go into a huddle with the actors to keep their focus clear on what their aim as antagonistic actors was.

In the first Forum solutions exploration in response to the '*Unfair Accusation*' play (Class 6A), the only behavioural change the children were able to come up in their last attempt with spect-

acting was to check if the pocket, of the “suspected” Child A, was empty and did not have the stolen money in it. They also asked the girl if she had seen anybody near the book-bag from which the money had disappeared earlier (Clip 2146). In the ‘*Family Trouble*’ Forum Theatre exploration (Class 6 C), the children could make suggestions such as “he could be kinder” to solve the problem for the protagonist, but they were not yet able to demonstrate the behaviour on their own. In the first Forum presentation (Class 6A), Alice, the teacher, was not yet proficient in asking all the right questions to encourage the audience to suggest viable solutions to the problem or to draw out a discussion between the children in the audience to arrive at viable change solutions. The ability to engage with the audience improved as she worked with the following groups.

Interestingly the learners in Class 6A were socially in tune with their broader political landscape as they had made a rap song called *Don’t steal*. The song referred to the political situation of South Africa in 2016, a time rife with corruption accusations levelled against the former president, Jacob Zuma, by the Economic Freedom Front constituency who chanted ‘*pay back the money*’ to challenge Zuma.

5.2.3.2. Second Forum Theatre exploration: Class 6B, ‘Sandwich Stealing’

The second performance was by Class 6B, who had created the ‘*Sandwich Stealing*’ scene, which was about bullies on the school grounds who steal other children’s lunches. The teacher, who was supposed to help the ‘victims,’ is tricked into believing the opposite is true. A threat was made physically by a bully through his “I will cut your throat” gesture to intimidate a witness to the prior action of stealing sandwiches. The playground teacher had not noticed that he did this. Initially, the audience did not notice the threatening gesture either. Frightened by the bully, the snitch twists the truth and blames the victims, thus flipping the situation inside out (Clip 2149) for the two ‘victims’. The rap song by the boys in this class emphasised the powerless position of the playground children with the line “What about our friends who did nothing wrong.”

In contrast, the girls had made a song about their feelings (cf. Appendix H – copies of the rap and song text of this class). In different ways, the two genders in the class gave a response to the core oppression happening in the scene. The gendered behaviour differences concur with the experience of Saldaña (2005:132) (cf. 5.3.3), who found similar response differences between boys and girls. This could point to gendered differences between children at that developmental age.

It became clear in discussion with Alice, the teacher, that not everyone had seen the hidden physical gesture threat made by one of the bullies. The teacher showed the audience that there were two victims in the scene. The bullies robbed two children of their sandwiches, so

these children were victims, and the other victim was the witness/snitch who came to tell the teacher what she had seen happening. Here the first spect-actors attempted bringing about change and this showed similar replaying of the roles as 'actors' playing the role rather than spect-actors who step in as 'solvers of the conflict' to replace roles and thus introduced no improvement in the outcome. Once again, the children just wanted an opportunity to be actors within a similar scene. After it was explained to them again what they needed to do, a spect-actor without first explaining to the group and Joker what she was planning to do, went in to replace the witness/snitch. This girl refused to be intimidated by the bullies and revealed to the teacher how the bullies were threatening her (Clip 2156). After that, the audience was not able to come up with further real changes in outcome. The teacher used the remainder of the lesson to tell the children what the adult solution to a similar problem would be. The weakness from a teaching perspective was a lack of discussion about the characters, their motivation, and their behaviour. Possibly this also had to do with too little time spent in the devising stage to develop the motivation and understanding of each of the characters. Further, there had not been enough training for Alice in the role of Joker for her to manage the process by identifying good ideas first before allowing the spect-acting. Training (cf. 5.6.5) would have helped her as the Joker to know which Socratic questions to ask as she would have understood the deeper levels of exploring the problem play better. Information about the role of the Joker in this thesis can be found in sections: 3.4.1.3; 3.4.2; 3.3.5; 3.3.7; and 3.3.9,

5.2.3.3. Third Forum Theatre exploration: Class 6C, 'Family Trouble'

After the '*Family Trouble*' performance by Class 6C, the Forum explorations showed us that despite discussion about kindness in their PSW class, the learners did not yet understand how care and kindness can solve a conflict situation. A girl in the audience mentioned that her friend had suggested "that the father needs to be kinder" to solve the conflict. The boy who initially suggested this solution was not willing to step on stage as a spect-actor, but the girl who spoke up for him was willing to give it a try. Possibly as it was not her solution, she was not able to model kind behaviour well enough to bring about a change. To aggravate the situation, in the replay, the 'mother' told the 'father' he needs to deal with his daughter so that she becomes more respectful of her, the new mother. She even tells the father, "It is not my fault her mother died" (clip 2165). Her insensitive comment drew a gasp from the audience shocked at the uncaring response played by the mother.

"What would be a more loving and caring response?" Alice asked the class. "Who are the victims?" (clip 2165). To clarify, Alice explained how they need to behave differently to make change happen. "The father first needs to comfort his wife" (clip 2165). They should not "start the conversation" before calm returned to the house. This conversation can only start once the emotions have settled down. As mom and dad are a team, they need to agree on the route

they want to follow to solve the fighting caused by manipulation of the one and insecurity of the other daughter. Alice had worked out how to improve the process of learning for the children, but she defaulted back into the role of the one telling the class what to do rather than finding a workable idea within the audience, and then fleshing the idea out further so that a child could demonstrate how to behave kinder as a spect-actor.

An example of participant modelling (Bandura 1977a: 195) occurred in the final spect-acting exploration when another audience member volunteered to play a caring father. After Alice's quick, discreet chat with a learner in which she gave the boy guidance on how to perform as a kind father, he went ahead and played a kind, understanding, and caring father. The solution was so effective that the class spontaneously started clapping to express their appreciation and endorsement of the performed behaviour. The palpable tension that had been created in the scene visibly dissipated when the boy dropped his voice to lower, kinder tones and calmed down the emotions and the fighting between the girls and their mother. Loving behaviour had entered the room, and it diffused the tension so that people could once again speak normally to each other, and a solution to their problem could become possible.

As already mentioned, Alice, the Grade 6 CA teacher, did not have Joker training before the programme started. To explain how the Forum works, she read the lesson plans, asked questions between classes, and watched a YouTube video of how Forum Theatre happened in an American school (YouTube - Theatre in Action. 2013). It would have helped her to receive more extensive Joker training before she performed the Joker role in the Forum. In most of the Forum intervention, she did not remain neutral, she did not analyse the situation but left the decision to the audience, and she was not 'Socratic' in her questioning of spect-actors. How to be the Joker gradually became more apparent to the teacher as she worked with the classes. After some children tried to be a kinder father figure in the Family Trouble play but were unable to change the outcome, she prompted a spect-actor in a quick private chat on how he could play the role. She, therefore, was no longer neutral but influenced the spect-actor, and she also did not engage much with the audience to search for answers to her questions. However, when she suggested a possible way of behaving kindly to the third spect-actor, she did succeed in assisting 'in the birth of ideas and actions.' The way the child modelled the behaviour resulted in the right outcome, and thus, the learners could see the effect that different behaviour could have on changing the conflict situation. So, there was a successful behavioural change in a proximal learning manner of engagement (Vygotsky 1978) but not in the way that Forum Theatre intended.

The evidence suggests the learners needed extra scaffolding as they were only able to perform different behaviour once the teacher had explained to them how to behave differently. Only

after receiving personal coaching was the third spect-actor in the role of the father, able to model the right behaviour. The behavioural change demonstrated to the class how effective this approach was, but the steps needed for the solution to work had to be sketched out to them first. The children were not able to arrive at a more loving response by themselves.

About the need for the introduction for more kindness, Noddings (2010:1469), in her article entitled *Moral Education in an Age of Globalization*, advocates for the adoption of Care Theory to guide our understanding and behaviour towards others in a diverse, globalised world. She emphasises that people are presently living in a world that needs to engage with others regularly, often others “whose values may differ from our own.” Further enabled through readily available mobile phone and streaming technology, people can talk to others from all over the world. This increased level of engagement with other cultures necessitates us to consider our efforts towards moral education from a “care” perspective. Thus, if we approach “the world through the relational ethic of caring, we are more likely to listen attentively to others” (Noddings 2010:1470). In a multicultural South African classroom, such attentiveness is much needed, as an educator “must evaluate and respond to a wide range of expressed needs” and “requires competence that spans a greater diversity of cultural contexts” (Noddings 2010:1470).

In the case study, when working with the learners through the various interactive games and activities, Alice, the teacher, and all the children in class become aware of how different their worlds are and where they are similar. Understanding the ‘other’ also helps to build tolerance for our mutual differences. Noddings (2010: 1471-72) emphasises “reciprocity” in that the ‘cared for’ need to show appreciation for the act of caring they receive. Otherwise, the carer in time could suffer from exhaustion or burnout. She writes that “caring-for [another] underlies our thinking about justice ... and morality” and that “moral education depends more directly on modelling than care ethics. Teacher-carers demonstrate their caring in everything they do” (2010:1471-72). For example, “in the case of bullying, ... a teacher shows care for both the bully and the victim when she explains to the bully that they demonstrated they were “strong” in a less effective manner. By saying, “You are a better person than that,” the teacher could turn the bully’s response into confirmation, and that builds this person up rather than breaks them down (Noddings 2010:1471-72). During the Forum Theatre workshop, the teacher was able to demonstrate through the performance of the boy in the role of the father whom she had coached, how introducing such caring behaviour brings about a meaningful change.

In line with the work done by Noddings (2010, 2013) on the ethics of care, modelling of such caring behaviour happened during the Forum Theatre performance when the child stepped up as a caring father figure. As a ‘one-caring’ person, the boy was able to alter the mood and

reality of the ones who were 'cared-for' in the scenario. By caring for the mother and showing understanding for the two fighting children, the tension on stage visibly discharged. Changed behaviour led to a 'surprised' response, evident on the face of the mother. The kind father modelling was an excellent example of where the children who were watching the caring actions and behaviour of another child in the role of the 'father' could extrapolate the core learning for application into their own lives. Both classes learned vicariously as everyone who was not part of the performed scene also watched and saw the effect of the change in behaviour.

The Forum experience of Class 6C taught them that changing the outcome for the protagonist is not easy. Twice someone tried to play a caring father but was unable to enact the necessary caring behaviour. Only after being prompted by the teacher was a boy able to enact a different response, which was focused on the others in the space, first dealing with their needs rather than his. Heightened or heated emotions and behaviour generally tend to attract more of the same emotional behaviour. However, the modelled kind approach was more effective and turned the situation around. The solution to counter the aggression lay in more self-control, as advocated by Katie (2002) and the Williams couple (2010) and their life skills training programmes that taught participants to counter angry emotional energy with calm and caring responses as this worked more effectively.

5.2.3.4. Fourth Forum Theatre exploration: Class 6D, 'Cyber Pressure'

Class 6D explored conflict arising out of mobile phone behaviour in the '*Cyber Pressure*' problem play. The children first showed how, as a group, they vented their frustration because of an unfair teacher who had given them too much homework. They expressed their frustration through swear words, and these were indicated by "beep, beep" sounds. It was late, after bedtime, and one of the children challenged the others with "What's with the swearing?" only to be told she should stop admonishing them or leave the group. Another child's mother then found her daughter still active on her cell phone late at night. Challenging her child, the mother demands the phone and reads the chat. Disgusted by the bad language, she threatens to take the phone to school and tell the headmaster about this. Playing to the audience, this mother exaggerated the upset mother role by adding some humour by telling the daughter she is "grounded for life."

In response to their problem play, Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, explained to the children that there should be rules about cell phone access and usage at their homes. As an example, she explained that in her home, she would look at the chats of her child regularly, and his handset would charge in her room overnight. Taking the mobile telephone away overnight removed the temptation of using it late at night instead of sleeping. The teacher pointed out

that the mother was not being a bully but was a responsible parent and had a responsibility to discipline her child if (s)he would be engaged in activities that are harmful to her/him. The victim in this scene is the child who tried to be the voice of reason but then received a backlash of being told to leave the group, which is an act of exclusion and that constituted bullying behaviour.

Once again, the process of the Forum was not adhered to when Alice just asked, “Who wants to replace the victim?” She did not first ask questions to ascertain if the audience understood what the play was about, to encourage empathy for the victim in the scene, and to challenge the audience to suggest ideas on how they could help the victim. She did not remind the audience that their task was to bring about change in the behaviour of the characters in the scene so that a different, more positive chain of events could unfold. It indicates that thorough teacher training and understanding of the Forum Theatre process would be essential to introduce Forum Theatre for problem-solving and modelling of better behaviour into the South African school curriculum.

During the next replay of the scene, a viable solution surfaced in that a spect-actor who replaced one of the ‘SMS-ing’ children says, “This is not right. God is watching us, and he is very disappointed in us”. The teacher zoned in on that comment and drew attention to it by saying to the boy, “Send that SMS message again!” In support, the teacher praised this boy and used the opportunity to explain to the group that this child did well because he did not care what his friends thought because he stood “up for what is right” (clip 2178). Here is an example where the teacher’s motivation raised the boy’s self-image and self-efficacy (Bandura 1977a).

The following provides context to the description of what happened in the last Forum performance and analysis of the problem of ‘*Cyber Pressure*’ (Class 6D). The Forum Theatre performance of Class 6D included a rap song about the learners’ focus and dependence on data, which underpins and enables the children’s social media access.

Data – Data – Data

WiFi – WiFi – WiFi

Airtime – Airtime – Airtime

We use it in our spare time, spare time

Never leave my home without my phone

Without a phone, I feel so alone

Whenever I try, I start to cry

Without WiFi, I feel so dry

Don’t be a loser,

It is your duty, duty, duty,

*To be a mature, mature, mature,
 Cell phone, cell phone user
 Data – Data – Data
 WiFi – WiFi – WiFi
 Airtime – Airtime – Airtime
 We use it in our spare time, spare time
 (Collected during the fieldwork for this case study)*

As communicated by the rap song, much interaction between children takes place through social media, such as WhatsApp and Instagram and interactive games on the internet. Besides speaking to each other face to face or meeting up for a shared physical activity, in this cohort's peer group, mobile phones, and their access to the internet facilitates their communication. Being excluded from the collective conversation is experienced as rejection by an individual in the group. Class 6D in the first week of the lesson sequence indicated they often had a conflict with their parents about their cyberspace behaviour. As this class had chosen this as their situation in which they encountered conflict, the Forum exploration was relevant to them and opened a guidance opportunity for their teacher about their behaviour in cyberspace. The children listened to her, but it was not clear if they agreed with her solution to the problem they faced.

5.2.3.5 Discussion on Forum Theatre performances

Botvin and Griffin (2004, 2010, 2014) (Chapter 2) are known for the effective life skills teaching programme in the United States. Over three decades they developed, researched, and taught life skills courses to school children in their early adolescence to increase their "social resistance" and enhance their "social and personal competence" to prevent substance abuse in teenagers and young adults. Their premise is that "abuse results from a complex interaction of several different factors, including cognitive, attitudinal, social, personality, pharmacological, biological, and developmental factors" (cf. 2.5.4). Harmful addiction rates are brought down substantially by teaching people generic social and personal skills in addition to resistance skills, through the preventative life skills courses taught by Botvin and Griffin. The list of life skills included in their prevention approach is "decision-making skills, interpersonal communication skills, assertiveness skills, and skills for coping with anxiety and anger" (2004, 2010, 2014). By involving the children in performance-based learning to teach them good decision making, communication, life skills, and insight into their social context, the children gain confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy when they break the oppression.

Bandura's (1977) (cf. 2.2.5.1) thinking about human social behaviour is of relevance here. He stated that people need an opportunity to practise new behaviour after they observe how it

works. Usually, in a traditional school class, a teacher first explains a new idea or concept to a class, after which they are expected to apply what they learned through exercises to test if they grasp the information taught to them. Often this is supported by the teacher writing on a big board and the children responding to that when they apply their understanding by writing in their exercise books. In the case of the Forum Theatre, the children who come up with a caring father solution did not just talk about the problem as a discussion between a few of them in the audience, they also explored and observed how it works using role-play and the performed enactment as a spect-actor who tried to do in in the pretended reality of the stage as well as by the other children who were watching vicariously. The teacher acted as a facilitator and catalyst for change. To enable experiential learning, she had to scaffold their learning, guide them to keep the exploration process relevant and assist the group with finding solutions. Bandura (1994:72) wrote that modellers were more effective in passing on their knowledge when they could explain why their solution worked well to reinforce the modelled 'good' behaviour.

Reflecting on all the performances, Alice mentioned the children tended to default to aggression as an answer to their problems.

... what I saw happen was the aggression just escalated and escalated and escalated and they got stuck there, they didn't know how to come out of it because in real life they are stuck there. In real life, they haven't come out of it, and that to me is a gap.
(Exit interview with Alice)

During this research, it became clear that with the guidance of the teacher, Forum Theatre could be used to teach children about the dynamics of conflict through performed behaviour. They experienced how an aggressive situation usually is not solved with more aggressive behaviour but rather achieved with calm and rational behaviour, infused with love, care, and kindness. Some of the learners instinctively knew where the answers to solving the scenes lay, and they struggled to spontaneously model the desired behaviour for bringing about a different outcome. The teacher suggested this was because they had not yet had enough of the right kind of behaviour modelled to them. During one of the Forum Theatre sessions, Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, was able to guide a spect-actor to model a kind and caring father's behaviour. The boy demonstrated how being caring defuses tension to enable more meaningful communication.

The pretend realities, performed in the Forum Theatre events linked to this case study, showed that the Grade 6 children were able to demonstrate, through powerless situations of their choosing, which situations are hard for them to resolve. Through role-play, children could explore, show, and experience how the dynamics of harmful behaviour can easily escalate.

Solutions could be explored in the pretend space to avoid such aggressive spirals. Through their experiences, the children could be guided to understand how their conduct can counter and change harmful behaviour.

Handled correctly, the techniques of Forum Theatre applied in CA classes can be used to help young people understand the social dynamics in a conflict situation. It can demonstrate how to change a response to avoid aggressive behavioural chain reactions. The solutions discovered through Forum Theatre's way of problem-solving introduced more mature, socially acceptable patterns through better modelling. Children discovered through experiential teaching how different behaviour enables better outcomes through an improved dramatic scene. They experienced how kinder, more caring behaviour dispels aggression from conflict situations.

The analysis of the data related to the experiential, performative approach to teaching children about conflict and powerless situations using a Forum Theatre workshop process when applied in the intermediate phase in a school context, is now ended. We move now to the second theme of this thesis, which is about the experiential learning and discovery brought about through playing games. By means of games and activities the children gain better self-awareness, insight into social dynamics, can develop trust, and gain confidence, integrate.

5.3. THEME 2 - EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND DISCOVERY THROUGH PLAY

In the following sections, the relevance and benefits arising out of Boal's activities and games to prepare the actors for performance on stage, are discussed in more detail. Reports of increased social insight, self-actualisation, and integration of intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual values occurred within this context. In this theme, the functions of games, the need for an introduction, a de-brief, and the suitability of the lesson plans for the developmental age of Grade 6 children are considered to situate the new learning for the children. An increase in various life skills such as empathy, self-esteem, respect, and tolerance was observed and mentioned by the children. The need for a safe learning space is essential for Forum Theatre success (cf. 3.4.5). Poulter (1995:19) cautions that when adapting materials out of Boal's methodology, this must be done with skill. Teachers would need a thorough grounding in Boal, his methods and the games and theatrical activities he collected and used very effectively over the years. The children also reported improved communication ability and better social integration after taking part in a sequence of performance lessons that were presented during a case study at a South African primary school.

5.3.1. *Playing games gives children social insight*

The data collected during my case study shows that the games and the performative exploration and creation of a short performance are beneficial stages in the Forum Theatre preparatory process. A full Forum Theatre intervention results in proper identification with a problem presented and has active participation. Children in the various class groups who participated in this case study shared that they had benefited from the performative teaching by gaining insight into themselves and their social context. The activities also provided a good foundation for children to engage in experiential learning.

Kolb and Kolb (2010), in their article on *Learning to play, playing to learn*, present their findings that in a playful learning context people have an opportunity for self-actualisation. The personal experiences of the participants of an amateur softball league were the context in which they analyse and describe the benefits of play in people's lives. They found that "self-actualisation extends beyond the development of softball skills; it extends into the arena of personal growth and development whereby some players come to grips with their inability to control anger or extreme competitiveness, while others experience awakening toward becoming more compassionate and accepting of others" (Kolb and Kolb 2010: 43). The article discusses the links between the ludic [playful] space and experiential learning. The respondents in their research "reported learning that was deeper and more personal, contributing to their personal growth and development in all areas of their lives. They spoke of gaining the courage to fail, of controlling negative emotion and competitiveness, of developing empathy and personal authenticity" (Kolb and Kolb 2010: 45). They explain that the space for experiential learning through play needs to be "safe and supportive, but also challenging. It must allow learners to oversee their learning and allow time for the repetitive practice that develops expertise" (Kolb and Kolb 2010: 45). The deep learning that participants in the play space experienced was linked to a balancing of their urges to be competitive but still play fair, or to be self-absorbed or show empathy for others, to be able to forgive themselves of transgressions and to experiencing their authentic self" (Kolb and Kolb 2010: 46).

Taken from an experiential perspective Kolb and Kolb (2010: 46) state that schools and organisations "are faced with the dilemma of balancing two seemingly contradictory goals: high productivity and efficiency vs creativity and learning" but "these goals are in fact complementary and need to coexist harmoniously" in conditions that allow for people to be "creative and productive". Allowing children an opportunity to engage with similar experiential learning opportunities during their CA classes enables them with an opportunity to develop the 'self' in a South African school context. Due to the current CAPS curriculum (2011b), the lessons of the children are assessment-driven, and they mostly employ a traditional, cognitive

approach to learning. However, when teaching experientially, as Kolb and Kolb (2010:27) explain by introducing

the concept of ludic [playful] learning space, wherein learners achieve deep learning through the integration of intellectual, physical, moral, and, spiritual values,” they can “become intrinsically motivated to define for themselves what to learn, how to deal with change, and ultimately reinventing themselves within the safety of the [ludic or play] space.

Beatrix, the HOD of Life Orientation in the primary school, recognised the need for self-expression in the children and saw the potential to develop the ‘self’ by teaching the children more about their society and by fostering the ability to make choices about how they behave in conflict situations.

5.3.2. Functions of games

According to Dieleman and Huisigh (2006), games can be used to teach about sustainable development. They describe their experience with being in a traditional school learning environment as one where “Learning (and teaching)” was “a purely cognitive process. We had to think, to analyse, to COMPREHEND, to learn by heart and to store the content of books in our memories” (Dieleman and Huisigh 2006:838) while the natural explorative way for a child is to learn by doing, which fits more easily within the gambit of experiential learning. These researchers made use of games to teach students or adults more about each other and their fields of expertise, and to integrate their insight and knowledge towards achieving sustainable development. For them playing games “stimulates and creates realities, with certain mutually accepted rules, roles, conditions, and assumptions. When one plays games, one can easily ‘take the role of others’ and develop an emotional understanding (apprehension) of why others act as they do.” The game simulates learning by doing within a space where there are no “negative consequences for the real world” (Dieleman and Huisigh 2006:841).

These two researchers Dieleman and Huisigh (2006:841-842) identified seven functions fulfilled when people play games.

1. They provide learning experiences.
2. They provide the possibility to create shared experiences.
3. Playing games with people with dramatically different backgrounds, help to create, at least, one shared experience.
4. Playing games contributes to team-building.

5. Playing games contributes to knowledge of oneself.
6. Playing games helps to test alternative solutions.
7. Playing games is fun and entertainment.

They realise that not all games serve the “same function” as “some games help you to discover parts of one’s self; others help one to understand processes of and mechanisms in communication with others.” Some games reveal the “working of complex systems” and where persons fit within such systems. They categorise games into three groups; games for ‘self-analysis,’ games for ‘communication and collaboration’, and ‘systems games’ (Dieleman and Huisingh 2006:842). Boal’s games achieve similar results in that the participants also learn more about their own bodies and become aware of its ability to communicate, many of Boal’s games engage the participants to make them explore and understand power relationships by bringing about insight into how people engage and manipulate each other, therefore stimulating critical thinking.

When playing games in an educational setting, they advise that the games need to be accompanied by a proper introduction or an extensive debrief to identify the lesson the game is teaching the player of the game. In the case study application of the lesson plans, it was challenging to provide the context for all the games before doing them, as Boal’s games and techniques were being used for the first time by the teacher and me. It was unknown how the children would respond, and what they would struggle to overcome, during the games. Unfamiliarity with the activities meant that all the future gains could not be visualised before introducing a new game to the children. The inexperience meant that the Grade 6 (CA) teacher did not provide enough context to situate the learning encompassed in the activity or game as a teacher should. For instance, the values clarification activity (sure, unsure, and uncertain activity) made the class aware that they were not alone in how they felt in various situations. The activity was supposed to build tolerance for cultural and individual differences. This was not emphasised enough before doing the activity. In one of the classes, the children and Alice were shocked to discover that three children agreed with the statement “Dishonest behaviour is okay as long as you do it in secret.” A lively discussion began to change the minds of these three children. This indicated how entrenched corruption and dishonesty had become that children felt justified to be dishonest and enter illegal acts in secret and this reflected the moral climate particularly in South African society in 2016.

Bandura’s (1977) (cf. 2.2.5.1) research also teaches us that it is vital that children are aware of the rewards that can result out of changed behaviour when teachers or parents model new behaviour. The participants also retain the new insights better if the modelling happens together with the reasons why it is more efficient. Situating the learning inherent in a game or

activity better in the future would be an area of improvement for the teaching of these lessons as the 'learnings' can differ for different people. It helps the participant become conscious of what they have learned through the game through either an introduction before or a debrief explanation after the activity. Furthermore, Dieleman and Huisingsh (2006:846) share that "in terms of the experiential learning cycle, games play important roles in all four phases" of the experiential learning cycle (Kolb 1984; Zull 2002) but "especially in phase four" when people apply what they have learned actively.

5.3.3. Developmental age and ability to engage with Forum Theatre

The teachers mentioned on numerous occasions that the children experience and engage in conflict with each other about unimportant, trivial matters. The teachers had various reasons why they thought this was happening, but nowhere did they link this tendency of the children to the phase of pre-adolescent development (cf. 2.5.4, 4.3.4.2, 5.3, 5.2.3.2 and 5.6.4). In my view as a researcher, this increased tendency towards conflict makes the introduction of Forum Theatre critical in the pre-adolescent phase as it will benefit the age group's understanding and will assist them avoid conflict. Botvin and Griffin also choose this age group as it is still open to being taught better behaviour to avoid substance abuse.

As discussed in section Botvin and Griffin (2004) have extensive experience with life skills teaching within a preventative health care environment. Their life skills course is aimed for middle school-aged children because they are at the perfect age to still be open to the information presented to them and acquire the self-protection skills they need to resist bad influences and peer pressure as they grow older. Their life skills acquisition course informs children about addictions and supports the development of their self-esteem. It becomes interesting to find out the applicable age at which Boal's ²performative techniques for social group engagement work with children. Saldaña (2005: 120) worked with primary school learners between the ages of nine and eleven years old to ascertain if they would be able to engage with the Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed methodology and techniques. He used the games to prepare children in that age group for the more advanced work of Image and Forum Theatre (Saldaña 2005: 124). He concluded that one can work with the children to make them

² Performance as used in this thesis refers to the little plays that the learners created and performed before other peer group learners. Performative means that the learners execute a physically active exploration of behaviour by means of the role (s)he takes over and attempts to act out and introduce different behaviour while spect-acting. The other learners learn vicariously by watching if their attempt works. If not, they consider how else they could behave in the problem situation.

more aware of their political and social context but that a teacher would need to provide a great deal of scaffolding to explain the social justice aspects to the children.

Interestingly, Saldaña (2005: 130) noticed differences in the responses given by boys and girls to situations of intimidation, oppression, or feeling powerless. Boys are “intimidated by “force” and “focus on behavioural tactics,” and the girls ‘are intimidated by “feelings” and “focus on emotional reactions and strategies”’ (2005: 130). Furthermore, Saldaña (2005: 132) recommended that certain games out of Boal’s collection of theatrical games are more successful in an application with this age group. His recommendation guided my choice of the Boal games incorporated into the case study lesson plans (Appendix G).

Preparing a short conflict or social problem play for performance in a classroom situation, around a collectively chosen problem topic, is where much of the learning and benefits of Boal’s theatrical creative process comes into play. (Boal. 2002, Theatre of the Oppressed. Section 3.3.1). Agreeing with Saldaña, I observed that it takes time, much effort, guidance, and input from a teacher to create such a play with Grade 6 children.

Time constraints are most likely the reason why some theatre practitioners such as Rutten et al. (2010) (cf. 3.4.1.5) in the Netherlands, chose to create a theatrical performance about soccer violence, before placing it before soccer-playing adolescents through a Forum Theatre intervention, to better understand the issue. The partial theatrical approach to Forum Theatre misses a growth opportunity. When a problem arises out of the peer group itself and is shaped through the understanding of those who are affected, (in this case, the teenagers who experienced violence on a soccer field), the play would be more identifiable to this audience. When watching a short performance, their friends created, and to whom they can relate, the audience would experience more intensive proximal learning. When the performance arises out of the participants’ experiences, and it demonstrates through image-making how, for instance, soccer violence takes place, the identification with the content would be more intense. Moreover, the image-making that takes place during the creative process would enable deep learning for the actor participants and gives them insight into their social context. Young people, who participate in the creative play workshop process and who are engaged in this more performative manner, should also more easily inspire their peers to step into the pretend reality performed on stage to try to solve a problem as spect-actors. Being able to relate and place yourself in the other person’s shoes leads to better identification and development of empathy for people who find themselves in powerless social and political positions. Driven by an urge to try and help, engaged spect-actors could perhaps step on stage more easily to explore and attempt to solve the problem of the protagonist through the performance of different behavioural choices.

5.3.4. Performance activities improve the self-esteem of children

Articles about achieving growth when children or young adults engage in theatrical, performative activities have been written by various theatre practitioners. Schroeder-Arce (2018) states that through the activities of the UTeach Theatre Programme, that she is involved with at Austin University in Texas, the drama activities of enrolled students “become the foundation for better mental health and academic outcomes” (Schroeder-Arce 2018). She concurs that drama activities help to improve the self-esteem and motivation of the participants. “When students are given a voice, they show up.” The positive benefits arising out of drama activities points to the need for most children to develop their voice. Drama teachers provide support “for struggling teens” as they help to “teach children how to deal with adversity,” and it “especially helps anxious individuals” (Schroeder-Arce 2018:23).

Beck (1976) (cf. 2.2.7.5), in his work with troubled people, had experienced and wrote that “[r]eality testing helps to identify unhelpful underlying beliefs and to explore alternative explanations lead to a redefinition and alternative response choices.” Through the performance of situations real to the children, they can compare their life experiences with those of their peers during the many improvisational activities that Boal’s methodology provides. Participation allows them an opportunity to consider and, if necessary, adjust their beliefs or their understanding of reality.

Bandura’s work is relevant here, through his teachings about ‘Participant modeling’ (Bandura 1977a) (cf. 2.2.5.1). This type of learning occurred when Alice, the teacher, and I would first demonstrate to the class how a game or activity worked and what it was that they needed to explore in a game. Alice, for instance, showed the class how the human rhythm-machine worked (cf. Lesson 2). She did this together with a few children who helped to demonstrate the basic principles to the rest of the class. Initially, a lack of ideas had inhibited some of the children. Interacting within a group of six children, the first three participants in the activity were still able to think of new movements to add to the rhythm machine, but the last few children in the group struggled. By jumping in and demonstrating her ideas, the teacher was able to suggest various alternative ideas. By trying to find their creative ideas and movements, the children, after watching her demonstration, now understood and were able to add different movements to the human rhythm-machine activity. They learned vicariously by watching the teacher who had showed them how to bring more variety into the movement options. They also watched their peers and working together as they did; the activities helped them to develop their sense of self-efficacy. The children could observe that they were not alone in struggling to solve the performative exercise; their peers were also struggling to execute some of the improvisation tasks (Bandura 1977a) (cf. 2.2.5.1). The teacher and I, in another improvisation exercise, for example, demonstrated how we responded when placed in an

unknown or a new circumstance. By having to think on our feet and react spontaneously to each other, we showed them how people changed their behaviour when they greeted each other in different contexts. As a next step, the class was challenged to think of other greeting options in pairs and demonstrate them via role-play (Lesson 3).

5.3.5. Safe space for sharing increased social savvy

Establishing the ground rules at the start of the programme helps to create a safe learning space. The safety is based on mutual respect between people. Participants must agree to participate and treat each other's input with confidentiality and keep what is spoken about in the room; they need to listen to the others and respect their differences, be patient, share truthfully and be open. To guard against disclosing too much, participants have the right to say pass when feeling uncomfortable. (Poulter 1995:18). Nobody teased, or made fun of others; instead, everyone enjoyed the challenges, encouraged each other, and cheered when good ideas arose. The learning environment was generally positive and supportive. The lessons contained many fun activities, and often peals of laughter rang out. The children did not suffer any adverse consequences from being unable to execute a task, and they were too busy and engaged to have time to bother others in the class by teasing them.

One child stated, "When we shared our opinion. It showed us what our people's opinions were sometimes different from others" (Class 6 A, Child 68) and another child wrote

I could see other people's point of view and how they saw a different thing! And how people react to different situations. And it was amazing we got to make up a role-play all by ourselves without practice or a script, and we got to play very fun games that we can actually learn from. (Class 6 A, Child 70)

Learners found game playing and role-play activities to be helpful. Different children learned different insights and learning in this manner helped them to develop their self-efficacy, abilities, and self-confidence. As a child reported,

[m]ost games we played came with technique. On what we could do. With our strengths" and "[p]laying the games helped me understand the topic even further and concentrate more on the thing we were learning. (Class 6A, Child 70)

In response to the "I am comfortable with my body" statement, the classmates saw that others also struggled to cope with the changes that adolescence brings, or with realities such as their subjective perception of either being too short or too tall for instance.

The children reported that they learned to improvise and make use of eye contact to communicate with another person. As one child put it,

[we] learned how to make our own decisions and to respect each other's choices. Later we learned how to think on our feet to improvise. Then we learned eye contact and not to turn your back to the audience. We were always building our confidence and that everyone has an amazing idea. We learned that not to undermine anyone's idea or knowledge, (Class 6 C, Child 100)

During the performative teaching weeks, the class members gained respect for each other, built new friendships, and gained insight that working together is fun and benefits the group. The opportunity to work in groups worked well to break the barriers down between the children. As a child wrote,

I enjoyed that I was with my friend. I learned to think of ideas by myself and to work together as a group. At first, we were fighting over which idea to choose, but we made a plan and combined all the ideas and make it into one idea, that is what I liked about the group. (Class 6 D, Child 23)

Another learner commented

... we learned how to work together by making machines no matter how much you do not like each other. Then we played and exercised on how to make your own decisions and respecting each other's choices. (Class 6 D, Child 25)

Moreover, a learner gained insight into how much more productive the result was when the group worked together. This child wrote

When we played those games and exercises, I really enjoyed how fun it was to work with other people, and [then] combining our ideas to make an even better performance. We also learned to hear others out to discuss ideas instead of listening to yourself only because when we had to carry on with someone else's ideas, our story turned out much more entertaining and appealing to many people. (Class 6D, Child 31)

The bonds between different children improved within their class because they worked with different children to their usual circle of friends. They also became aware that they can solve problems by making a change in their behaviour, which improved their self-efficacy.

When we did everything about family, it made me realise that not everything in the world is perfect. There might be family problems. However, you can always end up

solving them. Games are not really what I love, but these [games] that we played were very good. (Class 6 C, Child 75)

Not only did the children say they had become more confident or less shy, but the other Grade 6 teachers also observed greater learner participation in their classes. The teachers' experiences are discussed in more detail in theme five (cf. 5.6.6).

5.3.6. Practise new behaviour

Bandura (1977b) (cf. 2.2.5) recommends that people need to practise new behaviour before they can add this to their regular repertoire of behaviour. If they are successful in the execution, their self-efficacy will increase, and adversely if they fail at the task, their self-efficacy will diminish. In the creation stage of the problem play, children had the opportunity to practice different physical behaviour skills through the various games that they were playing. Eye contact, mirror, handshakes, human-rhythm machine, and image-making activities all helped to sharpen the physical expressivity of their body language.

Whitebread, Coltman, Jameson, and Lander (2009) report that children learn to self-regulate through play. "Play is recognised in this analysis as the first medium through which children explore the use of symbol systems, most obviously through pretence." Where an adult can think through "a problem inside their mind ... children require the support of real situations and objects with which the ideas are worked out through play". They also find that learning in a playful context "is particularly effective in preparing children for effortful, problem-solving or creative tasks which require a higher level of metacognitive and self-regulatory performance" (2009:50). Slade (1954:3), as explained in Henry, believed that "Personal play, which uses the whole body and self as in sports and performance ... yields the 'Experience' which can never be taken away." Slade proposes the concepts of 'Inflow' and 'Outflow' in which "Outflow precedes Inflow, i.e., self-expression precedes information gathering" and that the "knowledge gathered must be tried out – exercised by the body and feelings through drama" (Slade in Henry. 2000:49). Slade (1954: 73) further believed that drama could be harnessed to develop people and wrote that "training in the emotions is one thing that has been lacking above all else". Henry also introduces the concept that people use their creative abilities to learn more about their subjective reality within a world where the reality of the other will impact on the own reality of an individual. In drama, people use themselves as media, while "located between subjectivity and objectivity" applying improvisation to find meaning. They become media for learning" (Henry 2000: 57).

During the creative stage, when the classes were searching for a problem play topic, Alice asked the children to show situations where they felt powerless. The ideas in each class came out of these activities that were explored through improvisation around various of these problematic situations, as suggested by the children. Trying out roles other than their usual behaviour aided in developing their understanding of these situations.

