Teaching philosophical developments in the Dramatic Arts classroom: An action research study to improve my teaching practices

A dissertation submitted to the School of Education of the University of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

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I, *Mirasha Pahlad*, declare that:

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Abstract

In order to improve my teaching strategies in the Dramatic Arts classroom in which I teach, I conducted an action research study with my students. This study was underpinned by critical pedagogy and guided by four research questions. Firstly I looked at how effective my usual teaching strategies were. Secondly I determined what interventions were used to improve my teaching practices. Thirdly I explored how the interventions in my teaching practices, were used to improve the teaching and learning of philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts. Lastly I focused on how the interventions improved my teaching practices. I drew on the teaching strategies, interventions and action research studies of other educators and researchers. The participants of this study were Dramatic Arts students in a secondary school in the Durban South region. Data was collected using various methods such as pre-intervention questionnaires, observations, journal entries, test marks, a focus group interview and post-intervention questionnaires. After teaching each philosophical development, data was collected and thematically analyzed, according to positive and negative responses from students. Thereafter careful reflection took place. The analysis and reflections informed the next intervention that I created and used to teach the next section. The interventions included teaching strategies such as teacher led discussions, teaching at a slower pace, constantly repeating the content of the lesson, using more examples in the classroom, having an activity at the end of the lesson and replacing complex terms with simpler meanings. I also aimed to create a suitable teaching environment and used problem-based learning, visual images, quotes, hotseating, groupwork and group feedback. The teaching strategies that proved to be the most effective were teaching at a slow pace, using examples that students could relate to and replacing the difficult vocabulary with simple and more understandable words. These were the teaching strategies that allowed me to become a more effective and successful educator. As a result, my students understood well and performed better. This in turn, made my teaching strategies more effective, satisfying and enjoyable.

Keywords: Philosophical developments, symbolism, surrealism, existentialism, absurdism, action research, critical pedagogy, teaching practices

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1.1. Introduction

Education is a lifelong process and this study made it possible for me, as an educator, to learn about myself, my teaching strategies and my students. This opening chapter of my dissertation indicates my reasons for and the importance of wanting to carry out this study. The context and background of the study are discussed together with the corresponding key studies that relate to this enquiry. My research questions and objectives that guided the study are also covered. The process that I followed in carrying out this research study is discussed together with a breakdown of each chapter of this dissertation.

1.2. Rationale

I embarked on this study due to a personal interest. I have been teaching Dramatic Arts at a secondary school for the past five years. I did not find my teaching practices ineffective in the first three years but in the past two years I noticed that when I taught the section on philosophical developments in the Arts, my students did not seem interested and performed poorly in this section. During the two weeks that I taught the section, students straggled into the classroom with blank or bored facial expressions. In every lesson, there were always students who would have their heads down and many students were easily distracted by incidents that took place outside the classroom. Students" marks in the section were also poor. It was evident that my teaching strategies were inappropriate and I was an ineffective educator to my students. This made me decide to carry out my study based on this section called „philosophical developments in the Arts."

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to make me a more effective educator. I analysed my usual teaching strategies from previous years to determine their effectiveness. I also explored a wide range of teaching strategies to determine which would improve my teaching practices. The study thus aimed to improve my teaching and my students" learning in my Dramatic Arts classroom.

1.4. Background

Dramatic Arts is a subject offered to students from grade ten onwards. The subject comprises equal parts of practical classes and theory. Practical sections focus on voice, speech, breathing, improvisation, movement and performance aspects. The theory content entails play texts, teachings of key drama practitioners, and theatre history sections. In Dramatic Arts, philosophical developments such as Symbolism, Surrealism, Existentialism and Absurdism are part of the theatre history section (The Department of Basic Education, 2011) and are compared to realistic theatre and the philosophical development called realism. Together with realism, these philosophical developments have laid the foundation for Western drama and theatre; and have informed and shaped the theatre that we experience today.

The four philosophical developments in the Arts that pertain to my study are outlined briefly below:

1.4.1. Symbolism

Symbolism involves the use of symbols which denotes something other than its obvious form. Symbols include pictures, objects, words or even an event that stands for something that has a more complex and abstract nature. It is a form of theatre that uses these symbols and indirect messages to communicate and forces the audience to think deeper about what lies before them (Langer, 2012). According to my understanding, the message or theme is conveyed via reading between the lines and indirect messages. Curiosity is aroused in the audience so that they may want to know more about people and their feelings. Actors in a symbolist performance are usually monotone and emotionless, so that the audience can figure out how the actor should be feeling and portrayed. This prevents the audience from simply accepting and receiving what they see on stage, without any critique. Today, Symbolism is still used in theatre and even in everyday experiences such as in the colour of traffic lights, religious symbols and road signs, amongst many other things.

1.4.2. Surrealism

Surrealism is closely linked to fantasy and blurs the lines between what is real and what is fantasy. It is also associated with magic and things that cannot be real. Surrealists strongly believe that the truth is revealed in someone"s subconscious mind, where it is unaffected by thinking or any form of rationalism. All forms of thinking and being logical disturbed the natural order of the truth (Sheringham, 2006). Surrealism requires the audience to look at

unusual situations and question how life and reality are supposed to be; as well as why it should be that specific way.

1.4.3. Existentialism

Existentialism looks at the purpose of human life and the manner in which we live. Themes such as the purpose of life and God are emphasized. Existentialists question the presence and role of Godly figures and religion. This way of thinking was brought on by the negative circumstances and suffering that existed after the world wars took place. It seemed as if the world was filled with pain and destruction. Others felt that there was a genuine and urgent need for God and religion, in order to salvage the world (Witmore, 2012). This meant that the only certainty in life was death and Existentialists believed that people spent their lives wasting time, which got them closer to their deaths. Life was wasted by carrying out insignificant tasks such as working, entertaining and socializing. People lost the ability to make choices and display free-will because they were sucked into a monotonous and petty lifestyle. People existed, only so that they could die, without adding any value to their lives.

1.4.4. Absurdism

Absurdism is derived from Existentialism and Surrealism. Absurdists look at the serious issue of existence, in a silly and ridiculous manner. A common characteristic of Absurdism is waiting for something to happen that will provide a purpose for living. There is a devaluation of language hence the dialogue cannot drive the plot or be relied on as a communication device. The plot of an Absurdist performance is cyclical as there is no definite introduction, climax and conclusion. The characters in Absurdist performances are stuck in a monotonous environment and routine which leads to their doing the same things, all the time. This enhances the absurdity and hopelessness of their lives. Ultimately, Absurdism aims to make the audience question their lives and their purpose in life (Akhter, 2015).

1.5. Overview of key studies dealing with the topic

This study was shaped by literature based on effective general teaching strategies that other educators and researchers have used, locally and internationally. Literature also focused on educators who have used drama strategies in their classrooms to teach effectively. Action research takes place within a context that has identified a problem or requires improvement. This is carried out within cycles where various interventions are used and analysed in order to

reach the most appropriate solution or method of improvement (Levin, 2012). This form is research is generally performed within a researcher‟s environment (Koshy, 2005). Since this pertains to my study action research studies undertaken in various contexts were studied. Boler (2000) and Duncan-Andrade (2009) emphasized the need to use relatable examples when teaching students. Teacher-led discussions were promoted by Williams and Clement (2014). Ncube (2014) and Nosratinia and Abbasi (2015) outlined the importance of using appropriate vocabulary whilst teaching. O‟Gara (2008) as well as Westbrook (2004) encouraged the use of drama strategies whilst teaching as these assisted students in understanding and grasping the lesson content. Bentham (2009) and England (2011) found that the use of action research improved the effectiveness of educators‟ teaching. These key studies, and others, served to help me decide on my teaching strategies, based on what others had already done and discovered.

1.6. Research objectives and questions

My study was guided by three objectives. My first objective was to determine how effective my usual teaching strategies were. In order to improve my teaching practices of philosophical developments of the arts, I had to identify what teaching practices may be used as interventions. Lastly, my objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions that I had implemented. My research objectives were then:

a. To determine the effectiveness of my usual teaching strategies

b. To improve my teaching practices of philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts

c. To determine what teaching practices may be used as interventions to teach philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts effectively; and

d. To evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions implemented

My study aimed to answer four research questions:

1. How effective are my usual teaching strategies?

2. What interventions might be used to improve my teaching practices?

3. How might interventions in teaching practices be used to improve the teaching and learning of philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts?

4. How do the interventions improve my teaching practices?

1.7. Overview of the research process

This study used a critical paradigm and qualitative approach in an action research design. The data was collected using various methods. In order to establish the effectiveness of my usual teaching strategies, students provided me with data after filling out a pre-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) and writing a class test at the end of the section on symbolism (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test). I observed students" behaviour and responses during the lesson and my personal feelings and opinions were recorded in my journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry). I then used this data to create the first intervention which was used to teach surrealism (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation) and a class test was written after the section was completed (See Appendix D2: Surrealism Test). Thereafter I collected data from students" post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire). This input, in conjunction with the test marks (See Appendix D: Tests on philosophical developments), field notes (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule) and journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) helped me evaluate the effectiveness of the first intervention and additionally create the second intervention (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation). The second intervention was implemented and a class test was written after the section on existentialism was taught (See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test). To avoid monotony I replaced a post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire) with a focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview). This data was looked at together with test marks (See Appendix D: Tests on philosophical developments), field notes (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule) and my journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry). The data generated led to the creation of the third intervention that was used to teach the last philosophical development known as Absurdism (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation). The test marks from the Absurdism test (See Appendix D4: Absurdism Test) together with my field notes (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule), journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) and data from post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire) showed the effectiveness of the use of the last intervention. Reflection was done after every intervention.

Table 1 below represents the research process

Stage of research	Research Process
Pre-intervention	Teach the first philosophical development with usual teaching strategies, collect data, reflect and determine the first intervention
Cycle One	Use the first intervention to teach the second philosophical development, collect data, reflect and determine the second intervention
Cycle Two	Use the second intervention to teach the third philosophical development, collect data, reflect and determine the third intervention
Cycle Three	Use the third intervention to teach the last philosophical development, collect data and reflect

1.8. Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter one serves as an introductory chapter. This is followed by the theoretical framework and literature review contained in chapter two. Chapter three describes the entire research process which includes the research paradigm, research design and data collection methods. Chapter four presents an in-depth analysis and discussion of all the data that was collected. Data are reflected on thematically in terms of the positive and negative responses in order to determine the effectiveness of each intervention that was used. Chapter five concludes the dissertation by summarising the main findings, discussing theoretical and methodological implications as well as implications for my practice as an educator. The last chapter of the dissertation also contains my personal reflections and outlines the limitations of the study and areas for future research.

1.9. Conclusion

This chapter of the dissertation identified my need and purpose for carrying out this study. The background of the study together with the details about Dramatic Arts and philosophical developments in the Arts was discussed briefly. The key studies were mentioned and the research questions and objectives that steered this study were discussed. This was followed by an outline of how the research was carried out and how the data was generated. A brief outline of what was covered in each chapter was included.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter includes the theoretical framework that underpins this study as well as a review of literature based on studies related to my research. I have drawn on teaching strategies that other educators and researchers have used and found to be effective. Additionally, I have taken note of the impact of using drama strategies to teach more effectively. Interventions that have been used successfully by other educators have also been taken into account. In addition, I have looked at how other educators have used action research studies to improve their teaching practices. I have used this literature to inform the creation of interventions for each cycle of my action research, aimed at improving teaching and learning in my classroom.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study was underpinned by a critical pedagogy framework which was part of a critical paradigm (Darder, Baltadano and Torres, 2009). Critical pedagogy allows one to look at an issue, objectively analyze it and thereafter take a form of positive action. Action is taken so that students cannot be dominated. Freire (1999) claims that critical pedagogy looks for an existing problem that can be focused on and solved, with the use of dialogue and oral communication. Deep understanding and analysis must take place. My study acknowledged my ineffective teaching strategies, as perceived by me and also acknowledged by my students, which has led to action in the form of interventions. The relationship between teaching and learning was emphasized, in order to pinpoint and reveal relevant areas that may previously have been overlooked or considered normal. My study was largely based on oral responses from my students. This pedagogy is synonymous with creating improvements and it is moving towards success (Popkewitz and Fendler, 1999). This study aimed to create improvement in the effectiveness of my teaching strategies and hence, students may improve their academic performances.

The implementation of critical pedagogy is not limited to a single method (Darder, Baltadano and Torres, 2009) and critical pedagogy theorists understand that a school‟s social and political environment play an important role in the teaching and learning process (Popkewitz and Fendler, 1999). This study additionally took my school‟s social and political environment into account by taking note of the genders, races, academic performances and backgrounds of

the participants. The aim of critical pedagogy is to bring about transformation (Biesta and Tedder, 2007; Giroux, 1983; Giroux, 2009) and to strive towards improvement and transformation (Freire, 1973). The aim of my study was to improve and transform my teaching practices and, in turn, transform my students" learning experience. Freire (1973) established that critical pedagogy prevents students from playing passive roles and being fed everything that the educator feels is necessary. My students played an active role in this study as they were actively involved in and controlled the study with the data they generated. Data from students were created after each cycle of teaching. This data informed the interventions that were used to teach the four philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts.

A relationship must exist whereby educators and students can share and learn from each other"s experiences. This was the case with my study because I have learned about the effectiveness of my teaching strategies from my students, and they have learned subject content from me using strategies informed by their input. This pedagogy placed emphasis on the most significant party in the education process – the students. They were at the heart of this pedagogy since they become the cornerstone of education and are placed in a position of power, as well as given voices. Change is introduced in a democratic and collaborative fashion, with students in mind. These changes are steered towards creating transformation (Dewey, 1916).

Critical pedagogy draws on the work of Dewey (1916) who felt that students and educators should act as problem-solving individuals who think logically and critically, and researchers suggest that the content taught in classrooms should be related to the everyday situations of the lives of students (Shor 1980; Coghlan and Brannick 2005). In my study, I understood that the examples I used needed to be familiar to the students. I aimed to use examples to which they were able to relate and which were part of their everyday lives. It is further suggested that researchers should avoid being merely passive spectators as participation leads to and creates transformation (Brown, 2002; Danvers, 2003; Lind, 2007). As the researcher of the study and educator in the classroom, playing a passive role would have prevented my transformation from taking place with my students. I had to play a participatory role by teaching students, collecting data from them and acting on this data when I taught the next section. For each intervention I used to teach, I hoped to transform my ability to teach effectively and to transform my students" learning in my classroom. An environment that is willing to accommodate changes and improvement will be more amenable to transformation.

In order to create an improvement, practical changes must be made, whilst simultaneously being realistic. The reality of a situation must not be overlooked. A democratic atmosphere can be created in various ways. All students must be taken into account and changes should be made according to their performances. No single student is regarded as either superior or inferior. Any kind of barrier based on race, class, exclusivity or religion should be removed. Continuous changes must take place, in order to cater for and adapt to students" needs. A two-way relationship is needed whereby each party is always considered (Dewey, 1916).

This theoretical framework was apt for my study since I was a participant researcher in my classroom as opposed to playing a passive role. In action research, cycles of research take place. Careful reflection and analysis follows after each cycle so that each cycle can undergo substantial improvement (Koshy, 2005). I aimed to use the action research cycles to understand my teaching practices as it is located in the school, move towards improving my practices and thus empower myself as a professional in my classroom. It was hoped that by establishing effective teaching strategies, I would optimize the understanding and academic performance of my students.

2.3. Literature Review
2.3.1. Strategies considered effective by educators in school classrooms

While my study aimed to improve my practices in my Dramatic Arts classroom, I aimed to draw on effective teaching strategies used by other educators in other contexts. While the South African context has specific considerations, exploring what others have done in various contexts proved useful.

2.3.1.1. The classroom environment

In order for effective teaching and learning to take place, the educator has to ensure that the classroom has an environment and atmosphere that is conducive to learning. An empirical study carried out by John (2000) involved seventeen student educators. John found that an effective educator needs to be able to use intuition in the classroom appropriately. Not all classroom situations are predictable and cannot always be prepared for. Therefore, the educator must be able to make decisions and adapt to changes in the moment. Reiss (2005) encourages educators to plan for this volatility on a daily basis. A single attempt from the educator is not good enough to promote understanding and to bring about effective pedagogic communication in a classroom. Some students may require repetition of the classwork

therefore this could be an effective teaching strategy especially for less competent students. While repetition may be a useful strategy in the classroom, as an educator, I am aware that the teaching syllabus has an allocated amount of time for completion. One cannot spend too much time on a particular aspect because there will be a ripple effect resulting in work not being completed. The subsequent sections will have to be rushed through and some sections might have to be omitted.

Furthermore, students must not naively accept anything and everything that is told to them. Instead, the educator should freely question and critique the issues that are on their minds (Boler, 2000). This gives students a voice and leads to them creating firm and strong beliefs. This idea builds on Freire‟s (1973) approach whereby students must not merely absorb what an educator says, without being critical and putting thought into it. A study carried out by Rothstein and Santana (2011) in Boston revealed that educators were more likely to get feedback from students who asked questions and spoke out in the classroom. These students felt determined and compelled to get the required answers. In order for me to teach effectively I realised that I had to ensure that there was a suitable environment in my classroom whereby there was discipline and students were not afraid to be verbally expressive. Due to the fact that the participants were Dramatic Arts students and have been doing the subject from the previous year, most of them are already comfortable being verbally expressive. They are accustomed to performing scenes, storytelling, improvisations and to speaking out. They were, therefore, comfortable with providing me with important data as I observed them.

2.3.1.2. Using relatable examples

Students would be taught more effectively if they were in a position to relate to the content being taught using knowledge with which they were already familiar. They may then display more enthusiasm and effort to expand on their prior knowledge. This teaching strategy can be summed up in a principle established by Reiss (2005). It is called the K--W--L--H method and stands for (what I know, what I want to know, what I have learned, and how I learned it). This principle allows students to acknowledge their current knowledge and to expand on this so that they may discover new learning content. Duncan-Andrade, (2009) and Boler, (2000) add that educators are positively encouraged to relate classroom content to situations that affect students. It is effective because students related the content to aspects that they were

familiar with and deal with all the time. Duncan-Andrade promoted this strategy after carrying out interviews and conversations with educators and students in Los Angeles between 2002 and 2007. He positively encouraged content taught in classrooms to be related to the everyday situations of the lives of students of all grades. Educators were also warned to stay away from using idioms in the classroom; instead they should give simple and clear instructions to students. Idioms may sometimes be confusing and misleading due to their ambiguous nature. Based on studies from researchers, it is clear, that the examples I used for my students must be ones that they can relate to. The participants in my study came from very different backgrounds to mine. Most students live in low-cost houses and lack proper sanitation and electricity. Things that occur in my life daily may be unfamiliar and new to them therefore I had to understand who my students are and empathize with them. When I came up with examples to reiterate what I had just taught them, the examples had to be something that they knew about. Then only did the examples have the desired effect of increasing their understanding.

2.3.1.3. Learner-centered teaching and active learning

Learner-centered teaching is another example of an effective strategy used by educators (Fahraeus, 2013). It is characterized by the educator giving students the freedom to carry out more learning activities on their own. There is a shift from the educator simply dictating instructions to the students hence the educator is no longer the focal point and viewed as the main figure who knows everything. The students are the central figures of learning while the educator becomes a guide. Classroom activities are encouraged, together with peer assessment. This form of teaching is effective, practical and beneficial as the educator allows students to be in control of their learning and education. This is the epitome of critical pedagogy as students were encouraged to participate in the lesson as opposed to just receiving whatever the educator taught them.

Closely aligned to learner-centered teaching is active learning (Prince, 2004). The educator does not view students as passive members who will digest whatever is told to them. Students play an active and enthusiastic role in the learning process and the educator finds ways to actively involve students. Eighty males from an all-boys college in Pakistan participated in a study by Saleem and Azam (2015) to determine the effectiveness of being taught using a collaborative and sociocultural approach as opposed to the traditional method. A

collaborative approach refers to students working together with the educator whilst a sociocultural approach means that students‟ social backgrounds are given attention to, not merely the student in isolation. The traditional method of teaching on the other hand takes place when the educator is in power and control and feels the need to fill students with knowledge. The participants, who were English Second Language students, were taught reading comprehension skills. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from pre and post-tests and they revealed that being taught using the collaborative and sociocultural approach was more effective. Students became more sociable, were able to correct their errors and were also more open to learning new subject content. A case study by Williams and Clement (2014) also took place for a six to eight weeks course, with two high school Physical Science educators from Massachusetts. The aim was to determine the effectiveness of collaborative teaching strategies whilst teaching scientific concepts. It was found that appropriately leading the discussion steered the educators towards scaffolding where educators gradually led students to extend their knowledge and progress to reach desired outcomes. This is turn lead to a greater degree of understanding. I recognized that active learning and scaffolding of information was beneficial to my study.

2.3.1.4. Groupwork

In 2006, Zondi introduced groupwork to first year Business Administration students at a university in Riverside in Durban. Three lecturers also participated in the study and the intention was to come up with teaching strategies other than simply lecturing to students. Data were collected from observations, questionnaires, focus group interviews and an analysis of students' test results. The study revealed that using groupwork during lectures had a positive impact on the lesson and this was the case with both the students and lecturers. The data collection methods of this study are the same as those used in my study. Both studies similarly aimed to improve teaching methods in the classroom. The finding that groupwork created improvements in teaching and learning, prompted me to incorporate group-work into my study. Educators can also allow students to work in groups and share ideas, knowledge and opinions, in the form of co-operative learning. A case study carried out by Tsay and Brady (2010) highlighted that co-operative learning promoted success in their classroom because whilst students worked with other classmates, they became aware of how important their academic progress was. This encouraged them to participate in an active and progressive manner. It helped them become familiar with requests, clarification phrases and common

questions. Even sentence openers were used in other subjects, besides English. These were all examples of practical skills that students benefited from, even when speaking out of the classroom. This also gave educators an invitation to learn more about students, their hardships and lives (Reiss, 2005). Based on teaching the participants Dramatic Arts in the previous year, I am aware that many students prefer working with classmates rather than individually. Students felt less intimidated, and more confident working with another student. Co-operative learning was therefore a teaching strategy that I needed to adopt when I worked with my students in the study.

2.3.1.5. Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning can also be an effective teaching strategy that can be used by educators (Barrows and Tamblyn, 1980; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Hung, Jonassen and Liu, 2008). This takes place when the educator relies on students to establish problem areas and create suitable solutions. They are encouraged to work on their own and come up with problem-solving methods. It is easier for them to remember something that they have discovered for themselves, as opposed to someone simply passing on content to them. However, my experience tells me that in some situations the academically weaker students feel discouraged and demotivated if they are not successful in solving the problem at hand. Such students may feel insignificant and completely shy away from participating in the lesson.

2.3.1.6. Vocabulary

An interesting study took place in Iran with one hundred undergraduate English first language students (Nosratinia and Abbasi, 2015). Emphasis was placed on the vocabulary of the lesson and it had a positive, influential and valuable effect on students. A better quality of teaching was achieved. Various other researchers have also revealed that focussing on vocabulary teaching structures had been effective in the classroom over the years (Decarrico, 2001; Hatch and Brown, 1995; Maley, 1986 and Schmitt 2000). Ncube (2014) carried out an investigation with five schools in Johannesburg to determine the extent to which students understood the vocabulary used in their Physical Science lessons. One hundred and five English second-language students and their educators participated in the study. Data from interviews and questionnaires revealed that students were still unsure about the context of the words that were used in their Physical Science lessons. The study also indicated that whilst educators may regard vocabulary as simple and easy it may be problematic and confusing for

students. In order for effective teaching and learning to take place in the classroom, the vocabulary used should be discussed. This teaching strategy was very significant for my study as unpacking the definitions with them helped them understand the lesson and facilitated greater participation.

