

**FACILITATING CREATIVE ARTS TEACHING AND LEARNING WITH
FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS: A SUBJECT ADVISOR'S SELF-STUDY**

BY

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DECLARATION - PLAGIARISM

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This dissertation is submitted with/without our approval.

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DR KATHLEEN PITHOUSE-MORGAN

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MRS THELMA ROSENBERG

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of my self-study research was to explore how I as a Department of Basic Education subject advisor could better support Foundation Phase teachers in creative arts teaching and learning. I was concerned because, when visiting schools as one of my core duties as a Foundation Phase subject advisor, I perceived that creative arts did not seem to be given the attention it deserved. I began to question whether I was giving enough attention to creative arts when conducting workshops with Foundation Phase teachers. A socio-cultural theoretical perspective guided me in understanding that collaborative, inclusive support for creative arts teaching and learning could result in the development of competent and confident teachers of creative arts. I was the main participant in the study. The other participants were six Foundation Phase teachers. I also worked with critical friends (two of my fellow Master's students and a lecturer). My two key research questions were: 1. What can I learn about creative arts teaching and learning through memory-work? 2. How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers? In generating data in response to these questions, I employed the research practices of: artefact retrieval; collage making; memory-drawing; journal writing; audio recorded group discussions; and taking photographs. I used the creative research practices of personal metaphors and self-portrait drawing to facilitate my meaning making. Memory-work self-study assisted me in remembering my lived experiences in relation to informal and formal learning and teaching of creative arts. From this, I realised that, in my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning, I should pay attention to art forms from diverse cultural heritages, as well as to child initiated activities. In working with the teachers, I learned that creative arts workshops must be participatory, with sufficient time and materials to engage in active learning. Teachers must also be given opportunities to share their thinking and their teaching approaches. Three recommendations emerged as key to improving facilitation of creative arts with Foundation Phase teachers: (a) support for subject advisors; (b) more support for cluster meetings; and (c) participatory and practical workshops for teachers. My most important learning from the self-study research was that, although I am a subject advisor, the Foundation Phase teachers were able to enrich my professional learning; thus, if I want to grow professionally, I must be willing to accept other people's criticisms.

ABBREVIATIONS

DBE	Department of Basic education
NCS-CAPS	National Curriculum Statement-Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Project
MEd	Master of Education
SSA	Sub Standard A
PTC	Primary Teachers Certificate

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CHAPTER ONE:
BECOMING INVOLVED IN A PROCESS OF STEPPING BACK AND LOOKING
AT MY OWN PRACTICES AS A SUBJECT ADVISOR

Introduction

I am a subject advisor in one of the school districts in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. A subject advisor is an official in the Department of Basic Education (DBE) who is responsible for monitoring and support of teaching and learning, including organising and conducting professional learning workshops for teachers. This dissertation focuses on my own learning as a Foundation Phase (Grade R to 3) subject advisor in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. In visiting schools in the course of my professional duties over the past years, I perceived that creative arts teaching and learning did not seem to be given much attention by Foundation Phase teachers in their daily lesson preparation and in teaching. Moreover, I noticed that many teachers appeared to be facing challenges with how to teach creative arts and that they did not seem to feel confident to teach creative arts in their classrooms. I began to question myself as to how much emphasis I was placing on facilitating creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers. I asked myself whether enough attention was given to creative arts when conducting workshops with teachers. As Garvis and Pendergast (2011) confirm, teachers do need appropriate support to develop their knowledge and abilities in creative arts education. All of this caused me to reflect back on my own practices as a subject advisor. I felt humbled and decided to undertake an inquiry that would be based on my own learning as a subject advisor in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. My intention was to learn how better to support Foundation Phase teachers in creative arts teaching and learning.

In this first chapter of the dissertation, I explain the focus and purpose of my self-study research. I then provide the relevant background information for my study and provide reasons why this research is important to me as a Foundation Phase subject advisor and why it could also be significant to others. Next I give an explanation of the key concepts and the theoretical perspectives that have helped me perceive my topic in ways I could not have otherwise seen. I then provide a brief introduction to the methodological approach that I have employed and explain why the selected methodology is appropriate to the focus and purpose of my study. To follow, I give clarity on my research questions. To end, I offer an overview of the dissertation.

Focus and purpose of the study

In this dissertation, I give an account of my self-study research through which I have looked at my own learning as a DBE subject advisor in relation to facilitating creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers. Oreck (2004) suggests that people who conduct workshops on creative arts education need to understand the personal, institutional and external factors that might hinder teachers from teaching creative arts effectively. As I clarified above, my interest in this topic was ignited by my observations that teachers seemed to face challenges and not to feel confident about how to teach creative arts, which lead to creative arts being ignored in their daily classroom activities. As a subject advisor, I felt concerned about this because, according to the prescribed curriculum (DBE, 2011), creativity should be integrated across the teaching of all subjects in the Foundation Phase. This emphasis on integrating creative arts across the curriculum in the early years of schooling is not unique to the South African context. For example, Nutbrown (2011) maintains that art can be integrated into the teaching and learning of numeracy and literacy for the young ones in the early years of schooling in England. Likewise, Garvis and Pendergast (2011) state that the prescribed curriculum in Australia encourages the use of integrated arts education in the early years of teaching and learning because arts education is seen as the core learning area for all the other subjects.

I decided to embark on this study so that could I start by looking at my own learning as a subject advisor with the aim of improving my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers. I wanted to ensure that Foundation Phase teachers could have confidence in teaching creative arts in their classrooms. Moreover, I anticipated that as a subject advisor, I would gain a deeper understanding on how to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers.

Background information

The school district within which I work as a subject advisor contains both public and independent schools. Public schools receive support from the DBE in terms of resources and finance. Independent schools are independently owned and do not receive financial support from the department; however, they do receive support for implementing the National Curriculum Statement-Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (NCS-CAPS) curriculum policy.

The school district where I work comprises rural, township and urban schools. A township is an area in a suburb or city that was formerly officially designated for black occupation by apartheid legislation. The township setting includes many informal shacks and small Reconstruction and Development Project (RDP) houses that were built by the post-apartheid government. The schools in rural and township areas are faced with challenges of poor infrastructure and insufficient resources. There is a lot of unemployment and poverty in these areas. Most schools in the township and rural areas are categorised by the DBE as no fee schools. This means that learners who attend these schools do not have to pay school fees because their families cannot afford them. The schools in urban settings tend to be better resourced and have infrastructure which is in good condition.

All the public schools within the district are implementing the NCS-CAPS curriculum policy. The NCS-CAPS is a revised and strengthened comprehensive curriculum policy which was first implemented in January 2012 in the Foundation Phase. The NCS-CAPS provides an overview of the skills per grade and the content and concepts per term from Grade R to Grade 3. In the Foundation Phase the prescribed curriculum offers four subjects in Grade 1 to Grade 3, which are Home Language, Mathematics, Life Skills and First Additional Language. In Grade R there are only three subjects, which are Home Language, Mathematics and Life Skills.

Creative arts teaching and learning is a Life Skills study area taught in the Foundation Phase. The Foundation Phase Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Life Skills policy (DBE, 2011) specifies that creative arts should expose learners to four art forms: dance, drama, music and visual arts. However, the policy document does not give a definition of creative arts. In my own view, the policy outlines the overview of the content to be covered per term, but is not specific on how to teach creative arts (p. 9). The time allocation for creative arts according to the NCS-CAPS document for Life Skills is two hours per week and the policy document is not specific as to how many hours or minutes should be allocated to creative arts per day (p. 6). In my own opinion, this could develop confusion among teachers and, as a result, teachers could ignore creative arts or lack commitment in teaching creative arts.

Rationale

Samuelsson, Carlsson, Olsson, Pramling and Wallerstedt (2009) explain that “early childhood is considered to be a crucial time for the development of creativity” and they highlight “strong links between creativity and the arts” (p. 121). Furthermore, O’Connor (2013) maintains, “it is evident that engaging creativity in children is essentially an important milestone in the development of creative thinkers and innovators in adult life” (p. 1). I believe that if young learners are given ample opportunities to engage themselves in creative activities this could be a stepping stone to the development of independent, creative and innovative adults who can think creatively and be able to face and solve problems in their adulthood lives. Hence, Foundation Phase subject advisors and teachers need to be aware of the benefits and importance of involving creative arts in the early learning stages of education. Correspondingly, Garvis and Pendergast (2011) indicate that, “arts education is an essential component of comprehensive education” (p. 2). This suggests that if teachers are confident and accomplished in creative arts education they will be able to enrich learners’ lives.

As I indicated above, my concern was raised because I noticed that Foundation Phase teachers seemed to be experiencing challenges and to lack confidence in teaching creative arts. Oreck (2004) states that teachers’ self-motivation and the development of self-efficacy and self-confidence in the teaching of creative arts is influenced by a range of factors. Russell-Bowie (2012) points out that, in Australia, “primary teachers, because of poor arts experience at school and inadequate teacher training, lack confidence to teach the arts” (p. 60). Additionally, Garvis and Pendergast (2011) caution that teachers who have “weak self-efficacy for arts education are less likely to teach the arts” successfully (p. 3). This implies that the challenges teachers are facing could result in teachers being demotivated and losing the love of teaching creative arts in their classrooms.

My research has centred on my being involved in a process of stepping back and looking at my own practices as a subject advisor (Pithouse, Mitchell, & Weber, 2009). Meyiwa, Letsekha and Wiebesiek (2013) assert that “a reflective process is ideal for adult learning where there is a need for change, or a review of past and current activities and it builds on what people know, rather than to concentrate on simply training people on what they do not know” (p. 5). Hence, a key aim of this study was to engage in a reflective, self-introspective process to uncover, stimulate and develop professional strategies to improve my facilitation

of creative arts teaching and learning. Moreover, my aim was for the process to help me better support Foundation Phase teachers in teaching creative arts with confidence.

Methodological approach

The research methodology that I selected is self-study of educational practice (Pithouse et al., 2009). Self-study of educational practice is an approach to research that centres within me as a researcher where I reflect on my own professional practice from my personal experience with an intention to improve my practice and, in so doing, to inspire others (Samaras, 2011). Madondo (2014) explains that “the most important features of self-study are questioning one’s own practice from observations and personal experience” (p. 7). I chose to undertake self-study research because I anticipated that the findings would be a gateway to my professional growth in relation to my own learning and to facilitating creative arts teaching and learning. (I discuss the methodological process of the study in more detail and in depth in Chapter Two.)

Key concepts and theoretical perspective

The key concepts that I have paid attention to in my study are: a) creative arts teaching and learning; and b) teacher learning. According to Laboskey (2004), self-study research is underpinned by an understanding that “learning is processed through previous experience [and] so personal history and cultural context must be considered” (p. 819). Accordingly, when thinking about the key concepts for my self-study research, I took a socio-cultural theoretical perspective. In the following sections, I explain how a socio-cultural theoretical perspective on teaching and learning has helped me view these two key concepts in a way that is useful and appropriate to my self-study. Gerhard and Mayer-Smith (2008) explain that, according to a socio-cultural theoretical perspective, learning is not an individual activity; instead, learners need to collaborate and form a community where they feel that they belong and are valued as they engage in different learning activities. Furthermore, Gerhard and Mayer-Smith explain that a socio-cultural theoretical perspective is about understanding that learners and teachers come with a variety of backgrounds and that teachers must aim to create an environment that will build a community of learning that is inclusive of diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Concept A: Creative arts teaching and learning

Creative arts teaching and learning is a Life Skills study area taught in the Foundation Phase (Grades R to Grade 3). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Life Skills policy (DBE, 2011) specifies that creative arts teaching should expose learners to four art forms: dance, drama, music and visual arts, but it does not give an explanation of what creative arts actually is (p. 9). According to my own understanding to be creative means to be able to make up or to express something out of your own imagination or in an innovative way. In my view, every human being has an innate ability to be creative, which must be valued and developed at a young age. Similarly, O'Connor explains that "it is engagement with creative activities that promotes children's developing abilities to think of new ideas, express them, identify issues and problem solve" (p. 1). O'Connor (2013) also emphasises that "we don't grow into creativity, it is present in the early childhood and we are educated out of it" (p. 1). To complement this, I believe that creative arts learning and teaching can help to develop a child as an imaginative and innovative thinker. In addition, through engagement in creative arts, children can share their inner feelings, ideas and views in a social setting (Gcabashe, 2000). This implies that Foundation Phase teachers must be creative enough to come up with activities that will stimulate learners' imagination at a young age.

The concept of creative arts teaching and learning is seen by many scholars as the backbone for making connections with other subjects and for effective teaching and learning. For instance, Nutbrown (2011) states that "creativity is much a broader term than arts, as it can reach into all areas of learning" (p. 243). Similarly, Oreck (2004) maintains that, "teachers can use arts as tools for complete education" (p. 66). To me, this suggests that teachers can make teaching and learning meaningful, fun, and interesting through the use of creative arts in all subjects. Nutbrown (2011) proposes that arts-based teaching strategies that are interesting, broad, flexible and enjoyable will allow for learner participation and creative engagement towards holistic development of the child. She explains that "human beings carry...the need for the sensory stimuli and satisfaction which can be found in many of the arts" (p. 241).

My reflections on my own practices when conducting workshops with Foundation Phase teachers revealed a need for me to "provide innovative and practical approaches for creative arts teaching and learning" (Russell-Bowie, 2012, p. 62). Correspondingly, Hallam, Burnard, Robertson, and Saleh (2009) and Iwai (2003) emphasise a need for appropriate in-service

assistance for primary school teachers on the subject of creative arts teaching and learning. In my view, Foundation Phase teachers need support to discover and develop their own creativity to enhance the teaching of creative arts in their classrooms. Similarly, Simplicio (2000) states that creativity is not purely an innate ability, but rather that teachers must be given opportunities to learn how to develop their own creativity. This suggests a need for me as a Foundation Phase subject advisor to learn about how to cultivate my own creativity as a key part of facilitating creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers.

Oreck (2004) emphasises that “ongoing support for teachers’ creativity can take many forms, [for example,] regular professional development workshops, arts classes for teachers, meetings with colleagues, observations of arts classes and arts infused lessons [as well as] reading and study groups and direct encouragement from supervisors” (p. 66). This further indicates that there is a need for teachers to be involved in a range of collaborative opportunities in communities of learning about creative arts teaching. In addition, Eisner (2002) suggests that teachers must be given time to learn and to share their challenges with other teachers within the school. Hence, I anticipated that a socio-cultural perspective on creative arts teaching and learning would be appropriate for my study because collaborative, inclusive support for creative arts teaching and learning could result in the development of competent and confident teachers of creative arts who would have positive attitudes towards teaching creative arts in their classrooms.

Concept B: Teacher learning

Teacher learning is the second concept that I identified as central to my self-study research. I felt that there was a need to see myself as a learner in relation to the phenomenon of creative arts teaching and learning, as well as to enhance my facilitation of teachers’ learning in this area. Kelly (2006) defines teacher learning as a “process by which teachers move towards expertise” (p. 514). He explains that from a socio-cultural theoretical perspective, “teacher learning involves teachers and learners being fully engaged in the classroom working collaboratively in a dynamic process where knowledge is distributed in a social setting” (p. 514). Correspondingly, Bertram (2011) emphasises that, “teachers learn both by acquiring knowledge and skills as individuals and by developing their competencies in a community of practice” (p. 12). Similarly, in my inquiry I aimed to enhance my own learning by exploring my knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies of facilitating creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers in a social setting. To this end, I chose to work

collaboratively with a group of six Foundation Phase teachers. My intention was to gain and share ideas and recommendations on how to better facilitate creative arts in the Foundation phase workshops. I believed that Foundation Phase teachers had valuable experiences in the phase in relation to the teaching and learning of creative arts.

Taking a socio-cultural perspective (Kelly, 2006) helped me to see that teacher learning could involve a group of teachers working collaboratively in a social setting with an aim of learning and growing in their practices. Furthermore, Gerhard and Mayer-Smith (2008) state that, from a socio-cultural perspective, “learning goes beyond acquisition of knowledge to the engagement in activities, the building of identities, and the acquisition of cultures” (p. 5). This suggested to me that working cooperatively with Foundation Phase teachers using creative and participatory research methods such as artefact retrieval and collage-making (as explained in Chapter Two) could develop a community of creative arts teaching and learning. Eisner (2002) asserts that, for quality education, teachers must work collaboratively where they share their “work, hopes and challenges” (p. 577). Thus, I anticipated that working collaboratively with Foundation Phase teachers could build a culture of creative arts learning among the group members and that it could help me to begin to learn how to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers.

Research questions

The research questions that have guided the study are as follows:

Question one

What can I learn about creative arts teaching and learning through memory-work?

In answering this research question, I embarked on recalling my past experiences through memory-work. I recalled how I learned and taught creative arts, starting from home, school, college, at school as a teacher, up to my current occupation as a subject advisor. As shown in Chapter Three, through this journey of recalling my experiences I gained an understanding that the learning of creative arts happened through both informal learning and formal learning. The informal learning of creative arts started at home where it was not formally structured and officially guided by school teachers. The formal learning of creative arts was administered by teachers at school. As discussed in Chapter Three, this journey of recalling my past experiences through memory-work helped me to identify strategies, activities and resources that could enable me learn more in relation to creative arts teaching and learning.

Question two

How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?

In asking this question, I had an intention of working with Foundation Phase teachers to learn and share ideas and recommendations on how to better facilitate creative arts in the Foundation Phase workshops. I decided that Foundation Phase teachers would be relevant people to work in collaboration with since they are involved in the process of teaching creative arts. I anticipated that they would have some valuable experience and expertise in the phase in relation to the teaching and learning of creative arts. In responding to this question (see Chapter Four), I engaged with Foundation Phase teachers who were involved in narrating their memories through artefact retrieval on how they learned or taught creative arts. In addition, Foundation Phase teachers gave me recommendations and suggestions that were generated through collage making to help me on how to better facilitate creative arts. Through teacher narratives and discussions I gained information and ideas on how to better facilitate creative arts with Foundation Phase teachers.

Conclusion and overview

In this chapter, Chapter One, I discussed the focus of my study, which centred on my own learning as a subject advisor in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. I then provided the purpose of the study, which was to improve my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers. Further, I gave the background information of the district within which I work and a brief explanation of the relevant curriculum policy. In my introduction I also gave the reasons that aroused my concern about my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning. I substantiated the importance of this research to me as a subject advisor working with Foundation Phase teachers. Then I gave an explanation of my understanding of the two key concepts that I identified in my study: a) creative arts teaching and learning; and b) teacher learning. I explained how taking a socio-cultural theoretical perspective helped to understand my research topic. Next, I briefly introduced the methodological approach, clarifying why I believed that a self-study methodological approach would be appropriate for the focus and purpose of my study. In addition, I expressed the two research questions that guide the study.

In Chapter Two, I give an account of the research methodology that helped me drive the research process. I explain why I chose a self-study methodology. I then describe the context of the research and the research participants, highlighting my dual position as both a researcher and a participant. I clarify the role of my critical friends in supporting my professional growth during the research process. Subsequently, I elaborate on the research practices that I used to generate data, specifically: artefact retrieval, collage making; journal writing; memory-drawing; taking photographs; and audio recorded teacher discussions. I then describe how I used the creative research practices of personal metaphors and self-portrait drawing to make meaning from evidence offered by the data. To finish, I explain how I dealt with ethical issues and trustworthiness, along with the challenges that affected the study.

In Chapter Three, I address my first research question: *What can I learn about creative arts teaching and learning through memory-work?* I begin with a brief overview of the research strategies that helped me to elicit and narrate my memories. I then relate memory stories of my informal and formal learning of creative arts. I go on to describe how I made meaning of my memory-work through metaphors.

Chapter Four shows how I addressed the second research question: *How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?* I describe how I worked collaboratively with a group of six Foundation Phase teachers in a three-day cluster meeting. I demonstrate how I used a range of strategies to learn from the teachers: artefact retrieval; collage making; and audio recorded group discussions. Chapter Four reveals how teachers shared happy and sad memories of how they learnt or taught creative arts. It also illustrates how the teachers were able to make clear and worthwhile recommendations for how I could develop my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning. Chapter Four further demonstrates how I used a self-portrait drawing to make visible my learning from the teachers.

CHAPTER TWO: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY SELF-STUDY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Through my self-study research I intended to improve my professional practice as a Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3) subject advisor in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. I became involved in a process of recollecting, scrutinising and reflecting on my lived experiences to better understand how I learned and taught creative arts and what contributions my own learning and my teaching experiences might have made to my practices as a subject advisor. Because I took a socio-cultural theoretical stance, I also worked collaboratively with a group of six Foundation Phase teachers to learn with and from them about creative arts teaching and learning.

In the previous chapter, Chapter One, I explained the focus and the purpose of the study and gave the main reasons why I decided to conduct this self-study research. I also gave background information related to the research. I explained my understanding of the two key concepts and the theoretical perspective that helped me make meaning of the research topic. I briefly discussed the methodological approach that I used in my study, which is self-study of educational practice. Next, I gave clarity to the research questions that I have examined through this study and an explanation as to why I asked these particular questions.

In this chapter, Chapter Two, I give a clear guide to the process of my self-study research. To start, I explain my understanding of the research methodology that has driven the process. I then describe the context in which the research took place. Thereafter, I explain the selection of the research participants and also indicate my position as both a researcher and a participant in this study. Furthermore, I identify and describe each research practice I used to generate data and I explain how I used creative research practices to make meaning from evidence offered by the data. Lastly, I discuss how I addressed ethical issues and trustworthiness, as well as the challenges that affected the study.