5.3.7. Time to learn through play

In an environment where teachers are required to measure and record the progress of the children in their classes regularly as required by the CAPS curriculum (DBE 2011a), there is a perception that there is little space and time for teachers to allow children to learn through play, to find out how human beings interact through a role-played exploration. From the perspective of the children, the need for different approaches emerged. The children loved learning through performative CA classes in which they learned to improvise, could take on different roles, and observe how their classmates presented their diverse realities within the contexts of different pretend realities. Henry (2000:45) supports that learning to improvise teaches the children more than just improvisational ability as she writes that “[i]mprovising develops emotional intelligence and negotiating skills, and the ability to translate ideas into a new context through narrative and action.”

In the case study, there was no explicit investigation into how best to quantify the learning gained and how to provide useful feedback on the children’s learning. The focus was more on how the children responded to the creative activities, if they could deal with creating a problem scene, and would be able to solve the problems by introducing a different way of behaving to solve the conflict. The quantification of the learning could have been supported by asking the children to fill in questionnaires on how they would respond to conflict scenarios before the intervention and then having them fill out the same questions again after the intervention to ascertain if it made any change come about in the children. Further research on assessment of such performance-based experiential learning would be beneficial as it would assist greatly with the adoption of this way of teaching and learning to improve the children’s ability to handle conflict situations and fostering the understanding that they need to change their behaviour to solve a conflict situation.

In Theme 2, the focus is on gauging if the children valued and learned by playing games and engaging in performance activities. Through playing social power structure games and activities, by learning to improvise and take on roles, and by gaining awareness about how their body language communicates, the children could learn experientially through play within

a pretend reality. Only talking to children about what they should do in certain situations is not as powerful as when they can explore the patterns of the said situations. Exploring the conflict behaviour in a pretend reality afforded by drama and performance strategies aided a better understanding of these situations. Instead of telling the teacher what would happen in a bullying situation, for instance, the children without having to use words could now demonstrate through an improvised reality and role-play how the dynamics of such a conflict situation looked. Children also were able to empathise with the victim or powerless ones in a situation. The games and activities were fun and gave insight into living with other people, where they were similar, and where different. All seven functions of play, as presented by Dieleman and Huisinga (2006) occurred during the case study. The games provided the children with *learning experiences* and *shared experiences*. Despite having a vast diversity of backgrounds in class, the children could also create one “shared experience as a class group”. The games “contributes to *team-building*”, provide opportunities to acquire “*knowledge of oneself*” and learners could “*test alternative solutions*” and together they could have some “*fun*” and be entertained (Dieleman and Huisinga 2006:841-842).

5.4. THEME 3 - PERFORMATIVE TEACHING FOSTERED LIFE SKILL ACQUISITION

In this theme, the findings relate to how the children reported learning new life skills employing the Forum Theatre workshop approach.

5.4.1. Experiential learning theory

CA lessons can provide an ideal opportunity for children to learn experientially through a more performative approach to employing drama. During this study it became evident that the experience of collective creativity aimed at making a problem play performance for a Forum Theatre performance was not only heaps of fun, it also gave children opportunity to learn life skills experientially. The method can teach by modelling better behaviour, can introduce intervention skills, can help to grow self-confidence and empathy for the victims and is a skill set for intervention (Mitchell and Freitag 2011:16).

The children reported that they learned through exploration of various situations and experiences that arose out of their creative activities. From the children’s perspective, the children acquired a wide range of different life skills and gained more insight into human social interaction. The acting and role-play activities helped the children to position their reality

against that of their peer group, and this increased their social insight. CA lessons are the ideal lessons in which children can learn this through activities and discussions in an experiential way.

Safe space was necessary for the explorations to be successful, and varied exposure to performance through the many activities had assisted shy individuals in overcoming their stage fright and daring to participate more freely in class. The activities provided avenues for class-based expression for individuals and created opportunities for children to learn experientially rather than through the traditional chalk and talk methodologies used by teachers.

Various theatrical games, suitable for the age of the children (Saldaña 2005: 132) (cf. 5.3.3) were used in this case study and gave the four classes of Grade 6 children an awareness of other ways in which we communicate. These performative classes made the children more aware of their physical ability to show what they know or have observed about people and situations, through their body language. The sequence of lessons helped to develop the social insight of the learners while they worked together as a collective to identify a real problem for them and their class. Performative exploration gave rise, under the guidance of their teacher, to the construction of four class problem plays. Each class then performed their problem play in front of another Grade 6 class (cf. Table 5.3).

Six propositions apply in the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) formulated by Kolb (1984) and Kolb and Kolb (2005:194). Firstly, experiential scholars agree that "Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes." Kolb notes the importance of a learner receiving feedback on this process. Forum Theatre activities suit this process-driven approach. Secondly, the theory states, "[a]ll learning is relearning" (Kolb and Kolb 2005:194). The ideas and beliefs of a learner need to be open for scrutiny so that they can be looked at, tested, and interwoven with "more refined ideas." The dramatic games and Forum Theatre process accommodates this as it provides room for a teacher or a child to share their understanding to assist other children with adjustment if needed, in class. Thirdly, Kolb and Kolb postulate that learning arises out of "[c]onflict, differences, and disagreement." Drama, in general, deals with situations of conflict between characters who have opposing contexts, needs, or wishes.

A learner, while learning will encounter differences in understanding with others and will need to integrate his/her learning through their ability to either reflect upon, act, feel, or think about the learning topic. The theory states that learning is an adaptive and assimilative process, influenced by the environment of the learner. Existing concepts in a child's mind are altered, interwoven, integrated, and accommodated with new ones. Experiential learning theory is a constructivist approach as "social knowledge is created and recreated in the personal knowledge of the learner" (Kolb and Kolb 2005:194). Forum Theatre experiences enable such

experiential learning as it provides an opportunity for most of these propositions. The preparation for the Forum problem scenario teaches each participant insights into him or herself and the classmates. A sequence of theatrical games exposes learners to new experiences that help them be more aware of their physical ability to communicate beyond words. They gain insight into the societal similarities and differences in ideas and beliefs existing within their class. As the teacher or other children expose them to new or different ideas and ways of solving problems, they can refine their understanding by interweaving new ideas and approaches into their understanding and minds.

The Forum Theatre activities undertaken in this study would fall mostly into the first "acquisition" phase of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) approach to learning. This stage takes place "from birth to adolescence" versus later "specialisation" and "integration" phases that are not relevant to this study. ELT describes the development of an individual as "multilinear" and in line with their learning preference and what their "life path" exposes them to in experiences. According to Kolb (2005:194-195) and Zull (2002: 27), various parts of the brain are trained and developed depending on the engagement activity. Different areas of the brain link to different learning activities. Processing input related to "experience, reflection, hypothesis, and active testing" happens in four specific areas of the brain, "the sensory, reflective, abstracting, and acting brain" (Zull 2002: 27).

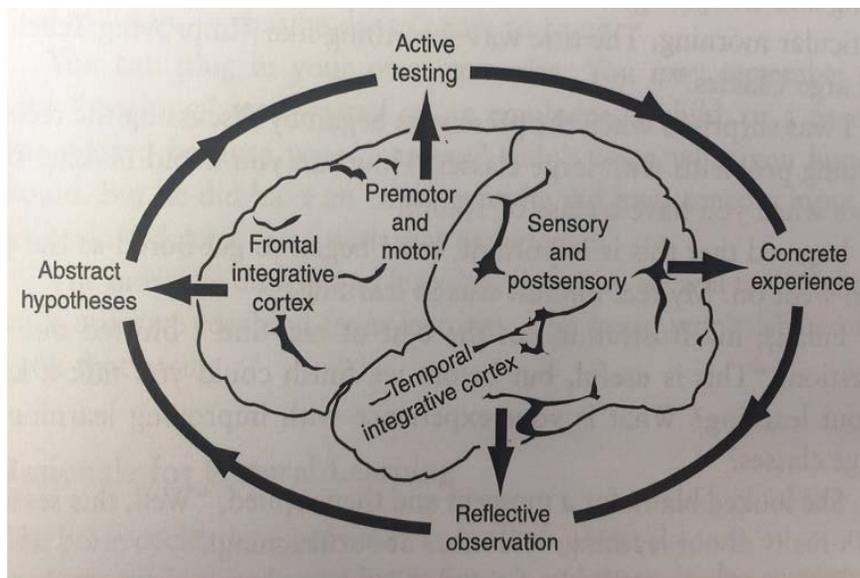


Figure 5.1 Learning areas in the brain (Zull 2002: 18)

The learning cycle described by Zull (2002), as shown above in Figure 5.1 starts on the right-hand side with real experience, then moves down into the reflexive space. From there, it moves to the left where abstract thinking happens, and the learning process ends in the upper section

of the brain when people have actual active experiences. To describe it in another way, the processing of a new concrete experience happens first in the 'Sensory and post-sensory' part of the brain (shown on the right in the drawing). The sensory experiences are processed in the sensory and post sensory parts of the brain and help to increase the processing of a person's affective concrete experiences. Reflective observation activity and exposure, which follows next, links to growth in a person's perceptual processing ability. This activity takes place in the 'Temporal integrative cortex' part of the brain, as indicated at the bottom of Figure 1. Abstract conceptualisation exposure, which happens when we try to think of new plans, increases the symbolic abstract hypothesis abilities of a person. These activities take place in the 'Frontal integrative cortex' part of the brain (indicated on the left in the drawing), while active experimentation will increase the behavioural processing abilities of a person. This is when newly thought of plans are brought into fruition through the active 'Premotor and motor' sections of the brain. (Zull 2002:18-19; Zull in Kolb and Kolb 2005:194 -195). According to Zull (in Kolb and Kolb. 2005: 208) this forth active stage in the learning cycle "may be the most important part of the learning cycle because it closes the cycle by bringing the inside world of reflection and thought into contact with the outside world of experiences created by action."

Drama activities such as the theatrical games and the creative exposure that the participants in the case study gained while constructing their problem plays, contribute towards various areas of development of their brains as the children did more than just sit and listen to their teacher, or discuss a topic to learn something new. They actively (experientially) tried out new behaviour during the many activities when they discovered more about themselves and their classmates. They experienced sensory input, reflected and processed what they experienced through the many games, class activities, and discussions that took place, through the Temporal Integrative Cortex. They came up with new ideas and plans in the Frontal Integrative Cortex used to express their collective thoughts that came out of their explorations resulting in their class plays, and lastly, they made use of their premotor and motor brain sections to present their ideas actively before another group of their peers. Further, they also observed, responded, and in some cases, became active as an audience group when they stepped into another problem play as a 'spect-actor' to start the learning cycle up again. Moreover, the class activities provided many vicarious learning opportunities. Children observed how other children and their teacher physically responded and reacted to various scenarios that they actively explored in class and during the Forum Theatre performance held at the end, which in turn stimulated the learning cycle to start again.

5.4.2. Pre-requisites for performative teaching

Children need to feel safe before they will share or reveal their inner experience of their world with others in that space.

5.4.2.1. Safe learning space

Space, where children explore to learn experientially, is of relevance. In the CA class, children can explore in a pretend, played reality just as children do when they play with each other. The research of Nonaka and Konno (1998) corroborates with that of Kolb and Kolb (2005: 200). They use the Japanese concept of 'ba,' which roughly means "context harbours meaning" to explain when people share learning barriers are removed between them, they can express their "feelings, thoughts and experiences" in the context of space. The individuals sharing the contextual space also need to show that they "care, love, trust, and [have] commitment" (Nonaka and Konno in Kolb and Kolb 2005: 200) for each other. Psychologically this type of contextual learning requires a "safe space," "serious purpose," and mutual "respect" for learning to flourish (Kolb and Kolb 2005: 200). Drama games and the Forum performance exploration creates an opportunity for shared learning through stimulating group discussions and through physical activity. Everyone's feelings and emotions are important "in determining whether and what we learn." Negative emotions hinder any learning from happening, and positive ones based on "attraction and interest" could be critical for learning to happen (Kolb and Kolb 2005: 208).

It is vital to consider if there will be any cultural codes or language parameters that need to be considered for the group to function well (Poulter 2018: 246-247). The teacher can try to find out about the hidden objectives of the participants and ask at the onset if there are any injuries or "physical, psychological or cultural" conditions that might "prevent participation or cause it to be difficult, inappropriate or conflictual". This will also contribute to creating a safe space.

5.4.2.2. Knowing the circumstances of the participants

Further, Poulter (2018: 249) advises that a teacher/facilitator of the drama workshops should start by placing a finger on the pulse of all participants. By exploring the given circumstances of participants, a teacher can ask them to respond to four thoughts first. First, 'what it is they want to do', second, if there are any restrictions to their participation triggered by the thought of "but ..."; third, what they are comfortable with doing through indicating what they can do ("I can") and if there are any afterthoughts triggered by 'before I forget' or "P.S.". The teacher asks children to consider these thoughts to acquire a sense of any possible factors that could have an impact on their performance activities. Establishing the level of engagement of the children at the beginning is necessary. Zull (in Kolb: 2005: 207) writes that for deep learning

to occur, a teacher achieves more when they first understand where their students are at in terms of the knowledge on a subject. After establishing that they can link the new knowledge they want to impart to their students, to their existing knowledge base; only then does it become feasible to add to that knowledge. On occasions, when a knowledge foundation is found to be lacking, a teacher will need to adjust or correct the misunderstandings existing in a student's prior knowledge. In this case study experience, the children were asked to write down for the teacher what the situations were that caused conflict for them, either between them and their friends or in their classes and with their siblings or parents within their family situations. This information was used as a stepping-stone to try and identify possible conflict scenarios worth expanding upon to create the class problem plays.

To recap, various school-based matters such as creating safe and large enough teaching space and finding out where the participants stand at the beginning of the process and including a final 'wind-down' moment at the end of each lesson, all need to be addressed by a teacher and the management of a school to enable successful performative teaching in Grade 6 CA classes.

5.4.3. Supportive learning environment to develop confidence

Bandura's (1977a) (cf. 2.2.5) notion of self-efficacy is of relevance. Bandura argued that "A person with high levels of efficacy will be more persistent, resilient and adventurous when it comes to acquiring new skills or knowledge." Therefore, it is important to increase efficacy and confidence in the children. As Child 100 (Class 6C wrote, (s)he had noticed that his/her "confidence had increased." Poulter (2018:21) adds when she states, "It doesn't take long if you structure the session carefully to give all players a chance to practice what is required and to build up their experience of 'taking the gaze' of the others through shared ... high focus activities" to develop the children's ability to explore behavioural changes towards kinder and more considerate behaviour, to show constraint and have a broader understanding on how to deal with conflict.

The class environment which I observed doing the lesson sequence was happy. In the feedback received, most children responded that they had much fun during these CA lessons. They supported each other and responded with cheering and clapping when they saw one of their classmates performing a role well. The Forum Theatre intervention thus happened within a supportive learning environment as propagated by Bandura (1977a) (cf. 2.2.5), and the enthusiasm of the children contributed to that. As Kolb (2002: 208) emphasises "[n]egative

emotions such as fear and anxiety can block learning, while positive feelings of attraction and interest may be essential for learning."

In a study executed by Burton (2010: 255) on adolescent girls, "confirmatory evidence [became evident] of the efficacy of drama in enhancing identification, empathy, and self-esteem in adolescent girls." The experience made it possible for the girls to learn and be able "to deal more effectively with relational aggression" (Burton 2010: 255). Usakli (2012: 025) in his article about the positive effects of creative drama and Forum Theatre activities on the development of young people, shares that it "provide[s] the opportunity to develop imagination, encourage[s] independent thinking and cooperation, build[s] social awareness, take[s] others' perspectives, promote[s] a healthy release of emotion, and improve[s] habits of speech". He further emphasises the "safety" that can be found "in a drama" where a person who is trying out different behaviour can do so without any negative "real-life consequences." The drama also assists students with gaining understanding about "themselves and the world within [which] they live." Usakli (2012: 026) also stresses that Forum Theatre builds "greater awareness in a drama about the development of different ideas, new skills and feeling more confident." That the children had greater awareness, confidence, and had gained new ideas and life skills, was evident in the case study data.

While some children were exploring a pretend reality physically (experiential learning) within the theatrical space, others were vicariously learning as they could observe the played-out dynamics as audience members and draw their conclusions out of their observations. The learning was varied and different for different children, but the high energy and participation in class pointed to interest as the children were fully engaged in class.

5.4.3.1. Safe space to overcome stage fright

As planned in the lessons that structured this case study exploration (Appendix G), the teacher, Alice, was asked to emphasise some ground rules to establish a safe space for learning in each class as a safe space that helps children to share and learn together. According to the request that "What happens in class, stays in class", learners could construct the content of their problem play so that they could have an original performance as a class during the Forum Theatre performance at the end of the term. The CA teacher has a "guardian and guiding role" (Poulter 2018) to guide and guard the exploration process and protect the children as much as possible. Poulter shares strategies on how this can be brought about in Section 5 of the second edition of *Playing the Game*. The second edition of the book has been expanded and now includes sections based upon the extensive insight she gained from years of working with drama productions, theatrical games, and performance techniques. In Part 1 of this book, Poulter (2018) highlights typical processes that could occur when using theatrical

games to develop confidence and physical expressiveness in children. She also provides ideas on how to develop a safe space in which people can move from their normal public behaviour, into participation and assuming a role to perform or act in front of others. She explains that people tend to have three different personas; "their public persona, their participant and their player persona" (Poulter 2018:14). The teacher or facilitator needs to guide people into feeling safe when playing roles in a group context. She advises not to place shy children into a situation with too much focus on them initially but to allow them to grow in their confidence gradually. Allowing the shy individuals to work within a group first rather than be the only player on stage, for instance, will allow a shy person to develop confidence. She also discusses the need for a teacher to guide and guard (guardianship) so the participants can develop a safe performance space and avoid teasing happening outside of it. The teacher/facilitator guides the group into becoming free while improvising and being in a role, (player and participant persona) but also needs to guide individuals back out of that persona using a wind-down activity so that they can leave the space with their public persona intact again.

The data from my case study corroborate the need for gradual exposure for shy children, because a timid child, who previously would refuse to take part in any performative activities, gradually thawed and was able to participate in the class activities. The teacher/facilitator of the theatrical games needs to think about whether the activities the children will be doing will undermine their relationships in the real world (Poulter 2018: 246). Moreover, it is helpful to consider if the participants know each other and if any of their relationships might be restricting someone's "behaviour, or causing tension, preoccupation, distraction?" (Poulter 2018: 246-247). All these matters are important when establishing a safe space in which a child can venture into learning in a more performative manner.

Overcoming shy feelings was achieved as various children mentioned they had become less shy or had managed to overcome their stage fright because they did a great deal of improvisation and acting in front of others. As is explained in Chapter 2, Ellis (1991) argued that it is helpful to desensitise a person out of their fear of acting and speaking in front of a big group of other people". Poulter (2018:21) adds that children need to be skilfully guided: "Careful planning can ensure that a player's self-confidence is not shattered at an early stage – which can happen quite easily if they are placed in a HIGH FOCUS situation before they are ready for it."

According to Perls (1970) (cf. 2.3.1), "Anything, you can do to help the other person discover himself is always good. Only what we discover ourselves is truly learned". Perls (1970) believed that people need to "experience themselves, learn to listen to others, and avoid their

compulsive talking". Engaging in role-playing stimulates this behaviour. The technique of working within a role offers some protection to the individuals playing these roles as they are portraying 'another person' while in a role. Others observe them in the way they experience this role rather than how they behave like themselves (Perls 1970). This measure of safety provided when exploring different, unfamiliar new ways of behaving in the context of a situation, gives an individual, and by extension their audience, an opportunity to discover more about their understanding of the role, the context and the type of person which they are playing when in a role.

This accords with the Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) theory of Ellis (1991) (cf. 2.2.6) who treated anxiety and fear in his patients, for which he used role-playing and reverse role-playing to show his clients where it is that they have 'incorrect' thoughts and how these have an impact on their behaviour and relationships with other people. In his work with his patients, they would explore a situation by taking on various roles in a simulated context. These exercises helped a person to think more effectively about a situation and helped the individuals to understand and breakthrough their irrational beliefs. Ellis (1991) (cf. 2.2.6.3) taught people to face their fears and move through them by experiencing them. They then experienced less fear, and in this manner, they could desensitise and free themselves from fear by moving through and past the fear (Ellis 1991) (cf. 2.2.6.4). Ellis used role-play to assist people in practising new skills of assertion and exploring the different ways in which they could communicate (cf. 2.2.6.3).

In a much less focused way than through psychotherapy, the shy children in the Grade 6 classes became less easily triggered into shyness through exposure to the many games and improvisation exercises. Role-play, as experienced during the CA class, helped to support the shy children. When an individual performs a role, the role acts as a buffer. Shown on stage is not the individual's behaviour but rather how they interpret a role, which helps to create distance. In this way, the attention can be focused on the processes rather than on the individuals and thus the many performance activities that happened in class provided the individual with a safe space in which to explore human behaviour (Ellis 1991) (cf. 2.2.6.4). "It is possible to build a player's confidence through the use of low focus games, for example, those played in pairs" (Poulter 2018:17). Poulter (2018:19) continues by stating that "[a]s a player's confidence and experience of taking the focus develops, s/he may be encouraged to be a solitary player."

One of the emotions that hold people back from stepping on stage to perform is fear. As Child 1 (interview) put it, "What I did learn is to not be too defensive with things and just be open about what you feel." The shyness also diminished by doing all the activities as a class. As

Child 11 said, "Doing this in front of a lot of people made me feel better about performing in front of other people." The role-play had also helped to desensitise Child 74 from fear of performing before other people. (S)he wrote, "When I started this, I was scared of making a fool in public. Then when time went on and we continued to do this, I got less scared, and then I wasn't scared anymore. So, you have helped everyone in this class." This child had moved from a position of fear into a realisation that, with proper guidance, there is no need to be shy or nervous when it comes to being on stage and performing in front of people.

The topic or content chosen for discussion in a classroom is important too, especially when helping someone see that they need not be too concerned about the approval of others when it comes to doing something which they fear. Convinced that people's emotions are a core link to how people think, Ellis (1977, 1991, 2004, 2010) believed that people need to learn "to accept themselves, to accept others, and to accept life unconditionally." In his opinion, challenging an individual who had developed irrational thoughts and questioning their beliefs reveals the flaws in their thinking. By laughing and seeing the absurdity of their flawed reasoning, the tension could be relieved, and their mood lightened. Feelings of shame, guilt, embarrassment, and humiliation are linked to anxiety. By doing shame attacking exercises, learners' fears can be overcome or diminished through a gradual desensitising and moving on to pass beyond their fears. All the Grade 6 children were motivated to engage in the performance activities purely through the high level of class activity and the whole class approach to participation. This helped some to desensitise and thus overcome some stage fright feelings.

5.4.3.2. Discovery increased friendships and harmony in class

Research by Schaefer et al. (2011:3) into the socialisation of adolescents finds that "activity co-participation promotes concurrent and new friendships." Being involved in an extracurricular activity such as a sport, performing arts, or academic activity, "promotes friendships." Performance activities such as drama, marching band/ orchestra, dance, and art, help to build and maintain friendships with adolescent peers, as do academic (science fair, maths tutoring, computer club, chess club etc.) and sport activities (school team sports such as baseball, basketball, football, golf, ice hockey, wrestling, swimming/diving, track/cross-country, softball etc.) (Eccles 1999:16-17). The data gathered during this case study, was slightly different as it gave a reflection of the children's personal experiences and led to the discovery of new bonds in all the interactive activities that they did.

Mostly, the case study data revealed that of the participating learners had become more open and tolerant of their peers. Many children indicated that they had more appreciation for their classmates and had become better at working with other people. Child 12 (interview) said, "I

made new friends because we got to talk to each other about what was happening, act with each other and laughed together, and you got to learn a lot about other people." Child 23 (Class 6 D) agreed and wrote that (s)he had "learned to think of ideas by myself and to work together as a group" and experienced that initially the group was "fighting on who's idea to choose but [they] made a plan and combined all the ideas together and make it into one idea" and "It was fun and exciting because we all did teamwork." The ideas and content of what the children were able to perform became better when they co-operated. Child 100 (Class 6 C) "noticed that everyone has an amazing idea." While child 77 (Class 6 D) found by combining and working together, they had better results. This feedback from the learners was not specifically tested in the study but rather represent the perceptions of the learners in this situation and at this time, and they were not necessarily an indication of a lasting behavioural change. Further research to test these experiences and their longer-term effects could be interesting.

Child 55 (Class 6 A) enjoyed playing the "games [as they] brought the class closer, and we became stronger." While Child 67 (Class 6 A) discovered more about his or her friends as "working with my group has given me the chance to learn more about my friends ... and I learned that each of my friends has a special talent". The talents differed as one was a good actor, another a good leader, or a good dancer, singer, or artist. In this manner, the children discovered that a team has more to offer than an individual. They understood they all gain when they give their collective talents a space to shine. The many situations they collectively explored made the children aware of the creativity and good ideas of their friends. It increased their acceptance of those classmates whom they did not know very well. In turn, this improved the mood and openness to co-operation in class. As Child 26 (Class 6 D) explained, he had learned from a game aimed at teaching the class what kind of responses were needed for a group to work well together, "The machines showed that your group had great ideas on how to improvise by using movements to create a system. If one part, a group member was not working, the whole system or machine would not be able to work or move. We also learned to work together as a group and class." Child 26 (Class 6A) also wrote, "We also learned to hear others out and to discuss ideas instead of listening to yourself only because when we had to carry on with someone else's story it turned out to be much more entertaining and appealing to many people." An awareness of social dynamics had improved for Child 74 (Class 6 C), who had learned "We all have a part to play. And you have to play that part to the best of your abilities. Even if it is not the part we want".

The role-playing also enabled one of the children to gain an understanding of how a responsible position in society [the school principal] can come with specific responsibilities. This child now understood that behaviour could be driven by and result out of the task and

responsibility and role of a person. This child explained what he had discovered in the following way,

Before I became this role [of headmaster], I looked at the principal as a grumpy man who is just following school rules and sometimes is being too harsh on his students. But now I understand why he has to be so harsh on them, so he can teach them what is right and wrong so that they do not do it again" (Child 8).

The role-playing not only allowed him to behave differently, but it also allowed him to gain insight into why specific behaviour happens in a social setting.

Six of the children reported learning about human behaviour and being part of a more significant social group from the responses of other people during all the role play and pretend situations that the class had explored during CA classes. Alternatively, they had "learned more about kids and how they communicate with people" (Child 2). During the activities, the children had become more aware of "co-operating with other people, [and] knowing more about them" (Child 7) through the games. Child 7 "noticed that his class has changed. I am noticing that people care for other people, [more] than they did before,' which points to a more cohesive class environment being brought about through the activities the class was doing together.

5.4.4. Performative teaching – developing life skills outcomes for children

During the Forum Theatre intervention, all the Grade 6 children played games and did activities that originate out of a theatrical context. Initially, the performance games collected by Boal (2002) were developed to support actors to create and perform a role. Instead of short script-based performance activities that language teachers sometimes do with the children, the children now practised a sequence of experiential and drama related creative processes. They did a brainstorming activity to identify a problem they could all relate to, they played drama games to improve their ability to make images, and they learned to improvise and to express themselves through their bodies. For several weeks, they were thus collectively enabled to create a short problem play in their CA classes. The activities were diverse, and amongst the 133 learners, they each learned different insights and skills in the process. The data shows how the learning the children experienced, as shown in their feedback, differed. As individuals, they each had different relatable life experiences and interests. The wide range of responses that emanate out of such an experience-based approach makes the measurement of their learning through performance more challenging for a teacher. For this case study, I did not explore the formal assessment side of the Forum Theatre's CA teaching lessons.

The case study findings further show that the children learned various life skills while they improvised and communicated through images. The children became more attentive to body language communication so that they would be able to explore difficult situations and perhaps also manage to solve them. The case study observations corroborate with those of Malm and Löfgren (2007:2). They find students need "practical training" to be able to acquire "[e]mpathy, active listening and appropriate communication" as "life competencies." These competencies arise out of a combination of "mental intelligence" together with "emotional and physical intelligence." Learning life competencies experientially through performance and drama exercises is a good way to instil life-skill acquisition according to the research of Malm and Löfgren but should happen in a "structured ... learning situation" under the guidance of a "trained facilitator" who is skilled in "educational drama" (Malm and Löfgren 2007:3). This kind of learning situation allows "participants [to] access a more meaningful experience of the conflict, including thoughts, feelings, and body experiences" within a fictional pretend context.

While cloaked in a safe mantle of a role, human dynamics can be explored by an individual in a pretend expression of reality and shown in the artistic realm, separate from the real world. This construct allows participants to "explore alternative actions and their consequences." Malm and Löfgren (2007:3) agree that "[e]arly adolescence is a critical period for learning conflict resolution strategies, as there is a high frequency of conflicts." Teaching these life competencies in a school context is strategically sound to prepare young people for their adult lives" (Malm and Löfgren 2007:4) while teaching children conflict management theory through "theoretical studies, exhortations or punishments have little or no effect" (Malm and Löfgren 2007:4). The beauty of teaching young people conflict management skills through educational drama is that "students are not told how to behave in conflicts." They are "provided with conflict situations from which they can learn and draw conclusions themselves" in an experiential manner. When left to learn conflict resolution insights in the real world, this "can cause much harm and damage the relationship between the parties" (Malm and Löfgren 2007:7). Children welcome experiential learning about conflict management strategies through theatrical means offered in an educational drama. Participants in the case study enjoyed the more active, explorative way of learning through the drama that they experienced during the study.

5.4.5. Acquisition and refinement of life skills

One of the aims underpinning this case study was to find out if children could learn life skills using their drama engagements at school. As different children are interested in different aspects of life, it follows that the list of reported new insights into life is diverse. In the following discussion, I list the life skills reported by the learners as matters that they feel they have now

learned or where they developed a skill further during the Forum Theatre workshop (preparation and execution) stages of this case study. The written and spoken responses to the question "What did they learn?" reveals the following about the diversity of the children's experiences. Judging from the feedback from the children, they became aware of, and had learned or gained new insight into the following life skills; respect, honesty, tolerance, problem-solving skills, caring for their belongings, the need for communication and the importance of kindness and caring behaviour to create a more conducive communication environment. Acquiring socially acceptable manners, building up moral values, acquiring more acceptable forms of assertive behaviour, and developing their self-esteem are but a few such life skills.

The DRACON (Drama and Conflict Management) research project reported on by Malm and Löfgren (2007:14), indicates that through the drama interventions studied in Swedish, Australian and Malaysian schools, the teenagers who took part showed they had gained "knowledge and understanding." This growth happened on three levels; "a social level, an aesthetic level, and a cognitive level." On a social level, they indicate the participants were "getting to know each other in new ways, developing feelings of fellowship, empathy, and respect, expanding their listening capacity, understanding the importance of co-operation and skills such as listening to others." Aesthetically the project enabled artistic and creative expression of feelings and emotions, and on a cognitive level, the students now understood conflict and conflict management better, as well as had gained new perspectives on life and society.

In this case study, the children reported having gained and improved their social skills and had an increased ability to co-operate with others, to be respectful, and tolerate differences with others, and had become aware of the value of honesty. Communication had also improved, as the children's mentioned their listening skills, their need for active communication, and their raised awareness of the value of co-operation, in their feedback. Australian students in Adelaide, that took part in the DRACON project ('Drama and Conflict Management' research project reported on by Malm and Löfgren 2007:14) stated they had improved their relationships with their peers at school and at home. On a cognitive level, children indicated they had gained in their decision-making ability and had better problem-solving skills. The problem plays had given deeper insight into bullying behaviour, and during the Forum Theatre engagement, they became aware of how important caring and kind behaviour can be, when a 'spect-actor' defused the tension in the room purely using his kind and caring behaviour.

For more insight into how the learners in this study referred to gaining a life skill or having improved on their ability, see points 5.3.5.1. – 5.3.5.8.

5.4.5.1. Respect

Child 5 (interview, when asked if he had learned any life skills, reported he had become aware that he should "[n]ot judge others by what they do, ... and respect people more, and to wait my turn so I can talk". Child 10 (interview) realised that they needed to respect other people, either because "when people are acting, you keep quiet and you watch," and Child 100 (Class 6C) wrote that learners had also learned to "respect each other's choices." Child 5 (interview) reported he had become aware that he should "wait my turn so I can talk."

5.4.5.2. Tolerance

The ability to tolerate others improved through the activities the class did. Gaining this awareness, Child 5 (interview) wrote he should "[n]ot judge others by what they do." Increased ability to tolerate other people was echoed by Child 89 (Class 6 C), who wrote: "I learned that I can always co-operate with people I don't like." Tolerance was also reported by Child 100 (Class 6C), who shared when "making a human-machine, we learned how to work together no matter how much you don't like them [the other children] ... Child 104 (Class 6 B) agreed as (s)he wrote, "I learned to tolerate people [despite] some people [who] just get up my grill."

5.4.5.3. Honesty

Two children learned to value honesty as a life skill. This insight came about through a values clarification exercise, which the children did. They were asked to place themselves in an area in the classroom where they felt most comfortable concerning a statement made by the teacher (Lesson 3). They could either move to the area called 'Agreed,' or "Disagreed' or 'Unsure.' Those children who agreed with the statement stood together, as did those who disagreed and those that were uncertain about how they felt, also grouped. The statement which led to a discussion about the importance of honesty as a value was "It is okay to be dishonest, as long as nobody finds out." Three of the girls disagreed with the statement. They were adamant that they saw nothing wrong with being dishonest if they could hide their dishonesty. When asked why they felt so, they answered: "Everybody else is doing it." This added insight into how entrenched corruption had become in South African society in 2016. It did, however, help some children to think about and embrace the value of honesty. Child 6 (interview) said, "it is not okay to be dishonest even if nobody knows" and Child 28 (Class 6 D) wrote, "I learned to be aware of my surroundings. I also learned to be honest." In the latter child's feedback, there is no direct link to indicate where in the programme he or she had gained this insight. Dishonesty and untrustworthy behaviour insight were also gained as Child 13 (interview), who was new at the school, stated that he had learned from a class problem play that "you can't trust anyone, like, they can steal your stuff."

5.4.5.4. Decision making

Child 100 (Class 6 C) indicated that learners also learned "to make our own decisions." Unfortunately, there is no indication which specific activities had taught the learners to make decisions. The moments where this skill would be needed was when the children had to choose how they were going to present a certain role in each situation, or during one of the theatre games, i.e. when they had to decide how they were going to add to the operation of the human-rhythm machine. The values clarification activity also required the children to assess and decide where they wanted to place themselves in the space, with the 'agree,' 'disagree' or 'uncertain' group of persons.

5.4.5.5. Problem-solving skills

The many improvisational activities enabled the children to work together and share their realities. As Child 45 (Class 6A) expressed it, "I learned that everyone has problems that can be solved with the right ingredient." Through the explorations and the proposed solutions, they saw that problems could go away if they are "addressed in the right way." During the build-up leading to the Forum Theatre, some children learned through experience that one could change behaviour. Altered behaviour, in turn, can lead to a different outcome. The children stated this in different ways. Child 62 (Class 6 C) wrote, "I learned that there are many ways you can escape a powerless situation" and Child 75 (Class 6 D) discovered "not everything in the world is perfect. There might be family problems. However, you can always end up solving them". The value of perseverance was brought home to Child 94 (Class 6C), who wrote: "lots of things are possible and can be done when you do not give up." In this way, the improvised explorations of a pretended reality had equipped them with efficacy skills (Bandura 1977a) (cf. 2.2.5).

5.4.5.6. Co-operate with others

The many improvisational activities enabled the children to work together, communicate, and share their realities. As Child 45 (Class 6 D) expressed it, "I ... learned to cooperate with my classmates". Many of the games and role-play activities required the children to co-operate.

Child 5 (interview), when asked if he had learned any life skills, reported he had become aware that he should "[n]ot judge others by what they do, to listen more, and respect people more, and to wait my turn so I can talk." The children had many communication opportunities with all the activities that were planned for each day, which led to Child 11 (interview) saying, "We got to talk a lot. Normally, last year, we used to argue a lot. ... Now we don't argue a lot." Child 2 (interview) agreed and shared, "I learned you need to communicate." Child 3 (interview) experienced that he/she "learned how to work with people more often and I learned how to communicate with them and everything." Child 8 (interview) also gained more insight into the

communication and found, "You should express yourself and be yourself, don't try and hide yourself." So, the interaction enabled the children to work together and share their realities as Child 45 (Class 6 D) expressed it, "I learned how to speak on the spot ... and how to express myself more."

When Boal became an exile in 1979, he worked together with Paulo Freire and taught Spanish language lessons to illiterate adults in Peru. Like Freire, Boal did not agree with the banking approach to learning. During this time, he experimented with utilising a more productive manner of communication. His theatrical abilities led him to encourage the class to use images to explain themselves better. The physical image is powerful as everyone relates to an image, but they are multi-interpretable. A discussion of the meaning captured in an image assists the group with reaching consensus on the general aspect captured in an image. By lifting the understanding of an image to the level of plurality, it becomes possible to address the social and political understanding of our societal norms and values. Forum Theatre seeks to engage a social group into a discussion and problem-solving about the core content captured in a societal problem. Boal aimed to share theatrical techniques with other people so that everyone could use the "richest of all languages" (Boal 2001:282) when discussing the meaning of the images should take place during the creative stage of the Forum Theatre intervention. The games and image-making activities provided the children with an opportunity to explore and use the actor's way of communicating to understand more about their shared realities. Boal (2001:298) realised that man can consider his past and create his future, turning the stage into "a place of study; and the theatre can be a fit instrument, a proper language for that discourse, that quest for oneself."

In the case of the Grade 6 learners in the CA classes, making images was a means through which they could show what a situation looked like for them. These images need to be studied with input from all the children to find out what the image means for them individually so that they can discover in the process of doing that what they all agree it signifies and, in that way, they can discover the general truth captured in the image. By knowing the core of the image and being able to show it to the audience with the root meaning, it also becomes easier for the audience to relate to the same meaning when they see the image on stage. Finding the general core is an important step in the devising stage of playmaking that should not be skipped (cf. 3.4.1.3). As mentioned one Grade 6 class was so engaged during image-making in class, that they spontaneously offered to sacrifice their break time so that they could continue working in this manner.