2.3.1.7. Use of resources

Reiss (2005) highly recommends the use of appropriate resources to teach effectively such as visual material. Problem-solving skills may even be developed with the educator using graphic pictures, web diagrams and timelines. Students may be able to grasp a concept easily and the visually organized image may help them understand better. Educators are also advised to simplify and break down the content being taught so that students may digest and grasp it without too much difficulty. After all, not all students in the classroom are of the exact same academic standard. Examples of expected assignment tasks should be discussed as well. This will give them more direction about what aspects to focus on and pay particular attention to, in an attempt to do well. In 2014, a study by Howell took place with thirty six student educators and forty five students in an Australian secondary school. It explored the effects of using historical fiction elements in the History classroom. Movies, television programmes and documentaries based on historical fiction were incorporated into the History lessons. A positive impact was noted since students displayed much higher levels of engagement with their classwork, as compared to being taught without the use of historical fiction elements (Howell, 2014). In order to teach effectively, I recognized the need to use resources that were beneficial and helpful to my students. However, I do recognize that the use of special resources to teach with various teaching strategies may be problematic for schools that do not have much equipment and other resources. This is the case with my school as, financially, it is unable to provide students and educators with resources, except for some workbooks and basic textbooks. My students have just the essential items for school which include books and a pen. In some instances, students can only afford a very thick book which they use for more than one subject. They are often found borrowing and lending items such as erasers, rulers and calculators.

Kumar, Saxena, Kumar, Kumar and Kapoor (2015) attempted to identify the most effective teaching strategy used in a dental college in India. Data were retrieved from 539 students and educators. A number of resources were used such as the chalkboard, power-point and

overhead projector. However the most effective teaching strategy revealed to be the chalkboard in conjunction with vocabulary from the students" mother tongue language, which was Hindi. Whilst teaching using this specific resource, a large number of students were attentively taking down additional notes. The researchers also found that having a discussion together with oral questioning prior to the lesson, was very beneficial and helpful to the students. The study cited was significant for me because when I teach every lesson, even though I do not plan to, I always end up using the chalkboard. It is a suitable way of getting all students" attention at once and can be used to provide examples, and clarify students" concepts using words and/-or diagrams. Even if we used worksheets or textbooks in the classroom, I always referred to the chalkboard to enhance the discussion.

2.3.2. Drama strategies considered effective by educators

It was also important to take note of the effects of using drama strategies to teach in the classroom. I needed to consider how drama strategies were used by other educators.

Drama strategies refer to teaching and learning techniques introduced by drama practitioners and they can be used in a variety of forms in the school classroom (Maley and Duff, 2005). Currie (2015) investigated the use of drama strategies whilst teaching grade twelve students an English novel entitled *Of Mice or Men* by Steinbeck. The study took place in Cambridgeshire and the focus of the study was on whether or not the drama strategies could assist students in understanding the characters of the novel. It was discovered that using a single drama strategy per lesson was inappropriate and did not yield desired results. Instead, many drama strategies such as empathy, hot-seating, soliloquies, group-work and improvisations may be combined into a lesson. Currie (2015) showed that there had to be a balance between the strategies students liked or would enjoy and strategies that would be beneficial to them. Therefore I had to consider a combination of drama strategies which could be used to teach my lessons more effectively. In retrospect, suitable drama strategies needed to be used to do justice to a lesson. Sometimes when I taught the same lesson to two different combinations of classes, I did not end up using the same drama strategies. The size of the class, attention span of students, academic capability of students and their behaviour must be taken into account before I choose which drama strategy to use. For example if the class is too big and students have come in after the lunch break and are very energetic, I will do more group improvisations with them instead of hot-seating. The selection of drama strategies to be used to teach must be suitable for the class being taught.

2.3.2.1. Hotseating

Winston (2004) promoted the use of the hot-seating strategy in the classroom. It is a technique in which a student takes on a role and is questioned by the educator or the rest of the class. Winston carried out a series of teaching projects in England that incorporated drama techniques with the English curriculum. Based on the collective results of these projects, he completely supported the idea and further claimed that when drama strategies were used, educators naturally immersed students in the classroom activities. Typically, students were required to pay attention and these drama strategies would finally lead them to impulsively react verbally. The hot-seating strategy could be used to gain the participation of students with honest responses from them. They could become more involved in the lesson being taught to them using drama strategies, as opposed to being taught a lesson without the use of drama strategies. This study is indeed significant as I have noticed this kind of behaviour from my students as well. With drama strategies, you learn more about students than just having a general conversation with them. Students freely express themselves with drama strategies since there is not much time to think and be selective. Due to the spontaneous nature of most drama strategies, students react impulsively and their reactions express their honest feelings, beliefs and situations. Similarly, using drama strategies to teach Life Orientation to grade eight to eleven students produced effective results. Westbrook (2004) discovered this after carrying out a case study in a high school in Durban. The aim was to determine whether or not using drama strategies would help students understand the lesson content more effectively. Academically weak students benefitted more from the use of drama strategies, than other students.

2.3.2.2. Drama strategies used for improvement

In a comprehensive analysis of thirty two quasi experimental studies based on the effects of drama strategies, Wagner (2002) found that the use of drama techniques in the classroom enhanced students" recollection of stories, comprehension and vocabulary. It is indeed true that students recollect better when they are exposed to experiential learning and carry out a task instead of theoretically just learning about it. Due to the practical nature of Dramatic Arts, it allows students to carry out many activities and these activities place them in a better position to recollect something they learnt or did. Another investigation carried out by Miccoli (2003) in Brazil aimed to determine the value of using drama strategies in the classroom and proved that the use of drama strategies enabled students to overcome their

fears and take risks regarding conversational skills. The use of drama strategies were also extremely beneficial since they could transport students into a new world - a world where their imaginations, posture, gestures, body and facial expressions were used creatively and appropriately. This fictitious world that educators created for them gave them a sense of power to express their views. Hence the use of drama strategies to teach students made it possible for students to become active and to play a very involved role in the classroom. Even though the study took place overseas, participation in Dramatic Arts appears to have similar effects on students universally. The practical component of the subject makes them feel brave and confident enough to take risks. When students internalize a character, they attempt to do so convincingly using their posture, voice and bodies. Zorina (2008) outlined the benefits of incorporating drama strategies into all subjects in the classroom in a book entitled *Teaching and Learning English for Career Development.* She claimed that it was useful since it created an internal energy or excitement which made students, especially the introverts, open up and express themselves. An environment was created where students felt that it was acceptable to make mistakes as their confidence increased. As students" confidence levels increased, they tend to become more themselves and their characters are revealed. They become less self-conscious and more outspoken, and less hesitant to respond orally to questions. With this kind of atmosphere, students open up and become creative and expressive. This is the kind of behaviour that was needed in my research, for students to respond authentically.

2.3.2.3. Drama strategies and written work

Using drama strategies in the classroom can also be beneficial in the area of written work. A collaborative study took place in a private international school in Milan, Italy with native Italian speakers (O"Gara, 2008). The aim was to determine the effects of using drama techniques as a teaching tool. Quantitative data was captured after using both traditional methods and drama techniques to teach two groups of students of the same grade. Pre and post analysis revealed that students grasped more content when taught using drama strategies. Based on observational studies by Wagner (2002), if an educator uses drama strategies whilst teaching, it will have a positive effect on the quality of writing produced by students. It made students more aware of the reader and their expectations of the piece of writing. However I did understand that students may sometimes grasp a concept but have difficulty in writing about it. Some students are more inclined to doing practical tasks and other students are more inclined to writing. Musthafa (2015) found that teaching English literature to Foreign

Language students in an Indonesian university can be very challenging. However, the use of drama strategies helped to teach the section. It made the experience more memorable and accessible to students and as a result, they were able to grasp the moral of parables and other stories taught to them. Morals and values were presented to students in an indirect but effective manner. Similarly, Dramatic Arts allows students to communicate effectively via non-verbal forms such as mime, gestures, improvisation and body language. Hence even students with language barriers are able to communicate effectively.

2.3.2.4. Drama strategies in other subjects

The use of drama strategies is not limited to the field of language and drama; it can be used effectively in other subjects as well. From 2012 to 2013, Science students from sixty one primary schools in Istanbul participated in a study by Kaya and Elgun (2015). The study aimed to figure out how using instructional games will impact on teaching the section on planet Earth. Data collected from an experiment and control group showed that the section was taught noticeably better with the use of drama strategies in the form of instructional games. Students" marks were much higher and these reassured researchers that content can be taught more effectively using a drama strategy such as instructional games. Pearson, Robinson and Jones (2015) created the Paperchain approach. It is made up of drawing pictures and thereafter creating recordings of sound to strengthen the explanation of the picture. This creative approach was first used in Mumbai and South Africa. Drawing pictures, creating visual images and sound recordings of subject content was used to express characters in a more user friendly way. Even though the Paperchain Approach seems effective, it was considered too time consuming to be used in my study. Nevertheless after studying the various drama strategies used by educators in the classroom, it has become evident that using drama strategies to teach can have many benefits and these were considered for inclusion in my study.

2.3.3. Interventions used to improve teaching

The use of drama interventions has the ability to provide better teaching in the classroom (Wedell, 2003). In his study, Todd (2006) collected data from policy documents and interviews with educators and found that educators who created drama interventions had to take into account that the environmental situations of each classroom will differ. These differences must be taken into account by the educator, in order to use drama interventions to

improve teaching. This finding is appropriate as my classroom situation is not the same as another educator's so generalizations cannot always be made. Studies using interventions in classrooms at various levels have proven that interventions, if they are correctly implemented, take the environmental situations into account and if they are implemented for the right reasons, can be very successful (Kellam et al., 2011; Wasik and Hindman, 2014). Wedell (2003) similarly mentioned that the educator responsible for implementing interventions must be aware of the reasons, implications and requirements of the interventions, so that they may be used beneficially. Drama interventions must be well planned and careful thought must have gone into them in order for them to be effective. Even though the interventions used in my study are for the purpose of my students at my school, other educators who are in a similar situation may benefit from my research as well. They could also adapt the drama intervention to suit their environments.

Schmitt, McClelland, Tominey and Acock (2014) carried out a drama intervention with 276 students in a primary school in the Pacific West in Australia. The intervention continued over eight weeks and the intention was to strengthen the quality of education taught to students. Students from the school were demographically at risk and they live under conditions of extreme poverty. The intervention was of a self-regulatory nature whereby students were exposed to skills that helped them pay attention, follow directions, persevere under challenging circumstances and concentrate more. Students who were exposed to the drama intervention displayed higher degrees of self-regulation as well as improved Mathematics skills. Similarly, even after the completion of my study, I will continue to use such effective interventions with my students of all grades. This is the intention of my study, to improve my teaching practices not just for my current students but throughout my teaching career as well.

Bapna and Sharma (2015) are authors of a book that keeps track of the different kinds of interventions used in order to improve the overall quality of learning in India. Interventions included additional classrooms, introduction of a laboratory, arts and crafts room, proper sanitation, additional educators and more emphasis on problematic subjects such as Mathematics, Science and English. PicTalk is an intervention that was used in Maharashtra, India with 15062 students. PicTalk involved using specific flashcards and teaching manuals that would help the students learn the English language and improve their speaking skills effectively. It did prove to be effective with all students; however the academically weaker

students benefitted more from the intervention. This finding is reiterated with an intervention that took place with 199 primary schools in Vadodra and Mumbai in India. An unqualified individual was trained and brought to the school to teach them additional content in the hope of assisting the students. This was achieved as all students" results improved yet the academically weaker students saw an even bigger increase in their marks, especially in Mathematics. Another beneficial intervention also took place with over two thousand children, from the slums of Delhi in India, whose ages range from two to six years old. They were given vitamin A supplements as well as a deworming drug. Remarkable results were revealed as the kids thereafter put on significant amounts of weight. This in turn produced healthier students who attended school more regularly thereafter. Previous research has also outlined that interventions are most beneficial and useful to children who are disadvantaged in some way or another (Bierman, Nix, Greenberg, Blair and Domitrovich, 2008). While I may not implement all the interventions mentioned above, I had to consider which of those mentioned could assist in my study with my students who are mostly at risk and disadvantaged, economically and socially.

Al-Musawi (2014) found that using students" mother-tongue language enabled a greater degree of understanding of the sections being taught. An intervention named USHER which stands for the United States History for Engaged Reading program was introduced by educators to grade six and seven middle school students, who did not all share the same mother tongue. The aim of the intervention was to get the students more involved with social studies and reading skills with the use of a set of already translated vocabulary. Over a period of time, improvements were noticed with all students, even those whose mother tongue was not English. Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006) introduced an intervention that emphasized the importance of ongoing silent reading in an intermediate classroom. They designed an intervention called the R5, which represents read, relax, reflect, respond, and rap. This aim of this intervention was to engross students in the reading process and it turned out to be successful. The participants were exposed to different kinds of reading texts and displayed more commitment to and enthusiasm for the reading process. Dorrington and Van Nieuwerburgan (2015) used peer coaching as an intervention with twenty eight primary school students. They found the intervention useful as they afterwards became more interested and motivated in their classwork. A greater degree of verbal communication was produced as opposed to written communication only.

Students registered in an Engineering course in India experienced an intervention in an attempt to boost their marks and optimize understanding (Halkude and Aher, 2014). The intervention included objective tests and group discussions. Students were expected to discuss and have conversations about their challenges and weaknesses. This created improvement as the students" marks in both the theory and practical aspects showed an improvement. Similarly Blanton, Stephens, Knuth, Gardiner, Isler and Kim (2015) carried out an intervention as well to improve grade three students" performance in Algebra. The students were exposed to various methods of solving algebraic problems. Out of one hundred and six students, only thirty nine were exposed to the intervention. The latter group of students performed much better than the former. Another study in India by Bapna and Sharma (2015) found that the government in India was involved in an intervention and provided four computers to almost all primary schools in the area of Vadodara in India. The intention of this intervention was to improve students" Mathematics and language skills. The effect of this intervention was measured with the grade four students. The students who were exposed to this intervention and given access to the computers, showed a noticeable improvement in Mathematics skills. Conversely this was not the case with language skills as no improvements in students" marks were noted. Perhaps it is difficult to have an intervention that tackles both language and Mathematics skills because they are such different subjects. They both require different skills and abilities from students.

Since many students carry their cellphones to college, Biddix, Chung and Park (2015) believed that cellphones should be used as learning tools in the teaching of the college"s curriculum. An intervention based on this view, called the „hybrid shift", took place. Teaching and learning involved the use of students" cellphones. Qualitative data was derived from six hundred and twenty students from Korea and the United States and the findings indicated that the intervention was mostly successful, with some room for improvement. A similar intervention was introduced into the language classroom in the form of flip teaching whereby students learn from watching online videos and programmes. This intervention proved to be much more beneficial to the students as opposed to lessons that did not include flip lessons. They produced better marks; and students took their learning more seriously and worked with more effort and determination (Hung, 2015). Murray, Koziniec and McGill (2015) using the same intervention encouraged the use of flipped learning. This was after eighty five first year university students in Washington were exposed to the intervention in

2014. Students became more serious about their education, appreciated the convenience of online learning and it also gave them a sense of freedom and control. This would perhaps not work well in South Africa as all students may not be able to afford Smartphones. There may also be an issue of safety in bringing cellphones to school. In the context of my school, using devices such as cellphones, laptops and the internet may not be very effective, simply due to the fact that many students do not have access to this equipment. It is also not safe for students to bring these items along to school as many of them walk to school and bear the risk of being robbed of these expensive devices.

2.3.4. Using action research to improve teaching practices

Action research attempts to use a cycle of teaching patterns to create a better quality of teaching practices and interventions for educators (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). It can be characterized as a form of research in action, instead of research about action (Adler, Shani and Styhre, 2004). Participants play a democratic role since the research is carried out with them and for their benefit, as opposed to simply using them as participants (Coghlan, 2004).

In order for an educator to impact positively on students" academic performance, she/he must be in a position to differentiate between what is taught, how students react to the lesson, and the content that students have actually grasped. These findings were retrieved from Bentham"s 2009 study in Durban where she carried out an action research with three Grade nine educators, to explore how well they grasped and could deliver teaching based on sustainable development. Her findings emphasized that exposing educators to action research and professional development outlines the challenges and obstacles they face in the classroom. This in turn, steers educators in the direction of creating improved classroom lessons and teaching strategies. Similarly, in my study the data produced from observations, journal entries, questionnaires and test marks were a clear indication of students" reactions to my interventions and whether or not they grasped the work I taught to them and to what extent. Reed (2010) performed an action research study with Grade eight Mathematics students from a region in Kwa Zulu-Natal. Her intention was to establish whether students" home languages were responsible for common errors in Mathematics. However, during the cyclical research process she found that she needed instead to adopt more collaborative teaching methods. These teaching methods allowed students to become active participants and to overcome some common barriers that students had previously faced.

Action research studies carried out internationally have produced creditable results such as an action research study that took place in a primary school in Massachusetts undertaken by Wisniewski (2000). The study included bilingual students and aimed to identify effective reading instruction methods for students who did not have enough exposure to the English language. Data collected indicated that the support students needed was closely linked to the amount of reading instruction skills they lacked. As students became more familiar with reading instruction, the less support and assistance they required from educators. Similarly, in my study, students whose mother tongue is IsiZulu also face the problem of being taught and assessed in English yet most of them are exposed to this language in the classroom only. Students speak English in the classroom but from my observations during ground duty during the lunch breaks, they speak IsiZulu. When students are at home they also prefer to speak their mother tongue, especially if their parents are not accustomed to communicating in English.

Educators play an essential and supportive role in the academic lives of students. This was revealed in the study by Livingstone, Celemencki and Calixte (2014). The dropout rate of Black students in high schools in Montreal is very high hence an action research study was carried out in four schools from 2009 to 2010. With the hope of finding a suitable solution to this problem, researchers found that the students involved in the study received an inadequate amount of support from their educators. They expected and looked forward to much more support from their educators, than they were actually receiving. This gave researchers insight into solving the problem of the high dropout rate of students. Carrying out cycles of research was also useful to Batagiannis (2011) who set up a case study on the effects of action research on a group of aspiring principals from Indiana. She established that the participants reaped rewarding benefits from doing action research. They developed strong leadership skills and were able to identify problematic issues.

Many other action research studies have led to improvements in educators" teaching practices. Mirzabeygi, Basiri, Yadegarynia and Zarein-dolab (2001) used this form of research to establish more effective and beneficial forms of teaching. Action research took place with forty two members of staff and six hundred and eighty six first and second year students at a medical university in Tehran from 1999 to 2000. It involved educational

workshops, training sessions and discussions. A better quality of teaching and education by the staff was produced. Action research has also proven to be beneficial to the staff of a school in Melbourne who used action research to improve their culture of teaching and learning. Effective teaching strategies such as increased student engagement, meaningful discussion and the use of visual media in the classroom were recognized (England, 2011). Action research can be beneficial in various areas of teaching and learning. Abdellatif (2015) used action research in Morocco to look at how using power-point presentations affect the extent to which English First Language students become involved in the classroom. An observer observed six lessons of forty five minutes each. The forty participants were first year students and their behaviour and body language was carefully taken note of by the observer. The study showed a remarkable change in students" behaviour and body language while using power-point presentations. More enthusiasm, determination and interest were evident in the students. Overall, there was a positive and promising reaction to the use of the power-point presentations. Perhaps the power-point could have been used as an intervention for my study; however my school only has one classroom with the equipment that is required for a power-point presentation. Using this classroom for selected lessons may be complicated and time-consuming as other educators use this classroom for presentations and to view films. There is also the added issue of getting students settled in an unfamiliar classroom.

Hase, Tay and Goh (2006) carried out a successful action research study with students from a slightly different context. Senior managers from various companies in Singapore were involved in the study and came up with better teaching strategies that helped them improve their managerial skills. They became more confident, open-minded, creative and learnt to relate their life experiences to their teaching and learning. Due to the job description of educators, they also act as managers of classrooms and action research assists them in becoming more effective managers (Martell, 2014). A study took place in Boston and focused on action research, through educators" experiences in their classrooms. It was found that action research empowered educators and hence made classroom improvement possible. Educators who implement suitable teaching practices are in positions to empower their students with appropriate content and knowledge. Action research was performed with grades seven to twelve students in a music classroom in Nebraska (Adams, 2014). The aim of the study was to incorporate informal teaching methods such as music and instruments to teach formal classroom content. As a result a greater degree of self and peer teaching was made

possible because students learnt about creating sound and interpretative skills. A study by Concannon, Brown and Brown (2013) was carried out with Science students in a school in the United States of America. They found that students had misconceptions about science theories and laws. Educators used action research and videos to help correct students" misconceptions and made it possible for them to differentiate between the two terms. Students thereafter understood the two terms, were more accommodating and welcomed new content in the science classroom.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter of my dissertation has identified the theoretical framework of my study as critical pedagogy. The reasons for this choice were discussed. The literature is based on researchers who have carried out similar studies to my research. I have engaged with the effective strategies that other researchers and educators have used. Additionally I have discussed local and international interventions and action research studies already practiced by other educators and researchers. I have used their findings as a basis for my interventions in conjunction with the data I collected from my participants. This assisted me to create interventions to improve teaching and learning in my classroom.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research paradigm, research design, participants of the study, data collection methods and analysis procedures. It also evaluates the issues of trustworthiness, rigour and reliability and highlights the methodological limitations.

3.2. Research Paradigm

Unlike many others, the critical paradigm goes beyond passively observing and taking note of a situation, moving as it does towards creating something that is enhanced (Asghar, 2013). Bohman (2013) identifies three characteristics of a critical paradigm. Firstly, there must be an issue that needs attention. Secondly, there must be clear directions to attempt to overcome the issue and thirdly, there must be room for reformation to take place. These three characteristics are evident in my study hence they fall under the critical paradigm. The issue that needed attention was my ineffective teaching of philosophical developments in the Arts in the Dramatic Arts classroom. I was aware that I did not teach the section well and I wanted to improve by using various interventions in the classroom to overcome this short-coming. This creates the opportunity for me to reform my teaching of the section and consequently transform my students by improving their performance and understanding of the section.

Table 2 below represents visually the parallel between Bohman's (2013) characteristics of a critical paradigm and the characteristics of this study

1. The issue that needs attention	* My ineffective teaching of philosophical developments in the Arts
2. Clear directions to attempt to overcome the issue	* Teach section One, collect and analyze data, reflect, create intervention One * Teach section Two using intervention One, collect and analyze data, reflect, create intervention Two * Teach section Three using intervention Two, collect and analyze data, reflect, create intervention Three * Teach section Four using intervention Three, collect and analyze data, reflect
3. Room for reformation	Reflections take place so that appropriate interventions can be created and my students and I are in a better position to improve

The critical paradigm served a transformative function and aimed to create improvement and success in me and in my students through repeated cycles of teaching and learning. This paradigm looks at reality as it is influenced by socio-cultural values and influences (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). In terms of socio-cultural influences, I am aware that the participants involved in the study are of a very low economic status. Many of them come from homes where the only income is in the form of a government grant. Most students live away from their parents, either alone or with a relative or guardian.

