Performing synergy: the use of Playback Theatre in exploring personal and dominant discourses amongst adolescents.

by

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A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Masters of Drama (Performance)

in the Department of Drama at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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March 2015

Acknowledgements

When I set out on this journey I was convinced that I knew enough about my field of study and that I needed no one's help. I could not have been more wrong.

Firstly, I must thank my study leader, Prof Marié-Heleen Coetzee, my guide throughout this study. Thank you for putting up with me, especially in troubled times. I have come to understand that through all of my turmoil and difficulty you were always on my side, looking out for me, even when I didn't know it. For your patience, understanding and hard work, thank you.

To my mother and father, you are always there for me, no matter what. There are no words that would ever be enough to thank you for your support and love.

To my sister, Jeani, who helped me with this study. Without you I could not have done it. Thank you.

To my sister Christine, so far away, you always encouraged me, even in my darkest moments. Thank you for everything.

To Johnathan Fox and Jo Salas for your teachings and your guidance, thank you for all that you have done.

To the playback group who helped me with this study, I can never repay you enough.

To Hesté Swart, my friend, without whom I could not have done all that I did. Thank you for taking my calls in the middle of the night; you kept me sane.

To Venessa, for the motivation you gave me and your friendship.

To Pieter Brand, for all the times you listened to me and helped me sort through the chaos in my mind. You are a true friend.

To my Grandparents, Oudie and Gawie, who read this dissertation a thousand times and helped me edit it and made sure everything was exactly right. Thank you for your love and encouragement, I could not have done it alone.

To my uncle Eugene, who believed in me and pushed me to be more than I thought I could be. I can never repay your kindness to me, but know that you are an inspiration to me!

Lastly to my aunt and uncle, Wilma and Gawie, you have been a beacon of light to me. I hope that one day I can be a beacon to someone else.

Declaration

I, Odia Jordaan, declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work, except where indicated in the acknowledgements, the text, and references. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters of Drama (Performance) at the University of Pretoria, Pretoria. It has not been submitted before in whole or in part, for any degree or examination at any other university.

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March 2015

Abstract

This dissertation explores the ways in which playback theatre can interrogate the relationships between dominant and personal discourses within an adolescent focus group with specific reference to personal responsibility and interpersonal communication. It further investigates how playback theatre can encourage a process of self-reflective discursive repositioning, which may encourage participants' to envision alternative possibilities that may assist them in re-imagining themselves within their social circumstances. Through playback theatre this mini-dissertation aims to explore participants' views on their social context(s) and establish the dominant and personal discourses within those views and what holds them in place. In order to understand how playback theatre can facilitate this process, it is placed within the relevant field of study and reflects on existing literature. Working with adolescents as a focus group required an exploration of adolescent development, which would allow me to place participants' stories within the relevant framework. Playback theatre is dependent on personal stories and is interactive. I use the methodological approach of participatory action research in this study to engage with participants' stories. In analysing the personal stories, narrative analysis is used, which can act as a means to map out dominant and personal discourses within the participants' narratives. The history of playback theatre as deduced from relevant literature, describes how playback theatre creates a space for re-examining personal stories. The study further explores the way in which personal discourses can possibly be re-imagined and re-negotiated through witnessing and aesthetic distancing, with specific reference to personal responsibility and interpersonal communication. It also investigates how effective communication can promote personal responsibility through reflection upon the participants' personal discourses and in doing so, re-evaluate and re-negotiate their understanding of their social circumstances. Twelve playback theatre performances with a group of 15 adolescents were held with a focus group in 2013. The stories that were told during the performances were analysed in terms of observation, participants' journaling, focus group discussions and the use of narrative analysis. Playback theatre elements are used as a tool to negotiate new avenues pertaining to voiced issues, as presented through the participants' personal stories. Overall, the study concluded

that playback theatre can interrogate the relationships between dominant and personal discourses, with specific reference to personal responsibility and interpersonal communication.

Key Terms: playback theatre, communication, personal responsibility, culture, dominant discourse, personal discourse.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background

The study proposes to use playback theatre to explore the notion of personal responsibility amongst a selected group of adolescents. In doing so, the relationship between dominant discourses and personal narratives in relation to personal responsibility will be interrogated. The participants in this study come from a low income community and, according to Khulisa Social Solutions; they do not believe that they can escape their poverty and circumstances (Z Halle 2012, pers. comm. 20 September). This study proposes that playback theatre can allow adolescents to envision alternative possibilities, meanings and understandings related to personal responsibility that may assist them in re-imagining themselves in their social[1] context(s) – encouraging synergy between them and these context(s). The original purpose of the study is to investigate the notion of personal progressed, a need for a dual focus arose, and the second focus area is communication, as will be highlighted in the lesson plans in Chapter 3.

The study is located in the field of Applied Theatre, a 'dramatic activity that primarily exists outside conventional mainstream theatre institutions, which [is] specifically intended to benefit individuals, communities and societies' (Nicholson, 2005: 2). Since the 1990s, Applied Theatre has become an umbrella term, referring to sub-

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[1]Human beings live their lives in physical proximity to each other. The groups in which one finds oneself, family, neighbours', the school one attends, the people one works with and the groups one learns and plays with, this is what forms one's social world (Fox & Dauber, 1999: 20). This is what constitutes one's social structure and it may include individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Social structure, according to Anthony Giddens (as cited in Elliott, 2009: 127), is a product of one's social activities – how one walks, talks what one does and how one does it (acceptable behaviour). One's physical environment also affects both one's behaviour and value system. Giddens goes on to say that there are rules of conduct within each specific social structure that enable individuals to function within that social structure (Elliott, 2009: 128 - 129).

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fields including educational theatre, community theatre, theatre for development, prison theatre and playback theatre. Applied Theatre generally aims to meet some of the challenges experienced by the participants' in their immediate communities. Although there may be methodological distinctions between the various modes of Applied Theatre, they share a common practical and theoretical base (Prentki & Preston, 2008: 9 - 10). Some prominent points of commonality between these modes of Applied Theatre include the use of participatory theatre strategies to work towards personal and social efficacy and to further educational development. Philip Taylor (2003: xxi) states that Applied Theatre raises awareness about how individuals are situated in the world and that it opens up new perspectives to allow individuals and communities to consider alternatives to their circumstances that can foster change. It can further be used towards healing psychological wounds or barriers[2]. It challenges dominant discourses and it voices the views of the silent and the marginal. (Taylor, 2003: xxii – xxvii). Taylor (2003: xx) states that theatre becomes 'applied' when:

> '..The art form becomes a transformative agent that places the audience or participants in direct and immediate situations where they can witness, confront and deconstruct aspects of their own and others' actions. [Thus] theatre becomes a medium for action, for reflection but, most important, for transformation – a theatre in which new modes of being can be encountered and new possibilities for humankind can be imagined' (Taylor, 2003: xxx).

There is a significant body of research on Applied Theatre that engages with the use of dramatic and/or theatre arts as tools in furthering personal and social skills; developing emotional competence and openness (Feldhendler, 2007: 8); enhancing communication, stimulating interpersonal interaction and creative skills (Feldhendler, 2007: 2); and as a medium for learning, problem solving, creative thinking (Andersen, 2004: 282). It is also applied to promote healing and personal changes (Salas, 2005: 79 - 80). Within the broader framework of Applied Theatre, playback theatre aims to 'achieve personal and social transformation through sharing experiences within a ritual space' (Fox as cited in Rousseau et al., 2007: 453). My

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[2] This study will not venture in to this domain of psychology or drama therapy.

research aligns with these aims of playback theatre; playback theatre is a group – orientated form of participatory theatre that primarily aims to encourage individuals to re-evaluate their positions within a broader social environment (Feldhendler, 2008: 1). It can be compared to the oral tradition of telling one's story to one's community. These points of commonality use the form of storytelling to find meaning and a shared 'truth' in the stories (Salas, 2000: 288), as well as 'dramatizing one's experience' in order to improve communication with one's community (Salas, 1983: 15).

In brief, prior research indicated that playback theatre can assist in facilitating:

- communication between individuals (communication skills);
- re-evaluation of circumstances (witnessing);
- insight into individual and group circumstances (community building); and
- allowing silent voices to be heard (recognition).

Prior research on playback theatre further demonstrates that it has contributed to the improvement of interpersonal relationships in social and personal contexts. The results of a study by Ladapat et al. (2010) point to the value of playback theatre as a tool in generating collaborative autobiography for fostering insight and for community building. Hannah Fox (2007) and Jo Salas (1983) have extensively researched playback theatre as a tool in community building, because it promotes communication between individuals. Other research on playback theatre focuses on the social functioning of HIV patients, reconciliation (Hutt & Hosking, n.d.), interaction between social groups, character development, promoting democracy, (Dennis, 2007) and both organisational and individual learning (Josendal & Skarholt, 2007).

Since 1999, Jo Salas, along with the Hudson River playback theatre Company, has used playback theatre as a means to address bullying in schools across America (Salas, 2005: 79). Playback theatre opens a way for these children to express their feelings concerning bullying in a safe, non-judgemental space and it also has the potential for therapeutic application (Salas, 2000; Row, 2007 & Hoesch, 1999). Playback theatre has furthermore been researched in corporate environments and in

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specific leadership and customer service programmes (Howes, 2010: 65). Prior research, as highlighted above, suggests that playback theatre engages the participants' on a cognitive and an affective level. Prior research also focuses on community building and personal stories that can be seen in the works of Salas (1983), Dennis (2004) and Fox (2007).

To date, playback theatre in South Africa has focused primarily on addressing issues such as HIV and AIDS, race, gender and prejudice (Drama for Life, 2008: 2). Searches on various databases (including MLA International Bibliography, SFX and EbscoHost) indicate that printed research in English and Afrikaans on playback theatre in South Africa is limited. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to playback theatre's potential to address issues such as constructing meaning(s) related to self, context and community in order to foster personal responsibility and enhance interpersonal communication.

1.2. Choosing a focus group for the practical application of playback theatre in South Africa

Existing literature on the ways in which applied drama can enable young people to 'stage and reflect upon their own diverse stories against the backdrop of wider, dominant discourses' (Hatton, 2003: 139) forms the basis for my use of playback theatre to highlight the notion of personal responsibility and interpersonal communication in this study. Khulisa Social Solutions (hereafter Khulisa) in Hammanskraal, indicated that the adolescents in their Awareness programme are lacking in adequate social skills, such as personal responsibility and have difficulty communicating amongst themselves and within the larger community (Z Halle 2012 pers. comm. 19 April). They are therefore ill – equipped to fully realise the consequential effects of their actions. Playback theatre possibly has the potential to assist these adolescents in addressing these issues they are faced with, as highlighted by Khulisa. My study focuses on a group of adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18 in Khulisa's Awareness programme. The group consists of

multicultural[3] participants'. The majority of the participants' are black adolescents who live in poor rural communities. Moreover, participants' do not originate from the same tribal heritage, and thus this study group, though based in a specific social cultural group, consists of what can be referred to as a multicultural group.

1.3.   Khulisa Social Solutions[4]

Khulisa Social Solutions is an international non-government organisation (NGO), founded in 1997 as the Khulisa Crime Prevention Initiative. In the past 13 years Khulisa's programmes have provided intellectual, moral and emotional support to the individuals in their programmes and nurturing that not only encourages but also challenges individuals to take responsibility for their lives as well as becoming productive members of society. Over one million at-risk individuals, in some of the most isolated and dangerous parts of South Africa were involved in an attempt to help them to re-invent their lives (Khulisa Brochure, 2011: 2-3). Khulisa strives to inspire constructive values and behaviour in order to promote sustainable development in individuals, communities and business enterprises (About Khulisa Social Solutions, 2012: 1). They work internationally and partner with government departments, schools and correctional facilities and low-income communities. Programmes are holistically designed to have a positive impact on human lives (Khulisa Brochure, 2011: 3- 5; McAree, 2011: 36).

Khulisa also manages a number of projects on behalf of government agencies, as well as corporate and private donors. These projects involve personal and community development programmes that 'provide a framework for multi-role-player large scale interventions', as well as training programmes that promote opportunities for healthy sustainable livelihoods in the communities (About Khulisa Social

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[3] The group consisted of participants' from the following backgrounds: Tshwana, Sepedi, Swati, Tsonga and Coloured.

[4] Please take note that most of the information concerning Khulisa Social Solutions is from Khulisa Social Solutions itself.

Solutions, 2012: 1). These holistically designed programmes support individuals in the long term (Khulisa Brochure, 2011: 2; McAree, 2001: 9; 37).

Khulisa has given me permission to work with adolescents (from the age of 15 to 18), in the Awareness programme[5]. This programme specifically focuses on self-development and self-reflection, as well as relationships between peers and the community. The programme is designed to promote the empowerment of adolescent's by way of emotional development, confidence building, decision-making skills and community building. The adolescents generally come from low income families and different cultural backgrounds. Although not all are necessarily financially severely disadvantaged, they seem to have a limited ability to accept themselves as potentially successful or as people able to become skilled and effective citizens who can escape their crippling circumstances and relative poverty. It should be emphasised that these adolescents are not delinquents, offenders or suffering from psychological pathologies.

1.4. Clarification of concepts

1.4.1. Playback theatre

Playback theatre was started in the spring of 1975 by Jonathan Fox (Row, 2007: 17) along with his partner Jo Salas and their colleagues (Halley & Fox, 2007: 568). Playback theatre stems from Fox's vision of a new kind of theatre where ordinary people tell and act out their own stories and those of the community (Salas, 2000: 288). It was greatly influenced by Jacob Levy Moreno's psychodrama and the improvisational theatre of the 1960s and 1970s (Row, 2007: 22). Improvisation is a form of theatre done without script: relying mainly on spontaneity and creativity. It is the physical representation of an idea, thought or story. Playback theatre fuses ritual

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[5] As a researcher I am aware that the perceptions of Khulisa and the participants are not necessarily fact. However this study specifically focuses on exploring perceptions.

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(Salas, 2000: 288), oral traditions of storytelling, improvisational theatre, psychodrama and drama therapy (Ford & Ward – Wimmer, 2001: 390).

Playback theatre allows for the re-enactment of 'personal subjectively told stories' by the audience members (Salas, 2000: 459), but is not in itself therapy, although it can be very therapeutic to those who participate (Chesner, 2002: 48). Salas (2000: 290) believes that by participating in playback theatre, the participants' move toward 'wholeness'[6], as they hear, see and tell stories about what is important in their own lives as well as in those of others. It is a non-scripted theatre (Chesner, 2002: 41) that, through affirmation and transformation, allows participants to see their situation in a new way (Salas, 2000: 459). Having one's story re-enacted allows an individual to feel that he/she has been heard, not only by the actors but by the audience as well (Salas, 2000: 290). This gives the story teller relief from his/her aloneness, creating a sense of distance to 'difficult past experience' (Salas, 2000: 290). Through this distance transformation can take place as one gains a new perspective or clear 'insight into a life situation' (Salas, 2000: 290), and 'discursive repositioning' (new insight into one's situation, or a different perspective to one's story) may also take place within those who view the action on stage (Park-Fuller, 2005: 6).

1.4.2.   Dominant discourse[7]

According to Whisnant (2012) discourse is a term that represents thoughts, ideas, images and other symbolic patterns that make up culture and/or the social world. Whisnant (2012: 4 - 5) further states that specific patterns within an individual's language will reveal something about the culture of that individual. It also reveals information pertaining to the social institutions that the individual is part of and the basic assumptions the individual holds.

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[6] In this study I do not engage with the therapeutic aspects of playback theatre.

[7] I acknowledge that dominant discourses may also have a positive purpose within a society, such as keeping people together in the face of hardships. For the purpose of this dissertation I will not explore this aspect of dominant discourse.

While Burr (2003: 64) defines discourse as:

> 'a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statement and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events [and] refers to [this in] a particular way of representing it in a certain light.'

Whisnant (2012: 5) goes on to say that within a society there are rules that regulate a specific style of language usage and these rules are not only contained within spoken language. The rules that govern discourse play an important part in how individuals think or act and they spill over into people's everyday lives. In doing so, discourse and the rules governing discourse influence how people do things, how they view things and how they create and appreciate things. This is what is seen as a dominant discourse. According to Foucault (as cited in Whisnant, 2012: 6), dominant discourses shape an individual's perception of the world that he\she lives in, how an individual acts upon that world and how he/ she engage with others in that world. It brings together associations that create meaningful understanding of oneself in relation to the world and to others. Dominant discourses conscribe individuals into their service and often frame these discourses as 'natural' or 'truthful' (Coetzee, 2009: 97), which creates tension between personal discourses and dominant discourses. This process renders the means by which the dominant discourses maintain power invisible and supports the forces that control the production and representation of meaning. As such, dominant discourses can overwrite personal discourses and cause a lack of agency and control over personal discourses (Coetzee, 2009: 97). This, in turn, impacts on notions of personal responsibility and interpersonal communication in relation to a broader social context. In this study I will explore how playback theatre engages with dominant discourses within the participants stories. I will now explain how the personal discourses of the participant articulate with the dominant discourses.

1.4.3.   Personal discourse

According to Teun van Dijk (2014: 181 - 182), people have 'socioculturally shared knowledge and beliefs', within a cultural setting. However, each person also has a 'unique personal history of experiences' as well as personal knowledge and opinions regarding his/her cultural beliefs (dominant discourses). People also have emotions and motivations for either agreeing or disagreeing with these cultural beliefs (dominant discourses). These personal experiences, knowledge and motivations are what are known as personal discourses. Kieran, Forman and Sfard (2003: 80) go on to say that at some point individuals '...start to make personal decisions about the kind of actions and goals that are assumed to be relevant in their [social] practices'. This, in turn, creates a personal stance that according to Kieran, Forman and Sfard (2003: 80) manifests itself as an attitude within the dominant discourse. For the purpose of this study personal discourse refers to the personal attitudes and beliefs pertaining to the dominant discourse.

Somers (1994: 613; 621) goes on to say that a person's personal discourse is constantly changing. This change in personal discourse takes place as individuals interact with other people's stories. According to Somers (1994: 613; 621) personal discourse can shift in time and space, meaning that one's interaction with other people's stories can alter one's personal discourse towards the dominant discourse. Playback theatre offers a space where this can happen, as Dennis (2007: 184) further states that playback theatre offers a space where an individual's personal experiences become meaningful in a public arena, where individuals gain a shared sense of purposeful existence. This idea of purposeful existence, according to Dennis (2007: 184), is 'in direct opposition to the ideas contained in traditional stories' (dominant cultural beliefs) which, according to Zipes (as cited in Dennis 2007: 184), will rearrange and reinforce the 'conservative values and ideas' that keep the dominant discourse in power. Kershew (as cited in Dennis 2007: 184 - 185) says that dominant discourses are oppressive and 'cheat [people] out of the right to make [create] their own culture'. Playback theatre promotes personal stories, placing them in high regard and in doing so, creates a site where emerging cultures can be explored.

1.4.4. Personal responsibility

Personal responsibility is a complex and well – documented notion that shifts, depending on the discipline in which it is studied (Minkler, 1999; Horner, 1997; Spear & Kulbok, 2004). For the purposes of this study, personal responsibility refers to recognising the extent to which one's own actions and choices have contributed to what happens to oneself, in contrast to attributing responsibility for what happens to one, from external forces outside of one's control. Examples of such external forces include 'chance, fate, an inability to understand the world, or the influence of other, powerful people' (Battle & Rotter, 2006: 482). In this study I borrow from the work of Don Hellison (2011). His work primarily focuses on sport and physicality; however, I would borrow from his concept of personal and social responsibility.

Hellison divides personal responsibility into different levels which are set out below:

1. Level 0: Irresponsible:

    In this level there is no responsibility. Individuals make excuses for their actions and blame others when things go wrong.

2. Level I:Respect:

    Individuals on this level are able to control their behaviour to such an extent that they do not interfere with others. They respect others enough to allow them to learn.

3. Level II: Participation

    Individuals show respect for others and are willing to participate in the class activities without disrupting the proceedings.

4. Level III: Self – Direction

    Individuals take responsibility for their own learning and participation. They can identify their own needs and start planning and taking action to achieve their own goals.

5. Level IV: Caring

    Individuals show concern for others and are willing to support and aid those who need help.

6. Level V: Outside the classroom

Individuals use their knowledge outside of the classroom environment, applying their skills in their everyday life.

Using his levels of responsibility as a means of creating dialogue around personal responsibility and structure topics for playback theatre, I have to point out that I recognise the reality that many individuals are forced to operate under severely debilitating circumstances.   However, making individuals aware of their own decisions and actions opens the door towards looking at new options and actions, despite external circumstances.