5.4.5.8. Listening skills

Three learners reported that they had become aware of the importance of listening. Child 5 (interview) reported that he should "listen more." Child 2 (interview), after the Forum Theatre performance said (s), he had learned from the process that "it was just simple things [that made a difference] and you had to listen and do and learn." Their ability to listen more also indicates they are less focused on their concerns and have a better ability to function as a group. Child 43 (Class 6 D) noticed something similar as he/she writes "We learned that not to undermine anyone's idea or knowledge," they need to pay attention to the teacher as well and "open our ears and listen in class or else you will flop in whatever the teacher is explaining".

In conclusion, theme three discussed if experiential learning strategies were effective. The need for a safe learning space is vital for a thriving performative learning environment, and active engagement with performance activities can lead to shy individuals developing more confidence. Through all the performative games and activities that the children did, they made discoveries about their friends and their abilities, explored human behaviour, made more friends, and increased their bonding as a group. The performative activities and game playing also brought more harmony into the class. Lastly, the children indicated they had gained or improved on acquiring various life skills. We move on now to the relevance of non-verbal communication as the fourth theme discussed and analysed from the case study data.

5.5. THEME 4 – HARNESSING OF NON-VERBAL, EMBODIED LEARNING

The performance-based classes that took place at the school made the children aware of their non-verbal communication abilities. Through the activities, they became more aware of their body's capacity to communicate. Boal, as a theatre practitioner, wrote, "[t]here are the languages of the voice, of the body, of movement, and then there are the unconscious languages." He became aware of this when he was studying in the US; initially, as a Portuguese speaker, he found it challenging to communicate in English (Boal 2001:124). The Boal methodology inspired the lesson plans for this case study. The theatrical games help people gain awareness of how they can communicate through their bodies. Humans use embodied language a great deal but less consciously. Generally, they are more focused on learning through their spoken language. Child 63 (Class 6 A) found, "I learned that the most important parts of a play are facial expression and body movement. I also learned that you need a loud voice and confidence." For Child 1 (interview), it was easier to do the activities and learn from the experience of trying it out physically rather than by having to talk about it.

Child 9 (interview) also liked learning through doing (experientially) in comparison to the regular more traditional teaching experience where learners are desk-bound because (s)he said: "I prefer this way, it is more fun, and I get to move around while I am learning." These children indicated they preferred learning through physical exploration rather than just talking about a topic.

The children were surprised to learn that when playing a role, they are not limited to communicating through a set script, and they enjoyed the freedom that came with the art of improvisation. As Child 39 (Class 6 D) put it, "I learned that dialogue does not have to be learned, you can just improvise to what the other person said and make it interesting ... I have learned that you should not think of yourself only. You should also think about others". Improvisation requires you to be fully alert to what the other person is saying, as an individual will be responding to the content spoken by the other person in the dialogue in a meaningful manner.

Boal (2001:147) emphasises the importance of eye contact as:

[t]he foundation of any show has always been two actors looking at each other ... Actors must always offer each other their gaze. ... It is in the gaze that the characters are born. It is in the gaze that one discovers the truth. A director's role in this is to ask the right questions so that the actor can discover what he needs to know within himself. In this manner, the director helps the actors give birth to characters.

The 'gaze' and developing a better awareness of human insights is one of the reasons that Boal (2001) (cf. 3.2.2) and Poulter (2018) (cf. 3.4.1.2) include various games to establish awareness of eye contact, to build confidence, develop an awareness of the other and to build up the interaction between participants. Having enjoyed the freedom found in improvisation and this manner of exchange, Child 44 (Class 6 D) wrote, "I enjoyed the part where we had to improvise and not read the dialogue and learn it off by heart." Child 10 (interview) found, "I learned ... when you don't have a script, you can improvise. I learned to be quick on my feet," Child 44 (Class 6 D) also "enjoyed the part where we had to improvise and not read the dialogue and learn it off by heart." The interactions and activities which Alice, the teacher, did in class were introduced to build up the improvisation and communication abilities of the children to prepare them for the creation of their problem plays.

5.5.1. *Expression of feelings*

Zull (2012: 169) emphasises the influence of our emotions on how we learn. He writes, "[w]e know that learning is influenced greatly by emotion. This influence can show itself in enhanced memory, motivation, and behaviours such as repetition and mimicry". The performance activities the children did gave them an avenue through which they could express their feelings. Child 86 (Class 6 C) wrote (s)he had learned "to express [his/her] feelings by acting, to be creative and see how to be in other people's position in life, what we would do if we were them." The children's acting originated out of their own life experiences and lay close to their reality. Being able to explore what a problem looks like together as a class gave the children a glimpse into the lives of their classmates. Their exploration led to experiential learning opportunities and fit within the thinking of Kolb (1984:26) (cf. 2.4.2.6), who stated that "[i]deas are not fixed and immutable elements of thought but are formed and reformed through experience ... Learning ... takes place in the tension created between our feelings and our thinking as well as that between our acting (behaving) and reflecting (perceiving) abilities". Kolb's (2005:194) experiential learning theory teaches that the process of learning involves the integrated functioning of the total person; thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving faculties all playing a part in the process.

Various children in their interview or their written reflections shared their thoughts about their feelings. As explained in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Beck (1976) believed that feelings and emotional responses are essential flags as they provide insight into the thoughts of a person. People develop stable cognitive patterns called schema's in the early stages of their lives, and they consider these to be proven and accurate patterns in life. These automatic thoughts link to emotions, feelings, and inhibitions that are based on our interpretations rather than on the actions themselves. Modelling is a key strategy within social learning, as parents model the 'should's and should not's' that they teach. These act as rules in their children's lives, and when people become emotional or experience intense feelings, it often links to such 'schemas.' Reality testing helps to identify any such unhelpful underlying beliefs. By asking questions such as "what will happen if..." Beck (1984) (cf. 2.2.7.5) could help an individual to discover alternative explanations, and in this way, by redefining problems, they can become less threatening. Reality testing in a classroom similarly provides the children with other perspectives. In the CA classroom, the Grade 6 learners (and indirectly their teacher) also became aware of how their realities compare to those of their peers through the role-play activities and this helped them to adjust problematic thinking.

Unpleasant early experiences where a child developed a fear of being in a role or having to perform before others can lead to excessive shyness. Sometimes a child needs to become

aware that others are not focused on watching them. Occasionally a child needs assistance to counter their dysfunctional beliefs about own perceived inadequacy. Poulter (2018) provides practical strategies on how to guide participants in gaining confidence through participation in performance activities. By learning that there can be alternative explanations for understanding a situation, children can experience different outlooks and so achieve a healthier understanding of a situation that previously caused them distress (Beck 1985) (cf. 2.2.7.5). For instance, during the first stage of this case study, which was the creative, explorative stage, one class indicated they felt powerless when their parents gave them 'the look.' To clarify this, Alice encouraged different children to perform a scene at a dining room table to show what the situation looked like when they would receive "the look." It made the class aware that they are not alone, and others also receive this treatment from a parent. The non-verbal communication was confusing as there could be many ways to interpret the disapproving 'look.' The 'look' communicated the displeasure of the parent, but it was not always clear to the child why they received 'the look,' and at that moment, it caused uncertainty and distress in the child. By exploring the situation in class, the children gained more clarity into what 'the look' could signify.

Wolpe (1995, 1958) (cf. 2.2.4) proved that by desensitising people who are fearful of something, they could overcome their phobias. Overcoming fear was evident in the development observed in a few shy children who previously had been silent observers who never contributed in class. They changed into people that engaged and were now participating in class. Teacher Lydia (Teacher interview) mentioned that "There is this girl "K," in Grade 6, and I never really noticed her at the beginning of the year, whatever, and this term, specifically, especially because they are also doing the plays and stuff. She just came out of her shell". Teacher Sally shared during her interview "... She is a lot more ..., she actually speaks now, and she puts her hand up and actually answers questions." She had a similar experience with another child:

Sally: She always used to sit there and just sit.

Researcher: Quiet?

Sally: And now she is a bit more open, and she likes to speak a bit more, so I don't know what changed, but it is definitely nice, to actually hear that she has a voice.

(Teacher interview with Sally)

According to the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, Alice, children enjoyed ridiculing each other. "[Y]ou will also find that in this age group, they find it funny to ridicule someone. So, someone is going to do something, and the rest are going to laugh at that person" (Entry interview with Alice). The danger of being ridiculed could be the reason why

some children withdrew into themselves rather than risked being made a fool of again. Therefore, it was important to create a safe learning space in which the class became supportive rather than antagonistic towards each other. I observed how one child, who at the start of the programme refused to participate, slowly 'thawed' into enjoying all the interaction and even becoming one of the children who mimed the emotions of the main characters during their class play. She gradually experienced less anxiety and was willing to participate more as she overcame some of her stage fright through the role-play, the games, and the activities the class engaged in during the problem play production. As one of the children put it "When I started this, I was scared of making a fool in public then when time went on and we continued to do this, I got less scared, and then I was not scared anymore" (Class 6 C, Child 74).

5.5.2. Image-based exploration and core identification

Theatrical games, image-making, and the Forum Theatre solution exploration stage are all opportunities for experiential learning, as proposed by Kolb and Kolb (2005). Zull (2002, 2012) also argues the active doing stage completes the learning cycle. It is crucial in the creative, explorative stage that the class, supported by their teacher, choose a suitable problem to develop for performance. A Forum Theatre intervention will be more successful when building the problem play around a sharp central image that shows what the heart of the problem is. Such an image can provide multiple perspectives on the explored problem. In class, different responses that come from the individuals in the group can guide the teacher. In the discussion of an image, the group (in this case, the class who are creating their problem play) may explore the meaning of the image together. A variety of answers to the meaning of the image adds depth to the image's meaning. By finding the commonalities in these responses, it becomes easier to reveal what is general in the image. As explained in Chapter 3, Boal (2002) (cf. 3.3) discusses the core that lies at the heart of an image. Investigating the general 'me' in this way makes a problem more relatable to all that are working with it and so the group venture closer to investigating the heart of the problem. Later, when performing the central image on stage, the core once again is important as more members of the audience will be able to respond if the core is clear in the performance. Knowing what is common to the group, in turn, will add to the strength of the discussion and solution exploration that takes place during the Forum Theatre performance.

Instead of following the proposed lesson plan, Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, sometimes tried a less involved class solution as there were so many children in her classes, or she attempted a more theory-driven approach. More children could participate when she allowed different children to be in the acting space to explore the different successive steps. The

change to the original lesson plan, where one group was to show the starting image and then bring the image to life by adding motion to the initial image to demonstrate what would happen next meant that the teacher had numerous groups of children work with this. The classes did a sequence of such tableaux where a sequence of scenes was shown in quick succession by many children. Different sets of four children played the four characters as a progression, showing it as "slices" of time; the first moment, second moment, third moment, and fourth moment. These then were animated, and the children tried to play them as a sequence. The children loved being able to sculpt with human bodies to demonstrate the situations that made them feel powerless.

One of the clear indications that the children loved these image-making sessions was evident when one of the classes did not want to leave class even though it was break time. The children gave focused attention when they responded to the opportunity to sculpt a scene using the physical tableaux. Image making is a very experiential way for the children to explore the reality of a situation. Different children were able to contribute to the scenes to make them as realistic as possible.

The power of using Boal's techniques for Poulter (1995:11) "lies in the way in which an image can by-pass words and avoid problems of verbal debate." She states when taking the images created in workshops, more seriously, others also challenge them less. The 'reality of the image' transcends the individuals' experience (Poulter 1995:43).

5.5.3. Reality-based explorations

The drama activities the teacher and I presented to the children to prepare them for their problem play creation, touched on the reality of the children's lives. The improvised scenarios that the children performed gave a glimpse into the nature of the real world of these children. What they had seen, knew, or experienced about life until then was reflected in the characters they took on and was evident in the make-believe scenes they explored. They presented scenarios, as mentioned above, of what it was like around a dinner table when one of the parents gave their child 'the look' of disapproval, or what the parent and passengers looked like and said when the family was travelling in their car behind a taxi. In the latter example, the improvisations showed how the frustrated parents experienced the journey. Their performative explorations illustrated situations on the school grounds or the sports fields. Reality inspired situations were also evident when the children explored the many ways that people greet each other. All these scenarios were informed by real-life experiences that they had, or by real people they knew. It was interesting to see that their first instinctive response to solving a

problem was aggression or a more energetic, forceful response, rather than a loving, understanding response. Whether that was due to their energy levels, or if it was because the world they live in that reacts in this manner is not apparent.

5.5.4. Conflict management and dynamics of power insights gained

In this case study, Forum Theatre was successfully used in various contexts to teach children about conflict management coping mechanisms. The results corroborate with those of Malm and Lófgren (2007: 5) who also looked at drama-based interventions but with just slightly older children. They write those middle school children in the age group 13 – 16 years of age, are dealing with "[d]evelopmental factors [that] include dramatic changes in physical maturation, new demands arising as a consequence of sexual development, the recognition of a greater independence and autonomy, and pressure to define one's identity as a preparation for entry into the adult world". These aspects of their development are all likely to increase the likelihood of conflict occurring in their world.

In the third term, when my case study with the Grade 6 children took place, their PSW classes also dealt with conflict management theory. The CA classes were aligned as the performative Forum Theatre activities supported the PSW lesson material, and Grade 6 (PSW) teacher, Steven, also contributed to the teacher focus groups attended by the music teacher and the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, Alice.

In their study, Malm and Lófgren (2007:11) worked with colleagues from Sweden, Australia, and Malaysia to discover if drama lessons can empower adolescents to handle conflict. They write the "typical arenas for conflict are family, schools, and leisure time activities." Their data suggests that conflict for early teens arises out of doing chores and needing to respect the rules of the house on when to be home. Like the findings of Saldaña (2005), (cf 5.3.3) they found the boys are more direct and use force when they deal with conflict, and girls choose a more indirect path. Girls tend to "engage more in problem-solving, compromising, and smoothing." Malm and Lófgren (2007:11) found that the "causes of the conflict were intercultural conflict, racism and racial stereotyping, gender, power imbalance, and bullying." They indicated there are "three clearly defined strategies for handling conflicts: confronting (aggressiveness), avoidance, and fronting (compromising/negotiation)." They also mentioned evidence of teens using more negative ways of "forcing and withdrawing" as possible conflict handling strategies, but this occurred only in one geographical area.

Basourakos (1999) believes "drama [used] to explore curriculum and self can enhance students' understanding (of various content and issues) and allow[s] them to critically reflect

on what they are experiencing through the arts-based learning." Henry (2000) suggests that by "improvising and role-playing, younger students develop emotional (as well as cognitive) intelligence, negotiating skills, and the ability to translate ideas to a new situation." Gallagher (2001, in Belliveau 2007) also agrees when he states, "drama allows, indeed encourages, participants to shift positions, to represent multiple perspectives and points of view." In the case study, Child 12 (interview) said the learners had learned "[h]ow to change it [the problem situation] and make it better instead of making the situation into an argument" and doing so by "being more truthful."

5.5.5. Dealing with bullying behaviour

The teacher and the four Grade 6 classes worked with a school-based bullying topic in three out of four classes. The bullying behaviour manifested in different scenarios. The problem play of class 6 A deals with blaming a child for doing something wrong purely because of their history of doing it before (*False Accusation*). Class 6 B addressed the problem of children stealing food from other children on the playground (*Sandwich Stealing*). The problem scene of Class 6 C was about peer group manipulation and portrayed the interaction with the mother of two children in a home environment (*Family Trouble*). The latter problem play aimed to address infighting between peers in a newly formed family unit of remarried parents, where each parent brings along a child with them to the new family unit. In the scene, the two stepdaughters fought with each other for the support of the mother in a childish tiff about school stationery. It explored the relationships within the family unit. Class 6 D represented cyberbullying (*Cyber Pressure*).

The findings corroborate that an educational drama-based intervention such as Forum Theatre can successfully deal with bullying. The four Grade 6 classes, together with their teacher, searched for a suitable problem play topic and they engaged well in the creative process to flesh out their class problem plays. Child 10 (interview) discovered in the Forum Theatre that exposing the truth around the bullies and not allowing them any more space to intimidate other children works because they "explained properly to the teacher and then the bullies went." Others in the class become more aware of the dynamics of bullying, and Child 2 (interview) said: "I didn't know that bullies could do such a thing, that they would prey on another person." During the discussions, Child 9 (interview) questioned why some children behave badly. He said, "I learned from bullying that – It is not that some bullies do hate other children intentionally. It is sometimes because they have problems with their families. Someone in their family is abusing them," and "I also learned that family is important from what we did." Previously "I didn't know why the bullies did that, but now I know that bullies need love."

Child 5 (interview) reported that instead of being able to share and communicate his feelings and thoughts, he protects his feelings as he can now "hide what [he is] feeling, you know when bullies start bullying you? You act like you are fine. I learned how to do that better, and I learned how to adjust myself to a situation." In this instance, the child had learned a coping mechanism but had not yet solved how to defuse or stop the bullying behaviour of peers.

As Smit and Scherman (2016:2) state in their article about *relational leadership and an ethics of care to counteract bullying behaviour at schools*, the "development of values stems from adults modelling value-based behaviours." They further argue that "bullying appears to be a systemic problem ... as it mirrors behaviour patterns within society". When the children in my case study revealed how bullying occurred either on the playground or by using cell phones, it also pointed to the behavioural modelling by adults within those contexts. The teachers and the parents depicted as characters in the children's plays were not very effective at dealing with bullying behaviour. It also demonstrated how the children perceived that both the teacher and the parent in their roles deferred dealing with the problem and would rather send the conflict situation to the headmaster of the school, in the hope that he would deal with it. It pointed out that in the children's eyes, many adults are not clear or decisive when dealing with bullying situations.

During the case study, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, Alice, explored different types of bullying to demonstrate and explain how she, as an adult, would deal with the various performed situations. In this manner, the teacher guided the children on how they could respond when in similar situations. Smit and Scherman (2016:5) further argue that "where dialogue (both verbal and non-judgemental receptivity), empathy, compassion, and modelling are encouraged, a safe space can be created" so that the "damage caused by bullying, can be counteracted and psychological connections with learners can be created." Forum Theatre interventions, where problem play creation stems from image-making and improvisation activities were followed up by the performance of these plays before peer groups, demonstrated that the ensuing discussion and solution-seeking stages made it possible for audience members to explore different options as spect-actors. I believe Forum Theatre interventions would provide opportunities to help counteract bullying behaviour, would help to teach children effective responses through exploration, and would help to make bullying a topic of discussion and enable experiential exploration with children in a caring school. An effective teacher, who guides as the Joker within the Forum Theatre process, is a crucial element for the success of such an intervention. For a more in-depth discussion on the role of the Joker, see sections 3.3.5; 3.3.7; 3.3.9; 3.4.2; 3.4.3; 5.4.6; 5.5.4.3; 5.6.7; and 5.6.9.3.

5.5.6. *Kindness and care*

In line with the work done by Noddings (2013) on the ethics of care, modelling of caring behaviour during the Forum Theatre performance happened when a child stepped up as a caring father figure (*Family Trouble* performed by Class 6 C and Class 6 B as the audience). The child demonstrated caring behaviour to bring about change in the performed conflict situation. As a 'one-caring' type of protagonist, the boy was able to alter the mood and reality of the ones who were 'cared-for' and who thus received care.

The power of caring responses became evident during the Forum Theatre exploration that happened after the performance of the *Family Trouble* problem play. By caring for the mother and showing understanding for the two fighting children, the tension on stage dissipated. The changed behaviour led to a 'surprised' reaction that was visible on the face of the 'mother.' The class spontaneously applauded this learner for his performance as everyone in the room recognised how kindness and care had removed the sting out of the performed situation. This was an excellent example of vicarious learning where the children learned by watching the actions and behaviour of another, they could extrapolate the core learning for application into their lives, for both the members of the audience (Class 6 B) and those who were watching from the performing class (Class 6 C).

In summary, in theme four, experiential learning and how it relates to performative embodied learning was discussed where the children are actively learning how they can communicate beyond their spoken words as they also use their bodies to communicate. I also looked at how feelings and emotions play a role and how shy children could desensitise and overcome their shyness through the many times they were performing in roles and improvised situations. The children examined how the images they created can mean different things to different people and that there is a general core understanding as to what certain behaviour demonstrates. The children's creative activities arose from their daily reality and revealed this reality. The conflict situations and problems they showed through improvised scenes were often related to bullying situations. These situations were not always fully resolved in the Forum Theatre. The teacher, as the Joker, was not yet experienced as the facilitator of the process.

We move on now to the second teacher-related theme that emerged from the data. Theme one focused on the teaching process followed by Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, how she altered the lesson plans to be more comfortable with teaching the children. Even though not always strictly following the lesson plans, she still realised the aim of creating a short problem play in each of the four Grade 6 classes. In the teacher themes, the teacher's experience with the more performative teaching approach is examined in more detail. Theme five will also include the responses of Beatrix, the HOD, and the other Grade 6 register class teachers (cf.

Table 4.1) who contributed either to a weekly focus group discussion or to an interview. We spoke about how they experienced the four Grade 6 classes during the third term. Further, they shared what happened when they had to teach these children after their CA lessons. This fifth theme also describes the gap in knowledge that needs to be bridged to prepare a teacher for a Forum Theatre intervention in a school.

5.6. THEME 5 – THE TEACHER’S EXPERIENCE WITH FORUM THEATRE

Willing to allow this case study to explore the feasibility of implementing a Forum Theatre experiential learning teaching experience at Peace Haven School, Beatrix, the HOD for Life Orientation, was keen to achieve a more child-centred approach during the CA lessons. The HOD identified three main outcomes she would like to see come about through the Forum Theatre based CA lessons. Firstly, she was hoping that the “issues of the children would come out,” secondly that “the children would learn to be more tolerant of other people’s opinions” and accepting or tolerant of “another child’s weaker performance abilities.” The peer group ridicule at school is harsh and leads to children becoming “extremely shy in performance” as “the fear of ridicule causes anxiety” in the weaker children. “Some kids are freaked out, completely freaked out, and this is purely brought about by peer pressure. I would like to see that get better”. As a third outcome, she said,

I think if children can learn how changing behaviour can change a situation that they are in. If they can learn that by gaining a more positive attitude, you can change the outcome of what you are going to get out of a situation. I would like to see them learn that. If they can apply that during their time at school, or in life, then we are going to see a change here as well. (Second interview with HOD)

Findings indicate that the Forum Theatre intervention achieved all three outcomes that the HOD had identified. The learners demonstrated several situations in the improvised scenes where they felt powerless. Four class problem situations developed into a performance scene, one for each class. Numerous children became more confident through their exposure to role play and improvisation activities over seven weeks. Some children also provided feedback that they had become more understanding of their classmates and had developed more friendships; one child even reported that his class was not fighting anymore. Except in the first Forum Theatre presentation (Class 6 A) which did not work very well due to the inexperience of the teacher as Joker, the other three Forum presentations (Class 6 B, C and D) had demonstrated a change in behaviour in a conflict situation which can help to resolve this situation.

As Grade 6 CA encompasses numerous creative disciplines such as music, dance, drama, two-dimensional drawing and painting, and three-dimensional sculpture (DBE 2011b), it is not easy to find an accomplished teacher who works across an array of so many artistic disciplines. Furthermore, not many teachers study any of these fields to become teachers who specialise in CA. In general, the emphasis in intermediate phase teacher training is focused on building the science and language abilities of the children. CA is seen more as a fun subject, and perhaps it is not emphasised enough how the arts contribute to the holistic development of a child.

5.6.1. Assumptions, lack of understanding and miscommunication

During the case study, it became clear that Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, and I had different connotations and understanding of terminology such as ‘play’ and ‘performance.’ For the teacher to create a play meant making a traditional stage production based on a written text with assigned character roles. However, within Forum Theatre, the creation of a play would result in improvisational exploration that attempts to communicate why certain situations in life play out the way that they do. The word ‘performance’ was initially understood by the Grade 6 (CA) teacher to mean how well she ‘performed’ in her position as a teacher by saying, “if you stand in front of a class, doesn’t matter what you teach, you perform” (Entry interview with Alice). She did not use the word to mean ‘showing an audience how actor ‘performs’ a role in a staged situation or how a group of actors ‘perform’ their parts on stage on a particular night. Within the context of the theatre, the word ‘performance’ can mean numerous things. The Collins Dictionary defines it as “performance involves entertaining an audience by doing something such as singing, dancing, or acting” and synonyms for the word are a presentation, playing, acting (out), and staging” (Collins on-line dictionary, 2019). During language classes, performance or role-play activities emphasise how effective, able, and well a child plays or performs the assigned text and role before an audience. Performance in the Forum Theatre approach focuses rather on the understanding of the content of the communication. Here it becomes important to find out if the behaviour demonstrated on stage brings about understanding and enables changes in outcomes to remove oppression or defuse the power of one individual over another. It does not focus on how ably and well various children perform the role. At the start of the case study, this difference in focus was not yet clear to the teacher and me.

After the teacher, Alice, had been given the lesson plans at the start of Term 3 and we had spoken about what we were aiming for, I explained that we were going to make a short ‘play’ with the children. She asked me if there was a list of roles that we had to fill for our stage

production. Although I had already presented my research objectives and plans to the teachers, in which I explained we were going to create a play she assumed that was going to be script-based and struggled to understand that the children would create their own short performed scenes based on their ideas about a social problem or life situation.

Alice: Have you made a list of the roles?

Researcher: Well, it depends on what they are going to do. The last one, look at lesson no 10.

Alice: Is it there?

Researcher: It has all the activities. [The activities in each lesson would support the children to achieve the aims of each lesson, the last lesson was to present their staged performance in the Forum] (Entry teacher interview with Alice).

The above interaction illustrates how the Grade 6 (CA) teacher and I initially misunderstood each other. The purpose of the programme, as understood by the CA teacher, was that we were going to stage a text-based play. Later in the term, another teacher shared she thought we were doing activities in CA “so that they [the children] can voice their opinion and be heard ... and that they have a say” (Teacher interview with Joan). Considering the above confusion about what performance and drama mean to various people, it would be necessary to explain different performance approaches to teachers. Hammond (2015: location 383 of 2469) agrees and emphasises the need for clarity at the beginning of a Forum Theatre engagement as to how the nature of this type of applied theatre is different from the commonly expected type of theatre teaching. Teachers need to become aware of how Forum Theatre could be used to teach in a more experiential and performative way to develop the life skills of children. The aim of introducing Forum Theatre in CA is for children to gain a better insight and understanding into themselves, their behaviour, and their social context. The difference between the two approaches to drama and performance needs to be established at the start to avoid miscommunication. By teaching drama, performance, and playmaking in a workshop manner during CA, a teacher aids understanding in performative, active, and exploratory ways.

One of the big gains that can arise out of a Forum Theatre process would be assisting children towards understanding their peers and themselves better, and for them to gain friends rather than lose them through fights with their peers, which seems to happen all too often between children in Grade 6. The Grade 6 register teachers, as well as Alice, indicated that the children disagree and are often in conflict with each other, which supports my observation that developmentally, children in Grade 6 classes tend to fight with each other. Developmentally, the Grade 6 children are pre-adolescent. Teaching them to behave in a more caring way when they encounter aggression or conflict situations, and by helping them connect socially,

therefore, is important. Hormones are beginning to play a role in their bodies, and it affects how they communicate with each other. The early adolescent does not yet understand the changes occurring in their bodies and how flared-up tempers can affect them suddenly. They still find these outbursts difficult to control. Hence conflict management lessons and behavioural support are important for children as they enter adolescence.

Another register teacher referred to the fighting between the children during break and outside of class when I asked her about drama in her language class.

Joan: Ja, I wouldn't say there is little scope for drama, but it is usually drama all the time.

Researcher: With the languages?

Joan: Not with languages. With the children between each other.

Researcher: Okay. Tell me about it.

Joan: I mean drama between themselves, being nasty to each other, saying ugly things. Is that what you are talking about?

Researcher: I am talking about performance.

Joan: There is drama all the time.

Researcher: I am talking about performance. (Teacher interview with Joan)

The misunderstandings that came about arose because people associate different meanings with words such as 'play,' 'drama,' and 'performance.' Initially Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, was feeling lost because her expectation of what it means to make a play and what the lesson plans contained were different. She expected that we would stage a text-based play. She struggled to make sense of the devising activities in the lesson plans due to the misalignment.

Neither was it clear to other Grade 6 teachers what the Forum Theatre programme aimed to achieve. Steven, the Grade 6 (PSW) teacher, had been at the initial presentation, attended all the focus group sessions and frequently asked questions about the research. He had spoken to Alice and me between classes about what we were doing with the children, yet he and the other teachers, in general, found it difficult to understand the programme. When Lydia asked Steven at the end of the third term, what had been happening in CA that term, he was not able to clarify it. During the interviews, Lydia, the English language teacher said, "When I then f[ou]nd out about it [the Forum Theatre programme], I wanted to know 'what it was about? What did you want to achieve with your study?' Steven could not explain to me." (Teacher interview with Lydia). Alice, the Grade 6 CA teacher, who was tasked to implement Forum Theatre teaching approaches based on the lesson plans in all the Grade 6 classes frequently indicated that she lacked adequate training on how to use drama techniques in a CA classroom. The lack thereof made her feel insecure (cf. section 5.2.2; Wong 2014:2), and she

often asked me to teach the games so that she could see what it was that I wanted to achieve in class. The confusion amongst the teachers indicates a need for creating clarity about this type a drama lesson where performance activities can teach children a diversity of life skills such as better social insight, conflict resolution, and decision-making ability. The performance activities help the children to grow in confidence, make friends, and bond as a class and discover more about their talents.

Initially, I had explained that we would be making a play together without explaining that the learners and teacher would be workshopping the content of the short plays together. A teacher would need an explanation about how this requires different teaching approaches, not assigning roles nor requesting that a child learns the words in a dialogue or script written for performance on stage. The awareness, creativity and devising activities that Boal uses to prepare participants for a Forum Theatre exploration and resultant performance, arise out of how a director and actors work together to devise and create new plays. A teacher needs insight into how Forum Theatre drama lessons require experiential, performative teaching and that the games and activities prepare the participants for improvised role-played scenes to demonstrate a social, behavioural problem they bring forward out of their experiences.

When surrounded by the demands imposed by a set curriculum that is driven by regular measurement and reporting, teachers feel uncomfortable when asked to play the instructional and theatrical games that allow children to playfully gain insight into their social context and explore how people behave within different circumstances. If the teachers are judged on their ability to measure and quantify the integrative, more holistic learning achieved by the children, they will be reticent and uncomfortable with the task. They, therefore, would need to be given guidance and be allowed to teach holistically.

5.6.2. Grade 6 Life Skills Curriculum

The Grade 6 CAPS Life Skills curriculum (DBE 2011b) requires regular assessment and includes prescribed lesson content, which teachers are expected to follow. However, scrutiny of the CAPS Grade 6 Life Skills (CA) topics and suggested activities (DBE 2011b:36; cf. 1.1) show that they do not run counter to Forum Theatre techniques. Nonetheless, Alice was constrained by the assessment requirements and chose to teach two of her initially planned lessons at the start of Term 3 as she had to award marks to the learners for that term and was unsure how that would happen during the planned Forum Theatre intervention lessons. In the exit interview she told me;

Currently, our schooling system is focused on attaining measurable results. It is task-driven and content-based with a disregard for the personal needs of the children (and the teachers). The Forum Theatre programme made the children the focus of our activities, to focus on what their personal needs were. It is a person-based approach. Currently, in school, we do not measure the child's growth. We do not measure the learning that is achieved in the child. They brought their own issues. The drama helped them to deal with these issues. (Exit teacher interview with Alice)

The CA and the PSW lessons of the Grade 6 learners covered similar topics; the Life Orientation textbook (Carstens et al. 2012) included conflict management in Term 3, among other topics. The Grade 6 (PSW) teacher, Steven, shared that the work they had done during the third term was about "passive responses, aggressive responses, and assertive responses" and "Do not do unto others what you do not want them to do unto you." In his class the learners had also discussed kindness and what it means (Teacher interview with Steven). He also thought that the teaching and learning in the CA classes would have dovetailed with his PSW lesson content in Term 2:

Steven: It would have worked better with my curriculum if it [the case study] was the last term [Term 2], because the last term, for example, I was dealing with bullying, this term was about [nation building and acts of kindness]

Researcher: But maybe it was a good introduction to what we were doing.

Steven: Ja, maybe, I don't know if the bullying topic came up for you?

Researcher: Yes, three times.

Steven: Okay, good enough, then. (Teacher interview with Steven)

Devising a theatrical scene will incorporate different creative activities into the class performance. Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher explained, "Currently, the curriculum says you have to do dance, drama, folk tales, elements of art, create in two dimensions, create in three dimensions, and do photo stimuli" (Focus group discussion 2). That means a teacher would have to teach seven topics within an eight-or nine-weeks term in two allotted periods to deal with each of them. To clarify how to fit each of these activities in the playmaking process, I explained that instead of doing three-dimensional sculpting with clay, they would be doing this with their friends in class when they create a tableau or frozen scene central to their performance. These tableaux could then be photographed to form the basis for teaching about photo stimuli. The photos can be analysed in class to understand their deeper meaning. The two-dimensional activity can be accommodated by teaching the children some of the elements of art and then asking them to draw a picture that communicates conflict. The best of these could be used as a projection on a screen and be the backdrop for the performance. Dance

can be used to add mood to the performed piece, and that can happen together with singing, mime, and body percussion of individuals in each class group. Some of the children would be the actors in the short drama. Everyone would take part in the creative stages, but then some children could be chosen as being the best for acting, others for their ability to dance, sing, or for their capacity to make percussion sounds. During the Grade 6 CA classes, I observed many of these creative expressions: boys spontaneously used their bodies to make sounds to accompany the rap songs they created in some classes.

In the case study, the devising lesson sequence incorporated many activities suggested for CA in the Grade 4-6 Life Skills CAPS curriculum (DBE 2011b) and this culminated in the Forum Theatre performances (which met the curriculum requirement of building and performing a short play and reflecting appreciatively on the performance) (cf. 1.1). While trying to include as many learners as possible into the Forum Theatre performances, we also gave children who did not yet have something to do, the role of stage managers or directors. Observing with 'director's eyes,' they could see how their classmates could still improve; and aiming to aid the others, the child directors wrote down tips for their performer classmates.

5.6.3. Perceived rigidity of the curriculum

When I asked the teacher how she felt about accommodating performance-based teaching into her lesson plans, the teacher indicated that because of the CAPS syllabus, there is not much space for such adjustments. She said, "This [CAPS] syllabus is quite prescriptive, you do this, you do that, so I stick to that because I don't think I am good at drama" (Exit teacher interview with Alice). She did, however, feel that there was an element that needed to be improved in the lessons we taught. She said it is necessary to tell the children what the skill is that they will be learning in a game or activity before they do it because "They need to be told, we are going to play this game to learn X Y Z. Because if they don't know they are learning X Y Z, some of them will just play, and they won't focus on what are we trying to, what skill we are trying to sharpen" (Exit interview with Alice). Bandura (1977a) (cf. 2.2.5.1) also recommends that the teacher emphasises the learning aim of each activity. Alice explained;

Alice: I need to say to them; we are going to learn that we are going to work on making our eye contact better by looking at people.

Researcher: And observing.

Alice: Yes, if we just start playing the game, they don't know...

Researcher: ...what the focus is (Exit interview with teacher Alice).

Steven, the Grade 6 (PSW) teacher, mentioned in his interview that he thought the children were just happy that they “don’t have to do proper work” (Teacher interview with Steven). This suggested that he did not think the games and activities could be used to teach useful skills. This aspect would need to be clarified in greater detail in the lesson plans and linked to the existing Grade 4-6 Life Skills (CA) curriculum which advocates games for constructive learning purposes (DBE 2011b:36). To illustrate, when we tried the image-making activity, which had been a big success with the Grade 6 A class, in Steven’s Grade 7 PSW class, the activity fell flat as the children were not prepared for it by means of all the activities, games and improvisation that the Grade 6 classes had enjoyed prior to the image-making lesson.

Allen and Williams (2012: 333) refer to Bandura’s work on self-efficacy as this “cognitive-perceptual capacity” builds and fosters the development of “autonomy and independence.” They explain that Bandura “identified four principal sources of self-efficacy” which are applicable and useful within group work learning activities. The self-efficacy sources mentioned by Bandura are role modelling, emotional expression and catharsis, verbal persuasion, and performance” (Bandura in Allen and Williams 2012: 333). Many of these sources where this kind of learning can occur are present in a performative pedagogical learning environment. As Catterall (2007: 174) explains the growth in self-efficacy: it develops because “learning drama and other art forms is itself empowering. Feelings of competence and control come with growing expertise”. Neelands (in Innes et al. 2001: 211) did research into the voice of the student and they emphasise the benefits that can be gained out of role drama as it “involves students in many modes or genres of communication: talking, listening, negotiating, defending and responding, in a variety of situations with other people (Neelands in Innes et al. 2001: 211). Neelands also emphasised that the theatrical medium “makes the invisible influences of culture visible, discussible and serves as a mirror of how we are made, and who we might become” (Neelands 1996:29 in Innes et al. 2001:212). It emerges from the comparative research executed by Neelands (in Innes et al. (2001: 220) that the students reported developing “understandings that move beyond the subject-specific, skills-based outcomes” and that “drama is significant as a learning medium for students at any stage of education.”

The ability to accommodate drama development and performance programmes such as those of Neelands (in Innes et al. 2001), where older learners create a play to perform before a younger audience to warn them against drug use, is limited as teachers have a little leeway on how they teach. The CAPS curriculum is perceived as prescriptive and demanding, and many teachers struggle with this. According to Alice, teachers often substitute for each other’s classes when a teacher is absent. She also said many of her colleagues have burnout symptoms. (Exit teacher interview with Alice). Joan, the register teacher for Grade 6A, said:

Joan: The curriculum also limits us, it is not us that decide ... it is CAPS, and CAPS is like this; there are so many assessments, that you don't get to the point where you can just be with your class and just talk to your class and just discuss with your class, because it like this the whole time I mean doing eleven assessments, nine to eleven assessments in a term, is a lot. It is a lot.

Researcher: I hear you.