3.3. Research Design
This study used action research as its research design. Action research is a collaborative and democratic form of research whereby changes are made in order to fix a problematic area.

Research occurs within the context of a scenario instead of about the scenario (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

3.3.1. Models of action research

Various researchers promote different models of action research. Mills (2011) found that there are common characteristics in all models of action research. There must be a problem area, followed by action whereby data is collected and this data gives the researcher an idea of the action to be taken next. Stringer (2007) and Piggot-Irvine (2006) all claim that action research takes place in a continuous spiral fashion where each step determines the next. Hendricks (2009) and Riel (2007) claim that action research is made up of four steps; which are planning, carrying out an action, collecting data and a reflection process. Action research differs from a traditional form of research as it is not a straightforward and direct process (Johnson, 2008). Overall it is a combined study that thrives on the collective efforts of both students and the researcher (Mertler, 2009). This study used the models proposed by Sagor (1992) and Calhoun (1994). These models promote the process of establishing a problem, collecting data, analysing the data, reporting the results and planning the form of further action to be taken. In addition to carrying out research, usually in natural settings, action researchers generate information, and critically reflect on the information that forms the foundation for what actions need to be taken thereafter (Schon, 1983; Jarvis, 1999; Coghlan, 2004). The intention of action research is to make it possible for teachers to research their own practices and eventually to effect improvement. This improvement can take place as a result of introducing new concepts and/-or researching current trends (Koshy, 2005). Levin (2012) describes action research as a process that serves a dual role in that it aims to solve a problem and does so in a rigorous and scientific manner.

The diagram below shows the four cycles of the action research process

Figure A – The action research process
Cycle One

Teach section One, ⟶ Collect data ⟹ Analyse and reflect ⟹ Intervention One
Usual strategies

Cycle Two

Teach section Two, ⟹ Collect data ⟹ Analyse and reflect ⟹
Intervention One

Cycle Three

Teach section Three, ⟹ Collect data ⟹ Analyse and reflect ⟹
Intervention Two
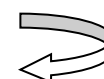
Cycle Four

Teach section Four, ⟹ Collect data ⟹ Analyse and reflect
Intervention Three

This action research which was carried out within two seven-day cycles of the school‟s timetable, aimed to improve my teaching practices using a system of interventions. It was hoped that the action research would improve my practices and thus enable my students to better grasp the sections of the subject (philosophical developments) and gain confidence in the use of a language which is not their mother tongue. Ultimately, I aimed for improvement in my practices to enable the transformation and improvement of my students‟ academic performance.

Over the years action research has become a common form of research used by researchers in various countries (Mills, 2011). It requires constant preparation from the researcher since preparation cannot be completely done at the start of the study. The first step must be taken and then data collected should be analysed. Reflection must take place, to determine the steps that will follow. A reflection process takes place after each step (Koshy, 2005).

3.3.2. Data collection in action research

Action researchers commonly use qualitative data which is based on written content or spoken words, as opposed to using numerical values. Qualitative research does not focus on statistics and numerical figures; it instead attempts to create understanding. Data collection takes place in an unstructured fashion whereby emphasis is on data that contains narratives, feelings, case studies, experiences and themes (Silverman, 2015). Preparation in advance is limited due to the unpredictable nature of data collection. The aim is to reach a conclusion at the end of a study. There is also no need to generalize findings as a qualitative study looks at a specific situation in great detail (Flick, 2015). This study utilized qualitative data as emphasis was placed on analysing observations from field notes (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule), details from my journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry), transcriptions from a focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview) and data obtained from questionnaires (See Appendix A: Pre-Intervention Questionnaire and Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire) and test marks (See Appendix D: Tests on philosophical developments). Researchers, employing this research paradigm, intend to gather research from their own environments and thereafter reflect on themselves. This leads to improved progress of the researcher as well as participants. Johnson (2008) also mentions that since an action research study pertains to the researchers" particular situation, the aim is to create improvement accordingly. Hence, my research study took my classroom situation and students into account. When attempting to enhance a situation, it is most convenient to look for answers and to adapt them to your situation however action research makes it possible for the creation of specifically designed solutions. In order for teaching and learning in a classroom to be enhanced, this enhancement must start within the classroom and focus on everything that happens in the classroom (Mertler and Charles, 2011). Mertler (2012) adds that over the years educators start to feel too comfortable and satisfied with their style of teaching. The disadvantage of this is that the calibre and nature of students changes each year. It becomes essential to adapt teaching strategies to the types of students being taught. Action research gives an educator the ability to recognize and make use of appropriate teaching and learning strategies in the classroom. Action research embraces the fact that every classroom situation will differ and will therefore produce different kinds of data (Anderson, 2002). As a result the findings from my study with my current students may have to be adapted to suit my students in years to come.

As beneficial as action research may be, it is still not carried out as often as the traditional method of carrying out a research study (Mertler, 2012). Action research is sometimes regarded as inferior in comparison to the traditional form of research, simply because the researcher is researching himself or herself. However a researcher must maintain a high standard of validity, accuracy and credibility throughout the study (Stringer, 2007). In action research a researcher has a more complex task since it is his/her responsibility to collect data, analyse it and reflect on it. In the traditional method of doing research, a researcher's duty ends once data has been analysed and a conclusion has been reached. Action research is also more time-consuming than other approaches and there is no standard example to follow as with traditional research studies. Each action research study will not produce similar results, due to the unique nature of each study carried out (Mertler, 2012).

3.3.3. Action research for improvement

Nevertheless action research can be very valuable (Mertler and Charles, 2011). Researchers tackle problematic areas that need attention in their classrooms therefore they are motivated to make their best attempts. This specific form of research allows the researcher to become more successful in the classroom by repairing the problem area and also through reflecting on the repairs carried out (Johnson, 2008). Action research is beneficial to the researcher as interventions and improvements can be achieved within a short space of time. This is essential as action research is an ongoing process that is constantly progressing. My action research study took place over three weeks. At the end of an action research study, researchers have more insight, knowledge and clarity regarding their teaching practices. This type of research also prevents researchers from passively accepting findings and not using them to improve their teaching (Johnson, 2008). Parsons and Brown (2002) add that in a traditional research study, findings are not of the nature where they must be used. Action research allows a researcher to come up with a finding and thereafter the researcher is compelled to make use of it and reflect on its effectiveness and usefulness. In this instance action research focusses on an educator's normal day of work (Johnson, 2008).

This particular research design is based on carrying out research and continuously acting on that research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). Action may take place in accordance with

various action research models as suggested by many researchers including Sagor (1992) and Calhoun (1994).

3.4. Location of the study

This study was carried out in a Dramatic Arts classroom in a secondary school in the Durban South region of Chatsworth, KwaZulu-Natal. Many students live far from the school and travel long distances from various township and rural areas such as Umlazi and Mariannhill to get to school. Students choose to come to this school because the schools nearby their homes offer isiZulu as a home language and they prefer to study English as a home language. Some students attend this school since it is the closest to their home. Others feel that the school fees are reasonable, compared to surrounding schools in the area. If students are in a difficult financial position and are unable to pay school fees, they apply for concession. They provide reasons and proof of being unable to afford to pay school fees and they will be exempt from paying a certain amount. Teaching at a school like this made me realize how little my students have and it made me want to go the extra mile and be a better educator to them, all the time.

3.5. Participants

This study was carried out with fifty-seven Dramatic Arts students. There were twenty-eight boys and twenty-nine girls in the class. Twenty-three of these students progressed to the next grade even though their marks were not suitable to pass. As a result of their already having failed once in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase, they were promoted. Their ages range from seventeen to twenty-four years. These students chose to do Dramatic Arts as a subject in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase and most of them seem to look forward to this subject. The practical component of the subject seems to excite them. Many of their homes are headed by the students and their financial positions are very poor. The home language of ninety-seven percent of the students is isiZulu.

Table 3 shows the age groups of the participants of the study

Age Groups	No of Students
17 – 18 years	16
19 – 20 years	26
21 – 22 years	13
23 – 24 years	2

Table 4 represents the race groups of the participants of the study

Race Groups	No of Students
Indians	2
Blacks	55

Table 5 shows the number of students who passed with their own efforts (promoted) and those who were progressed to the next grade, even though they produced fail marks (progressed)

	No of Students
Promoted	34
Progressed	23

The demographics of my students emphasized the need for me to try even harder to help my students to understand and pass, since they had previously not been promoted at a grade in the phase. They needed to be taught more effectively.

Collecting data from my students during each lesson during the research period was very time consuming. I would still be recording data in my observation schedule and journal whilst my

next class was waiting outside for me. Since there were so many students to observe, I had lots to record. I also managed to record small quantities of data during the lessons. Ideally, it would have been good to pause the lesson for a minute or two at regular intervals but there would not have been enough time for this. Additionally there would be too many interruptions in my lesson which would be too time-consuming.

3.6. Data Collection Methods

In action research, data collection methods can be regarded as interventions since the data collected is intended to benefit both the researcher and participants (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014), and the analysed data determines the next intervention. This study used data collection methods such as pre- and post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention questionnaire and Appendix E: Post-intervention questionnaire), observations (Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule), a focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview), test scripts (See Appendix D: Tests on philosophical developments) and journal entries (See Appendix C: Journal Entry).

Pre-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) are forms that participants anonymously filled in prior to being taught using interventions. They were used to get feedback from the students about my teaching strategies used before the interventions. Students" teaching and learning likes, dislikes and preferences were inquired into in the questionnaires which indicated the effectiveness or lack thereof of my usual teaching strategies used. The questions contained in the questionnaire were discussed with participants to ensure that they understood what was required of them. Two multiple choice questions and two open ended questions were contained in the questionnaire. It was an easy way of collecting data and was used to create a baseline that provided information to steer the study in a particular direction (Koshy, 2005). It outlined the path that I needed to follow. Post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire) were administered after the interventions took place to ascertain if my teaching practices improved and students were able to learn more effectively. It allowed the participants to indicate whether they found the section taught easy or difficult. Aspects that they enjoyed, did not enjoy and found difficult were outlined. The data from post-intervention questionnaires (See

Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire) revealed the effectiveness of the intervention used.

In one instance, the post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire) was replaced with a focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview Schedule) to save time and prevent monotony. This interview took place with ten students who were selected based on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is when a small group of students represent a bigger population of participants (Coghlan and Brannick; 2014).The selection took students" ages, races and performance into consideration. I selected students according to race, gender, age and ability. Since there are twenty-eight males and twenty-nine females that do Dramatic Arts, five males and five females were interviewed. Three of the youngest, three of the oldest and four of the students whose ages are in the middle, were selected. The participants comprised one Indian student and nine Black students due to the significantly larger number of Black Dramatic Arts students. Students were selected according to their abilities based on their final grade eleven Dramatic Arts marks. Three students with high marks, three students with low marks and four students with average marks made up the focus group. Interviews generally provide more detailed and descriptive data, as compared to a questionnaire. It also creates room for elaborations of participants" inputs and opinions (Koshy, 2005). Data from focus group interviews (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview) revealed students likes and dislikes together with the aspects they enjoyed, did not enjoy and found difficult. These would determine whether the intervention used was effective or not, and to what extent.

Classroom observations (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) were carried out as I made field notes on students" behaviour in the classroom. Observations are a reliable way of collecting data as they capture the natural behaviour of participants (Koshy, 2005). Since the students are already familiar with me as their teacher and as a researcher, their responses and behaviours should be genuine (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). Whilst teaching all four philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts, I observed the students in order to create detailed field notes. This was done during the lesson, when possible, or soon after to ensure that nothing was left out and forgotten. The field notes from observations captured whether students reacted in a positive and enthusiastic or negative and unenthusiastic manner.

This also indicated how interventions were used to improve the teaching of philosophical developments and considered my teaching practices.

After each section was taught, participants wrote a short test (See Appendix D: Philosophical developments in the Arts tests) and the marks assisted in determining students" understanding of philosophical developments in the Arts, using various interventions. This method of collecting data allowed participants" progress to be recorded clearly (Koshy, 2005).

In addition to all other methods of data collection, I also kept a journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry). Journals are a good way of keeping track of the entire research process and it simultaneously heightens the professional development of the researcher (Koshy, 2005). I used it to record feelings and details of the entire research experience. It provided details that echoed or contradicted the data retrieved using other methods. My journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) served the purpose of revealing information that I may have overlooked, not given sufficient attention to or regarded as insignificant.

Table 6 below represents the research process followed

Stage of research	Data collection methods
Pre-intervention	Pre-intervention questionnaires, class tests, field notes and journal entry; followed by reflection
Cycle One (Based on the first intervention)	Post-intervention questionnaires, class tests, field notes and journal entry; followed by reflection
Cycle Two (Based on the second intervention)	Focus group interview, class tests, field notes and journal entry; followed by reflection
Cycle Three (Based on the third intervention)	Post-intervention questionnaires, class tests, field notes and journal entry; followed by reflection

3.7. Ethics

Prior to carrying out this study, I obtained permission from the students (See Appendix H1: Information Sheet for students and Appendix H2: Informed Consent: Students Involved in the Study) and their parents or guardians. Parents or guardians were given notices (See Appendix I1: Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians of Participants and Appendix I2: Informed

Consent: Parent/Guardian of participants) in both English and isiZulu to ensure their understanding of the study and its requirements. The Department of Basic Education (See Appendix K: Ethical Clearance from Department of Education) and the university from which this study emanated, granted ethical clearance (Appendix L: Ethical Clearance from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal) to commence with the study. The principal of the school also granted permission for the research to take place at school (See Appendix G1: Information Sheet for head of school in which the study will occur and Appendix G2: Informed Consent: head of school in which the Study is to occur).

3.8. The Study

In order to obtain baseline information that would serve as something to measure against, I firstly taught students the first philosophical development called Symbolism using my usual teaching strategies (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation). This included teacher-led discussion, reading and discussing the notes with students whilst providing examples to them. I have used this approach in my previous years of teaching this section. My past teaching of these sections had not been very effective and suitable, as recorded in ex-students" test marks previously mentioned. Data collected from anonymous pre-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) revealed the ineffectiveness of my usual teaching strategies and identified which interventions needed to be used in the next cycle. Data revealed that students wanted more examples, more repetitions, explanations of complex vocabulary and to be taught at a slower pace. Hence, those teaching and learning strategies were used as the first intervention. A class test on the first philosophical development was written (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test), which gave me a mark to compare with after teaching with the use of interventions.

The first intervention was used to teach the second philosophical development called Surrealism (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation). This intervention included teacher-led discussion, teaching the section at a slower pace, using more examples, constantly repeating the main points of the section throughout the lesson and asking more questions as I taught. I also started replacing the complex terminologies with simple terms that were more understandable to my students. After being taught this section on Surrealism, students wrote a short class test on this philosophical development (See Appendix D2: Surrealism Test) and filled out a post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-intervention

Questionnaire) as well. Both these forms of data, together with my field notes from observations (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule) and my journal entries (See Appendix C: Journal Entry), indicated the effectiveness of the first intervention and whether or not it improved my teaching. This data allowed me to determine teaching strategies for the second intervention.

The second intervention included teaching strategies such as creating a suitable teaching environment, problem-based learning, using visual images and quotes, hot-seating, teacher-led discussion and replacing complex terms with simpler definitions (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation). It was used to teach the third philosophical development in the Arts known as Existentialism. Once I completed teaching this section students wrote a class test on Existentialism (See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test). However, I observed that the use of post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire) after teaching each section became monotonous and time-consuming. Students were still filling out the questionnaires after the lesson was over and this took up their time from their following lesson. Instead, the post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire) was replaced with a focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview). The discussion took place involving the same questions that were included in post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire). Data derived from test marks (See Appendix D: Tests on philosophical developments in the Arts), field notes from observations (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule) and journal entries (See Appendix C: Journal Entry), in addition to feedback from the focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview) were used to determine the effectiveness of the second intervention. It also helped me determine teaching strategies for the third intervention.

The third intervention was used whilst teaching the last philosophical development in Dramatic Arts, known as Absurdism. It included teaching at a slower pace, teacher-led discussion, replacing complex terms with simple meanings, groupwork and group feedback to the class (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation). As with the other philosophical developments, a class test was written after the section was taught (See Appendix D4: Absurdism Test). Post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-

intervention Questionnaire) were used after this intervention, to determine its effectiveness in improving the teaching and learning of the section.

3.9. Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative data is normally analysed using three phases. Firstly, data undergoes reduction by simplifying data into themes and patterns. Secondly, the field notes are presented in a user-friendly manner where data can clearly be understood using tables, charts, diagrams, graphs or other means of organising the information. Thirdly, conclusions are established (Koshy, 2005).

The data obtained from the pre-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) were organized into two themes: effectiveness of pre-intervention teaching strategies and interventions to improve teaching practices. This baseline data prior to the action research intervention was used to help me determine the effectiveness of my usual teaching strategies as well as what type of intervention ought to be used to improve teaching of the next section of philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts.

Field notes from observations (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule) were divided into themes of whether students responded positively or negatively to the various interventions that I used to teach in the classroom. Good attention spans, attentiveness, asking and answering questions, among others, were regarded as positive reactions whilst reactions such as yawning, staring blankly, failing to answer, and falling off to sleep, among others, were regarded negatively. This helped me determine if and how I could use the intervention to improve my teaching practices of philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts.

Test scripts were marked after tests on each philosophical development were written (See Appendix D: Tests on philosophical developments in the Arts) and an average mark of all students" marks per test was calculated. This helped me to compare and contrast the various interventions used. It emphasized how each intervention affected students" understanding of the philosophical development taught to them. The average test marks, in conjunction with the field notes of observations (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule) allowed me to determine how the interventions improved my teaching practices. It was an indication of whether the teaching strategies used were forms of effective interventions or not.

Journal entries (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) were a source of in-depth details and unanticipated data. This form of data was looked at throughout the data collection and data analysis processes, after each intervention was implemented. This form of data collection took the school situation, environment and my personal circumstances into account whilst teaching.

Data retrieved from post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire) and the focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview) was analysed thematically to further indicate how the new teaching interventions affected students" understanding of philosophical movements in Dramatic Arts. Students used these data collection methods as a way of revealing whether my teaching strategies using the interventions helped their learning to improve or not. I was then able to assess if the various interventions used in the action research cycles helped to improve my practices or not.

3.10. Trustworthiness, rigour and reliability

Triangulation, where different forms of data collection are used (Mason, 2002; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), increases validity since various forms of data collection can support each other. In this study, data was collected using pre and post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire and Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire), observations (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule), a focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview), students" test scripts (See Appendix D: Tests on philosophical developments in the Arts) and a journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry). Meticulous handling of research created rigour in the research process (Reason, 2003). Rigour was maintained in this study since ten percent of all test scripts were moderated by a colleague to ensure rigour and consistency in the marking process and handling of marks. Due to the nature of action research, data was analysed timeously and regularly in order to create the next intervention. As a result, this ensured that data was analysed as soon as possible, meticulously and carefully.

3.11. Limitations

I had planned to have a critical friend observe my lessons as I taught. This critical friend is my Dramatic Arts students" English educator so the students would already be familiar with her. This would have added greater trustworthiness, rigour and reliability to my findings.

However this was impossible to carry out. My friend did not have a free period at the same time that I was teaching the section on Philosophical Developments in the Arts. My research study happened to have taken place during a very busy period at school where there were many disruptions to the normal school day. I would have preferred to carry out my study where the normal school day would have been in operation, without any disruptions. Data was collected after each section taught, in the form of short class tests. Due to time constraints, more extensive tests could not be written. Such tests would have provided a better reflection of students" responses to the lessons they learnt. I would have liked my students to have answered the questionnaires with more effort and honesty. As it was they would sometimes rush to fill them out because the siren had rung for the next period. Students generally take long to come to my class as my classroom is situated in the last block of school. Even though I did mention that they must hurry to class, they would often be coming from the first block of the school. Had they come to class earlier, we would have had a few extra minutes for my lessons.

3.12. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the paradigm and design of the research study. The location and participants of my study were also discussed. An action research approach was adopted for this study. While philosophical developments in the arts were taught, data was collected in various forms. After each section was taught, the data was analysed and reflection took place to establish which intervention to use next and also to determine the effectiveness of each intervention. Rigour, reliability and trustworthiness were maintained in this study. The limitations were also discussed. This chapter is a detailed description of when and how all cycles of the research study took place.

Chapter 4: Discussion of findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter of the dissertation describes, in detail, the analysis of all forms of data that was collected. Data was analyzed thematically into positive and negative effects to determine how effective each intervention was. Reflection took place after each cycle to determine how I had felt after using each intervention and it also gave me direction about my teaching strategies in the classroom.

4.2.1. Determining effectiveness of pre-intervention teaching strategies

Field notes from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) during the lesson showed some positive reactions to my usual teaching strategies used. Two students asked questions throughout the lesson on Symbolism such as "Is talking part of Symbolism?" and "Isn"t robots an example of Symbolism?" Six other students answered questions when I questioned them at the end of the lesson. Two students asked me to explain some points again. Many students took down notes on their worksheets and in their notebooks as I discussed the section. I also observed that two students successfully attempted to create their own examples on Symbolism. It was clear that even before using any of the interventions, my classroom was an environment in which students felt comfortable with speaking out, participating in discussions and asking questions. This is in line with findings from Boler (2000) who found that when students spoke their minds, they became more self-assured of their beliefs, thoughts and opinions. Students were able to relate the section being taught to their everyday lives by thinking of examples of Symbolism that they use and are exposed to. In the past as well as presently, studies have found the benefits of using relatable examples when teaching students (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005; Reiss, 2005; Shor, 1980). This response from my students was an indication that a handful of students were paying attention and focused on the lesson on Symbolism. They participated and contributed to discussions. This made me realize that some of my teaching practices had to have been effective if students were paying attention as I taught them.