The research methodology

The research methodology that I selected is self-study of educational practice (Samaras, 2011). Magubane (2014) highlights that “self-study as a research methodology requires an individual to embark on a deep process of introspection within a particular area of focus, with

the purpose of personal and professional growth” (p. 18). Similarly, Madondo (2014) states that through self-study research he aimed to improve his pedagogic strategies by investigating his practices and experiences as a teacher. In the same way, I chose self-study of educational practice with the aim of doing self-introspection on my own experiences and practices of learning, teaching and facilitating creative arts.

To enhance my own learning and improve my practice, I embarked on memory-work self-study (see Chapter Three). Memory-work self-study is a process of recollecting and recounting past personal experiences in order to learn from them to improve future practice (Samaras, 2011). Dreyblatt (1997) explains that “memory-work functions to negotiate transitions from past to future” (p. 92). Likewise, Masinga (2012) states that in her collective self-study research she and her teacher participants employed memory-work “to re-experience and reflect together on [their] experiences” with the aim of learning “valuable lessons” for the future (pp. 122-123). Through memory-work self-study, I recollected my lived experiences in relation to creative arts teaching and learning, with the aim of improving my future practice of facilitating creative arts teaching and learning.

As Pithouse, Mitchell and Weber (2009) clarify, “a self-study allows teachers to plan and assess their pedagogical strategies with the support and critique of professional colleagues” (p. 43). Hence, in addition to engaging in memory-work, I was also involved in a process of re-examining my current practices as a subject advisor (see Chapter Four). Working with Foundation Phase teachers and my critical friends (two of my fellow Master’s students and a lecturer who was co-supervising one of these students) as professional colleagues helped me to advance in my pedagogical approaches when facilitating creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers.

Location of the study

My inquiry took place in one of the school districts in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. As explained in Chapter One, this district comprises rural, township and urban schools. My self-study research participants included six Foundation Phase teachers coming from three different schools. These teachers belong to the same cluster group. A cluster group is a group of teachers of the same grade or phase in neighbouring schools who work together collaboratively with the intention of learning from sharing ideas and challenges they are facing when teaching in their classrooms. Cluster groups are organised by officials of the

Department of Basic Education (DBE); for example, the subject advisor who is responsible for the phase, together with the cluster coordinator. A cluster coordinator is a teacher who is nominated by the teachers within the group to coordinate the logistics. The six teachers are all black females teaching in the Foundation Phase and the medium of instruction in their schools is IsiZulu. The majority of teachers in the township and rural schools in the district speak IsiZulu. Two of the schools that the teacher participants work in are in a rural area and one is in a semi-township area with a lot of informal housing. All the three schools have black children and are servicing communities where most of the parents or guardians are unemployed. In these schools, the number of teachers per school ranges from 15 to 20 teachers. The learner-teacher ratio per class ranges from thirty 30 to 35. Each school has three or four classes per grade. The classroom context for each of these schools is not well resourced. The schools do not have enough space for outdoor activities for the number of learners they have enrolled. I chose to work with teachers from under resourced schools in order to better understand the challenges they are faced with and the relevant solutions and suggestions they would recommend.

Research participants

Because my research is a self-study of educational practice it centred on me as the main research participant. I am a female educator who is 44 years old with 20 years of professional experience. I taught in the Foundation Phase for 13 years and have been serving as a Department of Basic Education (DBE) subject advisor for the Foundation Phase for seven years. As explained in Chapter One, a subject advisor is a departmental official who is responsible for monitoring and support, as well as organising and conducting workshops to support teachers' professional learning.

In my study, I chose to work with teachers from a cluster of schools in my district. I worked with six IsiZulu-speaking female teachers who teach all the four subjects in the Foundation Phase. Two of these teachers have obtained a Bachelor of Education Degree, one has a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma, one has a Bachelor of Honours Degree and two teachers are still studying for their Primary Teachers Diploma. Their ages range from 35 years to 55 years and their teaching experience ranges from 10 years to 20 years teaching in the Foundation Phase (see Table 2.1 below).

Table 2.1**Participants' professional information**

Pseudonyms	Number of years teaching experience	Grades taught	Highest qualification
Mrs M	18 years	Grade R	Bachelor of Honours Degree
Miss S	11 years	Grade R	Bachelor of Education Degree
Mrs K	12 years	Grade R	Bachelor of Education Degree
Miss J	15 years	Grade R	Junior Primary teachers Diploma
Mrs B	10 years	Grade R	National Professional Diploma in Education (under study)
Mrs D	8 years	Grade R	National Professional Diploma in Education (under study)

Since I am a subject advisor for Foundation Phase I thought it would be appropriate to work with Foundation Phase teachers. I also anticipated that they would have relevant experiences in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. I targeted teachers in three under resourced schools because I had observed that teachers in under resourced schools seemed to have more challenges in relation to creative arts teaching and learning, possibly because of the schools not having sufficient financial and material resources. I first visited the three schools and invited each teacher to participate through a one-to-one conversation where I explained the purpose of my self-study research. Thereafter, I gave the teachers informed consent letters that outlined the purpose of my research and the research strategies that I would employ during the process (see Appendix A). I then asked the teachers to read and sign the consent letters if they agreed to participate in the study. As I was also working with Foundation Phase

teachers in my professional capacity as a subject advisor, I wanted to make sure that my participants did not feel obliged to participate or that I would be monitoring them during the research. To establish a productive research relationship, I emphasised that they did not have to agree to participate during the research process, I tried to put myself at their level by making sure that we worked together as a group.

Critical Friends

Samaras and Roberts (2011) explain that in self-study research “critical friends work in a critical collaborative enquiry to extend and transform an individual’s understanding” (p. 43). Likewise, Magubane (2014) states that in his understanding of the term ‘critical friends’: “they are friends who have an understanding of their role in my research” (p. 29). My critical friends included two fellow Master of Education (MEd) students who were supporting my research practice with an aim to provide professional growth and learning. These MEd students, Miss Q and Miss R, were also doing self-study research. We all shared a research supervisor and met every two weeks for group supervision sessions. Another critical friend was Dr X, a lecturer who was co-supervising one of the other MEd students in our group.

Input from my critical friends at the group sessions helped me to see my research process from other perspectives (Samaras & Roberts, 2011). For instance, I remember how while I was presenting the data generated at my first research session with the teachers, Miss Q (who is also a subject advisor) cautioned me that when I am with teachers I need to be sensitive of their “baggage” (past experiences), which can have an impact on their teaching and learning of creative arts. Miss R (who is a teacher) joined in saying that teachers can be emotional about their sad stories of how they learnt creative arts at school since many of our primary teachers seemed to lack knowledge of how to teach creative arts. This advice from colleagues helped me to be very sensitive in my next two consultations with the teacher participants. I made sure that I listened and respected their concerns and frustrations when they were narrating their learning and teaching of creative arts (see Chapter Four).

My critical friends also helped me understand aspects of the self-study research journey. For example they stressed the importance of carrying my journal with me so that I could record my observations during the research process, the mood of the teacher participants, and the actual research process, looking at what went well and what needed to be addressed. This

helped me to make thorough preparation for each session with my participants and to understand the research process better.

Data generation

Data were generated using six research practices, namely: artefact retrieval, collage making, journal writing, memory-drawing, taking photographs and audio recorded teacher discussions (see Table 2.2). The artefact retrieval, collage making and memory-drawing helped me to retrace and narrate my memories of lived experiences of creative arts teaching and learning, starting from home up to my current occupation. Furthermore, my participants also used these research practices in our research sessions to trigger, narrate and prompt their discussions of their own experiences and of how I could better facilitate creative arts with Foundation Phase teachers. The dual use of these research practices helped me to respond to my first and second research questions respectively.

Table 2.2

Data generation

Research Question	Data generation activities	Participants
Q.1. <i>What can I learn about creative arts teaching and learning through memory-work?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artefact retrieval • Collage making • Memory-drawing • Journal writing • Taking photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Me
Q.2. <i>How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artefact retrieval with teachers • Collage making • My journal writing • Audio recorded group discussions with teachers • Taking photographs with teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Me • 6 Foundation Phase teachers in one cluster.

Artefact retrieval

Cole (2010) explains that artefacts or objects are tools that can assist a researcher to generate and represent data as evidence to make meaning in qualitative research. According to Mitchell (2011), we live in a world of objects and most of our daily activities revolve around interacting with objects or artefacts. Mitchell (2011) highlights the potential value of moving from traditional methods of interviews, case studies and surveys as the only means to generate data and argues that to focus on an alternative approach to data generation through the use of material culture (things, objects and artefacts) can support inquiry in qualitative research. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) explain that socio-cultural theories of learning “are based on the concept that human activities take place in cultural contexts [and] are mediated by language and other symbol systems” (p. 191). Mitchell (2011) identifies artefacts or objects as part of those symbol systems. She highlights “a range of tools and approaches ranging from socio semiotics, memory work and working with photographs as a new materialism in social research” (pp. 35-36). She explains that working with artefacts and objects reinforces the importance of the visual in qualitative research. According to Cole (2011), an ‘object’ is not just an object; instead, it symbolises something and has meaning and a story to tell. Cole (2011) states that, “physical objects trigger memory within qualitative research” (p. 227). In my understanding, this means that as we interact with objects they bring new meanings to us, which can enhance the study.

Mitchell (2011) identifies two key ways of working with objects. First, “objects as representational agent of change”, and second, “objects -in-inquiry” (p. 36). This suggests that objects or images can give different meanings in different forms depending on how the viewer or the reader perceives them. In my study, I worked with objects as representational agents of change and objects-in-inquiry, which helped me to generate relevant data for my study.

Objects as representational agents of change

Mitchell (2011) states that “photographing of objects and places often raises possibilities for working with symbolic than the real objects which helps to limit the risk of invading the ethical issues of informed consent” (p. 37). Thus objects as representational agents of change relies more on the photographic images of a particular object. In my study, I worked with photographs of images of particular artwork objects to trigger memories of how I learned and taught creative arts teaching and learning (see Chapter Three).

Objects-in-inquiry

Certain items might not be precious to us, but they will be precious to other people. These objects have meaning for these people who can tell a story about them. Mitchell (2011) states that the tangible objects that people honour are often displayed because they are special or unique. These objects evoke memories which can be individual or a social reflection of the past. Cole (2011) indicates that “memory plays an inevitable role in any study that requires participant reflection on the past” (p. 225). This suggests that if people want to enquire about objects that are displayed, then they will hear a narrative story or the history of the object. Through such narratives, human relations can be enhanced as conversations are stimulated, friendships can be made, and hence open mindedness and empathy can be cultivated (Mitchell, 2011). This relates to a socio-cultural theoretical perspective on learning (as explained in Chapter One).

In my study, I worked with tangible artwork objects as triggers for “memory production, reflection and discussion” (Cole, 2011, p. 227). Mitchell (2011) reminds us that “artefacts carry with them social and historical narratives that have seldom been investigated” and that artefacts have the potential to evoke autobiographical narratives (p. 50). In my inquiry, I used artefact retrieval, for example, a skipping rope, an old music record and a doormat, to trigger memories of my personal and professional history to narrate my own lived experiences of learning and teaching of creative arts. In addition, the same applied to my teacher participants. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, to prompt discussions, I asked each of the teachers to choose an object that would trigger her memories about creative arts either as a learner or as a teacher. In my introductory activity, I started by discussing one of my own artefacts. This was to make the teachers feel comfortable to share their own memories. I explained why I chose my artefact, and what it meant to me and I asked the teachers to ask me questions related to the artefact.

Collage making

According to Butler-Kisber (2008), collage making is a “process of cutting and sticking found images and image fragments from popular print or magazines onto cardstock” (p. 265). Likewise, Khanare (2009) describes collage making as a process “which involves creating an artwork from pictures, and may also include words and photographs” (p. 97). Collage making

is one of the research practices that assisted me in generating and representing data about my own learning and better facilitating creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers. Khanare (2009) describes collage making in the field of research as an artful approach to communicating and engaging with participants to have a better understanding of the research phenomenon. Butler-Kisber (2008) looks at collage making from two different angles, in the world of art and the world of research. Butler-Kisber (2008) states that “collage making symbolises the representational forms where meaning is understood to be a construction of what the text represents and what the reader or the viewer brings to it” (p. 268). This means that we are living in the world of visual objects where we need to give meaning by recognising and explaining the way we perceive things. Collage making assists the researcher to enquire and to communicate meaningfully with the audience through visual creativity.

Drawing on the guidelines for collage making in research as outlined by Butler-Kisber (2008) and Khanare (2009), I used collage making to explore and to have a deeper understanding about my lived experiences related to the learning and teaching of creative arts (see Chapter Three). This helped me to respond to my first research question through memory-work self-study. Collage making helped me to respond to my first research question because it prompted many memories of formal and informal experiences of learning creative arts. As discussed in Chapter Three, I realised that reflecting on the memories that were revealed by the collage could help me in better facilitating creative arts teaching and learning.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the first memory-work collage that I made. I remember how I felt frustrated as I tried to find relevant images that would help me narrate my memories of learning and teaching of creative arts. Some I had found from magazines and the *Isolezwe* newspaper. The other images were photographs that I took in different environments. I pasted the images on the chart. However, I did not have confidence in my collage as I was worried that some of the images were not relevant to my first research question: *What can I learn from my memory-work about creative arts teaching and learning?*

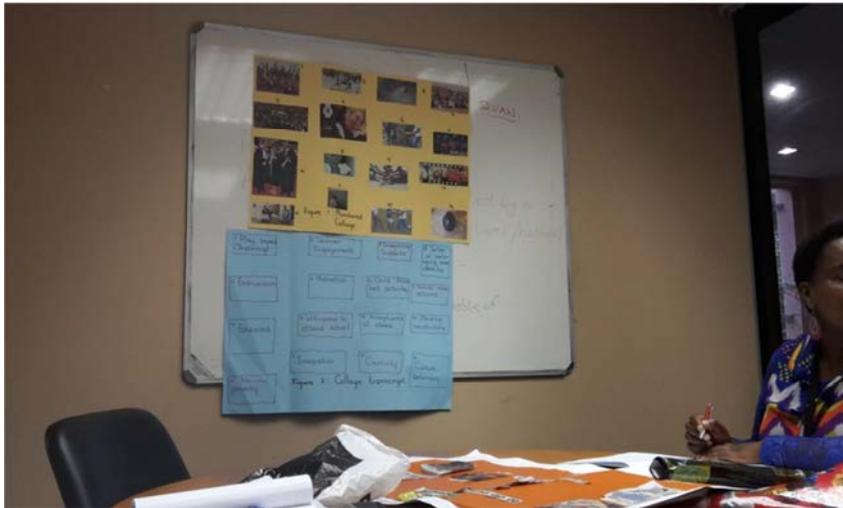


Figure 2.1. My first memory-work collage.

When I was presenting my first memory-work collage to our supervision group my supervisors and my critical friends gave me wonderful ideas about what else my collage could include and how it could look. These discussions with critical friends helped me to better understand how images in a collage could aid in eliciting my memories. I remember Dr X when she pointed to an image of Mahotella Queens (see Chapter Three) and she said “those people remind us of how African music was promoted in our times” (Journal entry, 13 March 2015).

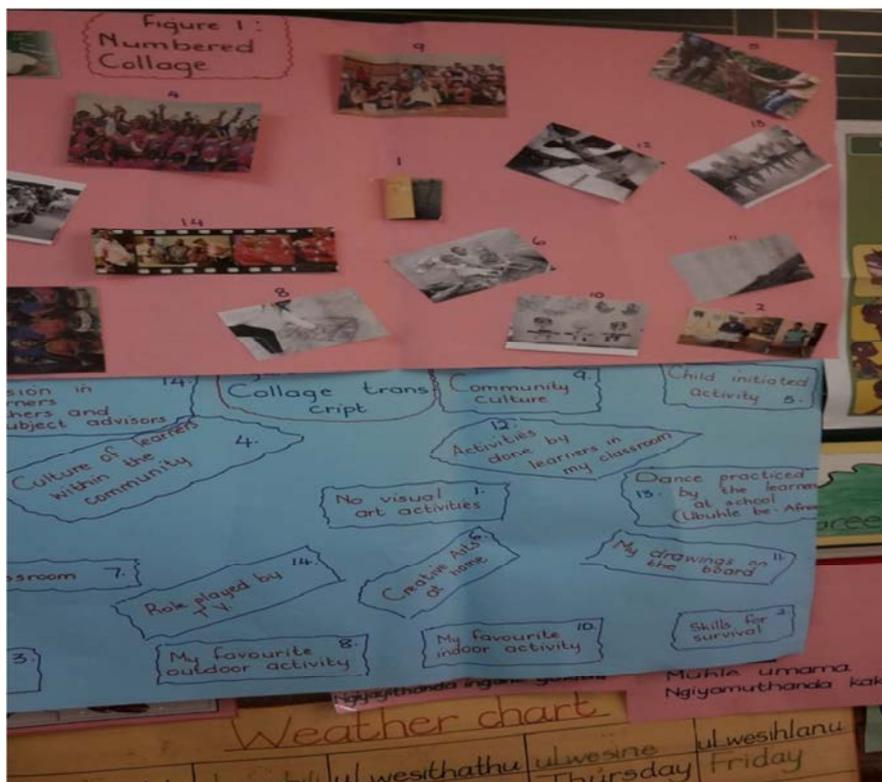


Figure 2.2. My second memory-work collage.

The photograph in Figure 2.2 represents my second attempt at collage making. In my view, the design of the second collage showed more creativity compared to the first collage which was a simpler design. Nevertheless, many of the images that are in my second memory-work collage were drawn from the first memory-work collage. The discussions with critical friends and my supervisors helped me in seeing how significant images could assist me to go back in time and recount my memories of creative arts teaching and learning, starting from my childhood experiences at home up to my recent occupation as a subject advisor. With each memory-work collage I made a transcript to give a description of each main image of the collage (van Schalkwyk, 2010). The descriptions give the meaning of why I selected the images as well as the thoughts and feelings they bring out.

As shown in Chapter Four, I also worked with the Foundation Phase teachers in making collages. Following Khanare's (2009) advice of using a ready-made collage as an exemplar, I used my own collage as a means of guiding my participants through the process of collage making. This helped my participants to feel comfortable in sharing their ideas as they selected images and words that were "conceptually and metaphorically relevant to the topic" (Butler-Kisber, 2008, p. 269). In addition, the collage making activity helped teachers to express, discuss and share better methods that could help me improve my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning.

Memory-drawing

I used memory-drawing to recall my childhood experiences in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. As explained in Chapter Three, as a child I loved to do sand drawing at home, but when my primary school teachers asked me to draw at school it was a problem because I felt that I was not competent in drawing. Rufo (2011) suggests that if teachers give children a platform to use their initiative in developing their own creative arts activities they will see unexpected wonders. This has led me to speculate on what might have happened if I had been encouraged to use my love for sand drawing as a creative arts activity by my former teachers.

During my research process, memory-drawing helped me to remember my informal and formal learning of creative arts. Likewise, Derry (2005) explains how memory-drawing helped her to remember her childhood experiences of being excluded by her best friend: "I

had trouble remembering exactly what happened”. She goes on to describe her memory-drawing process: “I sat down with a sheet of paper and some pencil crayons and I drew my memory of that incident. This drawing made all the feelings and details of the situation flood back” (p. 37). Correspondingly, Makhanya (2010) explains that “through this memory drawing activity with teachers, I saw how drawing activates the mind and thus helped them in the process of remembering” (p. 48). In my study Foundation Phase teachers felt excited when they were drawing face masks to show their sad and happy memories of their learning and teaching of creative arts (see Chapter Four).

Journal writing

During the research process, I kept a journal to record the following: a) the inputs that I received from my critical friends; b) memories of my personal history of learning and teaching creative arts; c) my written observations when Foundation Phase teachers were narrating memories of their personal history; d) the teachers’ discussions when making collages; e) my thoughts about the journey of my study; and f) my reflections on my self-study inquiry. Masinga (2012) asserts that a “journal writing process provides moments of reflection and interpretations of all aspects of the experience gained from each [research] session” (p. 128). Likewise, journal writing helped me to reflect on my research journey, my observations and the participants’ journey. In addition, I always kept my journal with me to record all the thoughts that brought back memories of my personal history of learning and teaching of creative arts.

I remember how, when I was preparing to go to the first session with the teachers I referred to my journal, looking at all the notes I had made with the suggestions from my critical friends to make my meeting with teachers participants a success. One critical friend, Dr X, suggested “to be at the level of your research participant you need to come up with an introductory activity that will make the teacher participants relaxed” (Journal entry, 15 May 2015). This input prompted me to think of a relevant activity which was linked to my research topic and would help to ‘break the ice’ with the participants (see Chapter Three).

My journal was also helpful in recording my observations on the sessions with my teacher participants. For example:

I remember when Mrs M was presenting an artefact of sun painting and Mrs B was keen to know more about sun painting she said to the group “I need to take the cell number for Mrs M so that I will phone her to give me more creative art activities since our school accommodate learners with special needs”. (Journal entry, 10 June, 2015)

Audio recorded group discussions

I used an audio recorder to record the teachers’ discussions when they were relating narratives about how they learned or taught creative arts. The audio recorder also helped me to record their discussions when they were engaged in the collage making process on how to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning. Later on, listening to these audio recorded group discussions reminded me of the teacher narration and discussions when I was writing Chapter Four in responding to the second question of my study: *How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?* Masinga (2012) highlights that audio “recording became [her] third ear, which became crucial for [her]”. She further explains that “[she] was able to replay the recording of the sessions after each meeting [with her participants]. In this way [she] gained more insight into what was happening and further analysed the responses and the discussions that took place” (p. 127). Similarly, I found that being involved in the process of self-study research my chances of missing important points that were made by my participants were high and the audio recorder helped me in collecting, storing and reflecting on all the information discussed. Furthermore, I audio recorded group discussions I had with my critical friends when they were giving inputs during my research journey. Listening to these recordings helped me to remember and take heed of all the vital points that were made by my critical friends.