1.4.5.   Culture

Culture is a contested term. For some culture refers to the appreciation of art music and literature (O'Neil 2006:1). Others view it in an anthropological context wherein culture means a range of learned human behaviour patterns (O'Neil, 2006: 1), it consists of tradition, values, morals, beliefs, customs, language, knowledge and even artefacts become part of the culture (Fox, 2003: 196; Zanjam, 2011: 7). For Raymond Williams, culture refers to:

> 'A particular way of life which expresses certain meaning and values not only in art and learning, but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour. The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture' (Williams, 2004: 178).

Sky Marsen (2006: 7) goes on to say that culture describes a norm and the convictions of a group whose members operate under a shared ideology and knowledge. She also says that it attributes different values that form behaviour, e.g. In some cultures material possessions make one successful, while in others your family ties are what makes one a success. She goes on to say that individuals interact with one another in networks or groups which carry certain 'expectations, rules, norms and ideals'. These regulative practices are based on assumptions

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about 'the order of things' such as 'values, ethical beliefs, attitudes towards status and authority' (Marsen, 2006: 81). These values and beliefs (dominant discourse) are at times enforced by cultural hegemony. Cultural hegemony is a notion that was first addressed by Antonio Gramsci (Lears, 1985: 568; Gramsci, 2005: 50 - 55). For him cultural hegemony is achieved when the domination of the masses takes place through ideological means. It specifically refers to the ability of a ruling group (people/government/religious institution) to hold power over social institutions and in doing so they influence the direction of (a culture) social life and thus influences the behaviour of the society (and by extension the individual) by imposing what they believe should be normative ideas, beliefs (for society) and values (Lears, 1985: 568 – 570) wherein these beliefs and attitudes of the dominant culture become common sense to most of the population (Gates, 2000: 50) and regulates behaviour and human interactions. The participants of this study consisted of a multicultural group. When I speak about culture in this dissertation, I am referring to what the participants understand to be part of their culture(s). This may not necessarily portray the dominant discourse of each individual's culture, but rather the dominant discourse common to the multicultural group.

1.4.6. Communication[8]

Communication in general refers to using symbols to represent meaning e.g. street signs. Interpersonal communication refers to how one uses symbols (such as gestures, talking) to convey an idea in one's mind to another person; therefore it is the communication that takes place between people and it forms a bond between them (Solomon & Theiss, 2013:4 - 5). According to Owen Hargie and David Dickson (2004: 13) interpersonal communication occurs through the exchange of verbal or nonverbal messages between two individuals, wherein they convey information, feelings or meaning. Interpersonal communication takes place face to face or in small groups, without mediation. It conveys personal aspects (qualities) of those interacting with one another (Hargie & Dickson, 2004: 13). Solomon and Theiss

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[8]I generally just make use of the term communication, although within this dissertation this term is interchangeable with interpersonal communication.

(2013: 9) state that it is consequential as it 'produces an outcome'; this outcome can be intentional or unintentional, as one can use it to intentionally cheer up a friend, or one can unintentionally insult someone. This also makes interpersonal communication irreversible, as one cannot take back a message that one has communicated. Once one has made a hurtful comment towards someone, one can try to apologise. However, every future conversation will include the memory of those comments (Solomon & Theiss, 2013: 10).

In itself the term communication covers a wide range of methods by which meaning is conveyed from one entity to another, whether it is a sign post to a person, or a radio or TV programme to a viewer, or a person to a person. There is a vast arena of means of communication outside interpersonal communication, involving methods and means outside words, e.g. sign, pictures, symbols and sounds. Most of these fall outside the scope of this dissertation. Raymond Williams (2002: 269) states that in the English language the oldest meaning of the word communication is the passing on of an idea, feeling or basic information from one person to another. For Williams (2002: 269 - 270), communication is the form in which ideas and information are transmitted by one person and then received by another. For the purpose of this study, when I speak about communication or interpersonal communication, I am referring to the information that passes from one person to another.

Beck, Bennet and Wall (2004: 21 - 22) say that communication happens in codes. These codes, that people use when conveying meaning, are learned from their earliest days, although one may not always be aware of this. Codes are culture specific. This means that the codes one uses are indicative of a specific set of signs and symbols that have a specific meaning for the people who are within a certain cultural group, and it is with these codes that people communicate. For van Schoor (1986: 13) there are different mediums or modes of communication and non - verbal communication. These modes consist of the spoken word (language and sound), gestures, posture, body language, facial expression, the tone and even the pitch of one's voice (Marsen, 2006: 48; Corner & Hawthorn, 1980: 50 - 61). The combination of how individuals use these modes gives rise to meaning and will determine how

the message is interpreted. Sky Marsen (2006: 48) states that the meaning attached to these modes of communication, and also how they are integrated, are culture specific, although some facial expressions are supposedly cross – cultural, such as, pain, anger, fear, happiness etc., as emotive responses are, from this theoretical position, part of the genetic code of human beings (an investigation into these ideas falls outside of the scope of this mini-dissertation). Through playback theatre, I will investigate the notion of interpersonal communication within the dominant discourses surfacing in the playback sessions.

1.5.   Developmental phase of adolescence

For the purpose of this study, I worked with a group of adolescents, between the age of 15 and 18 who are already active in Khulisa's Awareness programme for the youth. Adolescents are on the brink of adulthood, where they will have to accept new responsibilities and also learn to cope on their own when away from the protection of the parental home. They are already able to grasp the realities of life and the difficulties they may encounter to a certain extent. In view of the above, it is necessary to investigate and discuss the developmental phases of adolescents.

According to Louw et al. (1998: 329 - 459) there are four basic developmental phases for adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18, the time which is classified as adolescence or puberty and these phases are discussed below.

Physical development includes; physical growth and sexual maturity. During this period heightened hormonal activity results in rapid physical change in growth (growth spurts) as well as sexual maturation, resulting in marked sexual differences between males and females (Christie & Viner, 2005: 303). Louw et al. (1998: 329) go on to say that accepting these physical changes is not always easy for the adolescent, especially since he/she is actively aware of the extensive bodily changes taking place. As a result, adolescent become self - conscious, and very aware of his/her physical appearance (Spano, 2004: 2) such as skin (acne, facial features,

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and weight) and will spend a lot of time on perfecting his/her appearance (American Psychological Association, 2002: 8).

Cognitive development includes their understanding and perception of the world around them (Louw et al., 1998: 412). Levine and Munsch (2011: 242) state that they begin to think about broad abstract as well as concrete concepts and they are able to imagine the possibilities of what could be, instead of just relying on what is. They are also able to think in terms of hypothetical situations and start to develop a better understanding of metaphorical concepts and symbolic meaning (Christie & Viner, 2005: 302), allowing them to assess, analyse and interpret events in a logical order and then reflect on the knowledge they have gained (Louw et al., 1998: 416). They also begin to think about the future; intellectual interests become more important as they analyse different alternatives and set personal goals (Spano, 2004: 2; American Psychological Association, 2002: 11). Adolescents still need guidance to develop their rational decision-making skills, as poor decision-making may lead to risky behaviour, such as the use of alcohol, drugs or violence (American Psychological Association, 2002: 12).

During this stage adolescents are capable of 'imagining the thoughts of others', but fail to distinguish between what is important to other people and what is important to themselves (Louw et al., 1998: 418). They mistakenly accept that other people think about them in the same way they think about themselves. This phenomenon is called 'adolescent egocentricity' and it is revealed in two forms: 'imaginary audience and personal fable' (Louw et al., 1998: 419; Levine & Munsch, 2011: 243). The 'imaginary audience' refers to adolescents becoming very self-conscious and they believe they are the focus of other people's interest. Comments made by peers and parents, as well as how they believe they are being perceived by others, can be internalised and become part of their identity (Robinson, 1995: 253 - 254). This perception causes them to react to how they think the audience is viewing them (Louw et al., 1998: 419; Levine & Munsch, 2011: 243 - 244), while 'personal fable' refers to adolescents believing that no one else has similar experiences or feelings, as they do not believe their parents or even their friends can understand how they

feel. Playback theatre is ideal in assisting adolescents to explore and engage with these problems.

Personality development is about finding one's own identity (Bester, 2007: 177), learning to manage emotions and cope with stressful situations (American Psychological Association, 2002: 15). During this stage adolescents become more aware of themselves as unique and independent individuals and start to redefine their identities in relation to others (Louw et al., 1998: 425; Christie & Viner, 2005: 303). This influences how they perceive themselves, (Louw et al., 1998: 433), and involves two phases, the 'self-concept' and 'self-esteem'. The term 'self-concepts' refers to the understanding one has of one's own values, beliefs and personal goals, while 'self-esteem' refers to how much one likes and values oneself (American Psychological Association, 2002: 15). Louw et al. (1998: 426 - 427) refers to 'identity crises' and sees this as part of a period of confusion for adolescents, when they begin to question their existing values and start exploring new roles of identity in society. Through this process they develop and establish their own set of moral values, ideals and conscience (Spano, 2004: 3), keeping what they find suitable and discarding what they do not agree with. This new value system may form the anchor for their identity and morals for the rest of their lives.

Social development in adolescence is greatly influenced by the culture of parents and peers (Louw et al., 1998: 444).Culture forms a part of the social milieu and therefore has an immense impact on the development of adolescents (Louw et al., 1998: 406; 415; 431). During this phase, they begin to distance themselves from their parents, both physically and socially, though this does not mean that family life is less important. Although they are still largely dependent on their parents, they begin to interact more with their peers (Spear, 2000: 418), allowing them to gain greater emotional and social independence from their parents. Their own moral value system guides them in their actions and behaviour towards others and towards society, but they can only build and shape their own values by questioning the values which have formed part of their upbringing. Depending on the individual,

existing values will now either be incorporated into their own value system, or be discarded (Louw et al., 1998: 459).

In South Africa playback theatre may assist participants in better understanding themselves, their social surroundings and the role they can play in shaping their own lives and imagining their own futures. Using playback theatre I aim to discover dominant discourses and the underlying personal discourses that surface within the playback sessions. Furthermore I aim to explore whether playback theatre can assist participants' to re-examine and re-evaluate the relationship between dominant discourse and their own personal discourses, to re-imagine their personal discourses within their dominant discourse to assist them in effective interpersonal communication in their immediate social context (the Khulisa programme).

1.6. Investigative question

How can playback theatre be used to explore personal and dominant discourses amongst adolescents with specific reference to personal responsibility and interpersonal communication?

1.7. Dissertation statement

This study proposes that playback theatre can potentially interrogate the relationship between dominant and personal discourses, encouraging a process of self-reflexive discursive repositioning that encourages participants to envisage alternative possibilities, meanings and understandings, with regards to communication and personal responsibility, that may assist them in evaluating and re-imagining themselves in their social context.

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1.8.   The aims of this research are:

- to explore participants' views on their social context and in relation to notions of personal responsibility;
- to establish what the dominant discourses within those views are, what value systems are associated with them and what holds them in place;
- to establish how personal discourses articulate with dominant discourses;
- to identify story-threads in relation to the way dominant discourses articulate with personal discourses; and
- To explore alternative discourses and value systems based on those story threads.

1.9.   Research approach

This study will be located in a qualitative research paradigm. According to Merriam (2009: 13), qualitative research is concerned with the examination and analysis of the way 'meaning' is constructed in the social world. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore and examine phenomena, experiences or social issues to gain a better understanding thereof, instead of primarily relying on 'predetermined information from the literature' or dependence on the outcomes of former research studies (Creswell, 2007: 40).

Furthermore, it allows the researcher to be aware of the context in which the phenomena, experiences or social issues are located. It also permits the researcher to present a particular point of view to a social problem without promising any all-encompassing answers (Creswell, 2007: 42 - 44). Qualitative research further investigates the meaning that groups or individuals attribute to social issues or phenomena, and it collects data that confirms or expands existing patterns and themes in those meanings (Creswell, 2007: 37). This results in a rich description of the phenomenon/experience/social issue.

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My research is interpretive and exploratory and the product of the research is descriptive (Merriam, 2009: 13). Similarly, my research is based on social constructionism as the study assumes that participants' realities, as well as what they know and believe to be true about the world, are all constructed through dynamic interactions in specific social settings (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999: 48). The underlying assumptions of my research approach are that:

- the researcher is a part of the research process, not separated from it;
- meanings, facts and values are interrelated and do not exist in isolation;
- multiple interpretations of and meanings related to experience and reality exist;
- experience and meaning are located in a specific context and informed by other contexts; and
- the research will not aim to predict or prescribe, but to create a greater understanding of the participant's realities (Charmaz & Henwood in Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008: 245).

I will conduct my research in surroundings where the phenomenon or social issue is located, and thus aim to establish whether I can underwrite and confirm my findings in accordance with the meaning that research participants assign to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 3). I acknowledge that my background as a white, Afrikaans-speaking woman will impact on my engagement with and reading of the research topic, the participants and their socio-cultural context. In order to generate reflective distance, I will make use of generic qualitative research methods.

1.10. Methodological approach

I will use elements of participatory action research and elements of narrative analysis in a case study. A case study aims to explore experiences, social issues or phenomena by exploring a single case, and by exemplifying the phenomenon, experience or social issue in question. It is a form of descriptive and interpretive research that can be applied to individuals, groups, processes or institutions. A case

study generally describes the process whereby the research results were obtained and can provide context to data to present a more complete picture of the research process (Babbie, 2001: 285). I will conduct playback theatre sessions with adolescents, who are enrolled in Khulisa's Awareness programme with the aim of identifying how they place their own narrative identity within the larger dominant discourse operating amongst them.

I will use non-probability purposive sampling (Babbie, 2001: 178 - 179). I will co-select participants with Khulisa on the basis of attendance, willingness and availability (Babbie, 2001: 179). Purposive sampling refers to a 'group's participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question' (Mack et al., 2005: 5). Purposive sampling is most effective when the process of generating, reviewing or analysing data, is integrated with data collection, as this study aims to do.

According to Mutchnick and Berg (1996: 3), the depth that qualitative research aims for, allows researchers to work with a much smaller selection of participants than would have been the case in purely quantitative studies. In line with this proposition, I will use between 10 and 15 participants (depending on the enrolment in Khulisa's Awareness programme).

The following selection criteria will be stipulated:

- participants should be in Khulisa's care;
- participants should be enrolled in Khulisa's Marokolong Awareness programme;
- participants should be between 15 and 18 years old; and
- participants should be able to read, write and speak English or Afrikaans.

As a playback theatre conductor I will be actively involved in the story – telling process of the performances and therefore a participant observer, I will be actively involved in the case study (Thomas, 2003: 60), 'consciously and systematically sharing… in the…activities [and stories] of a group of people' (Jackson, 1983: 39).

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The advantage of this is that I will be able to form a connection (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009: 238) with the participants and may thus be better able to understand their experiences. The role of participant-observer falls within the domain of participatory action research (PAR).

1.11. Participatory action research (PAR)

Baum, MacDougall and Smith (2006: 854) state that participatory action research centres on data collection, reflection and action. As a methodology, PAR 'explores the relationship between the realms of the individual and the social' (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005: 566). PAR explores these settings and how individuals form and reform their own identities and their relationships with others (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005: 566 - 567). PAR further involves an 'on-going process of reflection and action' (Baum et al., 2006: 855) with a view to opening up possibilities for action and change. This process may include group discussions, observation, and a range of other methods required by the specific process. PAR further gives priority to participation and interaction between researchers and research participants. As I will act as conductor, PAR is a suitable methodology to apply to my study. In this study, playback theatre will simultaneously comprise collection and action, which will be reflected upon mainly through group discussions after playback theatre sessions. By means of keeping a journal, I will keep track of various experiences, processes and interpretations throughout the research process. I will also require participants to keep a journal, documenting the performances and the reflective sessions after each playback theatre session. Journaling[9] will allow the participants to refine their 'ideas, beliefs and … responses to the research' (Janesick, 1999; 505). In my journal, I will critically reflect on my own experiences as well as on playback theatre processes and participants responses to their playback theatre experiences (Janesick, 1999; 506). Keeping a journal will allow me to critically examine my assumptions about participants' and also clarify the participants' belief systems and personal subjectivities (Ortlipp, 2008: 695).

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[9] For the purpose of this study I will not make use playback actor's journals. This study will focus specifically on the participants' perceptions.

1.12. Data collection

I obtained permission from Khulisa Social Solutions to do my research in their Awareness Programme (see Appendix A). The playback theatre process will consist of twelve, two hour playback theatre sessions. Together with a Drama Department playback theatre group, I will develop performances in which the participants will participate as audience members and tellers. I will act as conductor.

A potential problem highlighted earlier is that, by participating actively in the study, my views on what is occurring may become overly subjective. To counter this, I will use generic qualitative research and differentiated data collection methods. My data will consist of recordings of playback theatre sessions and reflections on these sessions (focus group discussions), the participants' journals as well as my own. I will further review prior studies and recent scholarship on playback theatre and engage with the theoretical constructs highlighted in my review of scholarship. Thus, I will not merely rely on my own interpretations and observations, but also on those of the participants and relate my interpretations to existing scholarship. I will therefore review a diverse range of information (Maree, 2007: 39), to obtain reflective and critical distance.

1.12.1. Focus group discussions

As group discussions are an integral part of the playback theatre process I will draw on the method of 'focus group discussions' in each playback theatre session. Focus group discussion normally consists of 12 to 15 participants (Babbie, 2001: 294). It is a technique involving group interviewing in which a small group is led by a moderator (interviewer) in a structured discussion of various topics of interest (Rabiee, 2004: 655). It aims to understand experiences, phenomena or social issues from the research participant's perspective and also to explore the meaning that these experiences/phenomena/social issues, hold for the participant. It allows the research participant to explain his/her ideas, feelings and experiences in his/her own words and ways of communication (Rabiee, 2004: 655 – 656). The facilitator can draw out 'motivations, feelings and values' behind the topics that are discussed in the focus

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group (Billson. 2006: 3).   In this study the discussions will centre on what the participants have experienced when viewing their own narratives.

1.13.   Data interpretation

I will use elements of narrative analysis to identify and map recurrent patterns and markers that make sense or give meaning in the specific context of playback theatre sessions.

1.13.1.   Narrative analysis

According to Henning (2004: 45 - 46), 'narrative analysis' views information as being socially constructed. It is also concerned with modes of representing and symbolising these reality/realities. The aim of narrative analysis is to allow the researcher to collect, analyse and then interpret story-material (Lieblich et al., 1998: 2).   According to Henning (2004: 122) narrative analysis investigates how participants make sense of their own lives, by representing them in story form. According to Jaworski and Coupland (1999: 3), narrative and discourse are valuable means in which a researcher can comprehend a society and its individuals' responses to that society. Creswell (2007: 54) goes on to say that narrative analysis is a method that researchers use by gathering stories and narratives (accounts of events) and then organises them into a new narrative by means of a plot line. Narratives reveal different people's way of seeing the world and how their value systems work. Most value systems, say Jaworski and Coupland (1999: 7), are 'pre structured', that is to say, what a particular society or a specific institution, sees as normal or suitable. They are thus determined by the dominant discourse of a culture at work, as discussed earlier. Narrative analysis provides a way of interrogating such social constructions and value-systems, and the boundaries that frame such values/constructions, as well as the dynamics that hold the values/constructs in place. Thus, narrative analysis deconstructs social practices in order to gain insight into the 'social structure' and standard values that forms part of the 'structure of

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social life' (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999: 6). In doing so, it foregrounds the dominant discourses and power-dynamics operating in such social constructs.

Participants' stories and re-storied stories can then be analysed in terms of:

- narrative and performance markers including thematic content and the use of symbols and images as dramatic language (spoken and performed);
- recurrent patterns in the narration, representation and performance of these markers; the social and /or historical context and 'conventions within which the [data] has been created'; and
- the ways in which stories and story threads are created and the ways in which participants' create meaning from that (Henning, 2004: 45-46; 65; 117).

Elements of narrative analysis aided me during my investigation, as they have allowed me to examine the multiple meanings that can be found in the participants' narratives and their verbal and performed expressions, and have helped me discern the ways in which participants order experiences and information to make sense. It has also helped me to identify dominant and personal discourses in the processes of storytelling that playback theatre offers. It is important to note that narrative analysis and playback theatre positions the story itself as the object of investigation.

1.14.   Ethical considerations

I will follow the guidelines for ethical clearance as required by the University of Pretoria's Research Ethics Committee. The committee formally gave ethical clearance to the research and I will obtain the necessary permissions from the relevant authorities and the necessary informed consent and assent (depending on the age of the participants), regarding voluntary participation. Khulisa, and parents/guardians as well as participants will all be informed about the nature, aims and processes of the research and voluntary participation will be given via the letters of informed consent and assent. Audience members equally may choose to be either an active spectator or a participant in the performance; the choice remains solely with them and they may not be persuaded or pressed into accepting a role decided

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on by the conductor (Dennis, 2007: 356). For this research, the participants will be the audience. The participants can further choose what they wish to share or not.

Participation in the research process is anonymous and voluntary. Should a participant decline to participate in the study, his/her data will not be utilised in my interpretation (see letters of informed consent). The identities of the participants in the study will be protected by using codes (Cresswell, 2007: 141).