Additional positive reactions were obtained from the pre-intervention questionnaire (see Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) that students filled after being taught Symbolism using my usual teaching strategies. It revealed that 9% of participants found the section taught very easy, 30% found it easy, 57% found it of a medium level, 2% found it

difficult and 2% found it very difficult. These responses from students in the pre-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure B – Students'' reactions to being taught Symbolism
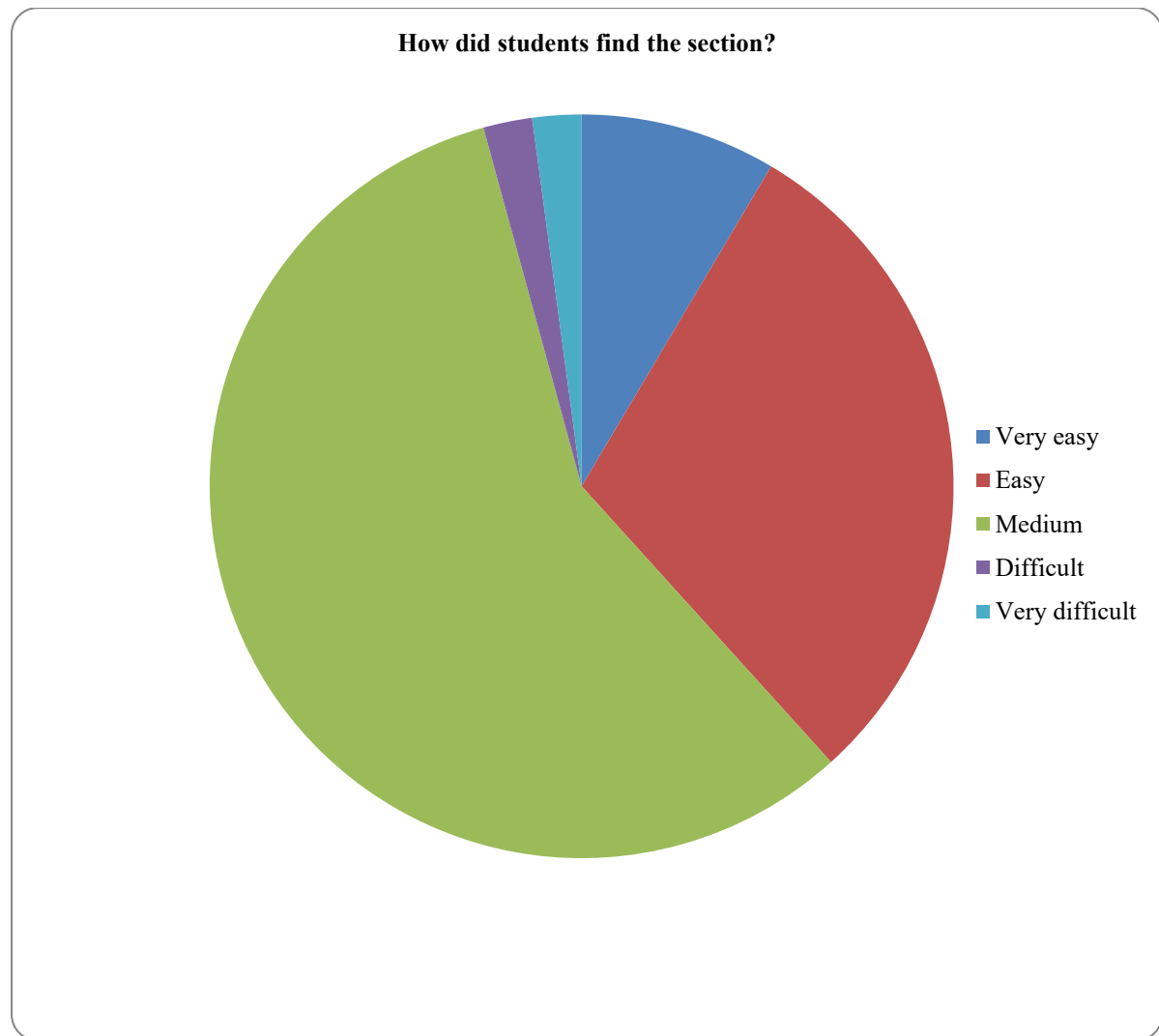
Most students indicated that they found the section of a medium level. Students probably felt afraid and hesitant to be completely honest in providing responses to the questionnaires therefore 57% selected an on-the-fence option and indicated that they experienced the section at a medium level. They could have been reluctant to indicate a definite response such as finding the section easy or difficult. This was the first questionnaire they filled in and maybe needed to be more familiar with this process of providing data. Throughout the research

process thereafter, I constantly reminded students to be completely honest and that there would be no consequences to their opinions and responses.

Nevertheless data collected from other methods contradicted the positive reactions noted and pointed towards my usual teaching strategies being ineffective. While observing students I noticed that many of them had looks of confusion during the lesson. Two students, who are normally very enthusiastic in my class, appeared to be lost. There were long moments of silence with not many verbal responses from all the students. When I asked questions, four students quickly looked down to avoid my gaze and being asked for answers or input. Some students just stared blankly and I noticed that two students were falling asleep. When I questioned them, they both claimed that they were not feeling well. I was unsure whether those two students were really unwell or pretending to be unwell. It could have been an excuse to hide the fact that they were bored and the lesson did not excite them in any way. Furthermore, the remaining students" behavior indicated that my usual teaching strategies were ineffective. Students did not concentrate on the lesson or find it enjoyable. Their lack of responses, participation, enthusiasm and failure to constantly pay attention showed that the teaching strategies I employed were unable to engage them with the lesson. This emphasized the need for an intervention when teaching the next three philosophical developments.

The field notes from observations (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) also revealed that whilst I was teaching the Symbolism section, two students were preoccupied with their practical work for their theme program, trying to learn lines. I scolded them at the beginning of the lesson but they still did not pay attention to the lesson thereafter. They were still chatty and tried to communicate discreetly with each other. The section prior to philosophical developments in the Arts was a practical class dealing with theme programmes. Some students were lagging behind and did not complete the task for this section. Hence they attempted to complete it when I had moved on to teaching the next section. They did not listen when I reprimanded them and this showed me how desperate they were to finish their work instead of getting a mark of zero for the theme program task, as I had mentioned they would. It also meant that they did not take me seriously when I scolded them because they still attempted to discuss their theme programme as I taught Symbolism. They may possibly have thought that they would have been able to catch up on the philosophical development later.

Field notes from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) revealed that three students were frantically writing and trying to complete their English essays quietly. I noticed their notes on "*Othello*" under their Dramatic Arts worksheets and notebook. A few other students also looked preoccupied, as if they were doing work for another subject. This did not surprise me as students occasionally try to do other work in the Dramatic Arts period, an activity I try to put a stop to when I notice it. This makes me realize that students do not have a high regard for the subject of Dramatic Arts. It is as if other subjects are prioritized over Dramatic Arts.

This was also echoed in my journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) as I noticed that educators from other subjects sometimes send my Dramatic Arts students late to class and think nothing of it. Perhaps my subject is regarded as less important due to its practical component. Other educators and students feel that the practical component makes the subject easier and requires less effort than others. This normally annoys me. It could also be that my teaching strategies are so ineffective and boring, that students would prefer to do work from their other subjects instead of pay attention to my teaching. Some students were very fidgety, and could not sit still and listen to the lesson. A group of students was looking out of the window every couple of minutes because the teacher in the next block was reprimanding his students outside the classroom. Two students attempted to have conversations quietly with their friends sitting in the same row. I scolded them at the beginning of the lesson, and they stopped chatting and paid attention to the lesson. Overall, there was not much class participation in the lessons on the first philosophical development, Symbolism. Students chose to pay attention to what was happening outside the classroom instead of paying attention to the examinable section I taught them. Two students had to be forced to pay attention and had I not scolded them, they would have continued chatting for the duration of the lesson. John (2000) correctly noted that in order for proper teaching to take place, the atmosphere must be serious and suitable. It took some effort to create an environment where students had to focus on the lesson being taught and paying attention.

Data collected from the field notes of the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) and the pre-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) contradicted each other. Even though positive and negative

responses were noted from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule), there were far more negative responses displayed by the participants. Their natural behaviour observed in the classroom showed a more valid reflection of how they responded to my lesson, as opposed to the pre-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) that they filled in. The questionnaires showed a very neutral response to the use of my usual teaching strategies, possibly because students were hesitant about being completely honest. They were also used to this way of teaching and knew no other method of learning. The field notes from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) outlined unenthusiastic, distracted and unresponsive reactions. This revealed the ineffectiveness of using my usual teaching strategies to teach Symbolism.

I was stopped a couple of times in the lesson to explain some difficult terminologies that the students found too complex to understand such as sub-text and aural. When I asked students "Is it making sense?" half the class did not respond and the remaining students nodded halfheartedly or shook their heads indicating no. I made an entry in my journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) that perhaps students did not engage with the lesson because I used words that were beyond their understanding and comprehension. The vocabulary could have been too difficult for them and as a result I lost their attention during the lesson. My journal entries (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) similarly revealed feelings of dissatisfaction, inadequacy and disappointment with my teaching of Symbolism. I realized that I had to come up with better and more effective ways of teaching in the next cycle. This was in accordance with a principle of critical pedagogy which advocated focusing on a problematic issue in detail and thereafter positively acting on it (Darder, Baltadano and Torres, 2009).

In my journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry), I also reflected on the many disruptions that took place at school on the days when I taught Symbolism. Perhaps these disruptions were also partly to blame for the lack of enthusiasm and concentration amongst students in the classroom. Whenever I heard of the disruptions or saw the educators absent in the relief roster, I just sighed and exclaimed "Oh dear!" Nine educators were absent from school because they were commemorating a religious holiday. Many educators served relief for absent educators and a few classes without teachers were asked to stay in the playground area for the duration of the period. On days such as these, students are generally more distracted than normal, and some attempt to abscond from classes and stand around in the grounds area.

Many students were also absent which gave the students at school the impression that there were too few students to be taught. All the female students from school attended a presentation in the assembly area so they were late for my lesson as well. When they came to class, they indicated that they were already feeling very hot and tired. My journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) reiterated my feelings of being an ineffective educator to my students. Even I felt drained of enthusiasm to teach.

After being taught the section on Symbolism, students wrote a short class test (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test) and they scored an average mark of six out of ten. 2% of students scored zero, 4% scored ten percent, 2% scored both twenty and thirty percent, 9% scored forty percent, 16% scored fifty percent, 19% scored sixty percent, 16% scored seventy percent, 13% scored eighty percent, 6% scored ninety percent and 11% scored hundred percent in the test. These results are illustrated in the diagram below

Figure C – Students" results from the test on Symbolism (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test)
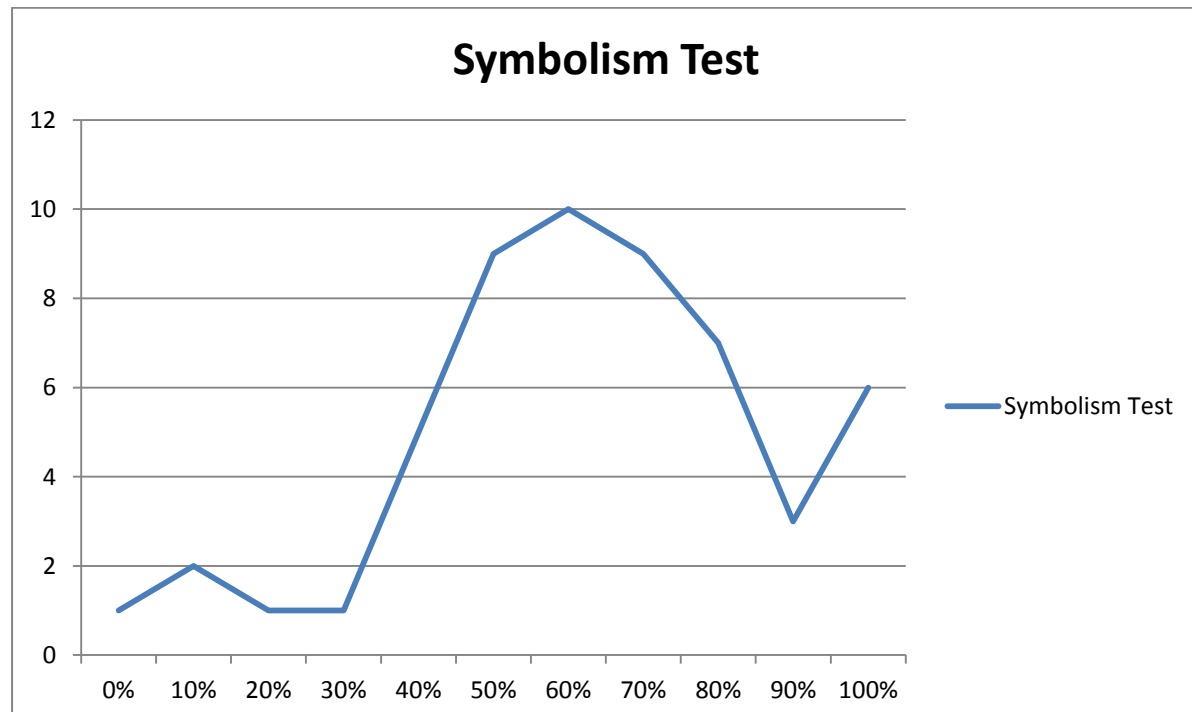
Two students showed that they learnt nothing from my lesson on Symbolism as they scored zero in their tests. Perhaps they did not take the test seriously as they thought that it may not

have been part of their continuous assessment formal task, even though I mentioned that it was. 10% of the participants had failed and 90% had passed the test on Symbolism (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test). These test results painted a positive and encouraging picture but this did not echo the findings from most of the field notes from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule). Test results showed that students benefitted from using my usual teaching strategies to teach the first philosophical development. Yet it was also a possibility that the class test (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test) that the participants wrote was flawed by being ineffective or by insufficiently testing their newly acquired knowledge on Symbolism. The test was out of ten marks (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test) and the duration was fifteen minutes. It was considered convenient for students to write a test at the end of the lessons after each philosophical development and it did not take up too much of the lesson time. Students also wrote the test soon after the section was taught to them hence the content still lingered with them. It is possible that the information would have been forgotten if it were tested after many days.

Below is a summary of the marks students scored in the Symbolism test.

Table 7 - Analysis of students" test marks on Symbolism

Questions – Symbolism	Percentage of students who scored maximum marks
1. What percentage of students completely understood Symbolism?	17
2. What percentage of students completely understood the Symbolism examples given to them?	69
3. What percentage of students was able to create their own examples of Symbolism?	45
4. What percentage of students differentiated between Symbolism and Realism?	46

Data from the test marks emphasized that only 17% of the participants were able to define the concept of Symbolism which was just taught to them. 70% did do well on the direct recall question of discussing the examples that were given to them. However, question three required students to apply their knowledge and fewer than half the number of participants were able to do so. Thus even though the average mark of six out of ten was satisfactory,

closer attention to the data collected from individual questions in the test (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test) revealed a lack of effectiveness in my usual teaching strategies. Perhaps the reasons for these test marks could be explained by students input from pre-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) that they filled out after the lesson. It indicated that 2% of students found the terms too difficult, a further 2% found the section boring, 5% did not enjoy the section, 6% did not understand the examples used and 85% percent enjoyed the section, as illustrated below.

Figure D - Students'' experiences of learning Symbolism
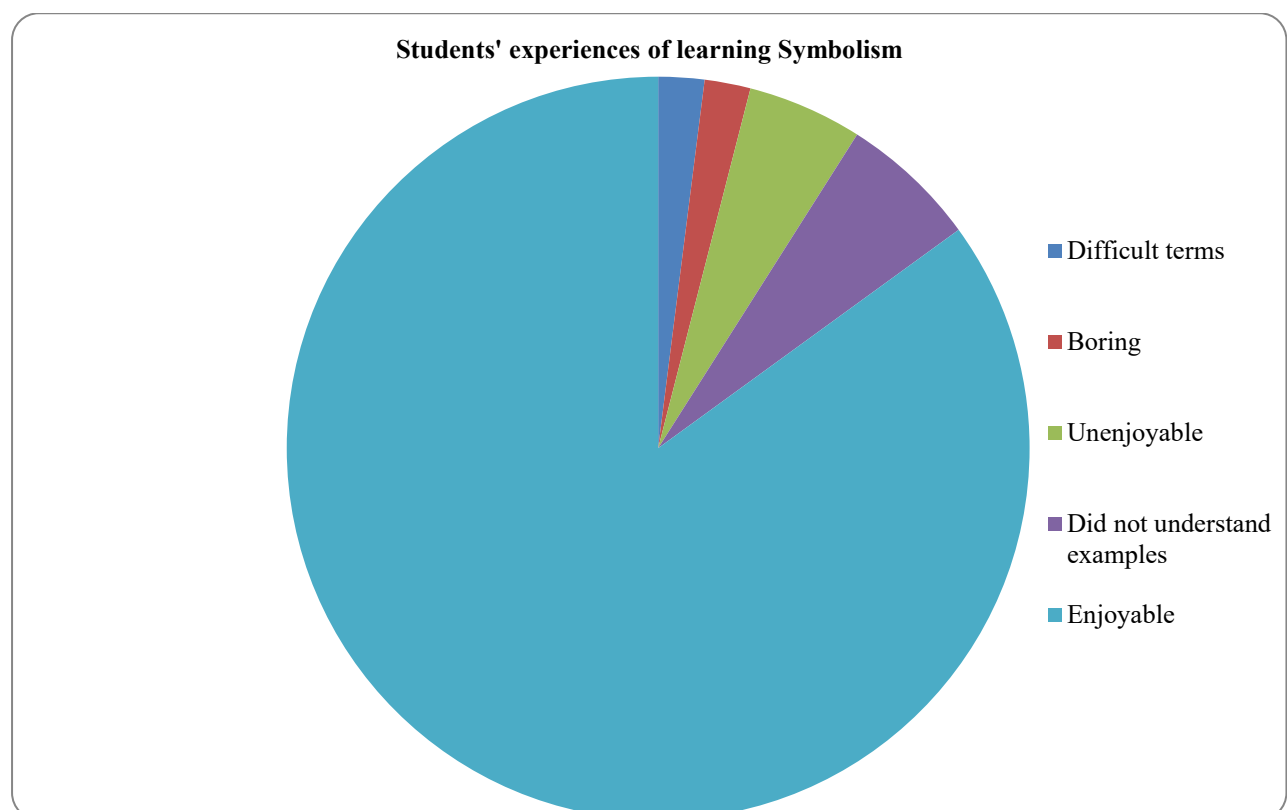
Even though a large number of students said that they enjoyed the lesson on Symbolism, data from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule), test marks (See Appendix D1: Symbolism test) and my journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) revealed a different response. Bentham (2009) appropriately advises educators to differentiate whether students grasp and understand a concept taught to them as opposed to just paying attention to and not internalizing it. Based on the pre-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire), students seemed to have enjoyed and understood the lesson very well however, this was not the case. As previously mentioned

students could have been hesitant to be completely straightforward and honest in filling out the first questionnaire and this was the only method of teaching that they knew so had nothing with which to compare it.

In the pre-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire), students were required to offer input about how they would like me to teach the next philosophical development in the Arts. Students indicated that they wanted the lesson content to be repeated more often. Reiss (2005) also emphasized the need for an educator to continuously repeat the content of the lesson in order to improve students" understanding. The participants also suggested that I could teach the section better and make it more enjoyable by using more examples, explaining at a slower pace, asking questions at the end of the lesson and discussing complex vocabulary. Perhaps my usual teaching strategies were ineffective because I had not used the teaching strategies that students would have preferred and enjoyed more. The teaching strategies offered by the participants would form the interventions I needed to use to teach the next philosophical development in the Arts. Dewey (1916) similarly outlines that both parties of students and educators must play an active role in and be responsible for successful changes to be made. Changes were made in a democratic fashion by considering students" requests.

4.2.2. Reflection

Personally, I did not feel pleased with the teaching of this section. It reminded me of my experience of teaching this section using the same teaching strategies for the past two years. Students also lacked enthusiasm and interest as I taught them philosophical developments in the Arts. When I taught this section for the first time in 2013, I assumed the unenthusiastic classroom environment was due to teaching the section for the first time. I attributed my ineffectiveness to the fact that I taught the section for the first time and this anxiousness made me feel slightly less confident in the classroom. However, in 2014 I noticed that students behaved similarly when I taught the section. I then realized that I needed an intervention to create improvement in teaching this section more effectively. I then decided that I would base my Masters study on this section in the hope of improving my teaching strategies so my students would understand it and would perform better in this section. Just as critical pedagogy aims to create improvements (Popkewitz and Fendler, 1999); my aim was to create an improvement in my teaching in my classroom.

After I taught Symbolism to my Dramatic Arts students, I felt ineffective and dissatisfied as an educator. This was because my usual teaching strategies had only been beneficial to such a small percentage of students in my class. Positive reactions were only displayed by a handful of the students even though the roll of the class was over forty. A few students kept track of the lesson as I taught but in order for my teaching strategies to have been regarded as effective, more positive reactions should have been observed from the majority of the students. My aim as an educator is to teach effectively and to every single student present in class. Hence, even though glimpses of attentive behaviour were observed, data revealed that my usual teaching strategies were not very effective. I wanted to teach for the benefit of all students in my classroom, instead of just a couple of them. It was clear that I was not doing justice as an educator and I needed to change the way I taught, so students could learn better and I could become an improved educator.

An intervention was needed before I taught the next philosophical developments in the Arts. Just as an action research study carried out by Reed (2010) identified the areas that students found difficult and needed improvement, the data I collected simultaneously identified problematic areas and gave me direction for the appropriate teaching strategies I needed to employ to teach the next section. They were taken into account when I created the intervention I used to teach the second philosophical development (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation). Being a teacher-researcher conducting research in my classroom, I felt that I had to be more observant and alert than normal. Initially it felt stressful and I worried that I would not have been able to record sufficient observations and journal entries. However for the entire research process, I had large amounts of data to record. Verbal and non-verbal responses, utterances, facial expressions and body languages were all forms of data that I noted and analyzed. Initially I was also concerned about having too much to do during the lesson time. When the research process began, I realized that I was not teaching any extra content to my students. The additional task came in when I had to pay more attention to classroom behaviour and record it. This was quite manageable and enjoyable for me as I was anxious to analyze the data I collected from my students. The data from the pre-intervention cycle indicated that I needed to use teacher led discussions, teaching at a slower pace, constantly repeating the content of the lesson, using more examples, having an activity at the end of the lesson and replacing complex terms with simpler meanings. The aim of

using these interventions was for all students in the class to improve their understanding and learning of philosophical developments in the Arts.

4.3. Cycle One

Cycle one of the study was based on the second philosophical development called Surrealism. Data was collected from classroom observations (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule), my journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry), a short class test (See Appendix D2: Surrealism Test) and a post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire). The aim was to determine the effectiveness of the intervention on my teaching strategies and determine how they may have improved my teaching of Surrealism. This first intervention included teaching strategies such as teacher led discussions, teaching at a slower pace, constantly repeating the content of the lesson, using more examples, having an activity at the end of the lesson and replacing complex terms with simpler meanings. The use of the first intervention had various positive and negative effects on my teaching practices.

4.3.1. Positive effects of the first intervention on my teaching practices

Whilst teaching the section on Surrealism, I observed that most students were interested, eager and curious to learn this section. They took down notes very often, diligently stuck their worksheets in their books and were quick to underline the main points of the lesson. Students displayed behaviour that showed their enthusiasm, keen interest and concentration during the lessons on Surrealism. They felt brave and confident enough to offer many of their own examples to add to the lesson content. Six students" hands shot up in the air when I asked for examples. They offered examples such as "You woke up so drunk that the last night seemed surreal!" Some examples were inaudibly shouted out. John (2000) similarly promotes this kind of atmosphere where students feel that they could speak up and air their views. This was an indication of their attentiveness and their attempts to engage with the content taught to them. It also provided data for me. I observed that many students seemed more energetic and there was noticeably more enthusiasm in the classroom as compared to the classroom atmosphere when I taught the Symbolism lessons using my usual teaching strategies. Approximately six students asked questions that gave them more clarity and helped them understand. They wanted to know how Surrealism would be used in a play. They nodded in approval as I explained, their facial expressions showed that they were pleased and they

focused on me as I discussed the section with them. As I started discussing the philosophical development called Surrealism with the class, I found that many students interrupted me with questions about Surrealism that were already covered in the previous lesson. A pupil asked me what the word Surreal meant, even though it was discussed in the previous lesson. As I answered the questions, I simultaneously managed to recap the gist of the previous lesson on Surrealism. I saw that many students benefitted from me recapping as they were nodding and mumbling "*Oh ja*!" (Oh yes) and "*Khumbula*!" (Remember). Thereafter the atmosphere improved and students were more attentive to my explanations. This finding is again echoed by Reiss (2005) who claimed that educators must repeat the content of the lesson in order for students to grasp it even more effectively.