Taking photographs

I took photographs that helped me remember my personal history in relation to creative arts teaching and learning (see Chapter Three). The photographs had images that showed my memories of incidents that happened while I was at primary school and also the things that I often see children doing when I do school visits. To abide by ethical guidelines, I ensured that I had permission to take these photographs and I did not to take photographs that would show anyone’s identity unless I had specific consent to do so (Wiles, 2008). One such instance was when I took a photograph of my daughter drawing a house (see Figure 3.2, Chapter Three). I explained to my daughter that I was doing research on creative arts teaching and learning and

I would like to take a picture of her drawing the house. My daughter was thrilled and she permitted me to take a photograph of her as she was always willing to help me in my research.

Taking these photographs helped me to express my feelings and to relive my experiences of informal and formal learning of creative arts. When looking at the photographs I was able to see things that could help me improve my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning. Moreover, the photographs helped me to think of different activities I could use in my facilitation of creative arts. Likewise, Mitchell, Weber and Pithouse (2009) assert that taking photographs can help a researcher “to address the challenge of change when embarked in a self-study” (p. 120).

I also took photographs with my cellular telephone to create a visual record of my interaction with the teacher participants (see Chapter Four). To respect ethical guidelines, I made sure that I had permission from the teachers to take the photographs and I tried not to take photographs that would show their identities (Wiles, 2008). Taking photographs was not always easy as sometimes I would be busy explaining what the participants need to do. In that case, I asked one of the teachers to take photographs for me, after discussion about ethical guidelines on how to take photographs.

Making meaning

My meaning making was inductive because it emerged as I engaged with the data generated in response to each research question, trying to “[make] sense of the whole of the parts...to reveal a bigger picture” (Samaras, 2011, p. 199). In making sense of relevant evidence offered by the data, “I searched for emerging patterns, associations, concepts and explanations” (Nieuwenhuis, 2010, p. 107). I also worked with my critical friends “to obtain alternative perspectives” (Samaras & Roberts, 2011, p. 43). Samaras and Roberts (2011) note that working collaboratively with critical friends can help a researcher to gain a broader understanding of the phenomenon under study and allows for growth and learning. Likewise, working with my critical friends had a positive impact on my meaning making about creative arts teaching and learning since they were supporting me with an aim to grow. I remember when my supervisor was asking us in the meeting how our research process was going. I answered positively that everything went well except that teachers were responding in IsiZulu and I asked them to try and speak in English. She suggested that I could “allow the teachers

to speak in IsiZulu and then when writing Chapter Four put a translated version of the teacher discussions”. (Journal entry, 12 June 2015)

Furthermore, in keeping with my research focus on creative arts, I used the creative research practices of personal metaphor and self-portrait drawing to facilitate my meaning making in response to each question (Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker, Jacelon, & Chandler, 2002). In addressing my first research question, “*What can I learn about creative arts teaching and learning through memory-work?*”, I embarked on a journey of recalling my memories in relation to how I learned creative arts, focusing on both my formal and informal learning. While I was narrating my personal history that was evoked by memory-work, I identified personal metaphors that provided deeper meanings of my personal history and which showed me areas that needed attention (Samaras, 2011). Hunter et al., (2002) explain that “a metaphor uses figurative language to suggest a likeness to or analogy of an idea.... It provides a strong visual image, one that is powerful in communicating meaning” (p. 392). In my own understanding, a metaphor is a representation or a symbolic meaning which is used to give a better understanding of something. Bullough (1994) asserts that “metaphors are a useful means for helping teachers think about themselves as teachers and are an important tool to assist them to become increasingly reflective about their actions in the classroom” (p. 109). He further explains that personal teaching metaphors can be used to making meaning of our personal histories. As shown in Chapter Three, identifying my own personal teaching or facilitation metaphors through memory-work helped me to become more reflective about how I was taught and how I learned creative arts and also to consider how I might change my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning for the better. As Hunter et al. (2002) describe, “metaphors provided the form of expression needed to understand and communicate” these reflections (p. 393). My thinking about these metaphors further guided me in planning pertinent research activities to do with my teacher participants (as described in Chapter Four).

I created a self-portrait drawing to make visible and consolidate my meaning making in response to my second research question: “*How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?*”. Pithouse (2011) explains that “creating self-portraits of [our] professional selves in action allows [us] to identify and examine both problematic and beneficial aspects of [our] current practice and to think of ways to enhance [our] future practice” (p. 39). Creating the self-portrait drawing allowed me to see myself and

my learning in action. As I clarify in Chapter Four, making this self-portrait drawing enabled me to draw together the ideas I had gained from the sessions with the teachers to identify problems that hindered me in facilitating creative arts as well as possibilities for better facilitating creative arts with Foundation Phase teachers.

Ethical issues

I am the main participant of the study, but I also involved six Foundation Phase teachers as participants. To protect the teachers' identity I used pseudonyms. As a Master's student I understood that I was obliged to show consideration for and safeguard the human dignity of each research participant (Samaras, 2011). I followed the research procedures which the university gave me as guidelines. First I wrote and submitted an ethical clearance application to the Research Ethics Committee. Next, I wrote letters to principals of the three schools, seeking permission to conduct research with the teachers. I then wrote informed consent letters, asking the Foundation Phase teachers to participate in my research. Thereafter, I completed an application to DBE asking permission to use departmental resources, for example, the school as a meeting venue during the research process. In the consent letters I indicated clearly: a) "the purpose of the research; b) what the participation will involve; c) that their involvement is confidential and voluntary; d) and that none will be penalized for not participating" (Samaras, 2011, p. 150).

As explained above, during the research process I took photographs of the process to record my interaction with the teacher participants. To observe the ethical guidelines, I asked permission of the teachers and explained to them that I would take photographs of their actions and avoid their faces. In the end, a few of the photographs did inadvertently show faces and I so agreed with my supervisor that we would crop the photographs to hide those faces.

Pithouse et al. (2009) caution that "teachers who work in challenging contexts frequently have painful memories of their own schooldays" (p. 58) and they advise self-study researchers who work with groups of teachers to develop strategies for emotional care within the groups. Having been reminded of this by my critical friends (as explained above), I tried to give emotional support when teachers were narrating their sad stories of learning or teaching of creative arts. I tried to show empathy by adding my own sad stories. I also sometimes thought of stories that would make everybody laugh. Masinga (2012) explains

how “humour [can be a] means of reducing the levels of ... anxiety” when sharing painful memory stories in a group (p. 134).

Trustworthiness

The importance of trustworthiness in a self-study methodology is crucial because the researcher is reflecting on herself. Feldman (2003) cautions that, “when we engage in reflective processes that focus on us, we cannot be sure of the accuracy of what we see” (p. 27). Working with a group of Foundation Phase teachers using different research practices to generate data helped me to get a variety of responses from the participants that could supplement my own understandings.

Feldman (2003) believes that to ensure trustworthiness researchers must also use multiple data sources to gain multiple perspectives. Consequently, I chose six data generation activities namely: artefact retrieval; collage making; memory-drawing; journal writing; taking photographs; and audio recorded group discussions. Feldman (2003) further highlights the importance of providing “detailed description of how we collect data and make explicit what counts as data in our work” (p. 27). In this chapter I have aimed to be meticulous and clear in explaining what kind of data informed my study. Next, I was explicit about the process of generating data and making meaning of the evidence offered by the data. I gave details of each research practice used in my inquiry. This shows a deeper understanding of how I worked with the data to explore how I could improve my learning as a subject advisor.

My self-study research was about introspection and learning with the aim of changing and improving my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning. To change my practice requires me to change who I am as a subject advisor first and be able to convince others that the change that has occurred is valuable (Feldman, 2003). Feldman (2003) explains that the self-study researcher must “provide evidence of the value of the change in our ways of being ... which can help to convince readers of the study’s validity” (p. 28). In writing Chapter Three and Chapter Four I was explicit in showing what I learned about how to change my practices as a subject advisor to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers.

Research challenges

One challenge I faced was on the day of the second session with the teacher participants when the principal of the school where we used to meet told me that the local community would be protesting on our next meeting date. Fortunately, the local councillor had informed the school about the protest in time and I was able to reschedule the date to the following day.

Another challenge was that on the first day we finished late. I was scared that the teachers might tender apologies and not come to the second session since I was dealing with female teachers who have responsibilities at home after school. A day before our next meeting, I phoned to confirm their availability, which then relieved my tension. In addition, working closely with the cluster coordinator and planning a convenient and a central venue where transport was easily accessible and transporting some of the teachers myself helped me to overcome the problem of getting home at a late hour.

On the last day of the cluster meeting I was afraid that teachers might be reluctant to critique my practice freely on how to improve my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning because of my official position as a subject advisor. To make them feel at ease, I worked with them in two groups, moving around assuring them that what they would be saying would be of importance to me since I wanted to learn and improve and that it would be important to them too.

Conclusion

In this chapter, Chapter Two, I have discussed my self-study research methodology, giving the reasons why I selected this methodology. I have described the context of where the research took place. Next I have explained how my participants were selected. I also described the research practices that helped me to generate data, giving reasons why I chose them and how they helped me during the process. In addition I have explained the process of making meaning and how this helped me to do self-reflection on my practice of facilitating creative arts teaching and learning. I have discussed the trustworthiness and the ethical issues of the study. Lastly I presented the challenges that I have encountered and explained how I overcome the challenges.

The most important thing that I have learnt from being involved in self-study research is that it is about critiquing your own practices with the aim of improvement, as well as welcoming

critiques from the critical friends and research participants. I have also noticed that self-study research methodology involves personal reflection in analysing what you know and what you do not know about the phenomenon. To get on board with the process you must be willing to learn and be open to professional criticisms. Because I was able to be open to the inputs that were given by my critical friends and by my teacher participants, they helped me to keep focusing on improving my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning. To be open to criticisms is not an easy thing because sometimes it affects your emotions. What helped me is conditioning myself that since I aimed to improve and to change my facilitation of creative arts the most appropriate way was through listening and accepting criticisms in a positive way.

CHAPTER THREE: MY MEMORIES OF CREATIVE ARTS TEACHING AND LEARNING

Introduction

My self-study research focused on my own learning as a subject advisor for the Foundation Phase (Grade 3 to R) in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. Creative arts teaching and learning is one of the Life Skills study areas; it exposes learners to four art forms: dance, drama, music, and visual arts (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2011. p. 9). The rationale for my research was to better support Foundation Phase teachers in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. Through this study, I aimed to better understand and advance my own facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning as a subject advisor for Foundation Phase in one of the districts in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

In the previous chapter, Chapter Two, I gave an account of the process of my self-study research. I began by explaining my understanding of self-study research methodology. I then described the context in which the research took place and the selection of the research participants. I also pointed out my position as both a researcher and a participant. Additionally, I acknowledged and described each research practice that I used to generate data and clarified how I used creative research practices to make meaning from evidence offered by the data. I then discussed how I addressed ethical issues and trustworthiness, as well as the challenges that affected the study.

Chapter Three attends to the first of my two research questions: *What can I learn about creative arts teaching and learning through memory-work?* Dreyblatt (1997) explains that through memory-work a person can connect with and become aware of the past, with the intention of making meaning for the future. Likewise, to respond to my first research question, I undertook a journey of collating my memories in relation to the learning and teaching of creative arts (which was known as art work when I was at school).

In this chapter, I discuss the process of collecting memories in relation to the learning and teaching of creative arts. Next, I give a brief overview of the research strategies that helped me to evoke and make meaning from my memories. To follow, I narrate and discuss memories of my informal learning and teaching of creative arts, focusing on: a) child initiated activities; and b) the role of family and community. I further recount and discuss memories of

my formal learning and teaching of creative arts, focusing on five key phases: a) my primary schooling; b) my secondary schooling; c) my tertiary education; d) my teaching career; e) my career as a subject advisor for Foundation Phase. Because my research topic involves Foundation Phase teaching and learning, the main focus of my memory-work is on my primary schooling. I then present four personal metaphors that provided deeper meanings of my personal history and which showed me areas that needed attention in my facilitation of teaching and learning of creative arts (Samaras, 2011).

Memory-work self-study research strategies

With the help of three memory-work self-study research strategies I evoked memories of how I learned creative arts at home as well as at school. As explained in more detail in Chapter Two, these research strategies were: artefact retrieval; collage making; and memory-drawing. Artefact retrieval enabled me to evoke ideas about my research topic (Cole, 2011). I took photographs of artefacts to prompt memories of my personal and professional history. This helped me to narrate my own lived experiences of learning and teaching of creative arts (Mitchell, 2011). I also used collage making to evoke, portray and share memories of my lived experiences of learning and teaching of creative arts. This involved cutting and pasting magazine and newspaper images and thinking of relevant words to describe the images (Butler-Kisber, 2008). In addition, I employed a memory-drawing technique to give a more detailed understanding of certain features of my discussion on how I learned and taught creative arts. As Pithouse (2011) points out, “drawing [can be] used to construct and re-construct data through a creative, recursive...process” (p. 44).

I used photographs that I had taken, as well as my drawings and images from my collages to evoke and illustrate the memory stories that I present in this chapter. Furthermore, as clarified in Chapter Two, I used metaphors to make meaning of these memory stories. Recognising my own personal teaching or facilitation metaphors through memory-work helped me to become more reflective about how I was taught and how I learned creative arts and also to consider how I might improve my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning (Bullough, 1994).

Memories of creative arts teaching and learning

Informal learning of creative arts

Child initiated activities

I grew up in a deep rural area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. My parents were unemployed. Even though my mother held a teaching qualification she could not pursue her career in teaching due to the Zulu tradition and cultural beliefs that women were not supposed to work when married. She followed that tradition which I assume made things worse at home because my parents had to sustain a living by ploughing fields. This was the only way all the community members could help themselves to cope with life.

I remember how I would wake up early in the morning to fetch water or go to the fields before I went to school. This sounds terrible, but it gave me time to sing on my way to the river and dance with other girls in the river, forgetting that my mother was waiting for water at home. Looking back, I can see that this was a good opportunity for me to learn some creative arts activities as the children of the community would entertain ourselves with singing and dancing to traditional songs. I recall that these moments brought feelings of togetherness, belonging and identity, fun and pleasure.



Figure 3.1. The seesaw: Children enjoy playing, even in the rough and hard conditions.

The image shown in Figure 3.1 is a photograph that I took in my home town when children were playing with an improvised seesaw. The photograph shows a background of a disadvantaged play setting; but also it shows creativity within the children. This photograph reminds me of the conditions we grew up in where we would develop our own play materials without the help of the adults. The area where I grew up did not have recreation places and

facilities set aside for children to play with. I remember how in winter we would play in an area with dry grass where we would collect cardboard boxes, get inside them and start moving them along dry grass (*amapele*). This game was played in a steep or slippery area which would allow the box with you inside to move and slide down freely as if you were moving in a slide. This was so enjoyable and it showed creativity because we were able to think of an activity that was going to give us fun and pleasure. O'Connor (2013) confirms that to cultivate children's creativity, "adults must allow freedom of play and choices to children and avoid interfering with them" (p. 3).

Nevertheless, the environment shown in the photograph is not conducive to play as it is not child friendly. As O'Connor (2013) notes, "children must be both free to make choices within their play and be supported in these choices by the teacher, the environment and the ethos" (p. 6). One can see that this activity shown in the photograph was done by children alone and there was no parent involved to give guidance and support. The grass and the trees that the learners are playing next to are not cut and this might allow snakes to hide and be dangerous to the children. The material the children are using for their seesaw is not safe as it might have sharp points and not be strong enough to allow them to sit and play without injuring themselves.

Another child initiated game I remember was *umagalobha*: two girls would hold a strand of wool with their bodies starting from the ankle up to the neck and other girls would jump in and out of the string. If a girl did not jump in and out properly she would go and hold the string (see Figure 3.1.1). In looking at my memory drawing (Figure 3.1.1), I can see that the *magalobha* game is a pleasant activity that can help to develop large muscles and eye foot coordination for young children. However, when I was at school our teachers did not seem to take notice of its educational potential.

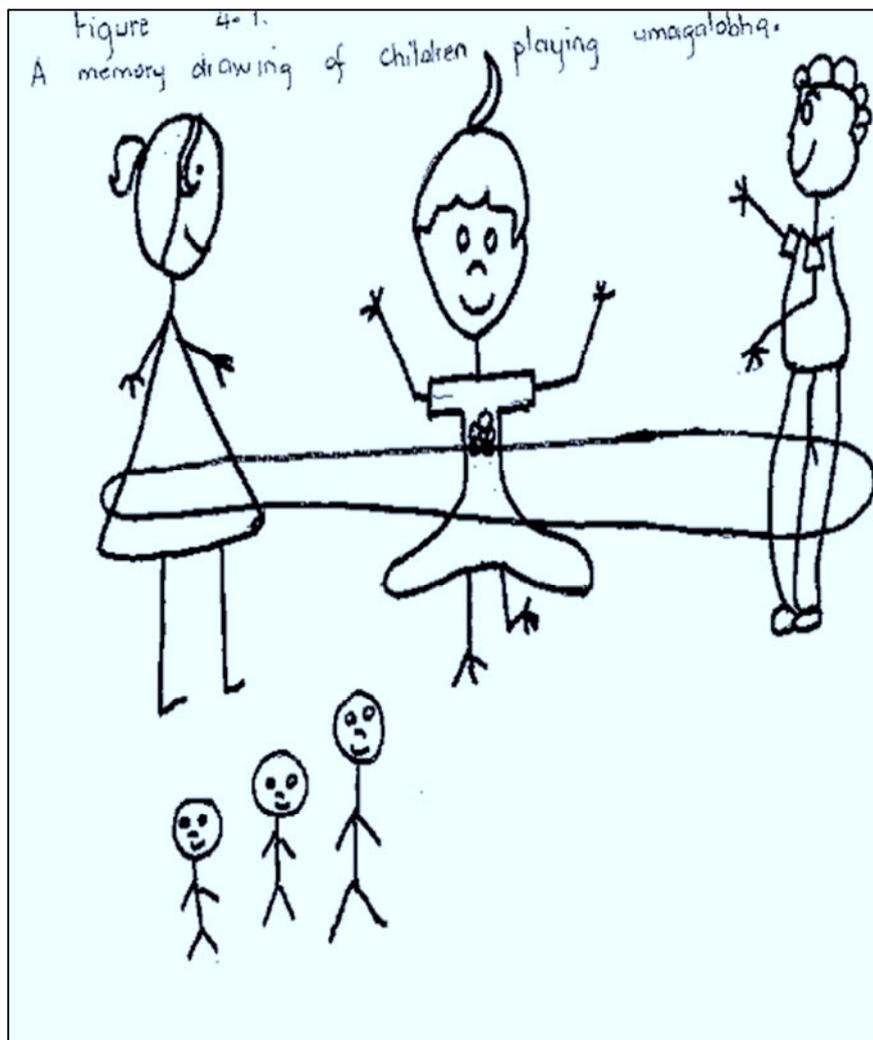


Figure 3.1.1. This is how we played *umagalobha* with my friends.

Looking back, I can see that when I was young my family and my teachers did not praise or support such child initiated activities. This might have resulted in me not accommodating child initiated activities in my own classroom when I became a teacher because I thought that was the proper way of doing things as an adult. Rufo (2011) points out that learners often tend to hide their own creative initiatives and not bring them into the classroom because of the fear they have about their teachers scolding them for doing their own activities during the teachers' time. With hindsight, I can see that engaging learners in learning through what they had initiated and were interested in doing could have made my teaching more child-centred and creative (O'Connor, 2013). However, I was not flexible enough to see how the activities that were initiated by the learners could bring meaningful education to both the learners and me.

I recall that there were activities designed by my learners that could have been educational. For example, when playing a game with stones the learners counted how many stones they had grabbed from the circle and how many must be brought back to the circle. In this game, mathematical concepts such as counting and number sense were developed outside the classroom, with no teacher being the facilitator (Rufo, 2014). When the children were seated in groups developing and sharing the rules of their game, their language and communication capacity was also developed. Nutbrown (2011) highlights that teachers can harness learners' initiative and creativity to offer a "broad, flexible and motivating education" for holistic development of the child (p. 242). I remember the challenges I experienced as novice teacher when introducing counting and the basic operations, but I did not think of using this child initiated activity to help learners understand these concepts because to me it was an activity that fell outside the classroom context. As Rufo (2014) points out, I would have had to "set aside [my] hierarchal practices [in order to] take advantage of the learning opportunities that emerge from [learner] self-governance and choice-based pedagogies" (p. 401).



Figure 3.2. Sand drawing: My favourite outdoor activity.