Joan: And I mean for languages that amount of marking that goes into that, it is insane. I mean only for an exam it is two papers that need to be marked. Of which one is a language and comprehension paper, and the next one is a creative writing paper. So, it takes, I mean, there are 140 children, so it is 280 papers that need to be graded. And then you still have another subject that you are giving as well. So, all in all, I think that the curriculum is too packed, I think that is the main cause, the curriculum is too packed, and we don't get to just discussing and listening to our kids. (Teacher interview with Joan)

The teaching regimen is demanding. The packed CAPS curriculum and large classes (35 children in a class at Peace Haven) limit the teacher's ability to extend or assist children who might have further questions or who are struggling to understand the lesson taught. The CAPS driven curriculum has a strong focus on the assessment of the children's learning, and to comply with that, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher did two assessment activities in the first two lessons of the term (cf. 4.3.5) to award marks for the CA classes to meet the CAPS assessment requirements of the DBE. However, there were apt creative activities in my lesson plans which could be assessed to comply with the Department requirements (cf. DBE 2011b). Group or pair activities happen during various stages in the build-up of the staged scene. By awarding marks to these initial stage Forum Theatre activities, the CAPS curriculum assessment could be accommodated. For instance, the rhythm machine can be marked for originality and how able they were in executing a living human rhythm machine as a team. A photograph can be taken to capture the quality of the sculpted three-dimensional tableaux of each class or group and the image marked on its artistic merit. An assessment of the handshakes, that the children demonstrated as a paired activity, can also be marked. However, extra time would be needed for the marking and this would clearly contribute to the teacher workload.

Beatrix, the HOD, said they are open to introducing other elements to extend the content of the Life Orientation classes. "The teachers always add supplementary worksheets or supplementary activities. The teachers are very creative in the life skills classes with fun things to do to keep the Life Skills classes engaging and fun. Fun is the key." (Exit interview with the HOD). Because of this, she, as HOD, had been happy to deviate from the lesson plans already created for Term 3 and to allow me to teach the Forum Theatre lesson plans. To ensure quality

and relevant content, the HOD vetted and approved the lesson plans before the programme began in August.

5.6.4. Fear of failure, disruption and lack of discipline

When talking about the reluctance of the Grade 6 CA teacher to implement some of the games and activities per my lesson plans, Beatrix, the HOD, shared;

Some teachers are very rigid in their way of working with the children; they can be too structured in their teaching approach. The teaching here (in CA) cannot be too structured because they will not be getting out of the children what they should be getting. To me, it is very much dependent on their personality. I also find that older teachers are not terribly willing to change. Any change; a new curriculum, moving teachers to new subjects or teaching a new grade, for some personalities especially, it gives them a sense of insecurity about matters such as “I’m going to be shown up as I can’t do this” or “It is not going to be good enough”. I find that is why they have insecurity about this specific thing. [However,] you cannot control it. The teacher needs to let the children come out with what they do. (Exit interview with HOD).

Two Grade 6 register teachers feared that Forum Theatre might disrupt the harmony and affect discipline within the school. With large classes of thirty-five children, this is very understandable for teachers to harbour such a fear. The size of the class is an issue because it becomes difficult to give attention to an individual child in a large class. As Steven explained, “When one child is given attention in the class of thirty-five children – that is less than a minute of attention per child.” Large classes make it impossible to assist “a quiet child [who] might need help with being more assertive” (Teacher interview with Steven).

For some teachers who need to manage large classes of children, it is important to maintain strict discipline in class. However, in a creative space, more leniency is required to allow for creativity. Alice’s response to the lesson plans she had requested was that she:

... had to do a lot of reading through those games and things and some of them I thought was good and could work, but I had a fear for some of the games, and I needed to make sure that discipline and safety, and dignity, stayed in place. So, there was stuff that was planned that I thought we are going to try it, and there was stuff that I tried, and I never expected it to go haywire, but then there was stuff that worked beautifully (Exit teacher interview with Alice).

It is not always easy to know where to draw the line as to what constitutes disruptive behaviour. Developing ideas together with others in the class necessitates children talking together. Talking together quietly is different from unruly and disruptive behaviour. The CA teacher preferred her classes to be quiet and said she found “the discipline extremely hard to keep but the children played along, and the children worked with me; they did not work against me” (Exit teacher interview with Alice). Interestingly many of Boal’s games (2002) are silent games as he wanted the participants to focus on what they could observe in the behaviour of others or be more aware of how well they were able to express themselves physically without words. However, Alice still avoided teaching the silent games.

Joan, the Grade 6 register teacher, identified that besides disrupting her class sometimes, there was a general discipline and an attitude problem outside the classrooms.

Joan: It is outside class that there is an issue about discipline.

Researcher: So, on the playground.

Joan: Ja, outside, in the playground. It is this entitlement that they have, of I am entitled to say this and this to you because it is freedom of speech. And I tried to explain to them; you know what if you ... “oh it was a joke. I just made a joke”. It is not a joke if both parties aren’t laughing and if both parties aren’t finding your joke funny. It then rolls over into bullying. (Teacher interview with Joan)

Steven, the Grade 6 (PSW) teacher, suggested the Forum Theatre preparatory lessons require the support of a teacher assistant. When teaching an intensive active sequence of lesson plans such as these, he said, “It is advisable that the teacher has an assistant, not because discipline is poor, but so that there is an extra set of eyes, and, you want your classroom to be a disciplined, structured place” (First focus group recording). Steven felt that the person in charge of a Forum Theatre workshop or intervention would benefit from having a teacher assistant to maintain classroom order.

Thus, Forum Theatre, which is part of Boal’s Arsenal of the Theatre of the Oppressed (1979, 1995, 2002, 2006), elicited some fears among some Grade 6 teachers that it would ignite unrest in the children and potentially disrupt the school. Steven mentioned, “There just needs to be, especially with your theme of the whole empowerment thing, there just needs a bit of a lid on it somewhere, so that these kids don’t like start becoming precocious and think that they are now running the place.” (Teacher interview with Steven).

Grade 6 register teacher, Joan, also had negative connotations with Forum Theatre because of a workshop with students at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) that had caused unrest on campus. While in the media centre, which forms part of the school library, she observed

one of the CA lessons. At the time, the class was looking for a suitable powerless situation to form the basis of the problem play performed in the Forum Theatre planned for the end of the term. She recalled:

I was there the one time that they had an opportunity to discuss their school uniform, and when they came out, they were under the impression they can come ... and say what they wanted to say in my class, and I do agree children need to, they need to voice their opinion, and they need to say what they want to say, but I think guidance at this age, especially at the age of eleven and twelve, is extremely important. (Teacher interview with Joan).

Because of their excitable state, Joan said she could not start her lesson, which followed on the CA class because the children were upset about wearing a school uniform. In response to what she observed the class was working on and subsequent behaviour in her class, she wrote me the below feedback.

Observation made during the lesson

Creating a forum for students to discuss the issues that make them feel powerless caused great concern for me. I felt that

1. It gives them the feeling that it is all right to be negative.
2. Creates an unnecessary uproar
3. This is how demonstrations start; for example, students in KZN had the same discussion forum. They did not get what they asked for. They left the forum and burnt down the library.
4. Learners at this age should be guided; they shouldn't have a free for all time to 'intice' [entice or incite?] each other in such a negative manner.
5. All through this is a role-play situation; for them, it is very real! After such a session, they are in an uproar and in a very demanding state.
6. This I have experienced after they come from art to the next period. Their discipline is totally out of the window. (Handwritten note was given to me by the CA teacher towards the end of Term 3)

The above incident emphasises how essential it is to do a wind-down closure activity after an active and performative CA class. A de-role activity, which is the name Hammond (2015: location 1827 of 2469) uses for a wind-down activity, helps the children to calm down at the end of their CA class, makes them leave their dramatic persona behind, and centres them back into their own persona again before leaving class.

Joan who made the above observation and had at first given the note to me anonymously came to watch her Grade 6 register class perform their play and saw how a problem about cyberbullying was analysed and explored in the Forum Theatre. She then became enthusiastic about the performance.

Joan: The cell phone thing that they did with you was very, very good.

Researcher: Did you watch it right from the beginning?

Joan: Yes, I watched the whole thing from the beginning to the end.

Researcher: Also, with the interaction with them afterward?

Joan: Yes, I watched the whole thing, I was there for the thing, and I enjoyed it, I enjoyed the kids, and they are very creative. They are very, very creative, but it is guiding them, guiding them to be in the right place at the right time.” (Teacher interview with Joan)

The need for guidance expressed by this teacher points to her fear that the Forum Theatre process could easily create turmoil within the disciplined structure they maintain in the school. Especially as the Grade 6 class, in general, was experienced as being difficult to teach (Interviews with teachers Steven, Lydia and Sally). However, the teachers each had a different understanding of why Grade 6 was difficult to teach. They disagreed whether it was due to the time of year, the CA class or due to habitual behaviour over the years. None of the teachers attributed it to the pre-adolescent phase. Teacher Sally described the Grade 6 classes as, “It is just the grade; I do not think it is related to art in any way; it is just, the grade is awful” (Teacher interview with Sally). Steven described the Grade 6 class of 2016 as a group that would challenge the teachers and the activities they needed to do. At the start of term, the learners had asked him if they needed to do the Forum Theatre programme. He thought the question was asked “for the sake of being difficult really. They like challenging things.” Teacher Lydia indicated that the previous Grade 6 classes had also been difficult. “Last year there was the same issue with this group where, in the third term, they gave the Grade 5 (teachers) lots of issues.” Sally said, “I also found this term, there is lot more argument amongst the kids but about stupid things, like things that have happened on WhatsApp, and things that happen in class, as this person left me for a break and whatever.” (Teacher interview with Sally).

The teachers did not accept the playful approach as a valid way to learn. They preferred more traditional teaching, where they as teachers transfer a specific skill or insight, followed by practice of the skill and then measuring the level of transference through testing the retention of the skill or insight gained. The experiential approach, introduced by playing games where children learned through exploration, made Alice, the Grade 6 CA teacher, feel uncomfortable and the activity was not taken seriously by her. Alice was afraid she might lose control of the

class and would not be able to maintain teaching in a disciplined way as she said, “I have been so strict with them, and I have laid down the rules so that they will perform. One or two periods per term, no more, you cannot take a whole term and just play games.” (Focus group session) The resistance to playing games as a learning technique was perhaps caused by unfamiliarity to experiential teaching methods. The teacher also felt uncertain about how she would measure the learning achieved through a test.

5.6.5. The social insight gained experientially through Forum Theatre methods

The results of this case study indicate that Forum Theatre, under the guidance of a trained and experienced teacher, can be used beneficially in a school. The method can develop life skills in young people and contribute to building up their social skills repertoire. Better acquisition of life skills and insight into how to achieve more caring behaviour as introduced by Noddings in her book *Ethics of Care* (2013) is possible. Good life skills acquisition links back to the debate on the development of sound ethics and moral education systems in schools. The debate interrogates how a caring approach to other people can gain better results in social and educational environments. By teaching social insight through performance methods, children can learn about their social context, make friendships while doing so and gain insight into how to solve a social conflict situation. Further, they learn when there is conflict; learners realise it does not help when tempers are heated to add fuel to the fire. Rather, they should employ introspection and maintain self-control to assess the importance of a conflict situation. This section of the data analysis links up to earlier sections in the thesis that deal with various life skills approaches (cf. Williams and Williams 2010; Katie 2002; Botvin and Griffin 2004). Research by Evjáková (2018:2) supports the use of learning through drama and performance as she writes that “through play, a director-educator leads a student to creativity, thoughtfulness, and expression. Theatrical work teaches about responsibility for the piece, teamwork, tolerance, and assertiveness”. Joronen, Håkämies and Åstedt-Kurki (2011:671) explain that “[s]ocial and emotional learning is the process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to recognise and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions and handle interpersonal situations effectively.” Moreover, these life-skill enhancing programmes assist with developing “social-emotional skills and academic performance” while decreasing the “conduct problems and emotional distress” of participants.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), based in Finland, has identified “five groups of inter-related core social and emotional competencies”: “self-

awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making” (Joronen et al. 2011:672) that support people in a positive way. Drama can assist with developing the “understanding and alternative ways of acting in the reality of human relations at the individual as well as community level.” They are further supported by Wright (2006: 43-65) and Wright, John and Ellenbogen (2006:186-205), as well as Malm and Löfgren (2007:1-20), who have reported “positive effects of arts programmes on social skills and on conflict management” (in Joronen et al. 2011: 672). Downey (2008: 58-64) also emphasises that teachers build up the resilience of children in caring classrooms when teachers “believe in them and serve as a role model and supporting adult.” When children “have opportunities to develop skills in communicating, coping with stress, managing conflict, problem-solving, decision making, and critical thinking” (Downey 2008:61), they also become resilient through social and life-supporting skills.

As a school-based application, the curriculum for Grade 6 CA can successfully incorporate a teacher-supported version of Forum Theatre. The case study undertaken in this South African public primary school has shown that a scaffolded form of Forum Theatre could work with middle-school-aged children. The children also find the more active performative lesson sequence fun, which is in line with a study by Joronen et al. (2011:671), which found that children enjoyed the drama activities. The findings show that the Grade 6 children learned life skills through these lessons (cf. 5.3.4 and 5.3.5.). However, a teacher would need coaching before attempting Forum Theatre activities. A manual which lists essential steps and provides context would also be beneficial to guide teaching in a performative and experiential manner.

A full Forum Theatre programme requires learning through performance-based activities and games, class discussions in response to the images, and improvised scenes. The teacher needs to know and trust that the devising process results in a problem scene because the characters that develop in the process have opposing needs and therefore, are bound to clash with each other. It results in a powerless character becoming a victim to the force exerted by the powerful one(s). It is in the unravelling of the conflict and exploration of the effectiveness of different behavioural responses that the children learn to acquire better behaviour, both emotionally and socially.

The dramatic scene develops through a workshop process into a theatrical problem performance. The group, together with a knowledgeable teacher or theatre practitioner, creates a problem scene to demonstrate the powerless situation. After a creative, physical, and active exploration of the participants’ reality to discover the nature of their problems, the problem-solving activities happen collectively. During the Forum, the audience is challenged to solve the problem under the guidance of a Joker or facilitator, as is fulfilled by the teacher.

Boal (1979, 1995, 2002, 2006), also called the Joker, the 'difficultor' (cf. 3.3.5) because the Joker must challenge the audience's suggestions with questions first to test the robustness of the suggested idea, before allowing substitution on stage. Performative and improvisational teaching is needed to apply Forum Theatre in a CA class as it is an experiential, person-focused approach to teaching social insight and it demonstrates a collective problem-solving approach.

The first devising part of a Forum Theatre intervention requires a teacher to explore numerous scenes through embodied awareness, image-making, spatial awareness, and three-dimensional sculpting to create tableau's which can be brought to life sequentially to enable children to discover much about themselves, their social context and the bigger society in which they live. The case study showed how a Forum Theatre approach to teaching in CA, could be an effective way to build up a child's awareness of body language (embodied) communication. It can help to improve their self-esteem, can provide a shy child with an opportunity to desensitise and gain more confidence, and helps a full class of children to get to know each other better, resulting in the formation and enhancement of friendships and leads to more understanding for the diversity in backgrounds among them.

The second part of a Forum Theatre intervention teaches children observation, discussion, problem-solving, and conflict management skills. Through role replacement and spect-acting, children observe social behaviour and learn more about problem-solving within social situations (Hammond 2015: location 604 of 2469). In general, Forum Theatre also teaches better conflict management skills. Forum Theatre allows children, under the guidance and with support of their teacher, to explore suitable ways to defuse conflict. The children learn that if they can change their behaviour, they can counter manipulative situations. Initially, after watching the performance in the Forum Theatre, children first attempt to solve the protagonist's problem without the help of a teacher. If it proves too complicated, or when they become stuck in aggressive responses, the teacher can guide the children by asking Socratic questions. For example, when the children could not defuse an enacted problem situation in the case study, their teacher suggested different behaviour, and she guided the children by explaining at the end how an adult would solve a similar situation. Further, she indirectly guided the class through her coaching and encouragement of behavioural approaches, which culminated in modelling of how, for instance, kind and caring acts work better than those rooted in an aggressive approach.

A teacher extends insight into a conflict situation by guiding the children's understanding and focusing them on the actions of the characters. Such an explanation happened when the audience did not notice how a bully intimidated the 'snitch' with his 'I will cut your throat' hand

action. Alice, the Grade 6 CA teacher, alerted the audience to the physical threat shown only as a gesture, and then the child actors replayed the scene to clarify.

If the spect-actor was successful, Hammond (2015: locations 151, 676, 686, 712 and 713 of 2469) advises the scene should be replayed again to entrench positive learning. To support the children in acting roles, a teacher can make use of a “huddle,” as Hammond (2015: location 677, 1401 and 1644 of 2469) calls it, to re-focus the actors on what they need to achieve in the re-run of the scene under scrutiny. A “huddle” keeps the children who are playing the antagonist's roles focused on what they need to achieve in the performance. He reminds actors what the spect-actor was planning to achieve, cautions them to remain realistic as antagonists, and boosts their confidence. He assures actors they can represent the motivation of their character as they only need to achieve the “essence” of their counter push against the behaviour of the ‘new’ spect-actors as protagonist. To entrench the learning gained after breaking the oppression, Hammond [would] also, before a re-run, “discuss (1) what suggestions will be integrated into the new more desirable, play and (2) what the structure of this new play will be” (Hammond 2015: location 709 of 2469).

5.6.6. Acquisition of life skills

Alice, the Grade 6 CA teacher, agreed that the children acquired new life skills by experiencing a Forum Theatre engagement because: “They learned to speak their mind. They learned to accommodate the next person into whatever it is they were doing. They learned you could speak with your body and your eyes” (Exit interview with Alice). More importantly, the CA teacher noticed the children had acquired social insight which works in an equalising manner because:

... they learned, that they actually all have the same challenges, like if it is a bad day in the family, mom and dad are shouting at one another, they played it out, and you could see they were familiar with it, it happens, and it is not the end of the world because you get over it. Knowing that you are not the only one facing a challenge or a difficulty makes working on that challenge easier. ... It also makes you feel more acceptable because you are not the only one that is going through this challenge, so your self-acceptance is better. It grows confidence knowing I have got a comrade in this. And I think knowing other people battle with the same difficulties, brings healing. (Exit teacher interview with Alice)

Moreover, Alice also identified that the children “grew a bit of compassion and a bit of empathy for one another” and “they look at one another with different eyes.” Working on matters such

as respect for another person “is something we will forever have to work on. It is never an ‘I have arrived’ place” (Exit teacher interview with Alice). For the children to feel safe and confident to share from their reality, Alice said, “The only thing these kids need to learn is respect. If they respect one another, they will listen to one another. They will give the other person a chance; they will value that person when that person speaks and looks him in the eyes. So that is we consider good manners” (Exit teacher interview with Alice). Performative teaching develops social manners in children and is one of the gains that arise out of the Forum Theatre approach to problem-solving.

At the start of the programme, Alice was aware that teaching children drama techniques would grow the children’s confidence. She shared that “...if a child has been assessed and the psychologists say the child lacks confidence, I will always suggest to the parents, take him for drama classes because then they learn to speak up and also to respond to those around them” (Entry teacher interview with Alice). When other children tease a child about their acting abilities, she said, “You have to intervene, you have to say no, we all have the right to try, we do it differently, and that is what I always try to teach them is, our strength lies in our differences. That’s it” (Entry teacher interview with Alice). This programme made it possible for the teacher to experience that frequent exposure to the performance activities within a group in class helps to desensitise a child who is very shy of having to perform in front of their peers. The shy ones become less prone to avoidance of the limelight and thus overcome the fear that limits them from reaching their true potential.

During the analysis stage, which happens as part of the Forum Theatre, the teacher and the learners become participant modellers on how to enact better behaviour, which in turn builds up better levels of self-efficacy. According to Hammond (2015: location 1468 of 2469), “the idea of rehearsal was one of the most helpful aspects of Forum Theatre. ... The process of rehearsal can instil confidence in the spect-actors to try to overcome challenges ... it is proven that the ability to show, rather than express answers verbally, can be empowering”. Shapiro (2011) called learning through the body in the play or performance “embodied cognition.” When a person is learning through the role they are performing, they also learn on a metacognitive level. The child is “encouraged to think about his thinking as if he were in the position of the character, rather than being the character *per se*” (Hammond. 2015: location 1508 of 2469). When the child steps into the role of the protagonist, he or she is allowed “to rehearse actively and play in a safe space.” So instead of thinking [cognitive engagement] “about what they might do, they can try it out” [experiential engagement] ... “The process can help to build up a problem-solving repertoire “that can be drawn on in the moment” (Hammond 2015: location 1527 of 2469). When everyone is thinking about how to solve the problem, the

social group is engaged in parallel towards achieving the same goal, and the solutions that do arise out of the Forum are “realistic and sustainable solutions.”

The children’s realities were the basis for the problem scenes raised by the children as hard to solve. They were first shown physically in class through improvised scenes. As Alice put it, “If they haven’t lived it, they won’t act it. It is not part of the world they live in; that’s why they wouldn’t act it out. That is why they got stuck in the aggression” (Exit teacher interview with Alice). She also experienced that the performed reality provided the learner with more clarity on the topic. Alice further said, “I think putting up a theatrical pretend situation gives the kids much better insight. They understand the problem; they can identify the problem much better than when you just talk about it. Even when they just talk about it, it is better” (Exit teacher interview with Alice). Reflecting, she said,

I think when they made their plays, they were very honest. They played what they know and what they saw. They played it honestly, and that is the world they live in. Some of the stuff was scary. I think every child while watching the play, could see a bit of himself in the characters or a bit of their family or their situation. (Exit teacher interview with Alice)

Thus, the children can develop social skills and test their understanding of social context against the experience of their peers. The lesson plans were designed with the hope that the children would be able to arrive at a problem scene they could perform. After that, a class group as an audience would find solutions to the performed problem in the Forum Theatre, as presented by another class. As the problem, performed in the play, is solved in the Forum Theatre, the teacher was asked not to find solutions in the devising stage. The teacher, however, wanted to discuss solving these exploration scenes as they surfaced and felt this was something that needed to be rectified if such lessons were taught again. She shared, “What didn’t happen was in those little skits, you said we are not to give them the outcome ... We are not to give them the solutions to the problems” (Exit teacher interview with Alice). Seeking solutions with the class right then would not have mattered, as in the Forum Theatre, a different class attempts to solve the problem for the protagonist of that class.

When asked if she thought the children now understood how their behaviour had an impact on solving the problems enacted on stage, Alice answered:

Alice: I don’t think they do. Only when I unpacked their skit, did they get it? So, I think when they put up this skit, I think it is good to dissect it.

Researcher: I also agree with you. It is very important. It needs to happen at the end.

Alice: And once if you dissected it and you send them back, they might be able to come up with solutions that have changed their behaviour.

She also was shocked that the children did not behave with:

... a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. Yet, as a nation, that is what we say is our saving grace. They hang on to the aggression, and 'I am going get you back, I have to get you back', and that is why in these kids, they couldn't move forward.

She identified that the general trend "followed outside in the political arena" is the need "to get you back. There is no forgiveness." (Exit teacher interview with Alice)

I asked the Grade 6 register teacher, Lydia, if the children in her class were more confident now. She answered that she did notice a change in a few children:

There is this girl K, in 6CS, I never really noticed her at the beginning of the year, whatever, and this term, specifically, especially because [they] are also doing the plays and stuff. She just came out of her shell. ... she is more out there. She is not in her shell. Not so distant. I mean she talks now during class.

Regarding a particularly shy child who refused to take part in anything performative in the past, she said: "She also interacts more, and she jokes more and, Ja [Yes], I thought she is just getting more comfortable with me, but I did notice" (Teacher interview Lydia).

So, for at least two of the timid children in Grade 6, who habitually just sat and listened in class, a change had come about as they were now contributing to the class discussions. Sally had not made the connection that the activities in the CA class had anything to do with learners' changed behaviour but had attributed the change to the learners just becoming more comfortable with her. She realised during the interview that it could also have had something to do with their CA classes.

For Alice "the value [of Forum Theatre] lies in the outcome of the situation like the kids so enjoyed" watching the solution that came about in the '*Family Trouble*' play when the boy taking the role of a caring father:

... came in, and he told his wife, she looked beautiful, go and sit ... and he said to the kids, go to your room. I am going to speak to you later ... What did he do? He spoke slowly, and he lowered the tone of his voice. What did that do? It had a calming effect on the irate mother and the children. And then, he could calmly reason with them, which is exactly the opposite of all the other scenes, they all scream and shout and talk together. So maybe we should try teaching the children how to speak (Exit teacher interview with Alice).

The demonstration of how it looks when somebody solves a problem by being more caring, understanding and kind in response to a conflict situation is where the huge benefit of performed behaviour lies. The children are not just told to be kinder; they are modelled and shown the kind behaviour that they need to apply in such situations.

5.6.7. Practical matters

As in any research project particularly where there is prolonged fieldwork, practical issues arise. Many of these were linked to time being limited. It would have been much better if the ethical consent and assent forms were completed and submitted by all learners and their parents before the Forum Theatre lessons started. The forms caused a great deal of administrative hassle as collecting the approvals took up time and distracted the class at the start of most lessons. The parent and child permission forms had to be linked with the parent's name appearing on the child's form. The surnames of parent and child did not always correspond in cases of remarriage, making it difficult to check if all forms had been received. Playing another game that communicates an essential performative skill to the children or a de-role or wind-down activity taking place at the end of each class would have been a more beneficial activity than collecting permission forms.

When considering a Forum Theatre programme in the school, it is important to think about the aspect of time. The teachers need to decide where in the school day this drama activity should take place. They also should consider what happens before and after their drama timeslot in the timetable so that they can allow for a warm-up and wind-down activity even when the time constraints are tight, as these activities play a crucial role in managing the behaviour of the children.

Forum Theatre applications differ as Midha (2010), in his application of Boal's methodology for secondary school children, choose to time the content of the problem scene for the end of the sequence as it happened only in the ninth lesson. First, he worked on preparing the participants for performing a role, then moved to create images and did sculpting with people in groups or pairs. The group would also spend more time analysing these images to understand their significance as each performer needed to know their character's motivation. Only after all the other activities had been completed, did Midha do a group brainstorm activity to identify possible performance ideas.

The good ideas would be those the children can relate to closely. Only if a group is stuck may ideas be suggested to them. These ideas may only be used if the group has experienced them before to make sure the content of the scenario is relevant. In Midha's approach, young people

also needed to think about how they were going to show oppression through drawings or a written description. After brainstorming, all ideas and drawings were shared with the bigger group and captured on a big sheet of paper, with a name linked to each core idea (Midha 2010:54). After a short enactment by the various subgroups, a feedback round took place. The various ideas suggested were hung up around the room so that the participants could choose the best idea democratically. People were asked to go and stand with the idea that held the most appeal for them. Groups of eight were ideal, and bigger groups were split up. Towards the end of devising a scene or short play, Midha introduced and discussed the role of the Joker so that the group understood there would be some bridging and interaction happening between them and the audience.

Further, to be able to do performative teaching activities with a class of children requires access to an open space in which the children can move around without hurting themselves. The importance of the open space also only became evident to Alice as we worked with the materials in the various lessons. When I asked her how we were going to access enough space for all the movement activities, she initially answered:

Alice: We 'maak 'n plan' [make a plan].

Researcher: Okay.

Alice: They can stand around the tables, or here, or we go to the grass.

Researcher: That might be wiser; let's do that.

Alice: There is a little place called the amphitheatre, which can also be nice; it is nice and warmish there if there is a wind.

Researcher: Okay. Good. Because I think if they have to cross over with the table in the middle that could lead to hurting each other.

Alice: They will find a way. We will just check it out, if not, then we will go out. (Entry teacher interview with Alice).

Later during the focus group, discussion, and the exit interview, it became clear that Alice had now experienced why a larger open space was needed and had understood that access to a big space was crucial for participation and the ability to do a performance activity during CA lessons (Exit teacher interview Alice; Focus group session 2).

During the Forum Theatre, the fourth wall of the theatrical space (cf. 1.2), the invisible wall that usually exists between the audience and the stage, is broken down to invite audience members to step onto the stage and take over a role to try and change how the play will end. The aim is to break the oppression being enforced on the protagonist by the antagonist. The audience is asked to help the victim(s) in the scene. At the start of the Forum, a Joker (a neutral person just like the Joker in a game of cards) would explain what was about to happen

and warm the audience up through a kick-off activity. After seeing the problem demonstrated on stage through the actors, the Joker (in this case, the teacher) next needs to clarify for the audience what the dramatic scene has communicated, establishing who the victim or powerless person(s) was/were in the scene. The next step is managing the process of finding ideas and solutions for the dramatic scene to be 'solved.' Generally, introducing different behaviour into the scene will lead to different solutions. All replacement attempts aim to resolve the depicted conflict situation.

When working with older children or adults, instead of the teacher or director taking on the Joker role, usually a person from the performance group is chosen to be the 'Joker.' The Joker is crucial to achieving engagement with the audience. In the case study, the Grade 6 learners were deemed too young to handle such a complex role, and thus the Joker task was assigned to the teacher. Further research could determine if this assumption was correct. As the children are promoted later move to secondary school, the middle school teacher remains behind and can repeat the activities with other classes in subsequent years. First, there is the need for guidance and support from a teacher, and second, it enables continuity for more regular Forum Theatre activities in the school to benefit other classes in subsequent years.

5.6.8. Differences between the case study lessons and Hammond's approach

Hammond (2015) published a book about applying Forum Theatre with children. I had not yet discovered his publication when the Grade 6 (CA) teacher implemented the Forum Theatre intervention at the school under my guidance. It would have been beneficial to use his many useful suggestions and ideas to achieve an engaged audience and to gain the most out of the Forum Theatre problem-solving process. The main differences between his way of working with children and how we applied Forum Theatre ideas and methods are touched on in the ensuing comparison.

5.6.8.1. Size of the group working on devising a problem performance

Hammond (2015: location 821 and 2056 of 2469) "works with a small group of six to eight children" to devise a problem scene for a Forum. In the case study, the entire class (on average 35 learners) was involved with as many children as possible. Some children became actors, and others performed as singers while others danced or showed their emotions through mime. We also had stage managers, and some children acted as directors to help the performers improve. By approaching the playmaking process in this manner, it taught the class that a theatrical performance allows for the integration of many different creative disciplines. Whole class involvement created an opportunity for more children to contribute and share what they

are inherently good at and allowed them all to explore and learn during the devising and problem-solving stages. The best acting, dancing and singing skills of a class were expressed on stage. The best drawings could be projected on a screen behind the performance to emphasise the mood or message of the problem play. Three-dimensional sculpting was utilised in the images shown during the show and came into play in the tableaux and choreography of the movements of the actors, dancers, and singers on stage. Theatrical performance is a rich language that integrates many artistic abilities and makes use of the embodied or physical expression. A good image and vibrant action on stage can be more expressive than expressing thoughts and feelings only on a cognitive level through spoken language.

However, working with the entire class, Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, had to keep all the children engaged, which made the devising stage a more draining experience for the teacher. Limiting the actor group as Hammond (2015) does makes the process more manageable even though it negates the opportunity for all the children in the grade to learn more about themselves, their classmates, and their social context through their experiences.

5.6.8.2. A collaborative and democratic choosing process

Exploring many conflict situations together led to the formation of suitable scenes for performance. However, the final choice about what the class was going to perform in the Forum Theatre was not collaborative or democratic as Alice, the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, did not put it to the vote. Instead, she worked with what she thought was the most robust performance scene or continued where we had left off to polish the scene for the Forum. In contrast, Hammond (2015) suggests that the facilitator asks the class to vote or choose the scene they thought was best for performance on stage.

5.6.8.3. More scaffolding steps to break the performative elements down

Hammond (2015: location 750 of 2469) breaks the Forum Theatre process down into more steps; this helps to make the process easier for the children to understand and apply physically through playing a role on stage. Some techniques used by Hammond, as mentioned below, are also applied in the field of psychology.

1. Hot seating – The character sits in a chair and can be interviewed to discover more about their motivation or feelings to achieve a better understanding of the character. Fritz Perls (1970) first introduced the technique in the previous century (cf. section 2.3.1.2).
2. Role reversal – By playing the opposing role, you gain more insight into what motivates the behaviour of the other party in the conflict, which makes understanding of their point

of view possible. Albert Ellis (1991) developed this way of understanding more about the position of the other party (cf. section 2.2.6.1).

3. Huddle – Just as a coach does with a sports team, the Joker or facilitator has a short private discussion with the actors who are demonstrating the behaviour inherent in a scene on stage to remind them of the behaviour and motivation of the antagonist in the scene. The group talks to align their purpose and focus on knowing what is needed to oppose the spect-actor’s attempt to bring about change, making the spect-acting more realistic.
4. De-role – This is what Hammond (2015: location 1756 of 2469) calls the last activity in a class where the persons playing roles can step out and become their person again. When the bell rang at the end of class, we did not do a de-role activity as we did not realise how important this step is. As a result, the children would sometimes arrive at their next classes behaving in an unruly and difficult to manage manner.
5. Aftercare – Hammond (2015: locations 317, 952 and 1862-3 of 2469) recommends that procedures are in place so that should somebody develop emotional problems because of the Forum Theatre workshops, he or she can receive support and help. In this case, the HOD and other teachers were aware of the case study. They could all help children if they came with questions. We did not specifically provide the children with the numbers of Child-line or provide a reference to a psychologist for further support should a more severe problem arise. The school had the contact information for a suitable psychologist to consult should the need arise. However, Hammond (2015) assures that Forum Theatre is not intended to deal with the therapeutic needs in a school, nor is it aimed at dealing with emotional distress, but rather its aim is generic. It is intended to “explore social, emotional, and behavioural components of the theme” while the children’s “social and emotional development is supported.”
6. Characterisation – We did not work much with the motivations of the various characters in the problem plays that the children had created, except for asking the class whom they thought the various characters were, after watching their classmates perform a scene. The frozen images were also not analysed very deeply to pinpoint what the image meant for different children. Discovering the multi-layered meaning contained in an image is essential to gain clarity around the motivation of the various roles and to identifying the core residing within the images. Joronen et al. (2011: 672) share practical advice that beside hot seating, “collective drawing, sound-tracking, argumentation, collective roles, still images and a conscience corridor” are drama techniques to assist children with understanding the assigned character better.

5.6.8.4. Teacher understands the importance of activities in devising stage

Hammond (2015: location 790 of 2469) explains that the creative exercises of a Forum Theatre process “develop emotional awareness, memory, teamwork, imagination and muscular, body, and sensory awareness”. In his Forum Theatre workshops, the first three sessions are focused on activities aimed at the development of a cohesive group and to prepare the children mentally, physically, and emotionally. “[W]e need them [the children] to trust the process of creating, feel comfortable with ambiguity and be ready to play without inhibition” (Hammond 2015: location 790 of 2469). “Children need to listen and connect both to themselves and their character” (Hammond 2015: location 808 of 2469). In the case of the case study, the teacher sometimes avoided parts of the creative exercises, either because she did not grasp their purpose or could not see how they added value. Sometimes she felt if the activities needed to happen within groups and run in parallel, it would make it hard for her to maintain discipline in class. Her dislike of disruption arises from her approach to teaching and might also have sprung from the reputation of the Grade 6 classes, who were notorious in the school for being difficult to teach.

“The initial workshops should aim to develop the sense of cohesion, trust, responsibility, and discipline needed to create and perform a piece of Forum Theatre” (Hammond 2015: location 883 Of 2469). He goes on to explain why the activities and games matter by explaining that “theatre remains a discipline, requiring focus, attention, cooperation and negotiation” (Hammond 2015: location 899 of 2469). Hammond also explains that the cohesion building activities make the children aware that they have more in common than they realise. Cohesion is especially important when there are antagonistic groups in the classroom. He also cautions that the activities should also happen within a space that is safe for all the participants.

The theme for the case study was conflict management and moments of feeling powerless. The children still had to choose their powerless situation as a demonstration in a problem scene. Playfully they would explore problem scenarios they felt caused them to have conflict at home or with their friends. Alice captured the topics through brainstorming on the whiteboard. These topics were explored through many improvised scenes that the children demonstrated in the devising stage. Hammond (2015: locations 379, 477 and 730 of 2469) also would first identify a theme before beginning on a Forum Theatre engagement. He writes that the Forum Theatre “process offers children a unique, playful experience ... helped to develop creative problem-solving repertoires” in the Forum, which takes place at the end of the devising process. The literature suggests that themes which are very effectively dealt with in Forum Theatre are bullying, learning to say no to peer pressure (Winston 2001:52), gender, and interpersonal violence. It can also be used to teach bystanders how they can play an important role to avoid gender-based aggression in toxic social situations (cf. 3.4.3.1).

The next section will deal with the gap that needs to be addressed to assist teachers with acquiring the correct foundation to be successful at utilising Forum Theatre. The technique can teach children a wide range of life skills during the creative process of building a performance about something they as a group struggle with.

5.6.9. The gap in performative teaching skills

The case study data suggests there is a gap that needs to be bridged for teachers to embrace and understand the teaching approach needed to implement a suitable Forum Theatre workshop. The way it teaches children about themselves and their social context requires firm understanding on the part of the teacher of an art-based, experiential teaching approach. Teachers would have to understand the value of a Forum Theatre workshop; know that it is a child-centred approach that can build up the self-esteem, resilience, and problem-solving abilities of children; and understand that a Forum Theatre teaching workshop leads to the acquisition of life skills in children. In general, they need to understand that life skills development helps children to thrive in life and protects them to be more resistant to harmful influences during their teenage and young adult years (Botvin and Griffin 2004, 2010, 2014).

The experiential teaching approach is a devising process that culminates in a problem situation/scene being performed as a class. For a teacher to be successful, they need to understand the purpose of a Forum Theatre programme and be able to manage the process to gain participation and discussion with their audience. They must be able to test the validity of suggested ideas from the audience. When a 'magic' solution is proposed, they, as an audience, must grapple with why the idea does not work. It will help a teacher to know more about devising as a creative, workshop process, and how they can harness the collective class creativity that erupts from these activities. If a teacher understands the creative process better, they will be more confident and will trust that the devising process of creating strong, believable characters with opposing needs or wants, will lead up to a short problem scene or performance. The teacher also must explain to the class that they are going to create a new performance piece without a script and that this is different from a traditional script-based performance with character roles and stage directions.