Field notes additionally revealed that students appreciated the strategy of teaching at a slower pace as it seemed to help them to concentrate. I could see that most students irrespective of their capabilities were following the discussion in a step-by-step fashion. Replacing complex terms with simpler words was also a strategy that improved the teaching and learning of Surrealism. This made the content self-explanatory and suitable for my students. They also got a little competitive with each other by trying to figure out the meanings of the difficult words such as fantasy, conscious and unconscious. This made the lesson more enjoyable for them and me. Ncube (2014), Nosratinia and Abbasi (2015) as well as Williams and Clement (2014) have also outlined that breaking down complex vocabulary terms and explaining it in a simple manner, is very beneficial to students. It breaks down the content of the lesson and makes it more accessible to students. Students did not get side-tracked with unrelated distractions and approximately six of them asked for clarity as I taught. The field notes from my observations (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) gave me a clear indication that the use of this intervention was effective and improved my teaching and students" learning of Surrealism.

Even though the weather was quite similar to when I taught Symbolism, students were very attentive, wide awake, interested and participated in discussions. Williams and Clement (2014) similarly promote the use of teacher-led discussions because it steers the lesson in the desired direction. This prevents the lesson from venturing into an unnecessary area. I recorded feelings of pleasure, relief and accomplishment in my journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) after teaching Surrealism. This was also because as I handed out a test to a

pupil, he said, "*Memu* (mam) I really enjoyed the lesson, it helped me." His comment affected me deeply and I felt very enthusiastic and pleased with myself. I thought to myself "This is it, I"m getting somewhere." It made me realize that using this intervention to teach philosophical developments in the arts was more effective than my usual teaching strategies. This was evident based on findings from field notes on the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) as well as my journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry).

After I taught Surrealism to my students using the first intervention, they wrote a short class test at the end of the lesson (See Appendix D2: Surrealism Test). An average mark of nine out of ten was scored. 2% of students scored forty percent, 4% scored fifty percent, 6% scored sixty percent, 8% scored seventy percent, 13% scored eighty percent, 10% scored ninety percent and 57% of students obtained a hundred percent for the class test. This data is represented in the diagram below, together with data from the class test on Symbolism (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test).

Figure E - Students" results from the tests on Symbolism and Surrealism
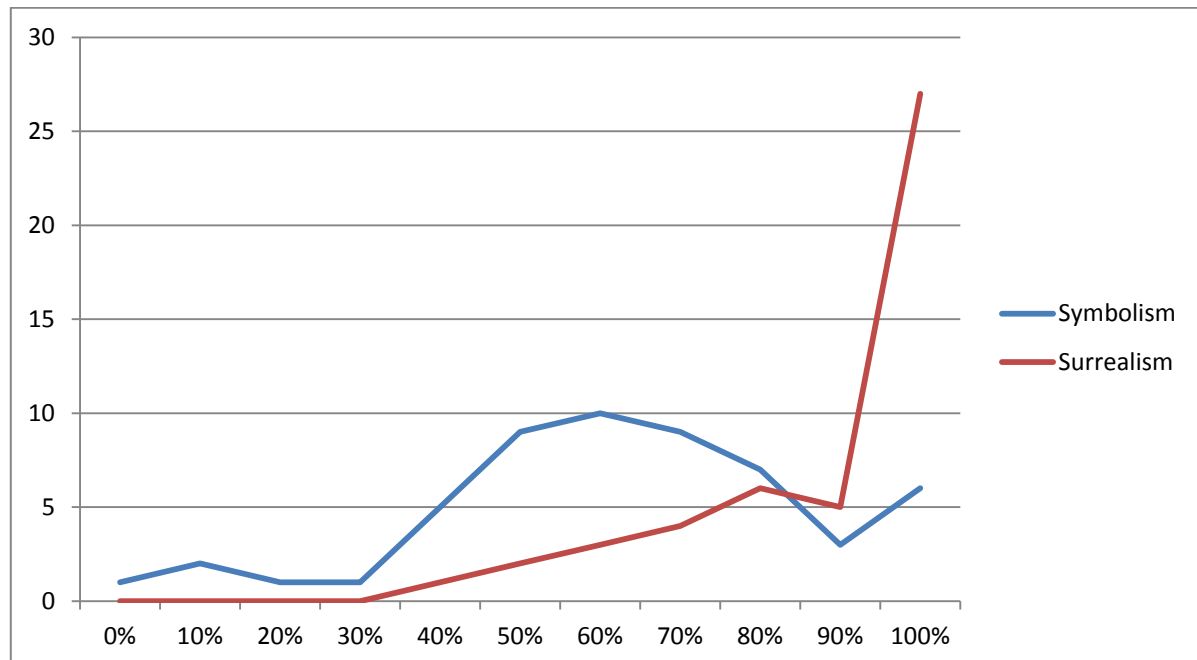
The test results were very pleasing and the average mark scored was higher than the average mark scored on the test on the first philosophical development. The lowest marks that students scored for the Surrealism test (See Appendix D2: Surrealism Test) was four out of

ten as opposed to students" lowest marks starting from zero in the Symbolism test (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test). 46% more students obtained full marks in the Surrealism test as opposed to the Symbolism test (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test). All students who wrote the test passed and more than half the number of participants achieved full marks. This indicated the effectiveness of the first intervention used to teach Surrealism. It was clear that students understood and grasped the section well.

The table below shows data that was obtained from each question of the test (See Appendix D2: Surrealism Test).

Table 8 - Analysis of students" test marks on Surrealism

Questions – Surrealism	Percentage of students who scored maximum marks
1. What percentage of students completely understood Surrealism?	81
2. What percentage of students was able to create their own examples of Surrealism?	65
3. What percentage of students differentiated between Surrealism and Realism?	92

In the Surrealism test (See Appendix D2: Surrealism Test), 81% of the participants were able to understand the concept of Surrealism fully. 65% created their own examples of Surrealism and 92% could clearly compare and contrast Surrealism to Realism, a section studied the previous year. A large number of students made sense of the section on Surrealism and were successfully able to relate it to another philosophical development in the Arts. They had to create their own examples of Surrealism and more than half the participants were able to do so. This showed the effectiveness of the intervention used to teach Surrealism. Even data from the tests (See Appendix D1: Symbolism test and D2: Surrealism Test) echo the finding that using the first intervention to teach Surrealism was more effective than teaching with my usual teaching strategies.

After being taught the section on Surrealism using the first intervention, students filled in a post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire) in order to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. When asked about how they found the section on Surrealism, 9% of the participants found it very easy, 29% found it easy, 53% found it on a medium level and the remaining 9% found it difficult. Nobody found the section very difficult. This data is represented in the pie chart below.

Figure F – Students" reactions to being taught Surrealism
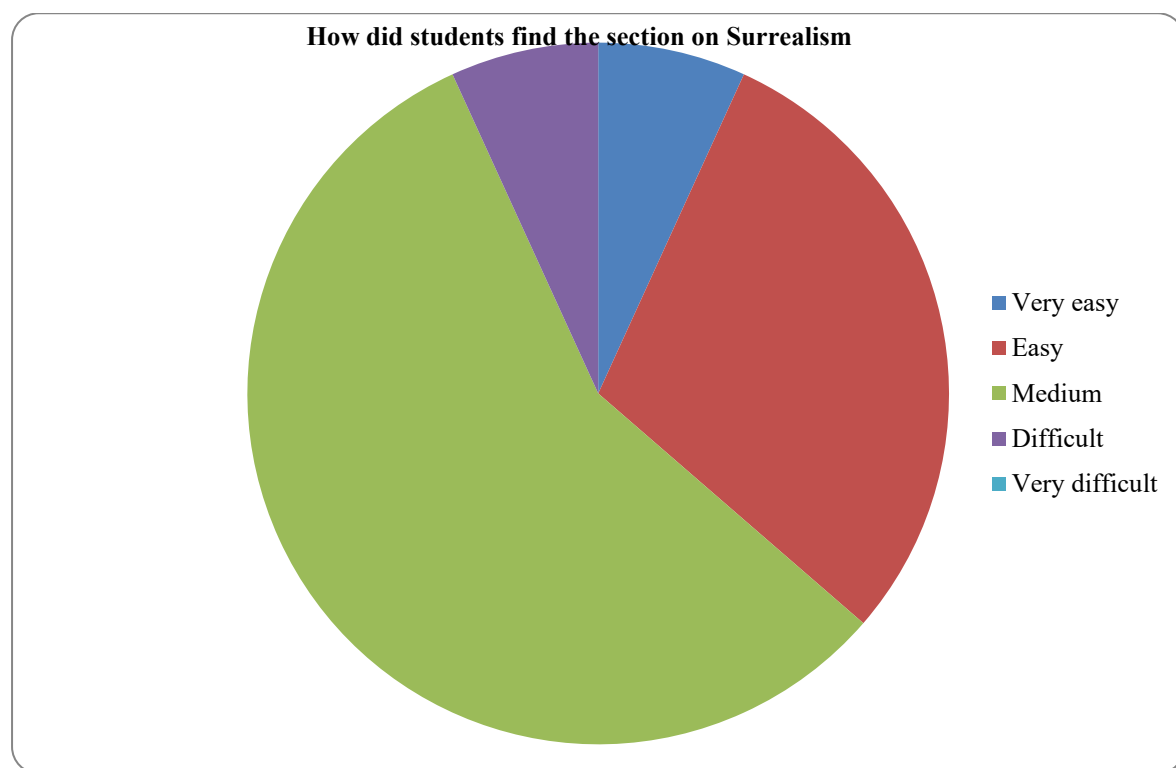
As with the previous philosophical development in the Arts, most students experienced the section at a medium level. It seems like they are still hesitant about being completely honest or it could be that they genuinely find the section at a medium level. However there is more variety to the way in which students responded to the question on how they found the section. Perhaps students are responding to the questionnaire more honestly, since it is the second questionnaire they filled in. In my journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) I recorded feeling pleased with this data. As a teacher, it has become evident to me over the years that if the lesson is too easy then students switch off because they think they know everything already

and there is nothing to challenge them. On the other hand if something is too difficult, students feel demotivated as if the lesson is too out of reach for them to grasp and attempt to understand. This has also been reiterated by Ahmed, van der Werf and Minnaert (2010). Many students found the section on Surrealism easy and this meant that the intervention used helped students to understand the section better.

Participants indicated that they enjoyed the content of the lesson, the questions asked orally and in the tests, the explanations used to explain the section, the examples used and the comparisons used to differentiate between Surrealism and Realism. This revealed that students enjoyed and benefitted from the teaching strategies used in the first intervention. Perhaps these strategies helped me to make the lesson more interesting and hence my students were attentive and focused. In the post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire) students were also asked about their experience of learning Surrealism with the use of the first intervention. 8% of the students responded that the terms were too difficult, 2% found the section boring, 4% did not enjoy learning about Surrealism, 4% also could not understand the examples and 82% revealed that they enjoyed the section on Surrealism, which used the first intervention. The pie chart below reflects students" experience of learning the second philosophical development, together with the use of an intervention.

Figure G - Students" experiences of learning Surrealism

Students' experiences of learning Surrealism

Legend:
- Difficult terms
- Enjoyable
- Boring
- Unenjoyable
- Could not understand examples
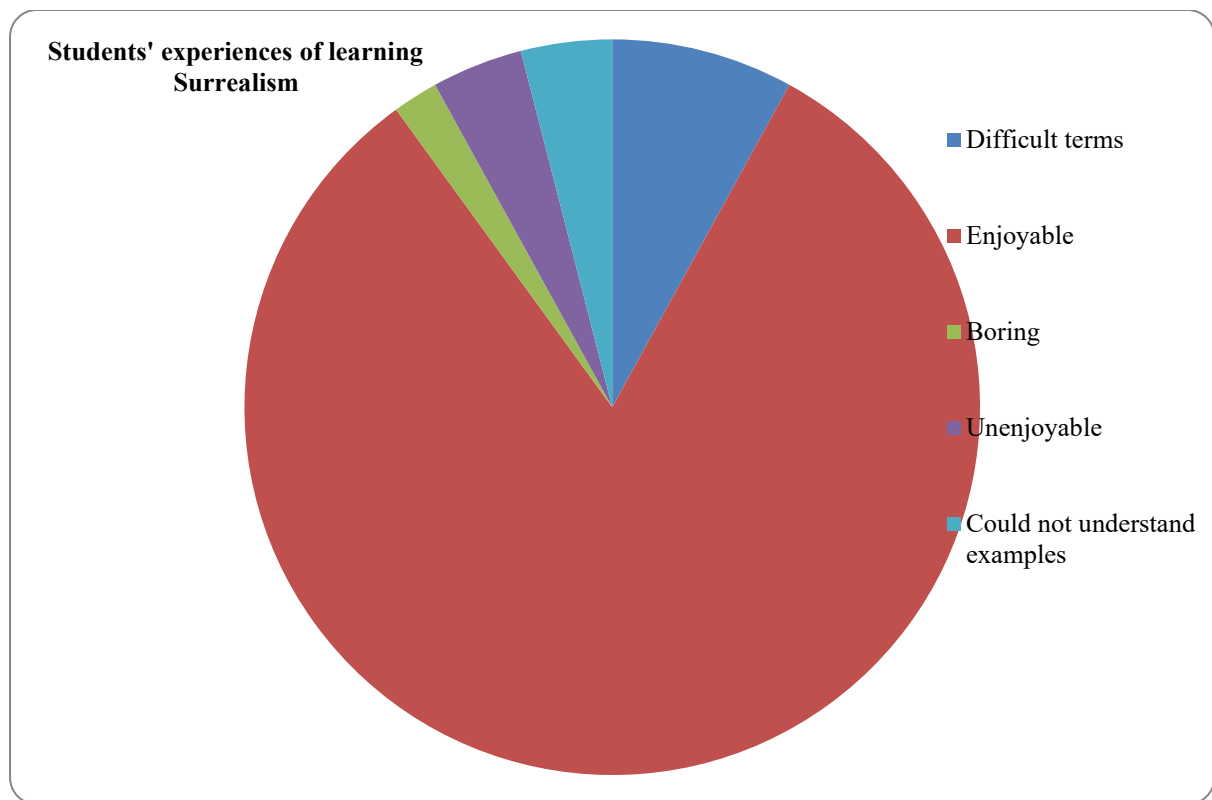
This confirmed that a large number of students enjoyed the section on Surrealism. Other methods of data collection such as the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule), test marks (See Appendix D: Test in Surrealism) and my journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) similarly found that students reacted positively to the teaching strategies used in the intervention to teach Surrealism. 97% of the participants claimed that the intervention helped them understand better, helped them focus on the lesson, the examples helped them understand the content more and it made them pay attention to the lesson. This was evident as they performed well in the class test and displayed positive responses during the lesson and even I felt satisfied with my teaching of the section. Test results (See Appendix D: Surrealism test), field notes from observations (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) and journal entries (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) all harmoniously pointed toward the direction of the positive effectiveness of the teaching strategies and intervention used. This was an indication that the first intervention used to teach philosophical developments in the Arts, was more effective that teaching using my usual teaching strategies. It was also possible that the introduction of a new method of teaching interested the students and captured their attention. Nevertheless a few negative responses were also noted whilst teaching Surrealism.

4.3.2. Negative effects of the intervention on my teaching practices

Field notes from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) showed that just one student had her head down on the desk. She was the same student who was asleep in the previous lesson due to being unwell. Perhaps she was still not feeling completely better. Students also became too chatty and disruptive quite a few times by having their own conversations whilst the lesson was on. Students seemed excited and concerned about something. Some students seemed very energetic and appeared to have too much energy. I needed a little more effort than usual to get through to them and speak to them. I made a journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) that an intervention for teaching the next philosophical development was needed to ensure that the students are not too loud and are mentally prepared for the lesson. Students were becoming too chatty and I had to use some effort to quieten them down and speak to them. Boler (2000), Freire (1973) and Rothstein and Santana (2011) promote a classroom environment where students are not afraid to speak, the classroom must also not become a place where students speak uncontrollably and disrespectfully. However this can be disruptive and it can prevent effective teaching and learning from taking place. I decided that in the next cycle, I had to create a suitable environment before starting my lesson on the third philosophical development. Using this as an intervention would help students learn philosophical developments in the Arts better, due to a suitable atmosphere being created before the lesson began. Students would then not be preoccupied in conversations or discussions with classmates. Instead the atmosphere created would allow students to pay attention and focus on the new section that would be taught to them. One student tried to start her English work at the beginning of the Dramatic Arts period but I told her to put away all work besides drama work. Once again I had to reprimand students for trying to do work from other subjects in my period. It has become very clear that students find some subjects more important than Dramatic Arts. Hence they attempted deliberately to disregard the lesson in order to do work from another subject.

Data from the class tests (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test and Appendix D2: Surrealism Test) revealed that there was a small percentage (19%) of students who did not grasp this philosophical development in the Arts. I noticed that three of these students were absent when I started the lesson on Surrealism. Perhaps this negatively affected their performance in the class test as they were unable to catch up, even from the recapping that was done in the classroom. After careful reflection I realized that I should use quotes and visual images as

teaching strategies for the second intervention when I teach the third philosophical development called Existentialism. Kumar, Saxena, Kumar, Kumar and Kapoor (2015) as well as Reiss (2005) reveal that an educator can teach effectively by using resources that are suitable for students being taught. They could be an effective way of allowing students, who were absent and weak students to catch up on the section, and they could also help other students understand, who were unsure about the section and did not indicate it.

It may also be a possibility that students who performed poorly were those who were placed in this grade due to the rule of them having previously failed in the phase. This meant that I needed to give them special attention and help them come up to a level where they understood and made sense of the section. The post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire) that students filled in at the end of the lesson on Surrealism showed that nine students displayed negative responses to the lesson on Surrealism, using the first intervention. They revealed that they did not enjoy the lesson and found the content challenging. The post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire) also emphasized that 3% of participants felt that the intervention did not help them at all. They felt this way because the section was still difficult and challenging to them, even though I taught Surrealism using an intervention with different teaching strategies from those I normally used.

4.3.3. Reflection

After teaching the second philosophical development called Surrealism using the first intervention, I felt very satisfied. I was more confident in the classroom, the students and I enjoyed the lesson much more than the previous section. I felt that I had done justice as an educator and the lessons appealed to approximately 82% of my students, not just a small percentage. Positive responses were evident in all forms of data that was collected. The teaching strategies that formed the intervention made a big impact in the classroom and I was very eager to explore with more interventions in order to establish those that are most effective in improving my teaching and students" learning. During and after teaching Surrealism, I could sense that there was a noticeable improvement in the way students reacted to and received the lesson taught to them. Even before analyzing the data collected from various methods, I knew that the intervention used was much more effective than my usual teaching strategies.

4.4. Cycle Two

The third philosophical development called Existentialism was taught using the second intervention (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation). This intervention included teaching strategies such as creating a suitable teaching environment, problem-based learning, using visual images and quotes, hotseating, teacher-led discussion and replacing complex terms with simpler definitions. Whilst I taught this philosophical development to students, I observed their responses and also made entries about the lesson in my journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry). Students wrote a short test on Existentialism after they were taught the section (See Appendix D3: Existentialism test). In the past two phases of research, participants filled in a pre-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire) and post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire). In this cycle, I decided to use a focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview Schedule) instead. The data collected was used to determine whether and how the second intervention improved my teaching practices and the teaching and learning of philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts. The teaching strategies used in the second intervention to teach Existentialism proved to have negative and positive effects in the classroom.

4.4.1. Positive effects of the second intervention on my teaching practices

Before teaching the section I spoke sternly to the students about their loud behaviour in the previous lesson. I felt that they needed to know that the section I was going to teach and had already taught were very important for the final examinations. I spoke sternly to them because it is how I normally win students over so that they know I will not tolerate inappropriate and noisy behaviour. Students then quietened down and paid attention. One student apologized by saying "Sorry madam!" Their loud and unruly behaviour stopped and they seemed serious and attentive thereafter. Creating a suitable classroom atmosphere before starting the lesson was very effective in improving my teaching strategies. It is easy for students to be distracted by their own discussions during the lesson time and this kind of behaviour had to be stopped before it got out of hand. Students often need to be reminded to maintain discipline in the classroom so that effective teaching and learning may take place.

Throughout the lesson on Existentialism I observed that students were very attentive, asked for clarification occasionally and nodded their heads as a sign of agreement and understanding. All students appeared alert. They seemed quite fascinated and intrigued with

the content of the lesson. Whilst I discussed the characteristics of Existentialism with them, all were very offended by them and around eight of them mentioned that they disagreed with the content. This was an indication that students in my classroom were not afraid to speak their minds or air their views and that they were alert in the classroom. Winston (2004) recommends the use of hotseating as an effective teaching strategy. This strategy allowed students to take on a role of a character and in the classroom I randomly interviewed students. I questioned them about their reasons for living and the value of life. I had their attention for the duration of the period.

Students took down notes throughout the period and asked interesting questions such as "Hai, how can they not believe in God?" and "Why are people just living if they don"t know what they are living for?" They nodded and murmured in agreement very often. Field notes from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) also showed that the students became very passionate and energized with this section and they responded very well to the quotes and the diagram that was used to help explain the section better. The two quotes that I used were "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (Lowry and Menendez, 1998) and "The meaning of life is to give life meaning (Sartre and Kaufmann, 1956)." The diagram showed the image of a hiker looking at a map of Existentialism (Hyvönen, 2015). It showed the hiker his location and stated that it was merely random, not for a particular purpose. The map also showed routes to various different insignificant places, with no name or proper co-ordinates. The image represented a visual definition of Existentialism. Students found the use of quotes and the visual image very effective. Kumar, Saxena, Kumar, Kumar and Kapoor (2015) found that only the use of appropriate resources benefitted students whilst teaching. They found the chalkboard to be the most effective resource. My study similarly revealed that the chalkboard and a visual image was a suitable resource for my Dramatic Arts students. I do not normally use these teaching strategies when teaching this section. Students were probably very intrigued by the new resources and this helped them learn the section on Existentialism in a more exciting way. Yet, the use of quotes and the visual image could not be effective in isolation. It had to be used in conjunction with the worksheet that contained the additional notes on Existentialism (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation). Both forms of resources reinforced each other and proved to be effective together. During the lesson on Existentialism I realized that students can be very expressive in the classroom. While drawing the visual image on the board, students were

curiously asking questions under their breadth. They were trying to predict the image before I drew it on the board and some were whispering "Huh" and "What is that?" Thereafter someone responded that it was a Garmin, implying that she knew what it was. However not everybody immediately knew of it. Just as I started explaining what a Garmin is, the students realized what I was speaking about.