I will steer clear of any harmful psychological, emotional or physical activities and it will be made clear to them that I will not venture into the field of psychology or therapy. However, a social worker from Khulisa will be in attendance, should any unforeseen incident arise where a participant may require counselling.

1.15. Chapter outline

The chapter outline appears below.

1.15.1. Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 1 contextualises the study, and provides an introduction to clarify terms used within the study and positions the research within the selected theoretical frameworks. The chapter further explains the research approach and its objectives.

1.15.2. Chapter 2 – Storied theatre: a theoretical framework

Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review and explores the theoretical underpinnings of the study. This chapter continues to investigate playback theatre and storytelling, with a view to gauging the possible impact this may have on preparing the progressive playback theatre sessions.

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1.15.3. Chapter 3 – Playback theatre process: lesson planning

Chapter 3 outlines the process and trajectory of the playback sessions. It will involve a detailed discussion of the playback theatre sessions and the techniques that I used to get the participants involved in the performance.

1.15.4. Chapter 4 – Playback theatre: analysis

Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis of the observations, journals, findings and reflections on the playback theatre sessions. This chapter will also discuss my interpretations of the relationship between personal and dominant discourses in the participants social context with reference to communication and personal responsibility.

1.15.5. Chapter 5 – Summation

This chapter contains the final conclusion and a critical summary of my findings. The chapter discusses the possibilities for future research and application within the domain of playback theatre. I will make suggestions as to how the field of application within the findings may be utilised and extended into other fields.

1.16. Conclusion

Chapter 1 places this study within the relevant field of Applied theatre, this chapter maps the broader conceptual framework in which playback theatre operates. The chapter explains the research approach and its objectives, provides an introduction to clarify those terms used within the study and positions the research within selected theoretical frameworks.

Furthermore, it explores the developmental phase of adolescence in order to understand the focus area better and to situate the focus group within their social context as well as the conceptual theoretical framework of the study and the

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developmental phases will assist in planning the playback theatre sessions (age – appropriate).

The next chapter will further explore the theoretical background of playback theatre to provide an understanding of how a playback performance is conducted. It will also highlight key elements in playback theatre which I will use in the playback sessions and in my analysis of the sessions.

Chapter 2: Storied theatre – a theoretical framework

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I situated the study in the relevant field of drama, stated the aim of the study, explained key concepts and the methodology that I will use to conduct the study, and I also outlined the chapters. This chapter will explain playback theatre. Playback theatre is based on storytelling. It further includes a discussion on how it relates to the construction of personal discourse. It will also include a discussion on 'witnessing' and how this allows individuals to reconstruct their own stories. Furthermore I will explain how aesthetic paradox allows for distancing and the role of communication in playback theatre. I will draw upon these notions in my analysis in Chapter 4.

2.2. Playback theatre

2.2.1. Playback theatre – historical context

Playback theatre was started in the spring of 1975 by Jonathan Fox (Row, 2007: 17) along with his partner Jo Salas and their colleagues (Halley & Fox, 2007: 568). Playback theatre stems from Fox's vision of a new kind of theatre where ordinary people tell and act out their own stories and those of the community (Salas, 2000: 288). Fox found psychodrama to be complementary to his new idea of theatre. With the help of a diverse group of actors Fox and Salas began experimenting with this new theatre, which was based on the idea of telling peoples' stories. The development of playback theatre was a collaborative process, which took form and shape as the group met. As Fox (2003: 3 - 4) says:

> '…over time we learned that our form demanded its own aesthetic. Some of our experiments suited the Playback approach....while others...turned out to be less effective.'

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Thus playback theatre evolved through a collective process that experimented with various modes and forms of drama and theatre. Fox was influenced by psychodrama when playback theatre was developed. However, playback theatre 'does not position itself in the therapeutic domain' (Fox, 2004: 1). Playback theatre was also influenced by the work of Paulo Freire, his work on the 'pedagogy of liberation' and the connected fight against the 'culture of silence' (Dauber, 1999: 70), Augusto Boal's Forum theatre and Victor Turner's notion of social drama. According to Dauber (1999: 70) Paulo Freire 'views the 'teacher' and the 'student' as partners in the dialogue about reality'. Fox extends Freire's framework to include the conductor, the actors, the tellers and the audiences. The goal of this dialogue remains the same as Freire's, to re-imagine the shared experiences that individuals have in reality. In playback theatre this is carried out indirectly during the re-enactment of the playback performance (Dauber, 1999: 70). Boal, who was also influenced by Freire's work, sought to overcome oppression by questioning it. Through Boal's Forum theatre he sought to 'provoke audience members out of their safe passivity as viewers'. In Forum theatre the spectator switches roles with the protagonist and enters directly into the action taking place on stage, thus becoming a spect-actor[10] (Landy & Montgomery, 2012: 132). By switching roles with the actor, the spect-actor seeks to play out a new ending or to pose an alternative solution to the problem that has been raised. This state occurs during the performance of the teller's story, when the teller witnesses his/her story on stage. Turner believed that a ritual could depart from the drudgery of everyday events and create a space where creativity could flourish. Turner (cited in Fox, 2003: 98) found that during rituals the community's mind-set was changed. He called the engagement in the performance that went beyond the limitations of social rules, 'liminal'[11]. This state allowed the community to find new solutions to the problems that they were faced with. During the re-enactment this liminal state occurs when the teller is distanced from his/her

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[10] Boal's notion of being a spectator and an actor simultaneously (Landy & Montgomery, 2012: 132).

[11] Liminal refers to every day cultural states, from shopping to structural status. Liminal time, according to Turner (1979: 465), is not measured by a clock, but is a 'time of enchantment', a moment in which anything can happen. Liminal activity provides community members with a space removed from their daily lives that allows them to reflect on how they think about their own cultural codes.

personal story. In the performance people are invited to share their personal stories (Salas, 1983: 18), which can incorporate anything, from a birthday party to a personal view on the political state of the country. Playback theatre is a 'contemporary, interactive, non-scripted theatre' (Fox, 2003: 5).

Fox (1999, 125) describes playback theatre as art, and as such it shares that task that all art has; it must convey meaning through 'coherency design, integrity of form, originality and skill in its execution'. Playback Companies across the world strive to for fill their artistic task of creating form for a teller's story. Furthermore, playback is, by its very nature, an interactive and socialising event – welcoming and introducing people, telling stories and promoting inclusivity. A third and important aspect in playback theatre, is ritual. Ritual is imperative in playback theatre as it operates within a structured set of rules, and this creates a safe place for the audience to participate and allows for social transformation. These three aspects of playback theatre are called the 'Triad'. According to Fox, playback theatre operates when these three elements are simultaneously present (Fox, 1999: 127). The elements of the 'Triad' come together through the structure and ritual of the playback theatre performance. The structure and the ritual provide the means for the elements of the 'Triad' to take place.

2.2.2. Playback theatre in its present – day form

2.2.2.1.   The general structure of playback theatre

The stage setting is done in a specific and set formation (ritual) which is structurally adhered to and is consistent within all playback performances (Fox & Dauber, 1999: 7). The conductor is seated on the left and next to him/her is the teller's chair. The musician is seated on the opposite side of the stage with an arrangement of different instruments on the floor. The actors are between them, in a half circle, usually sitting on boxes or chairs meant as props. Upstage left, is a structure covered in different coloured cloths that serve as props (Salas, 1983: 18). This arrangement and the

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designation of the space forms part of the ritual of playback theatre and clearly allocates the space of each one involved in the performance (Adderley, 2004: 9).

A Playback Theatre group is made up of five or more people: the conductor, the musician and three actors who act out the stories. The conductor, as master of ceremonies, welcomes everyone to the performance, interacts with the audience, leads the performance, draws out the story and creates clarity around it (Dennis, 2007: 18). The conductor also takes responsibility for introducing the audience to the nature of playback theatre (Salas, 1983: 18) and introduces the forms and prescribed rituals of the performance. He/she invites the audience members to come forward to the performance space to tell their stories (Salas, 1983:18), guiding each one during the story – telling (Dennis, 2007: 356). The conductor is also the bridge between the audience and the actors, and must therefore be aware of existing cultural differences (Halley & Fox, 2007: 568). In a country like South Africa this is particularly important, as this is a nation consisting of many different cultures. If the conductor is ignorant of the cultural differences among the audience members (or performers) he/she may offend and alienate an audience member, which would defeat the purpose of the performance and result in failure. At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that the composition of the audience is not always predictable. In this study, however, I am aware of the audience composition. The ritual of playback theatre is a set structure for the playback performance and this structure does not change.

2.2.2.2.   The ritual of playback theatre

2.2.2.2.1. The opening[12]

The Pre-Show starts with the conductor and performers introducing themselves to the audience. Each performer shares an emotion with the audience which is then

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[12] It is important to note that every playback company has their own ritual for starting the performance; some may sing a song, while others do not. The opening is unique to every playback group.

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acted out through fluid sculpture by the rest of the group. This gives the audience an indication of what to expect during the performance. It also serves to elicit a response from the audience. The audience is then asked to share with the group a feeling or emotion and when the conductor speaks the ritual word 'Let's Watch', that feeling is played back by way of Fluid Sculpture or Pairs.

Fluid Sculpture is a non-narrative short form in playback theatre, where the actors step forward one at a time, repeating a sound and movement, all expressing one aspect of the teller's feelings. When done, they briefly look at the teller, acknowledging that they have completed the enactment, before stepping back into a neutral position[13].

Pairs, also a non-narrative short form, are used to explain how a person can experience two opposing emotions regarding a single matter. During this form two actors participate, one standing behind the other, while an audience member participates by suggesting two opposing emotions. The actor in front starts the action, portraying one emotion, while the second one starts to enact the other emotion. The pair remains in configuration throughout the scene to create the visual sense of being one person, simultaneously experiencing an opposing feeling (Salas, 2007: 38 - 39).

By watching their feelings being played back to them spontaneously, the opening introduces the audience to improvisational theatre and the concept of sharing their personal feelings. This allows the audience to become used to the idea of having their stories played back to them and sharing their stories in a safe environment. It is during this time that audience members are invited to try to identify with each other's stories. By supporting each other during this stage, an environment of acceptance is created, making it safe to tell one's story.

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[13] Neutral position means to step out of the role and be ready to step into the next role assigned by the teller. It should be noted that this takes place after every re-enactment.

2.2.2.2.2. The warm-up

From here the conductor moves into the warm-up stage, asking audience members to elaborate on the feelings they are sharing. This involves telling the audience what happened to make you feel that way, thus telling a short story which is played back through Narrative V and 3 Part story.

Narrative V is a narrative short form in which the actors stand in a V-formation, the person in the front narrates the teller's story in the third person. The narrator also uses gestures, but refrains from further enacting the story. The other actors mimic these gestures without looking at the narrator; they also echo key words and use sound to emphasise certain phrases.

In '3 Part story', also a narrative short form, the conductor breaks the story into three sentences. After hearing all three sentences, the actors begin to enact the essence of the story. The actor standing on right begins by embodying only the first sentence. He/she portrays the essence of the first sentence, and then freezes. The second actor proceeds to portray the second sentence. The actor may interact with the first actor, but the first actor must remain frozen and may not respond to him/her. Once the second actor is in a 'frozen' position, the third actor then proceeds in the same way with the third sentence (Fox, 2010: 93). This introduces storytelling and prepares the audience for sharing longer stories.

2.2.2.2.3. Storytelling

After the warm – up the conductor invites an audience member to come forward and sit in the teller's chair, and tell his/her story. The conductor greets the teller and introduces him or her to the audience. The conductor will ask questions such as: "What is your name? What story would you like to share with us today? Where were you?" This is referred to as the 'interview': by way of a friendly conversation, the conductor gains information from the teller; this helps the seated audience and

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the actors, to grasp the essence of the story, which is important in the enactment of meaningful playback.

When the teller is done, the conductor will ask him or her to choose an actor to play the teller. He/she will also ask the teller to choose which characters he/she wants to see in the story and allow the teller to choose them as well. Once the actors have been chosen, the conductor will announce the start of the re-enactment by summing up the story in a short phrase[14] and saying the ritual word 'Let's Watch'.

Music plays while the actors take their place on stage, setting the scene. The music stops and the actors begin the performance. Once the story has been re-enacted the conductor will ask: 'Was that it?' This allows the teller to evaluate his/her story and absorb what he/she has experienced. Once the teller is ready, he/she returns to the audience and the whole process is repeated with the next member of the audience (Salas, 2000: 289).

2.2.2.2.4. The closure

When all the stories have been told the conductor brings the performance to an end, or so called 'closure'. During closure all the stories that have been told are revisited and reflected upon. The actors are on stage and while the musician plays, the conductor recalls the stories that were shared. The actors then embody the essence of each story and they freeze. This acknowledges all the stories that have been told, and clearly signals the end of the performance.

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[14] For the purpose of this study it was necessary to re-tell the story to the actors, as due to the facilities, there was a great deal of noise and the actors and audience could not always hear what the teller was saying. This is not a common practice, but it was necessary to adapt to the circumstances. It did not influence the outcome of the performance.

2.3. Stories and storytelling

According to social constructionist theory, knowledge is created through the daily social interactions that individuals have with one another. It is through these daily interactions that knowledge is shared and constructed. It is this shared knowledge that allows people to understand their current perception of the world. This is, however, not a 'product... of objective observation of the world, but [a product] of the social processes and interactions in which [individuals] are constantly engaged with each other' (Burr, 2003: 4 - 5) - a subjective and experiential engagement with the world. Thus, when a person speaks (tell his/her stories) the world is constructed (Burr, 2003: 8), and the importance of stories in constructing the social world is well documented (Webster & Mertova, 2007; Somers, 1994; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Stories provide coherence and continuity in experiences and it plays a central role in communication (Lieblich et al., 1998: 7). Helen Woodruffe-Burton and Richard Elliott (2005: 462) state that people make sense of their lives through the stories they can or cannot tell, and understand themselves through the stories they create in order to situate themselves in time, space and in relation to others. Fivush et al. (2012: 296) say that personal stories 'are both the process and product of how we create meaning from the events [in our everyday] lives.' How individuals construct the narratives they tell others, is also a way for people to understand their own narratives and, through constructing new narrative, they can discover new ways of understanding their own experiences.

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (2002: 11) proposes that people interpret their lives as stories, thus their worlds and realities are constructed by the stories they tell themselves, what they tell others about themselves and by the discourses they use to tell their stories. By telling and re-telling (and performing) personal stories, the storyteller's discourse 'produces the effect that it names' (Butler, 1990: 78); thus the story can become the teller's actual world/reality (Ezzy, 1998: 245). How individuals live their lives may in effect be the result of the ways in which they 'storied' their lives. Stories also reveal different people's way of seeing the world and how their value systems work. Most value systems, according to Jaworski and Coupland (1999: 7),

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are 'pre - structured', that is to say: what a particular society or a specific institution, sees as normal or suitable, provides a dominant discourse as the backdrop against which stories are framed.

Stories and the way in which they are told are thus significant in creating and effecting social and personal realities (Webster & Mertova, 2007: 2 - 3). Through stories an individual can position him/herself and his/her patterns of behaviour in a coherent progression of meaningful events (Woodruffe-Burton & Elliott, 2005: 462) and so create a 'subjective sense of self-continuity as it symbolically integrates the events' (Ezzy, 1998: 239). Stories thus provide a means of finding coherence and continuity in experiences and play a central role in communication (Lieblich et al., 1998: 7). Whilst storytelling may create a sense of coherence or stability in an individual's world/reality/experience, the construction thereof is dependent on the kind of discourse and interactions s/he has with other people (Ezzy, 1998: 246). On the other hand, Laitinen (2002: 3) suggests that in the process of storying, an individual is not only the person who tells the story, or even the one about whom a story is being told, but the individual becomes the reader and the writer of his/her own world/reality. Therefore, the storyteller is the interpreter, the interpreted and the 'recipient of the interpretation' (Laitinen, 2002: 3). Should the ways of telling stories, and the meanings individuals attach to stories change, their way of seeing the world or how they see themselves in it, may also shift.

It is in this regard that playback theatre is useful in exploring the relationship between dominant and personal discourses. Playback theatre has the potential to invalidate and/or highlight 'turning points' (Lapadat et al., 2010: 78) that can reveal the ways in which personal discourses have been imprinted by dominant discourses and each individual's ability to implement discourses into understanding their world.

2.1. Ritual in playback theatre

According to Bial (2004: 77) rituals provide the means for people to organise the world to fit their outlook on it. Rituals are a way for people to mark the passage of time (anniversaries), to mark the transformation of their social status (coming of age) and to guarantee good luck, giving them the sense of being able to control their uncertain existence. Thus, they 'are performances that provide structure and continuity to our lives'. (Bial, 2004: 77). Rituals are repetitive and although they may alter over time, they are fixed points enabling people to evaluate the remainder of their existence. Rituals reinforce the belief systems and moral values of the society that perform them. Societies become defined through their rituals (Bial, 2004: 77). Schechner (1993: 230) goes on to say that rituals represent actions that mimic real social events or problems and allow people safely to confront these problems indirectly. Thus, rituals become a metaphorical bridge, carrying people across dangerous waters to confront problems and then safely returning them to reality.

Playback theatre is rooted in ritual and theatrical ritual; from the structure of the performance to the re-enactment of the stories that are told. Fox (1999: 123) explains that, though playback theatre can be performed anywhere and is thus an informal type of theatre, 'there is nothing informal about the ritual of playback theatre'. There are definite rules in the use of its theatrical ritual and these rules form the framework of the performance, which is necessary because the spontaneity that playback theatre creates and requires may turn into chaos if rules are not adhered to (Fox, 1999: 128). Rules also help the audience to feel safe enough to enter the space willingly (Fox, 1999: 128). Jonathan Fox (1999: 11) argues that playback theatre creates a ritual in playback theatre that is designed to stir the audience's feelings but does not respond directly to the problems raised. This way audience members have an opportunity to have their opinions heard, which in turn allows for 'creative breakthroughs' (Fox, 1999: 125) and mediated responses to feelings and issues addressed. Rituals take place in physical space; the ritual of playback theatre creates what Adderley (2004: 9) calls a 'sacred space', brought about by the arrangement of the stage and the space where the audience is seated.

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Lastly, an after-show reflective period is an essential part of the ritual, as it facilitates the integration of the experience for audience members as they prepare to re-enter the social world beyond the theatre event (Dennis, 2004: 6).

2.2. Witnessing in playback theatre

'Witnessing is an act of presence and testimony, of authentication and memory-making, of evidence and seeing' (Prendergast, 2008: 95).

In playback theatre this describes the teller, the audience and the playback performers. The teller relates a story from his/her life, thus the teller testifies as to how he/she experienced the event and the audience bears witness to this testimony. The teller and the audience then watch as the story is played back by the performers.

In '*Performing Witness Testimonial Theatre in the Age of Asylum, Australia 2000–2005*' (2010), Caroline Wake divides witnessing into two categories; primary and secondary witnessing. According to her, a primary witness is someone who was present and actively involved with the event (Wake, 2010: 41). In playback theatre the teller takes on the role of primary witness, as he/she conveys a story to the audience. Etchells (1999; 17) goes on to say that, when witnessing an event as it is happening, one feels the ethical weight of the event and also one's place within that event, even if it means that at that moment one is only an observer. For Wake (2010: 41) this means that in a performance, the spectator should not experience the action as something that is repeated on stage, but should experience it as something that is happening right now.

A secondary witness is:

'A witness to the testimonies of others ... [a participant] not in the events, but in the account given to them... as the immediate receiver of these testimonies' (Felman & Laub,1992; 75 - 76).

In playback theatre the teller and the audience act as secondary witnesses. The audience may empathise with the action on stage, while the teller becomes a witness to his/her own story. Wake (2010: 49) goes on to say that spect-actors, can be both primary and secondary witnesses, I propose that in playback theatre it is the audience who moves between these two modes of witnessing. Audience members take on the role of tellers and afterwards move back into the audience and at the same time audience members listen to the teller's stories and observe the re-enactment.

Through dialogue and observation an audience member may also view him or herself as 'another' during a playback performance. This is fundamental to the playback experience. Linda Park-Fuller (2000: 23) states that although people's stories may differ, in a setting where people tell their stories, one does not only get to speak and witness one's own truth, but one can also 'create valid artistic and aesthetic experiences'. One learns that personal stories do not merely seek to entertain, but they bear witness to human experiences. In this way playback theatre brings about transformations which reaffirm validation in the community and allow one to feel connected to others in one's group or community (Salas, 2000: 459). It promotes dialogue and builds empathy between people, because the audience can see how the teller experiences a situation and is thereby better able to relate to that experience. Empathy, in this situation, refers to the fact that the audience can associate with what they hear and see, although they do not necessarily feel sympathy towards the teller.

