FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
COURSEWORK MASTERS DISSERTATION

Painting the Soul

- A process of empowering special needs educators

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DECLARATION

I, Eve Caroline Hemming declare that

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(ii) This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Signed: …………………………………………

- Submitted in *partial f*ulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts (Applied Drama) in the School of Literary Studies, Media and Creative Arts, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

- As the candidate's Supervisor I have approved this dissertation/thesis for submission.

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Abstract

Based on theories from Applied Drama, Dramatherapy and Psychology, this thesis explores the application of applied drama workshops with a group of educators at a school for children with barriers to learning, with a view to not only enhance their personal and professional development, but to facilitate positive outcomes for the children whom they teach, due to their implementation of various applied drama techniques into their teaching programmes.

The theoretical focus of this thesis was drawn from theorists including Carl Rogers, regarding the Humanistic approach and Emunah regarding the creative methodology, amongst others, which contributed to the establishment of a practical methodology that provided a process of self- discovery and empowerment through the applied drama workshops. (Emunah, 1994).

With Participatory Action Research as the primary research methodology, the thesis used applied drama workshops, classroom application of various techniques, journal entries, questionnaires and interviews for data collection. The longitudinal nature of this exploration took place over a period of eighteen months, with the group being comprised of special needs' educators.

The research found that the workshops were highly successful as the catalyst for positive change in the participants, encouraging sharing and reflection previously suppressed in their professional setting, thus provoking personal growth and empowerment.

Furthermore, professional growth and new explorations in their teaching methodology positively materialised. The group gained greater understanding about themselves, one another and the children they were teaching as the workshops heightened their perceptions. Consequently the participants generally became more tolerant and empathic of one another and towards the children. The children in the participating educators' classes participated enthusiastically, and developed in their socialisation and self-confidence. Their communication skills improved and they externalised their inner feelings more readily.

The participating educators did not highlight any negatives regarding applied drama as a medium in the school. If anything, as the researcher, I was overwhelmed that the results were unanimously so positive, with not a single participant reporting that they felt that its implementation had not been beneficial. The research project thus reportedly had a constructive outcome for all those who either participated or were directly influenced by the project.

Keywords:

Dramatherapy, play therapy, dramatic play, educational play, educational drama, process drama, improvisation, role-play, catharsis, therapeutic and psychological benefits, projective techniques, practical methodology, special needs education, intellectual or cognitive barriers to learning, participating educators and learners.

Contents

Preface

I have been passionately involved in special needs education for many years. I am conscious of the fact that children with intellectual disabilities learn more effectively through physical and creative action and play, than through theoretical and abstract intervention, as per Piaget's four stages of cognitive development, commencing with the sensory motor stage and concluding with the formal operations stage. (http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/piaget/stages.htm.).

 I am furthermore aware that if something resonates for an educator, and he/she takes ownership of a project at grassroots level, that he/she will be more eager to incorporate such an activity into the classroom, than if he/she were not actively engaged from its inception. I am also aware of the fact that working with disabled children can be extremely taxing, (having extensive classroom experience in various special needs schools), and that workshops with an element of play in them would be beneficial for the educators, through the incorporation of relaxation and de-stressing techniques into the programme.

I am sensitive to the fact that a group of educators in a professional milieu are inclined to conceal aspects of the self to one another as a protective defence mechanism, as a work milieu is a competitive domain. Kainan (1994) argues that teachers compete within the school hierarchy attempting to maintain order through both the existing hierarchy of the institution and their own created hierarchies. I am also aware that as the school principal,

to some or other degree, I would invariably be seen as wearing two hats as facilitator and principal, regardless of my attempts at using drama as a leveller.

Applied drama workshops had the potential to break down pre-conceived and constructed barriers, encouraging more interactive participation amongst the participants, and with me as facilitator.

I have been exposed to the world of drama since the age of 5. It was, however, only in recent years as a mature adult, that I turned to drama as a learning and developmental tool. The natural progression of this was to investigate its value in my work milieu.

I have been actively involved in the field of specialised education for over thirty years, as a special needs' educator, in senior management and culminating in ten years as a school principal at the special needs' school where the research was conducted. I was a student in education, specialised education and psychology studies for many years, which ultimately led to my registration as an educational psychologist. My desire to incorporate an expressive arts facet to my field of study, led to my enrolling in studies in applied drama, this thesis being the end result. It epitomises the zenith of my various quests.

1. Finding the colours for Painting the Soul

Introduction

A series of Applied Drama workshops with educators in a school which accommodates children with intellectual and physical barriers to learning was undertaken with a view to establishing if the participating educators would personally and professionally benefit, and if by them then implementing the applied drama and dramatherapy techniques in their classrooms, they could positively and proactively develop the educational milieu, leading to the enhancement of the children with special educational needs' development in specific educational and therapeutic areas.

Problem Statement

Due to the fact that the school is a special needs school for children with various disabilities, it was felt that some of their barriers to learning could possibly be reduced by incorporating applied drama therapy into the school curriculum. Many of the children experience communication difficulties as second language speakers, some with speech impediments or expressive language disorder, while some children either lack self-confidence or have poor socialisation skills. As some of the children are abused and traumatised children, or severely impoverished, I felt that they could benefit from the imaginative, playful, therapeutic and nurturing dimension of applied drama.

With the above problem statement in mind, combined with my awareness that most of the school's educators were not au fait with applied drama, (either as a therapeutic medium, or as an expressive arts tool with multiple dimensions), my objective became galvanised.

The objective was that by incorporating applied drama workshops, educators could be empowered to utilise the learnt strategies as an intervention tool for use in their classes. The intention was that this would benefit the children's communication, as well as their cognitive, social, and therapeutic development. It was hoped that by conducting the applied drama workshops with the participating educators, that the research process would act as a catalyst, which would become a powerful medium for their own ongoing personal and professional growth.

It was hoped that through active participation in the Action research, it would be empowering, leading to the participants taking ownership of their own process. Goals would include an enjoyment of applied drama as a technique, leading to the enhancement of their self- confidence regarding utilising these skills in the classroom. Furthermore, the intention was that through the workshops, trust and confidentiality could be enhanced, so as to encourage the externalisation of their feelings within a group context, thus leading to self reflection and to both personal and professional shifts, in turn facilitating their perceptions of the children, while being catalysts for the development of their learners' self- confidence, social, cognitive, creative and communication skills.

The research questions

The goal of the research was that various areas highlighted in the problem statement could be addressed through the incorporation of applied drama at the school. The intentions were to enhance the participating educators' personal and professional development including their self- confidence in group contexts, and through their utilisation of the various learnt skills in their classes, to then facilitate the development of the children's social, emotional, cognitive and communication skills.

The applied drama intervention took place at Open Gate Special School, situated in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. The school is a specialised school, which accommodates children with various disabilities. At the time of the research, there were 220 children in the school, who ranged in age from 6 to 21 years of age. Forty-two of the children board in the hostel on the school premises. There are many high-risk children. Some of the children suffer from HIV/AIDS, while others, being orphaned, are institutionalised. Some children in the school have experienced emotional and/or physical abuse and many experience other environmental disadvantages positively correlated with the combination of poverty, intellectual and physical impairment.

The children experience a wide array of intellectual disabilities with familial, genetic or organic etiologies, or due to non-specific causative factors. Some of the children experience multiple disabilities. Due to their home environments primarily being impoverished, the children do not have wide access to creative stimuli to enhance their

cognitive or social development and are largely reliant on the school for these interventions.

Brudenell (in Jennings, 1987) aptly states, "Mentally handicapped people are individual people with individual needs. Irrespective of the degree or type of handicap, their feelings are very real…" (1987:183,184). It is with this type of respect and sensitivity, combined with taking the children's feelings and their individuality into account, that the applied drama programme within the school was designed.

The educational programme at the school incorporates socialisation, life skills, didactics, and visual perception, fine and gross motor co-ordination, arts, crafts, dancing, music and various sporting codes. The drama programme at the school was previously limited with none of the educators having a formal practical or theoretical background prior to the workshops, which were introduced as part of the research project. Drama was previously incidentally incorporated by way of multi-cultural movement, song and dance, through action rhymes at assemblies, in music lessons and in class, which correlated with their cultural and religious backgrounds.

Sadly there is often pressure in schools to stringently adhere to a curriculum that is focused on an end result or outcome. The journey or process sometimes gets lost. Metaphorically this could be correlated with an urgency to arrive at the destination, not noticing the scenic view from the window en route. Fortunately special needs' schools do have more latitude, which allows for creativity in the process. The end result is not the

overarching objective. It is travelling the journey hand-in-hand with the child and with one's peers that epitomises the heart of the place. Jennings (1987) fittingly states "The struggle to free imaginative expression from the strait jacket of rationality is permeating all disciplines." (1987:16). As factors such as globalisation, consumerism, technology and mass production grip society, and as the right-brained dominant, creative individual may consequently become marginalised within a structured didactic context, applied drama, I believe, becomes an increasingly relevant medium in the educational system. It offers support and counterbalances the milieu, where competition and the drive for survival may swamp the individual. Jennings quotes Alice Walker (1985);

"What is the point of being artists

If we cannot save our own life?" (1987:17).

An Introductory Applied Drama workshop was presented to all the educators at the aforementioned school during August 2006, with the objective of offering insight into this creative medium and its therapeutic benefits. Icebreakers, movement exercises, circle activities, and projective techniques were incorporated, followed by reflection, feedback and closure. The majority of the educators expressed eagerness about the potential benefits, volunteering to participate in the research process. These educators reported that they were enthusiastic that there would be benefits for both themselves and the learners in their charge.

Nine educators plus the Occupational Therapist voiced an interest in participating in a series of Applied Drama workshops facilitated by myself, with the intention of acquiring

drama-related skills to utilise within the classroom. The hypothesis was that the participants would benefit both personally and professionally through the interactive workshops, and that the children they taught would benefit from the therapeutic aspects of dramatherapeutic techniques, within the classroom context, by being exposed to techniques from which they would benefit, as outlined earlier in this chapter.

In keeping with a contemporary post-modern perspective, it is essential that I declare my position in relation to this research. Apart from the elements shaping my research already discussed in the preface, I highlight additional perspectives and experience that influenced the research. I am an educational psychologist, an applied drama student and an experienced specialised educator. I chose the topic, which links with my work at the aforementioned school. With my interest in the therapeutic and creative benefits of applied drama techniques, I felt that it would be a mutually beneficial research project at the chosen site.

The research was designed and carried out by myself as sole researcher and under the supervision of Professor Hazel Barnes. An ethical approach was assured by ensuring confidentiality with confidentiality declarations signed by all participants and their names excluded from the research. This is further elaborated on in 1.3.

A brief overview of the contents of each chapter of this thesis concludes this introduction. Chapter 1 of this thesis acts as an introduction to the research project giving an outline of

the process with respect to the site used, the number of participants involved in the research, the duration and time frame, as well as about my design of the research.

Chapter 1.1 surveys literature, which facilitated my perspectives and enriched my arguments, while chapter 1.2 views principal theories, which underpinned the research, primarily The Humanistic Theory. Chapter 1.3 discusses the methodology used for the research.

Chapter 2 explores the workshops, which were conducted with the participating educators, as part of the research. Chapter 2.1 reviews the personal outcomes experienced by the participants, while Chapter 2.2 reviews their professional development by utilising the techniques in the classroom. Chapter 2.3 examines the participants' altered views of their learners and the paradigm shifts experienced by both educators and learners, as a result of the utilisation of the drama activities within the classrooms.

Chapter 3 focuses on the overall impacts. Chapter 3.1 reviews the reflections of the participants, Chapter 3.2, focuses on the Journal Reflections of the participants, Chapter 3.3, incorporates analyses of the data, and Chapter 3.4 focuses on ownership and active engagement. Chapter 4 brings the research project to closure with a summary and conclusions.

1.1 Literature, which offered the texture for Painting the Soul

Elements covered in the literature include the following aspects:-

- The aesthetics and ethics of expressive arts, including personal nourishment.

- Phenomenological perspectives, which are unique to being human.

- The spiritual aspects of drama.

- The playful and therapeutic benefits of drama.

- Anthropological, psychological and theatrical roots of dramatherapy.

- Incorporating collective culture into the programme to facilitate the diversity of participants and learners at the school.

- The benefits of incorporating drama as a therapeutic medium with children with intellectual barriers to learning and other special needs.

- Catharsis as a healing medium in drama.

- The benefits of imagination and its central role in drama.

- The incorporation of role-play as a central tenet.

- The benefits of applied drama with respect to the participants and the children in terms of the child's body image.

- Boundaries with respect to ethical touch, related to the sensory modalities within the drama framework.

- The benefits of applied drama with respect to verbal and non-verbal communication.

- The benefits of applied drama with respect to proceeding at the child's individual pace, taking cognisance of the wide array of disability types and cognitive limitations and/ or abilities at the given site.

- The spontaneous nature of drama as a benefit to the school.

- The paradoxical nature of theatrical distance with regards to its protective medium, combined with it offering self-realisation and self-expression for participants and learners.

- The use of ritual as a central component in drama.

- An emphasis on play, incorporating personal and projected play, and its relationship to drama, symbolic play, play therapy and dramatherapy, in addition to reviewing play, as opposed to 'acting out'.

- Projective techniques such as masks, puppetry and mirroring to enable therapeutic play.

- Identity as a focal point in drama.

- Primary principles pertaining to working with children with special needs.

- Discussion around theories relevant to the research.

Jacoby focuses on aesthetics in the expressive arts. She alludes to life being "…lonely without surprises" (in Levine & Levine, 1999:53). She questions how beauty can be brought into our lives to enrich it and sees art as a medium with properties that can enrich one both ethically and aesthetically. Connecting with the sensory component of the human, Jacoby (in Levine & Levine, 1999) refers to Logstrup (1983), who argues that the human requires "…nourishment of the soul" (Logstrup, 1983:14). Life energy springs from this source, which enables one to be receptive about embracing life. Logstrup's phenomenological view searches for characteristics, which are unique to humanity. Jacoby (in Levine & Levine, 1999) focuses our attention on Logstrup's (1983) *sovereign life utterances;* phenomena such as trust, compassion, hope, love and sorrow. As opposed to these are traits such as hate and jealousy, which do not reach out, but consume the possessor. Logstrup (1983) argues that the *sovereign life utterances* are what develop us

and encourage us to articulate our sensory world through the arts. Jacoby describes this force as being larger than human kind; "What is given to us as a gift lies at the root of our being alive, our creativity…. Our creativity springs from being created" (Jacoby in Levine & Levine, 1999). This phenomenological stance is compelling in facilitating our understanding of the prowess and spirituality of the arts as a medium to nurture the soul. This tenet evoked the spiritual component of my psyche, and for me this philosophy became a significant motive for my allegiance to expressive arts, including play, applied drama, music, art, movement, expression, visualisation, fantasy, ritual, communication and dramatherapy being explored in my further studies, and in this particular research.

My argument was that in inculcating the research project into the school curriculum, there would be a range of benefits for all the participants, through their utilisation of these so-called 'sovereign life utterances'. It was hoped that it would instil a deeper understanding of the educational and therapeutic benefits of applied drama in the educational milieu, and would act as a catalyst to incorporate enriching media into the educational curriculum of the special need's child at the school.

Drama is an ancient medium with creative, playful and therapeutic benefits. I saw it as having the essential ingredients to become the thread, which could connect and intertwine creative, educational, therapeutic and psychological dimensions within a special need's school. In both an educator and learner setting, the emphasis in a school is in teamwork, particularly at a special needs' school, where the educators are all focused on orthopedagogical (special needs) education, which lends itself to a team approach. Watts

(in Jennings, 1992) asserts that the power of drama is in the shared creativity and interaction with others. "To give the drama form, it is necessary to tune-in to others." (1992:41).

Dayton (2005) asserts that drama was used in ancient Greece to cathartically purge the psyche. Founded in the 1970's, dramatherapy has its roots in anthropology, psychology and theatre (Emunah, 1994; Landy, 1994). This allows dramatherapy to offer not only a creative theatrical dimension, but also a therapeutic dimension, which takes human development into account from its genesis to its current level. This embodies a holistic perspective, which embraces the educational ethos of the aforementioned school, which addresses the totality and individuality of each child.

Hornbrook's (1991) premise is that drama in schools should incorporate collective culture. This would accommodate diversity instead of creating a milieu that does not take various cultural traditions and perceptions into account. Hornbrook's argument offers a positive perspective within the aforementioned school, which accommodates and melds educators and children from different cultural groups, while Emunah (1994) describes dramatherapy as intentional and proactive. This would correlate with the research project, which had an intention with a proactive objective.

Jones (1996) makes mention of the relevance of taking social and cultural factors into account during play and dramatherapy. He asserts that conclusions drawn by researchers vary. The research has shown that it is largely dependent on the cultural milieu, as in some cultures children's play is limited due to the expectation that children should assist

with the economic survival of the family from an early age. Jones argues that for the therapist "it is crucial to contextualize play within the cultural difference." (1996:175). This factor needed consideration in the research project, due to the differing backgrounds of the children in the school, where play objects and their significance in the home environment and the degree and quality time of play may differ vastly. It was thus necessary to ensure that the tools used were familiar to the educators and particularly for the children to accommodate culture- appropriateness.

Landy (1994) argues that some educators, who are not therapists, may attempt to utilise dramatherapy with disabled children due to its beneficial properties. Due to the children in the school having special needs and many experiencing either emotional or physical trauma, while all are dealing with degrees of social stigma, a therapeutic medium was seen as being beneficial for them. Teaching the children can be emotionally draining for the educators. Thus the objective of the research programme was to engender an environment, which would offer therapeutic benefits for both the participating educators and the learners in their classes. Furthermore, as the educators have specialised educational skills and experience, I was confident that they could ably fulfill a therapeutic role in the classrooms, as per Landy's argument above.

Chesner (1995) asserts that when introducing a dramatherapy approach for the child with profound learning disabilities, there are several primary principles. These include patience, trust, space and safe boundaries. These characteristics are central to the school's nurturing ethos.

Dramatherapy is more group-oriented than psychodrama, incorporating improvisation, projective techniques and various media (Emunah, 1994). For this reason, dramatherapy techniques were chosen to be incorporated into the research rather than psychodrama, as this better accommodated the group work dimension of the programme, and allowed for both projective techniques, a selection of media and improvisation, both in the workshops with the educators and in their class groups.

Jones asserts, "…that within drama there is a powerful potential for healing (1996:1). Catharsis is a primary aspect of any therapeutic setting. Drama and play have the ingredients to accommodate catharsis, as the physical expression experienced can discharge what Hartshorne refers to as "psychic energy" (1987:87). Hartshorne emphasises that catharsis is reliant on the individual, who on being evoked by recalling the past through applied drama, expresses these emotions through action. Within the applied drama research project, both in the workshops and in the classrooms, the opportunity to explore and experience catharsis was a primary objective. Landy asserts "…distancing and catharsis become crucial in drama therapy when the natural means of distancing in everyday life break down" (1994:116). Hartshorne aptly states "Without facing the reality of past events, we cannot let go of painful associations and take hold of life in the present" (1987:87). It was felt that the participants would be enabled to confront painful life experiences and to benefit through catharsis.