The Boal (2002) games have different aims, but in general, they are designed to teach the children about their performative acting abilities. The children learn how their bodies communicate together with their voices. Being on stage requires more than just an expression of language; it also requires the ability to make a scene come alive through the bodies of the actors moving realistically in a fictional setting. The games and activities teach participants co-

operation, improvisation skills, and they create an awareness of how their physical body communicates without words and how they apply their improvisation abilities. Next the children discover, develop and shape the problem play or scene. The intent is to allow the children to discover what the core conflict situation of their choosing is like and allows them to demonstrate it physically within a performed scene. The content of such lessons is often reality-inspired.

The second part of the Forum Theatre lessons is about finding solutions for the problem play made by each of the classes during the first devising part. The audience is invited to watch the problem in the Forum and observe how it develops. The Joker leads them into a discussion about how they can resolve the problem. With the guidance of the Joker, in this case, their teacher, the spectators will be asked to try and change the outcome for the protagonist by introducing different behaviour that will lead to a different outcome. A teacher needs to become an efficient Joker to be able to manage this engagement with the audience. For more on this aspect, see sections 5.4.6; 5.5.4.3; 5.6.7; and 5.6.9.3.

5.6.10. *An integrated vision for performance in CA*

Alice queried my suggestion of creating an integrated vision by using the elements of art to create a short performance scene. She expressed misgivings because:

... if it is just charcoal drawing, ... they've got to do the elements of art, and you need time to teach, this is balanced, this is how you get dimension into your drawing, this is how you make something look closer, this is how to make something look far. We only have two periods, so one period I have to tell them that [the theory], now I only tell them, they are not used to it, they haven't tried it, and the next period they've got to create and that is their final thing, [they have] thirty minutes to create that. (Focus group)

Her teaching approach once again showed me that she liked to teach the theory first and then she would allow the children to apply what they had learned, rather than first trying to do an activity and then teaching theory to supplement their understanding where necessary. She also believed:

We are teaching the complex child, and you have to develop that child holistically. You can't just develop this, you understand, and that is a problem. So, you can't just focus on this concept in all the other areas. I don't know. It is not that big. You can't. At the end of the day, the child has to write an exam." (Focus group)

The teacher's comfort zone was a cognitive theoretical approach to teaching, which works well in many of the logically driven school subjects but not necessarily in a CA class where the expression of a child arises out of their creativity and understanding of their world. The assessment mark awarded in this class would thus not arise out of how well they scored in an exam or test but rather would depend on the quality of their creative expression.

During the Forum Theatre performance day, it became evident that doing an activity with the audience at the start was vital as it relaxed and made them more responsive. At the end of each Forum Theatre exploration, Alice followed up on the performed behaviour under examination, regardless of whether a solution had come about or not. She would explain how adults would respond and deal with the presented conflict situation to provide the children with another viable perspective on conflict resolution choices. She gave guidance by suggesting an adult solution to recap the vicarious learning modelled through the behaviour that the class had witnessed. It also provided a solution to any unanswered questions. The children received the message verbally and by way of modelling of more effective behaviour by a spect-actor who showed a peer group why it is important to behave in a fair, kind, and caring way.

Compared with the following list of potential benefits and growth opportunities to be gained from a Forum Theatre event (Rohd 1998: xvii-xviii), the Forum Theatre intervention in the Grade 6 classes shows:

- Forum Theatre can provide a safe space for learning and development;
- Forum Theatre does enable a class dialogue on a topic of interest. In the case study, the dialogue could have been explored and utilised more;
- Forum Theatre can explore children's choices and the consequences they bring;
- Forum Theatre does permit possibilities for children to practise for real-life;
- Forum Theatre enhances children's communication skills and develops their decision-making abilities;
- Forum Theatre gives insight into understanding how self-esteem affects moments of decision; the children who suggested and modelled a solution did so confidently;
- Forum Theatre enables risk-taking in fictional worlds with the potential to learn rather than fail; the children tried to bring about change, and their attempts were not always successful. The class kept trying until they did achieve a workable solution.
- Forum Theatre leads to taking action. Being a protagonist in a staged scene does have the potential to carry over learning to one's own life;
- Forum Theatre enables critical and visceral analysis of life situations and tests possible responses in those situations;

- Forum Theatre utilises the multiple perspectives different individuals bring to every interaction as a positive tool for problem-solving.

Rohd (1998: xix) stated, “We have no better way to work together, to learn about each other, to heal, and to grow” than through the theatrical space. CA lessons provide a perfect space for children to experience and explore changing behaviour through a Forum Theatre engagement to achieve different outcomes for a problem they encounter and find difficult to solve. Devising a short, performed problem scene was supported by image-making. In-depth discussions should have been used to discover the deeper meaning in the presented central image for every person in the class. Spectators need to understand the situation and what the intentions of the protagonist were. A Joker needs to ask the spectator with an idea to ‘show me rather than tell me’ as body language clarifies what is meant by words. The children can distil out the general core when they are assisted by a well-trained teacher who is proficient at being an energetic Master of Ceremonies, and a Facilitator or ‘Difficultor’, to aid or challenge their ideas. The Joker should be impartial and utilise humour to explore the dynamics of foolish behaviour because it helps to achieve liberation. The Joker draws out useful ideas and aids in the exploration of ideas so that the audience leaves with an array of possible solutions rather than just one. The Joker also needs to be the referee to choose who may attempt to bring about change after suggesting a solution as a member of the audience. Finally, the Joker must be an impartial Socratic questioner to test and explore unclear ideas in discussion first to clarify the thought in more detail before attempting to change the behaviour on stage.

The findings of the data analysis of the case study performed in CA lessons presented to Grade 6 learners in a selected South African primary school ends here. Findings indicate that Forum Theatre can be utilised successfully for teaching and learning a variety of life skills. Winston (2001:49) writes that life skills fostered through performative pedagogy and drama techniques “include: communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, and critical thinking”. Achieving successful acquisition of life skills through a Forum Theatre approach requires a motivated teacher who has been trained in performative pedagogy, who is familiar with Forum Theatre techniques to enable and guide the learning and devising process of the learners, and who can facilitate as the Joker in the final Forum Theatre performance.

CHAPTER 6

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINAL CONCLUSION

6.1. INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter presents an overview of the literature study and the results arising out of an intrinsic ethnographic case study executed in line with the problem formulation, research questions and aims set out in the first chapter. Key findings and recommendations for the improvement of practice are presented. Areas for future research are proposed, parameters of the study are noted, and final conclusions are outlined.

The main research problem presented in Chapter 1 was:

How can Forum Theatre as performative pedagogy be used in the teaching and learning of Life Orientation in primary schools in South Africa?

The main research question was divided into sub-questions as follows.

- What knowledge and skill domains are included in the definition of life skills / Life Orientation? What are the theoretical underpinnings and the debate surrounding these concepts? How are life skills taught in South African schools and elsewhere via the learning area of Life Orientation? (Chapter 2)
- What is Forum Theatre? What were the significant contributions and insights that Augusto Boal contributed to theatrical enactment with an emphasis on Forum Theatre? How may Forum Theatre be used as an instructional technique in a schooling context, to achieve effective teaching and learning of life skills in Life Orientation classes in primary schools in South Africa and elsewhere? What are the principles and practices of Forum Theatre? Who applied Forum theatre, how did they experience it, and how did they critique it after their application in a performative context? (Chapter 3)
- How can life skills be taught and learned effectively through experiential performative teaching during Life Orientation classes by selected Intermediate Phase learners attending a multicultural school in Pretoria; what are the principles and practices of Forum Theatre when applied during the performative inquiry in a classroom context? (Chapter 4 and 5)
- Based on the findings of the literature study and the empirical inquiry, what recommendations can be made for the improvement of practice? (Chapter 6)

The purpose of the study was to investigate how Forum Theatre as performative pedagogy can be used in the teaching and learning of Life Orientation (Life Skills) in the Intermediate Phase in a primary school in South Africa. The main research question was addressed by both an extensive literature review and an intrinsic ethnographic case study of a Forum Theatre intervention implemented in Grade 6 Life Skills Creative Arts (CA) classes in a South African primary school. CA forms part of the CAPS Life Skills curriculum for the Intermediate Phase (DBE 2011b). The findings of the literature and the case study provide the basis for recommendations for the improvement of practice in teaching life skills to Grade 6 children in an experiential, performative manner.

Section 6.2 and 6.3 present a synopsis of how the main research question and the sub-questions were addressed in this study through the literature review and the case study.

6.2. SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of the literature study that comprises Chapter 2 is the theoretical perspectives of several learning theories that underpin life skills acquisition. Starting with behaviourism (cf. 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4) the chapter moves on to an exposition of cognitive behaviourism (cf. 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 2.2.7, and 2.2.8) humanistic existentialism (cf. 2.3.1), and ends with experiential learning (2.4.1. and 2.4.2). These theories are situated within a social constructivist paradigm. Behaviourism was explored by emphasising how the cognitive understanding of an area in a person's life plays a significant role in healing and helping people overcome dysfunctional behaviour. Bandura (1961, 1963, 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1989a, 1989b 2006) (cf. 2.2.5) Ellis (1958,1975, 1976, 1977, 1991a, 1991b, 2004a, 2004b) (cf. 2.2.5) (cf. 2.2.6), and Beck (1967,1976, 1985, 1990,1996, 1999) (cf. 2.2.7) built on behaviourist foundations by bringing in cognitive and social conditioning perspectives about human behaviour. They taught us that people can change their dysfunctional behaviour and can overcome their fears. Perls (1969, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1978), (cf. 2.3.1), with his humanistic-existential approach, explains that people move through different 'gestalts' during their lifetime. He encouraged his patients to write about their recurrent dreams, either as a story or as a dialogue and would engage them in roleplay to reach a new gestalt sooner. Together Perls and his patient would explore the roots of their problems through role-play, the 'hot seat', and the "empty chair." These techniques bring about an understanding of where patients need to change their thinking or behaviour.

The socio-cultural theories to learning introduced by Vygotsky (1893 – 1934) (cf. 2.4.1), the experiential and socially shaped approaches presented by Lewin (1890 – 1947), Dewey (1859 – 1952) and Piaget (1896 - 1980), the experiential theory developed by Kolb (1939 -),

and Kolb and Kolb (cf. 2.4.2, 5.2.2, 5.4.1, 5.5.2) and the brain-based learning cycle theory of Zull (1939 -) (cf. 5.2.2, 5.4.1, 5.5.1, 5.5.2) provide a foundational understanding of learning. This is applied to how children are supported to acquire beneficial life skills. Vygotsky (1978) introduced the 'zone of proximal development,' and Piaget (in Kolb, 1984) formulated a theory about the different developmental stages that children move through as they develop into adults. The formal operations stage of his theory has relevance (cf. 2.4.2.4). Experiential learning theory focuses on the integrated functioning of the whole person that requires engaging their thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving faculties as part of their learning process. For teachers, this integrated approach implies widening the learning experience to go beyond merely listening, absorbing, and being able to repeat new knowledge. For deep learning to happen, new information and insight need to become more deeply integrated to further a person's existing knowledge and understanding.

In South African schools, life skills are taught in Life Orientation classes. In the intermediate Phase the Life Skills curriculum comprises of Personal Social Wellness (PSW), Physical Education (PE), and Creative Arts (CA) (cf. 1.1) This study introduces another effective way to teach life skills related to conflict situations, which includes experiential teaching approaches that enable children to see 'how it works' through effective modelling and 'look into the mirror' enabled through performance of behaviour through the pretended reality created on a stage to learn the dynamics of various behaviours. The modelling also demonstrates what the effects are and shows which approach is compelling towards solving the conflict. Children can use their experiences to learn by watching behaviour in different situations, can analyse the harmful behaviour of human character types and then playfully try out other ways to behave. For instance, they can benefit from watching modelling of effective caring, kind, and loving responses when they are shown within various conflict scenarios.

Forum Theatre as a methodology (cf. 3.3) enables teachers to work in areas of knowledge acquisition that make use of performance approaches. Various theorists and therapists have explained how their techniques aid their patients with gaining a better understanding. By investigating the dynamics of the behaviour of characters within a situation, teachers can provide more in-depth insight into harmful social dynamics. The explorations into problematic conditions, such as when a child was bullied and was unable to resolve the situation, and the ensuing conflict could be used to assist children with understanding the inherent dynamics. The analysis of the behaviour resulted in the children learning what they needed to change in their response to deal with toxic situations and persons.

Chapter 2 dealt with how performance strategies could enable teachers to work in areas of knowledge acquisition. Various theorists and therapists shared how performance was

beneficial for gaining a better understanding of relational and societal problems. Performative techniques such as role-play, the empty chair, hot-seating, and role reversal were used to address harmful human behaviour.

By investigating the dynamics of human behaviour, different responses can be introduced. The explorations into problematic situations, such as when a child is bullied or is unable to resolve the conflict they experience, can be supported by a parent, the peer group, and the child's teacher. Children gained an understanding of the inherent dynamics and how to counter and avoid harmful power-based behaviour. Through solution modelling, Forum Theatre could teach a more positive personal response, and it enabled practising through spect-acting (cf. 3.3.8) to deal with these situations. The learners, collectively under guidance of their teacher and the researcher, had created a short problem scene which some of them performed before another class. The other class then tried to help the characters in the problem scenario by suggesting solutions and as spect-actors to change the social dynamics in the scene by changing the behaviour of the characters until they were able to solve the conflict. The teacher had to guide the learners as they required assistance with finding kinder and more caring ways of behaviour to bring about a changed outcome.

Chapter 2 ends with a description of four different applications of life skills acquisition programmes that aim to help, empower, and protect people against negative or harmful behaviour. The applications presented are as follows:

- Richard Nelson-Jones (2006, 2007) (cf. 2.5.1), who promotes coaching and counselling as a therapeutic approach;
- Virginia and Redford Williams (1979) (cf. 2.5.2), who help people struggling with hostility and anger management;
- Byron Katie (2002) (cf. 2.5.3) who improves understanding of personal life problems through self-inquiry and introspection; and
- Gilbert Botvin and Kenneth Griffin (2004, 2010, 2014) (cf. 2.5.4), who together explore the relationship between life skills acquisition, building up young people's self-esteem and teaching them to be more resistant to harmful influences as a means of avoiding and resisting various forms of addictions especially when experiencing peer pressure.

The applications promote introspection, self-control, and restraint. They focus on problem-solving and assessment of the reality that triggers a harmful behaviour, they provide a strategy of identifying how and when to take action, and they strive to build up the self-esteem of young people to enable resistance to temptation when it comes their way.

Chapter 3 focused on the life of Augusto Boal (1979, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2006) (cf. 3.2) and how he utilised performance skills and drama techniques to assist people with understanding their social context by acquiring language and literacy skills and learning to avoid and manage the oppression of one person over another. Boal's methods are collectively known as the 'Arsenal of the Theatre of the Oppressed.' Later in his life, he stated he should rather have called his methods, techniques, and approaches the 'Theatre of Liberation' as participants in his workshops acquire self-knowledge, gain social insight and learn a variety of life skills that builds confidence so that they can live more productive and empowered lives.

Boal's approach is that the theatrical language is the closest to the daily reality of the group and therefore is a powerful tool through which the group working together can gain an understanding of their human dynamics and behaviour. By first devising to create a problem scene, then performing a play to other similar groups of people (cf. 3.3.5) and having a mediating Joker (cf. 3.3.7) who manages the engagement process with the audience, the problem is placed on stage for analysis by means of Forum Theatre (cf. 3.3). The solution seeking drive of Forum Theatre is achieved through spect-acting (cf. 3.3.8). The spectators are challenged to help the protagonist. A spect-actor with a viable plan is invited to step onto the stage and become part of the pretend reality that exists on stage to take on a role, engage in the dynamics between role players and try to bring about change through a change in behaviour and in so doing perform a proposed solution in the problem play. With the guidance of a Joker, the audience group thus attempts to find different and novel solutions to a 'power over' problem.

Various practitioners have applied Forum Theatre in a school context. Many have used only the last stage of the cognitive behavioural investigation and by doing so, negate the opportunity for the group to learn much about themselves, their peers, and their social context. Omitting the initial devising creative stage of finding a problem for a particular group is a disadvantage as in the process of doing role-play and improvisation, participants can become more confident and build up their self-esteem. Those growth opportunities are lost when an already made performance from outside the group is presented in the Forum. The development of participants can potentially happen right through the Forum Theatre process and ends when participants manage to break the oppression. Boal cautions that the problem play should not be about aggressive behaviour but instead should focus on power-based behaviour and human relationships.

Some researchers have identified weaknesses in the Forum Theatre method (cf. 3.4). Ball (1995) (cf. 3.4.1.2 and 3.4.3.2), Baxter (2005) (cf. 3.4.1.3 and 3.4.1.6), and Hammond (2013,

2015) (cf. 3.4.1, 3.4.3, 5.2.2, 5.2.3, and 5.6.8) caution that Forum Theatre can be a 'Rehearsal of Defeat' (cf. 3.4.1.6) when the power of the oppression is too entrenched to be broken or when confidence that is built in the devising stage leads to a situation where the fragile new confidence cannot be realised in the real world. For cases of this nature, it is possible to go further back into the problem's genesis to try to break the oppression in an earlier stage (cf. 3.4.4).

Saldaña (2005) (cf. 3.3.2, 3.4.1, 4.2.4, 4.2.5, 4.3.6.2, 4.3.7.1, 5.2.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.4.1, and 5.5.4) looked at the right developmental age for a Forum Theatre intervention, and his results suggest that younger children can participate in certain parts of the Forum Theatre process but struggle to maintain a 'frozen image' and need a great deal of scaffolding to help them. Children still lack adequate terminology and vocabulary inherent to social justice topics. They can however show you what they mean when they lack the words to describe a situation. He also saw that the change they brought about in class during the Forum process did not carry over to the playground. This point of view fits with the observation of Rutten (2010) (cf. 3.4.1.5 - 3.4.1.6) and Gourd and Gourd (2011) (cf. 3.4.1.7), who advocate for more time and effort on task for a change to come about before moral or social behavioural change can happen. Rutten (2010) indicates that a single experience with Forum Theatre is not sufficient as it needs to be repeated more regularly before it will be able to influence moral and fair play behaviour development. Hammond advocates for more time being spent on the earlier stage and having both the full experience of the devising and performance stages. Poulter (1995, 2018) (cf. 3.4.1, 3.4.5, 5.3.5, and 5.4.3) agrees the devising stage is essential to achieve group skill-building in image-making and improvisational abilities so that the actors can adequately represent their circumstances in the problem scene.

Vine (1993, 2013) (cf. 3.4.2, 4.2.5) cautions that the engagement strategies of Forum Theatre can become a 'Theatre of alternatives' that fail to lead to a better choice. Further, he indicates that the role of the Joker plays a significant part in the dynamics because it is essential to discuss the effectiveness of the proposed solutions. Dwyer (2004:199-210) points out that most time should be in enabling spect-acting, instead of only talking about possible solutions. The Joker also needs to be sharp as the Joker channels the engagement of the audience, inviting them to put effort into the performance on stage as exploring spect-actors, rather than just talking about the topic. Pendergast and Saxton (2015: 282-283) (cf. 3.4.1.3) warn that applied theatre practitioners must make sure that the performance on stage goes beyond the individual's story to reveal the core, the pattern, or truth of the social or cultural group in which the individual functions, within a fictional setting, as "[i]t is in the make-belief, not real space that a story can become 'our' story rather than 'mine' only."

Poulter (1995, 2018) (cf. 3.4.1) advises that the terminology should be changed to 'power over' or 'responsibility for' as the term gains more support. Pouter and Day (2002) suggest that various disciplines in school could work together to teach relevant information to support the devising stage. However, this leads to practical problems of class sizes becoming too big and unwieldy. Big groups are excellent for the Forum and the problem analysis, but the joint group is too cumbersome for the devising stage.

Mitchell and Freitag (2011) (cf. 3.4.3, 5.4.1) explored the effectiveness of Forum Theatre as a means of dealing with gender-based violence occurring during the college years. They began coaching bystanders to make a difference in deflecting and not condoning aggressive male behaviour in the early stages of the build-up to a rape situation. Jokers can help to 'red-flag' the moments where bystanders could step up to channel the energy of the aggressor into another direction, cautioning an individual when his or her behaviour is not acceptable. Durden and Nduhura (2007) (cf. 3.4.3.3) confirm that the problem performed should be reflective of the experiences of the entire community, and not just that of the male characters. The female participants in this research project, indicated that they felt excluded as their voices were not heard.

In most cases, only men were needed. We participated in singing and clapping... but for example when the guy was discussing with his wife, only a man was needed to go and convince her...Or when the man was talking to his son, they called another man, not a woman, to come and show ... Actually, I think that we didn't participate because roles were basically created for men. (Durden and Nduhura. 2007: 68)

The creative team needs to be aware of both genders and have representation of both male and female voices.

Boal used performance skills 'to explore the dynamics of human oppression and power play' to achieve a 'better understanding of human dynamics.' The audience is afforded a much more active role in understanding the staged dilemma and can experiment with and experience behaviours that change the dynamics of a situation. On stage, they can learn how to improve their responses to harmful behaviour. Participants in Forum Theatre exploration thus gain better communication skills, assertiveness, confidence, and ingenuity and their creativity is developed within human relational and social interactions.

As a Forum Theatre exploration enables experiential learning, facilitation, and group work, this approach seems beneficial for teaching and learning life skills in CA classes. Fitting a methodology that was developed within a very different adult community development context to that of a primary school requires adaptations. Boal's workshops often happened over a

focused period of a few days, but the school time table is organised differently. The challenge was to find ways to make Boal's approach to learning about life through the language of performance work within a school context. The performative teaching can occur within a 'double' lesson (longer than a regular lesson) with weekly intervals and would typically take place in a classroom that is located between other classrooms with the risk of the noisier active lesson disturbing the quieter adjacent lessons, or in a school hall type of location.

6.3. SUMMARY AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE EMPIRICAL INQUIRY

The empirical investigation fits within the domain of a qualitative research methodology. This case study into applying Forum Theatre to teaching and learning life skills in an experiential and performative manner was an arts-based, performative inquiry. The study content aligns with other research published in the applied drama field. Fels and McGivern 2002: 23) (cf. 1.6.2 and 4.2.4) defined a performative inquiry as where "performance is an action site of learning" and "the classroom becomes a site of questioning and re-imagining, a playing with language, choices of action, and possibilities".

A local multicultural primary school (Peace Haven Primary School - pseudonym) was selected as the site for the study by a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling. The school was conveniently situated for prolonged fieldwork and the school had experience in teaching drama and producing school plays. After access to the school and the necessary ethical permission were granted, I decided, in consultation with the HOD (Life Orientation), to implement the Forum Theatre intervention in Grade 6 (CA) lessons under the tutelage of the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, also supported by myself in the role of observer-participant. All four Grade 6 classes in the school participated in the study (N=133 learners). I spent a period of eleven weeks in the school in total. The Forum Theatre intervention took place over eight weeks: a 'double' lesson (60 minutes) was presented weekly to each of the four classes respectively based on researcher-designed lesson plans followed by the Forum Theatre performance by each class in the eighth week facilitated by the Grade 6 (CA) teacher who took the role of the Joker.

Data gathering during Grade 6 (CA) classes took place through observations of lessons based on specifically designed lesson plans, learners' written feedback, and video recordings of learner activities made during the seven weeks in which the Forum Theatre intervention was executed. During the devising stage of a Forum Theatre performance, Grade 6 learners explored, questioned, and gained an understanding of their social context. Later in the Forum they could explore how by introducing different physical behaviour they

could try to change the dynamic presented when they as a spect-actor altered behaviour within a power-based social situation as it was presented by their peers. Participants learned by employing their collective lived experiences during the preparation of a problem play. Individual and focus group interviews were conducted with the Grade 6 (CA) teacher, the HOD for Life Orientation, the Grade 6 (PSW) teacher, and the four Grade 6 register teachers. After the culminating Forum Theatre performances of the problem plays, thirteen learners who had participated in the Forum Theatre performances were also interviewed. Further, I collected various learner-produced artefacts.

Chapter 5 presents the research findings that emerged from the data analysis process. They were organised according to five main themes listed below:

- Theme 1 - Process adjustments within a school setting.
- Theme 2 - Experiential learning and discovery
- Theme 3 - Performative teaching fostered life-skill acquisition
- Theme 4 – Harnessing of non-verbal, embodied learning
- Theme 5 – The teachers’ experience with Forum Theatre

6.3.1. Theme 1 - Process adjustments within a school setting

The first theme in Chapter 5 was about the process that was followed during the case study. It explains how the Grade 6 (CA) teacher and the four Grade 6 classes explored the devising stages needed to prepare for a Forum Theatre performance in a school, the difficulties encountered with applying some of Boal’s games, and the teacher’s struggle to teach the lesson plan content provided to her.

The conclusions of Theme 1 were that Forum Theatre could be adapted for use in a school environment. The techniques can teach learners more control of their emotional responses and how to achieve better conflict resolution. It indicates that CA teachers would need training if a Forum Theatre activity were to be included in their Life Orientation (CA) curriculum. To be effective with creating a performed scene together with the children on a topic of their choosing, a teacher needs to develop competence in the devising process and should be guided through the process of creating a believable and realistic conflict situation that can be performed by one class before another. Teachers should be trained to develop the various characters in the problem scene and show a real conflict situation that arises between the protagonist and the antagonist central to the conflict scene.

How the Forum Theatre works needs to be crystal clear to the teachers. The children must be guided on their role is in the enactment of various solution suggestions. Their focus

should be on helping the protagonist break through the impasse and oppression caused by the antagonist. They need to know they may not replace any role for the sake of demonstrating how they could act in that role better than the protagonist already on stage. Rather a change in behaviour is needed instead of acting out the character role in a similar fashion.

Teachers should be familiar with Bandura's insights into self-image and self-efficacy and how they can be developed through the dynamic experiential lesson content. After an attempt at spect-acting, a teacher needs to highlight the key aspects of successful modelling and why or where an attempt to change the outcomes was successful. It is also essential to allow as many children as possible the chance to solve the problem that is under investigation. Teachers also should praise successful attempts to support the acceptance of the modelling of 'good' behaviour.

When children are struggling to identify positive options, they can be helped by analysing the problem before them further. For instance, the protagonist and the antagonist could be invited to sit in a 'hot seat' to answer questions from the perspective of their role. In this way, the audience can achieve a better understanding of the dynamics inherent in the conflict and what the driving force is behind the opposing character in the conflict situation.

6.3.2. Theme 2 - Experiential learning and discovery through play

The case study model followed was a full Forum Theatre intervention that included both the devising and the problem-solving stages. The explorative theatrical games gave the Grade 6 learners insight into various socialised aspects of their lives. The games made them aware of how they also use their bodies to communicate. They discovered more about their abilities, which contributed to their self-actualisation. Experiential, performance games have seven different functions and ways in which they can teach people about themselves and their surroundings. Exploring their social context from a personal situation could bring about more profound individual learning.

In their pre- or early adolescent stage, due to physical changes, Grade 6 learners experience more erratic and extreme responses to situations that may not have triggered a reaction from them at a younger age and thus the potential of interpersonal conflict emerges (cf. 4.3.4.2, 2.4.1.4, 2.4.2, 2.5.4). The peer group is also quick to ridicule children who act differently or unconventionally. Rather than not caring how their peers see them, the children have a strong need to fit in. The dissonance in their behaviour can lead to introspection and

shyness, rather than sharing with others how they feel. A safe, performative, dramatic space is crucial in an uncertain environment (cf. 3.4.5, 5.3.5).

Due to the difficulties that the children are experiencing in their communications with others, it is often easier to show others what their predicaments and problems look like, rather than only talking about what they are experiencing. Boal's games allow for exploration of a changing social environment, and the role play within a pretended environment enables the children an opportunity to explore and practice behavioural responses in baffling situations.

The performative learning space helps learners as they can learn about the self and test alternative solutions to disconcerting situations. The games at the same time also support social integration as while having fun together, learners are working on team building, learning through new imagined experiences, and by sharing their collective experiences.

6.3.3. Theme 3 - Performative teaching fostered life-skill acquisition

The teaching and learning of life skills happened by employing experiential learning opportunities that became possible through the creative devising process of a Forum Theatre intervention. Through improvisation, the Grade 6 learners used their collective creativity to devise a short dramatic scene and acquired life skills in the process. The approach gave various opportunities for a teacher and the peer group to model beneficial behaviour to the participating collective of children. The guidance of the teacher enables the children to learn alternative behaviour strategies in response to improvised role-play, and they learn from the experience as well.

A prerequisite for this type of learning is a safe learning space. To establish a sound footing for the teaching and learning, the teacher first must establish common ground. He or she needs to find out where the children are situated and concerning the topic she is going to explore in the lessons. For instance, if the class is exploring the theme of bullying, it would be useful first to find out what the experience of the class is on this topic. Alternatively, as in the case study, the first step was to ask the children to list causes of conflict on a written question and answer sheet. It is also recommended by Poulter (2018) (cf. 3.4.5, 5.3.5, and 5.4.3.1) to include questions to plumb individual sensitivities and parameters of the group of children.

Boal's theatrical activities are action-based and lead to physical engagement of the participants so that they can practise in the creative 'pretend' space and thereby learn how they can bring about change in their real lives too. The activities through which the children are prepared in a Boalian manner for the performance of roles in a pretended situation have a

beneficial side effect. The children get to know themselves and their peers in class better, and it enhances new friendships as they become better acquainted with each other. The activities assist with bringing about more tolerance for each other and the different ways they are raised, or because they impress others through their abilities demonstrated during class. The fun the group has through all the activities also contributes to their class' social integration.

The children reported learning a variety of life skills through the experiential learning approach. They stated they had learned to respect the others, were more tolerant, and appreciated the value of honesty. The Forum Theatre also taught children decision-making skills as they can decide to behave differently and use problem-solving skills in how they react to a problem situation as a kinder, more caring solution, which reaps better results. To achieve the creation of a performance, the children had to work together and support each other, which required co-operative skills. Further, they were challenged to listen, have empathy, and attempt to bring about change for the protagonist of the performed scene, which they witnessed.

6.3.4. Theme 4 – Harnessing of non-verbal, embodied learning

Experiencing the dynamics inherent in a situation within a playful context appears to be more effective than talking about ways in which to bring about positive changes. Embodied expression of a child's feelings and thinking is touched on when the child must think about what specific body language signifies. Different images can have different meanings for different persons, but at the core of their collective experience, there is a common core. Considering the various realities that they explored, the Grade 6 learners became aware that they had much in common with each other despite also having been socialised differently since they come from different cultural backgrounds. This interplay of art-based learning experiences increased their social insight. Finally, they discovered that the answer to solving aggression is not achieved by using more attack but rather by kinder, more caring approaches that enable communication to find solutions through increased understanding and a willingness to help each other rather than fight with each other.

6.3.5. Theme 5 – The teacher's experience with Forum Theatre

To enable Intermediate Phase teachers (in this case, the Grade 6 teacher) to introduce Forum Theatre into their CA teaching, they would need the support of a training programme. Teachers require the skills and knowledge to guide the devising process and to develop both competences in performative, experiential teaching and learning and the ability to fulfil the

role of Joker in the Forum Theatre performance. Teachers should grasp the principles of experiential learning as an integrative, child-centred holistic approach and how Forum Theatre techniques facilitate performative experiential learning. In the case of this study, the Grade 6 teacher needed to be aware of the developmental stage of Grade 6 children to enable her to deal with learners' interpersonal conflicts and to help them resolve them.

At the start of a game from Boal's collection, a teacher should explain what this game teaches the participants. The games are a valuable tool that enables more understanding of social engagement patterns as participants discover their talents and abilities and develop an understanding of the behaviours they are learning. Teachers also need to understand how Boal's games enable the active exploration of people's roles in society. The creative devising process needs a warm-up to help participants transition into a role-play environment. At the end of each class, learners should engage in a cool-down activity to step out of their roles again and return to their persona. The case study showed that it is possible to do the creative processes with the whole class; however, the use of a teacher assistant was recommended. Bandura's research on participant modelling and the importance of self-efficacy was relevant to a teacher's understanding.

Role-modelling, emotional expression and catharsis, verbal persuasion and performance, were all supportive of achieving self-efficacy. Drama and performative teaching helped to make the invisible in society visible and acted as a mirror to show how we were made and how we might become. Forum Theatre explorations in search of solutions to societal problems led to better behaviour, both emotionally and socially. It is vital that the teacher, guiding the Forum Theatre intervention, should have knowledge and experience of the Joker role as an essential part of the Forum Theatre performance. The Forum Theatre proved to be an explorative rehearsal space where the group discovered and developed better responses to a behavioural problem under investigation, not through spoken explanations but rather by seeing how to behave in a more caring and effective way.

6.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICE

Based on the literature and empirical inquiry, several recommendations are proposed to improve the implementation of Forum Theatre to benefit young learners in their pre-adolescent stage. This study has shown that including Forum Theatre as a performative teaching approach in Grade 6 Life Skills (CA) lessons that form part of the broad Life Orientation learning area can benefit and develop the behaviour and self-confidence of young people. The study shows that performative teaching and learning that culminates in a

Forum Theatre performance, assisted by a competent Joker to guide the audience involvement, achieves insight into the power of behavioural changes through exploration and modelling of better reactions within a problematic social situation.

6.4.1. *Pre-service and in-service teacher training and support*

Forum Theatre requires more experiential, explorative, and performance-based teaching approaches. These do not come naturally, and teachers need adequate training to become confident to teach the experiential, performative Forum Theatre lessons. The training should start in the pre-service training stage to create awareness, interest, and aid adoption of an exciting, fun way of teaching children life skills. Cognitive behavioural, existential and experiential teaching theory are needed to situate and explain why performance-based teaching works for life skills acquisition and highlight the benefits of this teaching approach.

To achieve Forum Theatre integration into Life Orientation/Life Skills (CA) teaching, more awareness must be brought about through in-service training for teachers, informing them about how they can help to raise socially wiser, more resilient children who have higher self-confidence levels. Teachers should know how they can be more practical life skills teachers by achieving peer-modelling of effective behaviour that can solve social problems as presented by children in the performance of their creation. Life skills acquisition was supported by theatrical games and performative teaching approaches when working with Forum Theatre in this study. Knowing the potential benefits of performative pedagogy and bringing about insight into how positive, more caring behaviour was stimulated in children while they were having fun in the class, were essential. Personal growth and insight into societal patterns in pre-adolescent young people were achieved employing Forum Theatre performative teaching. The teacher needed to gain awareness of how children could learn about their world in a performance space where role-play and improvisation, based on the learner's reality, brought about personal growth in the participants. By holding up the mirror to life in the performance space, children could explore and gain insight into themselves and their world. The dream is that more awareness into the potential benefits of performance exploration through Forum Theatre would stimulate the widespread adoption of this approach to learning essential life skills in schools while having fun with the children in the process.

6.4.2. *More informed insight into CAPS policy and documentation*

Awareness among teachers should be raised regarding the support of performative teaching approaches that are captured in the CAPS Life Skills for the Intermediate Phase document (DBE 2011b:36). Teachers in this case study were uninformed or unclear about the content of the CAPS curriculum, and they were unaware of how it accommodated and promoted performative teaching. Due to the many learner assessments, teachers felt overwhelmed by the assessment regimen required by the GDE. The teachers followed the textbook but did not necessarily consult the CAPS document itself to understand what type of lessons they could be teaching. Nor did they know how the various foci and suggested activities mentioned in the CAPS document could be used to build an integrated Forum Theatre performance. In-service training could create awareness about the benefits of performative, experiential teaching and learning, while at the same time showing the teachers that this is in line with the CAPS requirements. More understanding could assist with the adoption of a different, more performative, and experiential approach to teaching children life skills. Discovering more about the self, helped to build up children's self-efficacy and resilience, thus laying ethical foundations for living a wholesome life.

6.4.3. *Informing on Forum Theatre application for researchers and practitioners*

Sharing the outcomes of my research with other researchers through conferences, journal articles, and by establishing a website and database on the topic, the research could link to existing interest in experiential, performative teaching in schools. The theatrical games, improvisation, and image-making helped to create a performance of a problem that culminated in behavioural problem-solving in a Forum Theatre event.

Audiences that may be interested in the school-based Forum Theatre case study are:

1. Forum Theatre researchers and practitioners
2. Life skills acquisition researchers and practitioners
3. Experiential and performative teaching researchers and practitioners
4. Drama in Education researchers and practitioners
5. Drama Therapy researchers and practitioners
6. Applied Theatre researchers and practitioners
7. Youth or adolescent developmental stage researchers and practitioners

6.4.4. Research into the benefits of Forum Theatre for children from different age groups, school types or social environments

Teaching performatively to create a short play and then performing it in a Forum Theatre context could also be applied with secondary school learners in South Africa to great advantage. It would be useful to investigate if the older adolescents also would report learning life skills when they are engaged in a Forum Theatre workshop approach. It would be interesting to ascertain if the experience of an audience consisting out of learners from the same school differs much from that of a group of children from a similar demographical make-up but enrolled in a different school. Does knowing the performers in a problem play help with identification and empathy for the protagonist so that the audience is more willing to solve the problem presented than would be the case with a group of same-age children, from similar demographics and location, who do not know the actors in any way at all? It would be beneficial to explore if knowing the performers impacts on the engagement of a peer group audience.

The application of this Forum Theatre research took place in a public primary school. It is recommended that similar interventions be implemented in a range of teaching and learning settings, such as a home-schooling context, an independent school, an inner-city school, or a township school. It could also be beneficial to apply Forum Theatre as an extracurricular activity with other social groups for adolescents after school hours to develop and aid in their personal growth.

6.4.6. Recommendations for methodology

Gaining access to a school site is complex. It involves negotiation with the stakeholders to enable school-based fieldwork. It is recommended that when an innovative ethnographic study is envisioned, the researcher will benefit from extra training on how to gain access and alleviate the fear of the unknown in the participating teachers. The preparatory work for school-based fieldwork should be recognised as more time consuming as it requires six to eight weeks before approvals are received and extra investment to build up trust in teachers who are unfamiliar with the research approach and aims. When working in such ecologically sensitive sites like schools, the novice researcher requires extra time for relationship building.