The photograph presented in Figure 3.2 shows my daughter drawing a house. I took this photograph in my home town while she was playing outside with sand. The photograph has a background of sand which reminds me of different creative activities that I did on sand as a child without any support from my parents or teachers. I loved playing outside. I remember

how sometimes I would play with stones alone and pretend there was somebody I was playing with. At times, I would play with a tennis ball by bouncing and catching it against the wall and running back and forth. At other times, I would imagine a new house for my family and I would go outside and draw a house with different rooms and put furniture inside it. What amazes me now is that my house would show different shapes that I had learnt at school, such as rectangles, squares and triangles.

Iwai (2003) draws attention to the positive contribution of parents valuing their children's creative work. However, when I was playing these drawing activities no one at home would praise me for drawing good houses. Furthermore, I do not remember myself practicing these drawings at school because I feared that it would be against the teacher's will and I might get punished for doing my own things during the teacher's time. Nevertheless, if I look closely at the drawings in the photograph I realise that sand drawing was an activity that a teacher could have used to teach and reinforce different concepts such as counting and shapes. Interestingly, Gerdes (1988) draws attention to the potential educational value of "sand drawing patterns in the mathematics classroom" (p. 20).

This image of sand drawing thus reminds me of different activities I could have used in my classroom as a Foundation Phase teacher when teaching Standard 1 (Grade 3). These activities could have been used to teach the concepts of shapes and developed drawing skills. Learners can also develop fine motor skills when they are drawing freely on sand. In my experience, young children enjoy going outside and drawing on sand either with a finger or a stick. I think that when I was teaching I assumed that the necessary resources that could have promoted the teaching of creative arts were not available in our school. I can now see that there were a lot of activities that I did not use that would have allowed learners to go outside to learn creative arts, without the need for any expensive materials. I relied heavily on keeping the learners inside the class and focused only on the prescribed documents issued by the Department of Education and Culture. My informal childhood activities did not come back to me because I thought they were not relevant for meaningful learning.

The sand drawing image further reminds me that although I feel that I am not competent in drawing, I did have a little skill in drawing at an early age which was not nurtured by my primary school teachers since it was not practiced at school. I can now see that there were topics that would have allowed us to come up with our own drawings to show an

understanding of the topic, for example, My Family. The topic My Family could have accommodated my drawing and this could have helped me as a learner to understand the topic better. I also could have enjoyed learning about this topic and expressing myself through drawing. As O'Connor (2013) explains, “the pleasure factor for children’s creativity is a key component in their learning and in the nurturing of their innate creative abilities” (p. 2). However, my class teachers did not seem to think that as primary school learners we could create pictures of our families and go beyond that to also think of the houses and the furniture we could put inside the rooms.

Sadly, most of our primary school teachers were apparently not confident enough of their own creativity to develop creativity within us as individuals. They seemed to rely heavily on the prescribed curriculum documents that were given to them. The sand drawing photograph reminds me of how teachers often prefer to practice only the model activities that are given in the curriculum documents or textbooks. Rufo (2011) argues that taking such a narrow approach to teaching and learning can discourage children’s creativity. I selected this image because it shows the need to allow learners to explore their environment and to be given a chance to use their senses while learning concepts. As a subject advisor, I could use this photograph of sand drawing with teachers to prompt discussion on how they as Foundation Phase teachers could allow for free drawing for each topic they will be teaching. We could discuss the wonders of creativity the learners could show them.



Figure 3.3. My favourite “Kirigami” activity.

The photograph shown in Figure 3.3 is an activity that was displayed in a Foundation Phase classroom in one of the primary schools in the district I work in. I took this photograph because it reminded me of an activity I used to do when playing alone at home as a young child. This was my favourite indoor activity where I would look for a pair of scissors and cut any paper that I came across whether it was still useful or not. I have recently learned that this creative arts activity can be referred to as “kirigami”, which is a word that Florence Temko used in the title of her book on the creative art of paper cutting (1962).

If I remember well I do not know where my interest in this activity came from because I did this activity before I started SSA (Grade 1). I would cut out pictures of a man and a woman and I would cut out pictures of children. Then I would use saliva to paste these pictures on the wall. These cuttings portrayed members of my family. If it happened that I got a crayon I would be so happy because I would dress my people with beautiful clothes. Nobody at home asked about or praised me for my pictures. Instead they would shout at me because maybe I had cut up their important documents or their school exercise books. My mother decided to hide the pair of scissors so that I would not get an opportunity to mess with other people’s documents. In the same way, Rufo (2011) points out that teachers tend to conserve and control the students’ access to materials when doing creative activities and forget about the end result of allowing the learners to explore the world through manipulating materials.

As a Foundation Phase subject advisor this image shows me that even before they go to school children have an ability to demonstrate their creativity. The image of cutting and pasting papers (kirigami) to make different images is one of the activities that teachers can think of for any theme or topic. My childhood memories remind me that kirigami can be enjoyed by learners. They also show me that children are creative by nature but that this creativity must be developed by the teachers in their early years of learning. This image represents what I loved doing while I was young and reminds me of the importance of paying attention to what children love doing. The activities that I remember being done in my primary school did not involve cutting and pasting, which was my favourite activity. As a child I was also scared to do kirigami activities in class because I feared that I would be punished for being seen as a naughty child. My love for the cutting and pasting activity (kirigami) then faded away within me as a child and within me as an adult. When I started teaching I do not remember myself giving children a chance to do cut and paste activities.

Becoming aware of the value of child initiated activities

Through memory-work, I have become aware that teachers not allowing children to demonstrate their own creativity in coming up with their own activities might hinder the teaching and learning of creative arts and other subjects. I have been reminded of how I taught creative arts at school and how I did not allow learners in my class to do their own child initiated activities. When I think back, I feel sad and embarrassed because I now see how I might have hindered the growth of children's creativity. However, when I was a teacher I thought that teaching creative arts was about coming up with my own activities and not about allowing learners to initiate their own activities.

I have become aware that, in my facilitation as a subject advisor, I should involve Foundation Phase teachers in thinking of different creative art activities that will involve the learners. I should make sure that I encourage teachers to allow for free, child initiated creative activities where the teacher will bring different resources and ask the learners to do whatever they like to do with the resources that are put in front of them. I feel that Foundation Phase teachers must be encouraged to be flexible in their teaching of creative arts. Foundation Phase subject advisors and teachers should understand that their role is to support learners in their learning of creative arts. Similarly, Prentice (2000) reminds us that, "adults are crucial in the support of young children's creative development where the learners expose and engage with the world in different ways, to enable imaginative connections to be made between past and present experience" (p. 154).

I now see that creative arts is not about being stuck in the classroom doing formal work but it is about allowing learners to explore the world around them through engaging themselves in playful activities (O'Connor, 2013). In the Foundation Phase our teaching is supposed to be play based and we are supposed to lay a solid foundation for developing the child holistically and developing all the developmental domains such as communication, cognitive, emotional, social, language and physical development (DBE, 2009). If one domain is not developed to its fullest potential then there are chances of the child encountering problems in the future during his or her adult life.

The role of family and community



Figure 3.4. The fireplace: Family plays a vital role in the journey of a person's life.

The image presented in Figure 3.4 is a photograph of a fire place which I took in my home town. Fire is important to every household in that community since it brings hope, joy and warmth to the family. The fireplace is an area where the family will show togetherness when sitting down around it. Different families will share different activities when they are seated around the fire. Social activities that families will share around the fire include eating, laughter, discipline, respect, singing, family discussions, conversations, storytelling and some families will teach each other some skills of art work. The fire reminds me of the different art work I learnt through sharing information with my sisters.

I remember one day when my sister went to a village shop and came back with a bulky package of two different types of wool and some crochet needles. We agreed that everybody must make a dowel (a mat made of wool that is put on the table or cupboard for decorations) because we were still learning how to handle a needle and to do different stitches. As we sat around the fire we would share ideas on how to do crochet, knitting and art work made of grass. This created harmonious relationships and a relaxed atmosphere at home. Nobody wanted to go and sleep that day because we wanted to finish our dowels. There was a lot of moving back and forth trying to correct where we went wrong. The fire kept us warm and

energetic to proceed with our crochet work without even seeing that it was dawn in the morning. I remember that even when I was in bed I did not fall asleep because I wanted to finish my crochet work in which I was supported by a flickering light from the paraffin lamp (*isiphefu*).

This photograph of the fireplace further reminds me of the singing we would do with my brothers and sisters. It reminds me of my big brother who passed on in July 2001. He loved singing. He would start the song, “In the beginning God created ...”. Then my elder sister would join in “heaven and earth ...” and everybody else would join in singing as well. That would be the start of our singing and songs would come one after another. Sometimes we would start singing the church songs using the church handbook and sometimes we would sing traditional songs such as “*Nginehhashi lami elali hamba lenze nje*”. (This can be translated as “I have a horse which walks like this”.) My elder sister who was already a teacher would come up with new songs that she would teach us to sing. Sometimes we would sing while doing an art work activity which would make forget that we were working. The singing brought pleasure, harmony, unity and laughter at home, especially if there was a person who was not singing well. If it happened that you were not at home you would feel the loneliness and miss the fun and pleasure the family members were having together around the fire place. Correspondingly, Iwai (2003) explains that through music positive relationships can be enhanced and children’s emotional and social growth can be developed.

I also remember the days when I and my mother would sit around the fire and she would help me with the art work that the teachers asked us to bring to school. We would collect grass and plastics and start weaving doormats. Looking back, I feel sad that when I was at school as teacher I did not teach these activities to my learners. When I was a teacher at school we had a plan from the former Department of Education and Culture that we were expected to follow which did not talk about activities such as weaving, cutting and pasting, painting and drawing. Furthermore, I was not the only Standard 1 (Grade 3) teacher. So, as a novice teacher, I had to follow what the other teachers were doing in their classrooms during creative arts lessons.

I feel that subject advisors and teachers must be aware that creative arts is not something that can be practiced within the school setting only. Teachers must make sure they allow learners to do creative activities that they come up with from their homes and also allow them to teach

these to other learners. As a subject advisor, I should encourage Foundation Phase teachers to teach other teachers creative arts activities that they have learned outside school in the communities they are coming from. Recalling my memories of the handwork we made at home has also helped me to see that developing creativity does not necessarily require expensive resources. Waste materials that the learners can bring to class can help in developing creativity.



Figure 3.5. Beadwork: “This is wonderful my sister”.

The image presented above in Figure 3.5 is a photograph that I took at home. This is one of my sister's pieces of beadwork which she did during the winter holidays. This photograph makes me think of many people that have shown progress in their lives and have done important things like paying for their children's education through the skills that they developed at a young age. These people are regarded as talented and can earn a living through their talents. A talent is something that is within you but it also needs to be nurtured and developed. In my view, creative arts can help a person to develop skills for survival and to be able to support herself. Likewise, Prentice (2000) reports that developing creative industries can contribute to the economy of a country and help fight unemployment.

The beautiful beadwork in Figure 3.5 was done by a person who did not know how to start threading beads and making such a beautiful design. But because she was interested and willing to learn how to do beadwork then her dream became true. The beadwork has a design

and a pattern such as two black beads, then three black beads, and this is done throughout the line to make a pattern which shows the dexterity the person has developed.

I learned beadwork outside of school with the help of my sisters and my mother. To the family, it was seen as part of our cultural attire and so every woman was expected to have a skill to make it, not only for selling, but also to make it for her children. I can now see that this helped us to develop different skills which were school related such as eye hand co-ordination and fine muscles and it helped us to maintain unity and close interrelationships within the family. Thus my family played a vital role in providing me with informal education on the learning of creative arts.

The photograph in Figure 3.5 further brings back the memories of women in my area who used to sit down along the streets and sell beadwork to people from the community and to tourists. The kind of beadwork they sold resembled South Africa as a rainbow nation because one could see the way the women could match different colours into a beautiful beadwork piece. While they were in the street selling they were also carrying on with their work making beadwork while keeping the interrelations with other fellow women in the street which brought about harmony and mutual relationships in the community. When I look at the pattern in Figure 3.5, the threading and the weaving of the strings and the beads resemble the connections and the unity that women of the village have.

This image of the beadwork also brings to my mind things that I could have done with my learners at school when I was teaching. I did not include beadwork in my lessons, but I now think it is very important since learners can wear it during their cultural activities competitions (*Ubuhle be Africa*). The pattern in Figure 3.5 also reminds me of the pattern I used to teach my learners when I was reinforcing the concepts of phonics i.e. b, d, p, q, b, d, p, q.... I now see that I could have asked learners to complete such a pattern with beads.

I have realised that beadwork could be one of the examples I could show to teachers in workshops to demonstrate that creative arts teaching and learning can lead to two streams: fully developed fine muscles which are necessary for writing and handwriting and a child being an entrepreneur or an artist. Teachers must be creative enough to think of activities that they can teach to Foundation Phase learners, not only for the purpose of teaching but for the

purpose of developing each child to her or his fullest potential and to cope with the challenges of this world.



Figure 3.6. African musical heroines: The legacy lasts forever.

The photograph presented in Figure 3.6 shows African musical heroines, the Mahotella Queens. I took this image from the *Isolezwe* newspaper. These ladies shown in the photograph are regarded as legendary African musicians because they promoted the singing of African music. This photograph brings back the memories of my primary school learning where teachers would give us time in the afternoon to stand in front of the class and make a line of boys at the back and girls at the front. We would sing different songs that we had listened to on the radio and other songs from the community.

This was a wonderful experience since we would forget about the teaching and learning and start enjoying ourselves by dancing different steps that went with the rhythm. The singing was not for competition but it was for enjoyment and I can now see how it stimulated teamwork and positive social interaction with other learners. Likewise, Iwai (2003) explains that, “art activities enhance children’s self-awareness, self-confidence and acceptance of others” (p. 3). The singing was not supported by any musical instruments; it was our voices only. The teachers used to sing with us and teach us how to dance for that particular song. If they did not know the step the learners who knew the step would be put to the front to teach us the step. This is one example I can recall where our former teachers did allow learners to go outside to learn and enjoy creative arts.

Looking at the background of the photograph in Figure 3.6 you can see that one of the ladies is holding a trophy. The trophy reminds me of the choral music which was done at school. Everybody was forced to join the choral music no matter whether you could sing well or not. Our practice session would start at seven o'clock in the morning and finish at four o'clock in the afternoon. If the break time was 30 minutes we would be given a 10 minute break and be expected to go and practice singing. I remember Mr M. who was the music conductor would punish us if we come late after seven o'clock and also if we were not singing the notes correctly. Unfortunately, this developed the hatred of choral music among many of the learners in school because it was not about choosing to sing as everybody was forced. Nevertheless, I remember that when I was in Standard 4 (Grade 6) we went to a choral music competition and we won a trophy. We were so happy that we had won and the love for music started developing within us. We learned that music can make a person happy and that people can form groups and build relationships through music.

The image in Figure 3.6 further represents the role models of our African music cultural heritage who promoted African music in our lives. Through listening and watching their performances youngsters developed a love for music and started their own music groups and sometimes even went on to start recording companies. Through this I have become aware that music can help a person to learn and understand her cultural heritage and that we must not look down at our musical cultural heritage as Africans. Iwai (2003) reminds us that, “through arts education children can enhance their interpersonal skills such as teamwork, tolerance and appreciation of diversity in people and ideas and effective communication ability” (p. 6). In the same way, I now see that children should be given an opportunity to perform traditional music at school as it can allow understanding of cultural identities and it can develop positive social skills and teamwork.

Listening to the radio, watching television and paying visits to the shows where African music was promoted helped me to develop a love of African music. When I became a teacher I encouraged learners in my class to sing and dance and to know that by so doing there is no shame about African music but we need to honour our cultural heritage in different ways. This resulted in our school being involved in cultural activities through cultural competitions (*Ubuhle be Africa*). Learners would perform activities such as African gospel, traditional songs (*amahubo*) boys and girls, creative poetry, traditional dance for boys and girls

(ingoma). A lot of teachers did not have skills to train learners in these activities and we used to invite outside people within the community to come and assist our learners. This indicates to me that the community can play a big role in promoting creative arts with the children. As a subject advisor, I am working in a multicultural and a multi-racial district. I now understand that in my facilitation of creative arts I need to allow teachers to share different cultural songs and role play and dance to them so that other teachers will know how to sing and dance to different traditional songs.

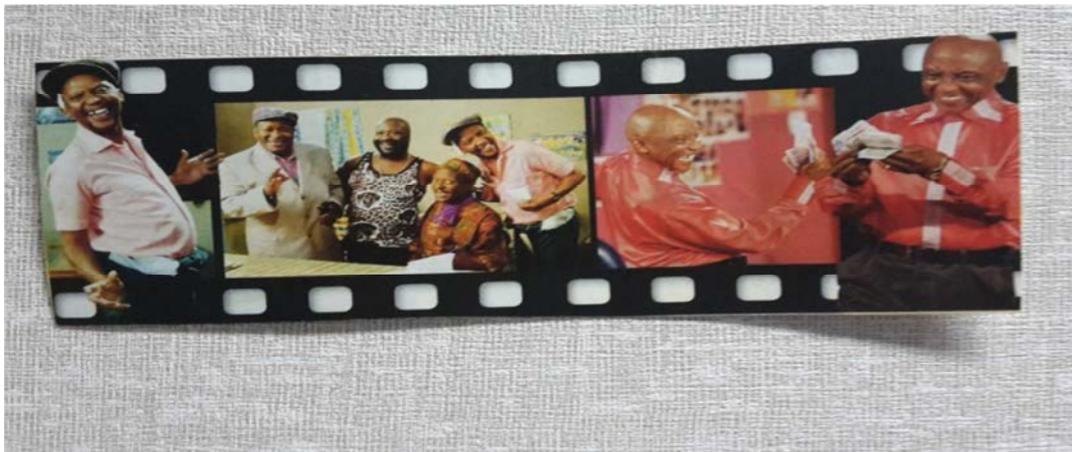


Figure 3.7. The role played by television in promoting creative arts.

The above photograph Figure 3.7 is taken from the Drum magazine. The photograph reminds me of the first black and white television set that my elder sister brought at home. During those times we had no electricity since my home was in a disadvantaged rural area. To view this television we had to charge the car battery so that we could watch news, comedies and music. During the day we would play with friends during our spare time where we would role play what we saw in the television or sometimes we would create our own stories and start to role play them.

The image (Figure 3.7) also represents the part that can be played by the television in promoting interest in creative arts. In my experience, watching television and seeing people doing role play and performing musical items has developed a love of creative arts in the younger generation. The television seems to have been an inspiration to the youth even when drama was not practiced in schools. Through watching television, some young people have grown in the talents of music and drama and are now earning a living out of them.

I remember how when I was teaching in a Foundation Phase class I would ask learners to demonstrate what they had watched on television. Sometimes I would ask them to do a talent show where they would act like a singer or an artist and sing his or her songs. This also helped children to develop self-confidence and self-esteem by standing in front of people and being able to perform. I have observed that children of today can sing a song exactly like an artist; they know the songs word by word and can dance like them.

Becoming aware of the significant role of family and community

I feel that Foundation Phase subject advisors and teachers must be flexible in our teaching to try and make use of all strategies and resources that will promote learning. We must not forget that in the Foundation Phase we are laying the solid foundation for our children's future. Foundation Phase teachers and subject advisors need to be creative in our planning of the lesson activities, to make use of the resources that the learners are familiar with and try and relate learning activities to the way of life the children are living within their family and community contexts. Through memory-work, I have become aware of the effort my family and the community contributed to my learning of creative arts. I was able to do art work as a child because of the support and the learning I received from my family and the community; this makes me value and respect them.

Formal learning and teaching of creative arts

My primary school years

My primary school was four kilometres away from home. My parents would take that advantage and would keep me in the fields until the bell rang. Corporal punishment was frequently exercised during this time and if I arrived at school late the school principal would be standing by the gate waiting for latecomers. Sometimes corporal punishment would start at the gate in the morning and would end behind our classroom when the teacher was punishing those that did not bring art work to school.

When I was at school, art work activities in the early years of learning were not given priority, but they were prescribed by the former Department of Education and Culture to tell the teachers what it was that the learners should do. The art work lesson was one period once per week and I can now see that this was not enough time for young children to explore the world around them. I can now see that this could have resulted in developing poor skills and

lack of creativity in the teaching of creative arts and in integrating art activities in other subjects to make teaching and learning more fun, interesting and meaningful.

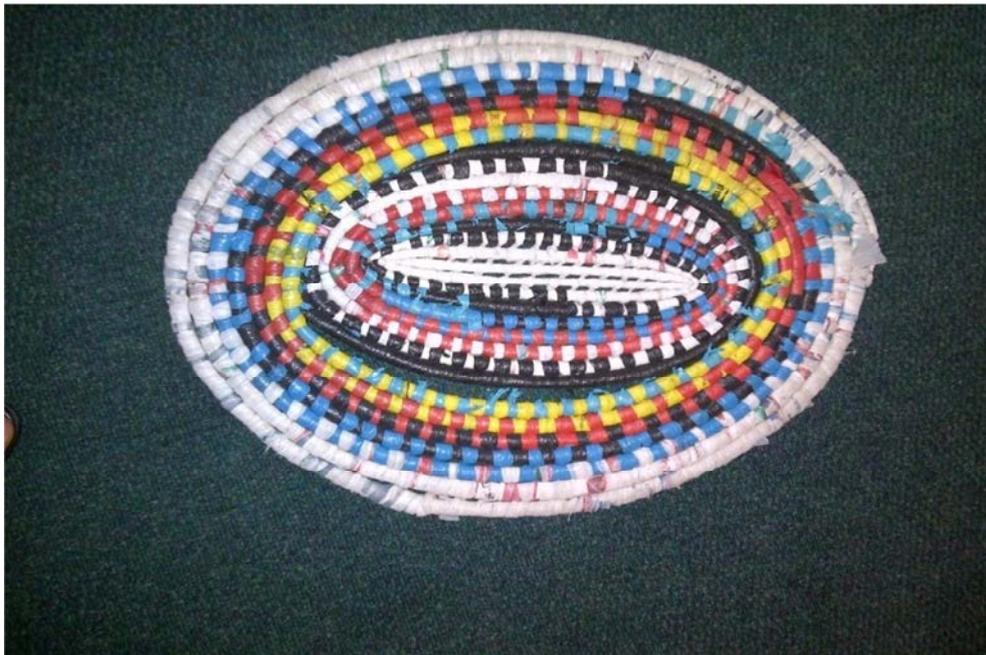


Figure 3.8. The doormat: Art work behind our classroom.