Safety measures were put into place to contain feelings due to the power of drama to

evoke intense feelings and the necessity to create safety measures. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.

"Imagination is the central concept which informs the understanding of the use of the arts and of play therapy" (Levine & Levine, 1999: 259). They argue that without imagination, the individual becomes trapped in superficialities and reality, while the power of imagination, through imagery, can take the individual to new realms.

Imagination is closely linked to symbol and metaphor. Through the imagination, the individual is able to access part of the self more readily by engaging in symbolism and metaphor. This type of engagement is facilitated by drama, where various projective techniques can be used as symbols, and where through role play one is able to create a metaphor that parallels facets of one's personal life. Drama enables one to better understand and express depth of meaning and significance in one's life. Imaginative play enables children to access this deeper meaning. Through play, the child can incorporate imagination to make sense of his world and deal better with trauma and uncomfortable parts of his reality.

Levine and Levine (1999) argue that imagination frees the child from pathologised and repetitive actions, to realms of more diverse exploration. Through therapeutic play the child is able to positively transform his world through imagination and creativity. It was felt that as some of the children with barriers to learning can become stuck in repetitive play patterns that they would benefit from therapeutic play through applied drama. It

could offer them new insights into playing and benefit them therapeutically through

participating in the different activities. This is aptly stated by Levine and Levine;

> The task of therapy with children which uses play is to mobilize the
> imagination, to free up and loosen the play as much as possible.
> At times we might need to teach a child to play if the ability to play
> has become constricted (1999:260).

Role-play was a significant part of the applied drama programme. Dayton (1994) asserts

that we alter over time and take on different roles in our lives. Our psychological well-

being is related to our capacity to react in a healthy way in the various roles we have in

life, whereas it is unhealthy to become stuck in a role without being able to adapt to a

new role. Dayton (1994) argues that we need to be able to move from role taking, to role-

playing and then role creating. In role-play one takes on learnt roles and enhances these

with one's own persona through experimentation and formulation of the self. In role-

creation one creates a new aspect of the self as part of one's development and

metamorphosis. Dayton refers to this as "a self-validating creative process" (1994:22);

while Eagle (1980) argues that a role is "the conscious manifestation of unconscious

aspects of the personality once these aspects have been integrated into the personality."

(1980:171). Role-play is central to applied drama and thus facilitates the development of

identity. It is a beneficial aspect of the development of the child with barriers to learning,

who may need additional guidance in role development.

Body image is a principal theme of any teaching programme with the disabled child. It

can be illustrated as the central core with other themes in ever-widening concentric

circles around it, from the self, to the immediate environment of the child, and then to the

more remote world. (I.e. Egocentric to Exocentric.) Cooper in Pearson, (1996) asserts

that in Drama, the individual can explore through his body, by using unedited movement.

By incorporating breathing exercises, movement and other non-verbal forms of

communication, the child is enabled to develop a better concept of his body image,

through his body exploring the environment. Wethered (1993) argues that many people

feel uncomfortable in their own bodies and may even dislike their shape or appearance.

She advocates that working on developing an awareness of the body could assist people

who have difficulty with their body image. This can be achieved through music,

movement and rhythm, which were an integral part of the applied drama research, where

some of the children have difficulty in relating to their bodies or feel uncomfortable about

their body image, as do some of the educators. Activities connected to this research

programme were successfully used in the classroom for the enhancement of body image.

Many children with barriers to learning have been known to experience difficulty

communicating verbally. This is further exacerbated due to the language of instruction

being in a second language for the majority of the learners at the site, where the research

was conducted. James (in Mitchell, 1996) talks about "creative vocabularies" (1996:22).

She highlights the value of non-verbal communication through movement, touch and

music. This creative vocabulary is relevant, as it encourages expression in the non-verbal

individual. James (ibid) adds that in working with touch, various ethical factors should be

considered. Defining boundaries is necessary so as to avoid misinterpretation regarding

touch as an expressive medium. Working with children with disabilities requires firm

boundaries as the children are affectionate and some suffer emotional deprivation, which

is a positive correlate of being institutionalised. Once firm boundaries are set, creative vocabulary including touch, music and movement are highly relevant for the non-verbal child at the school, as well as for the emotionally deprived child as a means of feeling a sense of self- worth.

The advantage of drama as a therapeutic tool is that the individual proceeds at his own pace. Langley (1983) argues that this differs from theatre, as it reduces the pressure of performance. It is the present process, which is relevant rather than a performance outcome. Important components include trust, group cohesion, relaxation and communication; all objectives of the research project. With regards to children with barriers to learning, the removal of pressure is seen as significant in the inculcation of applied drama into the school milieu. Positive and rewarding outcomes were noted regarding the development of the learners' self-confidence, due to the lack of pressure the various media offered in the classroom.

Spontaneity is central to applied drama and play therapy. Landy (1994) asserts that spontaneity is a midpoint between inhibition and impulsivity. It offers an opportunity for a compromise between being over-distanced and underdistanced. The individual is able to improvise knowing that he is in a fictional setting, yet he is able to participate with certainty. Spontaneity is a common characteristic of children with barriers to learning and through it they are able to develop. Some learners with barriers to learning have been known to experience impulsivity, as they experience high arousal due to poor impulse control, while others may suffer from extreme inhibition. Through drama the child can be

guided towards a midpoint, which is healthier. Landy (2004) discusses the role of the unconscious mind. Its imagery can be stimulated and untapped during dramatic play, and it becomes accessible when spontaneity occurs in the safe space of aesthetic or theatrical distance.

Theatrical distance is discussed by Jennings (1998). She argues that

> The paradox of theatrical distancing is that we can come closer to issues that concern us and our lives, both as individuals as well as the world as a whole (1998:117).

This paradox is brought about by discovering aspects of the self, denied to one by the subconscious mind. These discoveries can be brought to the fore by the safe distance which drama permits one between the self and the metaphorical mask offered by the various techniques. Through using applied drama in the school, this paradoxical facet had the potential to bring about discovery and some convincing developmental shifts both in the workshops and in the classrooms.

Roose-Evans (in Pearson, 1996) draws our attention to ritual. He argues that ritual enables the person to bring order to his life and to focus on the aesthetics in the expressive arts. Within group work at a school, ritual plays a large part in establishing a safe routine. "They heighten the intensity of shared experiences, enabling us to realize that we are not alone but part of an indivisible whole." (in Pearson, 1996:104). Roose-Evans sees ritual as "such journeys of the heart" (ibid: 110) enabling such connections and encouraging 'wholeness'. It is associated with rites of passage. By bringing ritual into applied drama, it allows for the participant to be in touch with the moment and to

surrender himself to the process. For this reason ritual was an important aspect of the applied drama process at the school. It allowed for focus and enhanced a sense of camaraderie and commitment to the workshop process.

Play is an important part of any school programme, particularly for young children or children with intellectual deficits. It is an integral part of learning for a child, because through play the child starts to develop certain structures, albeit unconsciously. O'Connor (1991) asserts that the child develops cognitively, physically, emotionally and socially and can process life experiences through play therapy, while Du Toit and Kruger (1993) assert that children's play patterns alter as they develop cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically. A child's play moves from an egocentric style to the realms of fantasy and social play, and whether it is unconsciously orchestrated by the child, or is consciously orchestrated by the educator, it is in itself a developmental tool. As play is closely connected to drama and is an integral part of a special needs' school programme, the objective was to incorporate dramatic and educational play into the programme.

Slade (1980) refers to Projected Play as a form of play in which the child's mind, but not necessarily his torso becomes engaged in play. The child utilises objects in an imaginary way, with the primary action being generated from outside the child's body. The prime characteristic is that the child's mind is absorbed in the process, through the use of mental projection and quiet activity. Schoeman (Schoeman & van der Merwe, 1996) asserts that projected play creates an appropriate outlet where the child can tackle issues, which he

has difficulty dealing with. The child is able to maintain self-respect through the process, while having an outlet to protect him from feelings of rejection or criticism.

Slade (1980) attributes the development of activities such as art, learning to play a musical instrument, activities requiring concentration and organisation as originating in projected play, while Schoeman (1996) asserts that projected play contributes to the child's artistic and creative development, but can be used by the child as a defence mechanism to shield unresolved feelings.

Slade (1980) refers to Personal Play as dramatic play. The child utilises body and mind in the process and there is the intention of utilising movement liberally. The child uses his body to become the imaginary object and dance may be incorporated into the movements. The child's movements become part of the story and enhance the role, which he adopts. Personal play is characterised by noisy, physical involvements. The child becomes absorbed in his role, embracing it with authenticity. Van der Merwe (Schoeman & van der Merwe, 1996) suggests that personal or dramatic play offers the child a non-threatening milieu in which to dramatise or act. Van der Merwe (ibid) sums up the advantages of personal play; it offers the child a safe environment for the release of emotions at a pace controlled by the child. Furthermore, the repetition of dramatisation offers the child the opportunity to gain insight into the situation. Slade (1980) attributes personal play as being the precursor to acting, sporting and physical activities. He asserts that from personal play the child learns to develop imagination, leadership, self-control and speech.

Slade (ibid) argues that projected play is prevalent in the child's early play patterns, whereas personal play is more obvious once the child has mastered various skills such as co-ordination. Slade asserts that projected play develops the child's ability to absorb and assimilate, while personal play develops the child's sense of sincerity and self-awareness. Slade concludes "Play is the Child's way of thinking, relaxing, working, remembering, daring, testing, creating and absorbing." (1980:42). Through both projected and personal play, the child is able to develop and it is through applied drama that both forms of play can be accommodated.

Bannister (1997) alludes to Slade's fascination with children's play. Slade observed that creative play was a natural healing medium for the child and concluded that this could be extended to a more conscious level of planned therapeutic interventions. Moyles' (1989) premise is that adults and educators need to be made aware of the significance of play, which should not be marginalised against the world of work. Moyles (ibid) argues that play is a means of exploring one's environment. The child learns about the parameters in relation to his world. Play offers a platform from which the child can have fun, while learning to be creative and competent. It is a medium, which can facilitate the child's conflict resolution and is a means of releasing anxiety. Its relevance within the school milieu is undeniable.

Grimshaw in Mitchell argues "Play is… a risk, for it exists in the interface between inner and outer realities; between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived" (1996:55), while Pearson (1996) discusses Slade's observations of children, whose movement and play are seen as archetypal by way of the patterns in their movements.

These movements can be incorporated into the rituals and shapes created in dramatic play. Pearson refers to these movements as "universal and timeless" (1996:95), purporting that they can be discovered through non -verbal communication.

Landy (1994) argues that although there are various theories pertaining to play and play therapy, "The common denominator is the dramatic nature of play in the sense of drama as a dialectic between the actual, everyday reality and the imaginative one" (1994:65). Landy (1994) asserts that the child discovers about his real world through his imaginative world. He views reality as the child's objective world and imagination as the child's subjective world. Through applied drama and play therapy, the child is able to explore both his objective and subjective worlds. Landy (1994) cites Winnicott (1971) who argues that by the child navigating his reality and fantasy worlds, he is able to "…negotiate the paradoxical boundaries between everyday life and the life of the imagination…" (1994:66).

Emunah (1994) asserts that Erikson (1940) views play as a miniature representation of reality with self-healing properties, and that Piaget (1962) sees the child assimilating the outside world through dramatic play, while Freud and Melanie Klein both view spontaneous play as the emergence of imagination, with dramatherapy seen as the outcome of play (Emunah, 1994). Incorporating dramatic play into the applied drama, offered a safe place for the child to test his external world.

Emunah (1994) alludes to Piaget's 1962 argument that symbolic play was a form of dramatic play, which shifted to more structured rule-orientated forms of play. Bolton

(1999) refers to Langdon, who back in 1948 asserted that dramatic play was an outlet for the child's emotional needs. At the aforementioned school, the children range in chronological age from 6-21 years, and thus different levels of dramatic play were brought into the programme that were appropriate to the heterogeneous cognitive levels in each specific class.

Jones (1996) concludes that play is currently seen as a way to understand emotional and psychological development and to develop imagination and creativity. This, he alludes, has relevance for the way play is utilised in dramatherapy.

Wethered (1993) brings our attention to the unfortunate situation in which there are some children and even adults who have a limited awareness of their own bodies, primarily due to having had limited opportunities to play. Such people are tactile defensive and feel uncomfortable when touched. The primary problem is in attempting to break down barriers when a client is fearful and self-conscious to express the self through play or movement. (Wethered, 1993). In the drama programme, slow and gentle movement was encouraged for the tactile defensive child, so as to build up trust.

Emunah (1994) highlights the connection between play therapy and dramatherapy. Through dramatic play, the child is able to explore problems and resolve conflicts. Some children do not instinctively play cathartically, thus they benefit positively from engaging in dramatherapy-related activities (Oren in Jennings, 1995). This is of relevance to children with special needs, as some require guidance regarding their play, which may be prone to more stereotypical or rote play patterns.

Jennings asserts that

> Dramatherapy is a therapy of optimism; it is a therapy of now
> and the future; it is able to assist people to move on, rather than
> perpetually delve into an unhelpful past (1998:41).

Bannister (1997) states that Sullivan and Sullivan (1987) argue that the development of identity through dramatic play is significant for the disabled child. At the school, various activities are incorporated into the programme to develop the children's self image and identity. This was explored in the research programme with the use of various media including masks, mirroring and puppets.

Krall focuses on the universality of structured, symbolic play, asserting that in a single session "…developmental shifts" (1989:20) are evident. This illustrates the power of play with its capacity to create developmental shifts in a single intervention. James (in Mitchell, 1996) asserts that learning disabilities are diverse, requiring specialised needs. With respect to the children at the school where the research was undertaken, their disabilities are diverse with cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural implications. Play through the drama lessons was seen as a medium, which could enhance both the cognitive development, as well as the therapeutic intervention of the learners who were given applied drama lessons. In many cases during the research programme it was reported that a single intervention showed powerful shifts in learner response.

Freud founded therapeutic play, which was developed as psychoanalytic play therapy by Melanie Klein and Anna Freud (Gil, 1991). Klein used the child's experiences through free association and play to access the unconscious mind, while Anna Freud used

methods to facilitate the child to understand his feelings so that he could explore change to ameliorate inappropriate behaviour. The objectives of psychoanalytic play were to deal better with trauma or disability. (http://www.media.wiley.com).

Other theories related to the research include client-centered play therapy (Guerney in Schaefer & O'Connor, 1983) and Gestalt play therapy (Schoeman & van der Merwe, 1996). Child-centred play therapy has its tenets in Rogerian humanistic psychology. In the play arena, the child is able to feel safe through the therapist's 'unconditional positive regard', while having the freedom to discover and communicate his feelings within protected parameters. (Landreth, 1991, in Carmichael, 1994). Gestalt play therapy, founded in the 1940's, uses a phenomenological-existential paradigm. Personal awareness and self-value reportedly come to the fore through the medium of play therapy. (Yontef, 1993).

Grimshaw (in Mitchell, 1996) uses Humanistic Rogerian dramatherapeutic techniques with emotionally disturbed children, arguing that society lacks empathy towards such children, as their behaviour may be disruptive, while Bannister (1997) refers to Westcott and Cross's (1996) argument that some therapists are reluctant to engage in a therapeutic relationship with disabled children due to the possible pathologised behaviour which they may manifest. My opinion was that the children at the school who had experienced personal trauma would benefit directly from the catharsis offered in applied drama lessons by educators trained to deal with their various psychological and behavioural anomalies.

By presenting the above arguments pertaining to activity and play, incorporating dramatic play into the research programme was seen as an imperative aspect of the research programme. The research was designed to incorporate various dramatic play activities into the applied drama programme for the benefit of both the participating educators and the learners with special needs.

James (in Mitchell, 1996) argues that school children are generally desk-bound. By incorporating creative media and therapeutic play into the applied drama programme, the goal was to encourage more interactive activities, which would be beneficial to children with cognitive limitations. This is because children with cognitive limitations can become restless when desk-bound, have limited concentration and prefer playful and physical activities, which the applied drama could offer. It was also seen as a positive medium to use with children in the school with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), as these children are easily distracted, have diminished focus and become agitated if not actively engaged. Applied drama in the classroom was a facility, which could offer more engaging activities, as opposed to more passive forms of teaching methodology.

Emunah (1994) makes a distinction between 'acting out' and acting. He argues that dramatherapy offers the child an outlet in which to act rather than 'acting out' inappropriately. I have found that children with emotional trauma either 'act out' or withdraw. The school staff is trained to closely observe the individual learner's behaviour and to look out for nuances or behavioural patterns which can be telling, and which

require follow-up investigation, intervention or professional referrals. Educators have a personal file for individual learners in their classes, in which observations are noted.

Courtney views dramatic play as a stage preceding acting-out, which leads to channelled sublimation (Emunah, 1994), while Blatner & Blatner (1988a) argue that 'acting out', being an unconscious defense mechanism, can limit personal growth. Bannister (1996) argues that remedial drama should be incorporated into teacher training, so as to facilitate children to develop healing strategies rather than their resorting to inappropriate 'acting out'. As 'acting out' and withdrawal are both factors experienced by children at the school, an opportunity to act rather than to adopt defense mechanistic strategies was seen as a healthy channelling medium.

Therapeutic intervention with children is generally geared towards behaviour modification, whereas in play therapy the goals focus on dealing with feelings, rather than focusing on medical interventions or etiology (Guerney, 1983 in Schaefer & O'Connor, 1983). Guerney, (ibid) discusses the appropriateness of play therapy for disabled children, removed from the constraints of evaluation. For children with intellectual barriers to learning, this is of great relevance, as they suffer in a world of competitiveness and evaluation, where they may feel vulnerable, stigmatised and incapable of normal levels of accomplishment.

Landy (1994) argues that puppetry is a useful medium in dramatherapy with the intellectually handicapped. "Puppetry is especially valuable for those whose disability

has led to over-distanced behavior and limited language skills." (1994:205). Landy (ibid) asserts that the disabled child imitates the puppet's movements, and feels secure as the puppet offers more distance and is non-critical. Puppets were incorporated into the school with the inculcation of the research project with positive outcomes.

Pearson (1996, in Bannister, 1997) advocates emotional release through movement and touch with disabled children, Jennings (1978) empahises emotional expression using movement and sound, while McClintock (1984) highlights the benefits of drama to develop gesture in the disabled child with limited verbal skills. As the children at the school love rhythm and respond positively to movement, sound and gesture, while some of the children have aphasia and expressive language disorder, it seemed apt to incorporate associated activities into the research programme.

James (in Mitchell 1996) brings the reader's awareness to more current concepts on working with the disabled. Policies such as normalisation policies, self-advocacy, and human rights have all impacted on the development of a school mission statement. Current terminology refers to children with 'barriers to learning', as this encompasses both internal and external barriers, which are prevalent in a 3rd world environment, with factors such as poverty, malnourishment, poor hygiene and inadequate support services, exposure to violence and criminality, limited stimuli, overcrowded classrooms and in some cases poor parenting skills as contributing factors.

In the Educational milieu, Inclusion is a policy with a long term goal towards integrating learners with less severe barriers to learning into mainstream schools, should they be equipped to manage with lower levels of intervention. However, the children at the school, where the research was conducted, require high levels of support and intervention, though their advocacy is a pivotal factor with regards to empowering them and their families to be equipped to make guided choices for their future lives.