Another recommendation would be to align the parent consent forms and the child assent forms to each other by placing the name of the parent on the child's form, and the other way

around. Much time can be saved when trying to match up the children with their relevant parents, as surnames differ in the case of remarriage or in single-parent homes.

It would also be recommended that novice researchers be given guidance on how to structure and manage voluminous data that a qualitative, arts-based inquiry with prolonged fieldwork generates. It is important to factor in enough time in preparation for the data gathering during and after fieldwork inside a school environment.

6.5. PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the performative case study using a small purposeful sample and qualitative methods of data gathering is not generalisable as is typical of any qualitative study. The aim of this study was to understand how participants understand behaviour, not to generate hypotheses; its value lies in depth not breadth. However, the clear and detailed audit trail provided suggests that a similar study could be conducted in different contexts. During the case study, the researcher did not test or quantify the amount of life skill learning that was gained and reported by the children or their teacher, nor did the researcher assess how best to do assessment in this manner of teaching. The aim instead was to discover if children could learn life skills in school by being taught in a performative manner.

No attempts have been made to establish trends, generalise or quantify the findings. Data was presented in descriptive terms only. There has been no attempt to predict the behaviour or to establish cause and effect relationships in an experimental situation. The literature review has assisted with providing the study with a framework within which the interviews could be situated and there has been no drive towards attempting to prove or disprove anything by means of this study. It was purely attempting to see how all the Grade 6 learners enrolled in a South African primary school and their teachers would respond to doing performative pedagogy to teach children life skills. The information presented in this thesis is of limited predictive value and the findings cannot be carried over to another Grade 6 group of children that are enrolled in another type of school context. (cf. 4.3.9. for more on the parameters of the research).

All possible bias of the researcher has been disclosed and acknowledged by the researcher. Like other qualitative research, the validity of the findings depends upon the ability of the researcher to utilize the techniques chosen. Furthermore, a statement of subjectivity was presented in Chapter 4. (cf. 4.2.7) to counteract any possible bias.

Finding out more about the assessment of performative teaching to gauge the growth achieved in the teachers and the learners would, however, help to achieve the buy-in of policymakers, school leadership and the teachers who are teaching life skills at primary schools. The risk of possible observer effect was stated (cf. 4.3.5.3); however, this was reduced by prolonged fieldwork which enabled a relationship of trust to be built between myself and the Grade 6 (CA) teacher and the Grade 6 learners.

During the case study, I choose to present a lesson plan sequence with the whole class rather than creating a problem performance, as Hammond (2015) does, within a smaller creative team of learners. The Grade 6 (CA) teacher, with my support, only skimmed the surface of the potential that resides in Boal's games to support the devising creative process. The teacher, due to her work situation at the time of the programme, began teaching the provided lesson plans without adequate experiential and performative teaching foundations. She also lacked Joker training. She was guided only by the prepared lesson plans, available YouTube videos and my ad hoc explanations before and after lessons. Even though Forum Theatre training with Joker training included therein was offered to the teacher, she declined the proposed training I had initially planned to present.

6.6. AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Considering the research findings of this case study, further research would be beneficial to discover more about which games can work with children, why they are useful, and how the various games support life skills acquisition, especially those focused on developing positive assertiveness, interpersonal communication, coping with extreme competitiveness, acceptance of others, compassionate behaviour, and diffusion of anxiety and anger responses.

It is especially important to teach children positive coping behaviour when they experience anxiety or are faced with adversity. Children benefit by exploring their reality and that of their peers, friends, and family, with guidance from their teacher. The theatrical space aided their learning as they could try out the effectiveness of different behavioural reactions through a role in a 'pretended' reality. It allowed participants to experience how their behaviour triggered reactions in another person and would be especially valuable when children were struggling to deal with their heightened responses brought on by the hormonal changes in their bodies.

Based on the experience with a reticent teacher when exploring performative ways of teaching, bringing about better buy-in and enthusiasm to try performative pedagogy would

also be beneficial. It would help to know how best to guide and inspire teachers with no prior knowledge of creative, devising processes. Knowing what will enable and encourage teachers to become competent with experiential teaching and learning approaches, and act as Jokers during the Forum Theatre event, would be relevant.

Further, it would be interesting in future research to assess if the stronger learners in a Grade 6 class would be able to handle the role of a Joker and to examine if their lack of life experience would make them too young and inexperienced for choosing suitable spect-acting suggestions from the proffered opportunities and ideas for changed behaviour that arise out of the peer group audience discussions.

6.7. CONCLUSION

This case study into Forum Theatre as performative pedagogy to support life skills acquisition in a South African primary school, shows benefits accrue through Forum Theatre problem identification and exploration activities. The children reported learning various life skills during the performance-focused experiential teaching and learning activities. They learned through drama games, engaging in improvisation skill development, by watching their peers perform in various role-played scenarios and through the discussions and activities. The children engaged in many role-play scenarios to explore baffling social situations they encounter in their daily lives, and a teacher could guide them based on their enacted positions. The games further taught children to be responsible members of a capable team. The image-making activities enabled children to communicate through visual and symbolic language. The performative teaching activities developed the children's ability to improvise in a role, and collectively they created their class' conflict scene.

The Forum Theatre exploration of a conflict situation taught them another way to do problem-solving, and the solution-finding process explained how else they could react to a situation to find solutions and solve the core conflict situation. The discussion of various scenes provided insight, and the children helped each other under the guidance of their teacher. As an added benefit, the children had fun, laughed and enjoyed learning about socially rooted, embodied conflict situations. As required by the curriculum, the children learned new problem-solving strategies and could observe which attempts at solving the problem were more effective. In one instance, it introduced caring reactions rather than forceful responses, and it demonstrated how conflict could be resolved when behaviour changes and improves (DBE 2011b:5). Moreover, isolated performance activities presented as separate elements in the

textbook can align with each other to all contribute to the creation of a short dramatic enactment.

Since I embarked on this thesis, Hammond (2015) and Poulter (2018) published books that would have been very beneficial in improving how I did the case study. Hammond's thinking is very much in line with what we were attempting to achieve in the CA classroom, but due to his practical experience, he was able to make the process go a little further than we were able to do. Both books are a source of inspiration for my further research into doing practical Forum Theatre activities within schools.

The Grade 6 (CA) teacher discovered that drama techniques support life skills teaching, as drama assists with social skill development. Children gain awareness of others and see the consequences of their behavioural choices. Within a safe, role-play situation, children can explore sensitive issues. By assuming a role, the individual explores the dynamics of a difficult situation. Learning to verbalise their thoughts during this process also supports growth of self-confidence and assists with language skill development. Forum Theatre provided significant experiential learning opportunities, and regardless of what the improvised problem play addressed, learners acquired new understanding, better manners, values, and attitudes.

Boal's Forum Theatre explorations assisted a teacher in discovering what made Grade 6 children feel powerless by tapping into their collective insight and identifying their helpless situations. The themes came from the learners and were relevant to their life experience. By exploring these themes during improvisation and image-making, the participants gained insight into the complexities of their chosen topics. Experiencing society through performance helps children become more resilient as they gain insight into social behaviour through dramatic enactment. As an explorative performance strategy, Forum Theatre developed a variety of life skills to support living in a complex society.

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Appendix A - Approval letter of the GDE



GAUTENG PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use only:
Reference no: D2017 / 055
 enquiries: Diane Bunting 011 843 6503

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	12 May 2016
Validity of Research Approval:	12 May 2016 to 30 September 2016
Name of Researcher:	Bettman M.C.
Address of Researcher:	30 Celtis Close; Irene; 0062
Telephone / Fax Number/s:	012 667 6011; 083 627 6695
Email address:	mcbettman@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Forum Theatre as Performative pedagogy in teaching Life Orientation in primary schools in South Africa
Number and type of schools:	ONE Primary School
District/s/HO	Tshwane South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned, the Principal/s and the chairperson/s of the School Governing Body (SGB) must be presented with a copy of this letter.*
2. *The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid;*

M.C. Bettman
 2016/05/13

1

Making education a societal priority

Open Rubric

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management ER&KM)

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
 P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506

3. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
4. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the THIRD quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
5. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
6. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written consent from the SGB/s, principal/s, educator/s, parents and learners, as applicable, before commencing with research.*
7. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilizing his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institution/s, staff and/or the office/s visited for supplying such resources.*
8. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research title, report or summary.*
9. *On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE Summary template). Failure to submit your Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation and Research Summary on completion of your studies / project – a month after graduation or project completion - may result in permission being withheld from you and your Supervisor in future.*
10. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned;*
11. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director/s and school/s concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Makhado

Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: *2016/05/13*

Appendix B – Approval Ethics Committee College of Education, UNISA



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

15 June 2016

Ref : **2016/06/15/54140382/11/MC**
Staff: Mrs MC Bettman
Student Number : 54140382

Dear Mrs Bettman

Decision: Ethics Approval

Researcher: Mrs MC Bettman
Tel: +2712 429 2120
Email: bettmmc@unisa.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof. EM Lemmer
College of Education
Department of Educational Foundations
Tel: +2712 4605484
Email: lemmeem@unisa.ac.za

Proposal: Forum theatre as performative pedagogy in teaching life orientation in primary schools in South Africa

Qualification: D Ed in Comparative Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for the duration of the research.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 15 June 2016.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*



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3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

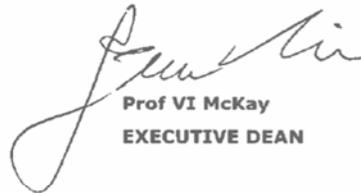
Note:

The reference number **2016/06/15/54140382/11/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



Prof VI McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN

Appendix C – Approvals Peace Haven Primary School

LETTER OF CONSENT

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT PEACE HAVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

9 May 2016

Dear {headmaster},

I am currently busy with my D Ed (Comparative) studies at UNISA. The title of my thesis is: **Forum Theatre as a performative pedagogy in Grade 6 Life Orientation Classrooms in a South African School**. This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I would like to invite your school to participate in this research. All Grade 6 Life Orientation teachers from your school will be invited to participate and I will request teachers to volunteer to co-facilitate the Forum Theatre activities as outlined below. I would also like to invite Grade 6 learners enrolled at your school with permission of their parents to take part in the project. Benefits of participating in the research are:

- Life skills acquisition through performance for learners participating in the study,
- Greater connection between participating learners,
- Improved insight and ability to deal with power relationships between people,
- Learning experientially through participation as a spect-actor or by means of the discussions led by the teacher in the role of a joker within the safety of the theatrical space,
- Professional teacher development of participating teachers.

Participating teachers and learners will be requested to explore the use of performative pedagogical techniques as a means of teaching the performative elements already in the Grade 6 Life Orientation curriculum for term 3. Peace Haven Primary school uses the *Spot On Life Skills* text books to teach their Grade 6 Life Orientation classes. Each class will create a short improvisation out of the various elements to be covered in the textbook this term. The lesson content covered in *Spot On* in the 3rd term includes the following:

- Creation of a dramatic sequence, a dance and a song;
- Discussion of topics such as caring for animals and people, cultural differences between people, gender stereotyping and nation building;
- Development of a short dialogue exploring conflict;
- Creation of a mask and
- Discussion of an artwork.

The aim is to use all these elements in the improvised scene for the Forum Theatre event. Learners will play performative warm-up games, share their stories and create short dramatic sequences. Their best one will be embellished with a dance and a song. They will make a mask and discuss an artwork about power. Rather than the various items being a series of loose elements, they will now all be incorporated into the performance each class are creating for a Forum Theatre event. The ten weeks of classes will be thoroughly observed by me as an observer participant.

Towards the end of term each of the participating classes will present their improvised scenes during a Forum Theatre event to be held after hours at the school with your kind permission. The performances will be about an unsolved problem; they are created by the children and will be presented to the rest of their peers. The participating teacher(s) will take on the role of a "Joker" to act as an intermediary between the audience and the actors. The joker's aim is to guide discussions and encourage participation of the audience about the problem presented. The audience are encouraged to find ways to change the outcome and find a solution to the presented problem. Some of the audience members are given an opportunity to explore their solution as a spect-actor within the dramatic scene.

The Forum Theatre session will be about 2.5 hours long and will be recorded on video. The first hour is where the various classes show their improvised scene (4x 10 min. presentation and 5 min. to prepare for the next improvisation while the Joker bridges with the audience = 60 min.) This will be followed by a short comfort break for the audience. The next hour and a half, after democratically choosing one of the scenes as the most interesting to all assembled, time is spent on exploring solutions to the enacted problem through discussions and performance by a few of the learners while on stage as a spect-actor.

The Forum Theatre technique training of the teachers will be completed by me and will take place at the end of the school holidays over 2-3 days if the teachers are agreeable to this. Furthermore, the teachers and I will meet once a week for an hour to discuss progress in a focus group meeting. I will be responsible for tidying up the venue after each session and will provide all workshop materials. The teacher training programme to be followed is based on the work of Augusto Boal and will be developed by me under supervision of Prof EM Lemmer. A copy of the performative pedagogy materials for the teachers will be made available to you for your perusal prior to the programme implementation.

There will be no risks involved to any of the participants. Participation is entirely voluntary, and all information will be kept confidential. The families, teachers and school's name will not be revealed. No monetary rewards are given to participants. Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any point without being penalised. Participants are expected to indicate whether they agree or disagree to participate by completing a consent or assent form (see attached letters).

The results of the study will be made available to the school in a special information sharing session with teachers and interested parents. The teachers and I will also share the research results with the children in a short talk with accessible language. The results of the research will form part of my doctoral thesis and may be published as an article or series of articles in a scientific journal or presented at suitable conferences.

This research is conducted under the supervision of Prof Eleanor Lemmer at UNISA (Department of Educational Foundations). Prof Lemmer can be contacted on lemmeem@unisa.ac.za. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries regarding the research or any other related matter. Thank you for your support and willingness to allow the school to participate in this research. It is much appreciated.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

E-mail: bettmmc@unisa.ac.za Phone: 012 429 2120 (w) Cell: 083 627 6695

INFORMED CONSENT FROM THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB)

I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about this study have been answered. My signature (on behalf of the SGB) indicates our wholehearted support for the study.

PRINCIPAL (NAME IN PRINT)	SIGNATURE	DATE

LETTER OF CONSENT

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT PEACE HAVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

9 May 2016

Dear Mrs [HOD of the Department of Life Orientation],

I am currently busy with my D Ed (Comparative) studies at UNISA. The title of my thesis is: **Forum Theatre as a performative pedagogy in Grade 6 Life Orientation Classrooms in a South African School**. This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I would like to invite your school to participate in this research. All Grade 6 Life Orientation teachers from your school will be invited to participate and I will request teachers to volunteer to co-facilitate the Forum Theatre activities as outlined below. I would also like to invite Grade 6 learners enrolled at your school with permission of their parents to take part in the project.

Benefits of participating in the research are:

- Life skills acquisition through performance for learners participating in the study,
- Greater connection between participating learners,
- Improved insight and ability to deal with power relationships between people,
- Learning experientially through participation as a spect-actor or by means of the discussions led by the teacher in the role of a joker within the safety of the theatrical space,
- Professional teacher development of participating teachers.

Participating teachers and learners will be requested to explore the use of performative pedagogical techniques as a means of teaching the performative elements already in the Grade 6 Life Orientation curriculum for term 3. Peace Haven Primary school uses the *Spot On Life Skills* text books to teach their Grade 6 Life Orientation classes. Each class will create a short improvisation out of the various elements to be covered in the textbook this term. The lesson content covered in *Spot On* in the 3rd term includes the following:

- Creation of a dramatic sequence, a dance and a song;
- Discussion of topics such as caring for animals and people, cultural differences between people, gender stereotyping and nation building;
- Development of a short dialogue exploring conflict;

- Creation of a mask and
- Discussion of an artwork.

The aim is to use all these elements in the improvised scene for the Forum Theatre event. Learners will play performative warm-up games, share their stories and create short dramatic sequences. Their best one will be embellished with a dance and a song. They will make a mask and discuss an artwork about power. Rather than the various items being a series of loose elements, they will now all be incorporated into the performance each class are creating for a Forum Theatre event. The ten weeks of classes will be thoroughly observed by me as an observer participant.

Towards the end of term each of the participating classes will present their improvised scenes during a Forum Theatre event to be held after hours at the school with your kind permission. The performances will be about an unsolved problem; they are created by the children and will be presented to the rest of their peers. The participating teacher(s) will take on the role of a "Joker" to act as an intermediary between the audience and the actors. The joker's aim is to guide discussions and encourage participation of the audience about the problem presented. The audience are encouraged to find ways to change the outcome and find a solution to the presented problem. Some of the audience members are given an opportunity to explore their solution as a spect-actor within the dramatic scene.

The Forum Theatre session will be about 2.5 hours long and will be recorded on video. The first hour is where the various classes show their improvised scene (4x 10 min. presentation and 5 min. to prepare for the next improvisation while the Joker bridges with the audience = 60 min.) This will be followed by a short comfort break for the audience. The next hour and a half, after democratically choosing one of the scenes as the most interesting to all assembled, time is spent on exploring solutions to the enacted problem through discussions and performance by a few of the learners while on stage as a spect-actor.

The Forum Theatre technique training of the teachers will be completed by me and will take place at the end of the school holidays over 2-3 days if the teachers are agreeable to this. Furthermore, the teachers and I will meet once a week for an hour to discuss progress in a focus group meeting. I will be responsible for tidying up the venue after each session and will provide all workshop materials. The teacher training programme to be followed is based on the work of Augusto Boal and will be developed by me under supervision of Prof EM Lemmer. A copy of the performative pedagogy materials for the teachers will be made available to you for your perusal prior to the programme implementation.

There will be no risks involved to any of the participants. Participation is entirely voluntary, and all information will be kept confidential. The families, teachers and school's name will not be revealed. No monetary rewards are given to participants. Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any point without being penalised. Participants are expected to indicate whether they agree or disagree to participate by completing a consent or assent form (see attached letters).

The results of the study will be made available to the school in a special information sharing session with teachers and interested parents. The teachers and I will also share the research results with the children in a short talk with accessible language. The results of the research

will form part of my doctoral thesis and may be published as an article or series of articles in a scientific journal or presented at suitable conferences.

This research is conducted under the supervision of Prof Eleanor Lemmer at UNISA (Department of Educational Foundations). Prof Lemmer can be contacted on lemmeem@unisa.ac.za. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries regarding the research or any other related matter.

Thank you for your support and willingness to allow the school to participate in this research. It is much appreciated.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ / _____ / 2016

E-mail: betmmc@unisa.ac.za Phone: 012 429 2120 (w) Cell: 083 627 6695

INFORMED CONSENT FROM THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HOD) FOR LIFE ORIENTATION INSTRUCTION AT PEACE HAVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about this study have been answered. My signature (on behalf of the SGB) indicates our wholehearted support for the study.

HOD FOR LIFE ORIENTATION (NAME IN PRINT) SIGNATURE DATE

**LETTER OF CONSENT
TEACHER PERMISSION FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**

Thesis title: *Forum Theatre as Performative Pedagogy in Teaching Life Orientation in Primary Schools in South Africa*

Dear [Teacher's name],

I am currently doing my Doctorate in Education (Comparative Education) at UNISA. The study I am involved with has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, University of South Africa.

The purpose of this form is to invite you to participate in my research and to provide you with information that may affect your decision to participate in this research study. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your permission.

If you agree, you will be participating in a research study on the implementation of a performative pedagogical technique to enhance life skills acquisition in Grade 6 learners. The purpose of this study is to investigate how Forum Theatre as Performative Pedagogy can

enhance the Teaching of Life Orientation in Grade 6 in Primary Schools in South Africa, and to make recommendations with regards to professional teacher development. My research has taught me that teaching certain life skills such as having a good self-image, being taught good decision-making skills, how to be assertive and how to resolve conflicts, will help to protect young people in situations where peers place pressure on them to engage in matters that will be harmful to them. It has also been shown that learners in Grade 6, 7 and 8 are at the ideal age to learn such life skills.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Attend a three-day training and orientation session to be held at Peace Haven Primary School at the end of the winter holiday,
- Facilitate a drama-based teaching strategy during ten weeks in the Life Orientation classes to teach life skills through a performative approach. The full programme will be discussed in detail during the training and orientation session.

I will be observing classes, recording songs and dialogues and will sometimes photograph and video record performance elements during ten Grade 6 Life orientation classroom sessions. As per the Spot On Life Orientation text book lessons for Term 3, the children will be asked to:

- Create a dramatic sequence, a dance and a song;
- Discuss topics such as caring for animals and people, cultural differences between people, gender stereotyping and nation building;
- Develop a short dialogue exploring conflict;
- Create a mask and
- Discuss an artwork.

Thus, the children will engage in theatrical games, trust building exercises, image creation, story development, writing of a dialogue and some will act out a role. The separate elements in combination will develop into a short, improvised play of about 10 min. Each session will be thoroughly observed.

Further, I will observe and film one Forum Theatre event to be held in the afternoon after school. With your kind permission selected photographs and the final Forum Theatre performance carried out by the learners will be included on a DVD in my thesis. The Forum Theatre event will be attended by learners and their teachers. It is expected that all learners and teachers will participate. Your role will be to teach the Life Orientation lessons and to co-facilitate the Forum Theatre sessions.

Once a week all the participating teachers and I will meet in a forum group meeting to share our experiences. All needed materials will be provided free of charge. I will take responsibility for tidying up the venue after the sessions. At the start of the third term and again after the Forum Theatre event, I will do hour long semi-structured interviews which I will record digitally with each of the participating teachers.

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. The possible benefits of participation for you and your school are:

- Learning life skills through performance approaches for learners to discover how to deal with power play situations between people,
- Greater connection with fellow learners while creating the improvised performance of each class,
- Greater awareness of the ability of the body to communicate ideas with other people beyond how we communicate through words,
- Exposure to experiential learning for the learners through participation as a spect-actor or learning vicariously by observing and by taking part in the Forum Theatre discussions which are led by teachers (as a Joker) about the problem explored within the safety of the theatrical space,
- Your own professional development regarding performative teaching techniques.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. You will not receive any type of payment participating in this study. Your privacy and the confidentiality of all data will be protected by not using your name in the data collected as well as in the report. The anonymous data will be coded and given a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

As participating co-researcher, you will have access to this data. You will be asked to keep data confidential. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I do advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with your participation in any study.

Hard copies of your answers will be stored for a period of five years in a locked cupboard in my office at UNISA for future research and academic purposes; electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded and electronic copies deleted from the hard drive of the computer through a relevant software programme.

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher, Mariëtta (Maria Catharina) Bettman at 012 4292120 (w) or 083 627 6695 (c), or you can send an email to betttmc@unisa.ac.za. If you have concerns about the way the study has been conducted, you may contact my study supervisor. Please send your correspondence to: Prof EM Lemmer, Department of Educational Foundations, UNISA, by means of the following email address: lemmeem@unisa.ac.za. Alternatively, you can contact the Ethics Review Committee chairperson, Prof Madeleen Claassen, College of Education, UNISA, by sending an email to Madaleen Claassens <mcdtc@netactive.co.za>.

Hereby you are making a decision to participate in this study. Your signature on this document indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate in the study. You will be given a copy of this document. Thank you for taking the time to read

this information and I hope you will be as excited about this study as I am and that we will be able to work together in the third term.

 CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (RETURN SLIP)

I, _____ (participant name) confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, anticipated inconvenience and potential benefits of participation.

- I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.
- I agree to the digital recording of the performative elements in the research and of the focus group discussions and interviews related to the research. I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant name and surname	Participant signature	Date
Mrs Mariëtta Bettman	/	/ 2016
Researcher name and surname	Researcher signature	Date

Appendix D – Parent Approval and Learner Assent

LETTER OF CONSENT

PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR MINOR'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Thesis title: *Forum Theatre as Performative Pedagogy in Teaching Life Orientation in Primary Schools in South Africa*

Dear parent,

I am currently busy with my Doctorate in Education in Comparative Education at Unisa. The title of my thesis is: ***Forum Theatre as Performative Pedagogy in Teaching Life Orientation in Primary Schools in South Africa***. This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, Unisa and permission for the study has been given by the principal of Peace Haven Primary School.

The purpose of this form is to invite your child to participate in my research and to provide you with information that may affect your decision to allow them to participate in this research study. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your permission.

You and your child are invited to participate in my study about the value of Forum Theatre as a teaching technique and approach to teaching life skills in Life Orientation classes in Primary Schools in South Africa. My research has taught me that teaching certain life skills such as having a good self-image, being taught good decision-making skills, how to be assertive and how to resolve conflicts, will help to protect young people in situations where peers place pressure on them to engage in matters that will be harmful to them. I will be working with the teachers of the Grade 6 Life Orientation classes for 10 weeks during term 3.

If you allow your child to participate in this study, your child will be asked to:

- Do theatrical games and take part in various performance activities covered in their textbooks in class. These activities will be combined into a short improvised dramatic scene that they will be making together with help of the teacher.
- Engage in weekly life skills homework activities that will be supplied free of charge.
- Your child may volunteer to answer a few questions about the experience after the Forum Theatre event.
- The various performances of the children will be photographed or recorded on video. With your kind permission selected photographs and the final Forum Theatre performance carried out by the learners will be included on a DVD in my thesis.

This programme follows the Forum Theatre approach as developed by Augusto Boal in South America and in Europe. His techniques have been used successfully in many contexts all over the world. Over a period of ten weeks the children will be doing various practical activities such as make a dialogue, creating a song and a dance. The best ideas and performances will be used in a short-improvised performance to represent each class. These performances will be presented at the culminating Forum Theatre event. Here the teacher, in the role of a joker, will bridge between the actors and the audience. The audience will discuss the plays presented and explore alternative ways of behaving to break the powerless situation presented by the main character in the performance. Learners in the audience will be invited to take over a role if they have a feasible idea to see if it can work. After calling stop they may interact in the

improvised scene to explore if a change in behaviour, can lead to a different outcome. The aim is to show how it is possible to change the outcome of a situation by changing the behaviour of the main character. By exploring different scenarios, the learners also practise various behavioural options.

Each life orientation session will be thoroughly observed. The children will sometimes be given homework to support the learning taking place in class. All the Grade 6 classes are invited to participate in the study. Some of the learners will be interviewed on a voluntary basis after school to capture their experience of the performative approach to teaching.

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. The possible benefits of participation are:

- Learning of life skills through performance approaches and how to deal with power play situations between people,
- Greater connection with fellow learners while creating the improvised performance of each class,
- Learning experientially through participation as a spect-actor or by taking part in the discussions led by the teacher (joker in the process) about the problems explored within the safety of the theatrical space,
- Greater awareness of the rich communication ability of the body to communicate ideas with other people, and
- Teachers will be learning a new teaching technique that they can utilise when teaching life skills.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. You can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and can still change your mind later without any penalty.

Neither you nor your children or any family member will receive any type of payment participating in this study. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty. The study will take place during the third term, I will observe the Life Orientation classes, take photos or video footage of the performances made in class and will film the Forum Theatre event at the end of the study with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. With your kind permission selected photographs and the final Forum Theatre performance carried out by the learners will be included on a DVD in my thesis. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof EM Lemmer, Department of Educational Foundations, College of Education, University of South Africa. My

contact number is 083 627 6695 and my e-mail is bettmmc@unisa.ac.za The e-mail address of my supervisor is lemmeem@unisa.ac.za. Permission for the study has already been given by Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

With a friendly greeting,

Mrs MC Bettman

Name of your child: _____

Parent/guardian's name (print) Parent/guardian's signature Date:

Mrs M.C. Bettman _____ / / 2016

Researcher's name Researcher's signature Date:

LETTER OF ASSENT OF YOUNG PERSON

Researcher	Mariëtta Bettman	UNISA Supervisor	Prof EM Lemmer
Email address	bettmmc@unisa.ac.za	Email:	lemmeem@unisa.ac.za
Cell phone no.	083 627 6695		
Title of study	<i>Forum Theatre as Performative Pedagogy in Teaching Life Orientation in Primary Schools in South Africa</i>		

Dear learner, Date: / / 2016

My name is teacher Mariëtta and this is a picture of me. I would like to ask you if I may come and watch you participate in drama activities with your teacher and during your intervals. I am learning more about how children learn life skills with their teachers as well as when socializing with friends.



If you agree to do this, I will be present when you are with your teacher doing drama activities as well as when you play on the playground. I will not ask to you to do anything that might hurt you or that you don't want to do. We will

do a performance after which you can try out different ideas through pretending to be another person. If you want to you may also answer some questions for me afterwards.

I will also ask your parents if you may take part. If you do not want to take part, it will also be fine with me. You may ask any questions. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, please ask me next time I visit your school.

Please speak to your parents about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. Please choose either the yes or the no next to the picture as well. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

With a friendly greeting,

Teacher Mariëtta

Your parent's name is: -----

Your Name	YES, I will take part 	NO, I don't want to take part 
Date:	xxxxx 2016	
Name of the researcher:	Mrs. Mariëtta Bettman	Signature of the researcher:
Name of witness:		Signature of the witness:

Appendix E – Observation Guides

OBSERVATION GUIDE/SCHEDULE – TEACHER

Observing the teacher during instruction of Life Orientation lessons

Session: _____ Date: _____

1. What does the teacher do to keep children engaged in the lesson?
 2. What activities does the teacher include in performative instruction lesson?
 3. What teaching methods (or instructional strategies) does the teacher use during performative teaching?
 4. How does the teacher cater for the diverse needs of the children in the class during (and after) performative lessons?
 5. How does the homework support the learning in class?
-

OBSERVATION GUIDE/SCHEDULE - CHILDREN

Observing learner's Interaction during performative instruction Life Orientation lessons

Session: _____ Date: _____

Child/ren: _____

Number of participants in the lesson: _____

1. The participant's willingness to engage in the lesson.
 2. Participant's response to activities (level of interest and participation).
 3. Prior knowledge of the activity being taught.
 4. Participant's creative engagement during the lesson.
 5. Any stress or anxiety experienced by the learner.
-

Appendix F – Interview Schedules

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Focus group schedule

Session: _____ Date: _____

1. What activity did you enjoy the most in today's session (as a facilitator)?
 2. What activity did the learners enjoy the most? Why?
 3. What activity did you enjoy the least in today's session (as a facilitator)?
 4. What activity did the learners enjoy the least in today's session? Why?
 5. In what way did today's session help you support learning of essential life skills through performance?
 6. In what ways does this programme influence or change your teaching routine?
 7. What suggestions would you like to make regarding the homework activities?
 8. Do you have any comments to record about your experiences as a teacher of this class for your reflexive diary?
-

GUIDE/SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEW WITH THE CA TEACHER

Semi-structured interview: Teacher interview guide for the initial interview to be held at the start of the Forum Theatre Performative Pedagogy Study.

Interview: _____ Date: _____

1. What are your expectations of the programme?
2. Did you explore performative techniques as a teaching strategy when you did your teaching qualification?
3. What life skills are you teaching learners in the third term in the Life Orientation classes?
4. What do you think is the importance of teaching in a performative manner?
5. How do you plan the classroom environment (e.g. presenting a lesson in the hall, making use of role play, incorporating songs, dance routines and a prop to be used on stage) to promote performative teaching?
6. What theoretical perspectives inform your performative instruction?
7. How do you plan your performative instruction lessons to include all learners (boys and girls)?

8. How do you make the learners feel safe when they improvise around their own ideas and life experience?
9. What activities do you include in your lessons to promote the dramatic arts?
10. What learning support do you offer to children who are struggling to take part in the performing art lessons?
11. What learning support do you offer to parents who have children who are struggling to take part in the performing art lessons?
12. What support does the school (Principal or Head of Department in the Foundation Phase) offer you to promote the performance ability and skill development of the learners in the dramatic arts lessons?

Semi-structured interview: Teacher interview guide, for interview to be held at the end of the Forum Theatre, Performative Pedagogy Study.

Interview: _____ Date: _____

1. How did you experience the Forum Theatre performative pedagogy programme?
 - 1.1. What worked well for you?
 - 1.2. What did you find difficult?
2. Did the learners acquire new life skills?
 - 2.1. If so, what skills did they learn during this term?
 - 2.2. How was this supported through performance approaches?
 - 2.3. How was this supported through group discussion?
 - 2.4. How did the homework contribute to the learning?
3. What do you now think is the importance of teaching in a performative manner?
4. Do you plan the classroom environment differently now (e.g. presenting a lesson in the hall, making use of role play, incorporating songs, dance routines and a prop to be used on stage) to promote performative teaching?
5. How do you plan your performative instruction lessons to include all learners (boys and girls)? Has anything changed over the past 10 weeks?
6. How do you make the learners feel safe when they improvise around their own ideas and life experience? Has anything changed over the past 10 weeks?
7. What activities do you include in your lessons to promote the dramatic arts?
8. Which topics worked the best to teach good decision-making skills?
9. Which topics taught the learners how to be more assertive to protect themselves against others?
10. Did the learners become more respectful of each other during the last 10 weeks?

11. Would you recommend using performance to other teachers as a way of teaching their learners life skills?
 12. Would you recommend using Forum Theatre to other teachers as a way of developing insight into human power play?
 13. Does trying out new behaviour in a theatrical, pretend situation provide a child with better insight than when a topic is just spoken about in a discussion on the topic? (Does experiential learning help the learners more or not?)
 14. Do some of the learners realise that their own behaviour contributes to the difficult situation that they presented in their play and that by changing their behaviour a difference can be made to the outcome?
 15. What insight did you gain while taking part in this study?
-

**GUIDE/SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEW WITH THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT –
INTERMEDIATE PHASE**

4. Semi-structured interview: Interview guide with the Head of Department Life Orientation, held at the end of the Forum Theatre, Performative Pedagogy Study

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the importance of teaching learners through performance approaches for you?
 2. How do you promote the performing arts in the Intermediate Phase?
 3. What Life Orientation programme does the school use and why?
 4. What learning support do you offer to children who are struggling to take part in performance arts or drama classes offered in the Intermediate Phase?
 5. What support do you offer to parents who have children who are struggling to take part in the performing arts lessons?
 6. Have the teachers enjoyed working in a more performative manner with the learners?
 7. Have the learners enjoyed working in a more performative manner?
 8. Did engagement in a Forum Theatre event teach the Grade 6 learners new insights? If so, what were they?
 9. Would you recommend a more performative approach when teaching Life Orientation lessons to teachers at other schools?
 10. Did the Forum Theatre event add value, and would you recommend it to teachers at other schools?
-

GUIDE/SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEW WITH THE CA LEARNERS

Semi-structured informal interview: Interview guide for learners held during the Forum Theatre, Performative Pedagogy Study

Informal conversational: Interview guide for short impressions gathered from learners during the study.

Child: _____ Date: _____

1. How do you like exploring ideas and thoughts you have by making pictures / images with your body?
 2. Did you make any new friends while working together in different groups in your Life Orientation classes?
 3. Is it more fun doing things and performing together with the others in class?
 4. What do you enjoy about making a short improvisation scene?
 5. What do you not enjoy about making a short improvisation scene?
 6. What have you learned about how people behave?
-

Semi-structured informal interview: Interview guide for learner's conversational interview (volunteers) after the Forum Theatre event

Learner/s: _____ Date: _____

11. Did you enjoy playing the warm-up games this term?
 - 11.1. If so, what did you learn while doing these games?
12. Have you discovered any new talents you did not know you had this term?
 - 12.1. Did you like making images to show your thoughts rather than talking about them?
 - 12.2. Did you enjoy making a dialogue for the play??
13. Did you make any new friends this term?
14. Did you enjoy creating a short play for performance together with your friends and your teacher this term?
 - 14.1. What aspect of making a performance stood out for you?
 - 14.2. What did you find hard to do?
15. Which short play did you like the best and why did you like it so?
16. Did you learn anything new when you and your friends talked about the chosen play in the Forum Theatre event?
17. Did you learn anything new when you or your friends stepped on stage to try a different solution for the problem in the play during the Forum Theatre event?

18. Did you and your friends or family members talk about the problem shown in the play?
- 18.1. Did you get any new solutions later after the play that you would have liked to try?
19. Did the way the teacher played the Joker role during the Forum Theatre process help you to make more sense of what was happening during this event?
20. Would you like to do another Forum Theatre event?
21. Do you know what a life skill is?
- 21.1. If so, what new life skill have you learned this term?

GUIDE/SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEW WITH THE REGISTER CLASS TEACHERS

Extra questions I asked all the register teachers after I received a hand-written note during the case study. It came from a register teacher who also taught the Grade 6 learners and I made me curious about how the other Grade 6 teachers had experienced the Forum Theatre activities in creative arts (CA) classes, if they had noticed or now and how did it manifest?

Semi structured register teacher interviews after the Forum Theatre event

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How did you experience the Grade 6 learners this past term regarding the Forum Theatre performance approach to teaching creative Arts this term?
2. Did you have discussions with them about their play making activities?
3. Are they more confident now?
4. Have you noticed anything regarding the children or their teacher that I should be aware of?
I understand some teachers feel that the freedom they had during CA lessons caused them to be disruptive?
5. Is there anything different regarding the teachers?
6. Would you be open to a CA project in school where various Grade 6 teachers were to work together to make a performance that could be followed with a Forum Theatre experience? i.e. Languages, life orientation, CA and music could join up so that the performance style of teaching would be more manageable?
7. How do you deal with discipline in the class?

Appendix G – Lesson plans 1-9

1. *Lesson one*

1.1. **The topic of the lesson:**

The teacher will explain to the Grade 6 class that they will be making a short performance together as a class during this term. At the end of the term, we will be doing a Forum Theatre event where we will perform the class scene.

1.2. **Lesson objectives:**

Children told about the importance of having a safe space in which to learn and to play roles in the pretend space. We will be playing a theatrical game each week.

- Establish the ground rules for how the class will be working together.
- Play drama games to introduce dramatic improvisation and scene creation activities for term 3.
- The aims of the game playing is to develop cohesion, build up their life skills, establish trust between the children and make them familiar with embodied communication (eye contact, observing and being focused on another person, only one person can speak at a time otherwise the person who is being guided cannot follow, being disciplined and taking turns, discovering how the body communicates in silence).
- All Grade 6 classes will make an improvised scene during the next few lessons about something with which they struggle to cope.
- The scene will be about an unsolved problem that causes conflict between children. The chosen situation makes the main person (protagonist) feel powerless.