Park-Fuller (2000: 23) goes on to say that 'witnessing', is not just telling a story about the past. It is a 'creative telling that occurs in the moment' and affects both the teller and the listener with great impact. According to Dennis (2004: 198; 217), although audience members may not have the courage to tell their own stories, they can witness themselves in someone else's re-enactment, thus giving them the feeling that their stories have been told. During the witnessing process connections are created between the audience members (Dennis, 2004: 104) by witnessing, from connections with those around one (Dennis, 2004: 221).

Adderley (2004: 15) states that every human[15] being has a need to be seen by others, and to be recognised by others. Playback theatre offers a safe place for tellers to emerge, because of the human need to be visible and to be heard (Adderley, 2004: 15). This basic premise of playback theatre is rooted in the need for mutual acknowledgement (recognition) (Feldhendler, 2008: 8). The notion of mutual acknowledgement proposes that one re-evaluates one's own experiences, thus looking at these experiences as if the 'self' becomes 'another'. It also implies that one re-examine one's personal history in the present, thus examining one's personal reality (Feldhendler 2008: 8). Recognition according to Sonia Albert (2010: 2) 'means to discover or get to know something or someone again.' For her the act of recognition allows one the opportunity to look at the people around one through new eyes, letting one see things that were ignored before. It allows individuals to become aware of what they have in common and what their differences are (Albert, 2010: 2). According to Honneth (1995: 92)

> '...the reproduction of social life is governed by the imperative of mutual recognition, because one can develop a practical relation-to-self only when one has learned to view oneself, from the normative perspective of one's partners in interaction, as their social addressee.'

Part of this need for recognition serves to locate individuals within their communities (Fleming & Finnegan, 2010: 2 - 3) and in relation to one another, the need for recognition 'expresses an expectation that can be satisfied only by mutual recognition' (Ricoeur, 2005: 19). O'Dwyer (2009: 17) also states that the need to be recognised by those around us is an essential part of reaffirming one's own place in a community. By witnessing and listening to each other's stories, individuals not only give but also receive recognition from one another, thus reaffirming their place in the community.

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[15] I acknowledge the problematic issue of so-called universality in this statement.

2.3. The aesthetic paradox in playback theatre

Lapadat et al. (2010: 78) states that: '...the telling of one's story is both a construction of self and a performance of self, in which the listener/reader/viewer is implicated as witness, audience, collaborator, and co-constructor.' Playback theatre thus serves as a space where people can witness one another's personal stories (Chesner, 2002: 64) being interpreted and performed. The focus is on witnessing the storyteller's story from the 'outside in'. The witnessing of the re-enactment of a story, offers a transitive space in which 'humans become social actors, both agent and subject of their stories' (Feldhendler, 2008: 118). Witnessing a story being interpreted on stage allows for a distancing from the story or experience (Rogers, 2005: 8) that may reposition and alter the perceived 'reality' of the event (Jackson, 2007: 1441). This is termed aesthetic distance. This distance allows the storyteller to view his/her story from another point of view, or even multiple points of view, that offer the possibility of critically re-evaluating stories, events or experiences (Salas, 2000: 290; Park-Fuller, 2005: 7) and positioning stories in relation to the stories of others (locating stories in a communal context).

For the audience, aesthetic distance allows for an involvement in the events on stage whilst simultaneously being aware of the functionality of the events on stage. It allows the audience to believe, and at the same time not to believe, what they are seeing (Jackson, 2007: 140). In temporarily suspending their disbelief in a playback theatre performance, the audience becomes witnesses and observers as well as participants' (Adderley, 2004: 7). Jackson (2007: 141) proposes that the 'real' world is being represented on stage in such a way that the audience can recognise the representation as real (the world exists), but at the same time they are distanced from that 'reality', enabling them to be critical of what they are seeing. This results in what Park–Fuller (2005: 10) terms the 'aesthetic paradox' - an identification-detachment effect that comes from watching one's story and/or oneself being enacted and interpreted on stage. The (re)telling of stories assists in disengaging the story from a lived experience, dismantling 'pre-reflective underpinnings' of stories,

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and overtly re-assembling through performance and a discursive repositioning (Park-Fuller, 2005: 10).

Coetzee and Munro (2007: n.p.) argue that the oscillation between identification and detachment (for audiences and storytellers) opens up dialogue between the 'real' and the 'symbolic' or the 'potential'[16]. This dialogue opens up a 'third space' of engagement and critical reflection. Playback theatre facilitates the oscillation between identification and detachment in participants. The 'third space' paves the way for multiple understanding and perspectives to materialise – opening the door to provide readings and positions celebrating pluralism, multivalence and multiple meanings (Coetzee, 2009: 112 - 113). Storytelling in playback theatre is the gateway to this third space. I will argue that the aesthetic paradox draws attention to the interplay between the stability (key themes) in and mutability of stories, which in turn draws attention to the conscious act of story construction. In doing so, stories and experiences are positioned as unstable constructs – emphasising the construction of personal 'reality' in which meaning(s) and understanding(s) can be (re)negotiated and (re)imagined.

2.4. Modes of communication in playback theatre

For van Schoor (1986: 2) communication refers to the meaning that human beings give to what they wish to communicate. He goes on to say that people have a need to express themselves to others, but more importantly, the need to be understood. For him 'an act of expression is only fulfilled when the message has been received and understood'. For this to begin the recipient of the message must actively

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[16]Debates on the real highlight, as Usher and Edwards (1994:119) state, that experience is not a direct representation of the world, but in itself a construct, 'the outcome of discursive practices'. In this dissertation, 'the real' refers to a mediated and personalised construction of the physical world outside the dramatic situation that students and facilitators occupy within the learning process (Coetzee & Munro, 2007, IDEA paper).

interpret the meaning of it (van Schoor, 1986: 3). However, communication does not always involve using the same medium to communicate.

According to Fox (2003: 38; 40 - 41) 'language' in playback theatre frequently takes on a non-verbal quality, for within a performance, the language is often repetitive and ritualistic. The conductor will often echo important lines from the tellers' stories, creating a trance - like quality. The informal language used between the teller and the conductor often resembles every day conversations. Anna-Lena Østern (2008: 83) speaks of multimodality in playback theatre, which refers to combining and mixing various modes of expression to create meaning. The expressions used to convey meaning in playback theatre are 'sound, verbal language, music, movement, acting and pieces of cloth' and it is the combined use of these modes that creates a space where symbolism and visual display can give stories a rich and deep meaning.

According to social constructionist theory, language provides individuals with the means to 'structure their experiences of the world' and the ideas people use in this construction do not 'pre-date language', but instead are 'made possible by it'. It also states that, because of this, there exists a possibility of alternative construction of one's discourse through language (Burr, 2003: 47 - 48). I propose that it is within the multimodality of playback theatre that the possibility for re-constructing one's own story exists.

2.5. Creating community through playback theatre

I will look at community and the way in which it allows for audience members as a group to form new and shared discourses within a playback context.

The 'collective…spectating' that playback theatre offers encourages 'multiple moments of communitas' (Dennis, 2004: 2) that promote community building, in that it creates a space where communal meaning can be created and shared. By

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witnessing and listening to each other's stories, individuals not only give but also receive recognition from one another, thus reaffirming their place in the community (O'Dwyer, 2009: 17).

Dewey (as cited in Fisher, 1997: 307 - 308), states that community implies 'entering into the activities of others and taking part in conjoint and cooperative doings and sharing experiences that over time become 'a common procession'. Similarly, Benedict Anderson's[17] seminal 1983 text proposes that conceptualisations of community are temporally, symbolically and affectively produced, rather than being authentic, stable and continuous entities. For Anderson (1991: 6 - 7), community refers to the image, sense and physical presence of being interconnected to members of a community. The connections are maintained by narrative constructions or stories that often perpetuate dominant discourses supposedly in the interests of the 'greater good'. Hoesch (1999: 46) states that playback theatre foregrounds this interconnectedness by searching for commonalities and connectivity through stories and facilitating what Feldhendler (2008: 8) terms 'mutual acknowledgement'. The notion of mutual acknowledgement proposes that one re-evaluates one's own experiences, thus looking at these experiences as if the 'self' becomes 'another'. It is through mutual acknowledgement, empathising with stories and the realisation that there are others who may share one's views and the thematic content in stories that a sense of community may be created (Hoesch, 1999: 47) and that a 'form of mindfulness' for others can be cultivated (Feldhendler, 2008: 8).The telling and retelling process makes visible the underlying social, political and personal dimensions of human interactions in a given context and builds synergy between individuals and their communities through a 'dynamic mediation' of the tensions within stories (Feldhendler, 2008: 1).

Due to the centrifugal role that the audience plays in constructing a sense of community, a playback performance necessarily dialogues within the cultural views

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[17]In his work '*Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*' (1991), Anderson actually refers to nation. However, his ideas include community as a building block for nationhood.

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of the particular participating community (Oivo, 2004: 5) and therefore may foster a sense of community. Dennis (2004: 50) further states that participating in a performance creates a sense of intimacy among participants as well as performers. Participants may feel connected to one another, or may experience a heightened sense of awareness. These feelings in turn allow for the participants to look at questions regarding life, culture, community and humanity in a new way (Dennis 2004: 50). Playback theatre enhances the communication skills of the participants and serves as a space where people can witness each other's personal stories, in a non-therapeutic environment (Chesner, 2002: 64).

2.6.   Conclusion

In this chapter I provided a brief history of playback theatre, in which I highlighted its development and defined the key structures that operate within playback theatre. This chapter also provided the reader with key aspects of playback theatre, which allows the tellers and the audience to re-examine their circumstances through witnessing and aesthetic distancing and 'collective…spectating'. In the following chapter I will provide the outline for my playback theatre sessions. I will also note observations as a participant observer, concerning how the participants proceeded to re-construct their stories during the performances and the group discussions.

Chapter 3: Playback theatre process – lesson planning

3.1.   Introduction

In the previous chapter I briefly described the history of playback theatre and outlined key aspects within it that allow one to re-examine one's own narrative. In this chapter I used narrative analysis as outlined in Chapter 1 to highlight recurrent themes within each session. I also looked at dominant and personal discourses that arise in the session.   When looking at dominant discourses, I traced recurrent threads within the stories that are told. When looking at personal discourse, I paid attention to both individual and group perceptions that emerged during the study. In this regard I documented my observation, while also considering witnessing, and aesthetic distancing during the sessions.

I also explained the notion of the playback ritual in Chapter 2. Based on this, I structured the playback session in the form of a ritual, starting with the performance and ending with journaling of experience, learning and thoughts. Framing the session in the form of a ritual, should allow the participants to feel comfortable enough to share their stories freely. It also provides a safe space to explore the context of stories (Schechner, 1993: 230).

This chapter also contains the broad outline of the facilitation process I used in the twelve playback theatre sessions, with a group of adolescents aged between 15 and 18 years in a high school in Hammanskraal. As noted in the previous chapter, the structure of a playback theatre performance is rooted in the ritual of oral story – telling. As such, there is a basic 'outline' of a performance, but the details cannot be plotted out in advance, as the audience generates much of the content and the players and the playback company adapt to that which the audience brings to the event. As this was a research project with specific aims, I necessarily did more pre-planning than I would in other circumstances. Still, I had to provide for flexibility as per the nature of playback theatre.

Fulma Hoesch (1999: 46) speaks about the 'red thread' which is a theme that will present and re-present itself as the underlying social issue in the playback sessions. I argue that this 'red thread' is the manifestation of the dominant discourse operating and participants' responses to this discourse

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I worked in collaboration with Khulisa during this study. As part of this collaboration a social worker from Khulisa was always present during the sessions. Working in collaboration with an NGO presented its own obstacles. Khulisa had specific aims for the project that needed to be incorporated into the study. Khulisa requested that as a part of the project, I do exercises with the participant that would help them to express their feelings in a constructive manner. Although this is not part of a playback theatre performance, I accepted that Khulisa's aims for the project were just as important as mine. To accommodate their request, I incorporated playback theatre exercises used to foster self-expression. In relation to my aims for the study, I used these exercises as a means for the participants to reflect on the playback performances and the stories that had been told.

Another consideration that needed to be taken into account was that the social worker was there to supervise the programme. The social worker could change the theme if she felt that it was not appropriate or if there was an issue she wanted to address or investigate. Therefore, the themes were discussed with the social worker before the performance took place. During the study there arose only two occasions where the social worker asked for specific themes to be addressed and which shifted my aims for the sessions somewhat.

After each session, the social worker and I had a brief discussion about the performance. During these discussions we would note the themes that had been raised and discuss what themes to consider for the next session, while keeping the research aims in mind. The chapter outlines the different sections of each session, the session activities, the motivation for the activities and the materials I used. It further provides brief information on the specific facilitation process I followed in each of the sessions. In the discussion of the process, I made personal observations (see

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research approach in Chapter 1) and I extracted the dominant themes that emerged during each session. I will also made use of Hoesch's (1999) notion of the 'red thread' to illustrate recurring themes. These sessions also served as a reflection on playback performances, which then provided a means to understand the flow from one session to the next. In the tables below, each session plan is outlined. I structured the sessions into Activities, Motivation, Material and Process in order to create an overall reflection of the activities in the playback theatre sessions.

3.2. Framework for playback theatre sessions as conducted during the research period

Age Group	Age 15 – 18
Location	Classroom
Session No	1
Duration	120 minutes
Facilitator	Odia Jordaan. Referred to in sessions as 'Conductor' or 'Facilitator'
	IMPORTANT: In order to prevent repetition of information, the rationale behind all the rituals and use of other elements of playback theatre will be discussed here. In all the sessions the stage set-up and the flow of the playback performance will remain the same. **The Stage Set-Up** The stage set – up is done in a pre-established formation (ritual) which is structurally adhered to, and remains consistent within all playback performances (Fox & Dauber, 1999: 7). The conductor is seated on the left and next to him/her is the teller's chair. The musician is seated on the opposite side of the stage, with an arrangement of different instruments on the floor. The actors are between them, in a half circle, usually seated on boxes or chairs meant as props. Upstage left is a wooden structure covered in different coloured cloths that will also serve as props (Salas, 1983: 18). This arrangement and the designation of space form part of the ritual of playback theatre and clearly demarcate the space of each person involved in the performance (Adderley, 2004: 9). **The Flow of the Performance**: **Pre-Show** The Pre-Show starts with the performers introducing themselves to the audience. Each performer shares an emotion with the audience which is then acted out through fluid sculpture (see Chapter 2) by the rest of the group. This gives the audience an

indication of what to expect during the performance. It also serves to elicit a response from the audience. The audience is then asked to share with the group a feeling or emotion, which is then to be played back by way of Fluid Sculpture or Pairs (see Chapter 2). Early introduction of the concept of sharing emotions is done to elicit audience participation and ease them into sharing their stories and emotions with the group.

Warm-Up

The audience is asked to elaborate on the emotions they are sharing, explaining what event led to the feeling, thus telling a short story which is played back through 'Narrative V' and '3 Part story' (see Chapter Two). This introduces storytelling and prepares the audience for sharing longer stories.

Stories

Audience members are asked to come onto the stage and share stories around issues or events personally relevant to them. The teller sits in the teller's chair and tells a story about an event that took place in his/her life, to the conductor. During the telling, the conductor asks questions to learn more about the issue/event in the story. The story is then played back to the teller by the actors. After the enactment or playback, the conductor asks the teller: 'Is that how it was?' If the teller is satisfied, he/she is asked to return to the audience. If the teller is not satisfied, he/she can choose to have the story played back again, with the correction.

Closure

During closure all the stories that have been told are revisited and reflected upon. The actors are on stage; while the musician plays the conductor re-calls the stories that were shared. The actors then embody the essence (key elements) of each story and freeze. This is done in order to emphasise that each story is important, remembered and acknowledged. It also signals to the audience the end of the performance.

3.3. Session plan 1: Introduction to playback theatre

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location: applicable to all sessions.	Preparation of location. The facilitator will set up the playback theatre stage in accordance with the playback ritual.	To uphold the traditional arrangement of players, props and instruments.	Coloured cloth Chairs Musical Instruments: Guitar Journals Pens	
Introduction 1: Getting to know the rules.	The facilitator welcomes the participants and thanks them for their willingness to participate. The participants write down their names for Khulisa, this is for the social reports. The facilitator briefly introduces the rules of playback theatre, emphasising that confidentiality will be ensured.	To impart important information to the participants and to create an opportunity for the participants to get to know the facilitator. The rules create a safe space in which the group can share their stories.		I started my introductory playback theatre session by explaining the ethical considerations related to this study (see Letter of Informed Assent and Consent in Appendix B). I proceeded to explain the rules and the nature of playback theatre to the participants. I explained to them the importance of mutual respect and respecting each other's stories and respecting the playback theatre space.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Introduction 1: Getting to know the rules.	Explain The Rules: • Attendance: All 12 sessions have to be attended. • Members may not talk during a participant's re-enactment, as it is disrespectful towards the teller. • Group members may not write the names of other participants in their journals – confidentiality must be maintained. Respect the space: • Within the playback performance space all stories must be treated with respect.	Each member has the right to be heard and have his/her story respected. The group needs to know that journals are private and that each person has the right to privacy and respect.		Once I had explained the rules I gave the participants the chance to ask questions about the study. All participants indicated that they understood the rules and ethical considerations and that they were satisfied with them. This was captured on DVD and indicated on the letters of informed assent and informed consent that were handed out and signed before the study commenced.
Playback Performance	Playback performance is conducted as follows: The facilitator will ask the participant open-ended questions.	Playback theatre opens the way for various potential themes to be explored in later sessions.	Cloth Chairs Musical Instrument: Guitar	The first session was an introduction to playback theatre.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Playback Performance	**The Flow of the Performance**: **Pre-Show** The Pre-Show starts with the play back performers introducing themselves to the audience. Each performer shares an emotion with the audience which the actors act out by way of fluid sculpture. The audience is thereafter asked to share with the group a feeling or emotion, which will then be played back through Fluid Sculpture or Pairs. **Warm-Up** The audience is asked to elaborate on the emotions they are sharing and to explain what event led to the particular feeling or emotion, thus telling a short	It gives the audience an indication of what to expect during the performance and serves to stimulate further responses from them. This is done to introduce to the audience the concept of sharing feelings and to facilitate audience participation. By sharing an emotion first, the audience is eased into sharing their stories with the group. This introduces storytelling and prepares the audience for sharing longer stories.	Cloth Chairs Musical Instrument: Guitar	The playback group therefore opened the first playback theatre performance by sharing feelings of happiness in meeting co – participants. The playback group did this to open the way towards confidence and openness in sharing their stories and feelings with us. As conductor I found the participants wary and hesitant to share stories. However, once they realised that the playback group respected and listened to their stories, they became more

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Playback Performance	story which is played back through Narrative V and 3 Part story.		Cloth Chairs Musical Instrument: Guitar	comfortable and started telling their stories.
	Stories Audience members are asked to come onto the stage and share stories from their lives. The teller sits in the teller's chair and tells a story to the conductor about an event that occurred in his/her life.	Sharing stories promotes constructive interaction between the participants, creating a space where interactive communication can take place.		Two themes emerged. Poverty and friendship. The theme of friendship was a result of the theme that the social worker and I chose. It shows that the participants are willing to accept themes and talk about them.
	The conductor asks questions during the telling in order to learn more about the event in the story. The story is then played back to the teller.	By viewing the story from the outside the tellers have the opportunity to step back, distance themselves from their problems and to re-evaluate it (Park–Fuller, 2010: 13). Thus empowers the audience through self-knowledge.		Poverty seems to be a reality that they are faced with and that structures much of their social imagination.
	After the enactment, the conductor checks with the teller, asking 'Is that how it was?' If the teller is satisfied with the enactment he/she is asked to return to the audience.	This is done in order to emphasise that each story is that was told is remembered and acknowledged. It also signals to the audience that the performance has ended.		