In the research project, the objective was to enable children to achieve some success and hence self- esteem through the process, rather than focusing on their limitations. Different strategies were used to relax the excitable child, offer expressive media to the withdrawn child and offer non-verbal means of communication to the non-verbal child as empowering mechanisms. In this way each participant, either educator or learner was seen as an inimitable being.

In Carl Roger's Humanistic person-centered theory, a fundamental tenet for the individual to reach his full potential is trust. "This has special meaning in relation to working with children…" (Corsini & Wedding, 1989:156). Much of Roger's work was child-orientated and one of his students, Virginia Axline, developed play therapy to work with "fearful, inhibited, sometimes abused children…" (Ibid; 181.) This reiterated my choice of Humanistic theory for the research project, where trust was seen as a core principle, and where the socially marginalised child could feel truly liberated.

Humanistic psychology is viewed as the most significant theory regarding dramatherapy (Emunah, 1994). This is due to its subjective and holistic qualities, as opposed to more structured, quantifiable research. Together with dramatic play, theatre, role-play, psychodrama, and ritual, this reportedly creates an "integrative framework for drama therapy" (Ibid; 1994:24). Within the research project, aspects of dramatic play, role-play and ritual were incorporated through various activities, so as to offer a therapeutic dimension to applied drama at the school, within the humanistic theory framework. The holistic mission statement and vision at the school where the research was conducted emblemises humanistic principles.

The literature reviewed, as background to this research, reinforced my objective to develop and present applied drama workshops for educators, with the intention of the educators, learners and myself benefiting. This would offer the children an opportunity to participate in stimulating activities, which could enhance the communication skills of learners with barriers to verbal and non-verbal communication, could strengthen the children's self-esteem and confidence to creatively perform without feeling evaluated, and could benefit children with limited concentration, who did not enjoy being desk-bound. It could also be a beneficial outlet for children to channel energy into creative and dramatic play, rather than to engage in 'acting out' to relieve tensions, and for the development of sensory awareness and identity.

The objective of the research was to develop and present practical strategies for the specialised educator participants, which they could then utilise for therapeutic and

educative benefits for the learners with special educational needs at the aforementioned school, and to ascertain what positive outcomes resulted, both for their learners and for themselves.

Key questions asked pertained to investigating the extent to which the practical strategies could be utilised by the educators, and to what extent these intervention strategies could contribute to positive and appropriate change or development within the group of children in their specific classes, as well as with respect to personal and professional development of the participating educators during the workshops that were conducted.

1.2 Principal Theories as the foundation for Painting the Soul

The Humanistic theory, as discussed above, most appropriately lent itself to the research project, which used applied drama strategies with a group of specialised educators. Qualitative research, which is more phenomenological than scientific, was used with the argument that it better accommodated measuring subjective human qualities, which cannot be measured quantitatively.

The work in the field of humanistic psychology emerged in the 1950's. This was an alternative to other theories such as psychoanalysis and behaviourism. Theorists such as Maslow and Rogers who wished to develop a more holistic view, developed humanistic psychology. Humanistic psychology focused more on the unique facets of humans. These traits included self-actualisation, creativity and individuality (Emunah, 1994).

Rogers saw human beings as essentially good. Landy (1994) views the Rogerian therapist as a "mirror that reflects back to the client that which he puts out to the therapist" (1994:29). It is imperative that the therapist offers a positive reflection and affirmation for the client.

Bugental (1964) refers to the following postulates of Humanistic psychology: -

- Human beings are unique.

- Within human consciousness is an awareness of self and other.

- Human beings have freedom of choice, which lends itself to also being able to be responsible.

- Human beings have the intention to desire meaning, value and creativity.

- Human beings cannot be limited to components.

Within the research project, the individual educator participants and the learners were all seen as unique individuals. There was a constant awareness of self and other, both in the intimate workshop forum, which required confidentiality and a deep respect for each person's individuality in terms of culture, gender and individual perceptions, and in the classrooms, which were seen to be a haven for each group of children with a wide array of disability types, degrees of limitations and levels of ability.

Freedom of choice and responsibility were relevant aspects of the research project, as the participating educators volunteered to participate and responded and participated responsibly, while some educators at the school chose not to participate and their choice was respected. Those who opted to participate did so, knowing that the research

workshops were designed to offer them experiences which were both creative and meaningful, and which theoretically could enhance their personal and professional lives.

Emunah asserts that Humanistic psychology "aimed to address the fullness of the human potential, the capacity of humans for creativity, art, spirituality, self-realization, and transformation" (1994:26). Taking cognisance of Emunah's quotation, it is noted that the participating educators and the learners' potential was explored through the process, which incorporated creativity and art. A spiritual dimension was of relevance to some of the participants and learners who used prayer as a comforting communication medium in their drama lessons when a Down syndrome child with congenital heart disease from the school passed away during the research period. Self-realisation and self-actualisation were areas that were explored during the reflections and the journalling aspects of the research programme. The entire research process created certain paradigm shifts which was a compellingly transformative characteristic. These shifts will be further elaborated on during the discussion within the content of the thesis. However, mention is made of the increase in participants' self -confidence with colleagues, and of learner self - confidence, communication skills and better peer group interaction.

In Humanistic psychology, the person's subjective experiences are respected, and trust is a necessary ingredient combined with respecting the individual's freedom and choice. (Emunah, 1994). Trust and confidentiality were highly significant aspects of the workshop, classroom and interviewing processes. Respecting individual subjectivity was a primary objective throughout.

Emunah asserts, "One of the primary relationships between humanistic psychology and drama therapy is that dramatic enactment can create a bridge between human limitations and human aspirations…" (1994:27). This theory would hypothetically respect rather than exhibit negative prejudice towards the children's limitations. It would also celebrate the enthusiasm of the aspirant participants. Emunah suggests furthermore that "Clients can experience safety, acceptance, respect, support, a sense of belonging, and intimacy" (1994:27) in a humanistic setting, all of which were noteworthy features of the research process.

O'Connor (1991) argues that pathology occurs due to the toxicity of the environment. With Roger's belief that human motivation is propelled towards self-actualisation and growth, O'Connor asserts that Humanistic psychology posits that the responsibility to create a healthy environment for the child lies with the adult. This is the central tenet of any educational milieu, including Open Gate Special School. For children with disabilities who are invariably 'pathologised', a humanistic paradigm offers them an opportunity to be seen removed from the medical model in which they are labelled with explicit etiologies. This approach best accommodated the research, which was to create positive developmental opportunities for both participants and learners. Emunah succinctly illustrates this, "Within all clients, including those who have been badly traumatized, a pilot light of health remains, and it is for this light, however dim, that the therapist reaches" (1994:28).

Treatment from what O'Connor (1991) alludes to as a toxic environment, can, he argues, take place through play therapy in an environment that provides positive reinforcement

and nurturing. This can lead to reduced conflict in the child grappling with his identity and values and the contaminated world around him, where he can be exposed to physical and emotional pain. This healing from a humanistic paradigm can facilitate self-actualisation, which was an intention of the research process, with many of the children having experienced a traumatic and toxic world environment.

In applied drama and dramatherapy, the emphasis is on relationships within the group. This would be appropriate for educators working in a classroom context, especially as self-esteem, socialisation and communication skills are paramount in the teaching programme for children with barriers to learning. It was hypothesised that through relationship building within the groups, the individual learners' patterns of behaviour could emerge through applied drama and dramatic play and that the educators could gain appropriate skills and experience developmental shifts during this period. In this way they could be encouraged to facilitate individual children to explore ways of creating a better self-image and self-confidence, as well as developing communication and social skills, through the implementation of applied drama therapeutic techniques into their teaching programmes.

Highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of humanistic research reveals the following. Strengths include a focus "on both the positive nature of humankind and the free will associated with change" (http://www.personalitysynopsis/humanistic_research.html, 2007). It is seen as having benefits in facilitating positive paradigm shifts in clients. The prime criticisms of humanistic theory pertain to its limited treatment approaches,

undefined theoretical framework and its assumption that all people are inherently good. (Ibid).

Using a Humanistic approach, questions were used to facilitate and enable the individual participants so that I was better able to assess the benefits and or changes experienced.

These questions were used to ascertain the following aspects:

- The willingness of the educators to participate in the process

- The responses of the educators after the process

- The learners' initial problems or needs

- The learners' willingness to participate in the process

- Any changes detected in the participating educators

- Any changes reported in the teaching programme

- Any changes detected in the learners

- Relevant characteristics of the applied drama programme were incorporated, including characteristics of the participants to facilitate the efficacy of any conclusions drawn.

1.3 Methodology for Painting the Soul

The research used for this study was qualitative, which lent itself to subjectivity due to the fact that applied drama is a subjective rather than a scientific field.

The hypothesis was that the participating educators would benefit both personally and professionally from engaging in the research project, and that in inculcating what they had learnt at the workshops into their teaching programmes, that the children in their classes would also benefit in various ways. The objective was to ascertain the validity of this hypothesis by applying qualitative research.

The research approach incorporated Action Research. This allowed for group participation to effect positive change. It involved a series of applied drama workshops with the participating educators at the aforementioned special school. This allowed them to be actively involved through participative action, adapting what they had learnt, followed by taking these ideas and activities into the classroom. This medium facilitated the participating educators to gain confidence in the methodology by experiencing it first hand in a proactive workshop forum. This research method offered them a springboard from which to experience the efficacy of the methodology and to discover more about themselves, their colleagues and their learners.

Action research "…is defined as the process of asking a worthwhile research question, collecting credible evidence to answer the question, and using the evidence to guide further improvement in a school" (www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary, 2008:1)

The article states that Action research resembles traditional research, as the objective is to enquire, gather data and utilise the information proactively. Researchers generally conduct research, but with Action research, it can be conducted directly within a setting such as a school.

Elliot (in www.madison.k12.wi.us/sod/car/carhomepage.html, 2008:1) states that

> Action research is the process through which teachers collaborate in
> evaluating their practice jointly; raise awareness of their personal
> theory; articulate a shared conception of values; try out new strategies
> to render the values they espouse; record their work in a form which
> is readily available to and understandable by other teachers; and thus
> develop a shared theory of teaching by researching practice.

Action research thus offered the educators the opportunity to participate in developing or testing out methodologies new to the school, reflecting, sharing, and collaborating and evaluating the process in a group context, as well as articulating collective values though creating the confidentiality contract. By participating in the process and consenting to their feedback being recorded and utilised in the research, the educators were actively involved in making a positive contribution for future educators to benefit from. It also had the spin-off of forging collegial relationships, leading to closer collaboration and allowing for introspection about personal teaching styles. This could encourage more flexibility in thinking, leading to more expansive ideas.

Dobson (www.down-syndrome.org/reports/61 2008) asserts that qualitative research is more appropriate for the collection of data in Action Research. She cites Vulliamy and Webb (1992) who argue that obtaining data in a special school is emotive and that qualitative research lends itself to this style. In her study, the data sought to investigate staff's impressions, as well as their attitudes, their experiences and their perceptions, which required qualitative research. Her research was also in a special needs' school. She argues that a literature search suggested that Action Research was the most suitable research method to use given her need to gather the above data. This further endorsed my use of this methodology.

My research objective was to use Action Research as a means of practical application through first hand experience to collect data. Corey (1953) asserts that Action Research offers a medium in which change can transpire through direct experience. Action Research lost momentum, later regaining credibility as a research method, and is currently seen as a popular medium for educator development. (Noffke & Stevenson, 1995). Borg, (1981) asserts that Action Research encourages educator participation towards personal growth, rather than being gained exclusively from theoretical knowledge.

The identified population included the educators participating in the series of workshops. As the researcher, I interacted with the participating educators in the workshops, as well as with the learners in the classrooms, once the applied drama activities were integrated into the lessons. As the school principal, it was vital that my role as principal did not in

any way undermine the participants. For this reason using Action Research in which they themselves were able to take ownership by conducting and presenting their own applied drama classroom activities and data gathering, was imperative.

Obtaining the data required: -

- Literature research, attending workshops as a student and the collation of suitable applied drama methodology.

- Conducting and facilitating a series of workshops.

- Classroom interaction and observations in all the participants' classes.

- Creating specific questions to be posed to the participating educators pertaining to the identified areas to be observed and monitored – viz. pertaining to any personal and professional benefits experienced by the participants, as well as positive outcomes which they identified with regard to the learners in the their classes, particularly regarding improvement in the children's self confidence/self- esteem, combined with any development in their communication and socialisation skills.

- Tape-recording and transcribing the individual interviews.

- Analysing and writing up the data.

In this study, I combined the various qualitative research methods to produce a framework of the data for analysis:

- Narrative

- Descriptive

- Interpretive

Collection of Data

After the Introductory workshop, an additional seven applied drama workshops were conducted with a group of educators who had volunteered to participate. These workshops were conducted weekly after their teaching contact time.

At the onset of the research process, I compiled a list of the professional educators/therapists who had volunteered to participate in the programme. These participants are employed at the aforementioned school and had indicated an interest in engaging in the process, so as to acquire an understanding of applied drama, with the intention of utilising such ideologies, activities and methodologies in their teaching programmes for the benefit of the children with special needs. The participants signed consent/confidentiality documents and agreements with respect to the research. (See Appendix 3).

Eight of the original ten participants were interviewed a year after the workshops were conducted, which had allowed them adequate time to first utilise the various methodologies within their classroom environment over a period of time, and to ascertain what shifts, if any, had occurred. Two of the original participants were unavailable for interviews, as one had relocated to an alternative workstation and another was on a year's overseas sabbatical leave.

Interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis after teaching contact time. The interviews were taped-recorded, transcribed and analysed. The participants were assured of anonymity regarding their interview responses.

Factors, which were taken into consideration included: -

- Perceptions and definitions of applied drama and dramatherapy in special needs' education needed to be addressed and explored further.

- Therapeutic modes and techniques, which could be used in the classrooms, were identified.

- The personal and professional development learned through involvement in the workshops by the educators had to be identified.

- The recognition of the role of teachers as helpers in a therapeutic frame was explored.

- The benefits, skills and development of the learners in the specific classes had to be identified.

- Cultural, gender, language and religious differences within the group were respected.

2. The mixed media explored through the workshops

Workshops were conducted with a group of educators who committed themselves to the applied drama process as an opportunity to learn various skills to utilise in their classrooms, and as a means of personal and professional development. The participating educators applied many of the activities in their classrooms, with positive benefits, once the workshops were conducted.

The classroom activities will be discussed in later chapters. Workshop activities are reflected in Appendix 1.

The workshops followed a general format, which commenced with a ritual, followed by icebreakers and various activities, and concluded with visualisation, reflection, and a closing ritual.

Emunah (1994) refers to ritual as a way in which both primitive and contemporary cultures can be protected so that transformation may proceed, while Chesner (1995) argues that a ritual at the beginning and end of each session contains and grounds a group, allows for focus on the immediate situation and enhances a sense of trust. Ritualising was a relevant tool to commence each workshop. The participants, who had been in the classroom teaching, would arrive tired and tense. Rituals were a means of encouraging the participants to remove themselves from the various stresses, which they had encountered prior to the workshop, to focus on the immediate present and to engage

in a feeling of group camaraderie and trust. Initially a set ritual was used, which focused on breathing deeply as a means of relaxation. Being in a circle formation was a means of creating a strong sense of solidarity for the group.

As the workshops progressed other rituals were introduced. One was lead by an Indian educator who introduced us to a symbolic Hindu ritual. On another occasion we had a tribal dance ritual using African music led by a Zulu educator. The inclusion of rituals by participants was seen as an important way of empowering volunteers who wished to lead a ritual. The multi-cultural inclusivity was an enriching aspect, which could symbolically celebrate the diversity and traditions within the group, as well as within the entire school.

Workshops would conclude with a ritual in which the group bid farewell to the inner space and welcomed the outer space and what still lay ahead for the remainder of the day. The rituals brought meaning to each workshop, creating a sense of cohesion and unison, as well as offering an opportunity to celebrate the unique qualities of members of the group. The opening and closing ritualisation gave each workshop a sense of spirituality, which amplified the commitment and the confidentiality shared in each workshop.

Icebreakers were a means of creating an environment in which the participants could warm- up and release tension. Jones (1996) asserts that warm up activities equip a group to be better prepared for a drama therapeutic session and assist individuals to find the appropriate space, so as to be in tune with the dramatic language. In the research workshops, warm-up activities included movement in various directions, different

tempos, reflecting moods, over and around obstacles, linking arms with a partner, trust exercises and the use of sensory modalities. The participants were energised and de-stressed after the icebreakers, which prepared them to fully participate in the central activities of each workshop. The warm-ups allowed for focus, which is an important element in drama, and which allowed for centering the participants.

Some of the warm- up activities allowed for participants to work in pairs, encouraging trust and relinquishing control as primary goals. This was seen as a vital aspect of working in pairs as the objective was to encourage a two-way trust in a relationship, as opposed to working alone and being self-reliant. It encouraged co-operation and a sharing of decision-making, a vital tool for the educators to take into their classes.

Many activities took place in a circle, the circle being an ancient and powerful medium for applied drama within a group. Emunah asserts that the circle "…is a powerful religious, spiritual and psychological symbol, reflecting the psyche' " (1994:23). The circle offers a sense of totality and has cyclical symbolic connotations. (Emunah, 1994). Using the circle allowed for a sense of intimacy, encouraged eye contact and was a leveller. The activities were designed sequentially, so that more challenging tasks, which required a greater level of disclosure and trust, were introduced at a later stage in the workshop schedule.

The objective of these activities was to build group trust through the intimacy of the circle, to invite the sharing of feelings, goals and ideals, to encourage the enhancement

of perceptions and to invite each participant to play a role, thus preventing any hierarchy, dominance or sublimation. Furthermore, the objective was to introduce various methodologies and projective techniques for the educators to experience and assimilate, with the option of using ones that resonated for them in their teaching programme, with the same beneficial objectives for the learners in mind.

Other activities not orchestrated within a circle framework required a variation of space, movement and sound. This created the opportunity for creativity and freedom of movement, in which the entire body was used as a means of expression, and on occasion where sound was used through vocalisation or through music. It allowed for group interaction in a more random way, as opposed to the structure and control within a circle and encouraged the release of inhibitions in a cathartic way. Jennings (Jennings, Cattanach, Mitchell et al, 1994), suggests that in dramatherapy, ways of expression should be flexible and go beyond words and that communication can be extended through movement and sound.

Some activities required participants to role-play in pairs. This offered participants an opportunity to work in pairs, which requires sharing, affirmation and co-operation. Being in role has the power to protect an individual from the depth of his/her feelings, thus encouraging self-expression. Emunah (1994) asserts that role- play is central to dramatherapy and that roles can be either fictional or real life experiences. Emunah argues that "Whether fictional or actual, the playing out of a multitude of roles serves to

expand one's role repertoire, foster an examination of the many aspects of one's being, and increase one's sense of connectedness with others" (1994:12).

Some activities created an opportunity for group work. This allowed for the entire group to work as an entity to facilitate group interaction, the sharing of ideas and the necessity to collaborate to reach consensus. This type of activity has constructive outcomes for a class, as it encourages sharing, communication and socialisation.