I made a journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) that using the problem-based and hot-seating strategy to introduce the lesson on Existentialism was very impressive and effective. At the beginning of the lesson I used the hotseating strategy and randomly selected five students. I thereafter individually posed the problem to them that they are in existence but do not know why. I gave those students about three minutes to solve the problem and figure out their reasons for existing. Students were eagerly looking up and following these new approaches. I noticed that there was silence as not only the five students I selected, but many other students started to think about their purposes of living. The classroom became very quiet as students were all deep in thought; there were no discussions between students. They must have realized that it was something they all had to discover on their own. More than the selected five students offered answers to my problem question. These strategies created a suitable atmosphere for the remainder of the section. Westbrook (2004) also found the use of hotseating and other drama strategies beneficial to teaching students more effectively. Existentialism looks at the way in which people live and their purpose for existing. Students were questioned about their purpose for and way of existing. Just from the introduction only, students were excited and managed to grasp some of the content on the third philosophical development in the Arts. The problem-solving and hot-seating strategies were very effective in helping students learn and understand the section on Existentialism. It gave many students an opportunity to speak out and expose themselves to the new section that I had started. These strategies brought the students alive by involving them in active and interesting discussions and debates. Two students mentioned that they live to please their parents and three students claimed that living was just about being loved and having fun. Three girls indicated that their purpose of living was to support their babies and make a better life for them. My research findings echoed findings by Miccoli (2003) and Zorina (2008). They found that using drama strategies in the classroom made students more outspoken, confident and verbally expressive. Due to my reprimanding my students prior to starting the lesson, they also kept in mind that they should not speak in an uncontrolled and disruptive

manner. My journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) also reflected enthusiastic, active and encouraging verbal responses from students. The class was impressed by the fact that the three female students lived for their children whilst the whole class was amused by the two students who lived to have fun. When the three students said that they wanted to please and make their parents proud, seven other students in the class nodded in agreement. Four of them murmured "Yes, yes." My journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) in conjunction with field notes from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) both indicated the effectiveness of my teaching strategies in the second intervention immediately engaged students and aroused their interests. They had interested and eager facial expressions which made me feel like this intervention was effective in teaching Existentialism to my students.

When students wrote the test on Existentialism (See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test) at the end of the section, they scored an average mark of eight out of ten. 7% of students scored thirty and 7% scored fifty percent, 9% scored sixty percent, 7% scored seventy percent, 20% scored eighty percent, 23% scored ninety percent and 27% scored one hundred percent. These marks are shown in the form of a line graph below, together with the test marks from the previous philosophical developments (See Appendix D1: Symbolism test, Appendix D2: Surrealism test and Appendix D3: Existentialism test).

Figure H - Students'' results from the tests on Symbolism, Surrealism and Existentialism
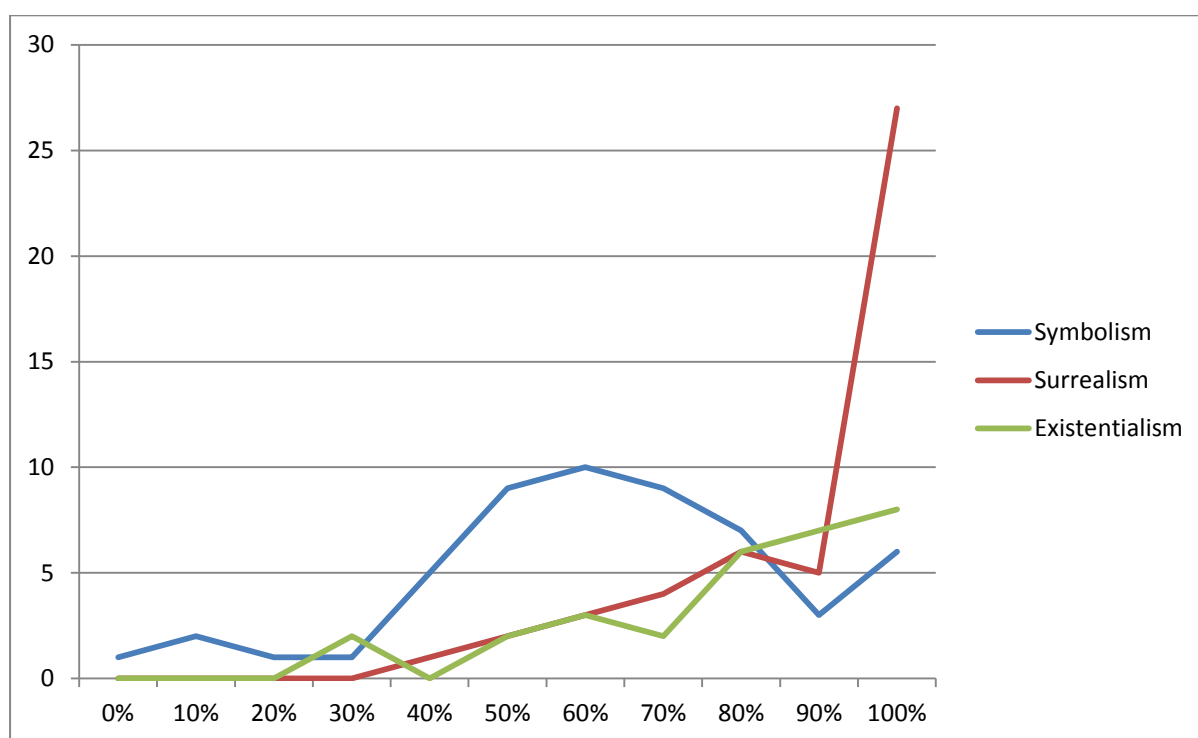
As compared to the section on Surrealism, fewer students scored full marks in the test on Existentialism (See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test). Perhaps this intervention was less effective than the previous intervention. Maybe students are starting to lose interest in being exposed to interventions altogether. Nevertheless, the average mark achieved in the Existentialism test (See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test) was higher than the average mark achieved by students when they learnt the section on Symbolism, which used my usual teaching strategies. The largest number of students scored full marks in the Existentialism test (See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test). This revealed an improvement in teaching and learning due to the use of an intervention. Perhaps the interventions proved to be more effective than my usual teaching strategies but the first intervention was more effective than the second intervention. It could be that the hotseating and problem solving strategies used at the beginning of the lesson excited students momentarily only. Maybe they lost interest after the beginning of the lesson hence did not perform exceptionally well in the class test (See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test). Perhaps students looked excited and enthusiastic however this may not be a direct indication that they would excel in the class tests. The idea of using hotseating and problem solving strategies may have made the lesson more enjoyable, but not more understandable.

The table below shows data that was obtained from each question of the test.

Table 9 Analysis of students" test marks on Existentialism (See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test)

Questions – Existentialism	Percentage of students who scored maximum marks
1. What percentage of students completely understood Existentialism?	53
2. What percentage of students understood the themes relating to Existentialism?	70
3. What percentage of students understood the origins of Existentialism?	47

In the Existentialism test (See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test), more than half the participants understood the philosophical development and even more students related to the themes on Existentialism. When students wrote tests on sections that were taught using an intervention (See Appendix D2: Surrealism Test, Appendix D3: Existentialism Test and Appendix D4: Absurdism Test), no students scored zero. However when students wrote a test (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test) on the section taught using my usual teaching strategies, some students did score zero. This could imply that the use of drama strategies as interventions improved the teaching and learning of philosophical developments in the Arts as students gained more knowledge and understanding from the lessons. O"Gara (2008) and Wagner (2002) likewise promote the use of drama strategies to teach in the classroom as it gives students the opportunity to expand on a topic by exploring with vocabulary. The overall experience is also memorable for students hence they tend to remember concepts more and use them in the future.

My journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) reflected enthusiastic, active and encouraging verbal responses from students. It was possible that the students found it easier to express themselves verbally as compared to writing down their ideas. These findings made me decide to use group-work and group feedback in the next intervention. Students would be given an opportunity to speak out about the lesson content with each other. Feedback from each group to the class would be required and they would also be exposed to writing out their ideas and views.

The focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview) with ten of the participants similarly revealed the positive effects of the second intervention used to teach Existentialism. Halkude and Aher (2014) encourage group discussions to gain direct input from participants. The participants in my focus group interview were verbally asked five questions. The first question was if there were parts of the lesson they enjoyed. All ten students claimed that they enjoyed replacing the complex terms with simple definitions, and they benefitted from the use of the picture and quote. Secondly, the participants were asked to discuss the unenjoyable parts of the lesson, if there were any. Three students repeated after each other "Mam you were going abit too fast" and two other students agreed in unison by saying "Go just a little bit slower, that will be better." A student also said that I needed to explain more extensively. The third question asked them about the use of the quotes, worksheet and visual image. All the focus group participants found the two new resources enjoyable and different from the usual teaching strategies. A participant said, "It was nice to look at pictures and different kinds of things and learn the work." Another student mentioned "It was very interesting for us."

Fourthly, the participants were questioned about whether each resource would have worked well individually or in conjunction with the others. According to all the participants the picture and quotes worked well with the content of the lesson and represented it in a visually interesting way. The participants said that the content related to Existentialism and they enjoyed its relation to the other philosophical developments. All ten participants said that they found both the quotes helpful because it clearly summed up the philosophical development for them. Eight of the participants found the visual image helpful as it helped them create a mental picture of what Existentialism is about. One student said "I could look at the pic and understand what you were teaching us from the worksheet!" and another student nodded and agreed with him. Reiss (2005) similarly found the use of visual images useful in teaching students effectively as it presented a more structured and simplified representation of theory content for students. Nine out of ten students in the focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview) felt that the worksheet (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation) was the most useful resource to them because it helped them understand the lesson content the most. Perhaps the worksheet was most beneficial to them because I summarized notes from a textbook and created simplified notes for my students. This was done with the intention of making it simpler and easier to grasp. However,

all three resources (worksheet, quote and the visual picture) worked well together and complemented each other. They all represented the same content in various forms but were beneficial and interesting to students because even if they did not understand one resource, they could have understood the content based on the other resources. Lastly, the participants had to describe their experiences of this lesson. Two of them found the section easy, one found it difficult and seven found it of a medium level.

4.4.2. Negative effects of the second intervention on my teaching practices

At the beginning of the lesson I observed some confusion and disagreement from most students when I explained what Existentialism was about. Many were personally offended with the meaning of Existentialism and I had to explain that those beliefs are what define Existentialism and not what we all should believe and promote. I gave students fifteen minutes to read their worksheets (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation) on their own. I observed that some students read the notes diligently for fifteen minutes and then got a little chatty, so I had to remind them to focus. They were well behaved thereafter. With each section it is becoming clear that students need to be reminded to continue with their work in a diligent fashion. If this is not done, students become distracted. Students also tend to become distracted when I am not standing in front of the class and explaining the work. This has taught me to avoid giving students tasks that they need to carry out on their own. These findings from my study contradict the findings of Fahraeus (2013), Prince (2004) and Saleem and Azam (2015). They found that allowing students to control their own learning in the classroom was beneficial however my study revealed that students work better and more effectively with constant educator supervision. Perhaps this is due to students becoming distracted if they do not know about the topic being discussed or if they are not interested in participating in discussion with other group members.

Ten students participated in the focus group interview. Data collected from the focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview) revealed that 2 (20%) of students found the section easy, 1 (10%) found it difficult and 7 (70%) found it of a medium level. Compared to the section on Surrealism, fewer students found this section easy. Students are still leaning towards finding the section on a medium level. It could be that they were afraid of how their honest responses may affect the next lesson and intervention. There was also the possibility that since students answered my questions face to face, they may have felt scared,

intimidated or threatened by me. In the past three cycles, most students found the level of difficulty on a medium level, even though the test results for all three tests have varied. Regardless of me reminding students to be honest when providing data, they still provide safe responses. Perhaps the second intervention worked more effectively than the first intervention. This data is represented in the pie chart below

Figure I - Students" reactions to being taught Existentialism
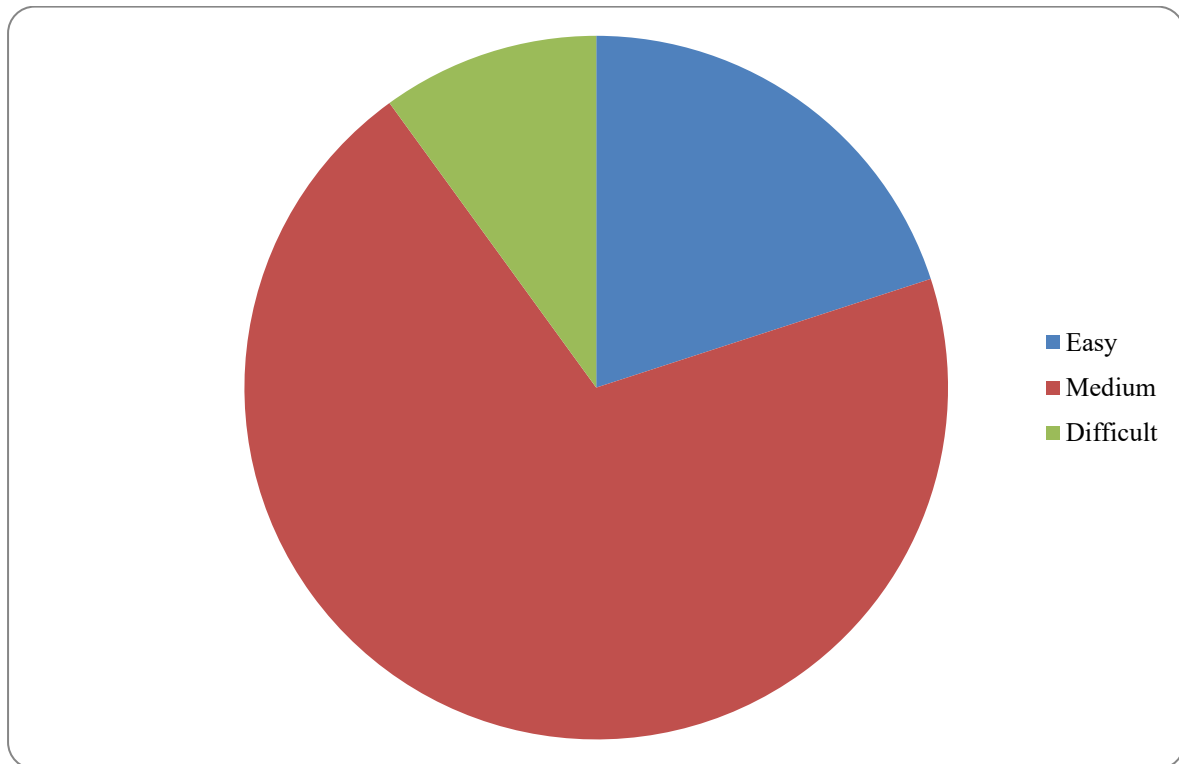
The majority of students experienced the section at a medium level. This seems to imply that the second intervention was not as effective and did not create as much improvement as the first intervention used.

Three students from the focus group, each repeated after each other "Mam you were going abit too fast" and two other students from the focus group agreed in unison by saying "Go just a little bit slower, that will be better." A student also said that I needed to explain more extensively. I must have misunderstood students" active discussion by thinking that they grasped the content of the lesson and unconsciously quickened my pace of teaching. For the next intervention I decided that I would teach at a slower pace again.

4.4.3. Reflection

I carefully reflected on the strategies I used as an intervention to teach the third philosophical development called Existentialism. There was definitely improvement in the teaching and learning of Existentialism as compared to the first philosophical development taught, using my usual teaching strategies. I said "At least my interventions are being somewhat effective." However the first intervention seemed to have worked better than this intervention. I realized that some teaching strategies used in the previous intervention needed to form part of the following intervention as students enjoyed them and they helped students to understand the section better. The third intervention to teach the last philosophical development called Absurdism included teaching at a slower pace, teacher-led discussion, replacing complex terms with simple meanings, groupwork and group feedback to the class (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation).

4.5. Cycle Three

I created field notes (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) as I taught the lesson, wrote a journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) based on teaching this section, students filled in a post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire) and they wrote a class test (See Appendix D4: Absurdism Test) at the end of the section on Absurdism. The aim was to establish the effectiveness of the intervention and to look at how it improved teaching and learning in the classroom. The use of the intervention resulted in both positive and negative responses from students.

4.5.1. Positive effects of the third intervention on my teaching practices

During the lesson students were very attentive to my teaching, wrote down many explanations and notes and were able to understand the examples I discussed with them. They grasped most of the new content and concepts very well. When I explained the term absurdity I saw a few students look confused. A boy whispered "*Ini* (what)?" to his neighbour. I quickly asked the class for a Zulu translation. They told me that the Zulu word is *ubuthutha* (silly/ridiculous/absurd). The students appreciated this and I could see that they had all grasped the new word. Al-Musawi (2014) carried out an intervention where he promoted the use of students" mother tongue language to create more understanding in the classroom. Students were eager to shout out answers and examples as we discussed Absurdism. There was much enthusiasm and concentration in the classroom. Students were able to verbally relate Existentialism and Surrealism to Absurdism in the class discussion. Three students

effortlessly compared and contrasted Absurdism to the other philosophical developments. The group-work went well and students assisted each other especially those students who were absent in the previous lesson. Even the students who were generally reserved and quiet contributed to the group discussion. I observed that active discussions took place and students were working well together. They summarized work well; the scribes in each group listened carefully and energetically wrote notes. Some group"s efforts were very simple and informative. They displayed an understanding of the section taught to them because they were able to explain the content of the lesson in their own words. It was evident that the teaching strategies of the third intervention were effective in improving the teaching and learning of Absurdism.

I recorded an entry in my journal (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) that I was pleased with myself for thinking of the Zulu translation. The lesson on Absurdism appeared to go very well because students were attentive throughout the lesson and regularly nodded in agreement. I had mentally planned the groups for groupwork so this saved time. It also prevented the students from wasting time and being selective about who they wanted to work with. I enjoyed watching the students as they did their groupwork because I noticed them speaking to group members about Absurdism with much confidence and enthusiasm. Halkude and Aher (2014) also found group discussions to be helpful to students as it promoted understanding between the group members. I also made a journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) about how suitable the atmosphere was when students were discussing their topics in their groups. I could see that students were talking about the lesson and not personal stories. More than half the students were referring to the worksheet when they were having group discussions. Group members acknowledged their roles in a group and all students were participating with enthusiasm. Perhaps students were grateful that they were given an opportunity to speak out instead of always listening to my voice. Field notes from the observation (See Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule) together with my journal entry (See Appendix C: Journal Entry) reveal that the third intervention used was effective in the teaching and learning of Absurdism. Students were not just learning from me, but learning from and teaching each other.

There were still no students who scored zero for the test on Absurdism (See Appendix D4: Absurdism Test). This also indicated that the last intervention improved my teaching

practices as students" lowest percentage was 20. Some students even scored full marks as well. More than seventy seven percent of the participants were able to grasp the concept of Absurdism successfully and to compare it to Realism. However less than fifty-two percent of participants understood the smaller sections based on Absurdism such as the themes, plot and language. It is a possibility that students lost interest after the introduction of the lesson. After they understood the definition of Absurdism, it could be that they stopped paying attention to the sub-sections that came thereafter. The table below breaks down each question of the test on Absurdism.

Table 10 - Analysis of students" test marks on Absurdism (See Appendix D4: Absurdism Test)

Questions – Absurdism	Percentage of students who scored maximum marks
1. What percentage of students completely understood Absurdism?	86
2. What percentage of students was able to compare Realism to Absurdism?	78
3. What percentage of students understood the plot related to Absurdism?	47
4. What percentage of students understood the language used in Absurdism?	47
5. What percentage of students understood the themes related to Absurdism?	53

Students" test marks also revealed the effectiveness of the teaching strategies used in the third intervention. The average mark scored was seven out of ten. The graph below compares the average marks that students scored in each test on the four philosophical developments (PD) (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test, Appendix D2: Surrealism Test, See Appendix D3: Existentialism Test and Appendix D4: Absurdism Test).

Figure J – Average test marks on Symbolism, Surrealism, Existentialism and Absurdism
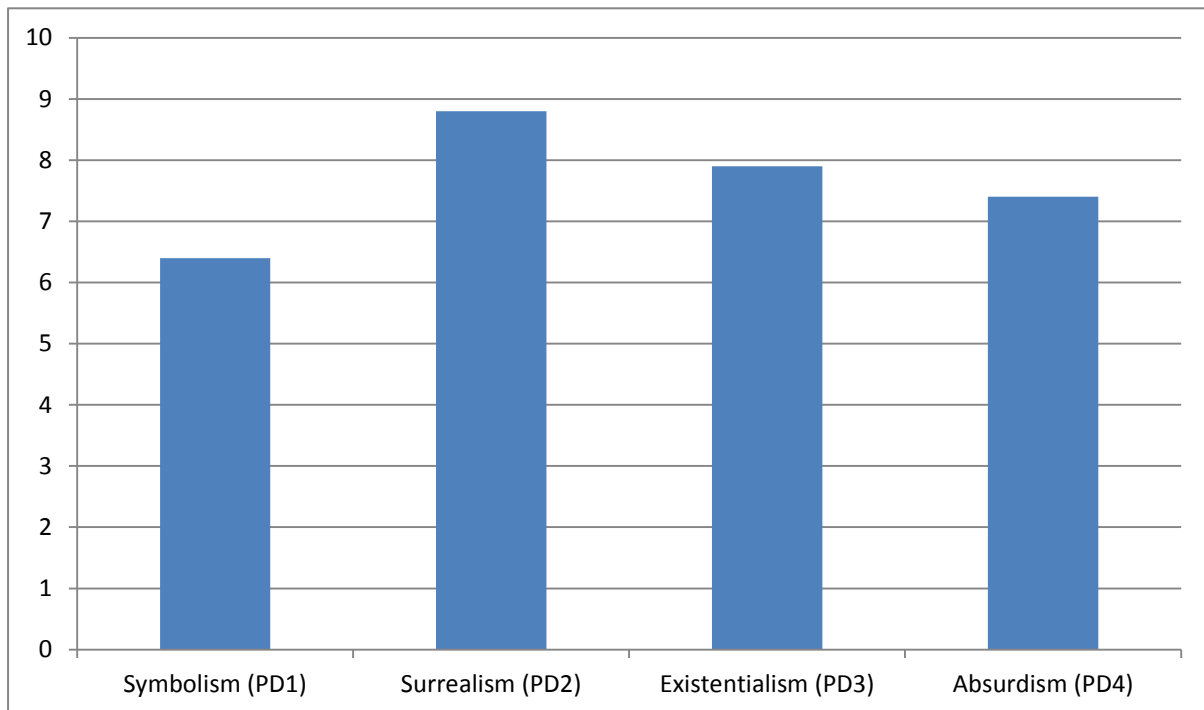
PD stands for Philosophical Development. The lowest average mark was scored in the test on the first philosophical development (See Appendix D1: Symbolism Test), which was taught using my usual teaching strategies. All three average marks increased for the next three philosophical developments and this emphasized the improvement in my teaching of the section. Even though some interventions created more improvement, they were all effective in improving my teaching and students" learning of the section. There was a decline in the average test mark after the first intervention was used. Perhaps students had become bored of the use of interventions or maybe they had built up expectations about doing something different. Probably students expected practical aspects to be incorporated into the sections.

The graph below represents the marks students scored in all four tests on the philosophical developments in the Arts.