Something that comes to my mind when a person talks about art work is a doormat (Figure 3.8). These doormats were made from waste plastic bags and dry grass. My mother and my elder sister would assist me in collecting waste plastic bags and would accompany me to go to the forest to collect grass for making doormats. This grass was put outside to get dry before it was used to make the doormats.

When I look at this artefact of the doormat (Figure 3.8) I think of the punishment we would get on Thursday afternoon if we had not brought our art work to school or if we had failed to make a proper doormat or crochet work. I recall how some children would attend the morning classes but then, when it was the art work period, they would disappear and absent themselves for the afternoon classes. Maybe this was because of fear of punishment or of being unable to do proper art work.

As far as I remember, the making of doormats, crochet work, grass brooms and wooden spoons were the only art work activities that were supported and accepted by our teachers. Looking back, I see that most of these activities were gender biased. For example, girls were

expected to make crochet work or doormats and boys were expected to make wooden spoons or grass brooms. At school we were not given paint brushes or lead pencils to draw anything that came to our minds or the objects we liked. Lead pencils were used for Mathematical and General Science drawings, which I did not enjoy because I thought I was unable to do them. The art work activities were part of the progression process for art work as a subject. This meant that every learner was expected to have submitted a number of art work activities to the teacher in order to progress to the next grade. Cultural heritage played a role in this because our parents were able to assist us with these activities because they were known to the community. At the end of school year, parents would come to an event where teachers would sell our art work to the parents after it had been assessed and marks had been allocated.

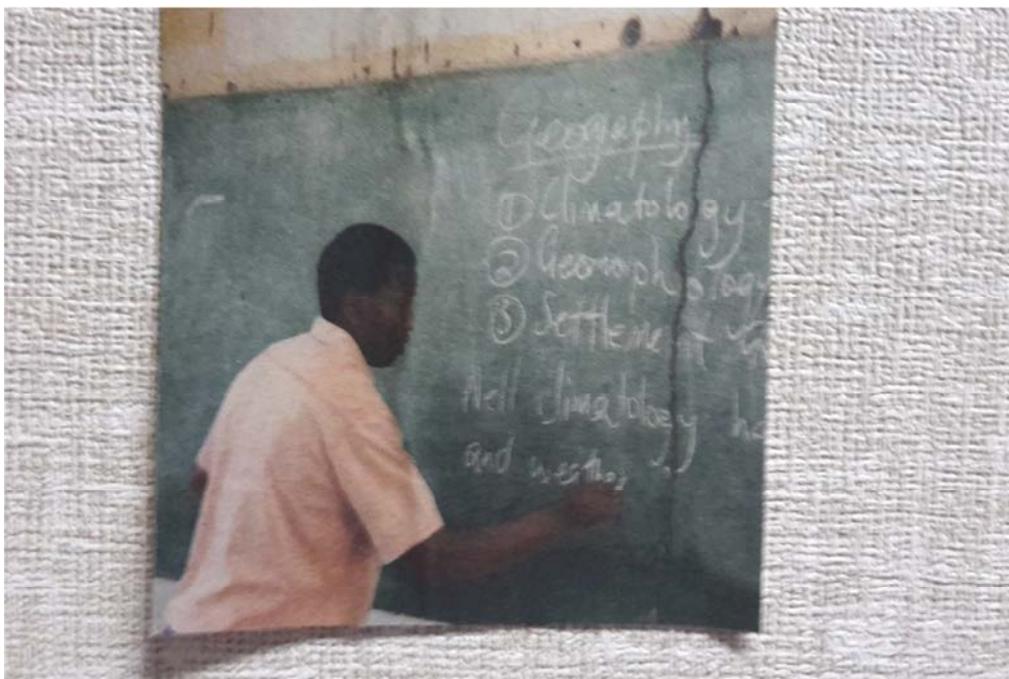


Figure 3.9. The chalkboard: My lived experience as a learner.

The photograph presented above in Figure 3.9 is an image that I took from the *Isolezwe* newspaper. If I look closely at the photograph (Figure 3.9) I can see that the wall is not print rich. I think that because our school was in a church building, the church elders did not allow teachers to paste charts and posters on the walls. The photograph shows a picture of a teacher in class using a chalkboard with cracks, which suggests that the school does not have enough resources. The chalkboard brings back memories of the chalkboard which was the most

powerful tool for teaching and learning during my schooling phase from Sub-Standard A (Grade 1) up to Standard 10 (Grade 12). Most of the activities that teachers would provide for us learners were through the chalkboard. The teaching conditions did not seem to allow teachers to come up with other strategies such as asking learners to do painting, making collage or cutting and pasting that could have helped us to develop our fine muscles and to learn concepts in a meaningful and enjoyable way. Maybe this was because of not having sufficient materials and resources or maybe the teachers did not have relevant skills to teach through creative arts activities. Correspondingly, Nutbrown (2011) reports that teachers who lack competence in creative arts teaching often did not get time to practice creative arts during their early learning. The chalkboard then must have seemed the best teaching resource for the teachers.

This image of the chalkboard thus represents most of the teaching that I received during my primary schooling. Teachers relied on the chalkboard as their main teaching resource and the learners were using writing materials to write on such as slates (a hard small board which was used by the learners in the early grades to write on), and jotters (an exercise book with soft pages that was used by the learners in the early grades to write on). Teaching was formal and the learners were expected to be formal, focusing their attention on teacher initiated activities. This did not provide opportunities for learner engagement which could have developed learners to be innovative and creative thinkers (O'Connor, 2013). As a result, learners would become bored and become disruptive, which would lead to severe punishment by the teachers.

One exception to this was my Sub-Standard A (SSA) teacher Mrs P., who would ask us to bring clay to class. I remember how my mother would accompany me to go to the river where we would dig clay. Everybody in class would be so excited and would be longing to see what we were going to do with clay. Mrs P. brought water and we would mould the clay. I recall how we were asked to mould a picture of our mothers. The teacher then asked us to mould a phonic “m” and to put it above the picture and then to mould a word “mama” and put it below the picture (see Figure 3.9.1).

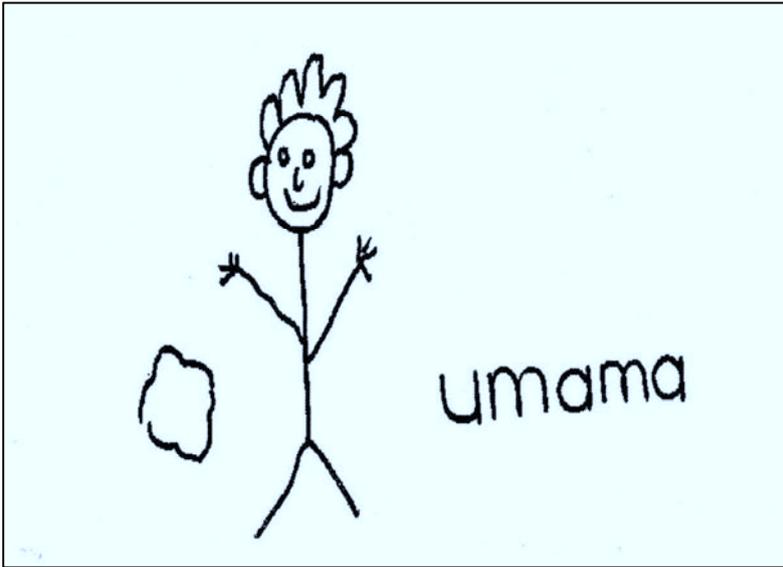


Figure 3.9.1. A memory drawing of using clay to mould the word “umama”.

Nutbrown (2011) suggests that for teachers to support learners’ creativity they need to come up with teaching strategies that are stimulating, flexible and pleasurable, and which will allow for learner participation and engagement. I loved the way Mrs P. taught us the phonics and, looking back, I can see that it helped me to master phonics more easily which made me really enjoy the learning in my first year of schooling.

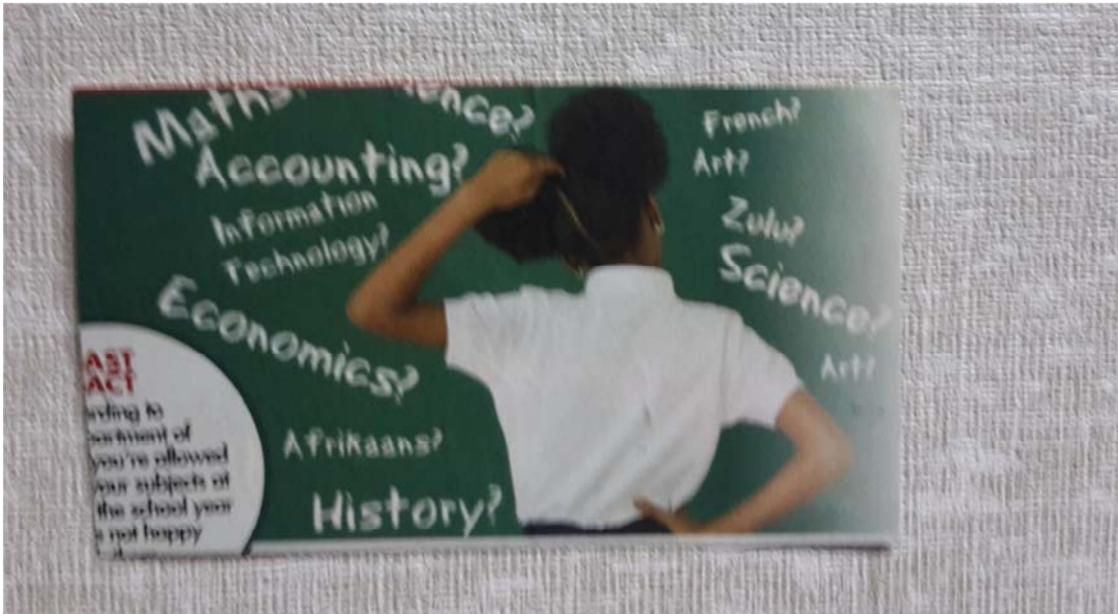


Figure 3.10. The confusion I had about creative arts.

The photograph presented in Figure 3.10 is taken from a Drum magazine. This image reminds me of the confusion I had about creative arts. If I think deeply, I can see that this confusion started in my early years of learning when I was in the primary school. I remember the times when the teacher would ask the learners to go outside behind our classroom to sit down and do our art work. I do not remember the teacher explaining to us what art work was and what the benefits of art in our lives could be. Confusion was even made worse when learners were asked to do art work without being taught how to do it. For example, I remember a Standard 1 (Grade 3) teacher, Mrs H. When we first started the art work, Mrs H. asked us to bring plastic bags and grass to school. The next day, we were sent outside to make door mats. However, none of the learners had an idea of how to start making a door mat. Fortunately, we received the help of other learners who were older than us. They showed us how to start making a door mat. I remember that mine did not have the knots to make it tight. I was failing to make knots and to shape it so that it became round. I agree that everybody has an artistic potential, but I believe that the potential one has at an early age must be nurtured and be developed in an appropriate way (O'Connor, 2013).

My secondary school years

I attended Standard six (Grade 8) at the secondary school which was near my primary school. The secondary school went up to Standard eight (Grade 10). There were no more art work activities done. Life was lonely and miserable since learners were now not even interested in playing during break time. The only activities that involved learners were soccer and netball, athletics and choral music. To keep myself busy, I joined the choir for choral music although I knew very well that I was not good at music.

My tertiary education

I did my teacher training in a college which was in a township. A township is an area which was formerly allocated for occupation by black people during the apartheid era. The college was dominated by white lecturers and only about 5% of the lecturers were Zulu speaking and there were no Indians or Coloureds.

At the teachers training college, art was done once a week for an hour and not much theory was done during the art lessons. I suppose art theory might have given me an idea of why art is important? The practical activities were useful, but because I was not informed about their underlying value I did not enjoy them.

My teaching career

My career teaching started with me teaching in one of the junior primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The school was in a deep rural area servicing a community that was mostly unemployed. This was not a new experience to me since I was also coming from a similar background. So, I could understand the situation the learners were coming from. The school did not have enough resources and most of the teachers were under qualified with a Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC) or unqualified with only Standard eight or Standard ten.

When I started teaching I had my art book from the college with me, This had different art work activities that I thought I would teach to my learners. I brought my art book and showed my fellow teachers the new activities that the learners could practice. One teacher told me that they could not teach art to the learners in this way because of insufficient materials such as paint, paint brushes, cardboard, scissors and crayons. So, as I have described earlier on in this chapter, I forgot about my art book which I got from the college and I had to think back to the art activities that were done when I was at primary school and also look at the art work that other teachers were practicing at the school.

My career as a subject advisor for Foundation phase

After 13 years of teaching in the junior primary school I was promoted to one of the districts in Kwa-Zulu Natal as a subject advisor for Foundation Phase. A subject advisor is a departmental official who is responsible for monitoring and support, as well as organising and conducting workshops for teachers. When I started in the office based post I was expecting that I would receive orientation, monitoring and support from my supervisors, but unfortunately it did not happen that way. I felt miserable and full of frustration. However, the challenges that I experienced at a young age while growing up had groomed me and made me a strong person who can face any difficulty.

In 2011, I trained Foundation Phase teachers on the new curriculum policy known as Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011). The CAPS training period armed me to become more confident with curriculum related issues. When I was conducting workshops teachers would pose difficult questions as they saw me as a representative of the DBE and they were tired of the constant changes in the curriculum

policy. This situation prompted me to interact with and know the policy documents well, which helped me to be able to give clarity in response to the teachers' concerns.

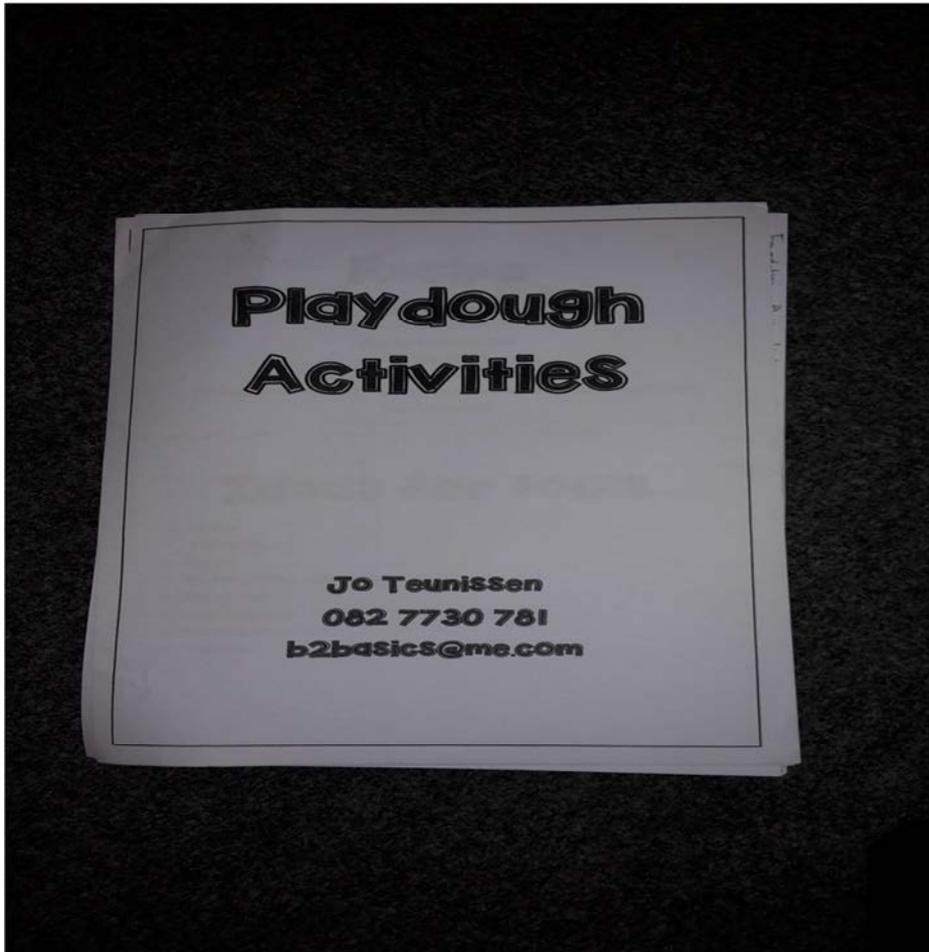


Figure 3.11. Workshop hand outs

Creative arts should allow learners to explore, discover and experiment with the world around them (Nutbrown, 2011). Henriksen and Mishra (2013) suggest that creative teachers connect their teaching to the real world of the learners so that it becomes meaningful. Creativity is something that we all possess but it needs to be nurtured at a very young age so that it grows with us (O'Connor, 2013). Figure 3.11 shows the hand outs that Foundation Phase teachers received from one of the ex-Model C (formerly white schools that were privileged during the apartheid era) primary schools within the district I work in. The workshop was organised by me and my supervisor at the DBE on creative arts teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase. As Oreck (2004) points out, “schools and district administrators should make in-service arts workshop a priority for early years teachers” (p. 67). Foundation Phase teachers

from the ex-Model C school conducted the workshop in order to assist Foundation Phase teachers from other, less advantaged schools to teach creative arts more effectively.

However, the workshop showed me that more training was needed so that teachers in less disadvantaged schools could be enlightened on different creative art activities so that they could use these in their daily teaching. This could develop confidence in the teachers and ultimately help learners to develop holistically. In the same way, Garvis and Pendergast (2011) suggest that, if teachers have a sense of high self-efficacy there is a high possibility of students performing successfully.

The intensity and the practicality of the creative arts workshop contributed positively to my thinking about my own workshop facilitation as a subject advisor for Foundation Phase. I felt that I needed to change my facilitation of creative arts from being based on theory to focus more on practical work of the four art forms spelt out by the Life Skills CAPS document, which are dance, drama, music and visual arts (DBE, 2011. p. 9).

My personal teaching and facilitation metaphors

As discussed in Chapter Two, identifying my own personal teaching or facilitation metaphors through memory-work helped me to become more reflective about how I was taught and how I learned creative arts and also to consider how I might change my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning for the better. A metaphor that I have chosen to represent my memories of learning and teaching creative arts is different kinds of cotton when they are tangled together (see Figure 3. 12).



Figure 3.12. Tangled cotton: My memories of learning and teaching creative arts.

A person who wants to untie this cotton will have difficulty because they will not know where to start. The cotton that is cluttered together represents the confusion which resulted in my lack of knowledge and skills in teaching creative arts in the classroom and in facilitating creative arts teaching and learning as a subject advisor. This artefact also symbolises how I felt like a fish out of water. I assume that many of the Foundation Phase teachers are feeling the same when it comes to teaching of creative arts since it now comes with the four art forms which are drama, dance, music and visual arts. The challenge is that, like me, many of these Foundation Phase teachers were not taught these four art forms at school.

Another metaphor that I have chosen is a house which is falling apart (see Figure 3.13). This represents how my teaching of creative arts was not built on a solid foundation.



Figure 3.13. A house falling apart: Lacking a solid foundation of creative arts.

Figure 3.13 is photograph of a house falling apart which I took while I was driving along in the area where I stay. The consequences of not building a house on a solid foundation are the same as that of a child not getting a solid foundation in the development of the self towards adulthood. I now see that the outcome of my teaching could have caused damage to my learners' adult lives because they were lacking a solid foundation of creative arts, which is regarded as an essential milestone in the development of creativity (Nutbrown, 2011).



Figure 3.14. A small and a big tree: The contributions of my family and community

Figure 3.14 shows two trees. I took this photograph at work when one of the gardeners was watering the garden. The small tree is growing very well because it is nurtured by the gardener. The gardener waters the garden every day so that the small tree gets enough nutrients through the collection of roots that it has. As the years goes by, the small tree will grow and become big. When the tree is big it will provide shade to human beings, protect buildings and people against strong winds. The big tree will bring protection and joy to the people who are around it. The process of a growing tree being nurtured every day is a metaphor for the contribution my family and the community made to my learning of creative arts. Through memory-work I have realised that although creative arts was neglected in my schooling, the art forms that I was exposed to and learned because of the support of my family and the community did nurture the development of my creativity in significant ways.



Figure 3.15. I started fixing cars at my young age! The value of child-initiated activities.

The photographs in Figure 3.15 remind me of the potential benefits of child initiated activities in developing creative arts and other subject areas. I took the photograph of the wire car. It was made by children in my community and reminds me of child initiated activities that I played at home and at school. I took the photograph of the car engine at my work. The metaphor of the car as shown by these two photographs reminds me that in my early years there were not enough facilities to play with. Nevertheless, children were creative enough to come up with different play activities, which had educational potential.