Projective techniques formed an integral part of the workshop process. Landy asserts that projective techniques involve "…the projection of aspects of a person onto such objects as dolls, toys, puppets and masks" (1994:149). This encourages a fictional and imaginative component, in which the person responds via his or her persona or role rather than through himself. (Landy, ibid). These techniques using puppets, masks, and objects, amongst other media, had in some cases a profound outcome. This was due to the use of symbolism and distancing, which projection had the capacity to offer, thus allowing the participants a safety net in which to respond more comfortably. They were able to feel more secure and less judged about sharing aspects of the self in front of their colleagues. Jones (1996) states that distancing allows the participant to experience perspective, as it allows for reflection and a certain amount of disengagement.

Landy (1994) asserts that using puppets and objects offers distance, which can initiate the expression of feelings. "For most clients, the distancing factor of puppets and dolls allows unexpressed or partially expressed feelings to be fully enacted" (1994:155).

Masks, because they are worn offer less distancing. But as the face is covered, the body can be freed to move more spontaneously. (Landy, 1994).

Closure activities and activities to centre the participants after any emotionally charged activities were used towards the end of each workshop. This was achieved by incorporating activities to de-stress and relax both body and mind, thus creating a sensation of calmness. It allowed an opportunity for reflection and contextualisation of individual feelings experienced, so that these were put into perspective. The calming exercises confirmed a sense of trust and confidentiality in the process and brought about catharsis, while other activities were light-hearted and playful. Jones (1996) states that closure is "… a clear point at which individuals leave or disengage from the dramatic space or activities…" (1996:27). Disengagement, Jones (ibid) argues, is important to avoid role confusion.

Reflections were incorporated throughout the workshops. These gave each participant an opportunity to share aspects pertinent to them with the group. They shared that they felt that the workshops were leading them to deeper levels of introspection and a degree of 'soul-searching'. They also shared that they were discovering insightful things about the children in their classes by utilising some of the activities in their teaching. They reported that they were learning far more through the workshops than they had anticipated and that they looked forward to each session, which brought with it new activities and challenges to engage in.

Chesner (Jennings, Cattanach, Mitchell, et al, 1994) discusses the significance of reflection. Reflection and discussion, Chesner argues, "…help to create some distance between the dramatic world and the here-and-now" (1994:72).

Journalling was an individualised activity for each participant to attend to at home after each workshop, as a form of reinforcement, to galvanise their commitment and to structure their thoughts. This gave them the opportunity to reflect on and write about what they had experienced and learnt, and what had evoked meaningful responses for them. They found this activity insightful and a springboard for personal growth. Journalling is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.3.

2.1 The personal outcomes experienced by the participants

This chapter incorporates the personal outcomes experienced by the participants as a direct result of the workshop context.

The interview process took place on a one-on-one basis once all the workshops were concluded and adequate time had lapsed, not only for the applied drama activities to be introduced as part of the creative curriculum in the classrooms, but also for the participants to have sufficient time to appropriately gauge the outcome of such.

I wished to ascertain if the objectives of the research programme had had the positive outcomes projected in the hypothesis. (The questions are reflected as Appendix 2.)

The participants were asked questions pertaining to four primary areas. These included any personal shifts, professional shifts, possible changes experienced in their level of self-confidence through the workshop process, and any shifts in their relationships with the other participants in the group, including myself as facilitator.

The respondents, when interviewed, disclosed many positive responses regarding personal benefits. Feelings of self-acceptance and looking at areas that needed strengthening became apparent through the process. This was empowering for the participants, as it was an area that surprised them. They had not realised how much they would personally benefit, by experiencing paradigm shifts in their own perceptions about themselves and their personal worlds, assuming that the workshops would only facilitate them in engaging with their learners in the classrooms.

Feelings of acceptance and developing an awareness of strengths or limitations were experienced.

J   *It helped me to reinforce what I like about myself – my optimism, sincerity and my positivism.*

G   *I felt that I could say things and be accepted and not feel judged. I also learnt to accept criticism better. It's not a judgement but is there to assist me in my own growth.*

The workshops created an opportunity for self-reflection through the various thought-provoking activities that were experienced by the group.

Some respondents felt that the workshops triggered a better acceptance of their personal circumstances. Through the evocative activities it became apparent that they were able to tackle personal issues more readily.

SM   *I found the workshops beneficial, especially as I was able to share about being diabetic…and how I felt about it. The response from you as the facilitator made me feel good that I am still a person, and it made me feel that I can still do things.*

Gaining insight and learning patience, tolerance and empathy were mentioned as positive benefits from the workshops. Respondents felt that their levels of empathy increased through the process, as the workshops created an opportunity for a deeper understanding of colleagues and for a greater level of disclosure through the intimacy of the workshop process.

Learning patience was a positive benefit for one respondent. She felt that she needed to work on improving aspects of the self, but also became more aware of some of her own attributes. Through the introspection, which she developed as a result of the workshops, she became more conscientised about herself.

J   *I was able to experience some introspection through the process. It made me develop a more conscious effort to work with others more patiently and to value my other attributes.*

Respondent L felt that she learnt tolerance through the process. Working in a group context gave her the opportunity to listen to her colleagues.

I learnt lots of tolerance because someone could take a long time to respond to something. I realised that the person … needed time to put it into words.

Respondent SM felt that she had benefited from the shared empathy through the process.

The workshops taught me to come to terms with what one is. I learnt how much support I would get from my colleagues when I disclosed to them that I had been diagnosed as diabetic. I never shared things about myself before... I saw that we could share and get support from others.

Respondent L developed deeper empathy through the unpacking aspects that occurred in the workshops, as did respondent C. This was due to the intensive dialogues, which took place in the workshop context.

I saw a lot of things in a new light, as we're teaching with colleagues, but we don't really know about their lives. My colleagues opened up, for example D talking about her brother with AIDS gave us more empathy.

Sharing with a colleague helped me to gain insight and empathy. It was a powerful part of drama. It helped me to stop saying 'Why me?' about my problems. This was through sharing. I saw that others also had problems.

Spontaneity and enthusiasm were reinforced and enhanced for some of the respondents through the workshops. This was an exciting aspect of the workshops as it brought out the 'child' in the participating educators. They were able to engage in activities in a playful way, which was cathartic for them. Several of the participants were experiencing difficulty with personal problems at the time when the workshops were presented. The playful aspects were healing for them, as it became a vehicle through which they could unburden their emotional baggage, both through the deeper communication and through the lighter interaction.

Respondent G reported that the drama workshops enhanced her spontaneity in her teaching, while respondent J shared her enthusiasm.

Children don't have the same responsibility and their spontaneity is healthy and infectious. I learnt to respond in the same way...

Because I was so enthusiastic about the drama... I went and bought puppets to use in my class.

Some participants found that the workshops became a platform for comparisons about one another, while one respondent felt that it was not productive to make comparisons, but to rather address her inner self. I found it illuminating the way their responses reflected facets of themselves, and how the workshops provoked thought and inner debate, and enhanced my understanding of my colleagues.

A   *I was able to see how it affected my levels of thinking, compared with some others in the group. Some interpreted an exercise at face value and not symbolically, while some of us were more symbolic in our interpretations.*

G   *I learnt that making comparisons with others does not offer solutions. I learnt to reflect on myself... and not try to master control in all situations. It made me realise that situations may be chaotic, but that one has to learn to release one's self from always taking responsibility...*

I became aware that the workshops became a platform for some participants to use as an extension of their own personal conflicts and their own pre-conceived perceptions. In some cases the workshops validated previously constructed perceptions, while in other cases the workshops altered perceptions.

There was only one respondent who felt that the drama workshops did not bring the group closer together.

I don't think that drama therapy brought us closer as a group.... It just validated what I knew about the individuals. But I got to know C. better through the group.

On the other hand this participant expressed the majority opinion.

SM   *The workshops helped me to grow by working in a team. I saw that people aren't all the same and that they think and respond differently. I learnt from you as the*

*facilitator that we are equal and not to expect this and that because of my HOD
status. The workshops levelled us.*

The workshops also emphasised for me that some of the participants were influential in

shifting other's perceptions and that some paradigm shifts were culture-related. In this

case it was to do to do with sensory touch. I found this extremely poignant.

SM   *I'm not a person who touches things...but I have learnt to touch through the
drama sessions. We black people were taught not to touch things. Now I've learnt
that you must touch to better know how something feels and that … it's a different
sensory experience from just seeing it. I learnt to apply this to my teaching – to
bring feeling different textures into my lessons, which is good for children with
special needs… It was a good experience for me, and the children were very
excited about it.*

The workshops became a powerful tool for some respondents in relation to reflecting on

their past. For one respondent this was particularly evocative.

SR   *It brought back a lot of memories… and some of the activities made me think …
much deeper. One session comes to mind. I chose a simple shell. And it made me
think of my father, of water, and then it evoked a stream of emotions. My dad was
a fisherman…and it took a simple shell to stir up those feelings… I went home
and had a good cry and it made me feel better.*

Some respondents felt that due to the workshops, they desired to make changes in their

lives. Thus the workshops became the catalyst for paradigm shifts with significant

outcomes.

SR   *One of the workshops was about what you would like to change about yourself. It
made me really think about what I want to plan for my life for the next five years.
Now I want to get my drivers' license and not rely on others for lifts.*

For some respondents, the workshops became a catalyst for acceptance about personal

circumstances.

Respondent C had spoken about his concerns about his brother, and that the brother, who was addicted to alcohol, did not want advice. He reported that the various visualisation and rituals assisted him in his closure.

> *During the drama sessions, I learnt that you could give advice but that it's not always accepted. Through the role-play it made it clear to me. It taught me to try and see my brother through his own eyes. This helped me deal with the problem, gave me relief from my tensions… to have closure… and to move forward.*

The workshops forged some dual support systems for colleagues who had previously not found any common ground, and also altered some respondent's perceptions about other colleagues.

C   *Exchanging problems with my colleagues helped me considerably. I talked a lot to SN and …we fostered a friendship and a sense of understanding.*

SR   *My perceptions and attitudes about everyone else altered…I was impressed about their plans for the future… and sharing made our relationships more comfortable.*

SM   *The way you accepted it, made me accept my diabetic condition. Finding out about it was a terrible shock for me. You made me see that I was still me.*

Through the interviews I was able to ascertain that the respondents had experienced a wide range of personal benefits as a result of the Applied Drama workshops. These assumptions were made due to their interview responses, which were individually conducted.

2.2 Participants' professional development is enhanced by taking the mixed media into the classroom

In interviewing the participants, their responses indicated that through the applied drama workshops, they had discovered, internalised and suitably adapted and developed many therapeutic applied drama techniques appropriate for use in their classrooms with children with special needs. They reported that in applying these activities with their learners, that they discovered many positive benefits for the children, and that their professional development was enhanced by acquiring new skills, techniques and methodologies. They felt that it increased their methodological repertoire and also offered them opportunities to gain more insight.

This chapter shares the respondents many new experiences within the classroom, illustrating the many benefits they reportedly experienced, which enhanced tier professional skills and deepened their relationships and understanding of their learners.

Some respondents discovered a refreshing new dimension to their teaching through the incorporation of applied drama, which I found rewarding. They reported that this dimension, which was new to them, enriched their teaching skills, as it gave them the courage to be more playful and experimental and less structured in their methodology.

SM   *Our schools never had drama, so I was puzzled at first, but I was very happy that I chose to participate because it taught me new things to use with my class.*

C   *The… activities… were helpful and made teaching playful, but was also a de-stressor… I didn't have all these ideas before, even with all my teacher training and experience. I learnt new techniques to use with my class...*

Forging a bond between learners and educators became evident. The respondents reported that they felt that a stronger bond developed between them and their learners through the utilisation of various applied drama activities in their classes. They concluded that the various activities allowed for a safe place and a vehicle for the externalisation of the learners' inner feelings, which enhanced a deeper relationship of trust. This encouraged the respondents to incorporate topics, which they previously may have avoided, thus enhancing their skills base.

L   *I implemented a lot of the techniques learnt in the sessions. I think it's made my bond with the children stronger. They now feel free to come and discuss personal things with me and they know it is confidential.*

D   *The activity 'Blind Man leads' activity helped the kids to trust me, and through this it led them to confide more in me…*

The respondents reported that they were excited to discover that applied drama could incorporate movement, music, art, role-play, visualisation and various other activities, and that all these methods facilitated the teaching process. Prior to the workshops, they had formulated an opinion that drama meant 'acting on the stage'. Thus they were enthralled to discover that applied drama encompassed a wide range of activities, techniques and methods, which could be applied within the teaching milieu. This gave the respondents new insights into the wealth of opportunities offered by applied drama, which is a broad discipline incorporating various expressive arts modalities. The participants reported that it gave them the opportunity to learn and utilise more divergent

teaching skills, which when implemented enabled the learners to engage in and learn through the various multi-sensory dimensions.

G   *Regarding the use of colour, I introduced a lesson-linking colour with emotions... It helped me to tap into their emotions better...*

D   *The activity when they drew with their non-dominant hand was interesting. They found it fun and amusing and it took the pressure off them...so they could feel a sense of worth in their own ability...*

G   *We used different tempos and sounds from techniques I had learnt at the workshops and the children responded well. I saw what a positive medium music is.*

The respondents reported that one of the positive outcomes of inculcating the applied drama skills into the classroom was that it enhanced the children's imagination. The respondents had found that the children at the school were inclined to feel less threatened when presented with concrete rather than abstract tasks, and there had been a general tendency to assume that imagination was beyond some of the children's capabilities. This influenced the participants to therefore incorporate more imaginative strategies into their teaching methodology.

By using various creative applied drama techniques, the children's imagination was sparked; so much so that it surprised many of us, myself included, to observe how well they were able to extend themselves into the abstract and how much they relished this aspect. It offered the children the opportunity to be invited into new worlds where they could play and pretend. By incorporating puppets and various media, and setting the scene for visualisation, they were able to explore in new cognitive ways. It was thrilling for the respondents to discover that the children's imagination was stimulated through the

various techniques utilised, and that this lead to more adventurous and abstract parameters within the teaching environment.

L   *Some people say that handicapped children don't have much imagination. But in the drama techniques we used, like eating imaginary food… they really went to town using their imagination. And in the imaginary ball activity they were able to imagine size and weight.*

J   *We got involved in a lot of storytelling, games and music. They were totally involved in the telephone game. They also used it in role-play. Drama definitely seemed to enhance their imagination.*

The respondents reported that the children's verbal and non-verbal communication skills benefited from the various applied drama activities. The activities reportedly encouraged the children to communicate using various techniques and media and encouraged them to be less inhibited about communicating in front of their peers. By introducing a puppet or a toy telephone for example, it offered the child a safe and creative medium through which to express himself and encouraged the participants to focus on developing the learners' communication skills. The objects were able to offer theatrical distance to protect inner feelings of vulnerability about expressing the self. It took the focus off the child with the object as facilitator. The majority of the children are second language speakers, so that communicating verbally in English poses communication difficulties for some, further exacerbated by conditions such as aphasia and expressive language disorder. The respondents reported that these techniques greatly enhanced their skills.

G   *The puppets facilitated their communication, especially those who battle to communicate in English.*

J   *Children with speech difficulties benefited from drama because of the role-play, enactments and the gestures.*

The children's concentration reportedly also improved through the inculcation of various objects into the story telling. With objects and puppets introduced into the lessons the children's attention was captured. A large proportion of the children at the school suffer from distractibility, hyperactivity, poor attention, as well as poor short-term memory. Concrete media gave the learners something to focus on, as their capacity for concentrating on an abstract concept is limited. It brought a nurturing, creative, colourful and interesting dimension into story telling, allowing for more sustained focus.

SM *I learnt that the children needed objects to motivate them and to make the lessons more concrete. I used to read to them and learnt that they had limited concentration... in using puppets; it facilitated the story and engaged their attention far better.*

One of the positive outcomes was that the children reportedly gained self –confidence through the use of applied drama. Many of the learners at the school experience poor self-esteem and lack self-confidence, often due to feeling inadequate in social settings and possibly due to a certain amount of social stigma. The various applied drama techniques used by the educators in their classes appeared to have offered an opportunity for the development of self-confidence for their learners, as it gave the learners the opportunity to act in class through role-play, and to communicate with puppets and the telephone game, amongst other activities. It allowed every child an opportunity to express him or herself in a playful way, which removed the anxiety associated with being tested or evaluated. It reportedly felt safer and more nurturing for the learners.

A *One girl originally lacked confidence and had a language backlog. She didn't want to participate in any school events. Now she volunteers to participate and has developed confidence... I attribute it directly to the drama lessons that she developed her self-confidence.*

C *Using puppets encouraged the learners to converse with each other. It helped them to relate to others in their communication…They gained confidence and gravitated to each other.*

What I found immensely rewarding was that due to the respondents inculcating the various applied drama techniques into their classes, they reported that they learnt more about their learners' personal lives, which increased their levels of awareness and empathy. The incorporation of applied drama became a vehicle for the learners to engage in more intimate dialogue with their educators and visa versa. The various activities encouraged the respondents to explore areas, which they may not have previously explored in a group context with their learners. The various media used reportedly created a secure environment for some personal sharing, and more importantly encouraged the learners to share with one another without experiencing feelings of fear, failure, shame or embarrassment. This was due to the fact that drama has the capacity to remove judgement from a setting by being a medium, which removes any hierarchy and offers a safe sanctuary. The learners reportedly took these activities seriously and were encouraged by each other to experience a sense of catharsis.

C *As educators we have to be strong and take the weight off the kids' shoulders. These exercises opened the opportunity to share, so my empathy and insight were developed.*

L *They shared a lot of things with me. One girl was being emotionally abused … and showed me this via the telephone game. We sat in a circle and they became emotional about things that had happened at home. One boy's father is abusing liquor and then fights with him. These things only came out since we used the drama techniques in class.*

This sharing reportedly allowed the learners to feel a sense of kinship in that they discovered that they all had various problems, whereas in the past they were not as comfortable to disclose this. Drama became the springboard for ongoing sharing and for

the educators to be proactive in investigating and addressing various situations. In cases, even when the problem was beyond the educator's control, the mere sharing became a cathartic experience, which engendered empathy and a deeper understanding between peers and their educators. Thus the respondents' professional development included an enhancement of their levels of empathy.

Drawing facial expressions and creating paper plate masks enabled a deeper level of sharing and empathy. The learners surprised their educators by being able to express emotions through creating happy or sad faces and were able to express their emotions to support their pictures. By expressing their feelings through the masks, it enabled them to express feelings more readily, than if just asked, 'How are you today?' when the response would invariably be 'Fine.' It became a vehicle, which encouraged expression, trust and empathy.

SR   *I incorporated the 'self-masks' activity, using paper plates. Things that I didn't expect were revealed to me. It was a real eye-opener…it was evocative for me and gave me a deeper understanding through this technique.*

SM   *It helped us to better relate to the children's feelings, e.g. facial expressions when we did the facial expression activity. It helped me to develop a better understanding of their emotions and taught me to notice little things in their behaviour better.*

From an emotive level, a respondent evocatively illustrated the positive effects for both learners and educators.