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Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Playback Performance	**Closure** During closure all the stories that have been told are revisited and reflected upon. The actors stand on stage, while the musician plays and the conductor recalls the stories that have been shared. The actors then embody the essence of each story and freeze.	The closure acknowledges all of the stories that were told. Giving validation to those who were tellers. While also allowing the audience to re-evaluate their own experiences, therefor looking at these experiences as if the 'self' becomes 'another'. It also allows them to re-examine their personal history in the present, thus allowing them to re- examining their personal reality (Feldhendler, 2008: 8).	Cloth Chairs Musical Instrument: Guitar	Remembering all of the stories helped the participants to reflect on what they had witnessed. It also served as a reminder of all the stories that had been told.
Focus group discussion.	A reflective discussion is held, discussing what happened during the performance and what the participants' have learned. During the reflection the participants discuss how their perceptions/view of their own and each other's stories might have changed after the re-enactment.	Reflective discussion allows the participants to reflect on what is seen and to enhance collective understandings. The re-storying during the performance allows the storyteller to perceive his/her story from another point of view - even multiple points of view -	Journals Pens	The participants were hesitant to share openly during the discussion. I realised that the participants were uncomfortable with the idea of talking about their feelings. Therefore, I asked them to share with me how it felt to see their stories being played back to them. The participants

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Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Focus group discussion		And in relation to the stories of others. This points to stories and realities as social and discursive constructs which can be (re)imagined and (re)storied.		responded by saying that it made them happy. I asked the participants if they found that they could relate to each other's stories. They all said that they could relate to at least one story that was told during the performance. The participants said that even though their experiences might have been different there are commonalities to be found with each other, thus through witnessing they realised that their experiences are not singular in the world, which relates back to their developmental phase and the sense of community that playback creates.
Journaling	Participants each take a numbered journal and are asked to remember the number of their	Numbered journals will ensure that the identities of the participants are protected	Journals Pens	I asked the participants closed ended questions about their experience during the session

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Journaling	journal as they will use it throughout the study. The participants answer (in writing) questions on what they have learned during the performance. Participants write down what they have learned during the performance. Journaling will allow the participants to internalise what they have learned and experienced. Journaling may also allow participants who are too shy to share their stories in public a chance to articulate their experience.	(Cresswell, 2007: 141). Journaling allows participants to distance themselves from performances and reflect on what they have experienced (Morgan & Saxton, 1987: 22). Journaling is used to help participants to internalise the material that they have seen. It also offers individuals the opportunity to communicate with themselves their understanding of what they have experienced (Morgan & Saxton, 1987: 22). Journaling will allow the participants to refine their 'ideas, beliefs and…responses to the research', while also allowing me to triangulate the findings from my data (Janesick, 1999; 505).		and they wrote the answers in their journals. I found this limited the participants' writing, as they were reluctant to elaborate on the answers that they gave.

3.4. Session plan 2: Responsibility

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location: Playback Performance	Same as in Session 1 Theme: Responsibility Performance Same as in Session 1	Testing the participants' prior knowledge on responsibility may prompt them to begin thinking about their experience and understanding of responsibility. (See Chapter 1)		The introduction to the session went well and the participants were comfortable with the playback ritual. As the original purpose of the study was to address issues of personal responsibility I introduced it as the theme for this session, as a means to test the participants on their prior knowledge and experience of the subject.
Focus group discussion	Same as in Session 1			What emerged was that, within the group's cultural(s) (as defined by the stories they told); children are responsible for household tasks, such as washing the dishes. Participants shared the experience that, regardless of how they feel and because they are children, they have to do what their parents demand,

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Focus group discussion	Same as in Session 1			no matter how unfair the circumstances. Most of the participants shared this feeling. The original purpose of the study was to address issues of responsibility; but this session made it very clear that the participants are faced with overwhelming responsibilities in their daily lives. Their response indicated a resistance to the hierarchy within their respective households

Most of the stories in this session are centred around the obligatory responsibilities that the participants are faced with at home. I entered the study with preconceptions regarding the participants' lack of personal responsibility, as per Khulisa's briefing. During my interviews with Khulisa's social worker, it became clear that my interpretation was incorrect and that the game plan would have to change. |

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Journaling	Facilitator will ask participants how they felt about the stories.	After the first session I found that participants are less likely to write freely when asked pointed questions. Therefore I will ask one open-ended, explorative question and ask them to explain their answer. This may prompt them to think about what they have experienced (Morgan & Saxton, 1987: 22).		Instead of asking the participants pointed questions, I asked them to write down what they felt they learnt. This worked better than asking pointed questions and the participants felt it allowed them more freedom to elaborate on what they had experienced.

3.5. Session plan 3: Learning new things

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location: Playback Performance	Same as in Session 1 Theme: Learning New Things	Participants must be allowed more opportunities to reveal issues they feel need to be addressed along the lines of my research aims.		The theme of responsibility was again raised. Another aspect that arose during this performance is that, within the participants' social reality, adolescents are also responsible for ensuring that guests in the house are taken care of.

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Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Playback Performance				A theme that presented itself during this session was that of **disempowerment**. The participants felt disempowered as they are subject to their social realities without having the agency to engage meaningfully with household values. This impacted on other aspects of their lives, such as school responsibilities. This feeling was shared by more than one participant, indicating that it is a shared story thread. If one looks at the narrative markers, it is a shared personal discourse amongst them.
Exercise	Participants form smaller groups. Within each group they must find one emotion that they all felt, during the performance They then play this emotion back to the entire group.	Make the participants aware that they have similar feelings and similar experiences. This relates back to the notion of community that was discussed in Chapter 2 Participants will have the opportunity to express themselves physically. This will teach them about using non - verbal communication.		While viewing the performances I observed that the participants were somewhat hesitant and self-conscious in re-enacting feelings and that they found it difficult to express verbally the feeling they had chosen. They would try to express the feeling by using no sound. Indicating that they have trouble expressing themselves. Which may indicate a

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Exercise	The playback group watches the participants' performance and applauds each group when they are done.	Starting with one emotion, they are introduced to the idea that they have shared feelings towards certain events. (See Chapter 2)		difficulty in communication. After the session I spoke to the social worker about my observation, as I may have misinterpreted their performance due to my own cultural background. The social worker informed me that she also observed that they had difficulty in expressing themselves and that this was due to their circumstances at home, as they are not permitted to express themselves. I spoke to her about expression, in an attempt to discern the cultural differences that I may have with the participants in expressing oneself, and she informed me that there were very little differences.
Focus group discussion	Same as in Session 1	Reflection gives the participants the opportunity to distance themselves from the experience and think about what they have learned and may help them internalise the experience (Morgan & Saxton, 1987: 22).		I had a very brief discussion with the participants to find out how they perceived the exercise of this session. They informed me that they found it exciting and wonderful to be able to express their emotions, as

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Focus group discussion	Same as in Session 1	Expression forms part of non-verbal communication and is important, as it contributes to the meaning that one wishes to communicate. (Beck, Bennett & Wall, 2002: 154).		they are not permitted to do so normally. Based on the stories that were told and the discussion with the participants', this may be because they are not allowed to give vent to their feelings without experiencing retaliation on the part of their parents and teachers. The participants' perception is that their parents and teachers do not listen to children, this in turn may create a lack of mutual acknowledgement.
Journaling	Same as in Session 2	Same as in session 2.		

3.6.   Session plan 4: Respect

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location	Same as in Session 1			
Playback Performance	Theme: Respect	Don Hellison (2011: 21; 34) states that respect is the first step in personal responsibility, as respecting the rights and feelings of others shows personal responsibility. Escartí et al. (2010: 672) goes on to say that it also include respecting the rules and respecting other enough to give them a turn to speak, allowing for a willingness to enter into dialogue. To test the participants' knowledge regarding respect.		As conductor I found this session very difficult due to the fact that teachers making preparations for their exams kept interrupting the session. This destroyed the ritual that creates a safe space in playback theatre. As a result the participants became withdrawn and were reluctant to share their stories, and long periods of silence followed. I realised that I had to re-establish the feeling of safety for the participants. By allowing the participants to share their stories in their own time and giving them time to come back to the space, the feeling of safety within the space was gradually restored. It is my belief that this would not have been possible without the trust that had

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Playback Performance				been built between the participants and the playback group over the course of the previous sessions. **Obligatory Responsibility** as a theme was raised once again within the stories. There emerged a sense of resentment towards their circumstances regarding how they had to submit to the role which had been assigned to them, within their household and their culture, regardless of the responsibilities that the school places on them. This feeling of resentment was a recurrent story thread that emerged within the participants' stories throughout the playback sessions. This recurrent pattern could thus be seen as a personal discourse that is resistant to the dominant discourse of obligatory responsibility.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Exercise	Participants form smaller groups. Each group chooses two emotions that they, as a group, felt during the performance. They then play these emotions back to the entire group.	To teach the participants that they can experience more than one emotion during a story.		Most of the participants related to the stories of parents not listening to their needs and not having time for them. This feeling is a recurrent thread that has emerged in the playback theatre sessions and can also be seen as a personal discourse.
Focus group discussion.	Same as in Session 3			During the discussion the participants indicated that they are beginning to understand that other people have similar experiences, and that they can therefore relate to one another, as opposed to feeling of 'I am the only one who feels this'. This correlated with their developmental phase. (see Chapter 1)
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			I came to the conclusion that the participants are faced with what they perceive as overwhelming responsibilities and that this has an impact on the way they relate to their world and other people.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			They also lacked the skills to communicate effectively with one another and their parents. This is one of the major problems that should be addressed and even at this early stage, it was clear that by taking part in playback theatre, the participants became more aware of interaction and shared their feelings. The recurrent thread was that of a lack of communication between participants and their parents, and also a sense of frustration with their circumstances. This motivated not only myself, but also the social worker to take a closer look at the need for promoting communication skills. This in turn could be a stimulus for developing agency (although this falls outside of the scope of this mini-dissertation).

3.7. Session plan 5: Communication

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location: Playback Performance	Same as in Session 1 Theme: Communication	During the previous session I have realised that the participants lack communication skills. The theme will allow me to investigate the participants' 'understanding and experience of communication		The participants were reluctant to share stories. The stories that were shared indicate that communication at home occurs mostly through arguments. Stories that were shared, once again indicated that the parents of the participants **do not listen** to them. This causes a lack of communication. This story thread has presented itself throughout the sessions. Looking at the marker indicated in Chapter 1, this story thread then presented itself as a dominant discourse within the participants' culture, as they understand it within the focus group.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Exercise	Participants break into groups and choose stories to which they could relate and then choose an emotion they felt while watching; these emotions will then be played back to the whole group.	To teach the participants that they can associate with more than one story and make more than one connection.		
Focus group discussion.	Same as in Session 3			After a discussion with the social worker, she and I agreed that during the remainder of the sessions, communication needed to be addressed. I will make use of playback techniques and exercises to enhance and foster effective communication skills.
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			

3.8.   Session plan 6: Preparing for the Examinations

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location	Same as in Session 1			
Playback Performance	Theme: Preparing for the Exam	Khulisa's social worker contacted me and informed me that in a discussion with the participants, they had indicated that the themes were too heavy for them. The social worker asked that the group discuss a lighter theme during this session. At this point the exams were a prominent part of the participants' lives and were therefore an obvious choice.		The participants responded to the theme by sharing feelings of anxiety and stress about the exams, while some felt confident. Some participants shared their stories of how difficult they found the exams to be. I have noted that the participants are very tired due to the stress they are facing prior to the exams. This has made them slow to respond to the conductor's invitation to share stories
Exercise	The participants divide into smaller groups and each has to choose an emotion that they experienced during the performance.	To give participants the opportunity to explore more than one way of expressing the same emotion, as they understand it, as there are multiple ways for communicating. (van Schoor, 1986; Corner & Hawthorn, 1980) and one		The participants did not understand the exercise and I had to explain it to them repeatedly. I then asked them to practise enacting these different expressions. The initial practice session resulted in all of the participants expressing the

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Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Exercise	The participants are given the opportunity to demonstrate how they interpret an emotion and how they would communicate it to the rest of the group. Each person's emotion is then played back to the whole group. The participants portray each emotion differently.	of the first steps in effective communication is to be able to express yourself effectively The different ways of expressing emotion introduce the participants to the idea of multi-modality.		emotion in one way. I stepped in and showed them different ways of expressing a single emotion. It was only then that they understood the exercise. The result of this exercise was amazing as the participants went from enacting an emotion with only external physical signs, to internalising the emotion and then enacting it with their entire bodies. It was rewarding to see the participants exploring different ways of physically expressing their emotions.
Focus group discussion.	Same as in Session 3			The participants indicated that they learned that there is more than one way to express an emotion and that one should think about how one expresses an emotion when communicating. They also learned that there are times when you need to ask for help, because your choices have consequences.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Journaling	Same as in Session 3.			Allowing the participants the freedom to express themselves may have had a positive effect on their interaction with each other, as some of the participants, who were shy at first, began to flourish visibly.

3.9. Session plan 7: Happy to be back

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location	Same as in Session 1			The playback group returned after the school holidays and the social worker informed me that the participants wanted to ask me a question and I agreed. At first I thought that it was only going to be one question. They asked me why I had chosen their school and why we wanted to hear their stories. However, the participants had more than one question to put to me. They asked why it mattered and whether we

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location	Same as in Session 1			wanted to be there. I informed them that their stories are important and that they themselves are important and that I looked forward to seeing them every week. I informed them that if they had any other questions they could ask me. They were silent for a moment and I saw that the participants were not looking at me, but at the actors. I realised at that moment that they had a need to communicate with the actors themselves. I gave the participants the opportunity to question the actors if they wanted to. The participants immediately asked the actors whether they liked them, liked doing their stories, liked coming to the school, and whether their stories really mattered that much? I kept quiet, allowing the actors to respond to the questions. They responded by saying yes, they did like the group. They told

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location	Same as in Session 1			the participants that every week they also learned something new and that they loved hearing their stories. The musician explained to them that she was used to performing for crowds where she knew no one and that it meant a great deal to her to have a small audience with whom she could make a personal connection. All the members of the group assured the participants that we enjoyed seeing them, that their stories meant a great deal to us and were important. I concluded that the participants needed reassurance that the playback group cared about them.
Playback Performance	Theme: Joy (Happy to be back)	Because the playback theatre sessions were interrupted by the holiday break, Khulisa's social worker requested that the playback group choose a theme that would welcome back the participants.		The theme that emerged was: **happy to be cared about.**

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Playback Performance	Theme: Joy (Happy to be back)	In accordance with this, the theme was chosen to put the participants at ease and facilitate the sharing of stories again.		
Exercise	Same as in session 6			I had the participants do the same exercise that they did in session 6, as a means to remember what had happened before the holidays and also for those who had been unable to attend the last session. I explained the different ways of portraying the same emotion in multiple ways to the participants' who had not been in the last session.
Focus group discussion.	Same as in Session 3			
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			The session was significant in that the group felt confident enough to raise hidden fears and speak to us about these. I also felt that giving them affirmation was essential.

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Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			The session showed that the participants' had grown considerably in confidence since the first session. Throughout the session, based on the story threads that have emerged, it has become clear that there is a need for communication skills. During the next phase I will focus on teaching communication skills through playback theatre and playback theatre exercises.

3.10. Session plan 8: Communication – Not being heard

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Exercise	Drumming Circle: During this exercise participants sit in a circle on the ground, their legs folded and their hands placed on the floor in front of them. One person will start tapping out a beat using his/her hands. A second person will then join in, tapping out a different beat, but one that adds onto the first beat. This process will continue until everyone in the circle is tapping out a beat. The result is a harmonious rhythm that has been created by everyone.	During the previous session I found that the participants were reluctant to address communication. To address this issue, for this session, I chose only to start with the exercise. It is a way to address this theme safely in a fun way. This serves as a platform to show that it is safe to talk about communication, as well as being a means to discover the understanding of the participants and their perception of communication. To foster listening skills and to assist participants in understanding that communication can happen without words (van Schoor, 1986: 3; Corner & Hawthorn, 1980: 59) and to teach them to listen to themselves, as well as to each other.	Different coloured cloth placed in a circle	I started the session with a drumming circle as it is an effective way to teach someone how to listen, not only to themselves but also to others. The first attempt at the drumming circle was a complete failure. I was not surprised. I explained to the group that they had to listen to their own rhythm and not to get lost in the multitude of sounds. In a drumming circle this is symbolic of losing your own voice in the crowd. It is important for the participants to learn this as it is the first step to taking back your voice and the first step in learning effective communication skills. The second attempt showed that they had understood, as far as listening to themselves was concerned. But they did not listen to each other as well; therefore it was not as successful as I had hoped it would be.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Exercise				I explained to them that they also had to listen to each other for the drumming circle to be effective. They had difficulty with this, so I showed them how it worked by choosing three participants to have a drumming circle with me. The participants could not believe that people could make such sounds together. I then had the whole group do the exercise again and was amazed by the rhythm and sound that they created. In the next few attempts they again stopped listening to each other, as they found the exercise difficult.
Focus group discussion.	Participants and the playback group sit in a circle and talk about what they have learned during the exercise.	Allows the participants to reflect on the experience and communicate what they have learnt.		One of the participants asked if sound could be translated into words. I explained to her that sound could create an emotion that could give rise to words. The participants had a very difficult time understanding this. So I asked our musician if she would be

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Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Focus group discussion.				willing to put emotion into sound, and she said yes. I then invited the participants to name different emotions. They chose sadness, anger and joy. The musician played a tune for each of these emotions. Most of the participants then understood the concept. However, Participant 011 said that only through words could there be any communication and that sounds alone could not convey meaning. I then used a 'sigh' to illustrate the concept. The first sigh I made expressed 'tired' and the second one expressed 'being exasperated'. When I asked the participants what they perceived the meaning behind these two sighs to be, they were able to identify the meaning I had intended to convey. Participants' 04 and 05 both said that they often made the second sigh in the presence of family members and many of the other

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Focus group discussion.				participants said then that they also used the second sigh on a regular basis. Showing that a sigh indicating exasperation is cross-cultural, within the context of this study. Participant 011 then understood that sound could convey meaning; however, he said that it was something he would need to think about.
Pre-Planning the Location	Same as in Session 1			
Playback Performance	Theme: Communication - Not being heard	I chose this theme because throughout the previous sessions the participants indicated that people did not listen to them. To determine the participants' prior knowledge of the concept of communication and what their present perception of communication is.		The participants responded well to the theme, sharing feelings about talking too much, saying things they should not, and parents and teachers who do not listen to what they have to say. They also revealed how they found communication difficult.
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			

3.11. Session plan 9: Communication: Not listening to other people

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location Playback Performance	Same as in Session 1 Theme: Communication (Not Listening)	The theme was chosen in order to underline the importance of listening to others as well, and to make the participants' aware of how self-orientation hampers one's ability to listen to others and how it negatively affects communication.		The group started responding to the theme somewhat reluctantly. It was a topic that they shied away from and it took quite a lot of effort to get them to tell their stories. They shared stories of not letting other people speak and ignoring their friends on purpose. This clearly relates to the developmental stage where the adolescents are still self-centred and not focused on the needs of other people (Louw et al., 1998; Levine & Munsch, 2011).
Exercise	Experimenting with musical instruments: During this exercise participants sit in a circle on the ground, their legs folded.	To show the participants how harmony can be created by listening to each other and also to show them how difficult it is to force oneself to listen to others.	Musical Instruments: Recorder Harmonica Castanets Kokiriko	I started off by showing them how the instruments worked. I also showed them that the instruments could make different sounds.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Exercise	In the middle of the circle are various instruments. Each participant takes an instrument and is given a few minutes to familiarise themselves with the instruments. Then, as in the drumming circle, one person starts playing a rhythm on his/her instrument. After a few moments the next person joins in, playing a different melody or beat, but matching the rhythm of the person who started. This continues until everyone has joined in. The result was that the participants played more harmoniously	There are different ways of interpreting what you hear. (van Schoor, 1986: 27 - 28)	Guiro Woodblock Wooden hammer Rainmaker Tambourine Maracas Bells Drum Xylophone	Once they were more or less comfortable with the instruments, we started the music circle. They were not able to create a melody together and I was not surprised, as no one listened to themselves or each other and every one kept changing their rhythms. They realised their mistake very quickly. At one point every person was trying to be louder than everyone else, resulting in a great big noise. I asked them what they thought of it, they said it was terrible and then listed the reasons why they thought so: not listening and doing their own thing. This showed some growth in the participants' ability to recognise their own mistakes without shame and without blaming each other. This relates to Hellison's fourth level of personal responsibility, where adolescents should be able to take

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Exercise				responsibility for their own actions. After a few more tries, they gradually started listening and concentrating on what they were doing. When they made mistakes I stopped them, actively making them aware of the fact that they had stopped listening to each other. However I encouraged them to keep trying, telling them that I know they could. The participants responded well to this way of learning. It was amazing to see them learning and implementing what they were learning, going from making a noise to creating music.
Focus group discussion.	Same as in Session 3			The participants indicated that they learned how you cannot create music together if you do not listen and that listening is a skill.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Focus group discussion.	Same as in Session 3			They also indicated that they understood that you have to listen to each other in order to communicate effectively.
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			In addition it taught them to concentrate on what they are hearing. They said they had learned that when you listen to each other, you can work together more effectively.