Through memory-work, I have become aware that as Foundation Phase subject advisors and teachers we must become more open to child-initiated creativity. Becoming aware of the value of child initiated activities for creative arts teaching and learning, as well as other subjects such as mathematics and languages, could bring change in me as a subject advisor to better facilitate creative arts with teachers in the Foundation Phase.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I narrated memories of learning and teaching creative arts, starting from home experiences up to my recent occupation as a subject advisor. In composing my narrative, I used a range of research strategies such as artefact retrieval, collage making and memory-drawing. This memory-work journey assisted me in remembering a range of activities related to both informal and formal learning of creative arts. I found that the memories of my past experiences of learning in relation to creative arts evoked both sad and happy memories and helped me to identify negative and positive contributions of my past experiences to my own learning and teaching of creative arts.

I recalled and described a range of informal experiences related to the learning and teaching of creative arts. These included those that were initiated by me or other children, such as *umagalobha* and *amapele*, as well as art activities that were done within the family such as crochet work, singing, dance and role playing. I also discussed the role played by television in developing a love of art in me and in the community at large. I highlighted how these activities could have helped me in the teaching and facilitation of creative arts and how Foundation phase teachers could practice them at school to teach creative arts more effectively. I also indicated the importance of subject advisors alerting teachers to allow learners to come up with their own creative activities in class, which can develop imagination and self-esteem within the learners. In addition, I revisited my own learning of creative arts at school, which I referred to as my formal learning of creative arts. In discussing the formal learning of creative arts, I highlighted activities such as doormat making, crochet work, and the chalkboard as a central teaching resource.

Through memory-work, I have realised that in my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning I should draw attention to dance, singing and other art forms from diverse cultural heritages, as well as child initiated activities. I should also sensitise teachers to engage learners in creative activities. In addition, I have learned that as a Foundation Phase subject advisor, I need to be innovative in designing workshop activities. I should make use of resources that the teachers are familiar with and encourage teachers to share how they can improvise if there seem to be few material resources for creative arts teaching and learning. I should also try to relate the workshop activities to the way of life teachers and learners are living within their school, family and community contexts. For me to support teachers' creativity, I need to come up with strategies and activities that are motivating, flexible and

pleasurable, and which will allow for teacher participation and contribution. This corresponds to a socio-cultural theoretical perspective (see Chapter One), which highlights that learning and teaching can thrive in an environment that builds an active community of learning that is inclusive of diverse backgrounds and experiences (Gerhard & Mayer-Smith, 2008).

My thinking about the four metaphors that I presented in Chapter Three guided me in planning appropriate research activities to do with my teacher participants (as described in Chapter Four). In Chapter Four, I address my second critical question for the study: “*How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?*” I describe how, to answer this question, I used a range of strategies to gain a better understanding of how engaging with Foundation Phase teachers could contribute to my facilitation of creative arts.

CHAPTER FOUR: LEARNING FROM FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

Introduction

This dissertation presents self-study research that centres on my own learning as a Foundation Phase (Grade R to 3) subject advisor in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. The purpose of this study was to help me as a subject advisor to better support Foundation Phase teachers in relation to creative arts teaching and learning.

In the previous chapter, Chapter Three, I recounted my memories related to the teaching and learning of creative arts, starting from home up to my current position as a subject advisor. Through my narration I was able to highlight the most memorable experiences that made a mark in my life in relation to the learning and teaching of creative arts. These past experiences revealed a range of positive and the negative influences on my learning and teaching of creative arts. The journey of memory-work portrayed both formal and informal learning of creative arts. Recalling some of these past experiences made me see how I could draw on my past informal learning experiences to enhance my facilitation of creative arts.

In this chapter, Chapter Four, I address my second research question: *“How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?”* To answer this question, I embarked on a range of activities to gain a better understanding of how Foundation Phase teachers could contribute to my facilitation of creative arts. The design of these activities was informed by what I had learned through my memory-work (as presented in Chapter Three). I give a summary of my journey with the teachers in a tabular form to show the process of three days of cluster meetings with Foundation Phase teachers (see Table 4.1).

In this chapter, I explain my introductory activity of a face mask which helped me to build a relaxed atmosphere while it triggered happy and sad memories in relation to the learning of creative arts. In addition, I relate teacher narratives in relation to the learning or teaching of creative arts. I reflect on my teacher participants' memories of their past experiences of how they learned or taught creative arts. I also explain how I encouraged teachers to embark on collage making, which enhanced group discussions. I then show how I created a self-portrait drawing to consolidate my learning from the teachers.

The cluster group meetings

As explained in Chapter Three, I invited six Foundation Phase teachers to participate in my research. I targeted teachers teaching in black, disadvantaged schools where I have observed that many teachers seem to be facing challenges in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. The teachers were from the three primary schools in one of the circuits in the district in which I work. I met these six teachers for a three day cluster meeting. A cluster meeting is when teachers of the same phase or grade meet to discuss and share ideas and strategies that will help them to overcome the challenges they are facing in their classrooms. I decided to use the cluster group for my research so that I would be able to work closely with a group of teachers who belonged to the same cluster and who already knew each other. The teachers who participated in this cluster meeting were all black females teaching in the Foundation Phase and the medium of instruction in their schools is IsiZulu. Two of their schools are in a rural area and one is in a semi-township area with a lot of informal housing (shacks). All the three schools have black children and service the communities where most of the learners' parents or guardians are unemployed.

I met with the participants once a week for three consecutive weeks. The duration of each meeting was approximately two hours. On the first day, I started by explaining that I was doing research with Foundation Phase teachers to improve my practice as a subject advisor. I had already approached the teachers privately asking for their participation and asking them to sign the consent form where I also explained that the cluster meeting was for the purposes of my research and that they were not obliged to participate.

At the first meeting, I further explained the procedure and the duration of the cluster meeting. I also explained that I would be taking photographs but that I would not take photographs of the teachers' faces. I told them that the focus of my photographs would be on what they would be doing, such as their introductory activity where they would draw masks when introducing themselves, narrating their memories using artefacts and discussing their collage making activity. I also explained that I would audio record their voices when they were narrating their memories of how they learned creative arts.

In meeting with the cluster group members I intended to bridge the gap between me as a subject advisor and them as Foundation Phase teachers in relation to creative arts teaching

and learning. I intended to better understand their experiences and concerns and to get more ideas on how to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning. I anticipated that the meetings with the cluster group would assist me to better understand how I could meet and address the challenges of Foundation Phase teachers with regards to creative arts teaching and learning.

Below is a table (Table 4.1) that indicates the process of my research journey with the teachers. The table has four columns which show the research process. The first column on the left hand side (day one to day three) shows the number of meeting days with the cluster group. The second column comprises the content that was covered per day. The third column illustrates my activities as a researcher. Lastly, the fourth column covers the cluster group activities.

Table 4.1
The process of my research journey with the cluster group

Foundation phase teachers			
Summary of the cluster meeting			
Cluster meeting days	Topic/content	Researcher activity	Cluster group activity
Day one	Introduction and setting the scene (My early learning of creative arts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the purpose of the meeting, the rules and the activity for the day. • Narrate my personal experience of how I learned creative arts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory activity • Mask making • Moulding names with play dough
Day two	Memory-work through artefact retrieval.	Explain the activity for the day and discuss their	Narratives of memory-work prompted by artefacts

		homework (explaining how I made my collage)	
Day three	Collage making	Explain the activity for the day	Group discussions prompted by collage making.

Sharing my early learning of creative arts

I explained to the focus group members that I was going to introduce myself using a face mask, which was made out of a paper plate. My face mask was divided into two halves, which represented my two main feelings about how I learned creative arts. The first half was a happy face, which represented the happy memories that I have of learning creative arts. I explained to the cluster group members that this was in relation to my informal learning of creative arts because it involved child-initiated activities or activities initiated by members of my family rather than formal learning and teaching at school (as described in Chapter Three).



Figure 4.1. Showing my mask of my feelings about my learning of creative arts.

The second half of my mask was a sad face, which represented the bad memories I have of the learning of creative arts at school where the teachers would punish me if I was not doing the art work correctly or I did not bring anything to work with (see Chapter Three). Through this mask activity I aimed to bridge the gap between me as a subject advisor and the

Foundation Phase teachers so that they could feel at ease and be able to share ideas that would help me to better facilitate creative arts. Furthermore, the activity was intended to trigger a range of memories of my and the teachers' past experiences in relation to creative arts teaching and learning.

This discussion of my mask evoked a lot of memories from the teachers and I could see that everybody was thinking of their own experiences of how they learned creative arts. The mood of the group changed since this exercise triggered a lot of bad and happy memories in the teachers' minds. I remember Mrs N. frowning while nodding her head and I could see that there were a lot of thoughts that were coming to her mind. Miss S. was laughing to herself and this made me wonder whether she had had similar experiences to those I was talking about.

While I was introducing myself through the face mask I was also referring to a collection of art work artefacts that I brought to the meeting venue. Showing the teachers this art work assisted me in bringing to life the happy and sad memories of my learning and teaching of creative arts. For example, I held up a home-made skipping rope and explained that, "Teachers would look at us during break times when we were playing with skipping ropes. They did not seem to think that the activity was very important for gross motor skills development". I also held up a doormat. I explained that it brought sad memories to me because teachers would punish us if we did not bring artwork to the school or when we were not doing it properly. While I was holding the doormat I said, "When I look at this doormat I just think of my teacher who would punish us when we did not bring art work in class". The photograph below depicts an assortment of artefacts that I displayed at the venue.



Figure 4.2. My creative arts artefacts.

Below is a table (Table 4.2.) showing the art work material that I brought to the venue.

Table 4.2.

A list of artefacts that I brought to the venue

Happy memories	Sad memories
Skipping rope	Doormat
Car wire	Play dough
Crochet work	
An old record	
Beadwork	

After my introduction and a lengthy discussion that was aroused by the mask presentation and the artefacts, I then gave cluster group members an opportunity to do the mask activity. I asked the cluster group members to draw their masks to help them tell the group about how they learned or taught creative arts at school. I gave them lead pencils and paper plates to create their face masks. While I was distributing the material, I heard Miss G. saying, “*Ave kungihlula ukudweba mina*” (translated as “I am not good in drawing”). This was a good opportunity for me to explain that I was not expecting fancy drawings. I showed them my first drawing (Figure 4.3.), which was not fancy since I also feel that I am not good at drawing.



Figure 4.3. Showing my first drawing of a face mask.

After I showed the cluster group members my first drawing they then seemed relieved and started drawing their own faces. While the participants were busy drawing (see Figure 4.4. and Figure 4.5), I was moving around having one-on-one conversations in IsiZulu, assuring them that they were doing well with their drawings and that their drawings were not going to be assessed. Coming closer and sharing ideas with teachers created a relaxed atmosphere. This developed a strong relationship and mutual trust between me and my participants.



Figure 4.4. A face drawing by a cluster group member.



Figure 4.4. Face drawings of the cluster group members.

Memories triggered by the teachers' drawings

The drawing activity of a face mask triggered sad and happy memories for the teachers. At first, when I asked the participants to draw their faces they started by saying, “*Angisakhumbuli mina ngawufunda kanjani umsebenzi wezandla ngoba sekukudala*” (translated as “I do not remember how I learned creative arts”). These comments made me assume they were ashamed to share their sad stories with the group members.



Figure 4.6. A teacher's drawing of a happy and a sad face mask.

I remember how one participant, Mrs K., just began talking and forgot even to tell the group her name. She shot straight to her memories of the learning of creative arts, which she said was not a nice experience. She told the group that when she was doing Standard 1 (Grade 3) the teacher would punish them severely if they did not bring the material to make doormats on Thursdays. As she told her story, I could tell that she was a bit emotional by listening to her voice and the way she was uttering the words to explain this sad experience. She proceeded to explain that doormats were the only art work that the girls were asked to do and the boys would do wooden spoons.

Miss G. told the group that one day in their classroom they were asked to make crochet Dowels. Her dowel started to lose its shape and it looked like a hat. The teacher was moving around checking their art work and when she came next to Miss G. the teacher took the dowel from Miss G. and put it on her head and she asked her, “*Yini le i doweli noma isigqoko?*” (This is translated as “Is this a dowel or a hat?”). Punishment followed after that question without any explanation from the teacher on how to make a dowel. Oreck (2004) maintains that many teachers “lack the confidence and autonomy to include the arts in their teaching” (p. 65). It seems that this was the case for many of my participants’ teachers.

Mrs M. told the group that she remembered Tuesdays, which were days for needlework. She was not good at doing needlework and her material would become dirty. One day the teacher kicked her out of the classroom and told her, “*Phuma hamba uyochelela ingadi*”. This could be translated as, “Go and work with the boys in the garden watering the plants”. Mrs M. further said, “*Ungibona nje angikwazi ukuthunga ngisho umphetho wengubo*” (translated as “ever since then I cannot sew even the hem of a dress”). Mrs M. explained that from that day, if there is something that needs to be sewed she will take it to her mother to sew for her.

Mrs S. explained that the way her Standard 1 teacher taught her to weave grass to make grass mats is still within her nerves in such a way that “*Uma umuntu ethi angimuluke ekhanda ngimubamba njengoba ngangiluka isikhonko uma ngenza umata*” (translated as “If a person asks me to tie her hair to make a style I will hold the hair the way I hold grass when weaving doormats”). She further explained that if teachers had showed them how to weave grass properly it could have helped her to learn to hold other things to weave them in a correct way. Mrs S. made an example of her having a problem with tying and related it to the problem she is having of tying other people's hair because of the lack of the correct skill she developed at

school. She commented that if teachers had taught them the correct skill of how to weave grass that could have helped those learners who did not finish school and who could have used those skills to make hair bonding in their saloons to earn a living.

The teachers' stories were so emotional, but at the same time they brought laughter to the participants since everybody had a sad story to tell which would make other people laugh because they could relate to it. When one was telling her story the others would join in before the storyteller could finish hers. This showed me that everybody had a memory which sometimes was triggered by hearing about someone else's experiences.



Figure 4.7. Teachers moulding their names with play dough.

I then closed the discussion and explained the next activity where teachers were expected to mould their names with play dough. I showed them play dough I had made at a school where I attended a workshop for creative arts (as explained in Chapter Three). Teachers who did not attend that workshop were so eager to learn how to make play dough and they were touching, feeling and smelling the play dough. Likewise, Henriksen and Mishra (2013) reveal that “opportunities for teachers to share their existing ideas and getting new ones from others is an excellent creative catalyst” (para. 4). The teachers moulded the letters and made their names

(see Figure 4.7). While they were busy moulding I explained to them that this activity showed me how we can integrate creative arts with other subjects, such as languages. I asked them a question, “Do you integrate creative arts with other subjects?” and they all said “Yes” and they gave me examples of arts-based activities they do with their learners in class, which also develop fine motor skills, such as moulding a picture which starts with a particular phonic or moulding the character of the story. All the participants then introduced themselves by showing and reading the names they had moulded.

I closed the day by giving the teachers homework whereby they would look for an object that would trigger their memories of how they learned or taught creative arts. I explained that the objects they would bring to class would be their artefacts since they would bring back the memories of how they learned or taught creative arts.

On our way home while I was transporting the teachers in my car, they were still talking about the sad and happy memories that were coming back out of the discussion we had during our introductory activity. This gave me an impression that most of the teachers have sad and happy memories in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. This made me think that as a subject advisor I should avoid the sad experiences they had recounted happening to the learners of today. Lastly, I could feel that the teachers were relaxed and the activities had evoked their past experiences of creative arts.

Foundation Phase teachers’ memory-work of creative arts teaching and learning

The preliminary activity for Day Two was an explanation and a reminder to the participants about the homework that I had asked them to do. They had been asked to look for artefacts that would help them remember how they learned or taught creative arts. As I indicated, on Day One while I was introducing myself, I also used artefacts to help me and the participants to think back about how we learned or taught creative arts.

Foundation Phase teachers’ narratives on how they learnt or taught creative arts

I started with the first participant, Mrs M., who was seated next to me on my left as we were seated around the table. Mrs M., explained, “I used to teach at a special school where we focused on teaching learners the skills other than the academic work because the learners were struggling to read and write”. She told us that art work activities were intended to equip the learners with survival skills. Mrs M. brought oven gloves which were decorated by the

learners at school through sun painting (see Figure 4.8). She explained the process of sun painting: “Sun painting is done by taking fabric and you put paint on it and you put the fabric with paint in the sun to dry”.



Figure 4.8. Sun painting.

Mrs M. further explained, “The designs are done by putting a round thing such as golf ball or a potato and you tie it around the cloth with paint and leave the fabric to dry”. Furthermore, Mrs M. explained alternative ways of making designs: “Sometimes they will put leaves to make a design where you put it on top of the material while it is wet and it dries with it”. Lastly, Mrs M. told the cluster group members about another design where she said, “You put rough salt on top of the material while it is wet and it will dry up and then the salt design will be left”.

Mrs M. then moved on to another type of a design they used at the special school: “We will ask learners to put dots of paint to the fabric or make drawings of any object in the cloth such as animals, trees and flowers”. Mrs M. then compared the special school environment where she had been teaching with her current school environment where the parents are more interested in written work than creative arts. She said, “*Izingane esizifundisayo kuhle uma singazifundisa ubuciko nokusungula sikuhlanganisa nezinye izifundo ukuze abantwana bakwazi ukupenda, ukudweba nokubumba ukuze bakhule izicubu ezincane nezinkulu*” (translated as “I recommend that the creative arts activities be integrated with other subjects

where learners will draw, mould and paint in order to develop their fine muscles”). Similarly Nutbrown (2011) views the integration of the arts into teaching and learning as central to learners’ holistic development. I then thanked Mrs M. for sharing with the cluster group how she taught creative arts and how she included some of visual art activities, which is one of the four art forms for creative arts.

Mrs K. then shared her experiences of learning creative arts with the cluster group: “I did a lot of craftwork at school such as grass mats, crochet and boys were doing wooden spoons”. Mrs K. further explained that learners benefited from all these activities: “These activities developed fine muscles and different skills which had helped learners to do things themselves and learn that they don’t buy everything”. Mrs K. brought her needlework which she was taught how to do at a primary school (see Figure 4.9). Mrs K. explained how her primary school teacher taught her needlework: “The needlework developed eye hand co-ordination, sewing skills and to distinguish between left and right because when you sew you start from right to left”.



Figure 4.9. Needlework.

While Mrs K. was discussing her learning of creative arts and its benefits for child development, the other group members came in also indicating how they learned needlework. I remember Mrs B. saying, “*Wawuthi uma usungcolile umthungo siwuhlanze ngesinkwa esinsundu*” (translated as “When the sewing material was dirty the teacher would bring brown bread to rub it on so that it removes dirt”). Mrs D. also indicated that she sees sewing

as an important skill because not all learners can read and write and there are learners that can earn a living out of sewing.

Miss S. brought her crochet work which she was busy making by putting the crochet needle in and out and pulling the red wool to make a stitch while we were busy discussing the artefacts (see Figure 4.109). She seemed to be feeling very happy as she was busy making her crochet work but also discussing with the group. Miss S. explained to the group how her Standard one (Grade 3) teacher taught them how to do crochet: “The teacher explained to me how to make a dowel holding my hand showing me how to hold a crochet needle and how pull the wool and make a stitch.”



Figure 4.10. Crochet work.

Miss S. further shared with the group her memories of how her Standard one (Grade 3) teacher would punish her when she was failing to do crochet work after she was taught: “The teacher would hit me with a big stick if I was failing to make a dowel”. Miss S. further explained that “this led to me crying if I could not do the dowel properly because I knew that the teacher would hit me”. Miss S. laughed and everybody laughed, but you could see that this was emotional for her by the way she was expressing it and the gestures she was making. Miss S. also told the group that “The positive impact to me in learning crochet is that I am still making my own dowel even today”.

Mrs B. brought two calabashes that she used to explain her formal and informal learning of moulding using clay and paper mache (see Figure 4.11).



Figure 4.11. Paper mache calabashes.

Mrs B. started by discussing the old calabash, which had a crack at the top and was very heavy to hold. She told the group that “*Uma ngibuka lolukhamba ngikhumbula indlela ende esasiyihamba siyokha ubumba lokwakha izinkamba. Lapho lwalukhiwa khona ubumba kwakunomgodi omkhulu owesabekayo*” (translated as “this old calabash brings the memory of travelling long distances to the place where we would get proper clay to mould the calabash”). She indicated that this was not a nice experience because in the area there was a big hole that you were supposed to get inside to dig clay. I looked at Mrs B.’s face and I could see that this was not a pleasant experience for her. As she was narrating her experience, I heard her sighing sometimes and laughing to herself, which indicated to me that the experience was tough for her. Mrs B. further explained the process of preparing the clay before it was ready for use: “*Uma sifika ekhaya kwakusithatha isikhathi eside siluxova lolubumba ukuze lube sesimweni sokuba lubumbe ukhamba*” (translated as “When we reached home we had to mix clay for a long time until it was ready to mould a calabash and the process would take much time”).

Mrs B. then moved on to the second calabash, which she held up and told the group that it is light to handle and cannot break easily compared to the first one made of clay. She explained to the group that she learned about this second material when she came to teach at school:

“Lolu olunye uhlobo lobumba engafunda ngalo esikoleni okuthiwa iphepha mashe (paper mache) olwenziwa ngezibi” (translated as “When I came to school I learned an easy way to make dough through waste material”). The calabash made of paper mache can be painted and you can draw pictures on it. Mrs B. explained that learners can mould a lot of things using paper mache such as animals, trees, birds, books and people. These paper mache figures can be linked to the topics in the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Mrs D. brought a game of stones and she said, *“Mina ke ngangikuthanda ukudlala”* (translated as “I enjoyed playing at a young age”). She explained this while she was busy drawing a circle in a chart and putting stones in it (see Figure 4.12).