C   *I could better experience and identify with their sadness and their frustrations. It helped them to express their emotions…and it enhanced my empathy for them.*

The participants used various techniques in the classrooms. Some of these were more widely used and reportedly had more relevance and impact on the children. This included using toy cellular telephones, which became a powerful tool for developing communication skills, as well as for enhancing social skills. The reason for this activity being so popular with the learners was possibly because the telephone is a powerful symbol of communication, which the learners can identify with. Furthermore with the significant impact, which mobile phones have had on the South African population, even in rural and disadvantaged areas, this medium was a way in which learners could imitate their family members, having assimilated the status attached to such an object.

G   *With respect to the imaginary telephone conversation; the children 'blabber away' – but even though their communication is poor... I could listen to their intonation and expressive tones and watch their gestures... I realised that communication is far more than just words.*

SR   *The telephone conversations have been the most powerful medium. Everyone gets a chance to listen... and everyone gets a chance to verbalise. It gives each child a sense of importance as they feel as though they are being listened to. They are able to use their imagination, as they get transported away...*

D   *One child, P. is nervous and withdrawn. She confided in me that her granny wouldn't let her play with friends, only with dolls. That' telephone conversation' made me realise that she needed a friend. Through this I was able to coax her more into socialising, as she is so shy. It gave me a better insight.*

A   *The telephone activity was effective... It helped them with their communication skills. I was able to see which children most needed assistance with their vocabulary instruction.*

The visualisation exercises and relaxation to music reportedly facilitated de-stressing the children. A proportion of the children in the school suffer from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). They are inclined to be noisy, excitable and easily distracted. Calming techniques have the capacity to sooth the learners and in this way

discipline can more easily be established. The activity had potent results, as the learners

were obedient and were able to lie still, close their eyes and gently relax their bodies and

minds to calming music. It was a new innovation for them and they responded

enthusiastically.

G   *I'm a rowdy teacher. But we closed our eyes and listened and visualised beautiful
        things and this technique worked well, and I put gentle music on and it calmed
        them down.*

C   *I played restful music for the learners to experience relaxation. They related what
        they felt and they relaxed and it was almost trance-like. They wanted to do it
        every day, but we had to put some routine into place, as I did not want this
        valuable tool to lose its lustre.*

The drama activities reportedly facilitated aspects of discipline and class control. This

was due to the wide variety of activities, which stimulated the learners, especially as they

need constant structure plus stimulation to sustain concentration. The various calming

techniques that were initiated were seen as an enjoyable affirmation for the group, instead

of being perceived as a punitive measure, such as 'time out', and the circle formation

offered a nurturing space for shared interaction.

A   *Discipline was enhanced by the drama sessions, as children need to be kept
        stimulated and the activities stimulated and motivated them, which encouraged
        self-discipline as the various techniques had structure to them... The circle
        activities also encouraged sharing and discipline.*

SR   *Because they are boisterous, the circle activities brought some control to the
        situation and were helpful. The visualisation to music also helped with discipline.
        I had a boisterous class and had to find a way to calm them and on other
        occasions to energise them...*

J   *Some of the exercises, like the calming visualisation ones were excellent for the
        children with epilepsy and ADHD. The visualisation calmed them down.*

Respondent D gave a different angle on discipline, using the drama activities to 'free' her class more.

> *My class is quiet and has 'blocked energy'. I had to get them to externalise more. I encouraged activities to make them free up, rather than to calm them, as their previous teacher had suppressed them a lot.*

One activity, which triggered evocative responses, was the use of the 'Magic Box'. (Details on what the 'Magic Box' consisted of can be found on page 108 in the appendices.) This was because it was a concrete object, which they could use as a non-threatening symbol, as opposed to a totally abstract activity, which they may not have responded to as favourably. It was a symbol, which they could focus on, which facilitated their verbal externalisation, as it offered a neutral and passive medium outside of the self. The 'magic' connotation probably also elicited some curiosity in them.

A   *I became more sensitive to my learners. I was able to understand their personal sadness through techniques such as 'The Magic Box' …This led us to implement some class rules about loving each other. It awakened a new dimension of teaching for me.*

C   *The lesson we shared with you about 'The Magic Box' was profound. It was amazing to see how symbolism helped the learners to ease the problem and lighten their burdens.*

Positive outcomes were reflected through role-play and symbolism. Role-play offered the learners an opportunity to use their imagination, to walk in someone else's shoes, and to view things from a less egocentric perspective. It offered a safe way to tackle their world, almost as though they were in a dress rehearsal of their lives, in which they were protected from experiencing the same degree of pain or trauma.

A   *I learnt to incorporate role-play, which helped the children and me to participate. It validated my observations of the children and taught me to be more acutely aware of my perceptions of them. K-L used to argue and fight and try to*

dominate. She was also very tactile defensive. Through role play I can now come up to her and she does not shy away…

Incorporating coloured fabrics into a drama lesson encouraged the use of imagination and symbolism, which developed the educator as well as the learners' perceptions.

SR *In the activity in which you used the coloured fabrics, which became water, grass, trees and earth, I'd have used them to teach colour or shape, so it taught me to bring more imagination and symbolism into my lessons.*

Collage, as an activity, offered the educators the opportunity to gauge the learners' likes and dislikes. Using this technique facilitated the more non-verbal and visual child to express himself.

A *The activity about our likes and dislikes using collage was very beneficial. I was able to get in touch with the children. I was able to better understand their likes and dislikes. I was quite shocked… as they were able to show likes and dislikes of people and feelings, too.*

The Magic Shop was an affirming tool, as it facilitated the learners to get in touch with more abstract aspects of themselves, such as their qualities, combined with the need to purchase the qualities, which they felt they wished to develop more. This was a way for them to tap into their inner selves and into abstract qualities by using a media that was playful and safe for them.

C *The learners had to buy qualities such as respect, honesty, love, friendliness and generosity from 'The Magic Shop'. It was a good exercise on learning to be less self-centered.*

Group and circle activities reportedly enabled educators to be more perceptive about their learners. This was due to the fact that each child participated, and being in a group context the individual child did not feel scrutinised or singled out.

SM *I learnt to work better in a group… and to listen better, as everyone had a chance to talk in the circle activities. So I learnt to use this method better in my class. I*

learnt that I must not talk all the time, but must encourage the children to communicate more. I learnt to listen and not answer for the children because sometimes they are slow to respond.

Using imitation and mirror reflections enabled an educator to enhance the lessons and to develop a deeper understanding about his learners' abilities to imitate and to interact in pairs.

C   *They also did gestures in twos and imitating each other as though they were a mirror reflection. They enjoyed imitating and it was good for their interaction. I think it taught them to become more perceptive towards each other and to read cues on the facial expression of their partner.*

The workshop activities, which were taken into the classrooms, undeniably enhanced the creative learning environment, heightened the educators' perceptions about their children, brought a playful, as well as a therapeutic and stimulating dimension to the lessons and unequivocally enhanced the educators' professional skills and development.

2.3 Using the creative media in the classroom alters perceptions about the learners

The participants' perceptions about the learners reportedly altered due to the applied drama being implemented in their classes. They reported feeling more 'tuned in' to the needs of the learners and this had many positive outcomes with respect to forging stronger relationships between educators and their classes.

C   *My perceptions of the learners altered through the drama. I interact more now and they share their concerns more readily…It has created a paradigm shift in our relationship. It has made me more compassionate. I believe that the positives*

have a long-term effect. I was amazed what a powerful tool it was to help me to learn more about my learners...

Through the dialogue that followed within the classroom activities, solidarity allowed for appreciation, and comfort was found through creating opportunities for relief through creating a space in which a belief in general good and in personal spiritual beliefs was enabled. This was able to sustain the learners in difficult circumstances, or when an agency was not available to offer this support.

L   *One learner said "Miss I want to pray for her" – this is when K-A was dying. And M. said that his sister was pregnant and had to walk a long way and he was worried about her. We sat in a circle and prayed for each other. Drama brought out the spiritual component in the learners. It freed them up to say things that they hadn't shared before. They learnt to articulate their emotions in prayer. It was moving the way they offered one another moral support.*

One participant was pleased about the positive effects of drama regarding communication. She found that through the medium of drama the learners in her class who had communication difficulties were better enabled to express themselves. Children were able to express themselves around feelings, as this had been explored through the use of drama techniques, working with puppets and masks depicting facial expressions.

J   *My perceptions of learners have altered due to the drama workshops and now I utilise these skills in my classroom... One child couldn't communicate well, but he was able to get across to us that his friend had hurt him. The children learnt the word "hurt" and used it to express their emotions. We didn't expect it from our children but I realised that they can express their feelings better than I realised...*

S. does not speak – he just makes sounds and through his actions he was able to show tears coming down his cheeks. These games were very beneficial for him and gave me a greater awareness of his capacity.

F. can tell a wonderful story and embellish it and dramatise what he's saying. He enjoys getting attention and has gained confidence. The drama made him feel good about himself, as it was a suitable platform for his personality.

Fr. is shy and only uses one word at a time. Now he can come forward and sing and perform. The majority of children have benefited.

Drama was also found to be a useful tool as a teaching methodology, which could explore and engage in facets of multiple intelligences and different areas of the school curriculum.

SM   *My perceptions have changed – it taught me that the kids benefit and that drama can be applied to all aspects of the school programme, even to maths and literacy. With the drama techniques, the children have learnt faster and with less stress... They are more participative as the lessons can be more practical and playful.*

Increased psychological understanding and awareness of underlying feelings was one of the positive outcomes.

D   *We often miss things, which are important. Drama helped me to see things... and be more sensitive. C. used to lie. I learnt that he was actually saying 'Notice me!' He was so desperate for attention.*

The incorporation of drama techniques in the classrooms gave the educators the opportunity to utilise the methodologies, which they had been engaged in, in the workshops, and to adapt them to suit their specific classes. The participants' responses clearly express that they felt that they had developed a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of their learners, and to thus better tap into their feelings and to monitor development in their social skills and their communication. This participant aptly summed this up.

SR   *I developed awareness through the drama sessions, which has helped me to look out for things in the learners, which I had not previously been aware of. It gave me more insight and made me more aware…about the children's personal lives.*

3. The colours and textures Painted the Soul; addressing areas of ownership and engagement.

3.1 The Effects of Applied Drama on Self- Confidence.

One of the areas of particular interest to me was investigating how engagement in the workshops could impact on the participants with regards to their personal levels of self - confidence. Educators are renowned for being confident within their own classroom milieu, where other adults do not observe them, but instead they have a receptive child 'audience', for which they are trained and find less intimidating.

Many of the participants reported that their self-confidence was boosted and enhanced through the applied drama workshops. Most of this confidence was in relation to their responses within the drama workshops with their peers, more than in the classroom, where most felt that they had acquired adequate levels of self -confidence. I had anticipated this outcome, as educators are taught self-confidence strategies for the classroom and acquire confidence through years of experience within the classroom environment, whereas they may feel more vulnerable when having to 'perform' or externalise their feelings in front of their peers, which is a less common facet of their professional portfolio. Educators generally feel safe in the classroom environment, which they perceive as their own space, often feeling territorial about being the leader in this domain, whilst in front of peers, they may feel that they are more under scrutiny or are being assessed, hence putting on a more restrained professional profile.

This was clearly illustrated by these participants who reportedly felt that they felt more confident and less inhibited amongst their colleagues subsequent to the workshop interactions.

SR   *I am generally confident in my class…It was more in front of the staff that I gained additional confidence.*

A   *It has helped me with the staff. I didn't feel silly at the end of the sessions. We were in it together and we could let our hair down and still be professional in other forums. I learnt to be less shy with the group and felt more at ease. It even released the tension in my neck… we looked forward to the sessions and went home feeling energised. It was amazing.*

One participant felt that the workshops developed her self-confidence and encouraged everyone to open out and be more transparent and less inhibited about their inner selves, instead of putting on a professional façade. She furthermore reported that due to the participants signing a confidentiality clause, she sensed an element of protection in the workshops with regards to disclosing facets of her self to the group.

G   *I think that my self-confidence was strengthened…Everyone was confiding his or her personal stuff, so it made me feel normal. I felt that I opened out and that I trusted the situation because of the confidentiality. I learnt not to feel as judged and was less inhibited.*

Due to the sense of intimacy within the workshop context, a participant felt that this enhanced her confidence around personal disclosure.

SR   *The intimacy meant we felt confident enough to share personal things.*

One participant felt that the workshops were non-threatening and accommodating. She felt accepted both in terms of her physical size, as well as her barrier to communication. This boosted her self-confidence.

SM *We all had to talk and not sit out, so it developed all of us and for me in my sharing more comfortably in English, too. We learnt how to address each other and not exclude anyone. I developed confidence in the drama, as I didn't feel limited by my size. It was accommodated.*

One participant, being the only man, reportedly had reservations about how he would feel in the series of workshops with woman colleagues only. Working within the workshop environment reportedly broke down his preconceived ideas and the barriers, which he had created. Thus his professional relationships with his female colleagues were enhanced.

C *My self-confidence was boosted... I was the thorn amongst the roses, as the only man. So initially I was shy, but it enhanced my relationship with my colleagues.*

Confidence was enhanced not only within the participants' relationships with their colleagues, but reportedly also altered the participants' relationships with their learners and regarding personal teaching styles.

SM *I have more confidence to tell a story in class now, as I now use objects that I learnt about in the workshops to better engage their attention. Beforehand I was disappointed and frustrated because my learners were not engaged in the story. Now they are.*

L *I have that type of relationship with my class. We can all act crazy together. It reinforced my confidence in the class situation, though, as the techniques enhanced confidence through the various activities.*

J *My confidence in myself as a teacher has developed... The drama workshops bring that out in one – to analyse one's role with these children and to see oneself for what one is. I do find that I have now been able to act and dance with my learners.*

SR aptly concluded that *"We worked as a team and so nothing was threatening. We did become more confident because we were trained and encouraged and affirmed."*

Self-confidence is a vital trait for one within the work environment. Within a special needs' school it is essential, as one is interacting with departmental officials, colleagues, parents, welfare agencies, the community, funders, the media and the children. I felt that it was an exceptionally positive outcome of the workshops that the participants' self-confidence was boosted and that it enhanced them both personally and professionally. I, too, felt that in conducting the workshops, that my own confidence regarding facilitating such workshops was enhanced.

3.2 Applied Drama as a catalyst for developing relationships.

The applied drama workshop process reportedly impacted on the relationships between the participants. Some of these relationships were strengthened, while for others it reinforced existing positive or negative perceptions about colleagues.

G   *My relationships altered in positive ways. It helped me to have a better understanding of others in the group...I was able to feel empathy about someone sharing his or her childhood experiences and feelings with me. I learnt more about their different characters, as activities revealed aspects of the individuals that I didn't know before. I became more patient. We got to know each other more intimately and the confidentiality contract we signed helped all of this.*

SR   *My perceptions of others in the group altered... It was a rough time for me, as we had just moved house and I was really stressing...And what came out of sharing in that session was that we began to chat about it, which was really good.*

L   *I think it was very intimate. We shared a lot of things and it was confidential. Now even today, I feel freer to go and talk to one of the ladies from the drama group, than those who did not participate.*

The workshops seemed to enhance the participants' empathy towards one another, which was reflected in some the participants' responses.

C   *It makes me reminisce now on my session with SN, re my brother abusing alcohol, and her with her problem with her vision. She had to have surgery on her eyes. It made me see her differently. We encouraged each other not to throw in the towel. It was a profound moment… It was real life and I found it very emotional. Getting to know the group better was mind-boggling.*

L   *We had a lot of empathy with D. due to all her problems. I even got involved in counselling her and her family. She took me into her confidence with all her problems, and this was developed through the intimacy of our drama sessions.*

The workshops reportedly lead to participants sharing confidences with one another, more so than in other situations in the work environments.

L   *SN. opened up a lot about little things. She opened up to me about confidential things about her marriage. I disclosed stuff, so she felt she could too. We put down our barriers of 'professional pride.' SM. also opened up about her hurts and little things that were bothering her.*

SM *It developed my relationship with L. She shared some confidences with me about marriage and that helped me in my marriage. I learnt to share, as we don't have time to sit and chat in the same intimate way in the staffroom.*

The workshops became a forum in which participants learnt from one another and strengthened bonds between various cultural groups.

SM   *I learnt from the other educators in our drama group. I learnt that we had some common ground…but that people from different cultures look at things differently. The workshops helped me to see this and helped me to heal and not take things so personally. I also learnt to communicate better…*

The workshops also reinforced existing friendships at the school.

J   *Because A. and I work well together, I still related best to her. It didn't alter my perception of some of the people; even if they showed themselves in a different light. I felt I had already developed my opinions about my colleagues. But my perception of E. altered because I could better see that she was able to be a team worker.*

Relationships with me as the facilitator were strengthened through the workshops. This was possibly due to the fact that the workshops gave us a forum in which to interact in a different medium where I was not seen as the principal of the school, but rather as the group facilitator. When the group engaged in personal dialogue, I joined in and participated in all the activities. This became a bridge, which linked us and enabled us to work more closely and intimately together than is done in other professional forums such as staff meetings.

J   *I already felt I knew you – you have a lot of energy that influences us in a very positive way. It was refreshing seeing people with lack of inhibition and I really enjoyed it. It was lovely sharing with everything…I learnt to be less inhibited doing role-play in the group. It was a journey together… It has given me that kind of confidence now to be a Master of Ceremonies or do a prayer in front of a school function. These are things I could not easily do before the drama work.*

L   *I think there's a better understanding between you and me since the drama sessions. The drama came at the right time for lots of us and we could vent our emotions. We kept it confidential and we felt rejuvenated through it.*

C   *It enhanced my relationship with you as the principal. In the sessions you were not like a principal. We were bubbly and joyful and there was some latitude and freedom from our professional roles as educators. I found that this made you feel more accessible and I learnt more about you. I saw that you were down to earth. With the activity about trading qualities and you were the shopkeeper and we came to barter. This enhanced my relationship with you. I found it a very healing experience…. I learnt that you were non –threatening and approachable.*

SR *We got to know you better – we learnt more about you – you spoke about your sister and about your home. We felt it was very comfortable and it was very well organised, too. We loved all the goodies [expressive materials] that you brought to each session... We went wild playing and it was relaxing. It wasn't like 'work' – it was like play therapy; relaxing, laughing and socialising. It was so good to have various activities and it can make class teaching more interesting – thank you!*

A   *We already respected you, so we were able to entrust ourselves to the process and to learn the strategies from you. I feel as though we developed a strong bond with you in the sessions…*

SM *You taught me as a leader to be able to take off your cap and be one of the people. Because of you being the principal, I was able to have the 'open door' policy*

and I learnt this more – through the workshops, that I can turn to you with my problems. You are able to see the good heart in everyone and I learnt this invaluable lesson. There was only one man in the workshops but you involved him and respected him. You showed no gender discrimination. Your style of workshop inspired me. I also feel that I got to know you better as a person.

3.3 Soul Reflections through Journalling.

Sutherland (2007) asserts that journal writing in the drama context may be beneficial, as the narrative component of journalling is a means to link drama with research. By reflecting on the practical components through journalling, it becomes "…a validation and acknowledgement of their own situated knowledge." (2007:111).

Journalling can be seen as a means to address "…the binaries between theory and practice, mind and body, subjective and objective, self and other, inner and outer worlds, fiction and non-fiction" (2007:112).