3.12. Session plan 10: Enjoying the day

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location	Same as in Session 1			The social worker was late, so while we waited, the playback group played tag with the participants.
Playback Performance	Theme: Enjoying the day	As the previous two themes were rather taxing, this theme was chosen to put participants at ease and to facilitate the sharing of stories.		The group shared feelings of being happy and relieved because for the first time in a long time they were playing.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Playback Performance				It seems that, due to the enormous amount of responsibility they are faced with daily, they stopped playing games at a young age. Two of the participants related how they purposely broke the class rules and how the teacher got angry with them for doing so. These stories indicate some form of passive rebellion against authority, which relates to the developmental phase.
Exercise	Tell each other stories and play them back.	To allow the participants the opportunity to apply what they have learnt about communication	Same as in Session 9	When faced with the chance to act on stage, each person tried to outdo the other, and the stories that they played back were disorganised and in some instances incoherent.
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			The participants still showed the need to rebel against authority as could be seen from the stories that were told. However, my perception was that through the exercise, they had been made aware of how difficult effective

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			communication really is. As in session 9 the participants were beginning to re-construct their own behaviour. This might be a sign of social reconstruction, as they were re-constructing their own, seemingly chaotic, performances into meaningful interpretations and practical awareness – re-constructing their own behaviour into future communication skills. This may relate to the personality development phase, which allows them to establish their own set of moral values (Spano, 2004: 3; Salas, 2000: 290).

3.13. Session plan 11: Communicating what you feel

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location	Same as in Session 1		Cloth Chairs Musical Instruments	
Playback Performance	Theme: Effectively communicating what you feel.			Participants shared stories of how they felt unable to express their feelings to adults, especially when they are being chastised.
Exercise	Same as session 10	Allows participants to implement what they have learnt.	Same as in Session 10	
Focus group discussion.	Same as in Session 3			During the discussion, I asked the group why the stories had worked. They told me that these had worked because they listened to each other, they respected each other and they worked together. One participant said that, when you listen to what other people are saying and you pay attention, it helps you to focus and then you can respond effectively.

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Focus group discussion.	Same as in Session 3			Another participant said that when you listen to people, you cannot go wrong because you understand what they mean. Another participant said that listening is a skill and it is hard to do.
Journaling	Same as in Session 3			The participants were gradually learning how to listen and express themselves effectively. They had come a long way from being unable to express themselves emotionally, to creating a scene with no words using only sound and physical expression to convey a story

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3.14. Session plan 12: Saying goodbye

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Pre-Planning the Location	Same as in Session 1		Cloth Chairs Musical Instruments	
Playback Performance	Theme: Saying goodbye	In a study that requires closely working with participants, it is inevitable that a bond will form between the participants and the facilitator. It is therefore important that the participants be given the opportunity to accept that the sessions are coming to an end.		The participants shared stories of disbelief and sadness at the prospect of having to say goodbye. The theme that emerged was one of **things ending.**
Exercise	Participants divide into groups. Each group chooses one story told during the performance. They are to play the entire story back to the rest of the group.	Allows the participants to apply the skills that they have learned during the study**.**	Same as in session 10	I could see that the participants had listened and paid attention when the stories were being told as they remembered details about the stories, indicating that they were utilising the communication skills they had learnt. Participants had grown from session number 9 where their attempts at

Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Exercise				portraying a story had not worked out well, to this session, where they portrayed stories with detail and confidence. I also found it interesting to see that, while some of the participants portrayed the same story, they were all able to embody and express the characters in different ways, showing that they had become confident in their own form of expression.
Focus group discussion.	Reflection on the Playback sessions.	Gives the participants the opportunity to reflect on the whole process and voice what they have learnt		I asked the participants what they felt they had learnt throughout the whole study. They said that they had learnt that communication happens in many ways and that there are different ways to express emotions. They learnt that if you listen carefully to someone, you will not misunderstand what they are trying to tell you and that listening is a skill that needs to be practised.

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Session Section	Session Activities	Motivation	Materials	Process
Journaling	Participants write down their final thoughts in their journals and hand them in.			
Closure	As part of the final session, each participant imparts a wish to the whole group.	This allows the participants to say goodbye to one another. End		The participants and the playback group said goodbye to one another and we, the playback group, left the school for the final time.

3.15. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the twelve playback theatre sessions that were used to explore adolescents' personal stories. It outlined the process of the study, explained the different phases and discussed the techniques used to get the participants' involved. The sessions provided an overview of the activities that took place. Each session was designed based on the previous session as, due to the inherent and essentially improvisational nature of playback theatre, the sessions cannot, and must not, be planned in advance.

In analysing results, Fulma Hoesch (1999: 46) speaks about the 'red thread' within a playback theatre performance, a theme that will present itself as the underlying social issue and dominant discourse. Throughout the sessions a recurring 'red thread' presented itself, namely: obligatory responsibility.

The next chapter will discuss the analysis of the dominant discourse that presented itself throughout the sessions, as well as the personal discourses associated with it. I will also discuss my findings in relation to the research aims as set out in Chapter 1.

Chapter 4: Playback theatre – analysis

4.1.   Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced the lesson plan of each playback theatre session that related to my broader research purpose. Chapter 4 will provide an analysis of the playback sessions. In doing so, I analysed the stories that were told during playback performances in an attempt to discern the personal and the dominant discourses in the stories and responses shared by the participant group. As stated in Chapter 1, I used elements of narrative analysis, focus group discussions and information contained in their journals to analyse these stories according to their recurrent thematic content (red thread). I highlighted specific stories, or moments in specific stories to illustrate these aspects. Though many discourses were presented through the stories that were told by the participants', for the purpose of this study I focused on the discourses that predominantly presented itself throughout the sessions. I further illustrated my analysis of these discourses through the theoretical lenses of stories and storytelling; witnessing and the aesthetic paradox, modes of communication and the idea of creating community.

Storytelling is an important component in the process of constructing and understanding one's life. This understanding is formulated due to the dominant discourse in which individuals operate, as discussed in Chapter 2. I useed the stories told during the playback performances to map the dominant discourses presented within the participants' social world as well as in the personal discourses surfacing amidst the dominant discourses. The participants in this study consisted of 15 learners in a multi-cultural, predominantly black South African group. The participants were not all from the same cultural historical background. However, the way in which the adolescents illustrated their stories and the patterns which the stories created, formulated a dominant cultural discourse.

This chapter will engage with my research aims through analysing the narrative markers, which include thematic content and the use of symbols and images as

elements of narrative analysis. I looked at recurrent patterns within the narration of stories, the repetition of thematic content and the way in which participants' create meaning through the stories they tell (as stated in Chapter 1). I also illustrated how, through playback theatre, the participants were able to re-examine and re-imagine their personal discourses in relation to dominant discourses. In this way, they critically reflected on both personal and dominant discourses towards furthering synergy between these discourses, encouraging them to re-examine their stories, which may allow them to re-imagine their circumstances.

4.2. Markers of narrative analysis

4.2.1. Thematic content and recurrent patterns

As mentioned in Chapter 2, playback theatre is generated by audience participation and as such audience members are invited to tell stories of their choice. I entered the study with preconceptions regarding the participants' lack of personal responsibility; however the recurrent theme that emerged during the sessions made me realise that I would have to shift my study aim. Fulma Hoesch (1999: 46) says that the themes that will present themselves within a playback performance represent the dominant discourses and the social issues of the community. She goes on to say that the 'red thread' is the theme that links the stories together. Within this study I observed that the theme from one session, namely obligatory responsibility and the lack of communication between participants and their parents/elders, would carry over into another, or would be brought to light again by the participants. The storied events would shift in location and time; however, the content matter would illustrate the same theme within participants' stories. This created a recurrent pattern within the participants' stories, as the issues they felt were important were raised again and again, as can be seen in Chapter 3. I also observed that story threads that repeat did not merely do so as a recurrent theme, but they presented themselves as a recurrent event in some of the participants' stories, within different historical and social contexts.

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4.2.2. Ways in which story threads are created and how meaning is created from them

As discussed in Chapter 2, when witnessing a story being played back, aesthetic distance allows one to distance oneself from the story and view the story from a different perspective. This permits the participants to re-evaluate the stories they see during a playback performance and then create new meaning from the story threads. This in turn enables them to gain insight into their actions and to re-imagine their actions, this re-imagining takes place within the third space that the ritual of playback theatre creates. The ritual of playback theatre provided a safe space in which participants could discuss social issues relevant to this research. It provided a contained platform where the voices of the participants could be heard. The ritual also enabled participants to witness one another's stories in a safe space, allowing for re-evaluation of their actions and for finding commonalities amongst the narrated stories and their personal experiences. It is the ritual of playback theatre that allows aesthetic distancing to take place, creating the oscillation between the real and the symbolic world. This, in turn, permits audience members to re-imagine their circumstances. Through the ritualistic form of the playback performance, different modes of communication were illustrated; these elements will be discussed in 4.4. and 4.5.

4.3. Mapping dominant discourses through storytelling

4.3.1. Stories and storytelling

Throughout the playback theatre sessions, there was a thread that presented itself repeatedly. It was that of 'obligatory responsibility', meaning that a child, and especially the eldest child, is held responsible for performing household duties and chores, irrespective of school duties. This is enforced through the cultural discipline and control that is part of their social world. Within their home setting, there exists a hierarchy, wherein the parents are to be obeyed. The oldest child in the household is responsible for the everyday household tasks. Participant 07's story illustrated the situation: She had washed the family's dishes before going to school, but on

returning home, she found that her mother had had company and the dishes were dirty again. Her mother ordered her to wash the dishes again. An argument ensued, and the daughter told her mother that she should wash the dishes herself as she had used them.

Me: 'So what happened?'

Participant 07: 'They told me that it is my job, I am the child.' 'I am the child so no matter what, I have to wash the dishes.'

After the re-enactment this participant had tears in her eyes[18].   This feeling of frustration was shared by other participants throughout the study, as other participants shared similar stories. One story in particular made me realise that the participants' duties within the house went beyond everyday household tasks. The participant told of how she returned home from school and found that her mother had company. As the eldest child it is her duty to see that the guests in the house are taken care of. She asked the visitor if she wanted anything to drink and was told that the latter did not want anything. The participant then informed her mother that she had a lot of homework to do, as they were preparing for exams.

Me: 'So what happened then?'

Participant 05: 'I asked my mother's friend if she wanted tea or juice and she said no, so I went to my bedroom and started doing my homework. After two minutes she [the visitor] called me and said "would you please, do a tea for me". So I was so angry because first I said: "Would you like tea or coffee" and she said "No", and then she called me and I didn't like it.'

Me: 'So what did your mother say when this happened?'

Participant 5: 'She didn't say anything. She told me to do the tea and go back to my room.'

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[18]Khulisa's social worker was present during all of the performances and was available to see to the participant's emotional needs when required.

This story again raised the theme that participants' feel frustrated with their circumstances and that school responsibilities must take a backseat to household responsibilities, as the obligatory responsibility of the oldest child maintaining the household becomes a regulative practice. It is through these stories that one was able to understand how participants situate themselves in relation to their personal circumstances. This theme within the participants' narratives presented itself throughout the study, as both male and female participants' shared the following:

Participant 04: 'I just feel like there's so much work to do and no one wants to help me. I'm on my own.'

Participant 05: 'Last week I had to wash my clothes and the dishes, do my homework and my mom wouldn't help me.'

Participant 011: 'It was yesterday. I was supposed to do my homework, wash the dishes and clean the house. I have a brother and a sister, my brother said I was on my own, my sister said I was on my own. Please, how do I do three things if I have only two hands at the same time, so I was feeling down.'

When telling these stories, participants would shake their heads in frustration. Participant 04 looked down at the floor when recalling her story, while Participant 05 counted down all the things she had to do on her hand, pausing between each chore. Through the stories that were told a shared 'truth' about the world within which the participants operate was revealed. This 'truth' is, however, dependent on the participants' culture(s) (as they understand it) and is a part of the social world within which their culture(s) operate. The theme of obligatory responsibility and the feeling of frustration that the participants expressed, throughout the study, can thus be seen as a recurrent pattern. This recurrent pattern is a narrative analysis marker which illustrates the participants' personal discourse towards the dominant discourse is frustration. Within their diverse cultural backgrounds this obligatory responsibility placed upon the eldest child is seen as 'natural' across their cultural backgrounds; thus, this dominant discourse conscribes the participants into their roles within the household and maintains power and creates a lack of agency within the participants.

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Participant 05 shared the story of how her mother would not listen to a song that she had composed and how sad it made her that her mother had no time for her. She told the story in a very quiet tone. When played back, the actor used a white cloth to represent the song that had been written. When the mother rejected the song, the playback actor shouted and cried out against what she perceived as rejection by her mother. After the performance the participant silently cried, saying in a soft voice that it was exactly how she felt. This story speaks of the fact that, due to the dominant discourse, in which parents do not listen to their children, there is a lack of communication between children and parents within this particular group's circumstances. This lack of communication further fosters a sense of isolation and participants' personal discourse, as observer and reflected on in the focus group discussions, illustrates that they feel they are not being acknowledged by their parents.

The responsibilities that are placed upon them create a sense of loneliness, especially during adolescence when there is already a sense of isolation in which the adolescent feels: 'Only I feel this way', relating to the belief that their experiences are unique (Levine & Munsch, 2011: 243 - 244). It is also during adolescence that they should begin to develop a sense of personal responsibility, and as a result they become aware that they are not alone in their experiences and that they also have responsibilities towards others. However, due to the enormous burden of responsibility placed upon them, combined with a lack of communication, the participants' are unable to develop a feeling of self-worth and personal responsibility. Instead, their sense of loneliness and inability to voice the frustrations they experience with their parents and siblings, results in feelings of **disempowerment.**

Participant 04 shared the story of how the pastor, who coaches the church choir, blamed her for everything that went wrong, even though she had only made a small mistake and how he would not listen to her when she tried to apologise. She felt belittled when he kept verbally humiliating her in front of everyone. Participant 011 shared the story of how a teacher had shouted at him when he was late for class. He said that he felt ashamed while the teacher was yelling at him. These stories illustrate that the lack of communication extends beyond the participants' household

circumstances. Within the social and cultural structure in which the participant live, it is not merely that they feel they cannot voice themselves to their parents, but also to adult authority figures. This pattern within the participants' stories illustrates that the dominant discourse is: that adults do not listen to children, as parental/adult authority is an absolute within their culture and that there is a need for effective communication skills.

Coetzee and Munro (2007: n.p.) speak of how the oscillation between identification and detachment opens up dialogue between the 'real' and the 'symbolic'. This was illustrated in the story of Participant 05. While she told her story in a quiet voice, the meaning and understanding of her story was re-imagined by the actors of the playback group. In the re-enactment the actor interpreted a new understanding of this participant's feeling of disempowerment. However this interpretation, while in opposition to the teller's voiced narrative, proved to be an accurate understanding of the participant's feeling within the story. By vocalising the pain and sadness she experienced, but felt she could not express to her mother, the actors' symbolic re-enactment became a 'real' moment for Participant 05. By witnessing the stories the participants were able to re-examine these, which could allow them to re-evaluate their circumstances and thus gain insight into their actions.

4.4. Witnessing

As was discussed in Chapter 2, human beings have a need to be acknowledged and heard. A person develops a practical relation-to-self only when he/she learns to view him/herself from the perspective of those around him/her. This allows an individual to affirm his/her place within a community and to form connections with others that allow people to empathise with one another, which in turn can foster a sense of personal responsibility. However, within the participants' cultural structure, 'children' have no voice. Looking at the stories that participants have told throughout the study, one of the dominant themes that emerged, was the feeling that their needs are not being acknowledged. They feel ignored by their parents and this fact fosters the sense that, because they are children, they do not matter and are not valued. Their

voices are silenced by the obligatory responsibilities placed upon them at home, along with the fact that as 'children' they are not free to express their frustration without repercussions.

These experiences prevent adolescents from viewing themselves from the perspective of those around them and foster a sense of isolation from others within the community. Their need for recognition may manifest itself in a negative form, such as bullying. Participant 011 shared a story of how the need to be recognised made him bully others. However, he met a friend who showed him that positive behaviour was a better solution to his feeling of isolation. One participant told the story of how she was bullied when a class mate stole her pen during a test. She borrowed a pen from a friend but this pen too was stolen.

Me: 'So the second time that the pen went missing you were very upset.'
Participant 08: 'YES.'
Me: 'Because it was something that you had borrowed from a friend.'

The participant explained that she did not mind losing her pen, but losing something she had borrowed from another friend upset her, because she had to give it back. She also said that the friend who had taken the pens laughed at her for being upset, but did return the pens.

In the discussion many of the participants' acknowledged that they themselves bullied others at school in this manner (taking other people's things). When they witnessed how this made the teller feel, the participants said that they realised that they should respect other people's feelings and private property. It may be that the process of moving between being a primary and secondary witness allowed the participants' to evaluate their own actions as they shared how they gained an awareness of the idea that their actions have consequences, and that they should take other people into consideration before doing something that will have a negative impact on others. Furthermore, it signifies that the way in which they structured their stories changed, from accepting bullying as an 'everyday' social practice and mode

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of interpersonal interaction to realising that bullying is not an optimal way of engaging with others and that they should not bully others. This is illustrated in the journal of Participant 06:

'I learned that stealing things that doesn't belong to you, you end up making people sad and make them cry, and that you must respect other people's belongings, before you take someone's things trying to make a joke, think of how it will make them feel' (Participant 06 Journal, 2013).

Another participant's journal entry illustrates how the participant learned that actions have consequences:

'....sometimes jokes are not good. Like sometimes you will think that you are doing a joke but while that is not a joke to someone, then it will cause trouble.....I have learned that if you do something, they will always have an effect...' (Participant 04 Journal, 2013)

Yet another participant showed that one should take others into consideration.

'...if you steal something, make sure that you think first of how it will affect him/her.' (Participant 03, Journal; 2013).

In Chapter 2, I proposed that within playback theatre the audience moves between a primary and secondary witness. The above illustrates how the audience members moved from witnessing the teller's testimony, as secondary witnesses, to becoming the primary witness of the event. The aesthetic distancing that occurs when witnessing a story being told and performed, allowed the participants the opportunity to re-position their perspective discursively upon their own action. As their journals indicated that they can feel the weight of their actions and their own roll within those actions. This realisation played an important part in the process and can be regarded as a first step towards developing personal responsibility. As Hellison (2011: 21; 34) says, respect for the rights and feelings of others is the first step in personal responsibility.

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4.5. Aesthetic Paradox

The oscillation between primary and secondary witnessing allowed the audience and the tellers to distance themselves from the event being enacted on stage, while at the same time, they were able to reflect critically on what they were seeing. This was illustrated in Participant 08's story of being bullied. The participants' 'real' world being 'fictionally' represented on stage allowed the audience the aesthetic distance needed to reflect critically on what they were witnessing. During the discussion participants told of how this type of bullying was a common occurrence in the school. In their experience it was considered a game or a joke. The oscillation between the real and the fictional created a third space in which a new understanding of the circumstances could be imagined by the audience. Thus, the participants were able to reflect on how their actions influence others, as they realised that, after seeing the effect of bullying, how it hurts the person being bullied.

The aesthetic paradox created in playback theatre also allowed participants to reflect on how their own actions influence communication at home. In session 9 participants told stories of how they would purposely ignore others. Witnessing these stories being played back to them created distance that allowed them to reflect on their actions. This then facilitated self-reflective discursive repositioning that allowed for a new understanding, regarding their role in effectively communicating with their parents.

The exercises I used in the study also served as a means for the participants to reflect on what they had learned and to express themselves effectively in a safe environment. Another benefit of the exercises was that by enacting someone else's feeling/story the participants were able to place themselves in another person's shoes. During the exercise of one session this had a tremendous impact. The story of how a group of friends had made fun of a stranger for the way she dressed was told, how the group was confronted by one person in the group for their bad behaviour, and how they then felt ashamed of their actions. One of the participants was meant to play the role of the person who did not approve of her friend making fun of someone else. The first time she played the story, she ended up making fun of

the person herself.   I confronted her with this fact and she then reacted by withdrawing. I reassured her that I merely wanted to understand why she had done this, so I asked her various questions about why she had chosen certain actions. She was very uncomfortable and evasive in responding, but eventually informed me that she found the role extremely difficult as she was normally the person who would make fun of people, and she could not associate herself with defending someone from ridicule. I stepped in as conductor and provided alternative ways of encouraging her to step into the role. I observed that she was uncomfortable, as she had empathised with others being bullied or teased. This interaction showed that the participant explored an alternative discourse which made her re-examine her own actions.   It also shows that she reflected on her actions, allowing discursive repositioning to take place which, illustrates that she had gained some insight into the idea of empathetic engagement and respect for others.

This event could not have happened if there had not been effective interpersonal communication between the participant and myself, as it was the different modes of communication allowed for in playback theatre that eventually allowed her to feel comfortable enough to talk about her difficulties in portraying such a character.