Part 1 of the double lesson

1.3. **Summary of tasks /actions:**

1.3.1. **Introduction**

5 minutes

Introduce the idea that the class is going to make a short dramatic performance in this term and that their collective creativity will be used. It is their play that will represent them as a class, and it can only be as good as what they together put into and invest in the experience. They will be crafting the dramatic scene that will be unique to them.

- The scene will be presented at a Forum Theatre event to be held at the end of the term.

1.3.2. **Establish the Ground Rules**

5 minutes

Start by explaining to the class what needs to happen for the activities to be safe.

- We want everyone to feel safe so that they can feel comfortable playing games and doing exercises. So, let us try to keep what we talk about quiet and only known to us. We do not want our ideas to be copied or taken over by another class.
- Everyone should feel free to share their thoughts and feelings.
- People will be playing roles, but that is not who they are. Roleplay happens in the pretend space to show how we understand specific behaviour. The way they act

a character doesn't necessarily make it their behaviour that we are seeing; it just shows us how they experience and would respond in the situation.

Ground Rules for the Creative Arts Class

- **Don't tease each other** – what we share in the class stays in the class. We are sharing stories, opinions and looking silly together. We need to be able to do that feeling safe, knowing that what we share in class stays there.
- **Non-judgemental** – We agree to disagree. Everyone's opinion is as important as anyone else's. We respect the differences between us. And everybody has a right to be heard.
- **Respect** – We show each other respect in how we listen, and talk to each other, take care of each other and treat each other.
- **Openness** – Be willing to share so that everyone can learn from the process. You don't have to reveal secrets or private stories but instead share your thoughts about how you see things as this will make understanding more productive for all of us.
- **Honesty** – If you choose to share, be honest and don't makeup stories just for the sake of it.
- **Right to pass** – Everyone has the right to say 'pass' if the activity makes them feel uncomfortable. Not because you happen to not feel like playing but instead because you don't feel safe to share on that topic.
- **Anonymity** – Everyone may write down ideas about which they would like the group to talk. A person might not feel comfortable to have their name linked to the topic. Then you can write it on a piece of paper that gets placed in the anonymous box.

Display the big poster with the basics ground rules to serve as a reminder whenever the class is working together. Show them the actual anonymous box and where it is situated.

4. **Playing interactive games.** 5 minutes

Remind the children to be focused when they are playing a game. Giggling and messing around shows that you are not yet focused. Share with the group that we are going to be playing games to increase participation and to make us more active when we work together. After each game stops, ask the group for their comments or observations.

- The teacher can ask: "Did you discover something while you were playing the game?"
- Tell the group that you will be giving instructions during the games. They need to listen and adapt but do not drop out. "Every game is an opportunity to work on focus and discipline in a non-personal, non-rules sort of way."
- The goal is to set up a safe space where everyone can enjoy themselves as they work and prepare to be an active, honest dialogue about things that are important to you. The creative arts class is where we have a spirit of play within a set of rules.

Game 1. Circle dash 10 minutes

Form a circle with all the learners. One person needs to stand in the middle. People in the outer circle will be swapping positions after signalling with each other. The person in the middle will try to step into the gap or empty place in the circle first before one of the pair of exchangers can get there. (See end of lesson plan one or page 10 and 11 of Rohd book for instructions).

[teaches silent communication and eye contact and facial expression can be used to communicate with the other person]

Game 2. Cover the space

10-15 minutes

Create a big rectangle within the classroom or hall space. Play the game in silence, no talking, no contact, and everyone must keep moving into empty spaces. The children may not stop moving. They must be aware of themselves and others in the space and how they are covering the space. Tell the children to spread out so that everyone in the class is covering a different part of the space, filling the space. As the teachers you shout: 'freeze' and let them take note of how they are distributed. Point out areas of congestion and ask them to try again – shout: 'Action' and everyone begins to move again. It's a game of freezing, listening to instructions and finding their rhythm again.

Variations: now as a pair, as a triangle of three people, as a square of four people, etc.

(See page 12 and 13 of Rohd book for detailed instructions at the end of this lesson plan).

[The children did not relate to this game so much, possibly because it was too easy for them?]

Part 2 of the double lesson

Game 3. Tilt and balance

10 minutes

This exercise reduces the self-consciousness of the children and as they work in pairs. Everyone "gets to do" and works together at the same time. It requires imagination and co-operation between the two members of a pair. Form 2 lines of equal numbers of children. Count from 1 – 18 along the first row and then start on the opposite side of the room and count from 1 – 18 again. Now join the two lines into a circle so that the #1's are opposite each other in the circle. Show them where the pivotal middle point is. Place an empty bottle at this point. Now explain that there is a big disc between them that rests and balances on the bottle. Then #1, then #2, and #3, etc. must work together. The children in the first line are the leaders to start the game. They can step onto the circle between them, but then the opposite #1 should help them and try to balance out the circle on the opposite side. Keep watching each other and respond so that the disc will not tilt. Everyone can now play at the same time as the person opposite them in the circle.

(For full instructions see the explanation as attachment at the end of this lesson; pages 15-16 of Rohd).

[The children enjoyed this game, and some could remember this one and refer to it in their interview or reflection]

Game 4. Minefield

10 minutes

Make a big circle with all the children holding hands. Now ask everyone in the room to put soft objects like a jacket or a jersey, or books, a lunch box or a school bag, etc. somewhere on the floor so that it covers the playing space and then to go and stand in their place in the circle again. These objects will be the 'mines' that one of the children who is blindfolded

needs to avoid on a journey to the other side of the circle. The 'sightless' person will be steered across space with just voices to guide them. If they touch something they will go up in smoke with a big KABOOM. They may not use names but need to work together.

[This game was only played in one class; the children enjoyed it and became aware that they cannot all talk at the same time as the child who is blindfolded becomes confused when too many people speak at the same time and give instructions on where they need to move next. Possibly, the children need to play this game in smaller groups spread out over the space. Full text describing the game is on the additional pages at the end of this lesson plan. Rohd, pages 20-21.]

Note to the teacher about giggling and laughter. Rather than scold the children about laughing rather remind them to focus as laughter is a way of releasing tension. Ask the group to keep focused as we have a lot of materials that we want to work through. Supporting the laughers to get more focused is more productive.

“Don't let it slide and assume it will take care of itself. We have been socialised out of being playful. Laughter is natural. It is our instinctual response for self-preservation. Concentration is natural too. Try to nurture the concentration, support it and push it. In a safe space, watch the tension go away as the joy of the process of playing takes over, and the need for defensive laughter eventually disappears” (see Rohd on trust work page 29).

The teacher should ask the children to pick up the homework document before leaving the class. They need to read it in preparation for the next lesson.

[This did not happen as I did not manage to write this material by the time the fieldwork began. It meant my original intention of including some of the Botvin life skills lesson materials into my lessons did not happen. It would not have worked as there was a time constraint on just managing to get through what I had intended to teach. Does this have to do with discipline issues, distracted children and big class size? The children loved all the activities and enjoyed being active in the outdoor space where we did the lessons]

4. Materials / equipment:

- Ground rules poster,
- Anonymous suggestions box, [Not necessary, was not used ever]
- Empty plastic bottle [didn't use it but a small bottle and a flat cardboard disc would have worked to be able to demonstrate what was meant by the pivoting plate]
- Book the hall for all creative art lessons in the third term for Grade 6 classes. [We hardly used the hall space because the teacher liked using the library]
- Scarf to use as a blindfold in the last game.

5. References:

Boal, A. 2002. *Games for actors and non-actors*. London: Routledge.
 Rhod, M. 1998. *Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

6. Take home tasks:

Life skills task – Children need to read this information for their next lesson and complete assignment 01. The assignment must be completed before the start of the next lesson. [Did not happen, would be more useful to do a cooling down activity at the end of the lesson to calm the children down before they go to their next class].

Circle Dash

Number of People: 10 or more (an ideal group: 20–40)

Age Level: Great for all ages

Time: 5–15 minutes

Source: Unknown (Taught to me in Coos Bay, OR)

The Basic Idea

Everyone stands in a circle around one person who's standing in the middle. The object of the game is for any two people in the circle to silently signal each other and switch places. The person in the middle tries to get to an open spot before the switchers. The person left takes the spot in the middle. This is a silent game.

Reminders

- You can teach the game from the middle spot and demonstrate as you explain.

When you call out "freeze" during any activity, you're asking for your group to stop and maintain position—to be still, but to stay engaged, not to drop out of the activity. Go over this definition early in the process so that it's clear to everyone.

- You can play this game with your group after you teach it.
- Those switching places have to try to get to the spot they are aiming for. If the person in the middle gets there first, they can't go for a random, empty spot—they must take their turn in the middle. That keeps a sense of order in a fast and chaotic game.
- A player can't just run—they must make visual contact with someone and signal a sort of agreement. This demands some connection between players.
- More than one pair can go at a time. With large groups, the fun comes when lots of pairs switch at once.
- People should go *around* one another, not *through* or *over* each other. (This may seem obvious, but wait for the first collision!)
- A good way to end the game is to say "See how many times you can switch in the last thirty seconds."

Thoughts

This game is contagious and succeeds on many levels. The most important aspect is that it allows people to choose their own level of participation. They can choose to switch places often or they can choose to not signal anyone. The key point here is that by just being in the circle, they are participants. Because they are making a choice one way or the other, they are involved. It's rare to see someone not switch by the end of the game.

If someone gets "stuck" in the middle you have the ability, as the facilitator, to help by trying an especially hard switch you know you won't make. If you feel it necessary, this gives you a way without "cheating" to prevent someone from getting too uncomfortable. Stay away from refereeing. I never referee, but stay silent and let them work out disputes. This also engenders participation, because when participants realize that there is no "official" call and other players are waiting for one, the participants must make their own decisions.

Cover the Space

Number of People: 10 or more (an ideal group: 20–50)

Age Level: 12 years old and up (This game can work with younger people, but often focus becomes an issue.)

Time: 5–15 minutes

Source: Boal

The Basic Idea

You set up a big rectangle in the room, using four chairs or trash cans as corner markers. You have everyone start walking around in the designated space. The rules are no talking, no contact, and to keep moving. After a little while you tell everyone to be aware of their own body, the bodies around them, and the space on the floor. Then, you ask them to begin to make certain that the space on the floor is covered. They need to keep moving at all times, get to corners and sidelines, and to always move to empty spaces to “cover the space.” If you were to shout “Freeze!,” they should be evenly distributed around the space, filling it. You shout “freeze,” point out how they’re doing, and send them right back to covering the space. It’s a game of freezing, getting new instructions, and finding their rhythm again.

Variations

Variation 1: After a little while, you shout “freeze” and tell them to grab a partner’s hand. As pairs, they keep covering the space. Repeat as triads. You can move to groups as large as you want, spending some time on each one. To end, they drop hands and cover the space solo again.

Variation 2: After a little while, you shout “freeze” and ask them how fast they can create three triangles using all their bodies without talking about it. You say “go.”

After they do it, return to cover the space solo for a little while. Then, freeze and form three squares, and so forth. Other options could include forming different shapes, combinations of shapes, letters, words, numbers. To end, return to cover the space solo.

Variation 3: After a little while, you shout “freeze” and ask them to quickly put themselves into groups based on what they’re wearing on the top half of their body without talking about it. You go around to each group and on a count of three they all have to say out loud what they think their group is called. For instance, “long-sleeved T-shirts” or “red tops.” Then, if the group is new to each other, have them quickly learn each other’s names in their group. If they know each other, return to cover the space. This round goes on with footwear, hair, favorite kind of music (silently), favorite kind of movie, and so forth. I always end with eye color.

Take your time. Remember that the rules are for the goals, not for obedience.

Reminders

- Lead this game from the outside since there are a lot of instructions and freezes. You need to be able to watch and sense when to go to the next step.
- The size of the rectangle is dependent on the size of your group. It can’t be too cramped. They must have room to struggle to cover all the space. But it can’t be too big either, or the task becomes impossible.
- The game should remain silent at all times.
- The game should take energy—it should be tiring as well as energizing. All of this play is work and should be played at 100 percent. If they don’t feel that they’re giving out that much energy, they’re not playing.
- In the beginning, remind them to look at each other. They may not be able to talk, but they should notice who they’re in the room with. Ask them to relax as well as to look at the other participants.
- Each time they come back to cover the space remind them to find their rhythm and focus.
- You will sense if people are playing and trying to cover the space or if they’re just walking around. This game offers a great opportunity to remind them not to play casually but to play the game and get their bodies involved, to move and focus on the task at hand.

Thoughts

I start every first session with this game, all the way through the three variations. Whether it's a long training or a one-shot workshop, this game gets people up and involved in the least threatening and ultimately most sneaky way possible. It simply asks participants to walk around the space and move individually; together as a group, yet safe in their own space. Over time it adds a group task, physical contact, working together, and groups connecting and finding each other. You can play the whole sequence once or you can play the first part and use that rhythm to return to a focus point in subsequent sessions to add other variations. You can ask participants to lead the game down the line and come up with new specifics in each variation. This game also allows participants to shake off the day and begin to find a rhythm in the group movement. They can be in this space and relax out of whatever tension they might bring.

One evening I was asked to observe a university-based, peer ed group I had trained conduct a performance workshop with thirty-five freshmen on their campus. They had chosen this game to use as a warm-up. The space they were in was a small dorm (or residence hall) lounge. As they began the game, it became clear that not only was everyone able to cover the space with ease, they were jammed in like sardines. As the participants grew restless, bored, and frustrated, the student leader grew impatient with what she saw as their unwillingness to get into the "spirit of play." She pushed them to focus and demanded that they work at the game. It was like asking a group of people to play football with no ball, no end zones, and no teams, and then being furious that they weren't enjoying themselves. The freshmen grew more and more antagonistic and a negative tone was established that lasted the whole session. Set yourself up for success. Recognize what environment you need to provide for that spirit of play to be accessible. Be aware of where your group is and try to not get defensive if something isn't going as planned. Adapt.

Tilt

Number of People: 10 or more (an ideal group: 14–40)

Age Level: All ages

Time: 10–20 minutes

Source: Unknown

The Basic Idea

Two lines of the same number of people face each other on opposite sides of the room. Each line numbers off from 1 on up. The numbering off should begin at opposite ends of the two lines. In the middle of the space rests a bottle or a cup. You explain to participants that they are standing on the edge of a plate and that the bottle is the center point of the plate.

The object of the game is to keep the plate from tilting out of balance and crashing off its fulcrum. You call #1 from one of the lines and when he/she steps onto the imagined plate, the #1 from the other line has to step out and move to balance the plate. The person who is called first is the leader of the pair. Each pair has to keep a straight line between themselves and the bottle in the center

point at all times. Then you call the other numbers until everyone is playing at once. The leaders are all from the same line until you call out to switch leaders. You can switch leaders often and have participants play with varying speeds and different ways of moving. This is a silent game.

This is the first of many activities where pairs all play at the same time. This reduces self-consciousness and ensures that everyone gets lots of time to do, not just to watch. It particularly pays off when you move on to bridge activities and improvisation.

Reminders

- You should lead this game from the outside if possible but you can lead it while playing.
- They should try to remain in visual contact with their partner at all times.
- They should try to challenge but never trick their partner.
- See if they can switch leaders fluidly without stopping or jerking about.

- If you don't see them varying their speeds, ask them to move in slow or fast motion or on the ground.

Thoughts

This game gains energy with more people. It gets people moving and connecting. It's play with safety, because everyone is doing it at once. As a leader, it might feel like it would get boring quickly. Let it go a little longer than you think it should. Watch their focus and joy.

2. *Lesson two*

- 2.1. **The topic of the lesson:** Activation of imagination and improvisation activities
- 2.2. **Lesson objectives:** Make the children aware of how they can communicate an idea through their bodies.
- 2.3. **Summary of tasks/actions:**
- 2.3.1 Welcome everyone back to the class. Ask how they found the reading for homework.
Who would like to respond to something in the text?
Can they please hand in their homework assignment? 5 minutes

[Instead of homework, we spent the start of every lesson collecting approval forms from the children]

2.3.2. **Warm-up game:**

Game 1. Machine

10 minutes

This game helps to activate the children in doing a movement task together and will stimulate their imagination. The teacher responds positively to all contributed creative ideas. All children hold hands and form a circle. Play the game in silence. Ask for a volunteer who can think of a movement that will make us think of a machine. Ask the volunteer to start doing this movement in the middle of the circle. As soon as everyone can see that movement is repetitive and has a rhythm, ask another child to join in, and another child, etc. until ten children are moving in the space. The children should not touch each other but try to make the movements look like they are connected. Call freeze or whoosh to stop the movements and wipe out all actions on the floor space. Now all the children can join the bigger circle again. Start a new machine with a person who has not yet had a turn. (Full description of the game is available at the end of the lesson plan: Rohd, page 26).

[This game worked very well, they needed to be shown how at the start of the activity. Everybody in the smaller groups could contribute. Harder for the children who started as they had to keep the same movement going until everyone in the group could participate.]

2.3.3. **Bridgework**

The next activity serves to build the bridge between the warm-up and the improvisation stage of theatrical activities. It is an important part of the process. Do not skip it. "Bridgework allows the energy generated in the warm-ups to gently become creative and quietly begins to address subjects of interest and concern to the participants. It makes the space safer; it engages the imagination and theatricalizes the setting" (Rohd. 1998:50).

Game 2. Environment

15 – 20 minutes

Silent game the helps children to start improvising together.

1. Ask for a volunteer, tell them to imagine **a space** of their choice where they are doing an activity. The rest of the children need to observe the volunteer and try to guess what it is the person is doing. Once they figure it out they join in doing another related task. (i.e., the first person is in a restaurant and is laying the table. Next person to join starts to welcome guests at the door; another person is the waiter; another is the

- cook, etc.) Ideally you want to have everyone in the class to have joined into the imaginary world. Call freeze and relax to end the activity.
2. Now do it with a **circumstance**; they need to start by thinking of a situation that happens when it starts raining or the power has gone out. You are asking the children to make imaginary situations real.
 3. Now they may become a **character**. Ask the children to show 'How old are you?' 'What do you do for a living?' 'How do you travel or get to work?'

[The classes could all do this activity, sometimes it was hard to make out exactly what certain children represented when they are in their restaurant role.]

Process:

5 minutes

- After the activity, talk to the children to ask them what they have discovered?
- Did they see that it was interesting to watch the person put in **specific details**? By adding details, the behaviour leads to discoveries about a character or a person.
- Generalities, on the other hand, lead to dead ends.
- Did they notice that people from different cultures might do specific tasks differently?
Did anyone notice such a difference between them during the game?

[The above did not happen much, we did make them aware of details in body language being important in communicating to the audience who you are and what you are doing.]

James Dean taught an actor friend of his to rather 'Be a type of behaviour', 'Do it' rather than 'show it.' Now imagine you are in a hospital. Who? Why? Do it. This activity is about focusing on a task at hand and creating an imaginary world that fits with the task.

Game 3. Two revelations

15 minutes

Pair up in two's. One child is the parent, and the other one is a child. Each person needs to imagine how old they are, where the scene will take place, which one will enter the scene and who will start in the imagined space. Now they can talk to each other but must **come up with a secret**. It must be a vital but realistic secret. It's a big deal and needs to be something that could happen. Next, they must **think of a reason why they must reveal the secret** to the other person. (What do they need from the other person?)

Call: Go. One person starts doing an activity, and another person enters the scene. Start talking. Call out **First revelation**. One person reveals their secret. Keep talking. The other person may not reveal their secret until teacher calls '**Second revelation**'. Talk again. Call **Freeze, relax**.

Process: Now, discuss what they learned from the exercise.

5 minutes

Point out the importance of

- listening to each other,
- making it real,
- staying focused, and
- making the reasons vital and significant.

2.4. **Materials / equipment:** none

2.5. **Assessment:**

Whole class participation.

2.6. References:

- Boal, A. 2002. *Games for actors and non-actors*. London: Routledge.
 Rhod, M. 1998. *Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

2.7. Take home tasks:

Ask the class to think situations that are hard for them to respond in that involve other people, a situation that makes you feel powerless. As a class, we will be working with that situation in the next lesson.

Machine

Number of People: 5 and more

Age Level: All ages

Time: 5–20 minutes

Source: Spolin

The Basic Idea

Everyone stands in a circle. One person volunteers to start the machine in the middle of the circle. They begin a clear motion and rhythm that can be repeated for some length of time. The motion and the rhythm stay the same. Once the rhythm has been established, one by one the other people in the circle add to the machine by creating a new movement that connects spatially, *but not physically*, to the existing movements. The rhythm of the first movement is the guide. The game is silent. The idea is to get everyone (or up to ten people at a time) into the machine and focused on staying with each other. After a little while, as a complete machine, the first person can change the rhythm and the group tries to find the new pace, together. Then, you call “freeze,” (pause) “relax.” Everyone comes back to the circle and starts a new machine.

Variations

Variation 1: Have folks come in with a sound, in addition to the movements, so an orchestra is almost created.

Variation 2: Pick an imaginary type of machine (like a pet-caring machine, or a house-building machine) and have the group create it.

Variation 3: Have the group break into smaller groups and have them all create the same imaginary type of machine, share them, and note the differences.

Reminders

- The game will feel strange and participants will feel self-conscious at first, so you want to do away with audience and

- get as many folks out there as possible. I recommend being the person to start the first machine yourself as you explain it.
- People should try to use the space three-dimensionally and not just build a straight line off of the first person.
 - Encourage people to not create movement with just their hands and arms but with their whole bodies.

Thoughts

This game is actually a sequence that starts here as a warm-up, goes to its next phase as a Bridge Activity, and culminates in Activating Material and Facilitation as Machine and Fluid Sculpting, both of which are described in detail later in the book (see pp. 62 and 66). The pieces can be used separately as they're described or as a progression within one session. Any time you can use an activity in the process and build on it in later activities it has two payoffs: 1) familiarity and comfort with the technique involved; and 2) a sense of trust in how all the work relates to the larger picture of what you hope to accomplish and address.

4 The machine of rhythms

Especially in this exercise, it is important that the actor really plays the internal rhythm: a machine is obviously mechanical so we should not demonstrate the external aspects of people. This game deals with machines of rhythms and even when the Joker asks the actor to show the machine of Rio or Mexico City, they should not show '*malandros cariocas*'²² or sombrero-clad men dozing under a cactus tree. The aim of the exercise is to reveal inner rhythms, rather than external cliché behaviours. Sometimes, the rhythm of a social ritual can be shown by keeping the same rhythm and changing the pace – making it slower or faster – rather than by making faces. This is a rhythm exercise, not an image one.

An actor goes into the middle and imagines that he is a moving part in a complex machine. He starts doing a movement with his body, a mechanical, rhythmic movement, and vocalising a sound to go with it. Everyone else watches and listens, in a circle around the machine. Another person goes up and adds another part (her own body) to this mechanical apparatus, with another movement and another sound. A third, watching the first two, goes in and does the same, so that eventually all the participants are integrated into this one machine, which is a synchronised, multiple machine.

When everyone is part of the machine, the Joker asks the first person to accelerate his rhythm – everyone else must follow this modification, since the machine is one entity. When the machine is near to explosion, the Joker asks the first person to ease up, gradually to slow down, till in their own time the whole group ends together. It is not easy to end together, but it is possible.

For everything to work well, each participant really does have to try and listen to everything he hears.

Environment

Number of People: 8 or more

Age Level: All ages

Time: 15–45 minutes

Source: Original via Spolin and Living Stage

The Basic Idea

The group sits facing as large an open space as possible. A volunteer enters the space and begins doing an activity that would take place in a specific location. For instance, he/she begins to wait on a table, and those watching realize the space is a restaurant. They cannot mouth words. They are focusing on an activity or a series of activities and making that action real. As soon as someone knows where the activity is taking place, they enter the space and begin doing another activity that could also take place in that location. People keep entering the space until, ideally, everyone is in the space by the end of the round. There is no talking and no interacting with each other. Everyone is silently focused on the physical world and activity they are creating in that same space. After a short period of time, they freeze, relax, and play another round.

Variations

Circumstance: You can play with circumstance: “It’s raining”; “The power has gone out”; or “Everyone remembers they forgot to do something very important. What do you do now?” You are asking them to quickly make imaginary situations important and real.

Character: You can add the focus of character so that you talk them through specific character choices as they carry out their actions. For instance, you could say “How old are you?” “What do you do for a living?” “Where do you live?” to help them build a person and a story. Then, you can freeze them and say, “It’s 10:00 A.M. on a Friday morning—where are you and what are you doing? Do it.” Everyone creates an environment and activity based on who they are. The space then becomes a variety of places. You can take them through a whole day like this and keep asking them questions about

their lives. After the exercise you can have a great conversation about how character can generate story, how specifics can lead to all sorts of interesting discoveries, and how generalities can be dead ends.

Issues: To bring issues in later in the process, you could say, “Each of your characters is visiting someone in the hospital. Who and why? Do it.” Or “Alcohol has created some situation you have to

deal with right now. What is it and where are you? Go.” You can generate issues with the group and randomly use them over time.

I recently saw an interview with Dennis Hopper on a television show and he was asked about his friendship with James Dean. The questions eventually led to Dean's impact on Hopper's acting. Hopper said Dean's only main advice was: "Stop showing. You're showing everything. Don't show it. Do it. DO IT! If you're drinking, drink. If you're listening, listen. If you're trying to get someplace, get there. That's real. People care about that." Hopper said that, although he has his own system and way of working, that's his guiding principle. Always. I knew I liked James Dean for good reason.

Combinations: Combining these different variations you can create new and interesting ways to challenge and engage participants.

Reminders

- This activity—like all of them—is not about entertaining an audience. It's not about performing but focusing on the task at hand and creating imaginary worlds. Don't let them turn it into comedy or showboating. **THE RULE** (for this game and for acting in general): Don't show. DO!
- Encourage participants to create environments where lots can happen.
- If someone starts in a space, it's actually the entire space. They don't have to feel stuck in the one room the first person creates (e.g., if someone starts in a classroom, the space can be the whole school).

Thoughts

This is an easy activity to use when you simply want to make a smooth transition to imagination work without engaging in issues too much. It's fun, and although it requires a lot of focus, the array

of variations allows you to return to it and watch it pay off. The focus on location and character makes it an excellent activity to use to develop your group's improvisational skills. Groups that train to lead performance workshops with peers often use this game as a bridge with their participants.

Two Revelations

Number of People: 6 or more

Age Level: 11 and up

Time: 15–30 minutes

Source: Boal

The Basic Idea

Everyone gets a partner. They stand together in their own space as you have them make the following decisions together, one decision at a time. You give them about 15 seconds for each one.

Who will be the parent and who will be the child?

How old is each of them? (They can choose for the child to be between the age of the youngest in the room to a couple of years older than the oldest youth present.)

Where will the scene take place?

Who will enter the scene and who will start in the space?

The following part shouldn't be discussed between partners. They make these decisions secretly.

Each partner has to come up with a secret. It should be an extremely important, realistic secret that they think a parent might keep from a child or a child might keep from a parent, depending on who they are playing. It should be a secret that they think someone might realistically keep in their community. It's a big deal but not "soap opera, fakey." It could happen.

Then they each come up with a reason why they have to tell the other person the secret in this scene. (HINT: What do they need from the other person?)

When you say "go," the person who is starting in the space begins to do an activity that could take place in that space (cooking in a kitchen, for instance); the other person enters, and the scene starts. They talk. Perhaps one of them blurts their secret out. Perhaps there is small talk. The catch is that when the first one says

their secret, the second person cannot say theirs until the game leader shouts “second revelation, go!” Together they have to deal with the first secret while the other person has theirs still churning around in their gut. The scene continues for a while after the second secret is revealed, then you shout “freeze, relax” and everyone comes together to process.

Reminders

- This is an improvisation game to play before working on improv skills.
- They should concentrate on listening to each other.
- They should concentrate on making the relationship real.
- They should work to stay focused and not fall out of the scene (e.g., giggle, look around). Everyone does this at once so there is no audience.
- They should make the secrets important to them so these are not casual conversations but events and confrontations that mean something to these characters.

Thoughts

This game accomplishes two great things. First, it gives you a sense of how comfortable your group is with improvisation and scene work. You can get a sense of how focused they are by just watching them play with each other in an intense situation. This will help you determine where you are in the process in terms of skills and group building even before you’ve worked specifically on improv. Second, it asks your group “what are the secrets people—families in particular—keep from each other in this community?” It is a powerful and subtle way to discover how those in the room view communication and “taboo” topics in the home. With the group, talk about secrets that appeared in more than one scene and about those that didn’t come up. This is an important activity to process and listen to. Not the details of each scene per se but the content of what was and wasn’t said. Generalize through these specific fictions and see what you learn. Also, it can be played again later but between a different relationship (friends, siblings, and so on).

I was in a small town playing this game once, and when we processed the secrets, everyone playing the child had a secret about pregnancy and everyone playing the parent had a secret about infidelity. The group was composed of twelve teens and four adults. When this came to light they were fairly stunned. It led to a fascinating discussion on secrets in the community, and it set the agenda for the initial issue work we did. It came out of creative activity, not talk. This made it more potent, more real, and more felt.

Minefield

Number of People: 10 or more (an ideal group: 15–40)

Age Level: All ages

Time: 10–30 minutes

Source: Unknown (Taught at a physical education conference)

The Basic Idea

Everyone stands in a circle and tosses any objects they can find that aren't breakable or sharp (shirts, jackets, books, keys, knapsacks, etc.) into the center. Spread the objects out so the whole center space is evenly covered. Find a volunteer and have them close their eyes. The rest of the group, using their voices, tries to navigate this volunteer to a point directly across the circle from where they currently stand. If the volunteer touches any of the objects during the navigation, KABOOM, instant obliteration! You, the leader, play angel of death and watch for fatal contact. The trick is all participants are trying to lead the volunteer at once. They cannot speak to each other or designate one speaker. They cannot call the volunteer or each other by name. They must fight through the chaos and lead the blind volunteer together.

Variations

Variation 1: The volunteer is vocally led by one navigator. Everyone else in the circle holds an object in their hand and gets a chance to throw it into the path of the blind traveler. They can't hit them with it, and it can't be placed right under the descending foot of the traveler. If they do so, their object doesn't count. They must be patient and strategize.

Variation 2: Several blind travelers, each with a volunteer leader. The travelers don't know who their leader is when they start. They have to figure it out. All travelers are led across at the same time while other participants in the circle attempt to toss objects in their path.

Reminders

- No one in the circle can move around, especially when trying to toss objects.
- Everyone involved should work on making the risk to the traveler as important as they can. The task should be done with immense focus and energy, not silliness.
- Make certain *no names* are used during the process. This forces participants to use their voices more fully.

Thoughts

This game is contagiously fun. Once you get going everyone wants to be the traveler, and it usually becomes a matter of stopping and assuring the group that you will play again. If you stop playing just as interest has peaked it's a nice way to ensure energy the next time because people will be excited to play again. You can also put a strong focus on the imaginary circumstance and really use it to introduce the idea of creating pretend situations with "high stakes," a phrase we return to again and again.

3. *Lesson three*

1.1. **The topic of the lesson**

Activation of the children's imagination with a focus on non-verbal communication and values clarification.

1.2. **Lesson objectives:** Make the children aware of how their bodies can tell stories — the first step towards choosing a central theme for the class.

1.3. **Summary of tasks/actions**

Follow up on homework. 2 minutes
Ask if everyone if they found a social situation that they find hard to do. The situation must involve other people.

1.3.1. **Warm-up game**

The Glass Cobra

10 minutes

This game teaches the children to be aware of how different each individual is to another person. They will be standing in a circle all looking at the back and shoulders of their neighbour to the right of them. Everyone is asked to close their eyes. Now with their hands, they need to gently explore what the head and shoulders of the person next to them. Then everyone is to move around the space with their eyes closed. After a few minutes you now ask them to stand still. Now still with their eyes closed, they must try and find the person that was next to them again. Finding the other person is done by feeling another person's head and shoulders again until they find the right person. When they find them, they need to stay in that place. The aim of the game is to reform the original circle with their eyes closed.

[The teacher was very against playing this game as she felt the children would possibly touch each other inappropriately]

Bridging activity

Total 15 minutes

Complete the image demonstration (silent activity) 5 minutes

(Silent game) Start with a demonstration with two volunteers. Ask them to greet each other with a handshake or other physical gesture that their culture uses to greet each other. Shout freeze. Ask the group what they saw was happening? Volunteers are to keep same position and facial expression. What relationships do you see? What else is going on? Trigger them to come up with interpretations. What is the story in this situation? Relax one of the two people who may then sit down. Another person steps in and is asked to create a new situation in response to the frozen person. The response can be any pose, not just handshakes. When the new person is ready they too freeze their pose. Ask the group for their response. Relax the other original volunteer, who also sits down. Repeat with a new person. Do this 3-4 times.

[This game worked very well as the children became aware of how they can communicate many different moods and intensions through a similar movement, such as a handshake. Helped to focus the children on the possibilities that lie within embodied language]

Complete the image, class interaction (silent activity) 10 minutes

The children, as a group, are now going to do this in pairs. Use the space and remind children that their faces express a great deal of what they are thinking, feeling and intending to communicate. They should not worry about what they look like as everyone is playing at the same time. They can also start with a greeting. One-person freezes, the other one looks at the frozen partner and responds, then freezes. The first person who was frozen now relaxes and responds to the 'newly frozen' person. The group is engaged in a "structured dialogue of images." Let the pairs play in this way for a few minutes then call out a theme word that will influence their responses

(Jealousy, family, confusion, conflict, sadness, etc.). They are free to use the suggested idea or not and should not let it restrict them in their creativity. End the game by calling freeze and relax.
[We did not play this game]

Remind and make the class aware that they were busy with non-verbal dialogue. It is an opportunity to be creative together and that there is no right or wrong behaviour. The class uses their bodies, their imagination, and they do this in a safe, abstracted way.

1.3.2. Values clarification activity

25 minutes

This activity is significant to help set up the ground rules of engagement in the class. Participants need to be able to voice their opinions in a non-judgmental way. Everyone will be allowed to share their opinions on this activity without being judged by others. A good way to make the class aware of the cultural and value differences that exist in society and the importance of tolerance for each other. Point out that people are allowed to disagree and treat each other with dignity to choose to be different. We are all part of the rainbow nation, and our diversity makes us interesting and stronger as a nation. Different cultures have different solutions to different problems, and this allows us choices and more ideas and options from which to choose when having to make a difficult decision.

- The class gathers together as a group. The teacher explains that we are going to respond to value statements. Everyone has an opportunity to decide for themselves which answer they will be choosing. We all come from different homes with different cultural backgrounds, and this will influence our ideas and choices. There are no right or wrong answers except if it is unlawful, violent or mean to others. Sometimes we choose different responses to situations for various reasons.
- The teacher puts down signs of 'agree,' 'unsure,' and 'disagree' on the floor to create three different spaces. Each person is to decide for themselves where they will place themselves. Read out the first statement. The children may go to the area of their choice. The teacher then asks volunteers to share why they chose to place themselves where they are. After they have shared their thoughts, you can move on to the next statement, and people may walk over to another space or stay where they are.
- The goal is to think about the subject matter and make a choice about where they stand and then feel comfortable that they are not judged on their opinions and points of view.
- The activity is about being non-judgemental, listening, and agreeing to disagree. The children are learning to respect each other and realise that different people see things differently.
- RULE; there may be no debate; everyone should feel safe to share their opinion. Children are only asked to respond to the statements. They will become aware of how different they are and hear reasons why various people make different choices.
- Children may change their minds and move to another space as they listen to people voicing their opinions.
- Nobody is forced to speak, children may say 'Pass' or 'It has already been said.'
- The smallest group always voices their opinions last to stop them from feeling overwhelmed by the more prominent groups.
- Now generate statements from the group for response.

This activity is about listening and hearing. As a teacher, explain the difference between these two words.

[This activity was very revealing about how various children thought about several topics. They enjoyed this activity. Was it due to the children all being able to participate at the same time or because they saw they were not alone in feeling or thinking in the manner that they did? It created cohesion in the group. The dishonesty question led to a lively discussion. The teacher became very vocal and challenged the children who agreed with the dishonesty statement no 2.]

Sample statements:

1. It is a person's responsibility to urge a friend with an eating disorder to seek help.
2. Dishonest behaviour is okay as long as you do it in secret.
3. It is okay to drink to get drunk.
4. Marijuana usually leads to the use of harder drugs.
5. Parents and their children should talk about sex.
6. I am comfortable with my body.
7. Sometimes violence is the only option.
8. I contribute to the atmosphere that allows eating disorders to occur.
9. I see discrimination in our community.
10. It is acceptable to hurt a player from the other team in a soccer match.
11. Generate more statements out of the group.

1.3.3. Process: Discuss the importance of respecting each other, never to do unto another person what you do not want them to do unto you, and the value of tolerance. Add the speech/thought bubble to the poster. 5 minutes

1.3.4. Explain the homework for the next lesson 3 minutes
[Homework did not happen.]

1.4. Materials/equipment: Agree, Unsure, and Disagree pages, laminated. Masking tape to attach the cards on to the floor.

1.5. Assessment: Everyone in the class was participating in the activity.

1.6. References:

Boal, A. 2002. Games for actors and non-actors. London: Routledge.
Rhod, M. 1998. Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

1.7. Take home tasks: Children need to read the pages on making sculptures on page 140 (and 141, which aims to make something with clay, we will be doing this slightly differently next week) in the *Spot On Life Skills* textbook at home.

1.8. Original texts for the activities

4 The glass cobra

Everyone stands in a circle (or in two or more lines if the group is very large), with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. With their eyes closed, they use their hands to investigate the back of the head, the neck and the shoulders of the person in front. This is the glass cobra in one piece.

Then, on an instruction from the Joker, the cobra is broken into pieces and each person sets off around the room, still with their eyes closed. In the legend of the Chilean *araucanos* Indians, this 'glass cobra' shattered into a thousand pieces when their nation was invaded by the Spaniards; but one day the pieces will find each other again, and these small fragments, harmless on their own, will become dangerous the moment they are reunited, because then they will turn into the steel cobra and will expel the invaders.

The cobra in the legend is the people, obviously! In the game it is the participants, who, after a few minutes of blind locomotion around the space, on a signal from the Joker must find their way back to the person who was in front of them before the cobra broke up. They must reconstitute the cobra(s). As in the legend, this may take time. . . .