Sutherland (2007) discusses Cherry's (1999) argument that through journalling, meaning can be created from the action research, making a compelling medium through which to integrate experiences with emotions and thoughts. Through reflection, thoughts can be provoked, which can lead to change. One takes on the role of participant-observer when journalling, as one observes the self and others' through the process.

My own experiences of journalling have validated this argument. Through journalling intensively as a drama student, it encouraged me to reflect more deeply, to analyse more

fully and to think more provocatively. It became a vehicle through which I was able to integrate the actual engagement with my emotions and my responses. Sometimes one is so engaged in a process that one only assimilates the finer details in relation to how it impacted on the self after the event.

Sutherland (2007) states that participants are able to navigate their way through their initial feelings of anxiety through journalling, thus coming into touch with their personal landscapes. She cites Schőn (1983), who argues that "…uncertainty, uniqueness, instability and value conflict" are central characteristics of professional practice which need to be reflected on and incorporated into professional learning programmes (Schőn 1983:42)".

By confronting the self through journalling, it may lead to a sense of vulnerability, but it can facilitate one relating to the self and one's inner and outer worlds more reflectively. Change is often uncomfortable, but journalling can be a means by which one can challenge these sensations constructively. In this way, one is able to address issues and work towards shifting inaccurate perceptions or judgements, rather than leaving these emotions unresolved.

Sutherland (2007) adds, "The complexities of writing personally, reflectively and critically involve a mixed genre, multi-voice approach…" Journalling also has what Bleakley argues, permanence about it, which can be lost in "… the spontaneity and immediacy of expression…" (2000:13 in Sutherland, 2007).

Journalling offers the participant the opportunity to review the self with a critical, yet anonymous voice. It validates one's personal voice and one's perceptions through one's reflective dialogue with the self. Through writing, one is better able to construct one's subjective feelings. One can prevent exposing aspects of the inner self to an outside audience. This was the case with the participants in the research project, who felt that the confidentiality of their journalling allowed them to open their thoughts more freely and to take ownership of their inner voices.

Some thought-provoking responses resulted from the journals, which each participant kept. These journals were a significant part of the process, as journalling after each workshop session encouraged the participants to reflect on the process and on ways in which the workshop had impacted on them from both a personal perspective and with regards to their professional development, understanding their learners and their teaching methodology.

SM   *It helped me to learn about the learners. I wrote down what I observed and I became aware that the visualisation relaxed the children...It also helped me from a personal perspective, as it made me aware about changes in my life, which better equipped me to reach acceptance.*

SR   *In writing in my journal, it highlighted activities for me... The circle activities had a calming effect and created a bond with the staff. When we made the two masks, it wasn't comfortable sharing emotions...I noticed that it was easier for others to share and I reflected on this in my journal.*

L   *After the session I would reflect and write about it in my own time... I wrote about how using imagination in the drama sessions made me think about aspects of my childhood... The activity 'Blind man walks' made me reflect about being in control when helping a blind person... It made me realise how they have to trust others completely...and to appreciate all my senses...*

I also had a chance to find closure on a close friendship. She had a stroke and became paralysed... It broke my heart. I made peace writing her a letter. It was

an emotional time in my life and I cried a lot... I was having marital problems too...and the drama sessions helped me to deal with facing these problems.

I enjoyed making the first mask. It reminded me of my childhood; my family shaping my life and being in control of everything... Then the growing up process, reflected in the second mask – how you mature and all the input is moulded into one's life. You make choices and must live with that... You learn to appreciate the little things in life, to learn to listen, when to keep quiet and when to walk away... I feel I understand the universe better and I try not to disturb the natural flow of things and to work hard and to adopt a mature outlook.

We talked about negative energy in a workshop. In my journal I said goodbye to my past and aspects of my childhood...I want to put the past behind me and I'm positive that the future holds many surprises, so I'm taking a day at a time.

C   *It gave me insight and an opportunity to go through all we had experienced in the sessions. It helped me to reflect ...and to prepare for the hardships and to value the positives. It was reinforced and cemented through my journal.*

G   *I learnt that self-expression is good for one through writing and reflecting. It helped me to put things into perspective.*

Sutherland concludes that journalling has the propensity to "become the catalyst for the development of critical reflection and creativity". (2007:120). Sutherland reflects on Barrett (2000 a), who asserts that the power of journalling occurs due to the fact that it marries two forces – one of critiquing and one of creativity. I believe that this statement emblemises the prowess and essence of journalling; that it is in a sense a creative science.

3.4 Analysis of Painting the Soul

When interviewing the participating educators about their views and responses to the Applied Drama workshops using Action Research, it became evident that this had been a powerful medium for them, due to their being actively engaged. This engagement led to

them taking a deliberate and committed ownership of their personal and professional development.

Action Research was used not only in the workshops but also in the classrooms. The educators who were part of the project implemented the various strategies in their classes to their learners. In this way it brought a new energy into their methodology and heightened perceptions concerning their learners. It created a new awareness for the educators, which not only boosted their confidence through their utilisation of the applied drama methodology in their classes, as discussed in this chapter, but through them personally implementing the strategies, instilled in them a sense of accountability for inculcating the positive changes. It provided opportunities for group work, the sharing of personal emotions and ideas, and the fostering of closer relationships. In this way personal and professional development occurred, classroom practice was rejuvenated and learners benefited directly.

Through the systematic applied drama process, application in the classrooms, reflections, journalling, and the data collection by means of interviews, the practical process reportedly lead to positive outcomes in numerous areas.

Efficacy demonstrations were used to establish changes experienced by the participants. This was reinforced by the fact that change was found in all of the participants who were interviewed, thus giving credibility to the research; that is that both their learners and themselves experienced positive benefits, due to the inculcation of applied drama into the aforementioned school's classroom programme.

Efficacy was further reinforced by interviewing each participant separately, using the same questionnaire, thus ensuring confidentiality and ensuring uncontamination of data. Analysis was taken from the interviews, which were taped and transcribed verbatim.

I had to generalise efficacy conclusions with the group of participants, as each participant was seen as unique within the humanistic paradigm. Thus a hypothesis from a Humanistic stance could only have goals with more generalised, rather than exclusively isolated conclusions.

The following discussion will incorporate the various results and the analysis.

The participants enthusiastically participated in the series of workshops and were always keen to discover what new experiences they were going to engage in. They reported that they looked forward to the weekly workshops, that they went home recharged and that the following day returned to school revitalised and eager to introduce new ideas into their teaching programme.

Many of the participants initially felt shy, but as the workshops progressed, they reported that they had gained confidence and felt less inhibited.

SR *At first we were a bit shy and didn't know what to expect. But by the third session we were all comfortable and felt free and relaxed. I definitely felt more confident, which was reinforced with you being there as well, and it was fun to socialise.*

Another participant, D responded in the following way.

> *After a heavy day and my problems, the workshops actually relaxed me. We were all smiling and it gave us energy. I would go home and cook my family a nice meal afterwards.*

One participant reported that the workshops taught her what to look out for. It was a form of guidance that made her see things in new ways and enhanced her imagination in her teaching programme.

> *With the drama sessions and you being a psychologist, it taught us what to look out for. It's been an invaluable guidance to make our lessons more interesting, imaginative and meaningful... and to use symbolism in our lessons, too.*

Looking critically at the intervention, it could only achieve general outcomes. This was due to the fact that the participants worked with children of different ages, according to which phase they taught in; viz., Junior Phase, (ages 6 to 11), Intermediate Phase (ages 12 to 16) and Senior Phase (ages 17 to 21) - (ages are approximate and refer to chronological, not mental ages), meaning that different techniques, which were more age and cognitive appropriate for their classes were extrapolated from the workshop content by the participating educators to utilise in the classrooms. Furthermore, none of the classes at the school are homogenous; each being comprised of children with a wide range of heterogeneous disability types. Thus the techniques and the lesson plans used by the participants varied vastly.

Activities such as the puppets were popular with the younger children, activities such as the telephone game were most popular amongst the intermediate classes, while the activities such as the visualisation and the 'Magic Box' made more impact with the older children and adolescents.

4. Completing the Canvas; Summary and Conclusions

All of the participants reported that they felt that they had benefited from the workshops in numerous ways. These included benefits from a personal level, which they had reflected about in their journalling, which offered the opportunity for deeper introspection. The workshops furthermore enhanced their perceptions and helped some of the participants to grapple with difficult personal issues, which they were currently experiencing. These were around issues pertaining to marital or family relationships, illness and sensitive areas of a personal nature.

The participants all reported that they felt that the workshops greatly enhanced their professional development, as the workshops stimulated them and gave them a variety of ideas, combined with fostering their self-confidence, which led them to inculcate new strategies into their teaching programmes. The workshops encouraged the participants to be less inhibited with one another in the workshops and it reduced a certain amount of inhibition in the classroom. This appeared to have created a ripple effect, as it reportedly encouraged some of them to be more interactive and theatrical with their classes and for the learners to subsequently display less inhibited behaviour, leading to more confidence in their responses. It furthermore reportedly enhanced the children's communication skills, both verbally and non-verbally.

The applied drama workshops and the journalling appeared to have directed the educators to become more reflective about their teaching, thus leading to them making alternative

choices, such as in choosing more appropriate teaching methodology, including the use of various sensory media to facilitate the children in being focused.

In relation to using Action Research - it became apparent to me what a reflective cycle emerged. It impacted on the planning, the doing and the reflecting, the reviewing and modifying accordingly towards more specific goals and media, followed by application and further reflection. It became evident to me the way the participating educators unconsciously started to assimilate this process, making modifications to their lessons according to the needs of the special needs' children in their classes. They were better able to tune into the mood and tempo of the group, which could oscillate at any given time. Working with children with special needs requires this type of flexibility and adaptability, as children with a low frustration tolerance respond to triggers more easily, leading to volatile responses. The reflection process seemed to develop the educators towards lesson transformation and even towards levels of personal resiliency.

Some of the participants reported that they were not inhibited in the classrooms, but only in the workshops. They felt that they gained self-confidence in front of their colleagues in the workshops, but that they were generally always comfortable to act and be spontaneous in class. Others felt that it did encourage them to be more playful in the classroom context. One educator felt that through the applied drama workshops, her self-confidence had developed so that she was able to take on the onerous role as Master of Ceremonies at a large school function, a role that she would previously have avoided.

By incorporating many new activities into their teaching programmes, the implementation of applied drama into the school was reportedly found to be exceptionally stimulating. It was rewarding to witness how the participating educators had incorporated an array of new media into their classroom practice, and to witness the enthusiasm of both the participating educators and their classes.

The children clearly looked forward to these lessons and wanted to engage fully in them. They were motivated and the participants reported some groundbreaking paradigm shifts in some of the children in their classes, which they attributed directly to these lessons. These included better communication, participation, concentration, socialisation and improved class discipline, an increase in creativity and imagination and in learner self – esteem, peer-group empathy and confidence.

The workshops forged closer relationships for most of the participants. This was due to the workshops becoming a forum where each participant was invited to share their inner selves via the various media and activities. They reported that they got to know some of the participants better, as the types of dialogue and sharing in the workshops were more intimate than they would have been in a staffroom context.

A few participants felt that it did not bring them closer to the others as they are private and did not want to disclose about themselves. It would appear that their capacity to let down their defenses was inhibited by their professional status and that because they had

special friendships at the school, they did not feel the same need to be as intimate in the group context, as their needs were already met.

When evaluating and analysing the data, cognisance should be taken of the fact that the participants were from differing cultural backgrounds, which may have impacted on the degree to which they opened up or withdrew.

Most respondents reported that it was a powerful means of forging trust and intimacy and that it became a springboard from which many confidences were shared, within the workshop arena, as well as beyond it.

The relationship between the participants and their groups of learners clearly benefited from the workshops, and from the resultant application of these activities into their classes. The participants reported that the process brought out qualities of patience, tolerance and empathy in them, and that they were better able to identify with the personal problems which their learners were experiencing. Most of these problems related to the children's poverty and to associated problems in the home environment. Through the various activities, it had offered the learners a mouthpiece to externalise problems, which in an ordinary class activity were not brought to the fore. One such activity, which proved to be powerful, was the 'Magic Box', while others included the 'Telephone Game' and creating happy or sad facemasks. These activities became a cathartic outlet for the children to externalise concerns that they had been withholding.

This allowed for the educators to address some of these concerns more directly, and to be able to experience more empathy and understanding.

Some of the problems, which the children discussed, were related to issues within the environment, beyond their home. These pertained to problems in obtaining their disability grant or Identity documents. There were clear frustrations for the learners around issues that were beyond their families' control. This saddened the participants who felt that they were unable to proactively intervene as the delays were at the Department of Health and Home Affairs. Due to the poverty index of the children, these problems impacted negatively on their welfare and state of mind. The participants did however report that through the learners being able to share their burdens, it was both cathartic for the learners and forged a closer bond between participating educators and their classes.

The participants all reported that the workshops had created a positive environment for personal and professional growth, and that they developed a stronger relationship with me as the facilitator.

It was reassuring that none of the participants 'dropped out' of the research project programme and participated from the commencement to the closure of the workshops, despite being given the option to terminate their involvement, should they so wish. As busy educators in a demanding professional role, combined with having other commitments, their own children and in some cases taxing home circumstances or

personal issues to deal with, I found it highly commendable and an indicator of the success of the workshops, that they remained enthusiastically committed to the process.

The methodology, which was used in the workshops, offered a wide spectrum of activities for the participants to engage in and learn from. It was beneficial for me to research these techniques from many sources and to utilise them in this forum. I had used many of the activities during my Masters in Applied Drama studies, whilst running workshops with undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, as part of my practical course work. Other techniques had been acquired and assimilated through my participation in workshops conducted by dramatherapists and drama lecturers during the course-work process of study. Many of the techniques had thus been tried and tested. I avoided using techniques, which I had felt had not come across as beneficial, as the university students had always given rich and honest feedback.

I consider that the guidance I received, combined with the knowledge I acquired through my research and literature readings, and the experience, which I gained by practically applying the applied drama techniques in my coursework masters, contributed to the success of the research project and that symbiotically, the research project then further contributed to my development.

 By researching and utilising many techniques, I felt that I developed an intuitive feel with regards to the length of applying any particular technique, and ultimately in making

decisions around which types of activities would support each other within a workshop. In this way I was able to orchestrate the workshops to incorporate both active and passive activities and individual and group activities, for example. Furthermore, I was able to gauge which activities required a deeper sense of trust and solidarity within a group context and thus to initiate these later in the process, and which activities felt safe and uncomplicated enough to incorporate earlier in the process.

There were obviously some activities, which the participants preferred or felt safer engaging in and others, which they felt less comfortable to participate in. They had been made aware at the commencement of the process, though, that feeling any discomfort in the process was in fact a developmental aspect, if one acknowledged it in this way. It was a process, which I facilitated the group to take cognisance of, as part of reflecting on the self, honouring what felt uncomfortable, and realising that these feelings could have a positive component to them. It had been discussed that some feelings could emerge which had the capacity to nudge the individual into addressing areas which they had previously wished to avoid or lay dormant in the subconscious mind, and that this was in itself an empowering part of the workshops, as it facilitated individuals to come to terms with change, inner growth and pain as part of development and liberation from old areas of discomfort.

It was interesting to note that the participants had carte blanche as to which activities to present to their classes. They had the experience to know what would resonate for their classes, given that the age range was from 6-21 years. But furthermore, they obviously

opted to use activities, which had been meaningful and had made a positive impact on themselves during the workshop process.

My recommendations to any facilitator using these techniques with a group would be to ensure that adequate sessions were scheduled and that once weekly was a healthy time frame. The participants would possibly have tired of the process if they had had to have more time allocated than the weekly workshop, due to their many other commitments, and it could have provided them with inadequate time in-between sessions to digest and reflect on what they had experienced, to journal their feelings and to utilise some of the techniques in their lessons. I would also recommend that sufficient workshops be run so that the content can be pitched at an increasingly deeper level. I found that the seven sessions (an introductory workshop followed by six workshops) worked well, although most of the participants intimated that they would have liked more sessions, though a few months later, due to other professional and personal requirements.

 I would recommend that any facilitator that used these techniques had sufficient knowledge of the power of this type of work and had acquired the skills to facilitate the process with a sense of credibility, so as to offer the group a sense of trust. It was imperative to allow the participants time to reflect, to share and to journal, as well as to debrief. De-roling from any role was paramount and ensuring that the participants felt safe and protected after returning to the 'here and now' from the theatrical space, was vital.

I would recommend that the facilitator has a passionate belief in the therapeutic and creative benefits of the applied drama work, so that he or she exudes a positive, exuberant and sincere energy as the springboard from which the process unfolds.

This is the essence of applied dramatherapy. It celebrates and tastes the visceral and diverse components of life and the self through various forms of creative expression. The clients need to feel safe, to enjoy the creative exploration and the empowerment of discovering, exploring and assimilating new terrain, to have reflected on their lives, to have accommodated any personal shifts through this provocative and stimulating journey, to enjoy imparting what they have learnt and assimilated to others, and finally to honour being individuals and sentient beings during the process.

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The above sites were explored from 2006 to 2008 during my Applied Drama studies, research, workshop presentations and while compiling this thesis.

Appendices

Appendix 1 gives an outline of the lesson plans of the workshops that were conducted. This includes a critical evaluation for possible weaknesses and omissions or proposed modifications for the purpose of re-implementation.

Appendix 2 gives an outline of some of the techniques, which were used, in the workshops, the benefits of these activities and the referencing information for easy access to these activities.

Appendix 3 pertains to the questions, which were used in the interview process. My approach to the interviews was to ensure that they were conducted in a conducive and stress-free environment. It was also imperative to allow an adequate lapse of time between the workshops being conducted and the interviews being conducted. This was due to the fact that some of the questions within the interviews pertained to the participants' perceptions about how the workshops had impacted on their professional development and their relationships with their learners, subsequent to their incorporation of drama techniques within the classroom. I wished to investigate four primary tenets in the interviews. These four tenets are elaborated on in Appendix 2.

Appendix 4 is a duplication of the confidentiality document signed by the participants of the research project.

Appendix 1:

Lesson Plans and outline of the Workshops conducted and an analysis of this process.

These lesson plans are given in an abbreviated form. More details for individual activities are supplied in Appendix 2. Each session took one and a half hours from commencement to conclusion.

Session 1

Contract: - The contract was discussed and developed and each participant signed his or her contract in the first session. The group helped to develop a group contract, which was put up at each session as a reminder and a commitment to the process. This was to emphasise confidentiality, group respect and trust.

Ritual: - We stood in a circle and negotiated commitment to the process. We breathed in and out slowly, raising our arms when inhaling and lowering them when exhaling. We bid farewell to the anxieties of the day and the outer space and welcomed the inner space as though a safe, gentle sanctum. Initially the participants found this quite fascinating. It helped them to engage in the present moment and to put other thoughts on hold.

Icebreakers: - The participants enjoyed the icebreakers, laughed and relaxed. It helped to ease anxiety, as the workshops were a new concept to them, which they were not au fait with. In the first session, icebreakers consisted of warming up and releasing tension, as well as from the singular to group identification. This included movement; sideways, backwards, forwards, endeavouring not to collide and showing respect for others. This

was a symbolic activity that connected to the content of the contract. The participants then had to explore the room and touch different surfaces and textures with their eyes open and then shut. This too was a symbolic activity encouraging the participants to embrace and feel totally safe and comfortable within the workspace, which would become the workshop environment for the following seven weeks.