4.6.   Modes of communication

Effective communication happens when one individual hears and understands what another individual is saying and then responds appropriately (Morsen, 2006: 48; Corner & Hawthorn: 50 - 61, 1980; van Schoor, 1986: 2 - 3). Throughout the sessions the stories of the participants indicated that their parents do not listen to them. This results in a lack of effective interpersonal communication, as 'children' who are not being 'heard' by their parents feel infantilised and are forced into silence. Through the stories participants indicated that this breakdown in healthy communication at home leads to an aggressive response, as communication mainly takes place through arguing. The lack of developing communication skills at home may spill over into other aspects of the participants' lives, leading to negative behaviour, such as bullying and fighting at school. This was demonstrated in a story

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that Participant 011 shared. He told how frustrated he was with his situation at home and so he started bullying his school mates to try and alleviate his frustration. One of his friends confronted him about his actions and told him he needed to stop bullying his school mates. To help foster effective communication skills, I used playback theatre exercises used to teach different modes of communication. For this it is important to know that: every action taken and every movement that a person makes, communicates meaning to others. According to Corner and Hawthorn (1980: 23), even if you do nothing, you are communicating with those around you and they, in turn, respond to what you are communicating. Van Schoor (1986: 3) and Morsen (2006: 48) say that an act of expression is only fulfilled when the message [that expression was intended to convey] has been received and understood. For a message to be understood, it must be actively interpreted and effectively communicated and expressed. Expression and interpretation go hand in hand and this 'underlines all forms of human communication.' (van Schoor, 1986: 4). Thus, expressing oneself effectively is the first step in effective communication.

Right from the first session I found that participants experienced difficulty in expressing themselves and communicating their thoughts and feelings. They would verbalise a strong feeling, while their facial expressions remained deadpan.[19] Whilst this may be read as emotional control and appropriate social behaviour, their discussions and journals told a different story. I spoke to the social worker about my observation, and in her report she writes:

> 'Most of these participants are unable to express their feelings as they are not given an opportunity to do so by their parents; thus that leads to conflict or misunderstanding among family members.' (Mnisi, 2013: Appendix C)

To address this, I implemented playback theatre explorations from sessions 3 to 7 that promote interpersonal communication amongst the participants (see Chapter 3). In session 3 (see Lesson Plan) I asked the participants to re-enact their feelings

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[19] I acknowledge that this is a 'Western' term and perspective of expression. However I spoke to the social worker and she agreed that they were not showing the emotions that they were naming.

through movement, without using sound. None of the participants[20] were able to express the feeling by using only sound; they named their feeling and then expressed it without using sound. One participant named anger as her feeling and then stomped her feet without making any verbal sound. This indicated that participants had difficulty expressing themselves effectively, as some would name a feeling, but the expression would suggest something else, e.g. another participant named the feeling as anger (cross – cultural facial expression, see Chapter 2), while her body expression suggested irritation. This observation was shared by the social worker, as can be seen from the quote above. I also noticed that when a particular feeling was suggested to them, one participant within the group would demonstrate his/her understanding of that feeling and the others would copy the embodiment. This suggested that they had difficulty expressing their feelings effectively. In response to the exercise one participant wrote:

> 'I felt a bit excited... because I also had a chance to play back an emotion that was not mine, it made me feel more free than ever before.' (Participant 02 Journal, 2013)

4.7.   Creating community

The audience plays an essential role within the playback performance and this is due to the cultural and social context that audience members share. The telling and retelling of the stories within the performances made visible the underlying social context within which each participant operates. Through witnessing each other's stories and through telling their stories, participants were able to find mutual ground that may have allowed them to re-imagine the way in which they situated themselves in their environment, in that the sense of being alone was problematised. Participants realised that there are others within the group who shared their views and had similar experiences to their own; this created a sense of community within the group. This sense of community allowed the participant to form a sense of

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[20] It should be noted that English is not the first language of any of the participants. This may have had an impact on their ability to express themselves verbally. However, I based my observations on both their verbal and non-verbal expressive communication.

mindfulness for others as they started working together. The social workers also noticed this aspect as they wrote: 'The group also showed cohesion and team work in the group' (Hlongwane & Mnisi, 2013: Appendix D). This aligns with Dewey (1997: 307 - 308), for whom community implies a process of entering and taking part in activities with others that over time becomes 'a common procession'.

Participating in the performances and witnessing each other's stories allowed the participants to feel connected to one another and their shared experiences, as they realised that they shared certain personal discourse, which allowed for a re-evaluation of questions regarding culture and community (dominant discourse), in regards to personal responsibility and communication. Hlongwane and Mnisi (2013: Appendix D) noted the following:

> 'The participants see communication as an important tool to use so that they can build a bridge between them and their parents; their peers and their teachers. Throughout this programme they mention that it is important to listen to each other; give someone who is talking a chance to finish talking; paying attention so that you can be able to understand him/her.'

In order to foster communication skills with the participants, I turned to a skill that is taught in playback theatre that aids playback practitioners in communicating effectively, namely listening.

4.8. Listening

Lisa J Downs (2008: 1) defines the word listening as 'making an effort to hear something; to pay attention or heed.' She distinguishes between hearing what is said and listening to what is said. Playback theatre offers a space in which the audience can hear each other's stories. Throughout the first sessions of the study it became clear that there was a lack of communication between participants and their parents, mainly because the parents do not listen to their children. This apathy towards hearing the needs of others is passed on through the socio-cultural context that the participants live in. To foster communication skills, one first needs to learn how to

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hear what people are trying to say and then to respond in a culturally appropriate way. 'Most of them [participants] mentioned that their parents do not understand them but when expressing their emotions in an acceptable manner they are being understood." (Hlongwane & Mnisi, 2013: Appendix D)

I used playback theatre explorations (drumming – and a musical circle) to demonstrate how difficult it is to listen to others. By using sound I was able to demonstrate to them that there is meaning in how one conveys something and that what one does when conveying something will also convey meaning, which will be interpreted by the respondent and will then initiate a response. This provided the participants with the basis for communication as framed in the playback theatre lesson plan (See Chapter 3).

> 'I learned how to communicate without using words, but using sound and emotion, body language and eye contact even... I learned to demonstrate an emotion using a song or sound with no words. I learned that there are many ways of communicating' (Participant 06 Journal, 2013).

Using only sound as a tool for communication also taught the participants that listening to each other is paramount in creating a rhythm together that sounds good. When not listening to each other, the instruments created a cacophony of sound that amounted to little more than noise. By listening to one another they were able to create a new melody, which gave rise to a feeling of pride. It was significant that during these exercises the participants started analysing their own behaviour. They were no longer ashamed when realising their own mistakes and were quick to list the reasons for the mistakes. Given the opportunity to do the exercises again the participants rectified their own behaviour and continued this into the next sessions, as participants were beginning to re-construct their own behaviour. For example, when they realised that they were not listening to each other, they would stop, on their own, and tell me that they had stopped listening and they were now making a noise. They would then talk to each other to find out why they had stopped listening and then start the exercise again and actively listen to one another. This might be a sign of social reconstruction, as they were reconstructing their own, seemingly chaotic, performances into meaningful interpretations and practical awareness -

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reconstructing their own behaviour into future communication skills. This may relate back to the personality development phase, which allows them to establish their own set of moral values (Spano, 2004: 3; Salas, 2000: 290). A good example of this was session 10 (see Chapter 3), when during the first session, they were given the opportunity to apply what they had learned, but they had trouble with the exercise because each participant was focused on his/her own needs. However, during the discussion the participants reflected on their action in a constructive manner. Hellison (2011: 24) states that self-reflection is an important part of personal responsibility as it requires one to be thoughtful about one's actions, thus thinking before one acts and considering how one can improve oneself. If one takes Hellison's notion into consideration the, participants had learned through the playback process and was implementing one of the first steps in personal responsibility.

This reflective process was carried over into session 11 as, during the exercise, the participants implemented what they had discussed during session 10. They were able to portray each other's stories coherently and in detail. When I asked the participants' what they thought about their performances, they replied:

Participant 011: 'We listened and gave each other a chance. We listened to each other; we discussed it and did it together.'

Participant 012: '...and we paid attention to what we were doing'

Participant 04: '...when you listen to people you can't go wrong because you understand what it is what they mean.

At this stage in the study the participants clearly understood that in order to communicate effectively, you must understand what someone is saying and respond accordingly. The participants' actions correspond with Hellison's third phase, 'Self direction' (2011: 34). According to him, in this phase, adolescents are able to identify their own needs, rationalise a course of action that will achieve those needs and carry it out. If one applies Hellison's principles as a criterion, the participants have made progress in understanding personal responsibility.

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During the last session I asked the participants what they felt they had learned throughout the whole study. They said that they had learned that interpersonal communication happens in many ways and that there are different ways to express emotions not just through arguing or fighting. They learned that if you listen carefully to someone, you will not misunderstand what they are trying to tell you and that listening is a skill that needs to be practised. Participant 012 said that people had told him that, whereas he previously never really listened or paid attention, they could see that he did so now. He also said that because he is now listening and paying attention, he is more focused when he is in class. This illustrates that the participant was able to explore an alternative discourse and then apply it as a personal discourse. Another participant wrote: 'I learned that I can learn just by listening' (Participant 06 Journal, 2013). If one applies Hellison's principles to this, then these participants have the potential to fall into the most advanced level of personal responsibility, as they may be encouraged to apply these skills outside the parameters of the study. However, an investigation into this falls outside of the perimeters of this study.

4.9.   Conclusions

In this chapter I analysed the dominant themes that arose during the playback performances. I also analysed the participants' actions through observation and the participants' journals. Through this I was able to map out a dominant discourse within the participants' cultural structure. I was able to discern the underlying personal discourses pertaining to the dominant discourse.   The table below illustrates these discourses:

4.9.1. Aspects of the dominant discourse and underlying personal discourses:

Dominant discourse	Personal discourse
Obligatory responsibility	Frustration with circumstances
Lack of communication	Feelings of isolation and loneliness
Lack of acknowledgement by parents/ adults	Feel ignored, unimportant and disempowered.
Parental/ adult authority	Parental authority is absolute and should be respected, regardless of the impact thereof on personal desires and educational demands

Through playback theatre, participants were able to witness their stories being portrayed on stage, which allowed them to become the 'social actors, agents and subjects of their stories' (Feldhendler, 2008: 18). This, in turn, allowed them to distance themselves from their experiences and in doing so they were able to reposition themselves within the event (Jackson, 2007: 1441). This also served as a form of recognition and allowed participants to realise that there are others who share their experiences. For those in the audience, witnessing similar stories being told, allowed for a sense of acknowledgement to develop, as they began to realise that they share experiences with others.

Participant 06 wrote:

> 'Seeing all those stories being played back to us, it made me feel like some of them happened to me; it made me put myself into the shoes of the people who were telling us their stories. It made me think of how it feels to be in such a situation.' (Participant 06 Journal, 2013)

Through witnessing the stories that were performed they were able to re-evaluate their own stories and actions, and in doing so re-evaluate how they respond to their circumstances. This also relates back to their Cognitive development as they are

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able to imagine how other people feel. In the second phase of the study the participants learned that there are multiple ways of communicating and that listening is the first step in fostering healthy communication skills.

From the above it can be determined that, through participation in playback theatre, the participants were able to reflect on the context and causality of their actions. They have become more aware of the need to be respectful toward others as they realised in the playback theatre sessions that their actions have consequences, and through learning about interpersonal communication skills, the participants' understood the concept of respecting others. They also understood that they should take others into consideration and thus improved their understanding of personal responsibility.

In the following chapter I will give a summary of my findings and I will make recommendations for further studies, based on the findings made during this study.

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Chapter 5: Summation

5.1. Introduction

In Chapter 1 I situated the study in the relevant field of applied theatre, explained my collaboration with Khulisa and stated the aim of the study. I also defined the key concepts and the methodology that I used to conduct the study; highlighting how I would use narrative analysis and how I would analyse the data I had collected. The chapter also provided an outline for rest of the chapters. Chapter 2 provided a brief description of playback theatre and how its rituals and structure work. It also explored key elements such as storytelling, witnessing, aesthetic paradox and the role of communication in playback theatre. In Chapter 3 I introduced the lesson plan of each playback theatre session, which provided an overview of how each session progressed. In Chapter 4 I analysed the stories told by participants during playback performances, using elements of narrative analysis, focus group discussions and journaling to analyse these stories according to their recurrent thematic content. I used the key elements described in Chapter 2 to aid me in my analysis and I highlighted specific stories, or moments in specific stories, to illustrate these aspects.

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between dominant and personal discourses and, through playback theatre, to encourage a process of self-reflective discursive repositioning that would encourage participants to envisage alternative possibilities, meanings and understandings with regard to personal responsibility that could assist them in evaluating and re-imagining themselves within their social context. This chapter will outline the conclusions drawn from my analysis in Chapter 4 in relation to the research question. The following discussion will include a summary of the information gathered during the case study, in accordance with the research aims.

5.2.   Research aims

The first aim was to establish participants' views on their social context in relation to notions of personal responsibility and making choices. Through the stories that were told I established that participants' actions and choices were mostly based on their own gratification. Their personal discourses were focused on their own needs and related back to the developmental phase of the 'imaginary audience' (Levine & Munsch, 2011: 243), in which they were the centre of the world. Due to this, participants often did not take the needs of others into consideration, as they could not empathise with others in their peer group. This lack of empathetic engagement with each other and the exaggerated need for self-gratification in accordance with the views of Hellison, (2011: 36) are both indicative of a lack of personal responsibility.

The second aim was to establish what the dominant discourses within those views are, what value systems are associated with them and what holds them in place. The participants' views (as constructed by their personal stories) are a result of the dominant discourse within their cultural structure, as they understood it. This discourse enforced the belief that adolescents should be responsible for the household, as it is training for when they have families of their own. However, story threads revealed that participants find that these responsibilities are overwhelming and that they find it difficult to cope with all that is expected of them. The beliefs are enforced through the social structure and culture within which the participants live, but there is little understanding of the educational and social demands made on the learners. This dominant discourse also enforces the belief that 'children' must be subservient to their parents and may not voice objections regarding their obligatory responsibilities.   Therefore, any objections raised to their parents are silenced through either punishment or rejection of their need to be heard. The personal discourse towards this dominant discourse is frustration. They also feel that their parents do not listen to their needs, which fosters a sense of loneliness and isolation. This discourse, in turn, gives rise to a lack of communication as the voices and needs of the participants' are silenced.

The third aim was to establish how personal discourses articulate with the dominant discourses. The participants articulated that they found the responsibilities placed upon them to be overwhelming and unfair. However, they are the children and so they cannot disobey their parents. This gives rise to a sense of **disempowerment**, as participants experience that their needs are not being respected. They perceive their parents' actions to be self-gratifying, this leads to the participants not respecting the rights of others to be heard.

The fourth aim was to identify story threads of resistance to the dominant discourses in personal discourses. In the focus group discussions participants shared stories of how they would bully others as a means for them to be recognised by others. This is a reaction to their need to be recognised. However, they seek recognition in a negative way. Participants also shared stories of how they would pretend not to hear what their parents said or purposely do the opposite of what they had been told to do. This can be seen as a need for attention or rebelling against authority (See developmental phase).

The fifth aim was to explore alternative discourses and value systems based on those story threads. Through playback theatre, participants were able to view their stories on stage. Witnessing the stories of how their actions affected others (hurt them), made them aware of the consequences their choices and actions have. This allowed them to re-examine their actions and re-position themselves in regards to their future actions. They also learned that they have shared experiences with others, making them realise that they are not alone. This allowed for mutual recognition to take place, and by exploring different modes of interpersonal communication, the participants were able to express their intention behind their actions more effectively, allowing them to clarify their meaning when communicating with others, thus reducing conflict when communicating. Within the focus group discussions, participants started to reflect on their actions actively, taking their findings and applying them during the next session. This shows that the participants are able to re-construct their own behaviour and in so doing taking personal responsibility for their actions.

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5.3. Limitations and recommendations

The study was an investigative study, aimed at exploring a new avenue of study within the playback theatre context. All of the participants were from a multicultural community in Hammanskraal. I had to make use of the volunteers and I worked in collaboration with Khulisa. The programme was presented in English and language proficiency and cultural understanding on both sides may have hindered identifying markers, which may have opened up more readings of their stories.

The findings can hypothetically be generalised into a broader context, such as the use of playback theatre as a tool for promoting communication and generating dialogue amongst participants and the use of playback theatre as a mean to re-imagine one's personal discourse within the wider dominant discourses. However, the context of the identified discourse remains culture specific. A longitudinal study with a different methodology is needed to determine whether the insights they gained during the sessions could have an impact on their broader social context. Therefore, further investigation into this avenue of research is required.

As a white middle – class South African female, it was not always possible to be fully immersed within the cultural context within which the participants operate. This was demonstrated as, at times, participants would have to explain various cultural phenomena, such as metaphors, for which I had no cultural reference. The playback performance would enact the explanations given by the participants, which often created a comical effect within the stories, which the participants found acceptable.

This study did not form part of a school curriculum. The study took place after school, during the sport activities of the school. Because of this the trancelike language of the performance needed to be altered, as the environment was loud and at times it was difficult to hear the stories being told. As a conductor, I addressed this issue by re-telling the stories to the actors and the audience after the teller had shared his/her story. This proved to be effective as it also acknowledged to the teller that the story had been heard. Paired with this was the location of the school. There

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was a very specific timeframe in which to execute each session, as the area is considered to be a safety risk after dark. This placed a great deal of pressure on me as the facilitator, because there was not always enough time to explore avenues of discussions in depth. However, I believe I overcame this obstacle through preparation and planning. I did 12 sessions with the participants. I believe that future researchers could benefit if they did fewer sessions, but extended the time period of each session. This would allow for a more in – depth exploration of the themes presented in each session. I also recommend that similar studies be done during school hours, as part of the school curriculum, such as life skills or culture studies.

As mentioned before, the content of a playback performance is generated by the audience. This study was limited to a multicultural class, who operated in a specific social group. Thus, I could only address the content provided by the participants. Further research with different sample groups could yield valuable information in this field of study.

Furthermore, this study was unique in that the audience members of the playback performances remained the same throughout the study. This allowed participants the opportunity to fully explore the issues that they felt needed to be addressed. In this regard the theory of Fulma Hoesh (1999) on the 'red thread' proved to be accurate. However, I found that this 'red thread' moved not only from story to story, but from performance to performance within the study. An investigation into the red thread phenomenon within a consistent audience group could yield valuable insight into furthering the field of playback theatre.

In this dissertation I focused my discussions on the stories and narratives that resonated with my research aims. However, as is the nature of playback theatre, other stories emerged, although not as predominantly, within the parameters of this study. It is these stories that led me to believe that there are new avenues to explore in playback theatre. One such avenue is the possibility of using playback theatre as a tool to improve self-esteem. I make this recommendation based on my

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observations during the sessions and participants' journal entries. Some participants were withdrawn and shy when the study started. However, at the end of the study the participants were actively involved with and willing to share during the discussions without being asked. Participant 010 wrote: 'Now I am not shy like last week. Now I know… I must not be shy.' and in a later session she wrote: 'The first time I meet you I am very shy, but now I am not shy' (Participant 010 Journal, 2013). The social workers also noted this when they wrote: 'Being in this group empowered them; it built their self-confidence' (Hlongwane & Mnisi, 2013: Appendix D). I believe that an examination into playback theatre's potential to promote self-confidence merits further investigation and will benefit the field of playback theatre.

5.4.   Concluding statement

The research statement focused on the potential of playback theatre to interrogate the relationship between dominant and personal discourses. It proposed that through playback theatre, self-reflective repositioning of these discourses could take place, as participants could imagine alternative possibilities and understandings with regards to communication and personal responsibility. This study has shown that it is possible to identify underlying dominant discourses within participants' narrated stories. Furthermore, it was possible to identify personal discourses that were resistant to the dominant discourse within their cultural structure.   Through witnessing and the aesthetic paradox that occurs during a playback performance, participants were able to enter the third space, where they could critically reflect on their stories from a safe distance. Playback theatre does not seek to provide solutions for the issues raised during a performance; rather it creates a space for critical reflection that allows audience members to find answers for themselves. This critical reflection allowed them the opportunity to re-evaluate their actions in regards to communication and personal responsibility, thereby gaining insight into their actions and in doing so; they were able to reposition themselves within their personal discourses. Through the use of playback theatre participants were able to envision alternative possibilities through self-reflective discursive repositioning and through playback theatre exercises they were able to explore alternative meanings within the different modes of communication. Through this they were able to formulate new

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understanding with regards to personal responsibility, which potentially allowed them to re-imagine themselves within their social context.

17 October 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to advise that, Odia Jordaan will be working with Khulisa Social
Solutions in Hammanskraal; doing playback theatre research as of February 2013.
We would gladly work with Odia on her programme with the youth.
Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.
Yours Truly,

Zain Halle
Area Manager Northern Gauteng
0844180676

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Appendix B

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

<div align="right">October 2012</div>

Dear (name of participant)...

ASSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY: PERFORMING SYNERGY: THE USE OF PLAYBACK THEATRE IN EXPLORING PERSONAL AND DOMINANT DISCOURSES AMONGST ADOLESCENTS.

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Odia Jordaan under the supervision of Prof. Marié-Heleen Coetzee of the Drama Department at the University of Pretoria.

This study is supported by *Khulisa Social Solutions*.