Figure K - Students" results from the tests on Symbolism, Surrealism, Existentialism and Absurdism
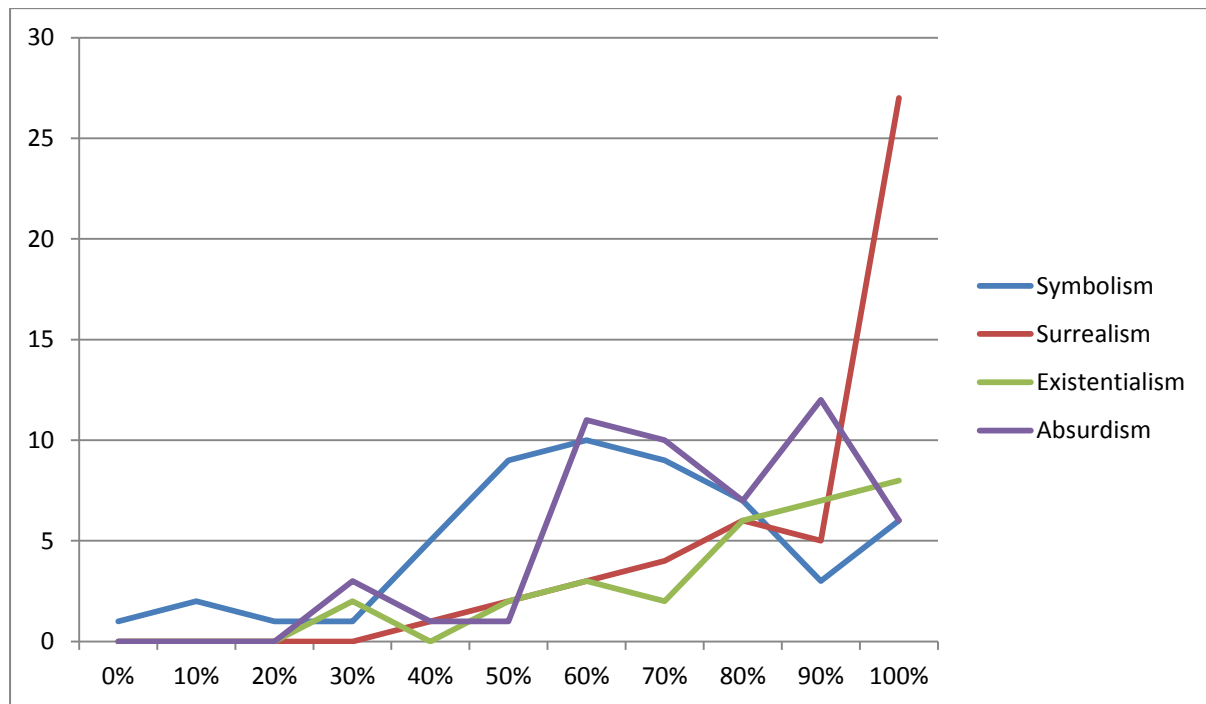
Due to the use of the third intervention, 86% of students completely grasped the concept of Absurdism and were able to compare it to all other philosophical developments they studied. Just about half the participants understood the smaller sections of Absurdism such as the themes and language used. Students probably understood the defining characteristics of Absurdism well but not the smaller sub-headings taught to them. This could also be partly due to their not being attentive when speakers were giving the class feedback on Absurdism. It could have also been that there was too much content crammed up into one lesson. This philosophical development needs longer to explain than the other three that were studied.

The data in the table below was from students" post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire). It shows students" experiences of learning Absurdism, using the third intervention.

Table 11 - Students" experiences of learning Absurdism

Students" experiences	% of students
Terms were too difficult	14
Enjoyed the section	60
Found the section boring	2
Did not enjoy the section	20
Could not understand the examples	4

Most students indicated that they enjoyed this section. This could be true as 74% of the participants also revealed that the third intervention helped them. It helped them to concentrate better, helped them use their imaginations more freely and understand the section better. The explanations of difficult words were understood a lot more. Groupwork helped them brainstorm and interact with students hence the section became more understandable, easier to grasp and more ideas were available. Students also found the test (See Appendix D4: Absurdism Test) helpful as it tested how much they had grasped from the lesson. A student was absent for the first lesson of this section but he was able easily to catch up in the second lesson because he stopped looking confused after the first seven minutes of the lesson. A group member assisted him during the group discussion and I overheard the use of isiZulu vocabulary as they spoke.

4.5.2. Negative effects of the third intervention on my teaching practices

A few negative responses were observed as I taught the lesson on Absurdism. Two students started doing their English work at the beginning of the period but I stopped them as soon as I noticed. They thereafter put all their English notes away. This has been a trend throughout the entire research process where students attempt to do work from other subjects in the Dramatic Arts period, even though I stop it. It obviously means that students have a perception that other subjects take priority over Dramatic Arts. Throughout the research process, I had noticed that this perception had not changed because students still take chances by trying discreetly to do other work. When the speaker from each group went to the front of the class, the remaining students were not very interested and attentive. They came across as uninterested and preoccupied and did not give the speakers enough attention. Perhaps students thought that they would not learn much from students as opposed to an educator. When I taught the section I had everybody"s attention. Even when I contributed and added to

some group"s feedback, the class quietened down to listen to me. Some group"s efforts were very shallow and did not do justice to their topic as they failed to mention important information that was taught to them. It seemed as if they had presented just for the sake of doing it. This taught me that in future I should not leave the lesson in the hands and control of students as other students do not look at them as a figure that is knowledgeable and of authority. I had to add to their feedback to the class. Even though Zondi (2006) found the use of group-work in the classroom to be very effective, my students did not completely benefit from this method of teaching. Perhaps I did not implement this strategy well enough. Maybe students needed more input from me before they were allowed to start speaking so that the tone of the presentation would be set for them by me.

This strategy was time consuming and taught me to steer away from similar types of interventions in the future or read up on more efficient ways of implementing them. Data was also collected from a post-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire) at the end of the section. The table below represents how students found the section on Absurdism.

Table 12 - Students" reactions to learning Absurdism

Students" reactions	Number of students
Very Easy	2
Easy	20
Medium	57
Difficult	14
Very Difficult	7

The third intervention (See Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation) did not make the section on Absurdism easier for all students because some still found it difficult and very difficult. A similar number of students found the section easy and very easy. The largest number of participants (57%) still experienced the section at a medium level. Perhaps students found parts of the section difficult and parts easy as well. Hence they must have decided to select the medium level.

26% of the participants claimed that even with the intervention, the section was still difficult to understand. They felt that when speakers from groups were presenting the class got noisy and this prevented them from listening attentively. Some speakers also spoke too softly therefore students did not completely concentrate on the speaker. While students presented in front of the class, I paid attention to their content to ensure that they told the class enough about their section. As a result, students were not eager to pay attention to speakers from each group. When asked about the areas that students found difficult, they responded that aspects from the lesson such as the themes were a little difficult and needed more focus and attention to understand. They also found the section boring. Perhaps this intervention is least effective because for a part of the lesson, students were expected to pay attention to their classmates and they were not keen on doing this. Students may have felt that their classmates are not knowledgeable enough to pay attention to, as compared to listening to an educator in class.

4.5.3. Reflection

After I taught the last philosophical development in the Arts, I realized that the last intervention was more effective than my usual teaching strategies. However, I feel that it was the least effective of all interventions. The strategies included in the first and second intervention worked better than those of the third intervention. It seemed like I lost students‟ attention and concentration after the first part of the lesson. I felt that I could have improved on the way the group feedback was handled. Perhaps I could have started off the discussions and thereafter students could have continued. The rest of the students in class may have possibly been more attentive and less chatty with each other. I could probably use this intervention with smaller classes where more interaction is possible. Students indicated that they enjoyed the section however it seemed like they enjoyed being given the opportunity to speak in groups. In future, I will use some of the teaching strategies of this intervention as I felt that they worked together satisfactorily. Nevertheless it is more successful than and different from my usual teaching strategies so I will have to adapt these strategies carefully to the students I will teach.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the use of my usual teaching strategies as well as the three interventions used to teach philosophical developments in the Arts. The effectiveness of my usual teaching strategies was measured and this led to the creation of the first intervention. Thereafter, a different intervention was used to teach the next three philosophical developments. Each intervention was created based on the data collected from the previous cycle. The effects of each of the interventions on my teaching strategies were explored in order to determine which strategies helped me to improve my students" academic performances and understandings. This chapter furthermore served to answer the four research questions posed at the beginning of the study. These answers were derived from carrying out the study and helped me teach philosophical developments of the arts more effectively.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter the main findings are outlined and the theoretical implications of the study are considered. Thereafter, the methodological implications are engaged with as well as the implications for my future practice as an educator. I complete the chapter with my final personal reflections, limitations of the study and aspects to consider for future studies.

5.2. Main Findings

The aim of this study was to improve my teaching strategies so that students would better understand and enjoy my lessons. Their responses and behaviour in the classroom generated the data and provided me with insight into how they received and were affected by the different teaching strategies I used as interventions. Their views and opinions were revealed to me in the form of post-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix E: Post-intervention Questionnaire), a focus group interview (See Appendix F: Focus Group Interview), test marks (See Appendix D: Tests on philosophical developments in the Arts), observations (See Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule) and journal entries (See Appendix C: Journal Entry). Various teaching strategies were combined and used as an intervention to teach one philosophical development at a time. Teaching strategies for each intervention were selected according to studies carried out by other educators and researchers. This was looked at together with the data collected, which revealed the negative and positive effects of the intervention used. There were some teaching strategies that overlapped into more than one intervention and some interventions worked more effectively than others. Nevertheless all three interventions were more effective than my usual method of teaching. My study was guided by four research questions:

1. How effective were my usual teaching strategies?

Data collected revealed that based on observations and the pre-intervention questionnaires (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire), students enjoyed and appeared not to have problems with my usual teaching strategies. However this could have been because they did not know any better. As students, emphasis is on the content that they are taught. If they are exposed to very limited teaching strategies and are unaware of other productive methods of teaching, to them there is no crisis. Nevertheless, I was aware of my ineffectiveness as an educator. To remain teaching in this fashion would have been a disservice to my students and failure in carrying out my profession. The test scores and my journal entry emphasized the

need for an intervention and adaptation of my usual teaching strategies in order to become a more effective educator, whose lessons students enjoyed. I felt as if my students sat in my class for the sake of being there, not for the purpose of coming to my classroom and wanting to learn from me. Even though my students did not mention any problems with the way I taught them, I had a problem with my ineffectiveness and was not completely satisfied because I felt that I was just a mediocre educator. I wanted to be more of an improved educator who is synonymous with effectiveness, high teaching standards and success.

2. What interventions might be used to improve my teaching practices?

Suggestions offered by students indicated the strategies they wanted to be incorporated into my teaching. They included using more examples, having an activity at the end of the lesson, creating a suitable teaching environment, problem-based learning, using visual images, quotes, hot-seating, group-work and group feedback to the class.

In my previous years of teaching, I explored various teaching strategies however they were done very casually. If I sensed students losing concentration as I taught, I would gradually try teaching using a different approach and alter my teaching strategy to maintain students" attention. I had used many of the teaching strategies from the interventions before however I did not use them combined with each other as in the study.

In the study the teaching strategies that formed each intervention were very structured and well planned in accordance with the data collected. In the pre-intervention questionnaire (See Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire), students suggested that I teach at a slower pace, use more examples and discuss difficult vocabulary. These suggestions gave me a sense of why my teaching was not as effective as I wanted it to be. It emphasized that I taught too fast, which meant that students would have been unable to make sense of and digest what I taught as I would be explaining too quickly. At some point I would have lost their attention. I also used words which students did not understand so they could not completely grasp the concepts I taught. While examples serve the purpose of reiterating and complementing the content taught, the use of examples that contained difficult vocabulary meant the students could not understand and relate to the examples I presented. I did not realize this, until I collected data from students.

The three interventions can be categorized into three different themes. The first intervention required me to make my lesson more understandable by using strategies like simpler vocabulary, teaching at a slower pace and discussion of more examples. The next intervention incorporated drama strategies into my teaching such as hot-seating and problem-solving strategies, together with the use of visual images and quotes. The third intervention allowed me to use groupwork with my students as I taught.

3. How might interventions in teaching practices be used to improve the teaching and learning of philosophical developments in Dramatic Arts?

In order to improve my teaching and students" learning of this section in Dramatic Arts, data revealed that I had to teach at a slower pace, replace complex terms with simple meanings and repeat content as I taught. These methods of teaching made the section on philosophical developments more understandable for my students. I also had to simplify and summarize the content so it made more sense to them, as opposed to teaching with my usual teaching strategies. This made my teaching more effective and hence students" learning of the philosophical developments improved. Three interventions were used and their effectiveness was measured so that I could learn which teaching strategies helped me teach better. Some of my usual teaching strategies such as teacher-led discussion were used as interventions in combination with other teaching strategies. Hence, I transformed my role as an educator by incorporating some of my usual teaching strategies with other teaching strategies that were derived from the data collected.

4. How did the interventions improve my teaching practices?

When compared to my usual strategies of teaching, students displayed greater degrees of understanding when using all three interventions. This was shown in the improvement of their test marks. However the improved test marks could have been a result of other factors such as their being more enthusiastic since they knew they were part of a study, the tests being of a shorter duration than normal or even because each test was based on a sub-section as compared to being based on an entire larger section at once. Nevertheless, more alert behaviour in the form of attentiveness, eye contact and fewer distractions were also observed during the lessons that included interventions.

After I used the three interventions to teach philosophical developments in the Arts, I felt more satisfied and competent as an educator. I was pleased with the way in which I taught students and the way they received the lesson as they appeared more focused and enthusiastic than when I taught before I started the study. The increase in test marks made me feel more effective as an educator because that is a way of measuring how I teach. Even though the students are ultimately responsible for the effort they put in and results they produce, I felt that their marks were partly a reflection of how I taught.

From my study, I discovered that the most effective teaching strategies were reinforcing concepts in the content of the lesson, using more, and more relevant examples, having an activity at the end of the lesson and replacing complex terms with simpler meanings. All three interventions used showed an improvement in teaching and learning, as compared to my usual teaching strategies. I felt that more students sat upright and focused on me as I taught. They also listened more as we discussed the information. Students performed better in the class tests and displayed behaviour that was synonymous with paying more attention in class like not staring outside, chatting to friends or fidgeting.

The least effective intervention included groupwork and group feedback to the class. I think this type of intervention was not as effective as the others because for the first time in the study, students had to be responsible for their own teaching. Perhaps students were not ready for this type of intervention, having not done it before. It is possible that they also understood teaching to mean that the teacher did the teaching. I personally expected this strategy to be effective as it created a variety in the teaching strategies used. Instead of my standing in front and talking throughout the lesson, students could be in charge of presenting the work to the class. It is also a possibility that students prefer to speak out and listen more attentively in groups rather than in front of the class. Group feedback might have been more effective if students had to present to their group or even another group rather than to the entire class.

5.3. Theoretical Implications

In accordance with critical pedagogy principles, the aim of the study was to transform myself as an educator so that students could perform better and be themselves transformed (Darder, Baltadano and Torres, 2009; Giroux, 2009). Just as the intention of critical pedagogy is to move towards transformation (Popkewitz and Fendler, 1999), the intention of my study was

to transform myself as an educator in the classroom. After I carried out the study, I felt that I had moved towards transforming myself as an educator because I learnt much more about how students felt about my ways of teaching and about me as their educator. This allowed me simultaneously to transform my students by finding more effective teaching strategies that helped them.

Critical pedagogy does not ignore the social and political environment in which teaching takes place (Darder, Baltadano and Torres, 2009; Popkewitz and Fendler, 1999). I recognized the diversity in my classroom and understood that students arrived with various backgrounds, social circumstances and abilities. I used the advice from Shor (1980) and Coghlan and Brannick (2005) to consider students" lifestyles and to come up with examples that are familiar to them. In this way students are expanding on knowledge with which they were already familiar. With my usual teaching strategies I did not put as much thought into the examples I used. When I carried out the study I used examples from students" everyday lives. When I taught symbolism I asked students about the symbols they saw on their way to school and they responded that they see road signs. I explained the section by referring to the road signs that students pass as they travel to school. When teaching Surrealism I asked students if they ever had a surreal experience. A boy responded that he had a surreal experience when he got drunk at a party and woke up the next morning. As inappropriate as it was, I built on this example and students giggled as they realized that they understood what we were discussing. I used the example of a student who comes to school rarely and expects to pass easily, to teach Absurdism. Many students tease each other about being part-time students if they do not attend school regularly. This relatable example made sense to them and they nodded when I used it.

According to Freire (1973) students should not be expected to sit passively in the classroom without providing any input. My study ensured that this was not the case as students were active and played a crucial role in helping me transform my teaching practices. In my previous years of teaching, students merely received the lesson, irrespective of the teaching strategies I used. Students had no say with regards to the manner in which I taught them. Conversely, this study was controlled by the input I received from my students and not by my sole discretion and views. Interventions were designed, in response to the feedback from students about my teaching strategies. Data was used to select the way in which the students

would be taught the following section. This created a two way interdependent relationship between me and my students. I had learnt about the effectiveness of my teaching strategies from my students, and they had learnt subject content from me using strategies created using their input. Critical pedagogy is synonymous with democracy (Dewey, 1916) where all role players have a say. This was the environment that existed in my study whereby valuable input was obtained from my students. The students'' valuable input was meticulously analysed so that I could adapt my teaching strategies in order to teach more effectively.

5.4. Methodological Implications

In accordance with action research principles, my study recognized a problematic area and attempted to correct it (Reason and Bradbury, 2001). The problematic area for me was my ineffective teaching strategies that made me feel dissatisfied with how I taught. After the completion of this study, I believe I had improved my teaching strategies by making them more effective and enjoyable and this was evident from the data that I collected and analysed. As an educator, it is imperative to identify problem areas in the classroom, on the part of the educator, students and subject content.

With action research, researchers implement and explore positive changes throughout the action research process (Johnson, 2008). Hence, it becomes impossible for the researcher to play an inactive and passive role. In order for a positive change to happen, suitable action must be taken. Hence, the researcher cannot play an observant and passive role that does not intend to create improvement. My role as a researcher in this study was very active as I constantly analysed and reflected on data after each cycle of teaching, in order to come up with suitable interventions.

Various researchers promote a similar model of action research whereby a problem area is recognized, action is taken to solve the problem, data is collected, it is analysed so that thorough reflection can take place and this leads towards the next form of action to take place (Calhoun, 1994; Hendricks, 2009; Johnson, 2008; Mills, 2011; Piggot-Irvine, 2006; Riel, 2007; Sagor, 1992 and Stringer, 2007). Coghlan and Brannick (2014) state that the methodology of action research makes use of various cycles of research to bring about improvement. This study similarly used different interventions for the last three cycles of the

study. Each intervention successfully created improvement in the teaching and learning in my classroom, as compared to my usual teaching strategies that I had previously used.

The action research process combines the efforts of both the researcher and participants (Mertler, 2009) just as my students provided the data for the study and I analysed it in order to create interventions accordingly. In a classroom that has an educator and a student, it is necessary for both parties to be actively involved. An educator, especially, must put effort into the lesson and the teaching of it. Students must put in effort in order to perform well academically. Due to the unpredictable nature of action research, the researcher must undertake intensive preparation and continuous reflection. Too many firm decisions cannot be made in advance because each action is dependent on the previous step (Mills, 2011). This was the case with my research study as lessons for each cycle could only be prepared once I reflected on data gathered from the previous cycle of teaching and learning. Although constant reflection and intensive preparation was required, this was beneficial in becoming a good teacher. I was reminded at every step of this study that I had to improve my teaching practices and this was my constant frame of mind which, I believe, did eventually materialize during the study.

In accordance with Silverman (2015) most action researchers use qualitative data as opposed to quantitative data. In my study, qualitative data were involved. This data was used to establish whether or not students" responses to the interventions were of a positive or negative nature. I wanted detailed data and content from my students so that I could use it to teach better and I understood that I could not make generalizations about my findings.

5.5. Implications for my Future Practice

This study has impacted positively on me in many ways. It has taught me always to consider my students and to take into account their different backgrounds and upbringings. Not all students come from the same situation at home, some are parents, some run their households and some live with their parents. In my future practice of teaching, I know that I will be more sensitive to these factors.

This study has also made me feel much more comfortable with and confident about exploring my teaching strategies for the future. I will now have the option of using various strategies as

I teach, that are appropriate for the specific class I teach. Whilst teaching other grades and even other subjects, I find myself paying extra attention to students" positive and negative reactions, just as I had done in this study. Students" responses are an indication of whether they are paying attention, distracted or pretending to concentrate. In the past, I usually got so involved with teaching the content of the lesson that I had missed regularly looking at students and noticing how they respond to my teaching. This research experience made me realize that the classroom is an unpredictable place. Even though other researchers had discovered this before, I personally noticed that you can prepare every single detail thoroughly but sometimes things in the classroom cannot go as expected. Perhaps I predict the lesson may take a certain amount of time yet it may take even longer or less time. Sometimes I perceive an aspect that is easy and may take a few minutes to discuss, yet students need in depth explanations. On the other hand I may perceive something as complex yet students may not have any difficulty in understanding it. In some instances, things happen outside the classroom such as interruptions, presentations and extended assemblies. As a teacher, I have learnt the importance of just dealing with unexpected situations and continuing with classwork. I have also become more conscious of the amount of time per lesson.

Even after the study, I will continue to do reflections as I teach. Maybe it will not be as lengthy and structured as it was for the study; however I will make this a regular habit with each class I teach. This will ensure that I am constantly reflecting on my teaching practices and on students" responses to them, and focusing on providing my students with effective ways of teaching and learning.

5.6. My Personal Reflection of the Study

Carrying out this study has taught me the great importance of discipline. Previously I always did tasks closer to the deadline however the magnitude of this study initially intimidated me. I started off with a time plan that left no room for procrastination and I was determined to finish the degree within the designated time. As a result, even on days when I was not in the mood or distracted, I had to remember that constantly doing my dissertation a little at a time was essential. I looked at the dissertation in small parts as compared to a big write up. As I finished one chapter I started to concentrate on the next chapter otherwise it became too stressful and daunting. I also became more appreciative of time. During weekends and

holidays I had to choose between leisure activities or the completion of the dissertation. After all aspects of the dissertation process are complete I will also learn to value my free time. I am eager to do all the things I did not have the time for in the recent years. As difficult as it was to complete within the designated time, I have also learnt to stay motivated irrespective of how difficult and uncomfortable the situation may seem. It is important to look at the bigger picture and then suddenly the task ahead of you seems more possible and worthwhile.

I am also very grateful and appreciative to be given an opportunity to further my academic studies. There are many people who yearn to study but are weighed down by circumstances that prevent them from studying. This thought has always been my motivation during the long, tiring and stressful early hours of the morning. It is essential to have a list of priorities that also caters for a good balance of activities. When I had completed a chapter, I took a small time out period for a week or so to enjoy something that did not relate to this dissertation in any way. A good balance of activities is always necessary to prevent mental and physical boredom and exhaustion.

However, my overall reflection on the study as a whole is that I am now able to recognize the path towards effective teaching and learning, both for my students and for myself. I also know that my process of transformation is ongoing.

5.7. Areas for future research

After carrying out this study, I see the need for more action research to take place as it is a vehicle to transformation and improvement. That should be, after all, my responsibility as an educator. I want my students to do their best and to improve their academic progress. Action research makes this possible by allowing me to improve myself so students can be taught better and perform more successfully.