Complete the Image

Number of People: 6 or more

Age Level: All ages

Time: 15–40 minutes

Source: Boal

The Basic Idea

Everyone sits down together and faces the largest open space in the room. You ask two volunteers to come up front. They shake hands, look at each other, and you shout “freeze.” They must freeze their position, including their facial expression, and prepare to hold it for a while. You turn out to the group and ask them what they see. There are two human beings but what else is going on in that image, in that moment, between those two people? There are no wrong answers so try to get as many interpretations as you can. You might ask what relationships they see. What relationships they don’t see. What the story is in this situation.

There are no wrong answers in image work, because every image holds truth for its creator. Therefore, all responses are “right.” Freeing up your group to realize that and to act on it is a constant and wonderful goal.

Then, you relax one of the frozen people and let them sit down. The other person stays frozen, and you ask someone else in the group to come up and to create a new image by placing themselves in a position in relation to the already frozen person. They can be touching the already frozen

person or be completely separate. The two bodies create a new image together. Once the second person has found their place they freeze. Once again, you ask the group what they see. You relax the original person in the image, and he/she sits down. A new person comes in. The same thing occurs. You do this three or four times, then have one person go out, and you explain how the rest of the game will work.

At this point, you can demonstrate by using the group member still up there and a new one, or you can demonstrate by taking the role of the second person in the image yourself and explaining the next phase as you actually do it. I always do the latter. I find it breaks the ice nicely.

You explain that after the demonstration everyone in the room is going to get a partner and do what they've just seen. Two people shake hands, look at each other, and freeze (as shown in the first part of this activity). One of them unfreezes, looks at their frozen partner, and takes a new position. Then, the other person unfreezes, looks at their frozen partner, and takes a new position. This keeps repeating so it's a constant flow: both frozen; one unfreezes, looks, adds back in; both frozen for two or three seconds; the other unfreezes; and so on. The demonstration should go on for at least two minutes in silence after it's explained to help establish focus, silence, and the variety of images people can create. The images might be realistic or they might be abstract. They might come from the head or they might be gut responses. The pair continues to have this structured dialogue of images. The group breaks into partners and plays for five to fifteen minutes. You can call out a theme or idea (such as communication, jealousy, family) and ask them to allow the word to influence their playing together. If the word starts restricting them, they should ignore it. It's there to add a layer, or it should disappear. After a while you say "freeze, relax," and everyone comes together to process.

Reminders

- The whole process should be silent.
- Encourage them to use the space (the floor, any walls or doorways) and not to get stuck with two people standing near each other.
- Remind them their face is a large part of the images they create.
- They shouldn't worry about what they look like. There is no audience. Everyone is playing.

Thoughts

This is the first image theatre activity I put in the process. In addition to the variations on Sculpting, Complete the Image engages participants in nonverbal dialogue. It is theatrical in an unusual, powerful, and freeing way. It is also simple to play and if you have succeeded at establishing some focus and trust, the intensity with which a group may take to this work will surprise you. It allows participants to create together with no burdens of right or wrong, or even trying to communicate to others. It is a wonderful bridge because it uses the body, exercises the imagination, and if it touches on issues (adding the words), it does so in a safe and abstract way.

1 Complete the image

A pair of actors shake hands. Freeze the image. Ask the watching group what possible meanings the image might carry: is it a business meeting, lovers parting for ever, a drug deal, they love each other, they hate each other, etc.? Various possibilities are explored to show all the 'meanings' a single image can have.

Everyone gets into pairs and starts with a frozen image of a handshake. One partner removes himself from the image, leaving the other with his hand extended. Now what is the story? Instead of *saying* what he thinks this new image means, the partner who has removed himself returns to the image and completes the image, thus *showing* what he sees as a possible meaning for it; he puts himself in a different position, with a different relationship to the partner with the outstretched hand, changing the meaning of the image, but conveying an idea, emotion, feeling – this is a dialogue of images, not just a juxtaposition.

Then the first partner comes out of this new frozen image and looks at it. When he was inside it, he had a feeling; outside it, the remaining partner in the image staying frozen and now alone, the image will have a different meaning, evoke a different emotion, idea, etc. So, he completes it, changing its meaning again. And so on, the partners alternating, always in a dialogue of images. The players should look quickly at the half-image they are completing, arranging themselves in a complementary position as fast as they can not only to save time but to avoid thinking with words and translating them into images; like the modelling exercises, the actors should think with their bodies and their eyes. It does not matter if there is no literal meaning to the way an actor chooses to complete the image – the important thing is to keep the game moving and the ideas flowing.

Then the Joker can add a chair to the game, two chairs, an object or two objects – how does this affect things, how does it change the dynamic?

4. *Lesson four*

4.1. **Topic of the lesson**

Image making, children to create images /sculptures in groups with the bodies of the children in each group

4.2. **Lesson objectives**

Make the children aware how they can use their bodies to model images to make a 'live' sculpture.

4.3. **Summary of tasks/actions**

4.3.1. **Warmup game**

10 minutes

4.3.2. **Sculpting**

Phase 1 – Sharing of concerns and thoughts on power / conflict. 10 minutes

Ask the children to sit in a circle. Either go around the circle or ask for hands of people who would like to contribute their thoughts. They can briefly share what is on their minds when they think of the power of one person over another person in their own lives. Now ask them to give you words that come to mind on this issue. Capture these on a flip chart. They can be topics, themes or emotions. Gather 30 to 50 words from the group.

[We captured their thoughts in a mind map on the white board]

Phase 2 – Partner sculpt.

10 minutes

[Silent activity] Teacher demonstrates how to sculpt with another person's body **without using words**. Every child pairs up with another child. One is to be the clay and the other the sculptor. Teacher calls out a word from their list. The aim is to try and make a piece of art. After they are done the sculpture needs to freeze. (Take photos of the interesting sculptures). Sculptors can move around to see what others have created. (The image is 'released' when the sculptor says: 'Clay relax'). Now the pair exchange sides and the other person makes a 3-D image. Teacher gives them a different word from the list as well.

Phase 3 – Group sculpt.

15 minutes

Now create groups of 4-5 people. Take turns to sculpt a word, everyone to get a turn to sculpt. Need to move quickly and work silently. Freeze, photograph, move around and relax - the sequence repeats itself.

Phase 4 – Circle sculpt

15 minutes

Three volunteers stand in the middle and take on a pose in response to a word. Teacher invites a response from the group to the image. Now anyone may step into the circle and re-sculpt the image. One at a time, they can sculpt as many images as they like with a pause between the various poses. Introduce a new word and see what the word inspires in the group in images.

- Teacher can ask the sculptor who the main character/protagonist is and what could be written in a pretend speech bubble above each of their heads. Write it on the sign and then let them hold it above their heads.

[This lesson was the most successful lesson in the sequence in my opinion. The children were very engaged, and one class did not even want to leave class after the lesson. The teacher asked different children to create the first moment in the

sequence, a next group created the following step, moving on to another step in the sequence, again created physically by different children.]

4.4. Materials / equipment

Have access to the hall. Some laminated cardboard speech bubbles and some white board markers.

4.5. Assessment

Whole class has participated.

4.6. References

Boal, A. 2002. *Games for actors and non-actors*. London: Routledge.
Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. *Spot On Life Skills: Learner's book*. Sandton: Heinemann
Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. *Spot On: Life Skills: Teacher's book*. Sandton: Heinemann
Rhod, M. 1998. *Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

4.7. Take home tasks

For the next lesson the class will be working on a dialogue. Please read pages 104 on dialogue in your *Spot On Life Skills: Learner's book*.

5. Lesson five

5.1. Topic of the lesson: Improvisation on topics of cultural diversity and introducing dialogue into played scenarios.

5.2. Lesson objectives: Learning about the importance of dialogue in dramatic performances.

5.3. Summary of tasks/actions:

5.3.1. Warm-up game

5-10 minutes

Death by story: Everyone forms a big circle. Teacher starts a random story and mid-sentence points with their arm at another person in the circle. That person then needs to continue the story where the previous person left off. Then the teacher point at another person who then has to take over the story. If someone is unable to continue the story, then the group calls "Death by story". This dying person then can mime falling down dead in some dramatic way. And the story is continued by another person in the circle who is pointed at by the teacher.

5.3.2. Dialogue

20 minutes

Story telling

In this lesson we are going to tell a quick story (It should not be a deep dark secret but something you are happy to share with someone else). The story can be about anything. You should try to make it an interesting or "rich" story because of the details you add to the story. Describe the people in it, add in a description of how it smelt, or sounded. Describe the clothes, the place, the mood etc. Use your voice by changing the pace and volume. Use facial expressions.

Monologue work (page 68 – 69)

On a white board write 'yes' and 'no' on either side separated by a line running down the middle. Together the group makes a list under Yes and No. Possible ideas: Why do children fight (yes) or avoid fighting (no) with each other? Do we respond differently when looking from the perspective of gender, or cultural background, or age? etc. Put the reasons why they fight under the 'yes' and the avoidance reasons under 'no'. 5 minutes

After making the list every person gets to choose a reason off the list (either a yes or a no). They each sit on their own for 10 minutes to create a character, a point of view and a story that goes along with that point of view. 10 minutes

Each person will be given a turn to sit in the story teller chair and tell their short (2 min. max) story to their group. (6 groups of 6 each; 3 groups for 'yes', and 3 for 'no' reasons) The others may then interview the character about their life, their choices, and their story. The group may not be judgemental but may be inquisitive to find out more about the character. 15 - 20 minutes.

Each group chooses their best character and story which is then presented to the rest of the class. 15 min.

5.3.4. Process

5 minutes

Who had a fun exchange of ideas? Would you like to share with us what their particular interaction was about?

Explain that theatrical situations are built around a conflict situation. This often occurs when two characters want different things and these 'wants' or 'needs' clash with each other. The children need to write their own dialogue based on a situation that comes forth out of a different perspective that causes conflict. They can imagine up their own situation or they can base it on something they have seen happening around them or have witnessed in our improvisations. If based on a real situation they should keep it anonymous by choosing

fictitious names. Make sure the children know how the dialogue used in a play or drama is captured in text, for example:

Anne: "Hi Ben, where have you been?"

Ben: "Oh hallo Anne, I was out for a run this morning".

There is an example of a dialogue on page 175 in Teachers guide and on page 104 in the learner's text book. They should not be limited by the scene the book provides. The group has come up with far more interesting ideas that they can capture as their dialogues and they may use the ideas that came out of their class improvisations. (Their written dialogue must be a page long and each character needs to speak a minimum of 3 times)

[The teacher combined the content of this lesson with other teaching material, which she had. She taught them the basic elements of a good story and then asked the children to follow on. Not all the children were able to improvise in this manner and this would on a few occasions kill the story. She did not let them do the acting out of the dying moments as per the instructions above.]

5.4. Materials / equipment

Spot on text books

5.5. Assessment:

Dialogues need to be completed by the next lesson (? Date) and will be marked for points as a creative arts assessment activity.

5.6. References:

Boal, A. 2002. Games for actors and non-actors. London: Routledge.
 Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. Spot On Life Skills: Learner's book. Sandton: Heinemann
 Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. Spot On: Life Skills: Teacher's book. Sandton: Heinemann
 Rhod, M. 1998. Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

5.7. Take home tasks:

5 minutes

The homework task is that each of the children needs to write up a short dialogue about a conflict situation.

This dialogue will count for marks. It needs to be handed in by the next lesson.
 [In the practical context of the case study lessons, even though I had included this homework activity in my lesson plan, during the practical execution the children were not given any homework by the teacher.]

Complete the Image

Number of People: 6 or more
Age Level: All ages
Time: 15–40 minutes
Source: Boal

The Basic Idea

Everyone sits down together and faces the largest open space in the room. You ask two volunteers to come up front. They shake hands, look at each other, and you shout “freeze.” They must freeze their position, including their facial expression, and prepare to hold it for a while. You turn out to the group and ask them what they see. There are two human beings but what else is going on in that image, in that moment, between those two people? There are no wrong answers so try to get as many interpretations as you can. You might

ask what relationships they see. What relationships they don’t see. What the story is in this situation.

Then, you relax one of the frozen people and let them sit down. The other person stays frozen, and you ask someone else in the group to come up and to create a new image by placing themselves in a position in relation to the already frozen person. They can be touching the already frozen

person or be completely separate. The two bodies create a new image together. Once the second person has found their place they freeze. Once again, you ask the group what they see. You relax the original person in the image, and he/she sits down. A new person comes in. The same thing occurs. You do this three or four times, then have one person go out, and you explain how the rest of the game will work.

At this point, you can demonstrate by using the group member still up there and a new one, or you can demonstrate by taking the role of the second person in the image yourself and explaining the next phase as you actually do it. I always do the latter. I find it breaks the ice nicely.

Everyone gets into pairs and starts with a frozen image of a handshake. One partner removes himself from the image, leaving the other with his hand extended. Now what is the story? Instead of *saying* what he thinks this new image means, the partner who has removed himself returns to the image and completes the image, thus *showing* what he sees as a possible meaning for it: he puts himself in a different position, with a different relationship to the partner with the outstretched hand, changing the meaning of the image, but conveying an idea, emotion, feeling – this is a dialogue of images, not just a juxtaposition.

Then the first partner comes out of this new frozen image and looks at it. When he was inside it, he had a feeling; outside it, the remaining partner in the image staying frozen and now alone, the image will have a different meaning, evoke a different emotion, idea, etc. So, he completes it, changing its meaning again. And so on, the partners alternating, always in a dialogue of images. The players should look quickly at the half-image they are completing, arranging themselves in a complementary position as fast as they can not only to save time but to avoid thinking with words and translating them into images; like the modelling exercises, the actors should think with their bodies and their eyes. It does not matter if there is no literal meaning to the way an actor chooses to complete the image – the important thing is to keep the game moving and the ideas flowing.

Then the Joker can add a chair to the game, two chairs, an object or two objects – how does this affect things, how does it change the dynamic?

There are no wrong answers in image work, because every image holds truth for its creator. Therefore, all responses are “right.” Freeing up your group to realize that and to act on it is a constant and wonderful goal.

Two Revelations

Number of People: 6 or more
Age Level: 11 and up
Time: 15–30 minutes
Source: Boal

The Basic Idea

Everyone gets a partner. They stand together in their own space as you have them make the following decisions together, one decision at a time. You give them about 15 seconds for each one.

Who will be the parent and who will be the child?

How old is each of them? (They can choose for the child to be between the age of the youngest in the room to a couple of years older than the oldest youth present.)

Where will the scene take place?

Who will enter the scene and who will start in the space?

The following part shouldn't be discussed between partners. They make these decisions secretly.

Each partner has to come up with a secret. It should be an extremely important, realistic secret that they think a parent might keep from a child or a child might keep from a parent, depending on who they are playing. It should be a secret that they think someone might realistically keep in their community. It's a big deal but not "soap opera, fakey." It could happen.

Then they each come up with a reason why they have to tell the other person the secret in this scene. (HINT: What do they need from the other person?)

When you say "go," the person who is starting in the space begins to do an activity that could take place in that space (cooking in a kitchen, for instance); the other person enters, and the scene starts. They talk. Perhaps one of them blurs their secret out. Perhaps there is small talk. The catch is that when the first one says

their secret, the second person cannot say theirs until the game leader shouts "second revelation, go!" Together they have to deal with the first secret while the other person has theirs still churning around in their gut. The scene continues for a while after the second secret is revealed, then you shout "freeze, relax" and everyone comes together to process.

Reminders

- This is an improvisation game to play before working on improv skills.
- They should concentrate on listening to each other.
- They should concentrate on making the relationship real.
- They should work to stay focused and not fall out of the scene (e.g., giggle, look around). Everyone does this at once so there is no audience.
- They should make the secrets important to them so these are not casual conversations but events and confrontations that mean something to these characters.

Thoughts

This game accomplishes two great things. First, it gives you a sense of how comfortable your group is with improvisation and scene work. You can get a sense of how focused they are by just watching them play with each other in an intense situation. This will help you determine where you are in the process in terms of skills and group building even before you've worked specifically on improv. Second, it asks your group "what are the secrets people—families in particular—keep from each other in this community?" It is a powerful and subtle way to discover how those in the room view communication and "taboo" topics in the home. With the group, talk about secrets that appeared in more than one scene and about those that didn't come up. This is an important activity to process and listen to. Not the details of each scene per se but the content of what was and wasn't said. Generalize through these specific fictions and see what you learn. Also, it can be played again later, but between a different relationship (friends, siblings, and so on).

I was in a small town playing this game once, and when we processed the secrets, everyone playing the child had a secret about pregnancy and everyone playing the parent had a secret about infidelity. The group was composed of twelve teens and four adults. When this came to light they were fairly stunned. It led to a fascinating discussion on secrets in the community, and it set the agenda for the initial issue work we did. It came out of creative activity, not talk. This made it more potent, more real, and more felt.

6. Lesson six

[We did not execute this lesson as it was planned below. The dance in each presentation was created in parallel to the songs towards the end of the term].

Topic of the lesson - Using movement elements (Unit 6) and Telling a story through dance. (Unit 20).

1. Lesson objectives

- Finalising what the theme of the class is based on what came out of the previous improvisation sessions and the storytelling.
- The children in groups of 6 are to make a dance sequence that is inspired by their chosen conflict situation.
- We tried teaching the children the difference between being assertive rather than being aggressive.

2. Summary of tasks/actions

1.1. Warm-up game

10 minutes

The machine of Rhythms (Boal below, Rhod version, see scan at end of this lesson plan)

An actor goes into the middle and imagines that he is a moving part in a complex machine. He starts doing a movement with his body, a mechanical, rhythmic movement, and vocalising a sound to go with it. Everyone else watches and listens, in a circle around the machine. Another person goes up and adds another part (her own body) to this mechanical apparatus, with another movement and another sound. A third, watching the first two, goes in and does the same, so that eventually all the participants are integrated into this one machine, which is a synchronised, multiple machine.

When everyone is part of the machine, the Joker asks the first person to accelerate his rhythm – everyone else must follow this modification, since the machine is one entity. When the machine is near to explosion, the Joker asks the first person to ease up, gradually to slow down, till in their own time the whole group ends together. It is not easy to end together, but it is possible.

For everything to work well, each participant really does have to try and listen to everything he hears.

1.2. Maintain focus in improvisation tasks

5 minutes

When improvising, remind the children to think about engaging in the following way:

- Do I stay in it?
- Do I make it important to me?
- Did we make strong choices to build the story together?
- What could I do differently to increase the stakes? (Adapted from Rhod. 1998: 75)

1.4. Spot-on textbook activity

45 minutes

- Ask the class to divide up in to groups of 6 learners. Each group needs to create a short dance sequence about conflict. (15 minutes).

- Then each group will present their 3-5 min dance to the rest of the class. Best dances or elements out of their collective creativity and dance routines will be used in their final forum theatre performance. (30 minutes)

Activity 6.1 Movement sequences exploring conflict

Learner's Book page 108

50 minutes

1. The learners work in pairs. Give the learners about five minutes to prepare. Tell them that they are meant to feel under pressure for this activity as it is designed to make them think fast and be creative in a short period of time. If there are pairs who are really struggling, allow them to go last. This will help them to be less nervous and they will see from the other performances what is expected of them.
2. Each pair of learners needs to choreograph a sequence of movements that conveys a conflict situation, for example a couple fighting over money, a boy stealing a girl's ice cream or a girl who has been telling stories that are not true about her friend. The learners may not talk or make sounds – they have to use movement and body language to communicate the story and the conflict between the two people.
3. Show the learners an example of an action and reaction sequence. Ask one of the learners to come up to the front of the class to help you. An example is where you try to snatch something out of his hand while he turns away before you can get the object.

Extra information on music and dance on page 203 in Spot On teacher's book and page 135 in the learner's book.



Creative Arts Task 3

Performing Arts

Learner's Book page 131

Music and dance

The learners can read through the information on gumboot dancing by themselves.

1.
 - a) For the first part of the Assessment Task, the learners must first perform polyrhythms on the coffee tin drums. They follow the two lines of polyrhythms as set out in the *Learner's Book*. Explain to the learners that they can read the polyrhythms by following the dots. When there is a dot in a circle, they must play a beat. When the block is empty, this indicates a rest.
 - b) They form groups of four to five learners. They must divide their groups into two groups. One group plays the first line of the rhythms and the second group plays the second line.
 - c) The groups perform their polyrhythms one at a time. Then instruct them to start one after the other. Each group must perform their rhythm twice. Continue until all the groups have started playing. All the groups can play together and then gradually play softer until the music dies away.
 - d) Give marks for:
 - i) the accuracy of the rhythms performed
 - ii) how well each group performs together. (10)
2.
 - a) For the next part of the Assessment Task, the learners must sing the song *Sibathathu* that they learnt on page 127. They must also work out a rhythmic body percussion sequence using the note values they have learnt so far. They must then work out gumboot dance movements to be performed with the song. They must combine the song, the rhythmic body percussion sequence and the dance into one performance. The performance of the learners must therefore include:
 - i) singing the song *Sibathathu* accurately
 - ii) performing a rhythmic body percussion sequence with the song using the note values and rests they have learnt so far
 - iii) performing a gumboot dance together with the song and rhythmic body percussion sequence.
 - b) Give marks for:
 - i) singing the song accurately using the correct note values and pitch (5)
 - ii) the accuracy of the rhythms in the rhythmic body percussion sequence (5)
 - iii) the originality of the dance movements, the togetherness of the group and the accuracy of the combined song, rhythm and dance. (20)

Total: 40 marks

Unit 20 Telling a story with dance

The purpose of dance

The learners must plan carefully how they are going to tell a story through dance. Give the learners some ideas before they start:

- Water: Use movements like running, splashing up and rocking gently.
- Fire: Use jumping movements to show how the flames shoot up and destroy everything in their way.
- Wind: Use swinging movements with the upper body to show the power of the wind in the trees and on the water by making wave-like movements.

Warm up

5–10 minutes

1. The learners stand with their feet hip width apart and stretch with straight arms upwards. Their legs must be completely straight. They slowly bend from the waist to the side, keeping their back straight during the stretch. Their stomach must face the front. They must hold the position for 30 seconds.
2. The learners stay in the previous position and twist their tummy down, still keeping their legs straight. Hold the stretch to the side for 30 seconds.
3. The learners place their torso down onto their leg. They hold the position for 30 seconds.
4. The learners repeat the three stretches to the other side.

Activity 20.1 Telling a story using masks

Learner's Book page 135

25 minutes

Apparatus: cardboard boxes, glue, scissors, tape, string, paint, pictures, waste materials, fabric pieces, feathers, tin foil, pipe cleaners, paper towels, old stockings, bottle tops, buttons, corks, music, an open area with a big space to dance

1. The learners could make their masks in the art class.
2. They must work well together in the group. Ensure that there is good social interaction between the learners.
- 3–4. Observe the learners closely. If they struggle, you can help them with ideas and encourage them to explore different aspects of their dance, such as:
 - dance steps: galloping, marching, hopping, skipping, sliding and leaping
 - shapes and formations: zigzag, square, triangle, circle and diamond
 - contrasts: up and down, forwards and backwards, clockwise and anticlockwise, soft and hard movements
 - follow the leader and movements opposite their partners
 - mime.
5. Give the learners some time to tell their story using dance and masks to the rest of the class.

At the end of class, the group and the teacher choose the more interesting dance sequences which were shown by the children. These dance(s) elements may be included in the final sequence.

3. Materials / equipment

Bring music device and recordings of different conflict inspired pieces of music to inspire the class when creating a dance. (Music teacher can perhaps assist the teacher to find suitable music tracks).

4. Assessment

The aim is to achieve whole class participation with the group work activity. Class will be told that the best sections in their creative dancing will be used in the dramatic scene for their class. They will also all receive a mark for participation and creativity

5. References

- Boal, A. 2002. Games for actors and non-actors. London: Routledge.
- Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. Spot On Life Skills: Learner's book. Sandton: Heinemann
- Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. Spot On: Life Skills: Teacher's book. Sandton: Heinemann
- Rhod, M. 1998. Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

6. Take home tasks

Refer to life skills information about the difference between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour.
(See page 110 in the *Spot On Life Skills* book.)

7. *Lesson seven*

7.1. **Topic of the lesson**

Visual language, showing conflict in 2D.

7.2. **Lesson objectives:**

- Discussing art with a conflict theme
- Discuss visual language.
- All children to make a drawing showing conflict
- Choosing images from the class's work to use as backdrops for their Performative scene.

7.3. **Summary of tasks/actions**

7.3.1. **Warm up game**

2 The bear of Poitiers

One participant is designated the bear of Poitiers (a French town where this game is played). She turns her back on the others, who are the foresters. The latter busy themselves with their forestry tasks – woodcutting, planting, tree-felling, taking a break, whatever. After an interval, the bear must give vent to an enormous growl, whereupon all the woodcutters must fall to the ground and 'play dead', not making the slightest movement, absolutely motionless as if their life depended on it. The bear goes up to each one of them, growling at will, and touches, tickles, prods, tries any trick she can think of to make them laugh, to make them move; in short, her goal is to force them to reveal that they are alive. When the bear succeeds, the forester who has given himself away becomes a second bear, and the two bears set off to do the same thing to the other foresters, who still try not to move. Eventually there are three bears, then four, and so on.

This last exercise is very curious in that it produces an effect exactly opposite to its guiding principle. The principle is: if the woodcutter can send his senses to sleep, if he can feel nothing, see nothing, hear nothing, if he can successfully play dead, the bear will not attack because bears don't eat dead people. But the instruction 'Feel nothing' provokes exactly the opposite reaction, and all the senses become extraordinarily highly developed – you sense much more, hear much better, etc. Fear hypersensitises us!

7.3.2. **Discussing art with a conflict theme**

7.3.3. **Discuss visual language.**

Ask the children who can remember what these art terms mean?

- Line (How thick or thin a line is, is it a solid or a dotted line, straight or curved?)
- Tone (Dark or light in colour? Dense or see through?)
- Texture (Smooth or rough, speckled, glassy etc.)
- Shape (2-dimensional appearance – e.g. Square, circle)
- Form (3-dimensional appearance – e.g. cube, sphere)

- Space (positive or negative space)
- Colour (black, grey and white or the various colours of the rainbow).

Which of these elements can you see /spot in the picture on page144?

Creative Arts (Visual Arts): Visual literacy Term 3 Week 10

Unit 26 Stimuli in photographs, artworks and real objects

Visual language

It is important for the learners to see visual art as a visual language that can be “read” to understand the meaning and message of any artwork. Instead of using nouns, verbs and adjectives, the artist uses a combination of the elements of art to communicate a message to the viewer. We must look carefully at the combination of elements the artist has chosen and the way they have been changed to understand the message.

Activity 26.1 Observe and discuss visual stimuli

Learner's Book page 145 60 minutes

Resources: a larger version of the painting shown on page 144 of the *Learner's Book* displayed on the board, digital projector or overhead projector (optional)

- Learners work with a partner to hear different opinions and points of view.
- They must write all their answers in their workbooks. The partners must discuss each answer first.
- Encourage the learners to think deeply and try to figure out what the artist is saying and why he is painting a painting like this.
- The subject matter of the painting is a large family of people and perhaps some family friends sitting around a table.
- The family are about to have thanksgiving lunch. The grandmother and grandfather are serving the turkey to the rest of the family.
- Outline around the people; curved line around the plates; decorative line on wallpaper
- The ceramic plates and dishes are smooth and shiny. The grandfather's jacket is made of material and is soft.
- The light is bright and it is coming from the window behind the two main figures. The tone is quite dramatic as there is high contrast between the light and dark tones. The light shows that it is daytime.
- The mood of the artwork is joyful, excited and enthusiastic as everyone is smiling, chatting and waiting to eat.
- The tone is bright and light which adds to the cheerfulness of the artwork.
- The artist has used asymmetrical balance in the painting because the painting is balanced yet different subject matter has been included on either side.
- It makes it less formal and predictable. The painting looks relaxed and informal. It looks like real life.
- The learners give their own ideas and opinions to answer the questions. There is not one correct answer. Example answers:
 - This artwork has many people, while I only included myself. The subject matter is the correct size compared to the people, while I drew myself much smaller.
 - Yes, my drawing was balanced.
 - It was symmetrically balanced.
 - The mood of my drawing was dramatic and exciting.
 - The drawing was cluttered as it was full of objects and there was very little space left.

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7.3.4. All children are asked to make a drawing about conflict. It can either be about the
 a) cultural differences between people and the kind of conflict this can lead to, or
 b) the conflict theme of the class.

7.4. Materials / equipment:

Sheet of white paper, colouring pencils, erasers, crayons.

7.5. Assessment

Each child participates and will be given a mark for their drawing. The children may take their drawing home to finish it for homework.

7.6. References:

Boal, A. 2002. *Games for actors and non-actors*. London: Routledge.
Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. *Spot On Life Skills: Learner's book*. Sandton: Heinemann
Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. *Spot On: Life Skills: Teacher's book*. Sandton: Heinemann
Rhod, M. 1998. *Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

7.7. Take home tasks:

Every child may take their picture home to complete their drawing. Teacher may choose some of the drawing(s) and use them to support the class performance by projecting it on the screen behind the actors.

8. *Lesson eight*

8.1. **Topic of the lesson**

Provide structure and shape to the dramatic scene / performance of the class.

- If the musical item has been worked on in the music lesson, then this lesson will be devoted to placing it in the performance scene of the class.
or
- If music teacher is not involved, then we need to choose a song and adapt it so that it supports the theme of the class play. (Music and dance on page 203 in teacher's book and page 135 in the learner's book.)

8.2. **Lesson objectives**

Structure the performance scene of the class.

- Choose actors for the protagonist and antagonist roles;
- Check if these actors and actresses know the scene and can improvise the dialogue.
- Musicians? Who are they?
- Dancers? Who are they?
- Supporters in the back-stage roles. [Sound system and microphone; projection of the images; costumes and make-up, and stage management (masks, props).]

8.3. **Summary of tasks/actions**

8.3.1. **Collect the 'conflict' drawings from the children.**

8.3.2. **Warm-up game**

13 The antiquated telephone exchange

A circle of people watching each other. All are numbered from 1 to however many people there are in the group. If there were 10, say, the surveillance might go like this: 1 watches 4, 2 watches 5, 3 watches 6, 4 watches 7, 5 watches 8, 6 watches 9, 7 watches 10, 8 watches 1, 9 watches 2, 10 watches 3. The numbering need follow no particular mathematical formula – as long as everyone is watching someone, and being watched by someone else.

The instruction is to do nothing, unless you see your quarry do something. So you watch carefully without doing a thing. But whenever anyone moves the tiniest bit, his observer is also to move, a tiny bit more. As someone else is watching him, that person will now move a tiny bit more than he did and a tiny bit more than his model did. The whole thing escalates. With the instruction 'Do nothing' as the starting point, we end up with all extremes of behaviour.

8.3.3. **Develop the dramatic scene of the class.**

Checklist for an activating scene

- The group should think about choosing a believable and realistic situation.
- Is there a structured scene? (not scripted)

- Is there a moment of decision? And the choice should leave us wanting the protagonist to do something different.
- There needs to be a clear relationship, intention, circumstance, location, activity, high stakes, and two people listening and connecting to each other in the pretend moment.
- A conflict is clear.
- A protagonist that the audience will care about and can identify with.
- An antagonist or villain that wasn't evil or cartoony, but is credible, strong and has certain ambiguities around his actions that make him human.
- A clear idea of what the protagonist wants and doesn't want.
- The reason for failure to get what he/she wanted.
- The reason for failure clearly being the strong actions, attitudes, and choices of the antagonist(s).
- A clear sense that the protagonist has inner voices, or desires that reinforced his/her inability to succeed. (Rhod. 1998:102-103)

[This lesson was not executed. The teacher was very focused on finishing a scene for each class and ignored this step in the process. It was a pity as this step gives understanding and depth to the conflict situation that was central to each short performance.]

By now the class has a conflict theme, a dialogue, a song and some dance elements ready. They need to choose actors for the various roles. The persons whose original dialogue and images are being used need to be involved to help choose who would be the best persons in the class to play the roles of the protagonist, antagonist(s) and bystanders (Helps to choose personalities that match with the roles). All members of the class are allocated a role.

- Protagonist,
- Antagonist(s)
- Bystanders
- Dancers
- Singers
- Percussion or musicians
- Sound
- Visuals [choose the best pictures to represent the class]
- Make-up/costume support
- Stage manager

Decide where the music and dance will be used. (At the start? or at the end? or somewhere during the dramatic scene?)

- Dancers need to refine the sections for their dance(s) as support for the performance. They may source ideas out of what they saw in the previous lesson's collective class creativity. Singers and musicians help to support the dancers.
- Actors need to work on their part of the performance to make the scene as believable as possible. Also need to work on entrances and exits for the scene.
- Split others in the class are to be the audience / spectators for the actors and the dancers. Their role is to provide feedback and ideas to them on what works and to help improve the parts that are not believable yet.

8.4. Materials / equipment

Stage and setting decisions
Props and costume decisions

8.5. Assessment

Whole class participation.

8.6. References

- Boal, A. 2002. *Games for actors and non-actors*. London: Routledge.
- Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. *Spot on Life Skills: Learner's book*. Sandton: Heinemann
- Carstens, M. Coetze, T. Glover, J Wolmarans, A. Vercueil. De Matos Ala, & B. Klopper, A. 2016. *Spot On: Life Skills: Teacher's book*. Sandton: Heinemann
- Rhod, M. 1998. *Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

8.7. Take home tasks

Learn a particular life skill? Or

Make a mask or a prop which can be used by the dancers? Made with material or on a ready-made bought mask? Do you have any creative ideas on decorative elements which can be used to transform masks?

9. Last Lesson – Forum Theatre Event

9.1. Topic of the lesson

Children experience a run-through of their dramatic scene and all the secondary activities that are part of doing a performance on a stage.

9.2. Lesson objectives

Time will be spent ironing out any loose parts for the class performance piece.

- Are all the actors prepared for their parts?
- Dancers?
- Singers and musicians?
- Are all the technical issues decided and arranged?
- Does everyone know what is expected of them for the Forum Theatre event?
- Make sure each class knows when they will be doing what.

Teachers to decide for the Forum event:

- Which two classes are up first?
- When will the break take place?
- Who will be performing in the second half of the event?

9.3. Summary of tasks/actions

9.3.1. Preparation for the Forum Theatre event;

1. Take the performance scene through from the beginning to the end.
2. Decide who does which other supportive roles;
 - Clothing and make-up,
 - Sound system (microphone), music player and overhead projection apparatus for projection of the image on the screen,
 - Props and furniture where on the stage (stage manager),
 - Seating arrangements and joker microphone.

9.3.2. Joker(s) teachers allocated to each class and are they adequately prepared for their role in the Forum Theatre event?

9.4. Materials / equipment

Make sure all the preparations have been made for the Forum Theatre performance?

9.5. Assessment

Participation of all learners, either to act or perform a role or in a supportive capacity and as participants in the audience.

9.6. Take home tasks:

Are any children willing to be interviewed after the Forum Theatre event? I am interested to talk to spect-actors, discussion participants who were in the audience and some of the performers.

Appendix H– Artefacts collected during Fieldwork

Child director notes for the ‘Cyberbullying’ performance

[Directors were a little bored having to sit and watch, they would much rather have been actively involved].

Child A

10 pm
 Louder
 and more dancing movement.
 Rappers and dancers together
 New topic than the teachers
 And do it in a line and skip K
 To go last

Child B

The rappers must sing it louder, so everyone can hear you
 The texters must speak louder
 They need to speak together
 You can't wait, you need to talk immediately when it is your turn
 No single's

Child C

K – speak louder – T and O
 More dancing
 Dialogue speak louder
 O – talk in tune – Don't push
 Add in more drama
 K – I was asking for homework (whispering 'not') (Mxm hai suka)
 O – don't dance after your line
 J – Do you guys even know what time it is (yawn)

Child D

More rapping and less beat
 Go same way and rappers should also dance with the dancers

Formation for the dancers and raps
 Less piping and talking
 Props for acting: blankets and pillows
 Props for dancers and actress: Caps, jackets on waist [waistcoats] All-stars, Air max
 B should talk louder
 They must look at the 'clock'.
 J must her timing
 M should be louder.

Child E

K is too soft
 The rappers need to be louder
 They aren't saying or pronouncing the words properly, so we can't hear them nicely –
 Rappers
 The people in the dialogue seem to be confused about what they are saying
 There is too much swearing in the dialogue
 M seems to be mumbling at some of her lines
 The rappers aren't saying their lines loud enough and they are confused about what they're saying
 O is NOT saying things loud enough.

Child F

K is way too soft. Everything was too soft. Add some feeling
 Be louder, not shouting, relax more
 K, O and O seem to be saying things with the same idea. There should be no swearing every time someone speaks,
 The mimes should do more
 The rappers should at least pause. The 'beeping' people don't focus as much on their lines as much as they do 'beeping'.
 [Beeping sound was used to indicate whenever one of the children was using a swear word in their late-night WhatsApp conversation]

Child G

The Rapp needs more oomph and needs more volume. Repeating lines. K needs more volume. Boys in rap must be louder. They need more benz. The beat must be louder.

Child director notes for the 'Family Trouble' performance

Child H

Kwaito dance

Sepedi drama [So people can laugh]

Playing drums for the song

Child I

G does not know how to do the moves.

Nice acting

The singing group needs some loose

Still needs bass

J should talk more

Child J

G should practice his dance more x10

The singing group needs bass

Child K

Kwaito dance

Sepedi drama (so people can laugh)

Child L

G must learn the dance

In the song they must add some bass

Child M

G should learn faster

The singers should smile more

The boys need a bass

G should get out

J should talk at least once

Child N

Dancing:

M does not know the dance yet

And C's legs don't move

Singing

S – she doesn't sing she just moves her mouth, S also.

Child O

G knows none of the moves

A could be mean to I's daughter

A could fight more

Child P

G to stop laughing

I could speak in a sad and lonely voice

A could be in an angrier voice (when arguing)

The granny could speak a little bit more.

Child artist pictures

Instead of being directors some of the children chose to rather create a drawing while the others in class were practising their performance for the Forum Theatre event. Below are photos of some of these drawings the children made. The topic given to them was a conflict situation.