Figure 4.12. A game of stones.

Mrs D. started grabbing a lot of stones out of the circle and putting back as many as she could. She explained the challenge she had when playing a game of stones at home: *“Sasingavunyelwe ukudlala lomdlalo ekhaya ngoba abadala babekholelwa ukuthi uletha indlala noma izulu”* (translated as “This game was not allowed at our home because the elders had a belief that it brings poverty or lightning”). Mrs D. explained that she enjoyed playing this game and she believes that through it children can learn counting, eye hand co-ordination and develop fine muscles.

Mrs D. told us how when she came to school to teach she learned that you can make stones through paper mache, which is light to handle and is not dangerous to the learners (see Figure 3.13). She showed our group the material that she uses to make paper mache, such as empty egg boxes, glue, and powder. Mrs D. shared with the group how you make paper mache since most teachers were not aware of how to make it: *“Uma wenza iphepha mashe ucwilisa amaphepha, uglu, nophawoda ubusuku bonke bese ufaka nosawoti ukuvimbela iphunga”* (translated as “You soak the above ingredients overnight and put salt to avoid a bad smell”). Mrs D. explained that she used to ask learners to make any material using paper mache and she brought stones that were moulded by the learners and they used different colours to make them colourful.



Figure 4.13. A game of stones made of paper mache.

The explanation of how to make paper mache prompted a lot of discussion among the group members. This led to sharing of ideas and I could see how it was building a strong relationship within the group. The group members ended up giving each other their phone numbers so that they can keep in contact to give each other ideas that will help them teach creative arts effectively.



Figure 4.14. A plastic doormat.

Miss J. brought a doormat, which was made of plastic and dry grass (see Figure 4.14). She explained how she enjoyed making doormats at school and how friendly her teacher was when teaching them how to do it. Miss J. told the group how making doormats would keep her busy: *“Ngangivuka ngisho ebusuku ngenze umata ngendlela engangikuthanda ngayo”* (translated as “I would wake up at night and make my doormat the way I liked doing it”). She told the group how she enjoyed helping and teaching other learners that were struggling in making the doormats. Miss J. further discussed how as a teacher herself built strong ties with teachers from other schools by sharing her skill in making doormats: *“Ngahlangana nothisha wakwesinye sezikole wagicela ukuba ngizobasiza ukufundisa izingane zabo kanye ngesonto ukwenza omata”* (translated as “I was networking with one of the schools around the area and would go to the school once per week to teach the learners of that school how to make doormats”). She explained that when she looks at the doormats all the happy memories of her primary schooling comes back.

I then referred the participants back to the previous activity where they were discussing their artefacts and there was a lot of learning and sharing of new ideas from each other (see Figure 4.15).



Figure 4.15. Teachers sharing ideas of creative arts.

I explained that through those activities I have learned from the teachers' discussions and also that the teachers were learning from each other. Moreover, I indicated that these activities would help me to think of ways to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers.

I finished the session for Day Two by explaining the teachers' homework where they were to look for magazine images that would help them think of ideas that would aid me as a subject advisor to improve the facilitation of creative arts. Mrs M. indicated that "We will experience a challenge in finding magazines to get the images". I then asked them to try and get whatever they could get, but I explained that I would also make a plan to get magazines. Furthermore, I showed them my collage which I had presented at my research supervision meeting (Figure 4.16).



Figure 4.16. Showing my collage work to teachers.

I had made two charts: chart one (at the top of Figure 4.16) was collage making with images and chart two (below) was for the transcript. The transcript of the collage was a description of each main image of the collage which gave the meaning of why I selected the image as well as the thoughts and feelings it brought out (Van Schalkwyk, 2010). I explained how I found the images and also explained the transcript in the second chart. My intention was to show the teachers what a collage is and how to make it.

Foundation Phase teachers expressing themselves through collage making

Day Three was the last day of our cluster meeting. I started by reminding the participants about the purpose of the cluster meeting: that I wanted them to give me suggestions on how to better facilitate creative arts with Foundation Phase teachers. Again, I explained to the participants the ethical guidelines for taking photographs and I asked permission to audio record their voices when they were discussing their collage activities when they would be selecting images and matching them with the relevant word to answer the questions. Moreover, I clarified the activity for the day. I explained that I had formulated two questions and that the participants would answer the questions through making a collage. Once more I explained what collage making is: that it is a process of cutting and pasting images and matching those images with describing words, in our case words that would help the teachers to answer a question.



Figure 4.17. Discussing activities for Day Three.

The questions I posed to the teachers were:

1. When going to the departmental workshops how would you like to see the workshops of creative arts being facilitated to you as Foundation Phase teachers?
2. When you compare these three days of our cluster meeting that we have had and the workshops of creative arts that I used to conduct in the past are there any differences that you have seen?

In addition, I gave details of how the group members would be making their collages. I separated the group members into two groups. One group was going to make a collage to answer question one and the second group would make a collage to answer question two. I gave the groups materials to work with such as magazines, a pair of scissors, charts, marker pens and a glue stick.



Figure 4.18. Showing how I made my collage

I showed the participants my own collage where I had found 12 images that triggered sad and happy memories of how I learnt creative arts (see Figure 4.18). Although I had explained the collage making activity in the previous session, I felt it was going to be helpful to give teachers another explanation to have a better understanding of how to do the collage making activity. I explained to the participants that each group would use one chart where they would put their images and a description below each image. The participants worked in groups looking for pictures and thinking about ideas that could help me as a subject advisor to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning. While teachers were busy discussing in their groups I moved around helping them in their discussions. I asked the groups to write a topic for each collage and I helped them to come up with the two topics: a) Recommendations of how subject advisors can better facilitate creative arts; and b) Comparing the cluster meeting and creative arts workshops.

Group A

In Group A the participants were discussing what subject advisors needed to bring to the creative arts workshops so that their workshops would be successful. I remember Mrs M. saying to the group members while they were looking for images in different magazines: “Here is an image which is talking to working through real objects which subject advisors must bring to the workshops”. Mrs N. agreed, saying that “*Yebo izinto eziphathekayo zibalulekile uma sifunda ngobuciko nokusungula ukuze othisha bazibandakanye ekufundeni*”.

ubuciko nokusungula sakudlala” (translated as “It is important for subject advisors to bring real objects so that teachers can see the need to teach and involve learners through real objects”). The teachers agreed that resources (real objects) are most important to facilitate creative arts teaching and learning.

Then the teachers started looking for other images that would help them to discuss their ideas through the collage. When looking for and choosing images, there was a lot of discussion on which images would clearly define each point. Group members were choosing different images and were able to support why they chose that particular image (see Figure 4.19). The discussion became quite heated as they each explained their choice of images. To calm the discussion, I then encouraged the participants to include all the images they thought were relevant to their point.



Figure 4.19. Teachers deciding on the words that are relevant to the images.

Group A had a lot of discussion on choosing the relevant images. They then moved on to their next idea. They agreed that when subject advisors are conducting the workshops for creative arts they must allow time for sharing ideas. Miss S. came up with an image of cakes. She said that baking is a skill a person can acquire if there is an opportunity for sharing ideas: *“Nanka amakhekhe adinga abantu basizane benikana imibono ukuze bakwazi ukuwabhaka”* (translated as “baking cakes is a skill which needs a lot of sharing ideas”). The members of

the group agreed that the image represents the importance of sharing ideas in the creative arts workshop.

Mrs N. also had an image of people working together. She said that it showed that practical work is important when conducting creative arts workshops: *“Uma othisha bekuma wokshophu obuciko nokusungula kuhle uma bangahlali balalele kodwa nabo kube khona abakwenzayo ukuze bayokufundisa izingane”* (translated as “When teachers are in the workshops they must be engaged with practical work so that they teach their learners too”). The teachers then looked for the other images to evoke other important points (see Figure 4.20).



Figure 4.20. Teachers sorting the images.

Group B

The participants in Group B started off by looking for images that were about the four art forms for creative arts: music, dance, drama and visual arts (see Figure 4.21). To begin with, they chose an image of people singing and pasted it on their chart. Mrs D. indicated that *“Asizithatheni zonke lezithombe ezikhuluma ngo muculo sizibeke ndawonye”* (translated as “Let us put the images that talk to music and put them together”). Mrs B. was not happy with their decision and could see that their images were not answering the question. She suggested, *“Sengathi asenzi ngakho ngoba lezizithombe ngeke ziwuphendule umubuzo”* (translated as “We need to look for the images that would answer the question we have been

given”). I came in and assisted them on how to select images to express their thinking of the differences between the cluster meeting and the usual departmental workshops for creative arts.

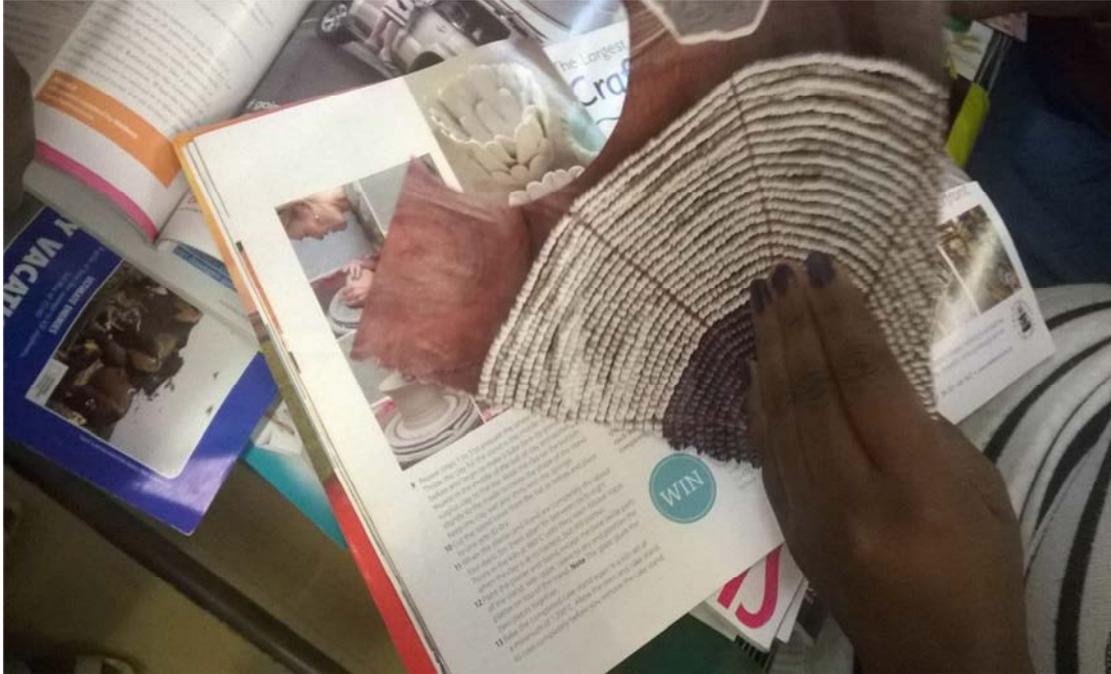


Figure 4.21. Teachers selecting the images.

Group B then looked again at the magazines with better idea of what pictures to look for. The participants were now clear about how to make a collage to respond to the question. This seemed to make the participants more free in their discussions and to inspire them to come up with a lot of valuable ideas. As I was moving around I could see that the teachers were more relaxed about saying anything that would help me to better facilitate creative arts. I think they had seen that sharing information and coming up with different ideas could help me and the whole district in relation to the learning and teaching of creative arts.

Miss J. then came up with the idea: *“Mina ngicabanga ukuthi kufanele sifune abantu benza okuthile okuzochaza ukuthi kulomhlangano weklasta bekuno kuzibandakanya okukhulu”* (translated as “I think we need to look for people doing practical work because there was a lot of practical work in this cluster meeting compared to the usual departmental workshops”).

I heard Mrs B also commenting, “*Nibonile kulo mhlango wethu we klasta sithole ulwazi oluningi kabi*” (translated as “This cluster meeting was so informative, we have gained a lot of information”). The group members agreed on that point and they started looking for images that would show people getting information (see Figure 4.22).

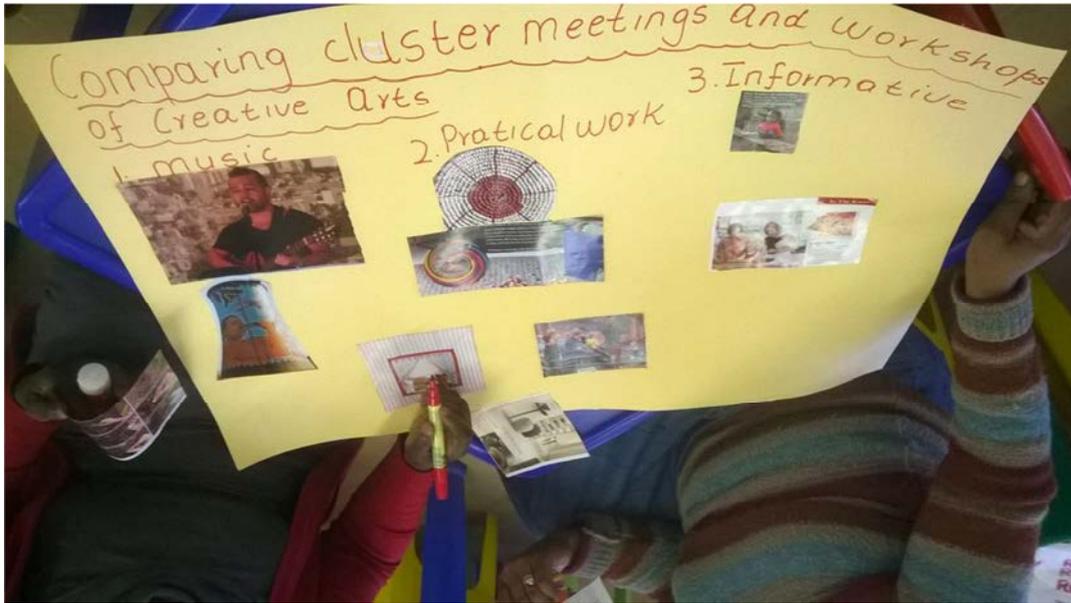


Figure 4.22. Teachers putting images and words together.

Feedback by the groups

Group B

I then asked the teachers to give feedback on their collage activities. Group B started presenting and Mrs B. presented for the group. Mrs B. started by the telling the cluster group that “*Thina kwelethu iqembu besiphendula umbuzo lapho siqhathanisa khona iklasta nama wekshophu esihlale sibizelwa kuwo*” (translated as “In our group we were answering the question comparing the three days of our cluster meeting that we have had and the workshops of creative arts we used to attend”). She presented their collage, showing how they had come up with the three ideas when comparing the cluster meeting we held and the usual departmental workshops for the Foundation Phase teachers (see Figure 4.23). The differences they found were that: a) the cluster meeting was very informative; b) the participants were sharing ideas in the cluster meeting; and c) the cluster meeting involved the participants in practical work. Through their presentation, I could see gaps that I was expected to fill when conducting workshops with Foundation Phase teachers.

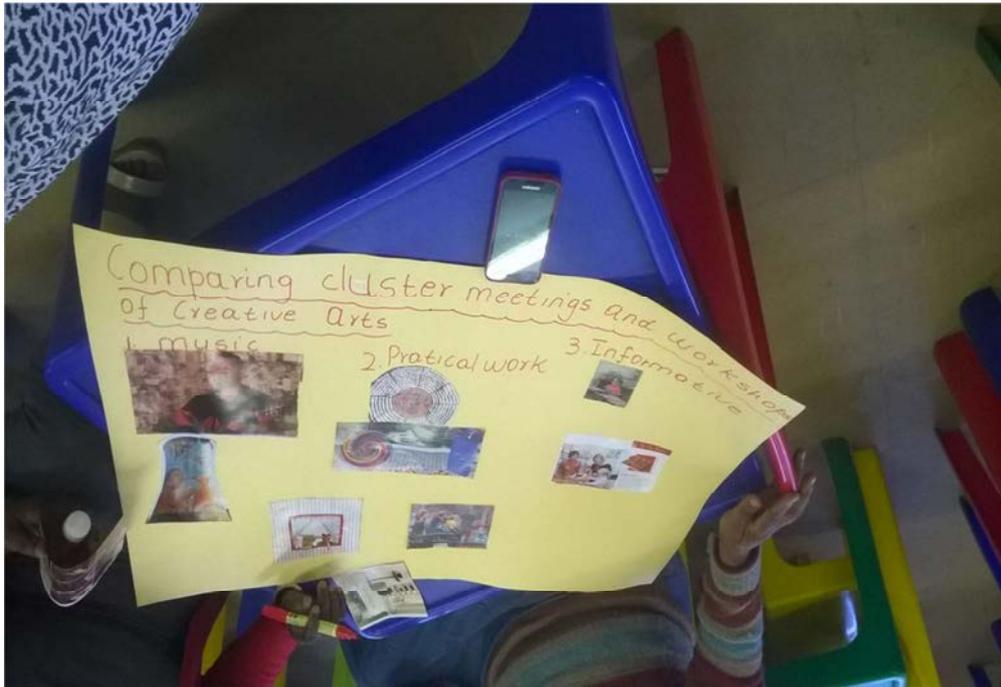


Figure 4.23. Feedback by Group B.

Mrs B. started by explaining that the first image which she said was a little bit out of line with the question: “*Siqale salahleka kancane kulezithombe zokuqala sangaphendula kahle ngezithombe*” (translated as “In the first point we were a little bit lost as we pasted images of people singing which is part of music”). She further presented the second point: “*Laphaya kulesigaba sesibili sivumelane ngokuthi kulomhlangano weklasta bekunokusebenza okuningi besingalaleli kuphela uthisha*” (translated as “The cluster meeting had a lot of practical, all the members were engaged”). She then moved to the last point: “*Okokugcina sibonisane ngokuthi lomhlangano weklasta usinike ulwazi oluningi*” (translated as “The cluster meeting was informative where we learned a lot from each other”). In addition, Mrs D. also indicated that “*Yebo lomhlangano weklasta ngifundile nje kakhulu mina bengingazi ukuthi kanti umculo ungaphansi kwesifundo sobuciko nokusungula*” (translated as “In this cluster meeting I have learnt a lot as I was not aware that music is part of creative arts”).

Group A

Mrs N. presented for Group A. and she started by reminding us of the question they were answering: “*Kwelethu iqembu besiphendula umbuzo obewuthi uma siya kuma wekshophu sifisa ukubona abaqhamuka kumnyango bebafundisa kanjani othisha*” (translated as “When we go to the workshops how would we like to see the workshops of creative arts being facilitated?”). Mrs N. indicated that in their discussions Group A agreed on three ideas which

bangacini ngokukhuluma kodwa basidedele senze lokho abakushoyo ukuze kubelula ukukudlulisela ezinganeni esizifundisayo” (translated as “Facilitators must provide a lot of practical work which will help teachers to practice that with the learners”).

Wrapping up the cluster meeting

I then thanked the participants for availing themselves for the three day cluster meeting. I indicated to the teachers that what they had said over the three days had given me a lot of insight into the challenges Foundation Phase teachers are facing. I explained that I had learned about possible approaches that I can practice in order to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning. Lastly, I acknowledged their suggestions, recommendations and the inputs they had made through collage making, which would help me as a subject advisor better facilitate creative arts to Foundation Phase teachers. Mrs M. made some concluding remarks which expressed that the teachers had learned other creative arts activities which would help them when teaching in their classrooms.

Consolidating my learning from the Foundation Phase teachers

Figure 4.25 shows the self-portrait drawing that I made when I was consolidating my learning from the Foundation Phase teachers in the cluster meeting. This drawing shows three cycles of my facilitation of creative arts. The first cycle is when I did not have any inputs or recommendations of how to better facilitate creative arts. In the first cycle I see that my facilitation of creative arts was based on theory where teachers were kept at the desk with no practical work. The second cycle is when Foundation Phase teachers were discussing in the cluster meeting things that could make my facilitation of creative arts work better. In the second cycle, I see that working in a cluster helped me to sit down and discuss ideas that would help me to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning. The last cycle shows some of the recommendations that Foundation Phase teachers came up with that will help me better facilitate creative arts. In the last cycle I see that working collaboratively with Foundation Phase teachers in a cluster meeting helped me to change my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning by involving practical work.