Action research may be carried out using various subjects as each subject has a different set of requirements and the nature of subjects differ. It is also possible to use other grades and topics in Dramatic Arts within an action research study. Further, action research may be explored in schools with varying levels of resources such as public schools, private schools, all girls or boys" schools, fully resourced schools and under-performing schools, amongst others. With the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, there was

a change in the content of some subjects. Perhaps there is also a need for change in teaching practices. Action research could be very helpful in this regard.

Emanating from my study, more research may be explored with groupwork and group feedback. This is the one teaching strategy with which I felt disappointed and that did not work very well. Future research could focus on research with groups in various types of classrooms. Perhaps the selection of group members, group leaders or monitoring during groupwork needs to be looked at more closely so that it may work more effectively.

5.8. Conclusion

The results that I have obtained from this study have been discussed in this chapter, in addition to its relation to my theoretical framework of critical pedagogy. The methodological implications are outlined as well as the impact of this study on my future practice as an educator. This was followed by the personal lessons that I will take away from this study. Lastly the limitations of the study are explained and some suggestions for future research are explored.

This study aimed to improve my teaching strategies of philosophical developments in the Arts. I was able to recognize the changes I needed to make for myself to become an improved and more effective educator. The teaching strategies I had to employ the most were teacher-led discussions, teaching at a slower pace and explaining complex vocabulary to my students during the lesson. This transformation in the way I teach is something that I will use in all areas of my teaching, with all grades and for all subjects in the future. I will constantly reflect on all teaching strategies that were part of interventions and adapt them to suit the classes that I teach. This research experience has equipped me with many teaching strategies that can be adapted to teach more effectively. I hope that other educators may also benefit from this study by taking note of my methods of becoming an effective educator and undergo similar transformations so that they may teach more effectively as well. Most importantly, I understand that my transformation is dynamic and never complete. I will undergo transformation every time I teach as I will always look for the most effective strategies of teaching and strive to be an improved educator.

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Agency.

Appendices

Appendix A: Pre-intervention Questionnaire

1. How did you find the section taught to you? (Circle the correct the answer)

1 – Very easy

2 – Easy

3 – Medium

4 – Difficult

5 – Very difficult

2. How could I teach the section to make you understand it better?

3. Describe your experience of learning this section. Tick the correct boxes:

I found the terms too difficult	
I enjoyed the section	
I found the section boring	
I did not enjoy the section	
I could not understand the examples	

4. How could the section be made more enjoyable for you?

Appendix B: Classroom Observation Schedule

Date:

Period:

1. How do students respond to the lesson?

2. To what extent to students participate in the lesson?

Appendix C: Journal Entry

<u>Date:</u>

Appendix D1: Symbolism Test [10 Marks]

1. What do you understand by Symbolism? (3)

2. Discuss how the following are examples of symbolism (3 x 1)

2.1. A lady dressed in white with a halo above her head and wearing wings

2.2. A character dressed in black costume whilst all the other characters are in white Costume

2.3. A man sitting on a throne and wearing a crown

3. Give 2 of your own examples of symbolism (2)

4. How is symbolism different from realism? (2)

Appendix D2: Surrealism Test [10 Marks]

1. What do you understand by surrealism? (2)

2. Give 3 of your own examples of surrealism (3 x 2)

3. How is surrealism different from realism? (2)

Appendix D3: Existentialism Test [10 Marks]

1. What do you understand by existentialism? (3)

2. Give 3 themes existentialism looked at (3)

3. How did existentialism originate? (2)

4. List 2 existentialist playwrights (2)

Appendix D4: Absurdism Test [10 Marks]

1. What do you understand by absurdism? (2)

2. How is absurdism different to realism? (2)

3. Describe the plot of an absurd play (2)

4. Discuss the language used in an absurd play (2)

5. List 2 themes that absurdism focused on (2)

Appendix E: Post-Intervention Questionnaire

1. How did you find the sections of surrealism, existentialism and absurdism taught to you? (Circle the correct the answer)

1 – Very easy

2 – Easy

3 – Medium

4 – Difficult

5 – Very difficult

2. Which part/s of the lesson did you enjoy, not enjoy or find too difficult to understand?

3. Describe your experience of learning surrealism, existentialism and absurdism. Tick the correct boxes:

I found the terms too difficult	
I enjoyed the section	
I found the section boring	
I did not enjoy the section	
I could not understand the examples	

4. Did the use of (<u>include intervention</u>) help your understanding of the sections taught? Discuss.

Appendix F: Focus Group Interview

Questions

1. Were there parts of the lesson you enjoyed? Discuss

2. Which parts of the lesson were unenjoyable (If there were unenjoyable parts)? Discuss

3. How did you find the use of the quotes, worksheet and visual image?

4. Would each resource have worked well individually or in conjunction with the others?

5. Describe your experiences of this lesson

Appendix G1: Information sheet for Head of School in which the study will occur

Dear Respondent

This Masters research focuses on Grade 11 Dramatic Arts students and a topic that they will study in Term 1 – philosophical developments in the arts. An action research will be carried out in order to establish the most effective teaching strategies that can be used to teach this section.

Students'' participation in this research is voluntary and all forms of data will be treated in complete confidence. Should they feel the need to exclude themselves from this research at any point in time, they may do so without any negative consequences. No explanation will be needed. This research will assist them by finding the most effective and beneficial method of learning philosophical developments in the arts. Students will be involved in filling out questionnaires, observations and completing tasks that will simultaneously comply with CASS requirements.

Thank you for your participation.
Mirasha Pahlad

Should you have any questions please contact

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HSSREC Research Office: Prem Mohun Tel: 031-2604557, e-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
(Govan Bheki Building, Westville Campus)

 You may retain this Information Sheet.

Appendix G2: Informed Consent: Head of School in which the study is to occur

I am aware of the nature, purpose and procedures of the study "Teaching philosophical developments in the Dramatic Arts classroom: An action research study to improve teacher practices." I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study and consent to allow students to take part in the study.

SIGNATURE OF HEAD OF SCHOOL   DATE

_____

Appendix H1: Information sheet for students

Dear Student

This Masters research focuses on Grade 11 Dramatic Arts students and a topic that you will study in Term 1 – philosophical developments in the arts. An action research will be carried out in order to establish the most effective teaching strategies that can be used to teach this section.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and all forms of data will be treated in complete confidence. Should you feel the need to exclude yourself from this research at any point in time, you may do so without any negative consequences. No explanation will be needed. This research will assist you by finding the most effective and beneficial method of teaching you about philosophical developments in the arts. You will be involved in filling out questionnaires, observations and completing tasks that will simultaneously comply with your CASS requirements.

Thank you for your participation.

Miss M. Pahlad

Should you have any questions please contact

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(Govan Bheki Building, Westville Campus)

You may retain this Information Sheet.

<u>Ulwazi oluqondene nabafundi</u>

Sawubona mfundi

loluCwaningo luqondene nabafundi abenza yishumi nanye abenza izifundo zeDramatic Arts futhi isihloko esizofundwa ngeThemu lokuqala – ukuthuthuka kwengqalasizinda yamaguqa loluCwaningo luzoqhutshekwa ukuze kutholwe indlela eyiyona yokufundisa lesisigaba.

Ukuzibandakanya kwakho kulolucwaningo kuwo kusiza futhi konke okungama data kuzophathwa ngokuzithemba okukhulu. Umangabe uzizwa sengathi uthanda ukuphuma kulolucwaningo ungakwenza lokho ngokukhululeka. Azikho izincazelo ezizodingeka loluCwaningo luzokusiza ukuthola izindlela eziyiyona futhi ezingakufundisa ukuthuthukisa amagugu. Uzozibandakanye ukuba uqede konke okuzobandakanywa nohlolo oluqhubekayo.

Ngiyabonga ngokuzibandakanya

Mirasha Pahlad

Uma unembuzo thuntana nalaba bantu
Umcwaning: Mirasha Pahlad, Tel: 031-7061503, e-mail: mirasha.pahlad@gmail.com
Umphathi: Umcubunguli iAnsurie Pillay, Tel: 031-2603613, e-mail: Pillaya3@ukzn.ac.za
HSSREC Research Office: Prem Mohun Tel: 031-2604557, e-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
(Govan Bheki Building, Westville Campus)
Gcina leli khasi

Appendix H2: Informed Consent: Students involved in the study

I am aware of the nature, purpose and procedures of the study "Teaching philosophical developments in the Dramatic Arts classroom: An action research study to improve teacher practices." I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study.

I allow consent for the following methods of research

	YES (Please tick)	NO (Please tick)
Questionnaires		
Observations		
Tasks		

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT   DATE

Ngiyayiqonda indlela nenhlosos nemigomo yokufunda: "Ukufundisa ngamagugu nokuqhubekela phambili kwezamagugu nobuciko ekulasini umCwaningo oulthathiwe ukuphucula, ucwaningo lokufunda kothisha." Sengitholile, ngafunda ngaqonda ngolwazi lokufunda.

Ngiyavuma ukulandela lemigomo elandelayo ngoluluCwaningo

	Yebo (√)	Cha (X)
Okuyimibuzo		
Ukubhekisisa		
Okuwemsebenzi		

<u>UKUSAYINA KOMFUNDI</u>   <u>USUKU</u>

Appendix I1: Information Sheet for parents/guardians of participants

Dear Parent/guardian

This Masters research focuses on Grade 11 Dramatic Arts students and a topic that they will study in Term 1 – philosophical developments in the arts. A action research will be carried out in order to establish the most effective teaching strategies that can be used to teach this section.

Your child˙s participation in this research is voluntary and all forms of data will be treated in complete confidence. Should he/she feel the need to exclude him/herself from this research at any point in time, he/she may do so without any negative consequences. No explanation will be needed. This research will assist your child by finding the most effective and beneficial method of teaching philosophical developments in the arts. Your child will be involved in filling out questionnaires, observations and completing tasks that will simultaneously comply with their CASS requirements.

Thank you for your participation.
Mirasha Pahlad

Should you have any questions please contact

Researcher: Mirasha Pahlad, Tel: 031-7061503, e-mail: mirasha.pahlad@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr Ansurie Pillay, Tel: 031-2603613, e-mail: Pillaya3@ukzn.ac.za

HSSREC Research Office: Prem Mohun Tel: 031-2604557, e-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
(Govan Bheki Building, Westville Campus)

You may retain this Information Sheet.

Ulwazi labazali/umqaphi babafundi

Sawubona mzali/mqaphi

LoluCwaningo luBhekene nabafundi yishumi nanye abenza izifundo zeDramatic Arts nesihloka abazosifunda ngeThemu lokuqala ukuthuthuka amagugu. loCwaningo luzoqhutshekwa ukuze kutholwe indlela eyiyona yokufundisa lessigaba.

Ukuzibandanya kwengane yakho kuloluCwaningo kuwukusiza futhi konke okungama data kuzophathwa ngokuzithemba okukhulu. Mangabe inyane yakho izizwa ifuna ukuphuma kuloluCwaningo noma yinini ingakwenza lokho. Azikho izincazelo ezizodingeka loluCwaningo lokusiza ukuthola izindlela zokufunda eziyiyona ezinemikomelo yokufundisa ukuthuthukisa amagugu. Ingane yakho izobandakanyeka ekugwaliseni imibuzo, nokubukisisa izinto nokuqeda umsebenzi uzobandakanywa uhlolo oluqhubekayo.

Ngiyabonga ngokuzibandakanya

Mirasha Pahlad

Uma unembuzo thuntana nalaba bantu
Umcwaning: Mirasha Pahlad, Tel: 031-7061503, e-mail: mirasha.pahlad@gmail.com
Umphathi: Umcubunguli iAnsurie Pillay, Tel: 031-2603613, e-mail: Pillaya3@ukzn.ac.za
HSSREC Research Office: Prem Mohun Tel: 031-2604557, e-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
(Govan Bheki Building, Westville Campus)
Gcina leli khasi

Appendix I2: Informed Consent: Parent/Guardian of Participants

I am aware of the nature, purpose and procedures of the study "Teaching philosophical developments in the Dramatic Arts classroom: An action research study to improve teacher practices." I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study and allow consent for my child to take part in the study.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN   DATE

_____

UMZALI/UMQAPHI KAMFUNDI

Ngiyayiqonda indlela, nenhlosos nemigona yokufund "Ukuthuthuka kwengqalasizinda yamagugu ekilasini: uCwaningo oluthathiwe ukuphucula ukwenza kothisha." Sengitholile, ngafunda ngaqondisisa ulwazi ngokufunda olubhaliwe futhi ngiyayivumela ingane yami ukuthi izibandakanye ngokufunda.

UKUSAYINA KOMZAL   USUKU

Appendix J1: Declaration of Consent

PROJECT TITLE: Teaching philosophical developments in the Dramatic Arts classroom: An action research study to improve my teacher practices

RESEARCHER   SUPERVISOR

Full Name: Mirasha Pahlad   Full Name of Supervisor: Ansurie Pillay

School: Education   School: Education

College: Humanities   College: Humanities

Campus: Edgewood   Campus: Edgewood

Proposed Qualification: M. Ed   Contact details: 031-2603613

Contact: 0761564648   Email: Pillaya3@ukzn.ac.za

Email: mirasha.pahlad@gmail.com

HSSREC RESEARCH OFFICE

Full Name: Prem Mohun

HSS Research Office

Govan Bheki Building

Westville Campus

Contact: 0312604557

Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

I, Mirasha Pahlad, Student no. 206508241 am a M.Ed. student, at the Edgewood Campus at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: Teaching philosophical developments in the Dramatic Arts classroom: An action research study to improve my teacher practices. The aim of the study is to determine the most effective teaching strategies. I want to study and understand my own practices so that I may carry out interventions into my teaching and learning strategies and thus improve my practices. Through your participation, I hope to understand the challenges you have in the classroom. This will help me determine the teaching strategies that are most effective and beneficial to you. I guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you personally.

Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate in the study. Should you feel the need to exclude yourself from this research at any point in time, you may do so without any negative consequences Please sign on the dotted line to show that you have read and understood the contents of this letter.

Appendix J2: Declaration for Consent

I…………………………………………………………………………… (Full Name) hereby confirm that I have read and understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research project has been clearly defined prior to participating in this research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire without any negative consequences

Participants

Signature……………………………………………………………………………

Date…………………………………………………………………….

Appendix K: Ethical Clearance from Department of Education

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane   Tel: 033 392 1004   Ref.:2/4/8/325

Miss M Pahlad
P.O. Box 194
PINETOWN
3600

Dear Miss Pahlad

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"TEACHING PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DRAMATIC ARTS CLASSROOM: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY TO IMPROVE MY TEACHER PRACTICES"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 February 2015 to 31 December 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education:

Brindhavan Secondary School

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 05 January 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa   ...dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 beyond the call of duty
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

Appendix L: Ethical Clearance from the University Of Kwa-Zulu Natal

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

21 January 2015

Ms Mirasha Pahlad 206503241
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Pahlad

Protocol reference number: HSS/0009/015M
Project title: Teaching philosophical developments in the Dramatic Arts classroom: An action research study to improve my teacher practices

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 5 January 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Ansurie Pillay
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
Cc School Administrator: Ms T Khumalo/Ms B Bhengu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: ▪ Edgewood ▪ Howard College ▪ Medical School ▪ Pietermaritzburg ▪ Westville

Appendix M: Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation

Performance Texts in Context: Theatre Production

Philosophical Developments in Dramatic Arts - Symbolism

Date: 2 February – 4 February 2015

Duration: 2 x 55 minute periods

Learning and Teaching Support Materials

- Worksheet

- Chalkboard

Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Allow students to read, read with students

- Teacher led discussion

- Provide examples

Assessment

- Class test

Philosophical Developments in Dramatic Arts

- They were introduced after World War 2

- By the end of the 20th century there was fear, despair and a meaningless life without God

1. SYMBOLISM (Philosophical Development 1)

- It originated in France, 1880"s – 20th century

- Anti-realistic

- Symbols and abstract/indirect symbols are used to convey messages

- It has a mysterious and ambiguous nature

- Audience must read between the lines (sub text)

- Messages are not expressed in the dialogue

- Audience is made to think on a deeper level

- Playwrights: Maurice Maeterlinck, Alfred Jarry, Samuel Beckett

Examples: a main character sits on a larger chair than the other characters, a huge clock on stage needs the audience to pay attention to time, an unhappy character wears a black costume whilst other characters wear colorful costumes

The director, in collaboration with the set designer, costume designer and sound designer, may make use of symbolism to convey the subtext of the play. Such symbolism would be used to convey meanings that cannot be expressed through the dialogue. It is a way of getting the audience to „read between the lines."

Set can be used to convey symbolism by creating certain set pieces of disproportionate size. Thus, the protagonist"s favourite chair may be larger than the others, or a wall clock may be unrealistically large in order to focus on the importance of time in the play.

Costume may also be used symbolically. One character may wear only black, while all the others wear bright colours to convey a sense of isolation or despair.

The function of symbolism is to encourage the audience to view the characters and setting on a deeper level. It does this by reinforcing the mood and tone of the play, and highlighting those aspects pertinent to the subtext.

Symbolism is a means of making concrete the ideas, themes and relationships explored in the play.

<u>Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation</u>

<u>Performance Texts in Context: Theatre Production</u>

Philosophical Developments in Dramatic Arts - Surrealism

Date: 5 February, 9 February 2015

Duration: 2 x 55 minute periods

<u>Learning and Teaching Support Materials</u>

- Worksheet

- Chalkboard

<u>Teaching and Learning Strategies</u>

- Allow students to read, read with students

- Teacher led discussion at a slow pace

- Provide many examples

- Replace difficult words with simpler meanings

- Recap and repeat main points of the lesson (throughout the lesson and at the end)

<u>Assessment</u>

- Class test

2. SURREALISM (Philosophical Development 2)

- It is also known as super-realism and started in France in 1924. It was started by Andre Breton

- Surrealists looked at a new and different form of realism which was based on the sunconscious dreamy state of the mind

- The unconscious is the complete truth

- Truth was also revealed in dreams, without the interference of conscious thought and reason

- Familiar and strange things were looked at, next to each other

- Surrealists wanted to explore the human dreams and desires without the conscious mind

- Surrealism challenges our understanding of the environment

- It tries to show things we don't normally see in real life: this makes us question reality

- It often reacts or protests against society

- New spaces, lighting and sound effects were used, instead of the traditional kinds

- Theatre should be a mystical experience

- It should not escape the real world, it should confront it

- Theatre of Cruelty was introduced by Artaud, it used physical actions to show the audience the cruelties of the world

- Audiences should be exposed to life, not just be spectators

- Surrealism uses dreams, nonsensical (surreal) things to challenge the world

- Playwrights: Guillame, Dali, Magritte

- Guillame wrote *The Breasts of Tiresias* in 1917. It is about a man who became a woman and had   40 000 children

<u>Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation</u>

<u>Performance Texts in Context: Theatre Production - Existentialism</u>

Philosophical Developments in Dramatic Arts

Date: 10 February, 13 February 2015

Duration: 2 x 55 minute periods

<u>Learning and Teaching Support Materials</u>

- Worksheet

- Chalkboard

- Quotes

- Visual image

<u>Teaching and Learning Strategies</u>

- Create a suitable classroom environment

- Allow students to read, read with students

- Teacher led discussion

- Problem based learning

- Hotseating

- Provide examples

- Replace difficult words with simpler meanings

<u>Assessment</u>

- Class test

3. EXISTENTIALISM (Philsophical Development 3)

- it originally started in the 1800‟s but became well known in the 1950‟s
- it questions how humans live
- it claims that all humans control their destiny
- no matter how hard people work, there can be no success. God and science were not in control
- Life is a very lonely journey, with many unanswered questions
- writers show the uncertainty and irony of human existence
- plays, novels and short stories are based on the problem of human freedom, there is no joy or happiness
- Existentialism is anti-realistic and anti-social
- common themes: freedom and choices
- there is no meaning or point to life. Man lives day by day
- Existentialism: What is the meaning of existence? What does to exist mean?
Playwright: Ionesco

Existentialism is concerned with the problems of human existence. It originated as a philosophical movement as far back as the 1800‟s but became popular in the 1950‟s. Existentialism questions how one exists as a true human being. They believe that freedom is an act of individual will and does not follow universal and abstract rules. Every individual is responsible for his or her own destiny, but there are feelings of abandonment, fear and anguish associated with this status. Existentialism springs from a belief that, despite all people‟s strivings, achievements and beliefs, nothing works – neither God, nor humanism or science. We exist in a metaphysical void.

The freedom of individual choice also cuts off the individual from the rest of society. So existence becomes a state of fear and anxiety, a lonely journey with only the grave at the end. In the midst of material wealth and technological advancements, people feel estranged from God, nature and themselves. The questions are still there, but the answers have failed.

Existentialist Theatre

Existentialist writers are attracted to the absurdity and irony of life and human existence. An interest in the problems of individual freedom led to the development of existentialist writing in the form of plays, novels and short stories, which explored themes such as choice, freedom and consciousness. There is little joy or happiness in Existentialist literature. Yet this „anti-social" view of life has had a profound influence on Western theatre and indeed on all aspects of Western life.

QUOTE 1: "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself"
QUOTE 2: "The meaning of life is to give life meaning"

VISUAL IMAGE

Dramatic Arts Lesson Preparation

Performance Texts in Context: Theatre Production

Philosophical Developments in Dramatic Arts - Absurdism

Date: 16 February, 17 February 2015

Duration: 2 x 55 minute periods

Learning and Teaching Support Materials

- Worksheet

- Chalkboard

Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Allow students to read, read with students

- Teacher led discussion at a slow pace

- Group discussion and feedback

- Provide examples

- Replace difficult words with simpler meanings

Assessment

- Class test

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4. ABSURDISM (Philosophical Development 4)

In the Theatre of the Absurd, human experience is seen as fragmented and purposeless. The search for truth is rejected.
- It is out of harmony with reason and thus ridiculous, silly
- Absurdism is used to describe a violation of the rules of logic

Elements of Absurdism
- The static world – waiting is the subject of the play
- Devaluation of language
- Mixes the familiar and unfamiliar, real and unreal or dream-like
- Characters are locked into performance of habit, routine and ritual
- Repetitive speech undercuts the possibility of ultimate meaning
- Use of silence: Absurdism tends towards minimalism
- Disconnected images
- Invites the audience to a new perception of reality
- Contradictions constantly keep audience at a critical distance
- Humanity¨s vain struggle against fate
- Use of small talk and understatement
- Lack of definite characterization
- World bent on destruction
Playwrights: Beckett, Genet, Pinter, Ionesco

Appendix N: Editor's Certificate

DECLARATION OF PARTIAL EDITING

This is to certify that I have English Language edited the main body of the dissertation:

Teaching philosophical developments in the Dramatic Arts classroom: an Action Research study to improve my teaching practices
Candidate: Pahlad M

Sections not edited include: **The Title page, The Dedication, Acknowledgements, the Abstract, List of acronyms, List of Figures, Contents, Appendices.**

SATI member number: 1001872

DISCLAIMER
Whilst the English language editor has used electronic track changes to facilitate corrections and has inserted comments and queries in a right-hand column, the responsibility for effecting changes in the final, submitted document, remains the responsibility of the candidate in consultation with the supervisor/promoter.

Director: Prof. Dennis Schauffer, M.A.Leeds, PhD, KwaZulu Natal, TEFL, TITC Business English, Emeritus Professor UKZN, Cambridge University Accreditation for IGCSE (Drama).