They found kinship working in pairs, as one participant had to take the lead, the other follow and then switch roles. Different dynamics from singular to partner movement was noticed. They also clearly enjoyed exploring the room and feeling different textures.

Circle Activities seated in a circle: - The participants worked in pairs. Being the first session, they had to introduce themselves to the person on their left. E.g. I am…. And I enjoy…. They then shared something in the 'now' – e.g. "I am tired. It's been a hard day". The objective was to gain immediate empathy/support/understanding from a partner, and to develop a sense of camaraderie between participants.

Shell as a symbolic object: - This was an object provided for the group to each have a turn to hold, touch, caress and describe its significance, before passing it to the person on the left. It evoked some amazing responses, some being tabled below.

JM – She said that it was a rich life form.

GVW – She said the exterior was rough and the interior soft and added the interpretation, "Don't judge people by their exterior."

SN – who is visually impaired, said that she didn't like the rough shape and texture.

CM – said it was symbolic for him as "Life offers you curved balls."

SR – it evoked powerful memories of loved ones who had taken her to the beach and were now deceased.

Puppets: - This was an activity in pairs. My partner shared that she had just been diagnosed with diabetes. I had not known this before, as she had not disclosed it at school. She said that it was great to get it off her chest and that she is still working through the acceptance. As there were an odd number in the group that day, I was part of a pair, so was not able to hear what all the other pairs had shared. However, my partner found it a very revealing and cathartic moment for her.

Visualisation: - This activity took place to soothing music. Participants could lie down or sit. They were encouraged to visualise a pleasant place that evoked them, e.g. the beach, mountains, next to a stream, a safe place. The participants loved this exercise and afterwards said that they would have liked it to be even longer and to be able to literally fall asleep and totally relax!

Bear Hugs: - They named the bear Honey Bear and loved talking to him, hugging him and 'sharing'. J.M commented that she needed to be loved and hugged that day. Ending each session with a bear hug was a way of offering ritual and solace for the participants and myself. They were often tired after a day of relentless 'giving' to the children and hence enjoyed the comfort offered to them.

Our Reflections: - I felt as though it was a wonderful session. The group was really participative. There were nine present. LE had bronchitis and was absent. I felt that a great deal came out of the first session. They all had a turn to reflect at the end of the session and it had been poignant and evocative for them. They voiced feeling 'safe' and DvW was glad that one didn't have to disclose what one didn't want to. AA said she'd learnt a lot of ideas to use in class. EL said that she would include visualisation as "The kids sometimes got hyped up and it was a wonderful exercise to calm them". They said that they were keen to implement some of the ideas immediately.

Ritual: - We closed with the ritual of saying farewell to the inner space and welcoming the outer space.

Session 2:

Unfortunately there were a few apologies. AA had to go to a Union meeting as the school representative. DvW and JM were both ill and GVW had urgent private affairs. There were six in the group. Although several of the staff was absent, a worthwhile session took place. We reinforced information for LE who had been ill the first session.

Ritual: - As for the previous week.

Icebreaker exercise – 'Find the same hands': - With eyes shut and no talking, the participants had to move about and feel others' hands and then try to guess whose hands they'd touched. They enjoyed this exercise and reported that they felt that it could

enhance the children's tactile sensory modality. They felt that it was also an exercise, which broke down barriers and had the same type of symbolism as holding or shaking hands as a form of mutual respect.

Reflections: - We spent time reflecting from the previous session. Some participants reported that they were very excited and had already started using activities in the classroom. Others seemed shy to give feedback.

Identity through touch: - I provided different objects with the objective of the various stimuli evoking the participants in different ways - through memory or through various sensory modalities such as tactile, olfactory, auditory or visual. They found this meaningful and it gave me a deeper insight into them as individuals and to one another, too.

SR – She chose the packet of flower seeds as they had recently moved house. She reported that the garden still needed to be established and was a mud bath, which she said was exasperating. She found that the flower seeds offered her hope.

SN – She chose the pair of glasses because of her visual impairment, which she reported had lead her to having to accept her disability as a blessing rather than a curse. We honoured SN's response but I felt that she was projecting her pain by using projection. She was not at a stage to explore this deeper so early in the process.

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SEM – She chose a silver crucifix, as she needed religious strength to deal with the death of her niece. She was also dealing with her own grief at discovering that she was diagnosed with diabetes. The group respected her need for a spiritual symbol.

EL – She chose the blowing bubbles, which she blew, as she said that she needed to 'lighten up' and be more playful. This was a good revelation on her part, as being the youngest in the group, she needed space for playfulness as was inclined to be too serious.

LE – She related to her close friend having a stroke. She found an object, which symbolised their friendship; beads as in 'worry beads' that she could play with to alleviate her pain.

CM – He chose a candleholder with an elephant design on it. It reminded him of a place he wanted to visit in India on a pilgrimage to honour his Moslem religion. This gave the group deeper insight into CM's spiritual side.

Group Reflections: - The group felt that they were beginning to gel together. Parts of the 'self' started to emerge, showing a development of trust and a sharing at a deeper level than I had witnessed in the first session, or in other group situations with them.

Imaginary Ball: - The group sat in the circle and one at a time could throw an imaginary ball. This was fun and offered light relief after the intensity of the previous activity. The ball could alter in shape, size and weight. The participants started to relax more and to

become more imaginative, playful and innovative. The activity also had as a goal the symbolism of throwing away any uncomfortable issues, whether big, small, light or heavy.

Shake it out:- Movement to music to shake out and eliminate any negative emotions symbolically thrown away in the previous activity. The participants found this activity interesting and responded positively.

Reflections: - The participants shared aspects that were pertinent to them and reported that they felt that the sessions were leading them to levels of introspection and 'soul-searching.' which they had not expected.

Visualisation:- " Close your eyes and lie down, or relax. Visualise that you are floating gently on a cloud, and just surrender yourself to the gentle movement in a soft breeze." They listened to Vivaldi music and were so relaxed that some of them reported nearly falling asleep and did not want it to end!

Ritual: - Closure ritual as for the previous week.

Session 3:

Only one participant was absent. CM had developed pneumonia and we only discovered later how very ill he had been.

Ritual: - As for the previous week, so as to instill some security by offering routine.

Icebreakers - Movement: - The participants enjoyed movement around/over/under obstacles and then in a free space avoiding obstacles so as to feel connected to figure and ground types of space. It brought out the 'child' in all of us and there was much laughter.

Blind Man Walks: - 'Follow my sound' – Participants worked in pairs and then swapped roles, so that each had a turn to be in control and lead by making a sound, and to follow the sound in the role as the blind persona. Some, like LE, reported that she found it difficult to relinquish control and to utterly trust. (She was experiencing marital separation at the time, and so needed to feel that she was empowered. She found this emotion interesting and revealing.)

People Puppets: - Working in pairs, one participant pretended to hold the other's puppet strings and to manoeuvre them. The puppet obediently had to move limbs, neck and head accordingly. The participants reflected how powerful it had felt was to share, control and then relinquish control and totally entrust oneself to one's partner. They felt that it was a meaningful activity to learn more about the self and others. They also commented that it was beneficial regarding their learners' body image and crossing the midline.

Telephone in the Centre of the circle: - The participants had to dial a fictitious or real number and reflect on what they would like to say. They then redialed the number and verbalised what they wished to impart to the significant other that had hurt or upset them.

This gave them an opportunity to externalise any blocked up emotions and to use confrontation as a tool. They could raise their voice or slam the phone down to vent feelings. They were relatively controlled. However, I felt that even if only a peripheral or secondary issue was raised, any real issue could have been internally acted out. It seemed particularly powerful for LE. I reflected that this activity was challenging and emotive and that it would possibly have been more beneficial later in the process.

Shake it out: - The participants could stand and shake out any pent up energy through their fingers and toes and by moving their necks and shoulders from side to side.

Magic Box: - This activity gave the participants an opportunity to place painful emotions or thoughts / or give thanks for good things into the box, which was placed in the centre of the circle. It was an emotional experience for DvW and LE, who both found the activity, gave them an opportunity to offload inner pain that they were experiencing.

Reflections and Passing on a blessing or sage advice: - Seated in a circle, each person passed on a blessing or advice to the person on their right. This exercise was powerful and evocative with people's inner thoughts emerging, E.g. LE's dialogue with EL. She tried to offer advice about listening better. It was courageously accepted, but interestingly antagonised a few participants who shared this in the interview process. (That is the nature of group work. It accommodates emotions to flow, but respects that colleagues aren't always in agreement with one another's motives or actions.)

Visualisation: - 'Close your eyes, lie down or sit comfortably without crossing arms or legs. Visualise that you are confronting the significant other whom you had confronted on the telephone. Then visualise a golden impenetrable light around you that can protect and comfort you.' They found this activity peaceful and reassuring.

Ritual:- Closure as per the previous week.

Session 4:

I was concerned about the health of the participants and reflected if the emotional externalisation during the sessions could also impact on their health. Six members were present. CM still had pneumonia, DVW had bronchitis & SEM was in hospital having her diabetes monitored.

Ritual: - Opening ritual as previously.

Icebreakers:- I wrote in my journal, "They are getting more mellow each session. I love their responses!" The goal was to warm up and release anxiety. (Incorporated activities were to energise, relax and to develop sensory awareness and trust.) Activities included movement at different tempos, followed by giant and tiny steps, moving with energy and then with fatigue. This was followed in twos, using the same contrasts, so that sharing and teamwork were developed.

Transforming a real object: - The participants sat in a circle. A variety of objects were brought for the participants to choose from, e.g. a hat, a stick, a ball of string, a teacup etc. Each person had to choose an object, transform it into something else and pass it to the person on his or her left. They battled with this activity and could not all symbolise. They remained fairly concrete and altered their object into something as similar in shape to the original as possible. E.g. AA turned a lipstick into a blusher stick and JM a frame into a book. I reflected that this activity would be challenging to attempt with children with special needs, who feel safest when confronted by the familiar. I also reflected that this activity would have possibly had better outcomes if it had been used later in the process when the participants' sense of freedom and imagination was further extended.

Pass the facial expression: - Each person had the opportunity to cover his or her face with hands and to create a mask. They then had to turn their head and in pantomime reveal the mask to the next person. The participants loved this activity and enjoyed pulling tongues and making strange facial expressions, even those that are more inhibited and dignified, I noted in my journal. The activity brought laughter and light relief. The participants expressed their desire to use this activity in class, as the surprise value and opportunity to pull faces would undoubtedly appeal to learners with special needs.

Fabrics: - A range of colourful fabrics was provided for dressing up and taking on a persona. This was to facilitate the participants in establishing a role. The sensory aspects of the fabrics encouraged the participants to express and explore their feelings and taking on a role offered them the dramatic distance to be less reserved and more expressive. The

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participants relished this activity and said that their classes also loved dressing up. Cultural facets also emerged – e.g. JM converted her fabric into a sari. They also had colour preferences, which was interesting.

LE – She dressed up in a lilac sarong, revealing her glamorous persona.

GVW – She was a king dressed in orange. This reflected her senior position at the school.

SR – She wore a yellow headdress, depicting that she was a thinker.

AA – She chose her favourite colour, pink, wrapped as a skirt to express her femininity.

SN – She chose yellow; a colour she said she could more easily see. She made it into a diaper. She generally liked to elicit attention, possibly due to a need for acceptance.

EL – She made her fabric into a sea green mini skirt and said she enjoyed being youthful.

Collage: - Albeit only 15 minutes long, they got stuck in and so enjoyed this activity, not only the making of the collage, but the sharing about themselves. Due to time constraints, the group stuck to quite literal themes, rather than revealing any great depth, but more importantly, it was a release and an opportunity for cathartic expression. They also loved talking about themselves and sharing about their likes and dislikes with the group. They wanted to keep their pictures and take them home, which revealed how significant the activity was for them. I reflected that more time could have been more beneficial, but that a shorter activity even had benefits. I also reflected how much easier it is to talk about ones self than about something one is not familiar with.

Visualisation: - The participants always loved this activity, as it relaxed them and they enjoyed the sensory dimension. They had to visualise that they were in a garden where

they felt safe. The objective was to relinquish a sense of being on guard, and to rather focus on sensory odours and sounds in the garden. They reflected afterwards that their classes would enjoy this activity, too.

Bear Hugs: - They got attached to Honey Bear, and enjoyed the tactile comfort of a farewell teddy bear hug. It made me aware of how important physical contact is and that so often people are fearful of touch, because of so many other implications, so much so, that society becomes tactile defensive and loses the opportunity for gratification from this normal construct.

Ritual: - Closure as for the previous week.

Session 5:

Six participants were present. CM made a good recovery and was back. EL and DVW had bronchitis and SEM's diabetes was still being controlled. I wrote in my journal,
 " The group is increasingly enjoying the icebreakers. They have gained confidence, relax more, are playful and laugh a lot. They are also far less inhibited in front of each other. They enjoyed making sounds and actions in a circle. We were in stitches!"

Ritual: - JM lead the ritual and we did a symbolic Hindu action with hands folded as in prayer, then touching the face, while moving the left leg to the side, then touching the ground. I had asked the week before if someone would like to introduce a ritual that could symbolise his or her culture and JM had volunteered. SN explained that it was a

way of asking God to bless the earth and give bountifully. The group enjoyed the activity. As they were gaining more confidence, I had felt that it would be empowering for participants to contribute diverse activities and lead some activities.

Icebreakers: - Exercises included warm- ups and activities to release tension, to energise and relax, with a focus on sensory awareness and developing trust.

      i)   This included movement at different tempos; fast, slow, backwards, forwards, with trepidation, then confidence.

      ii)   This was a circle activity, seated on the ground (if possible). One started a sound and others imitated. A sound and a motion, then a sound, a motion and a facial expression followed this. This was followed by a sound, a facial expression and a series of motions. It created laughter and was light hearted, yet underneath was an exercise which could enhance concentration and sequence. They reported that the children's concentration and perceptions could be developed through these types of activities.

Nametags: - The participants greatly enjoyed this activity. It required time and effort to decorate their names. The importance of one's name and identity was reinforced. Reflecting in my journal, I felt that this activity should have been introduced in the first session as a means of establishing each individual's identity at he beginning of the process. However, as it was introduced later, they were less inhibited which possibly lead them to embellish and decorate their names more elaborately. I also reflected on how

educators always oversee their classes creating things and how in such instances they enjoyed touching base with he child in themselves.

Pass the substance: - Once again the participants found this to be a light-hearted and playful activity. They preferred to make and pass something 'nice' like hot muffins, sticky chocolate etc. They enjoyed the actions and accompanying facial expressions. I reflected on how participants showed professional respect for one another and that 'ugly' substances weren't passed. Possibly an adolescent male group might have responded differently, I thought.

Person in your life: - The participants found this activity challenging; working in pairs and looking at 'problem areas' that others see in them. In pairs one had to take on the role of someone else in one's life that was then criticising ones' self to the other listening person. SN commented that she used a 'problem' that her son criticises her about, so it wasn't painful, but that it would be more painful if it were a problem that she wasn't aware of. They commented that it helped to contextualise and objectify things seeing themselves through another's eyes. (I didn't discuss this activity in appendix 2, as in my reflections, I'd concluded that this activity was possibly too abstract to use in the special needs school milieu, as the participants initially found the concept quite challenging.)

Storytelling: - This activity was chosen to illustrate how a story can be used and dramatised to illustrate universal themes. I relayed a story with a genre, which depicted personal struggles, poverty, illness, change and betrayal. The group thoroughly enjoyed

enacting the story, dressing in the fabrics provided to illustrate their roles, or an aspect of the story.

JM – She wore green fabric to represent when the situation was 'good' before the family breakdown.

CM – He represented the sick child.

SN – She chose to be Joseph, the father's 'girlfriend'.

AA – She chose to be Maria, the depressed mother.

In my journal I reflected that "They all 'came to life' and enjoyed acting the various roles."

Group Statue - (Sculpture):- The participants formed a connected statue and froze to represent the above story. This was a new experience and one, which they reflected, made an impact on them. I reflected that it would have been more powerful if I had taken a photograph of them in the connected statue format. This would be my recommendation, as well as with regards to class work, which incorporated a frozen statue format.

De-Roling: - The participants bid farewell to the roles they had taken on and welcomed back their own personas**.**

Reflections: - The participants loved the session and reported that they felt that they were learning a lot and that they were feeling increasingly comfortable and confident. SN said

that it was assisting her in dealing with her father's death, which she had not previously processed. And LE reflected that it had assisted her to deal with her recent marital break down and to opt for counselling intervention.

Journalling: - The group was reminded that the journaling was a powerful way to reflect on each session.

Ritual: - As previously.

Session 6:

All present and well again after various illnesses. I wrote "Yey" in my journal.

Ritual: - We had a pleasurable time, with the incorporation of traditional African music and dancing. SEM took the lead and particularly enjoyed it. They also enjoyed linking up and moving together, as well as using scarves, which led to an extension of the body and allowed for more freedom of expression. They allowed themselves to explore movement and expression with the use of the scarves and inhibitions were dropped.

Icebreakers: - Warming up and releasing anxiety activities. These activities were aimed at encouraging relaxation, to energise, to enhance sensory awareness, as well as to cement a sense of group solidarity. The group moved in circles, then in a straight line to the left and the right, linking arms. Scarves were used to enhance movement, which they particularly enjoyed.

Self-Masks: - Each participant was asked to create two masks. They spent quite some time creating their masks and were clearly engrossed. The masks illustrated a before and an after, E.g. Youth and Adult.

LE – She illustrated before separation from husband and then her 'new me'.

JM – She created horns to depict the naïve experimentation of youth, and then as an adult without the horns, knowing more clearly what her choices were.

CM – He illustrated his restricted childhood, then his independence as an adult.

EL – Her two masks were used to reflect two different moods; fear and excitement regarding her overseas travels scheduled for the following year.

GVW – She illustrated the freedom of childhood and the responsibility of adulthood.

SEM – Her masks were as above, but with an emphasis on liking who she was now, due to feeling more empowered as an adult.

DVW, AA and SN – Their two masks reflected a celebration of both childhood and adulthood.

SR – Her masks reflected her sadness before and then sheer joy after falling pregnant with fertility treatment.

De-Roling: - The participants bid farewell to the roles by placing their two masks into a basket, after each spoke to the mask personas from the self, what they liked, related to and disliked about that persona.

Shake it out: - After the emotional sharing of the two masks exercise, we did a shaking- it- all -out exercise. Here everyone stood up and shook out any tensions through their

fingers and arms, their necks and shoulders, as well as through their legs and feet.

Newspapers: - Participants could scrunch up the paper, jump on it, tear it, as well as throw it. They were encouraged to add sound to the activity by shouting out sounds. They reflected that it was a cathartic exercise for externalising inner frustrations and felt that the children would relish this type of activity! They said that they were able to see through their children's eyes, as they enjoyed the freedom to make a mess and a noise. They reflected how children are often expected to be quiet and cooperative, and that supervised noisy activity has its benefits.

Visualisation: - The participants could create their own visiualisation which included relaxing and breathing with eyes shut to centre themselves.