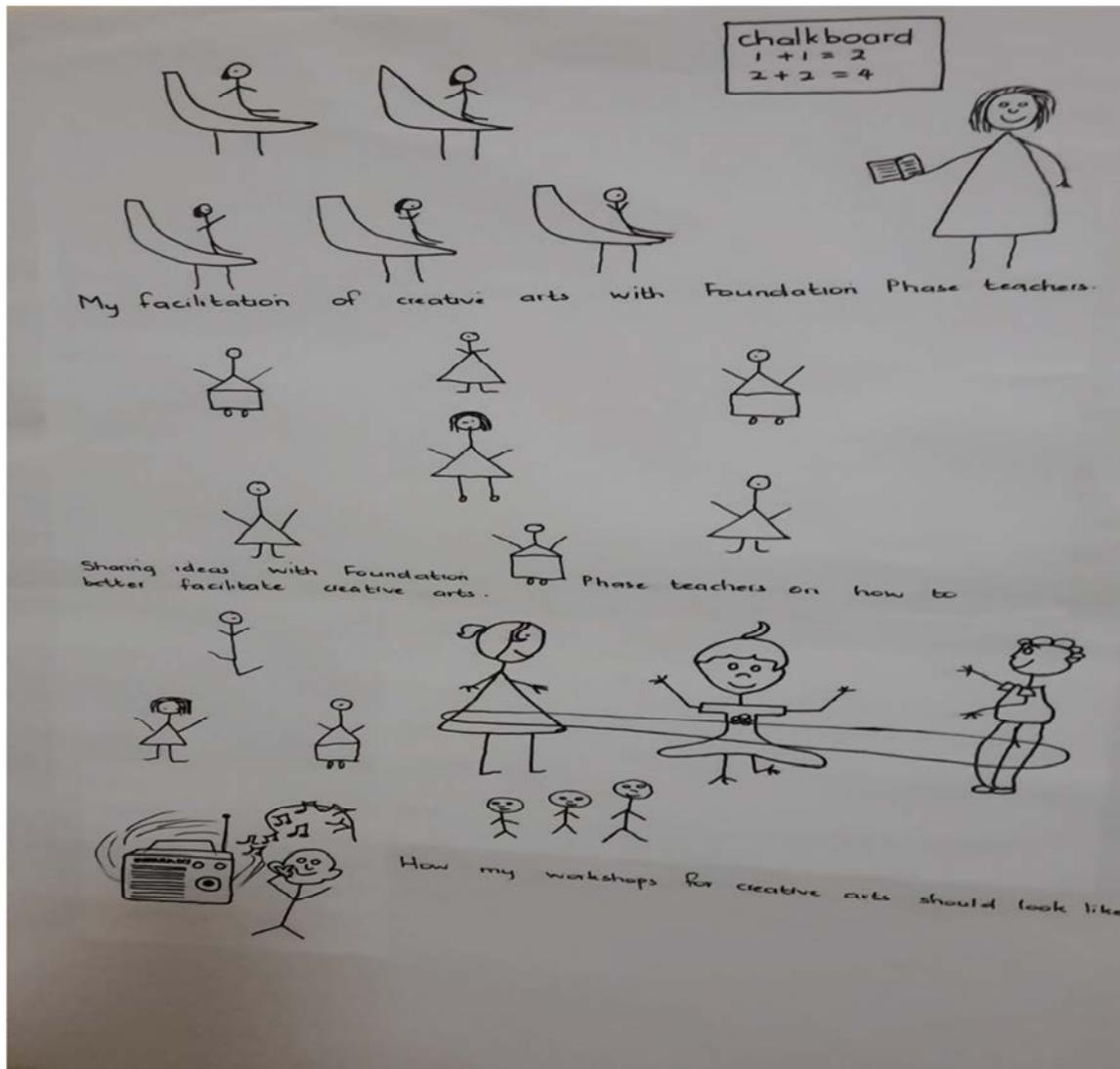


Figure 4.25. A self-portrait drawing: Sharing ideas with other teachers can develop you professionally.

Through creating this self-portrait drawing I was able to identify the problems that hindered me in facilitating creative arts and I was able to identify relevant methods that could help me better facilitate creative arts with Foundation Phase teachers. As Pithouse (2011) explains, self-portrait drawings can enable us recognise and look at problematic and valuable aspects of our educational practice and think of ways to improve. Likewise, through creating a self-portrait to make visible the challenges of my facilitation and the support I received from the research participants I have been able to express my learning about how I can better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning.

Conclusion

In this chapter, Chapter Four, I have attended to the second research question of my study: *How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?* I addressed the research question by narrating how I used a three day cluster meeting fruitfully through employing creative and participatory research strategies. These strategies enabled me to respond to the research question and to gain more insight. The creative approaches seemed to make the teachers feel free to share their past experiences of how they learnt or taught creative arts as well as their recommendations for how I could improve my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning. In summary, the teachers' key recommendations for workshops were: workshops should be informative and relevant to teachers' contexts and concerns; appropriate resources and materials need to be available at workshops; teachers need opportunities to share ideas and learn with and from each other; teachers should be involved in hands-on, practical work. The understanding that I took away from the cluster meeting was that although I am a subject advisor, the Foundation Phase teachers were able to enhance my learning about facilitating teaching and learning of creative arts. Working cooperatively with Foundation Phase teachers using creative and participatory research methods helped us to develop as a community of creative arts teaching and learning.

CHAPTER FIVE: TAKING MY SELF-STUDY RESEARCH FORWARD

Introduction

The focus of my self-study was on my own learning as a Department of Basic Education (DBE) subject advisor in relation to creative arts teaching and learning. The aim was for me to attain new knowledge to advance my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase (Grade R to 3) teachers. In the previous chapter, Chapter Four, I addressed the second research question for this study: *How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?* In Chapter Four, I clarified how I worked collaboratively with Foundation Phase teachers in a three-day cluster meeting using diverse strategies to learn from the teachers about how I could enhance my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning.

In this concluding chapter, Chapter Five, I offer a review of the dissertation, explaining briefly what was covered in each previous chapter and highlighting the key message of each chapter. I then clarify my professional learning from the study, looking at the positive impact this self-study research has had on my learning about creative arts teaching and learning. Thereafter, I explain my methodological learning from this research. I go on to make three recommendations as a way forward that can help me improve my facilitation of creative arts.

A review of the dissertation

In Chapter One, I explained that my self-study research centred on me as Foundation Phase subject advisor as to how can I improve my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers. I clarified that my interest in this study was evoked by my observations that Foundation Phase teachers seemed not to be giving much attention to the teaching of creative arts in their classrooms. This observation then directed me to undertake a self-study to find out more about the challenges teachers might be facing and coming up with possible measures to address these in my own practice as a subject advisor. In Chapter One, I also introduced my research methodology, which was a self-study of educational practice. I further identified two key concepts that were central to my research: a) creative arts teaching and learning; and b) teacher learning. I then explained why I chose a socio-cultural perspective as a theoretical perspective to help me understand these two key concepts. I explained that from this perspective, I could see how teachers could learn about creative arts in a social setting where they shared ideas and worked collaboratively.

Thereafter, I moved on to Chapter Two, where I presented the research methodology that helped me drive the research process. I explained that I chose a self-study methodology with the aim of doing self-introspection on my own experiences and practices of learning, teaching and facilitating creative arts. I then described the location of the study and the school context. Next, I gave details on the research participants and also discussed my dual position as both a researcher and a participant. I further explained the role of my critical friends in supporting my professional growth during the research process. Next, I described each research practice I used to generate data, namely: artefact retrieval, collage making; journal writing; memory-drawing; taking photographs; and audio recorded teacher discussions. I explained how I used the creative research practices of personal metaphors and self-portrait drawing to make meaning from evidence offered by the data. I also discussed how I tackled ethical issues and trustworthiness, in addition to the challenges that affected the study. The main message of this chapter was that I have learnt that if you are involved in self-study research you need to welcome criticisms from the outside to help you to critique your own practices. Thus, a self-study researcher must be willing to learn and be open to comments that can help a person to grow professionally.

In Chapter Three, I went on to my first research question: *What can I learn about creative arts teaching and learning through memory-work?* To respond to this research question I narrated memory stories of my informal and formal learning of creative arts. To elicit a range of relevant memories I used different memory-work strategies such as: artefact retrieval; collage making; taking photographs; memory-drawing; and journal writing. To make meaning of my memory-work I used metaphors. Identifying personal teaching or facilitation metaphors through memory-work aided me to become more thoughtful about how I was taught and how I learned creative arts and also to reflect on how I might improve my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning. The metaphors highlighted my own lack of knowledge and skills in teaching creative arts in the classroom and in facilitating creative arts teaching and learning as a subject advisor. This led me to see that my teaching of creative arts was not built on a solid formal education foundation. However, the metaphors also assisted me to realise that even though creative arts was neglected in my schooling, the art forms that I learned informally with my family and the community did foster my creativity in important ways. Through the metaphors, I also became conscious of the value of child initiated activities for

creative arts teaching and learning, as well as other subjects such as mathematics and languages.

In Chapter Four, I addressed the second research question: *How can I better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers?* To answer this question I engaged myself with a group of Foundation Phase teachers in a three-day cluster meeting. To elicit experiences, ideas and recommendations from the Foundation Phase teachers I used a range of research strategies: artefact retrieval; collage making; taking photographs during the research process; journal writing; and audio recorded group discussions. Using these research strategies to gain relevant information it made teacher participants more relaxed and engaged during the research process. Connecting with teachers through these research strategies helped me to engage productively and to gain more understanding. These approaches seemed to make the teachers feel comfortable with sharing happy and sad memories of how they learnt or taught creative arts. They were also able to make clear and useful recommendations for how I could improve my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning. From the cluster meeting I learned that, despite my position as subject advisor, the Foundation Phase teachers were able to teach me about facilitating teaching and learning of creative arts.

My professional Learning

As explained in Chapter One, I embarked on this research because I anticipated that the challenges that teachers face in teaching creative arts could be resolved through professional learning either within the school or at a district level. This put pressure on me as a Foundation Phase subject advisor to take responsibility for providing support to Foundation Phase teachers so that they can become competent and confident in the teaching of creative arts. From my self-study research, I have learned that the DBE must provide on-going professional development workshops to uplift teachers' self-efficacy in creative arts teaching and learning. However, these workshops must be practical, with enough time and resources for teachers to engage in hands-on learning. Teachers must also be given opportunities to share ideas and strategies with each other. These kinds of workshops could develop teachers' self-confidence and self-esteem in relation to the teaching and learning of creative arts.

After having involved myself in this research I now see a vast change in me as a subject advisor and in the way I now view my facilitation of creative arts teaching and learning. When I conduct workshops I now understand the importance of bringing waste material and

play resources which can make my facilitation fun, interesting and creative. I now know that I can improve my learning as a subject advisor through collaboration and sharing of ideas with teachers and other professional colleagues. I now know that as a Foundation Phase subject advisor it is not enough for me to come to the school and find fault with teachers; when I visit schools it must be with the aim of monitoring and giving appropriate support.

Taking a socio-cultural theoretical perspective (as explained in Chapter One) helped me to understand that creative arts teaching can be learned effectively when teachers come together and share information in a practical way. This can help teachers to go back and apply what they practiced in the workshops to their classrooms where they can then allow learners to come up with and engage in different creative arts activities. I have learned that my previous facilitation of creative arts did not involve and inspire the Foundation Phase teachers. Through working collaboratively with Foundation Phase teachers in a cluster meeting, I now know that there is important advice that a subject advisor can receive from teachers. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) explain, “as more educators become aware of the broad scope of socio-cultural theory, they will develop practical applications that will broaden and strengthen this theoretical framework” (p. 204). Working with the teachers to explore lived experiences of learning and teaching of creative arts helped me to better understand how a socio-cultural perspective can be put into practice. In my view, it is important for teachers and subject advisors to be aware of the benefits of learning creative arts in a socio-cultural context. If subject advisors and teachers become more aware of the socio-cultural aspects of learning they can develop practical approaches to teaching that meet the needs of all learners, “especially the linguistically and culturally diverse who historically have been marginalized by traditional models of pedagogy” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 204).

My methodological learning

Using self-study of educational practice as my research methodology helped me to learn that interrogating my practice as a subject advisor is most important and that it is the first step I have to take as a subject advisor before I put blame on teachers. The memory-work self-study method that I used helped me to be able to recall my informal learning of creative arts. This allowed me to see the importance and the relevance of informal art activities I did as a child. This helped me understand that learning of creative arts can happen at home, within the community and at school. I also came to see that it can be child initiated.

The advice I would give to other students interested in using self-study of educational practice as a methodology is that self-study can help a person to see things in ways that she was not seeing them before. The process of interrogating the self helped me to do in-depth introspection as whether I was doing justice in supporting Foundation Phase teachers to teach creative arts effectively and confidently. Through self-study, a person can grow professionally by taking a step in the direction of moving from being rigid to become a more flexible individual. Teachers, subject advisors and any other professionals who are willing to change and grow professionally can adopt this methodology. However, it is important to be aware that you must be willing to listen and be open to accepting professional critique in a constructive way.

Moving Forward

Engaging myself in self-study research helped me to come up with *three recommendations* as a way forward that can help me improve my facilitation of creative arts to help teachers to teach creative arts with confidence.

Support for subject advisors

With the support from the DBE, I can become involved in providing adequate support to subject advisors, with the aim of helping them to facilitate creative arts teaching and learning in an appropriate way. During these workshops for subject advisors there must be relevant resources and hands-on activities that can help them to learn to integrate creative arts with other subjects.

More support for cluster meetings

I can offer more support for cluster groups. From my study, I have noticed that teachers seem to learn more freely if they are in a cluster group where they know each other and they are not shy to share ideas. A cluster meeting also provides more time to work closely with each other and be able provide guidance to each individual. Working with teachers in a cluster group can create mutual trust and close relationships between teachers and subject advisors. Cluster meetings need to happen more frequently. Subject advisors need to take a more active role in participating in cluster meetings so that we can learn from teachers and be able to provide guidance to them where there is a need.

Participatory and practical workshops for teachers

I have learned that workshops for teachers must be participatory, with sufficient time and materials for teachers to engage in active, hands-on learning. Teachers must also be given chances to share their thinking and their teaching approaches with each other and with subject advisors. All DBE workshops should aim to advance teachers' confidence and self-assurance as professionals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to highlight that creative arts can be the backbone for all subjects in the Foundation Phase. Teachers who want to excel in their teaching must engage learners in a variety of creative arts activities. Learners can grasp and understand concepts meaningfully if they are taught through methods that involve creative arts. Creativity is not a skill that is attained at school; it is an innate ability that every human being possesses and that should be nurtured at school and outside of school. An important part of my role as a Foundation Phase subject advisor is to support that process. I also would like to emphasise that if you want to grow professionally you must be willing to accept other people's criticisms. Professional learning cannot happen in isolation.

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Appendix A

448697 Inkangala Area

Adams Mission

Amanzimtoti

4126

Dear Sir/ Madam

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS.

My name is Chiliza H.Z. (Phezi) and I am a Master's student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa. I am conducting a self-study on facilitating creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers. The research objectives are to learn from my personal history about creative arts teaching and learning and to better facilitate creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers.

To gather information for my study, I would like to work with Foundation Phase teachers who are involved in teaching creative arts in their classroom. I have selected Foundation Phase teachers because they have relevant experience and expertise in learning and teaching creative arts. To generate data I will use the following data generation strategies which will involve you and the Foundation Phase teachers in providing contributions to my research.

Data generation activities are:

Artefact retrieval

I will ask you to choose an artefact that will trigger your memory in learning or in teaching creative arts at school.

Collage making

For collage making process I will ask you to work in groups to select images and words that are conceptually and symbolically linked to the topic of facilitating creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers.

Audio recorded group discussions

I will record group discussions when Foundation Phase teachers are narrating their personal history in learning or teaching creative arts.

I will record group discussions when Foundation Phase teachers are involved in collage making.

First, I will ask you to bring artefacts that will trigger your memory of learning or teaching creative arts, than narrate your personal history either as a student or as a teacher.

Next, I will ask you to sit in groups and make a collage while answering the three questions:

What is creative arts?

What does creative arts mean to you?

What does creative arts involve?

Thereafter, I will record group discussions in a journal writing and I will audio record some of the group discussions. These activities will be done after school hours and should last approximately 1-2 hours on four days.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your input will not be attributed to you in person.
- Your name will not be revealed in the MEd dissertation or any research publications or presentations.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- I will share the findings of the study with you by arranging meetings for my feedback.

I can be contacted at: Email: phezi.chiliza@gmail.com; Tel: 082 431 6615.

My supervisor is Dr Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan who is located in Education Studies on Edgewood campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Email: Pithousemorgan@ukzn.ac.za; Tel: 031 260 3460.

My co-supervisor is Thelma Rosenberg who is located in Education Studies on Edgewood campus of the University of KwaZulu Natal. Email: Rosenbergt@ukzn.ac.za; Tel: 031 260 3473

The contact person in the Research Office is Ms Mariette Snyman who is located on the Westville campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za ; Tel: 031 260 8350.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Yours faithfully

Chiliza H.Z (Phezi)

DECLARATION

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project : Facilitating creative arts teaching and learning with Foundation Phase teachers.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my group discussion YES / NO

Use my art based products YES / NO

Record my contributions to group discussions in a journal YES / NO

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

448697 Inkangala Area

Adams Mission

Amanzimtoti

4126

Mnumzane / Nkosikazi

**INCWADI YEMVUME NOKWAZISA OTHISHA BAMABANGA APHANSI NGOCWANINGO
LWESIFUNDO SOBUCIKO NOMSEBENZI WEZANDLA.**

Igama lami ngingu Chiliza H.Z. (Phezi). Ngingumfundi weNyuvesi yaKwaZulu Natal kwinkundla yase Edgewood e South Africa owenza i Master's kwezemfundo. Ngisohlelweni lokwenza ucwaningo maqondana nokufunda kwami isifundo sokufunda nokufundiswa kobuciko nomsebenzi wezandla emabangeni aphansi (Ibanga R kuya kwelesithathu).

Ucwaningo lwami luphokophele ekufundeni okuthile ngomlando wami ngokufunda nokucija othisha bamabanga aphansi ngokufundiswa kwesifundo sobuciko nomsebenzi wezandla. Okwesibili ukufundisa kahle isifundo sobuciko nomsebenzi wezandla kothisha bamabanga aphansi.

Ukwazi ngesifundo sami ngizosebenzisana nothisha bamabanga aphansi abafundisa isifundo sobuciko nomsebenzi wezandla kwibanga R kuya kwelesithathu. Ngikholelwa ukuthi labothisha banolwazi olugcwele ngesifundo nokufundiswa kobuciko nomsebenzi wezandla.

Ukuqoqa imininingwane ngizosebenzisa lezizinhlelo:

Artefact / Athifekthi

Ngizocela othisha bakhethe ama athifekthi azosusela konke abakukhumbulayo ngokufunda noma ngokufundiswa kwesifundo sobuciko nomsebenzi wezandla.

Collage / Ikhola

Othisha bazosebenza ngamaqoqo benza ikhola besebenzisa amabhuku ukukhetha izithombe namagama okuhambelanayo nokuchaza kabanzi ngesihloko socwaningo.

Ukuqoshwa kwezingxoxo zamaqoqo

- Ngiziqopha izingxoxo zothisha ngamaqoqo lapho bezobe bexoxa ngomlando wabo wokufunda noma wokufundisa isifundo sobuciko nomsebenzi wezandla.
- Ngiziqopha ingxoxo othisha othisha besebenzisana ukwenza ikholaji.

Ekugcineni ngizobhala kwincwadi yezigigaba zansuku zonke izingxoxo zamaqoqo. Lemisebenzi ibhekeleke ukuba ithathe ama hora 1-2 ezinsukwini ezine.

Okubalulekile:

- Ngalocwaningo zonke izethulo zakho ziyoba yimfihlo.
- Igama lakho ngeke livezwe kushicilelo locwaningo lwe MEd..
- Izethulo zakho ngeke zisetshenziswe kokunye ngaphandle kokuqoqa imiphumela yocwaningo.
- Imininingwane izogcinwa endaweni ephephile bese iyashabalaliswa emuva kweminyakaka ewu 5.
- Kuyilungelo lakho ukukhetha ukuhlanganyela noma ukungahlanganyeli kulolucwaningo.
- Ukuzinikela kwakho kumaqondana nokuzikhulisa ngokomqondo wokufunda okungaphathelene nenzuzo.
- Imiphumemla yocwaningo siyocobelelana yona emhlanganweni uma sengibuyisa okutholakele.

Ngiyatholakala ku: Email: phezi.chiliza@gmail.com; Cell: 082 431 6615.

Umpathi wami u Dr Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan otholakala esikhungweni sezemfundo enkundleni yase Edgewood kwi Nyuvesi yakwaKwaZulu-Natal. Email: Pithousemorgan@ukzn.ac.za; Ucingo: 031 260 3460.

Umpathi wami u Thelma Rosenberg otholakala esikhungweni sezemfundo enkundleni yase Edgewood kwiNyuvesi yakwaKwaZulu Natal. Email: Rosenbergt@ukzn.ac.za. Tel: 031 260 3473.

Uma ufisa ukwazi kabanzi nge hhovisi locwaningo xhumana no Ms Mariette Snyman otholakala enkundleni yase Westville kwi Nyuvesi yakwaKwaZulu-Natal. Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za ; Ucingo: 031 260 8350.

Ngiyabonga ngezethulo zakho kanye nokuhlanganyela kanye nami kulolucwaningo.

Yimina ozithobayo

Chiliza H.Z (Phezi)

AMAZWI AFUNGELWE

I.....(amagama aphelele omhlanganyeli)
ngiyavuma futhi ngiyaqonda ngakho konke okushicilelwe kulomqulu kanye nesimo nezinhlelo zocwaningo,
ngiyazinikela ukuhlanganyela nokuletha izethulo zami ocwaningweni olumayelana nesihloko esithi:
Ukufundiswa kwesifundo sobuciko nomsebenzi wezandla kothisha bamabanga aphansi.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi ngivumelekile ukuhoxa kucwaningo noma yinini uma sengifisa.

Ngiyavuma uku:

qoshwa kwezingxoxo zami lapho sihlanganyele eiyiqoqo YES / NO
sebenzisa ikholaji/ ulwazi lwami kwezobuciko ukwenza ucwaningo.

UKUSAYINA KOMHLANGANYELI

.....

USUKU