Description of the research:

This study will explore how personal experiences and stories can be re-created through story-telling in playback theatre. Furthermore, it will explore how playback theatre can facilitate personal responsibility through story-telling.

Confidentiality and anonymity:

All information received will remain confidential and your participation will remain anonymous. Your identity will not be revealed as aliases will be assigned to you when discussing the outcomes of the observations.

Drama Department	Tel. Number 012 4202558	Email address Yvonne.rabie@up.ac.za
University of Pretoria	Fax Number 012 3625281	www.up.ac.za
Pretoria 0002 South Africa		

Although your contribution is needed and is extremely important to ensure the success of this research study, your participation is voluntary and you are in no way obliged to participate. It is your own free choice to participate, as long as you have the permission of your parents. You will not be penalised in any way should you or your parents decide to withdraw from the study. Your contribution will be sincerely appreciated.

Participation implies the following:

If you choose to participate, you will have to attend a two hour performances that will be presented once a week over a period of six months at a convenient time. Your facilitator, Odia Jordaan, will guide the process and explain all details clearly.

During this study you will be asked to:

- partake as audience members;
- tell short stories during the performances which the performers will then act out;
- partake in small group discussions about the performances and the stories told; and
- give some feedback of your experiences in journal form. Your name will not appear in the journal as it will be coded in order to protect your privacy. The journal has to be handed into the facilitator after the twenty fourth performance.

Potential risks:

You will not be engaged in any harmful psychological, emotional or physical activities. *Khulisa's* social worker will attend performances and will offer counselling, should any unforeseen incident happen.

You will not receive any remuneration for your work, but will be appropriately thanked during a special occasion after the completion of the performances.

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Data storage

In accordance with UP regulations, data will be stored in the archives of the Drama Building, Room 2-16 at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years. Your permission will be requested should any person want to access the data in storage again for further research.

Contact information:

If you or your parents / guardians have any questions or concerns about this study,

or if any problems arise during the research process, please contact:

The facilitator / researcher:

Miss. Odia Jordaan

E-mail: ojordaan@gmail.com

Cell: 072 689 7293

or

Prof. M-H Coetzee

HOD Drama Department

University of Pretoria

Tel: +27 12 4202558

Fax: +27 12 3625281

Drama Building Room 2-2

or

The social worker

Mrs. Mosidi Madisha

E-mail: mosidi@khulisa.org.za

Cell: 082 064 5686

Please hand the completed consent form in at our first meeting. No participant will be allowed to participate without the written consent of their parents and themselves.

Yours faithfully

Odia Jordaan

Researcher / Student

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ASSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH STUDY: EXPLORING PERSONAL AND DOMINANT DISCOURCES THROUGH PLAYBACK THEATRE.

This assent form is addressed at the participant of the research study

I ….. (full names and surname) have read this consent letter and I voluntarily give my consent to participate in this study. I also give my consent that the information provided by me during the performances may be used for research purposes, provided that I be given an alias in the discussions of the research in order to protect my privacy.

Participant's full
names...
Participant's identity number..Participant's age...................
Participant's signature...
Signed at …...................................... on the …...... day of the …................. month 2012

…..

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

30 October 2012

Dear (name of parent/guardian)..

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY: PERFORMING SYNERGY: THE USE OF PLAYBACK THEATRE IN EXPLORING PERSONAL AND DOMINANT DISCOURSES AMONGST ADOLESCENTS.

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Odia Jordaan under the direction of Prof. Marié-Heleen Coetzee of the Drama Department at the University of Pretoria.

This study has been accepted by Khulisa Social Solutions, who has given consent that the research project may go ahead

Description of the research:

This study will explore how personal experiences and stories can be re-created through story-telling in playback theatre. Furthermore, it will explore how playback theatre can facilitate personal responsibility through story-telling.

Confidentiality and anonymity:

All information received will remain confidential and your child's participation will remain anonymous. Your child's identity will not be revealed as aliases will be assigned to him/her when discussing the outcomes of the observations.

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Your child's contribution is extremely important to ensure the success of the research study. His/her participation in this research study is, however, voluntary. She/he are in no way obliged to participate. Your child will not be penalised in any way should she/he decide to withdraw. Be assured that your child's contribution will be sincerely appreciated.

Participation implies the following:

Your child will have to attend a 2 hour performances that will be presented once a week over a period of six months at a convenient time at Boitshepo Secondary School. The facilitator, Odia Jordaan, will lead the performances and explain every process clearly.

During this study your child will be asked to:

- partake as audience members;
- tell short stories during the performances which the performers will then act out;
- partake in small group discussions about the performances and the stories told; and
- give some feedback of your experiences in journal form. Your name will not appear in the journal as it will be coded in order to protect their privacy. The journal has to be handed into the facilitator after the twenty fourth performance.

Potential risks:

Your child will not be engaged in any harmful psychological, emotional or physical activities. *Khulisa*'s social worker (Mosidi Madisha) will attend performances and will offer counselling, should any unforeseen incident happen.

Your child will not receive any remuneration for his/her work, but will be appropriately thanked during a special occasion after the completion of the series of eight sessions.

Data storage

In accordance with UP regulations, data will be stored in the archives of the Drama Building, Room 2-16 at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years. Your permission will be requested should any person want to access the data in storage again for further research.

Contact information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or if any problems arise during the research process, please contact:

The facilitator / researcher:

Miss. Odia Jordaan

E-mail: ojordaan@gmail.com

Cell: 072 689 7293

or

Prof. M-H Coetzee

HOD Drama Department

University of Pretoria

Tel: +27 12 4202558

Fax: +27 12 3625281

Drama Building Room 2-2

or

The social worker

Mrs Mosidi Madisha

E-mail: mosidi@khulisa.org.za

Cell: 082 064 5686

Please hand the completed consent form in at the first meeting. No participant will be allowed to participate without the written consent of their parents/guardians and themselves.

Yours faithfully

Odia Jordaan

Researcher / Student

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This consent form is addressed to the parent or guardian of the participant of the research study. The parents or guardian of the participant has to give his/her/their consent that their child may participate in this study.

Consent – Parent/ guardian of participant

I, (full names and surname) have read this consent letter and I voluntarily give my consent to …..

(child's name) to participate in this study. I also give my consent that the information provided by my child, during the performances, may be utilised for research purposes. I understand that my child will be given an alias, to protect her/his privacy, during the two hour session during the six months and will take responsibility for her/his own safety and transport after the completion of each session.

Parent or guardian's full

names..

Parent or guardian's

signature...

Signed at …..................................... on the …..... day of the …..................month 2012

Appendix C[21]

REPORT FOR DRAMA THERAPY

IDENTIFYING DETAILS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS:

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<u>Introduction</u>

This report covers six sessions done with fourteen-sixteen participants at Boitshepo Catholic School. The group started with sixteen participants-three boys and thirteen girls, aging from thirteen years to eighteen, the number was decreased to fourteen. Participants are from grade nine to grade eleven. The sessions were implemented from 14h00 to 16h00 every Tuesday.

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[21] For the protection of the participant the names have been blocked out of the report. However I have made no changes to grammar and syntax so as to preserve the integrity of the report.

Session one

Date: 30/04/2013

Venue: Boitshepo Catholic School

Time: 14h00-16h00

Number of participants attending: 14

The first session was about learning how to express feelings through acting. Most of these participants are unable to express their feelings as they are not given an opportunity to do so by their parents thus that leads to conflict or misunderstanding among family members. The other concern was that participants found it hard to make friends when starting a new school-the impact of close friendship breaking up, this was a tremendous anxiety and hurt for the participants because they feel rejected and isolated in the new school. Because of these issues one participant shared with the group that he turned to be a bully in order to portray a notion of being cool and accepted in the school, he then met a friend who convinced him to change his bullying behaviour. The other two participants shared about losing someone close to them, even though they go through difficult times they learn to accept things they cannot change. They also shared about things that make them happy and little things they do for others to be happy and enjoy their day.

The participants related their stories to each that was shared and were aware that their stories are more alike and they go through similar experiences. They also learnt to appreciate each other in being brave for sharing their stories. They acknowledge the importance of taking time to listen to each other as they need each other.

<u>Session two</u>

Date: 07/05/2013

Venue: Boitshepo Catholic School

Time: 14h00-16h00

Number of participants attending: 14

The session was about learning how to express feelings through acting, which will help improve their relationships with their teachers and family members. In this session the participants showed lack of confidence and low self-esteem. They took time to share their stories and they were not volunteering in being the first to share their stories. They shared stories about the relationship changing between them and their parents and their peers.

Date: 16/05/2013

Time: 14h00-16h30

Participants attended: 13

Purpose of the session: Addressing self-esteem

According to the evaluation of the previous session it showed that the participants lacked self-confident, it was then decided that it be addressed on this session. The participants were given a chance to act in the session and that made them feel good about themselves. Their self-esteem was increased and participants were no longer shy to stand in front of the other participants and officials and perform, they enjoyed it. They were able to express their feelings well through acting and because those were their stories they could tell it better.

Date: 21/05/2013

Time: 14h00-16h00

Participants attended: 14

Session: 4

Purpose of the session: self-respect

The cast started by telling their feelings/check in by sculpture acting. They also linked their feelings with the topic of the session; in this session it was self-respect. The participants were given a chance to tell their stories linking them with self-respect.

Stories that came from the participants were:

- Stories of being able to say no to something they believe is right.
- How to express their feelings without feeling bad about it
- Looking at the best way of communicating with their parents about issues that are important to them
- How to choose friends
- To stand in what they believe in

Their stories were then acted out by the cast while they are watching and were asked to confirm if that is what happened and all of them confirmed that is what happened. The acting helps participants to see themselves through other people's act, which makes them able to rectify their mistakes or continue with the right thing they were doing. They feel embarrassed, hurt, ashamed and sad when watching people act out their stories.

After telling and acting their stories the participants were now given a chance to evaluate the session, and this is what transpired:

- It makes them feel bad, sad, hurt and disappointed when their parents are not supportive.
- They think that their parents are harsh and they don't have time for them
- The treatment they get from their parents at home affect their behaviour at school
- They also learnt that people change

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Participants link each story with their personal stories; they see themselves in each story that was told. They have common feelings about stories that were told.

Evaluation:

Participants go through almost the same experience so they identify with stories that are told by other participants; even though they experience them differently.

Date: 29/05/2013

Participants attended: 14

Purpose of the session: Learning communication skills

Session: 5

In this session the topic was learning communication skills. The participants were reluctant in participating in this session. They seemed tired, stressed or confused. The facilitator had to wait for a while before someone can share his/her story, which made the session to be a long. Not all of the participants were sad or hurt about the communication between them and their significant others; instead others were making fun of their teachers and learners at school.

These were the stories shared:

- Someone who was bullied
- Someone who got into trouble for something he did not do
- Someone who was corporally punished in class

Evaluation:

Most of the participants were inspired by the story of someone who got into trouble for something he did not commit. These participants experience that kind of a treatment at their homes and they wish parents would learn to listen and show interest in them because that is more important to them. It was also discovered that the participants are writing exams that is the reason why they seemed stressed out and tired. They felt anxious and wondered if they could do it in their exams thus they were not actively involved in the session.

Date: 04/06/2013

Number of participants attended: 07

Session topic: Surviving through exams

Session: 6

In this session only seven participants attended the session. Some gave excuses that they needed to go home earlier that day and other said they need to study for the exam they are writing on the following day. The participants learnt something new in this session-they learnt expressing their feelings through making the sculpture; they also learnt that an emotion has different levels of which they need to express when making a sculpture.

The stories that were shared in this session:

- Participants feel that there is too much for them to do
- They feel anxious and scared about the exams
- They feel like running away and disappear until the exams are over
- Others feel confident that they can pass their exams
- Everything they do while at home affects what happens at school and when they write their exams.

Evaluation:

These participants show commitment because even when they are in the middle of the exams they were able to attend the session. They also appreciated that they learn a new thing every day and that is what keeps them going in life. They learnt that it is impossible to know everything and they should learn to ask for help-that shows that their self-esteem is growing.

Report compiled by: E. Mnisi

REPORT FOR DRAMA THERAPY

IDENTIFYING DETAILS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS:

[names blocked out]

<u>Introduction</u>

This report covers six last sessions done with thirteen participants of Boitshepo Catholic School. The group started with sixteen participants-three boys and thirteen girls, aging from thirteen years to eighteen, the number was decreased to fourteen and eventually to eight participants from grade nine to grade eleven. The sessions were implemented from 14h00 to 16h00 every Tuesdays, since the participants were inconsistent, we moved the sessions to Wednesdays, sometimes we had them on Monday until to the last session.

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[22] For the protection of the participant the names have been blocked out of the report. However I have made no changes to grammar and syntax as to preserve the integrity of the report.

<u>Session seven</u>

Date: 31/07/2013

Venue: Boitshepo Catholic School

Time: 14h31

Session topic: Emotions

In the previous session the participants did not show up as agreed. Before the session started Odia and the participants discussed the problems they encountered during the past sessions; and this is what transpired:

The participants had their own expectations-they wanted Odia to teach them drama; but she explained that the study is a process and they have to go through the whole process before acting. Odia went on explaining that the study is a research; and can only listen to their stories but not teach them drama.

The participants had an opportunity to voice out things they thought are going to be in the programme which were not part of the programme and Odia cleared everything with them and they understood her.

The participants shared their stories and the crew acted their stories out. Most of them shared happy stories and the crew acted their stories out.

<u>Facilitator's evaluation</u>

The participants learnt that it is good to express their emotions at home and at school; so that people can know how they feel and understand them. Most of them mentioned that their parents do not understand them but when expressing their emotions in an acceptable manner they are being understood. Today's sessions also taught them how to differentiate emotions and pay attention to each emotion expressed.

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<u>Session eight</u>

Date: 05/08/2013

Venue: Boitshepo Catholic School

Time: 14h00-16h00

Number of participants attending: 13

Purpose of the session: **Communication**

1. <u>Summary of the session</u>:

Odia Jordaan the facilitator has highlighted that the learners or participants were struggling with communication. They are unable to express themselves openly and by being unable to do that it changes their behaviour. The participants were seated in circles whereby they were taught how to create a rhythm of music by humming and creating beats one by one until they can all come up with something that makes sense. The purpose was to teach them to be able to listen so they can be good listeners and how to convey information in a way that it does not confuse the next person or the receiver. The participants were also taught that before one can consider acting as a career, he/she must be a master in communications. The learners seemed to be enjoying the exercise at it seemed new to them. Each produced a unique beat and eventually they came up with a good rhythm because of listening.

2. <u>Social worker/facilitator's intervention</u>

The participants are very cooperative, and the exercise seems to be having a positive impact on them as they turn out to learn how to listen to each other. In a way by learning to be good listeners, they are learning to respect themselves and others. Overall evaluation of the session is that it was well done and exactly what the learners needed.

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<u>Session nine</u>

Date: 12/08/2013

Venue: Boitshepo Catholic School

Time: 14h00-16h00

Number of participants attending: 12

Purpose of the session: **Communication**

1. <u>Summary of the session</u>

In this session the crew showed learners how to express themselves through acting. Learners shared their personal stories orb experiences which Odia and her crew dramatizes and the learners confirms whether they have depicted how he/she felt during that experience. After the play back they carried on with the communication activity. This time Odia brought different kinds of musical instruments of which she gave the learners a single musical instrument. They sat in a circle again and they started producing beats using the instruments. Since each had a unique instruments, they had to listen to each other so that they won't have to have two people playing the same rhythm with different instruments. So by listening, each could come up with a new and different tune.

2. <u>Social worker /facilitator's intervention</u>

The musical instruments were a good tool for helping the learners to express themselves and at the same time teaching them how to be good listeners. The session was good, loud and fun, the louder or rougher or softer they played conveyed how each participant felt.

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Session ten

Date: 21/08/2013

Time: 14h00-16h30

Participants attended: 10

Purpose of the session: **Communication**

1. Summary of the session

The session began with playback drama theatre, where they express their feelings through acting. The crew also acted out the stories that learners shared. Then Odia divided the learners into two group five per groups. She gave them storylines and they had to create a play and dramatize it in front of other learners. Their creativity was very good but at the same time it was clear they still had a long way to learn about communication and drama in general.

2. Social Worker/ Facilitator's intervention

The learners are slowly but surely losing interest, but giving them a chance to be on stage and do a bit of acting was very helpful. The session helped them to express themselves in a playback dramatical theatre, they enjoyed being on stage and given the opportunity.

Session eleven

Date: 26/08/2013

Time: 14h00-16h00

Participants attended: 14

Purpose of the session: **Communication**

1. Summary of the session

The crew started by showing emotions through acting. Then learners/ participants shared their stories which the crew acted out and the participants confirmed whether it how they felt. After that a few learners shared their

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stories with the other participants and the crew and then the crew would bring the story to live through acting. After the crew had finished Odia called together the participants and she gave them an activity to each write a short story. After they were finished they used instruments again. The reason was to help to be better communicators.

2. Social Worker/ Facilitator's intervention

The learners are doing better, they seem to be having an understanding of what it means to communicate effectively. Their listening skills has improved and their ability of self-expression is very good and impressive.

Session twelve

Date: 04 /09/2013

Number of participants attended: 10

Session topic: Education about drama and how to communicate in an artistic way.

Summary of the session

This was the last session of playback drama theatre for Odia's research. The learners were on time, and so were Odia and her crew. They started by having ice-breakers of which the purpose was to help the learners to relax and laugh a bit after a long day and for the crew to get in the stage mood after the long road to school. After they had played the games, they all took their seats and Odia gave the both the learners and her crew a speech about how much she appreciate their commitment and help throughout the programme. She gave special thanks to the learners of Boitshepo catholic school for helping her with her research studies because they played a bigger role by availing themselves everyday of her sessions and that the research was done on them.

After she was done with her speech they began with their usual playback drama theatre. The learners started to share their emotions and feelings with Odia, who directed her crew to play the emotion in a dramatical way, and the learners had to confirm whether the crew are truly depicting how they really felt, this went on for about 30 minutes. Then afterwards the learners had to voluntarily share a story that happened in their lives, and Odia's crew would dramatise it to the satisfaction of the learner. The learners who shared their stories only spoke about something that happened recently and that made them happy, they didn't tell sad stories which tells they were in a happy mood. Others didn't were unwilling to share their feelings with others, they just kept quiet and watched the crew was acting out someone's story.

After they had finished. Odia's crew said their final goodbyes to the learners and told them how much fun they had with them throughout the year and how much they will miss them. Learners as .crew left. Odia stayed behind with the learners, they were divided into groups of four, they had to do playback drama theatre as the crew had done it. And they also dramatized stories they came up with as a group. After that as they filled in their diaries, writing how they experienced the session and what they have learnt.

Evaluation:

- At this stage the group members have developed the norm. Members are now relaxed; they are no more scared of the facilitator; they are now appreciating having each other in the group.

- The participants see communication as an important tool to use so that they can build a bridge between them and their parents; their peers and their teachers. Throughout this programme they mention that it is important to listen to each other; give someone who is talking a chance to finish talking; paying attention so that you can be able to understand him/her.

- Respect is a very important aspect to them; when they are not listened to; they feel belittled; ignored; small; and that takes away their self-confidence. In this programme they learnt that in order to be listened to they need to learn to listen to others. They understand that it is not easy to learn to listen but they are eager to try it.

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- The programme also showed them the importance of expressing their emotions. They learnt how to express their feelings without using words. In the era we are living in; it is not easy for a teenager to express his/her feelings without using words. The session taught them how to learn to control their feelings.

- The participants embrace change they see in their lives-they learn new things.

- The participants learnt replacing a negative behaviour with a positive one-they mentioned that they are changing, though it is not an easy path to walk through but they are taking one step at a time. From what I have perceived they are taking responsibility for their actions; if and when they wrong; they are aware of it and they try to rectify it.

- I also perceived that they need to be told that they are being loved and cared for by their parents. They need to hear that from their parents.

- The group also showed cohesion and team work in the group.

- When they were using instruments they learnt that when you attentively listen to the sound; you respect the music and also learn to listen to people.

- By learning how to control their feelings they show that they are able to discipline themselves as teenagers.

- Many mentioned that they feel good when they are in a group that shows the sense of belonging; they group becomes their second home or home away from home.

- Being in this group empowered them; it built their self-confidence. They learn from each other; they learn from the crew and the facilitator.

- The participants also found it fascinating to communicate without words; it is a new thing to them; they are not used to it and others thought it was not possible but once they learnt how to do it; they found it as another way of being listened to and being heard. This will help them in future not to rush to speak but to consider what the other person is saying and paying attention to it.

- The participants' learnt to accept themselves the way they are; respect themselves and appreciate things they have through this programme.

Report compiled by: R. Hlongwane and E. Mnisi

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[23] I am aware that according to the *Harvard Referencing Guide* as set out by the Monash University in 2012, personal communications should not appear in the list of references, as they have not been published. However to avoid any confusion, I have included the personal communications in the list of references.

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