Reflections: - The participants were asked if the session had been empowering and how it made them feel. They reflected that it had been a 'fun session', and though tired at the commencement, that they felt energised and refreshed to tackle the remainder of the day, including cooking an extra nice meal for her family, one participant remarked jovially! They also said that the two-mask exercise had been powerful and they wanted to write in their journals about reflecting on their lives in the tow states they had depicted.

Ritual: - The closure ritual was in Zulu dance form again, as per the commencement of the session, but this time was a gentler rendition.

Session 7

SN was ill. Nine participants were present.

Ritual: - We reverted to the original ritual, as I wished to ground the participants, as this was the final session.

Icebreakers: - Movement with scarves and music was initiated. The participants had become far more innovative, playful and interactive. More choice was offered and I initiated less structure. This was to encourage the participants to be more independent, as they had become more empowered during the process over several weeks.

Eating in Mime: - This activity was perceived to be great fun, allowing for the use of imagination, including imaginary messy, hot and sticky food. The participants reflected that their classes would enjoy this activity, as it would trigger not only their imagination, but would encourage them to guess what others in the group were 'eating', e.g. a banana or an apple. It was thus seen as an activity that could engender group participation, camaraderie and jollity.

Drawing with the Non-Dominant hand: - Once again the participants found it to be a playful activity, as well as a challenge as one has less control with one's non dominant hand. They reflected that it prevented them feeling that they could not draw, if not artistic, as they all felt equally disadvantaged. For this reason they felt that it would be an exercise which could benefit their learners, particularly those who were inhibited to draw.

Then drawing with the dominant hand and eyes shut: - The participants found that they had no option but to 'flow with the process'. They enjoyed not trying to be perfectionists by relinquishing control. They reiterated that it would be beneficial for their classes for the same reasons.

Spectrograms: - This activity was perceived to be enormous fun by the participants, who had to create their 'own story', using toy cars, animals etc. to illustrate a story about something which they needed to address in relation to others. They enjoyed being playful and were seated on the carpet. Even though the activity was perceived as playful, they were addressing serious issues. However, because it was created in miniature, with everyone involved, it brought all their problems to the fore, in a safe non-threatening way. They willingly shared their stories. I reflected that the participants far more readily shared matters about their inner selves than previously. They felt that the children would enjoy illustrating stories in this same way as it could concretise various issues.

Magic Shop: - The participants found this activity thought provoking. Instead of buying food or goods from the shop, they were buying human qualities. It was a surprisingly powerful activity, which shifted perceptions for several participants. They reflected on this, both in their journals and in the interviews. It gave the participants the opportunity to trade different qualities, and so reflect on what they perceived to be their strengths, limitations or deficits.

Reflections: - The participants' gave feedback on the sessions and on the lessons they had given.

AA – She said that the class had done the 'happy and sad faces on paper plates' activity and through this she had learnt about their personal issues, which then heightened her levels of empathy. With regards to the Magic Box activity, she reflected that she had learnt the children's likes and dislikes. She liked incorporating music in the visualisation, e.g. 'We are at the beach'. The learners took the role from her, copying and imitating with positive outcomes. She also learnt that it is' okay' to act silly in the icebreakers and that it made the group feel closer.

LE – She discovered about a learner who slept on the floor, as no mattress via the drama in class. She was able to feel more empathy and to look for a resolution. She reflected that she had learnt a great deal about herself, her learners and her colleagues, as well as teaching skills.

GvW- She reflected that she had grown in herself and had learnt many exciting skills to utilise in class, and had learnt to engage with her colleagues better.

JM – She said that the telephone imaginary conversations were powerful. It amplified for her the significance of family for the children. She liked the visualisation to soothing music. She enjoyed being able to laugh and have fun in the sessions and found it

immensely cathartic. She reflected that all the activities would be highly beneficial in her classroom teaching.

DVW – She said that she was excited to utilise the ideas in class and to take them to her new school. (Her family was moving to the Traansvaal.)

CM – He enjoyed the relaxation/visualisation with the learners and learnt about learners' problems via drama lessons.

SEM – She said she had also discovered learners' various problems via incorporating the various techniques. She had introduced the visualisation, which her class loved.

EL – She reflected that the sessions had confirmed for her that she was on the right track. She planned to incorporate visualisation and free play techniques in her occupational therapy sessions.

SR – She said that the pictures the learners had drawn depicting facial expressions were telling. It had enabled her to better identify with their various emotions. She reflected that she had been surprised, as she had not been aware that a particular child was sad until this activity was incorporated.

Transforming Magic Clay into a Gift:- The participants each had a turn to transform their fictitious piece of clay into an object to present as a parting gift to the person next to

them in the circle. Each recipient accepted their gift and then transformed it for the next person. The activity was chosen, as it seemed an apt closure activity, allowing each member of the group to express kindness and each member to be a recipient of kindness. The participants enjoyed creating gifts for one another. They gave gifts such as: - a heart made from clay, a clay vase with flowers, perfume, wisdom, balloons, a book, an aeroplane ticket and a picture frame.

Ritual:- We bid farewell to the inner space and the here and now, breathed in and out slowly, using our arms, raised and downwards, facing the inner circle. Then we faced the outer world and repeated the activity. Everyone felt a mixture of deep satisfaction tinged with sadness that the moment and process had come to an end.

Appendix 2:

Workshop Activities with references for individual educators to utilise.

People Puppets - One participant held the imaginary puppet strings and could manipulate the movements of the partner and they could then swap roles. The participants enjoyed this activity immensely and were able to relate to the sharing, trusting, malleability and the controlling and relinquishing of control. (Emunah, 1994:183).

Imaginary Ball – The participants had an imaginary ball to throw to one another in the circle. Its shape, texture and weight could alter at the thrower's command. This activity

was to encourage concentration and responsiveness, as well imagination and playfulness. It could also be used to symbolise throwing away uncomfortable issues in a non-threatening milieu. The group was innovative and found this activity to be light relief. It evoked merriment in the group, which was relevant as it reduced their initial feelings of anxiety, and created a feeling of group solidarity. (Emunah, 1994:177).

Responding to an object – a shell was passed around for each participant to handle, caress and inspect. They described it and then passed it to the next participant. The participants found that the shape, colour or texture of the shell evoked some powerful emotions in them. For one participant it evoked strong emotions relating to her deceased father, a fisherman. The exercise opened up the participants' emotions and evoked their sensory modalities. The object became a means to dismantle some of their initial defenses about sharing. Within the classroom context the introduction of an object was used to evoke the children to share thoughts and feelings. (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Drama Department, Dramatherapy workshop with registered dramatherapist, Kirsten Meyer).

Blind Man Leads - Each leader chose a specific sound and the partner followed the sound with his/her eyes shut and then swapped roles. The activity encouraged concentration and auditory sensitivity. A few participants reported that they found difficulty in relinquishing control and being able to totally trust their partner who was leading them. They found this to be a good learning curve. (Emunah, 1994:173).

Incorporating fabrics- The participants could choose from a variety of coloured fabrics provided. These were offered to facilitate the participants to establish a role. As going into a role was not something the group was familiar with, having a tangible object better enabled them to experience being in role. The sensory aspects of fabrics invited the participants to express and explore their feelings through movement and gesture. Fabrics were later used with positive outcomes in the classrooms, more as a means of symbolism such as for water, sky and earth. (University of Kwa Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg Drama Department, dramatherapy workshop with Kirsten Meyer.)

Collage – Each participant created a collage using magazines, scissors, glue, kokis, wool, seeds, glitter etc. The symbolism of the collage could reflect the individual's likes/dislikes and how they felt about themselves. The objective of the exercise was to enable the participants to illustrate their personal story through a collage. This gave them an opportunity to be expressive in a graphic form, rather than just through words. In this way the participants were tapping into a different creative domain and allowing themselves to be expressive via pictures, which for some was less inhibiting than words alone. It succeeded in allowing them this expression. I was surprised how relevant the collages were to each individual as it was a concrete medium, which they could keep, where words have immediacy, which is less concrete to retain. It was an activity, which was successfully used in the classroom for the same reasons. The participants enjoyed sharing about themselves and became quite animated. It revealed aspects about them which the group and I found revealing. (University of Kwa Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg Drama Department – Applied Drama studies with Prof. H. Barnes.)

Identity through touch – The objective was to offer each participant an object to touch. This activity could be relevant in the classroom to encourage more inhibited learners to participate. Participants were encouraged to choose an object from the bag of objects I had supplied. These were used to evoke their senses, memories or feelings. The exercise facilitated the participants to share aspects of their inner selves within the group. The chosen objects became subjective media through which each participant could express various emotions, ideas and goals. It gave me clarity about each individual's personal aspirations and motivating forces, and a deeper insight into them as individuals. It reflected their acceptance of areas, which they wished to alter in themselves, and was thus a way to create personal shifts. (University of Kwa Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg Drama Department – Dramatherapy workshop conducted by Kirsten Meyer.)

Telephone – This is an exercise that enhances communication and expression. A disconnected telephone was placed in the centre of the circle. This is a powerful exercise, as it becomes a medium through which each participant can address inner hurt in a relationship and by expressing suppressed emotions via the telephone, they are able to make more sense of, and come to terms with looking for a resolution. Initially the participant dialed a fictitious number to someone significant who they felt had hurt them, but did not speak. They then reflected on what they would have liked to say to the significant other. In redialing the fictitious number, the participants attempted to express their feelings verbally. Some participants found this to be an evocative and cathartic experience. This exercise had the capacity to evoke strong emotions, as it brought painful scenarios to the surface. The telephone became a mouthpiece through which to

externalise feelings. With the absence of the recipient on the other end of the telephone, it was less threatening, which lent itself to more courageous and challenging dialogue. The telephone activity proved to be a powerful medium for verbal expression in the classroom in future lessons. (Emunah, 1994:185).

Magic Box – This was a potent group activity using metaphor. An empty box was placed in the centre of the circle, which offered the participants an opportunity to metaphorically place any painful emotions into the box, which, once all had had a turn to do so, was sealed. This activity evoked deep emotions for two participants. It was a means of shedding 'emotional baggage' which allowed them to feel relief from some of their personal problems. This was a useful closure activity, moving into visualisation. This activity had positive results within the classroom. (Emunah, 1994: 232).

Pass the substance- A participant created an imaginary substance that could be hot, cold, sticky, slimy, lumpy etc. and passed it to the person on their left. The person who passed the substance and the recipient responded with facial expressions. The objective was to elicit an emotion of revulsion or pleasure and to imaginatively experience a spectrum of feelings and reactions. This proved to be a lighthearted activity. They preferred to pass on something pleasurable such as hot muffins or sticky chocolate. Being work colleagues they were possibly mindful not to antagonise one another. (Emunah, 1994:230). Passing the facial expression, a similar activity was also used. (Emunah, 1994: 231).

Eating in Mime – The participants had to pretend that they were at an imaginary picnic with their choice of food selected from a basket. Each person enacted eating the food while the rest of the group guessed what he/she was eating. The participants engaged in this activity with delight and were able to exaggerate and use their imagination. They found it to be a liberating activity. It was pleasing to observe how the participants started to remove their professional masks and become more playful, and how effective this activity was in the classroom. (Emunah, 1994:180).

Drawing with dominant hand and then non-dominant hand – This activity allowed for freedom of expression without attempting being artistic. The focus was on form or colour, not perfection. Drawing with eyes shut was an additional activity, which focused on establishing the perimeters of the paper with a focus on direction. The participants enjoyed these activities and felt that they would be beneficial to use in the classroom, to empower the learners and eliminate pressure on them to create a realistic presentation, which as anticipated, proved correct. (University of Kwa Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Drama Dept., Applied Drama Studies with Prof. H. Barnes.)

Self-Masks- The participants were each given two paper plates to create self- masks. The masks were to signify two different moods or periods in their lives, such as a happy and a sad period, or to childhood and the present. The participants were given various media and the objective was for self- reflection around life changes or moods. The completed masks were placed in the centre of the group. A volunteer could select a mask and ask the person who had made the mask questions. The recipient would respond in

first person as the mask. Each person had an opportunity to select a mask (not yet chosen), and a turn to ask the 'mask' questions. They then had to de-role as the mask. The participants were engrossed in this activity and shared poignant facets of the self through their disclosure. They commented about the freedom or the restrictions of childhood, the naivety of youth and the responsibility and empowerment of adulthood. One participant illustrated one mask symbolising fear and the other of excitement with a future life experience she was going to embark on. Another participant illustrated her sadness before being able to conceive a child and her joy afterwards. The participants were excited at the idea of mask-work in their classrooms as a means of encouraging communication, creativity, emotions, identity and self- awareness. (Emunah, 1994:214).

Spectrograms – Each participant chose miniature objects to create a story. This activity was executed on the carpet, the objective being to illustrate the self in relation to significant others using objects to 'write the script'. Once completed, each participant shared their cameo with the group. This activity brought out a playful side in the participants, yet they were also able to create a meaningful, evocative scenario. This gave them the opportunity to be sensitive to one another as personal aspects surfaced. They felt that this activity would be relevant in their classes. (Emunah, 1994).

Magic Shop – This activity gave participants the opportunity to purchase attributes from The Magic Shop where I, as facilitator, served them. They needed to trade a positive quality in order to purchase other traits they felt they lacked. The objective was to reinforce a sense of self-worth about positive attributes, combined with an opportunity

for the participants to examine themselves with respect to taking cognisance of their shortcomings. They found this activity thought -provoking and felt that the more senior learners in the school would benefit from it. (Emunah, 1994:220).

Puppets – Using puppets is a significant aspect of drama as it permits a safe space between the participant and his/her emotions. (Landy, 1994). It becomes a medium, which holds the person's emotions through the puppet, offering a sense of protection and distance. This has the capacity to encourage the externalisation of feelings more easily, particularly as the participants worked in pairs and did not need to disclose feelings to the entire group, which would have been more threatening. Working in pairs, each participant had an opportunity to express their feelings to their partner through the puppet, which acted as a medium through which to channel emotive dialogue. My partner disclosed that she had just been diagnosed as diabetic. The disclosure was therapeutic for her. They de-roled after the activity and reported that this was an emotive medium due to it offering some protection, and that it would be a meaningful tool to use in the classroom.

Storytelling- I told a fictitious story to the group related to universal themes. This was to reinforce the thematic outline of the archetypal story with heroes and villains and to use these threads to create a storyline. The group enacted the story using fabrics and objects to illustrate it. They worked together constructively, chose their roles and various acts and orchestrated the story in mime. They felt that their classes would enjoy this type of

enactment after listening to a story, and they were highly energised and stimulated by the group work, which seemed to encourage them to cohese. (Emunah, 1994:233).

Group Statue – (Sculpturing) - The group joined in to create a group statue as a collective whole. The group physically connected and then froze. The statue could emulate a collective mood or emotion which the group could select and also reflect each individual's feelings. They formed a statue to represent the story just used in the workshop, which was most effective. (Emunah, 1994:211 & 236).

Shake it out – This activity was a successful de-stressor, especially after engaging in an activity that was emotive. (University of Kwa Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus; Drama Department workshops.)

Visualisation to music - The participants could visualise a safe, restful place. They found the visualisation exercises relaxing and cathartic. They reflected that they felt that it was a healing experience, in which they could literally have been lulled to sleep. (University of Kwa Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus; Drama Department workshops.)

Appendix 3:

Questionnaire for participating educators

1. Do you consider having *benefited* from the Applied Drama workshops, which you participated in?

If so, would you be able to describe what *type of benefits* you consider yourself to have experienced?

A.   From a *personal perspective* with respect to any areas of personal growth or development, which you consider yourself to have experienced.

 i) E.g. Re your levels of awareness regarding *yourself;* i.e. re your perceptions, your attitudes, your judgements, expectations, aspirations, strengths, qualities, personality traits, limitations, emotions, health issues etc.

ii) What were you able to establish about *yourself* w.r.t. *keeping a journal* about your perceptions, emotions and reflections during the process?

B.   From a *professional perspective* with respect to ways in which you consider yourself to have developed professional skills.

 i) E.g. Re the various *professional skills, which you learnt in the applied drama,* process for application in your classroom milieu? I.e. Skills and techniques *that reinforce your role* as a professional educator w.r.t. instructions, group control, group activities, discipline, release of blocked energy, ways to calm excitability, ways to assess learners' emotions, dealing with specific events e.g. bereavement/loss.

ii) Would you be able to elaborate on *the most significant drama skills* which you acquired through the process – and which you have focused on in class? i.e. the therapeutic use of puppets, the symbolism of using masks, visualisation, objects, group games, rituals, warm ups, the use of music, fabrics, storytelling, collage,

spectrograms, a telephone, facial expressions, gestures, circle activities, or any other activities that resonated for you?

2. Do you consider that in participating in the Applied Drama Workshops, your *self-confidence* was enhanced?

i) If so, do you feel that it has *better* enabled you to utilise the various drama strategies within your specialised educational milieu?

ii) Would you be able to elaborate on ways in which you have noticed that your *self-confidence* has been influenced or affected? E.g. Have you found that you were better able to '*act*' in front of the learners in your class to demonstrate what you wanted them to apply without feeling as inhibited?

iii) Do you consider that your self-confidence was strengthened *within the group dynamic* with the other participating educators? I.e. Did you feel less inhibited with the drama group than you would feel in front of other educators who had not shared the process with you?

3. Do you consider that in implementing applied drama in your class that your perceptions of the learners have in any way altered?

i) If so, do you consider your levels of awareness regarding the *learners in your class have become enhanced*; i.e. have your levels of perception about the learners within the applied drama setting increased?

ii) Would you be able to cite examples of such, w.r.t. different learners in your class and their specific related problems and concerns, which they were dealing with?

4. Do you feel that your relationships with the other educators who participated in the drama workshops altered in any way?

i)   If so, in what specific ways, i.e. did you feel that you developed empathy for a colleague? Could you elaborate?

ii)   Did *sharing confidences* with one another within the workshops alter your relationships? – Could you elaborate?
By getting to know one another more intimately re likes, dislikes, interests etc., did it alter your understanding of one another? – Could you elaborate?

iii)   Do you think that your relationship with the researcher/facilitator altered in any way? Elaborate where possible.

Appendix 4:

Consent/ Confidentiality document signed by the participants

Consent Form - Open Gate Special School

Applied Drama Research Project

Conducted by: Eve Hemming (Master of Social Science - Educational Psychologist and Master of Arts, Applied Drama student).

Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences

School: Literary Studies, Media and Creative Arts

Discipline: Drama and Performance Studies

Supervisor: Professor H. Barnes,

University of Kwazulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg

I …………………………………………………….. (name)

Hereby consent to voluntarily participate in the above research programme.

I undertake to participate in the programme as a professional educator.

I confirm that I have been informed:-

- Of the nature/purpose of the research.

- Of the identity and institutional association of the researcher and supervisor.

- That my participation is voluntary.

- That the responses will be treated in a confidential manner.

- Of any limits on confidentiality, which may apply

- That anonymity will be ensured, where appropriate (e.g. coded names of

  participants/respondents/learners.)

- Of the fact that as a participant, I am free to withdraw from the research at any time

  without any negative or undesirable consequences to myself.

- Of the nature and limits of any benefits which I may receive as a result of my

  participation in the research.

Signed: ………………………………… at Pietermaritzburg

Date: