

https://dspace.org/

The significance of participation in educational theatre for young audiences: the case study of Themba Interactive Theatre Company

Wembe, Cedric Ghislain

2013-09-12
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/13130

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES:

The case study of Themba Interactive Theatre Company.

By

Cedric Ghislain Wembe

(695688)

Supervisor

Kennedy Chinyowa (PhD)

A This Research Report was submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Dramatic Arts

Johannesburg, 2013

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters in Dramatic Arts by Coursework in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another author's work and to pretend that it is one's own.

2. I have used the author date convention for citation and referencing. Each significant contribution to and quotation in this essay from the work or works of other people has been acknowledged through citation and reference.

3. This essay is my own work.

4. I have not allowed and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

5. I have done the word processing and formatting of this research report myself. I understand that the correct formatting is part of the mark for this assignment and that it is therefore wrong for another person to do it for me.

Cedric Wembe

---------- Day of---------- 2013

Abstract

This study examined the significance of participation in educational theatre for young audiences with specific focus on the Interactive Themba Theatre (ITT) company. The paucity of literature on theatre for young audiences coupled with the controversy surrounding the notion of participation motivated this research. The conceptual framework was based on selected paradigms of participation such as popular, dialogical, extrinsic, peripheral, and integral participation. These paradigms helped young learners to take initiative and to bridge the subject-object distinctions that are often characteristic of the classroom learning process. They enabled learners to be at the center of the learning process. The significance of participation in unpacking themes associated with sexual relationships, peer pressure and teenage pregnancy was revealed through ITT's educational theatre performances targeted at young audiences, namely *The Right Time*, *Virtual Dynamics*, and *Is That You*?

Dedication

To my family and friends who have invested time, love, prayers and money in my studies and for the fulfillment of this research.

To all the educators, lecturers, trainers and mentors who have imparted in me, knowledge and 'savoir faire' in my life. I am very grateful to you for your patience and support.

To all the artists and practitioners who laid the foundation to this study, those who have made the way, set the path and prepared a seat for a humble researcher like me.

To Mr. and Mrs. Smith, people that I have never met, and who may come across this work in their journey for life. I hope this study will not only challenge you, but enrich you too.

Acknowledgement

To God almighty without whom I would not have learned enough to carry out this research.

"*To the only wise God our Savior, be the glory and majesty, dominion and poser, both now and ever. Amen*" Jude 1:25 [KJV].

To the Holy Spirit of God, for the inspiration he has not ceased to pour in me, and for the direction in choosing this topic.

To my mother, Temgwo Therese a courageous, energetic, loving, and encouraging woman who has always been present in my life to support and encourage me throughout my studies, in good and bad days.

To my elder brother Koagne Cyrille and my elder sister Sellam Nathalie who have sacrificed their own satisfactions to push me and encourage me in my studies. Your sacrifices are of immeasurable reward.

To my friends and relatives who have always supported me and encouraged me in my dreams, and have pushed me this far.

To my pastors Bishop Gwedji Stephen, my spiritual mentor Pastor. Eric Nzhie, and brethren in Christ for their spiritual support and presence.

To my Supervisor Dr. Kennedy Chinyowa, whose patience and encouragement have been my strength when I felt down and discouraged.

To Drama for Life, University of the Witwatersrand for the opportunity it gives me to study in such a prestigious University.

To my lecturers at the University of Yaoundé 1, Bole Butake (Pr.), Emelda Samba (Dr.), Fai Donatus (Dr.), Fofie Jacques Raymond (Dr.) and Tang Anne Tany (Dr.) who believed in me and gave me the basis I needed for my studies abroad and for this study.

To the *'Theatre du Chocolat'* for allowing me to work with them and lay the artistic and professional background supporting this research.

Enfin pour tout ceux et celles qui de près comme de loin on contribué pour l'accomplissement de ce travail. MERCI!

Table of Contents

Declaration i

Abstract ii

Dedication iii

Acknowledgement iv

Table of Contents vi

Chapter 1 **GENERAL INTRODUCTION** 1

1. Aims of the Research 1

2. Research Questions 1

3. Rationale 2

3.1. The context of the research: Themba Theatre Company 3

4. Literature Review 3

5. Research Methodology 5

Conclusion 8

Chapter 2 Conceptual Framework 9

Introduction. 9

2.2 Paradigms of participation 10

2.2.1 The dialogical paradigm 10

2.2.2 The popular participation paradigm 12

2.2.3 Extrinsic participation paradigm 13

2.2.4 Peripheral participation paradigm 15

2.2.5 The Integral participation paradigm 16

Conclusion 18

Chapter 3. **From Themba HIV/Aids project to Themba Interactive organization** 19

2.1 Introduction 19

2.2 Initially an HIV/AIDS project 19

2.3. From a project to theatre organization 20
Conclusion 22

Chapter 4: Methodology of Themba 23
4.1 Introduction 23
4.2 Introduction of the process 24
4.3 The interactive play 25
4.4 The questioning 26
4.5 Reflection 27
4.6 Breaking the silence 28
Conclusion 29

Chapter 5.The problem of sexual relationships In *The Right time* 31
5.1 Introduction 31
5.2 Context of performance 32
5.3 Understanding sexual relationships in *The Right time* 32
5.3.1 Building self-confidence 33
5.3.2 Describing sexual relationships 35
5.3.3 The question of 'where' 37
5.3.4 The question of 'when' 38
Conclusion 39

Chapter 6 The Problem of Peer Pressure In *Virtual Dyanamics* 41
6.1 Introduction 41
6.2 Context of performance. 43
6.3 Manifestations of peer pressure 43
6.3.1Rape as a negative factor 43
6.3.2 Youth gangs 45
6.3.3 'Being cool' 47
6.4 Consequences of peer pressure 49
6.4.1 Rebellion 49
6.4.2 Substance abuse 51
Conclusion 54

Chapter 7 The question of teenage pregnancy In *Is That You?* 55

7.1 Introduction 55
7.2 Context of the play 55
7.3 Causes of teenage pregnancy 56
7.3.1 Inadequate sex education 56
7.3.2 Peer pressure 57
7.4 The consequences of teenage pregnancy 58
7.4.1 Dropping out of school 58
7.4.2 Family conflict 60
Conclusion 61

Chapter 8 GENERAL CONCLUSION 62
8.1 Presentation of research findings 62
8.2 Recommendations 63

Bibliography 65

Chapter 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Aims of the Research

This research examines the role of participation in educational theatre performances for young audiences. It focuses on the role of participation in theatre for young audience, as an empowering and effective tool in the process of learning through theatre. The study also explores different paradigms of participation, and their role in the education of youth regardless of their background. The research also examines ways in which those paradigms of participation could effectively work in theatre for young audiences.

The numerous definitions arising when talking about participation have created a serious polemic around the concept itself. According to Chinyowa (2005), the multitude of definitions of participation "can only serve to confuse rather than clarify the concept" (2005: 223). Participation in contemporary discourse is conceptualized differently every time the word is mentioned, depending on the context and the purpose of its utilization.

2. Research Questions

This study examines the role of participation in educational theatre for young audiences, with particular focus on the following research questions.

a. How can participation enhance the learning process in educational theatre for young audiences?
b. Does such participation contribute to better practice in educational theatre for young audiences?

3. Rationale

"This is not theatre, give us back our money." These words were thrown at me by a nursery learner in the midst of a theatre performance for young audiences in Cameroon. This happened during the Festival Camerounais du Theatre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse (FESCATEJ), in December 2009 at Ebolowa. Since then I have been asking myself the reason for such an angry reaction. What was missing in that performance? What are the requirements of a theatre for young audiences' performance? Little research had been done on children's and youth theatre in the performing Arts section of the University of Yaoundé in which I was studying at that time. My desire to carry out an experimental research on children's theatre was for my lecturers an innovation in the department.

Theatre for young audiences had mostly been perceived as entertaining rather than educational (Schmidt, 2012). It had essentially been providing a theatrical experience that is delivered to the audience in a *top-down* approach. It was therefore practiced with little or no empowerment of the young audiences who were given no space to discuss, argue and reflect on the issues at stake. I found it necessary to explore the empowering capacities of a more participatory theatre for young audience, in which actor-educators or facilitators encourage young learners to participate in solving the dilemmas presented in the play. The desire to research on educational theatre for young audiences increased during the course of my study at Wits when I encountered Process Drama, a creative form of drama in which the learning originates from the participants who are placed at the center of the process. My encounter with applied theatre, especially Process Drama reinforced my decision to research on educational theatre for young audiences. Applied theatre possesses a transformative power which is manifested when participants are carried into the dramatic elsewhere, the fictional universe of the play. The encounter considerably shifted my

initial concern regarding research on theatre for young audiences. It made me question the practice of children's and youth educational theatre that I had experienced in the past.

The need for more research on children and youth theatre has been the concern of scholars like Davis' (1961). According to Davis (1961), such theatre has been focusing on playwriting and play production concerns. I agree with Davis' concern, and wish to carry out research on educational theatre for young audiences by looking at the significance of participation.

3.1. The context of the research: Themba Theatre Company

Interactive Themba Theatre Company (ITT) is a Non-Governmental Organization based in Johannesburg, South Africa. As suggested by the name, ITT is a theatre company that uses interactive methods as well as theater and drama techniques to address HIV/AIDS and other social related problems. ITT's performances are framed in a way that allows moments of interaction between the audience and the actors.

ITT provides educational theatre performances for young audiences, especially young learners in South African schools and communities. They give their young audiences opportunities to take part in the ongoing process of learning alongside the actor-educators. The theatre company activated my curiosity about the effectiveness of creating theatre for young audiences during the learning process.

4. Literature Review

Wates (2000) defines participation as the "act of being involved in something" (2000; 194). He refers to the active involvement of 'people' taking part in the activity. In educational theatre for young audiences this implies the active involvement of the learners in the activities of the performance and the generation of the learning. For the purpose of this study, participation refers

to the potential actions and reactions of the young learners in relation to the performance. It relates to active engagement with what is happening on stage at any level of the performance. The impact and significance of different levels of participation on the learning generated, and on the learners themselves during theatre for young audiences will also be considered.

Davis (1961) points out that insufficient research has been carried out in the field of children's theatre. Theatre for young audiences is an umbrella term encompassing children's theatre and theatre for youth. Goldberg's (1974) view of children's theatre as "a formal theatrical experience in which a play is presented for an audience of children" (1974: 5) will be applied to theatre for young audiences. The point of convergence between Goldberg and this study will be at the level of the goal of a theatrical experience that provides the best learning for a young audience.

Research on a theatre that works towards engaging young audiences in the process of education through their participation has not placed much focus on the learners' involvement in the activities of their education (Gordon, 2007). Hence the need to examine the level of participation in ITT's educational theatre performance for young audiences in South African schools and communities.

A critical analysis of participation in the work done by ITT will incorporate John Darling's (2007) idea of children being considered as agents of the learning process. Doddington and Hilton (2007) also support this idea by pointing out that more responsibility should be allowed for 'learners' in their education. It is important for learners to provide their own points of view, or express, share and present their thoughts freely. It is also important for them to be given ownership of the learning activity.

Giving more credit to the dramatic context of education, Courtney (1989) states that the activity of educating through drama or through play should start with the learner. In his own words, Courtney states that, 'If we can obtain the same intensity in the child in learning situations that he or she has in the playground, then this is the basis of a real and permanent education' (1989:13). I agree with Courtney in this regard and think that it will be important for the learners to be part of the ongoing educational activity.

While presenting learners' participation as an activity to be encouraged in education, Hallak asserts that "one of the most important recommendations of the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All in 1990, was that 'new and revitalized partnerships at all levels should be built in order to achieve *Education For All"* (*in* Sheldom1994:v). The idea of a partnership between learners and educators was initiated by Freire (1970).Such partnership needs to be visible at all levels of the educational experience. It is necessary for educational theatre for young audiences to consider ways to create and establish a partnership between the audience and actors on stage throughout the activity. The way in which this partnership can be made more effective in theatre for young audience will be the focus of this study.

Drawing from the idea that education should find ways to integrate learners in the production of learning, this study focuses on young audiences' participation in learning through theatre. As has been pointed out, the need for participation in the learning process will be considered as significant in educating the youth through theatre.

5. Research Methodology

To examine the role of participation in children's educational theatre I adopted data collection methods based on qualitative research methodology.

Sharan defines qualitative research as, ‘the method of inquiry that seeks to understand social phenomena within the context of the participants' perspectives and experiences’ (2002:69). She notes that the methods used in qualitative research are more flexible, responsive and open to contextual interpretation. This idea also concurs with Patton’s (2002) definition of qualitative research as an attempt to understand the unique interactions in a particular situation. The purpose of qualitative research is not to predict what might occur, but to provide a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the situation.

The data collection was carried out through the use of the following qualitative research methods:

Interviews

I asked open ended questions to different young audiences and also the actor-educators before and after the performances. The intention for asking the young learners was to allow them to answer from their own perspectives about the feelings they had during and after the performances. This was meant to provide additional information that was going to confirm or contradict what I had initially observed. The youth were asked to express their thoughts about what they had learned and how the experience was to them. They had the choice of remaining silent and not respond. On other occasions learners also responded to questions prepared for them in the reflection of the play when actor-educators together with the audience engaged in discussion on the experience and the learning generated.

Participant observation

This involves the researcher’s observation and participation in the process of the research. In the case of this study, the researcher’s role was that of a ‘complete observer’. Gold (1958) posits that

the "complete observer role removes the researcher from interaction with informants" (1958; 221). The complete observer's role helped me to examine participation from the audience's perspectives. It also helped in recording as much as possible moments of audience involvement in the action and the performance in general, and to examine the significance of these moments on the learning process.

Journals

I also kept written reports of what was happening during ITT performances. This was meant to help in collecting information relating to different instances of participation occurring during the performances. The collected information helped in studying different levels of participation and also to understand moments of non-participation.

Video

I recorded different performances in order to have a view of the moments of interaction that could not be observed during live performances. This also helped me to be able to critically engage with controversial and problematic moments of participation that might have occurred during the performances. The video recording enabled me to 'read' those moments where the young audiences were not, or seemed not to be engaging with the paradigms of participation at work, and the consequences this had on the play and the learning objective of the play.

Documents

I used documents in the form of reports, books and articles related to the work, with specific reference to ITT''s interactive techniques. Sharan (1988) describes documents as forms of data not gathered through interviews or observation. Lindsay (2003) posits that, "documents are not just manufactured, they are consumed [...] in organized settings for many different ends, and they

also function in different ways" (2003:4). The documents I used helped to inform the concept of participation as it is understood in educational theatre with regards to ITT's performances.

Conclusion

This chapter has set the foundation of my study in the sense that it has helped to reveal that the current study aims at examining the significance of participation in educational theater for young audience. Participation was also presented as a controversial concept that needed to be well defined and framed in the context of this study. This study was also the consequence of an academic gap existing in terms of research on theatre for young audiences as mentioned by Davis (1961). It came up the lacks observed during a personal experience in the field also influenced this study.

Moreover this chapter was found important to define participation and to have a clear understanding of what will be referred to as theatre for young audiences. This also helped to set the main task of this study with regards to the notion of the learner-centered education through theatre. This task was fulfilled using a set of qualitative research methods, namely interviews; participant observation, with the researcher as a complete observant; Journals; video recordings and documents.

Having laid the foundation of this research, the next chapter provides a conceptual framework that will enable this study to critically engage with participation in educational theatre for young audiences.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

Introduction.

Contemporary development discourse has gradually shifted towards incorporating people's desire to become involved in the transformation of their communities. They want to be part of the decisions and actions which are designed to impact change in their social lives. Therefore participatory approaches to socio-political as well as cultural and educational improvement need to be regarded with particular attention. The apparent inability of developmental projects to produce the expected results has led to misconceptions surrounding participatory practices. The last decade has seen the rise of multiple paradigms of participation which have tended to make it a controversial concept. This is the view of Mohan (2001) who points out that: "People today have an urge - an impatient urge - to participate in the events and processes that shape their lives. And that impatience brings many dangers and opportunities" (2001:1).

Participatory theatre appears to have become one of the platforms where 'outside agencies with their own agendas initiate and manipulate communities. This has led to confusion in terms of understanding participatory theatre practice. Sloman (2011) argues that:

> A cause for concern in participatory theatre is where the name is used but there is little substantive participation occurring. Participatory theatre has become a buzz tool that development agencies, governments and theatre groups are using more and more, but often not including some of the core elements of participatory practice. (2011:49)

Despite the gap between theory and practice participation, remains widely advocated as a popular approach to development. Saxena (2011) argues on the use of participation in India as a means of getting people to agree and go along with a project that has already been designed for them. This is an abuse of participation which uses the people that are supposed to be at the center of the designing and implementation of change. Perhaps what is needed is to explore and interrogate some of the paradigms that are supposed to frame participatory theatre.

2.2 Paradigms of participation

In spite of its abuses, participation remains a powerful and strong factor in development projects. In applied theatre, the concept has led to the emergence of new perspectives and conceptualizations. It is therefore necessary to explore some of the paradigms that are involved in framing theatre for young audience. Chambers (1997) defines a paradigm as "a set of ideas (or concepts), values, methods and behavior which fit together and are mutually reinforcing." (1997:33).

2.2.1 The dialogical paradigm

Pioneered in education and social transformation by the Brazilian adult educator, Paolo Freire in the early 1970's, the concept of dialogue has become fundamental in participatory development practice and education. Freire (1974) defines dialogue as 'the encounter between humans mediated by the world, in order to name the world' (1974:78). This suggests that dialogue is a human activity. Dialogue is at the center of the learning activity which seeks to liberate the learner and dismantle oppression. It is the process through which knowledge is exchanged between human beings engaged in exchanging information, learning and knowledge. According to Freire (1995), dialogue does not represent a false path that I (as educator) use to elaborate on

and realize in the sense of involving the integrity of the other (*in* HER 1995: 378). In practice, dialogue is a voluntary activity and not a 'bureaucratized' formality which consists of asking community members to speak in turns on the issues at stake in the project. In such situation there is no dialogue but conversation. Freire (1995) argues that dialogue is not a simple 'technique' to get people to participate, in a 'conversation' which has no consideration of the 'learning object' and the transformative goal. The dialogical paradigm implies that participants are free to talk or to remain silent, without being forced to participate.

Refusing what I can call the tactical use of dialogue, Freire focuses on the knowledge shared in the dialogical situation by interlocutors. The participants/learners should be able to share their personal experiences throughout the process, with the intention of adding to the knowledge they have on the object of learning. Thus dialogue draws upon the intellectual curiosity of the teacher or facilitator who should be able to accept and be open to the new knowledge brought on by the learners. The dialogical paradigm enables participants to come together and share their personal experiences and contribute to knowledge. It presupposes that dialogue is not a detached activity but the *raison d'être* of liberatory education (Freire, 1974).

In educational theatre for young audiences, dialogical participation is made possible through the different interactions between actor-educators and learners occurring before during and after performance. The theatrical practice creates a space for actors and audience to critically engage with the issues raised in the play. Young audiences feel empowered and start to look at these realities at a personal level. They share with educators their thoughts and personal experiences with regard to the theme, topic or question of the play. Participants and actor-educators think and learn from one another. Perceived from that angle, dialogue becomes a process of thinking together for collective empowerment, education and development (Isaac, 1999).

Applied theatre aims at giving voice to the voiceless by placing participation at the center of the transformative process. The actor-educator moderates and orchestrates responses from the learners. The responsibility of the facilitator is to make sure that the shared experiences are in line with the learning objective of the play.

The dialogical paradigm of participation goes beyond the learning context to affect real life. Participants do not just reflect on the issues at stake on stage. Connections and inferences are made with situations that may occur in real life. Dialogical participation might not necessarily incorporate all voices but strives to involve the participants that are willing to engage with one another.

Participation should not be an instrumental practice in which participants feel obliged to take part; rather they need to take ownership of what they share in the participatory space. Thus the danger in this paradigm is when dialogue ceases to be a voluntary activity and becomes a mere tool to give voice to the audience. This can be alienating to participants who are made to talk about personal experiences without any involvement in the learning (Freire and Macedo, 1995).

2.2.2 The popular participation paradigm

Popular participation occurs when the local community is placed at the center of the educational process. The local community is given the role of catalyst of change and development. Community members decide and design the plans and solution(s) to specific problem(s) in their community, and play an active role in the implementation process. Robert Chambers (1992) describes it as the paradigm of the people to differentiate it from the paradigm of things. Chinyowa (2005) argues that the point of departure in popular participation is characterized by its focus on the *process* rather than the *product* (2005:224). Popular participation promotes

partnership between local communities and outsiders instead of patronage which tends to domesticate the local community. It involves people expressing themselves and exploring new perspectives and ways in which they could address problematic issues. Chinyowa (2005) states that popular participation has to be *liberating*- it should allow originality of thinking, acting and feeling in the participants (2005:224).

For instance in applied theatre for young audience the audience takes part in designing the ways in which they want to implement their project. The theatrical experience should not be monopolized by the actor-educators and facilitators, but should incorporate young audience's views and actions. They remain at the center of the change they want to see in their lives, and should be fully active and implicated in identifying those problems and designing solutions to them. Giving young audience only one responsibility or half of it results in an oppressive activity in which the audience talks vaguely about things they do not understand or relate directly with.

In order to be effective in the transformation of the community, popular participation tends to reject manipulation by outside agents. Community members have more influence over the decisions that affect them. (Saxena, 2011). This paradigm therefore promotes a bottom-up approach to learning which is the basis of liberatory education and democratic learning.

2.2.3 Extrinsic participation paradigm

The extrinsic paradigm of participation presupposes that audience take part in the play or the developmental activity without influencing its structure or form (Chinyowa, 2005: 224). This paradigm often involves audience in the 'post-performance discussion. Extrinsic participation can also occur in the 'pre-show' stage when audience members engage in preparatory activities with the actors or facilitators. In such cases, extrinsic participation happens effectively only

when the audience is recognized inexperienced in educational theatre spectatorship at the beginning of the performance (Prendergast & Saxton, 2010:21). Young audiences that are not used to participatory theatre need to be briefed by actor-educators on how to behave and react throughout the performance. Facilitators need to know what is expected from the audience, what they can and cannot do as well as how their involvement can be made effective.

A sense of community is required for extrinsic participation to occur either in the pre-performance or the post-performance activity. Stakeholders and local communities taking part in the process of development establish a working contract among themselves. The contract can be incorporated as part of the extrinsic paradigm in the sense that it happens at the beginning of the performance, and states the code of conduct to be observed during the performance. The contract can be a short verbal agreement which is not imposed by either party, but carefully negotiated in order to create a space for mutual discussion.

In applied theatre participants engage in extrinsic participation at two different levels. The first instance occurs during the pre-performance stage when the contract is being negotiated between the facilitators and the audience. Participants are given the opportunity to express themselves and show whether they agree with the terms of the contract. They are free to make amendments on the terms of the contract.

The second layer of extrinsic participation occurs in the post-performance stage and is often accompanied by action(s) that are going to affect change in the community. At this stage participants and facilitators reflect on ways in which they can solve problems emerging from the play. Participation in this case gives the audience an opportunity to influence decisions-making. (Cornwall, 2011: 205). The audience members provide feedback on the performance they have

watched. Their responses and reactions to the play and their understanding of the issues developed and presented in the play are significant to this form of participation.

However extrinsic participation gives little power to the audience whose participation does not affect nor transform the process. Since they are invited to participate in pre/post-performance stages it undermines their involvement to affect change on the play. The audience can only help in finding the solution to the problems raised during the play. Although they do not take part in identifying the problem, they play an active role in suggesting solutions that are likely to be implemented in their lives.

2.2.4 Peripheral participation paradigm

The peripheral paradigm implies audience involvement in the performance process without modifying its structure. Participants' involvement in this context is just complementary. They interact with the issues at stake on a superficial level. Their contribution has little or no impact on the structure of the play. Peripheral participation does not modify the structure of the performance set initially by outsiders. It acknowledges participants' ability to generate new ideas, skills and meaning but does not give them space to affect change in the process. Participation in this circumstance is 'instrumental' and objectifying to the learners or the local community. (Cornwall, 2011:59).

In theatre for young audience, the peripheral paradigm only gives the audience space to engage with the issues as they are presented to them. This paradigm does not take cognizance of young people's need to find their own identity. Peripheral participation does not give enough power and ownership to the participants who would like to see their views and ideas implemented in the play. The major limitation lies in its inability to enable participants to make their own choices.

2.2.5 The Integral participation paradigm

Integral participation refers to direct engagement of the audience in the play at all levels from the identification to the implementation stages. This paradigm is one of the most advocated paradigms in participatory and developmental practice. The strength of the integral participation paradigm lies in its ability to give the audience ownership of the process. The central role which is given to participants gives them more agency (White, 2007).

In applied theatre for young audience, this paradigm becomes evident through audience interactions with the performance. They interact with the story, giving it new perspectives as they work alongside the actors-educators and facilitators. Participants are no longer instruments of change, or objects of learning, they become subjects or agents of change and catalysts in the learning process. They work together with the actor-educators or facilitators. They do not participate in response to the call(s) of outside stakeholders, but their involvement becomes an expression of their ownership of the process. The paradigm presents itself as a voluntary act which serves to reaffirm audience's control over the construction of the play and the resolution of the identified problems through their implication in the play.

The integral paradigm of participation breaks down the oppressive wall existing in a normal teaching situation. It establishes a safe space for the empowerment of the learners and gives them more space for dialogue. When implemented in a performance, integral participation can be transformative. White (2011) argues that the idea of participation as *empowerment* is that the practice of being involved in considering options, making decisions, and taking collective action to fight injustice is itself transformative. This idea is at the heart of integral participation which

seeks to shift power onto the learners or local community members. There is no transformation if participants do not exercise the power given to them.

Integral participation appears to be the means through which 'conscientization' happens (Freire, 1972). It provides the platform where learners express their views and can say 'No' to what is offered by stakeholders or theatre troupe if it does not meet their expectations. The community's expectations are placed at the center of the transformative experience, and the stakeholders' responsibility is to facilitate the process (White, 2011). It gives the audience an opportunity to actively take part in the implementation of solutions which they have initially identified and to which they have agreed. Integral participation implies that the audience plays a fundamental role in the process, and can benefit from the responsibilities and privileges they used to be deprived of. They set their own priorities and design plans for collective action to address them.

Integral participation occurs when the act of involving the audience members becomes an 'unself-conscious activity' (Chinyowa, 2005:225). Only then can they be able to resolve the dilemmas and answer the difficult questions. Participants' views and perspectives become an integral part of the theatrical experience through constant negotiation as the performance evolves. Actors and audience members occupy the same physical and imaginary space and both have significant influence over the process. It is necessary that the empowering role given to the audience should be accepted for integral participation to be possible and for the expected transformation to be effective.

Conclusion

The controversy around the concept of participation does not deny its importance in education and in development. In applied theatre the effectiveness of adopting a participatory approach is not arguable. The reason why different forms of participation have emerged lies in the nature of the applied theatre practice. This chapter aimed at examining paradigms of participation and their uses in applied theatre for young audience. The chapter examined the significance of participation in educational theatre for young audiences by exploring the dialogical, popular, extrinsic, peripheral, and integral paradigms. These paradigms do not necessarily have the same transformative outcome excepted in applied theatre practices, but help to understand audience's perspectives at different levels of their involvement in the play.

The paradigm was shown to empower the audience by giving them responsibility in the identification of the problem as well as the designing and implementation of the solutions to the problem. By placing the audience at the center of the activities of the performance, the popular participation was presented as the center of liberatory education and democratic learning. The extrinsic paradigm demonstrated little ability to empower the audience, as it involves audience in pre/post-performance discussions only. The peripheral participation paradigm implies audience involvement in the theatrical activity without modifying its structure. The integral participation paradigm is the most advocated in development practice. It places the audience at the center of the performance and everything is decided and built around their interactions with the play and the actor-educators.

Having examined the significance of these different paradigms of participation, the next chapter provides the background to Themba Interactive Theatre Company as the chosen case study for this research.

Chapter 3

From Themba HIV/Aids project to Themba Interactive organization

2.1 Introduction

Themba Interactive is a Non-Governmental Organization that was launched in 2002 as a project for school drop-outs in the communities of Alexandra and Soweto townships. It was based at the Trevor Huddleston Memorial Centre in Sophiatown. The organization has become a fully-fledged theatre company with members recruited from various locations around Johannesburg. This chapter provides a background to Themba Interactive, with specific references to the ways in which participatory approaches have influenced the work of the organization.

2.2 Initially an HIV/AIDS project

Themba Interactive was initially set up in response to an invitation from Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, who was at the time director of the Trevor Huddleston Memorial Centre in Sophiatown to deliver HIV/AIDS education and awareness by using interactive theatre and participatory training workshops. Kim Hope was requested to devise and run the initial project in Sophiatown. Hope was Head of Drama at the Weald Comprehensive School, West Sussex in the United Kingdom from 1981 to 1990. Her background as a drama and theatre teacher, facilitator of participatory based training, organizational development, public relations and journalism, had equipped her to undertake community work using interactive approaches. Hope partnered with Theresa Lynne, an experienced academic, drama therapist, facilitator and theatre practitioner who had been involved in a number of institutions and organizations in Europe and Africa. Like Hope, Lynne had expertise in a kind social activity that places the community at the center of

development and change. Both Hope and Lynne were tasked with the responsibility to design a project which was expected to use interactive methods that had not yet been tested in the South African context. They recruited young people from Soweto and Alexandra townships, and a few young people from other townships to be part of the project. The recruits were trained as actors, facilitators and peer educators on HIV/AIDS through participatory theatre and drama techniques. The actor-educators were meant to go back to their respective communities to devise and implement a project that will ensure information dissemination on HIV/AIDS using interactive techniques.

The use of interactive approaches in training the youth as peer educators was not only to make the learning exciting, but also to allow the learning to emanate from participants. Participatory techniques were to be at the centre of the organization's work and to constitute its distinctiveness as a theatre organization. The organization was therefore intended to equip a group of peer educators with the necessary information and skills required to implement a bottom up approach to learning and development in their respective communities.

2.3. From a project to theatre organization

The Themba HIV/Aids project was registered as a non-profit making organization in August 2004. According to the 2005 annual report of the organization, this shift was done in order "to provide an umbrella organization within which different participatory-based activities would take place, namely the Interactive Themba Theatre (ITT) and the Themba Training Initiatives (TTI)" (Themba Interactive Annual Report, 2005: 5).

ITT is the theatre troupe functioning within Themba Interactive made up of young, talented and trained actor-educators and facilitators who use participatory theatre and drama to educate and

raise awareness on social issues affecting the youth. The methods used by ITT to design their performances have the potential of enabling participants to identify themselves with what happens in the intervention and to think critically towards change. As pointed out by Chipatiso (2008), "the process is interesting in that it invites participants to take part not as passive spectators but as active participants who are allowed to take up roles in the play"(2008: 17). Chipatiso (2008) goes further to argue that, instead of throwing mass marketing and information dissemination at people through radio, television and print media without giving them a space to reflect, ITT"s approach provides space for the audience to engage with the subject matter and also allows room for reflection (2008:17).

As one of the South Africa's pioneering applied drama and theatre organization, ITT uses participatory-based approaches to engage with young audiences about sexual reproduction, HIV/AIDS awareness, human rights, social justice and diversity. The organization has undergone major transformation in its 10 years of existence but interactive and participatory approaches have remained the core elements of Themba Interactive work. The organization has become one of the leading youth theatre companies in South Africa. The Themba Interactive Education, Facilitation and Training Program has a dynamic team of drama therapists and reflexive practitioners who utilize innovative applied theatre techniques to foster dialogue and influence behavior change among its young audiences. As Inge (2008) has concluded:

> According to my knowledge, The Interactive Themba Theatre (ITT) is the only theatre Company in the vicinity of Johannesburg that makes use of interactive methods during a performance. Unlike most Theatre in Education (TIE) programs, which present a play and use it as a catalyst to facilitate discussions with their audiences after its presentation, dialogue with the audience facilitates participation during these performances. This

technique is an integrated element of the presentation as a whole and forms an integral part of the ITT methodology. (Inge, 2008)

Audience's interaction with the story and involvement in the learning process as an integral part of the play is one of the priorities in ITT's approaches, and is at the center of the preoccupations of the entire organization.

Conclusion

Interactivity and participation have been at the centre of the work done by Themba Interactive since its formation. This chapter has shown how participation has influenced ITT's approach to theatre for young audiences. The chapter has revealed that Themba Interactive is the product of a project destined to equip the youths of selected communities of South Africa with skills and knowledge on HIV/AIDS and social related issues. This chapter also provided us with an understanding of the place of participatory approach and interactive techniques in the work of Hope and Lynne, respectively responsible of leading the project, which later turned into a theatre for social change .

The current chapter provided an understanding of how participatory approaches and interactive techniques have influenced the work done by ITT since its formation. The next chapter describes the methodology used by ITT, which will enable an examination of the participatory and interactive techniques used by the theatre organization.

Chapter 4

Interactive Themba Theatre's (ITT) Methodology

Introduction

The ITT methodology has been in constant evolvement. This is due to the need of the theatre troupe to develop an effective model that enhances participatory dialogue among the targeted communities. Chipatiso (2009) notes that the methodology involves a short presentation to the participants in schools, prisons, communities and corporate organizations in a way that enables interaction between actor-educators and the participating audience.

ITTs methodology is as old as the NGO itself and draws from the Forum Theatre techniques devised by Boal in his *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979). As pointed by Inge James (2008), the forum theatre approach was not found adequately flexible to address the specific complexities brought about by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The ITT methodology had to be revised drawing from a mixture of other interactive approaches. These modifications resulted in 'a movement away from "pure" Forum Theatre' to a more 'structured forum' to enable a controlled learning experience within ITT's predominantly school-based audiences (Hope, 2007:4). The ITT methodology is now informed by a set of interactive methods drawn from inter alia, forum theatre, drama therapy, improvisation and play making (van Rooyen, 2007). According to the Themba HIV/Aids organization's 2005 annual report, "the first year, 2002, was one of experimentation. We devised with the actor-educators, a unique interactive theatre methodology that uses a range of interactive theatre techniques" (2005: 5). From my observations, I realized that there has been a considerable incorporation of participatory elements in ITT's methodology.

4.2 Introduction of the process

The first stage of the ITT's process consists of an introduction of the theatre troupe to the participants, followed by the brief descriptive presentation of the process by the ITT actors. The introduction of the play consists of a dance prepared by ITT for the participants. It is part of the warm up, and happens when young learners are already sitting in the learning space.

The importance of the introduction lies in its ability to enable young learners to start engaging with the process and to get ready to participate. The introduction helps them to focus and concentrate for the rest of the process. Although they do not yet question the actions they see on stage, they begin to think about what is going on. This thirst is vital for the success of a participatory experience as it stimulates the learner's ability to get involved at later stages.

The actor-educators proceed to ask the learners questions about how they feel at the beginning of the performance. The emotions and feelings of the youths are played back through dynamic images created by the actor-educators. This activity engages the participants in their first interactions with the actor-educators. It is the starting point of the learning process as it establishes the atmosphere in which the performance will take place. The process of taking an active part to the learning process at this early stage helps to build confidence in the young participants. They immerse themselves into the playful space. The involvement of participants, right from the beginning of the process plays a significant role in the preparation and the integration of the audience.

The introductory stage ends with the negotiation of the working *contract* which is meant to ensure that the performance is carried out in an atmosphere of respect for each other and for the process itself. ITT actors-educators and participants decide and agree on the code of conduct that

needs to be respected by both parties. This creates a safe space for further interaction. As Bolton (1979) argues, "by coming together, the participants create worlds of existence where they will be able to explore their live experiences or even fictional worlds by creating, taking and playing certain roles" (1979: 141). The introductory activities therefore, consist in making the play appealing and interesting to the participants, in order to ensure that they will engage in the intervention process.

4.3 The interactive play

The play performed by the ITT actors is usually a short play with simple structure, language and plot. The story is closely related to theme and presented in a way to enable participants to identify with the story or the characters on stage in one way or the other. The play also serves as a pre-text for the first interactions between the actors-educators and the participants, what O'Neill (1998) calls the 'the launching strategy.' It helps to bridge the teacher-learner relationship which has been manifested in most development campaigns and social change activities. Instead of telling communities what to do, what is wrong or right, the interaction consists in getting the communities to think about what is right or wrong, what they think they should do or not.

ITT uses an interactive play to enable the young audience to start envisaging multiple possibilities in the process of analysing issues and working towards finding solutions. Cornwall, (1997) states that, "the creation of performative or visual images is a starting point rather than a finished product. It serves as a basis from which to begin to unravel and analyse the underlying issues and to work together to find solutions" (1997:3).

4.4 The questioning

Questioning takes an important proportion of the performance and indeed the entire process. The questions are meant to get participants to process the information they have received from the play in the light of their own personal experiences. Chipatiso (2009) argues that:

> The use of questioning in the ITTP *(ITT Performance)* is vital in inviting the spectators to be involved with role. Although they will be contributing from their seated positions, the fact that they are reacting to the workshop-performance through answering questions gives them an encounter with role in the intervention (2009: 27).

Questions are important in the learning process because they allow the learner to examine the experience and analyse it from different perspectives. Taba (1967) posits that questions draw language out of the children (serving to lift) the level of thought in the learning process. In order to make the process more enjoyable for the entire classroom, the cognitive expert further says that when questioning a group, [*educators should*] allow each person to contribute just one response, in order to involve more people. (*In* Morgan and Saxton, 1987). Questioning gives the participant the opportunity to freely rely on their primary language of expression.

Questions are being asked by both facilitators and audience members who question behaviours and attitudes of specific character(s) in the play. The questions help participants to reflect on the reasons and motivations behind the behaviours of these characters. The participants also ask actors questions and together they propose solutions on what the actors could have done better in different situations.

Saxton and Morgan (2006) points out that:

> The classic concept of learning is that it occurs when the teacher asks questions and the students can answer them, but the reality is that learning does not occur until the learner needs to know and can formulate the questions for himself… We must recognize that however indispensable as teachers we consider ourselves, children have been learning by themselves and asking questions since they were born (2006: 75).

Young audience members learn more when their curiosity is exercised through the questions they ask regarding what they want to understand better. As Boal (1992) have argued, you cannot teach if you don't learn from those you are teaching. During ITT's performances participants are allowed to ask questions as much as they can from the actor-educators.

The responsibility of the facilitator at this stage is to make sure the questions and answers are re-focused on the learning objective of the lesson. Participants can suggest different possible solutions to be carried out by actors or themselves. The actors can respond in-role to the participants. This is what, according to most participants, makes the performance original. They are allowed to be involved and take part in the process of educating themselves. Unlike in mainstream theatre where the activity of the audience is simply to witness the performance, participatory theatre allows participants to be actively involved in the play and to be at the center of the expected change. Participants are allowed to contest or contradict different views and to own the space and the learning process.

4.5 Reflection

This is the stage where the learning acquired during the performance is processed and digested by the participants. At this level also, questions are used by the facilitators to evaluate if the process benefited the participants. By probing the participants, the facilitator encourages students

to think about their answers more thoroughly. The intention is to work towards more accurate and specific solutions (Saxton and Morgan 2006: 92).

At this stage of the performance, participants reflect on the motivations behind the actions that occurred in the play. For instance they try to understand the implications of certain behaviors that could lead to teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other related problems posed in the play. Reflection is vital to the process for it allows participants to share their views on the questions posed by the play. Although it might not be the easiest part of the process reflection remains one effective way of initiating further dialogue. Chipatiso (2009) states that, "what is most disastrous is when the spectators need someone to talk to after an intervention and not find them." (2009: 36). The reflection therefore starts in the performance space, and carries on after the performance in group discussions with peers as a follow up to the process. It sets the space for closure so that both spectators and actor-educators are able to *derole* from the roles they would have been playing in the process.

4.6 Breaking the silence

This interactive activity comes at the end of the performance, and is as critical as the rest of the other activities. It helps participants to digest the learning and to think positively in relation to the theme of the performance.

One of the facilitators takes over the stage and leads participants in a call and response process. For instance, facilitator says, '*I am HIV positive,'* the participants respond, '*and I still care for you'* and vice-versa. The activity gives a voice and a space to people who might be infected with AIDS or have relatives who are to open up and to be able to support one another. This could be the first step towards taking positive action and an expression of change.

By saying, 'I am HIV positive,' participants do not curse themselves, or call the disease upon themselves, but they step into the shoes of an affected person, friend, classmate and relative. The simple fact of repeating these statements in this interactive form already sets the dialogical context of the community in which they live, be it in the hospital, township, school, or city. They know of somebody who is affected by HIV/AIDS and the stigma and cultural taboos which are strongly present in their community. Breaking the silence is perhaps the most important part of the performance; because it relates to the primary mission of Themba Interactive: Fighting against HIV/AIDS and other related issues.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the methodology used by ITT in working among communities and facilitating change. Change can happen when community members are fully involved and are given space to be agents of their own development.

ITT uses an interactive play to enable the audience to envisage new possibilities for change. By reflecting on the problems they have identified in the play, young learners draw connections to their personal lives, and as a result, work to solve these problems. The use of questions was presented as an important element of the performance. It is the fundamental engine of participation. It enables participation to occur and helps in setting the space for dialogue.

Questioning helps the young audiences to relate the performance to their lives and to reflect on the situations presented in the play. The reflection also provides space for the young audience and ITT's actor-educators to share views on the problems at stake and to take important decisions based on the play. The final element explored in this chapter was how participants open up and break the silence on HIV/AIDS and related issues.

The next chapter explores the role played by participation in ITT's performance of *The Right Time* in unpacking the problem of sexual relationship among young learners.

Chapter 5

The problem of sexual relationships in *The Right Time*

Introduction

The last decade has been marked by a series of governmental and non-governmental strategies and campaigns designed to stop the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic across the African continent. The introduction of the Life Orientation classes in schools demonstrates government's desire to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the youth. However such efforts have not made it easy for educators to engage with learners on the topic of sexual relationships (Govender, 2001; Selesho, 2012). In as much as it can be considered the primary means of information and the first step in sensitizing youth on the pandemic, sex education needs to be designed in a way that incorporates the learners' views and creates a platform for dialogue.

Applied theatre uses participatory approaches that provide learners with a range of opportunities to engage with the issues at stake and to share their personal experiences. Learners can engage in dialogue with actor-educators on sexual issues and exchange knowledge and experiences. This view is supported by Mavrocordatos (1997) who points out that participatory theatre is rooted in the assumption that a two way dialogue is inherently developmental. When dialogue is initiated between project leaders and the local community it leads to increased trust and cooperation.

The problem of sexual relationships was explored in ITT's performance entitled, *The Right Time*. ITT made use of participatory theatre to engage in dialogue and discussion on when is the right

time for the youth to start sexual relationships. This chapter explores ITT's use of participatory theatre to unpack the theme of sexual relationships.

5.2 Context of performance

The Right Time is one of ITT's theatre in education (TIE) performances framed around the question of sex education, with specific focus on understanding sexual relationships among youth. The performance took place on the 8th of August, 2012 in the conference hall of the F.J. Well School, and was designed for Grades 7, 8 and 9 learners. *The Right Time* intended to enable the youth to make informed choices on matters pertaining to sexual relationships.

It was based on the short story of Dumy, a young girl telling her classmate, Chomy, about her elder brother who is about to 'have sex' with his girlfriend. The two friends are caught in the midst of this conversation by their teacher who asks the rest of the class on what they know about having sex, and when is the right time to have sex? The teacher changes the lesson she had planned for the day to focus on sex education. The performance creates a platform for the learners to engage with the topic of sexual relationships, and develop criteria that inform the right time for sexual relationships to happen.

5.3 Understanding sexual relationships in The *Right time*

In this part of the chapter, I intend to unpack the role of participation in addressing the problem of sexual relationships in *The Right Time*. I also examine the use of different paradigms of participation in the performance and how actor-educators engaged with the young learners in reflection and discussion on the issues identified in the play, and the significance of these paradigms in affecting change among the young learners.

5.3.1 Building self-confidence

Self-confidence refers to a sense of self-assuredness in one's personal judgment, ability and power to do something. It comes from an attitude where one promises oneself, no matter how difficult the problem and the situation might be, to try as hard as one can to help oneself (Persaud, 2005:295). Self-confidence is important in learner-centered education in the sense that it fosters learners' ability to participate in the activities of their education.

The ITT actor-educator used dialogical participation to build self-confidence in the young learners. She started the process by asking the learners how they felt and what they understood by sexual relationships. The learners found it challenging at first when the actor-educator posed the question, 'What is a sexual relationship?' I think societal taboos were at work at this moment, considering how it was difficult for the young learners to talk about a sexually related topic.

Saxton and Morgan (1994) have argued that learning springs from the learners' curiosity, or the need to know. The actor-educator needs to get the most out of that in-born feeling in the learners, by attracting, maintaining and satisfying the learner's attention. This enables him/her to create a context for learners to think about.

The actor-educator started by asking the learners questions about their feelings, in a simplified form of playback theatre. The learners expressed their feelings which were then played back in front of them by the other actor-educators using *dynamised* images. This activity was meant to get the learners to participate in the experience. By answering these introductory questions in the opening of the performance, learners were prepared to engage in further activities that would require their involvement.

The question of what they thought about 'having sex' was at first not answered by the learners. However, when the actor-educator asked the question once again, the learners started to open up, and finally, everybody wanted to say something about the topic. They realized that if they did not respond, the performance might not proceed. According to Freire (2005), dialogue cannot be possible in the absence of reciprocal engagement. Dialogue should not be forced, but originates from each and everyone's personal will to share and express their views on the topic. It stimulates the curiosity of learners, and facilitates the expression of their eagerness to learn. The challenge only comes when the actor-educator tries to impose his/her own perspective on the learners.

Learners who were the most curious were the most engaged and participating in the performance. They had been invited to dialogue and did not hesitate to ask questions that were meant to facilitate their involvement in the learning activity. One of the young girls asked about what language to use in their interaction with the actor-educators. The actor-educator responded that they were free to express themselves in any language they could as long as it was enabling them to communicate accurately. Giving this opportunity to the learners to express themselves in any of the national languages created trust in the process and helped to develop self-esteem in the learners who did not hesitate to switch from English to their respective mother tongues.

To an extent, dialogical participation helped learners to not only get acquainted with the activities of the performance, but also to reveal the problem of sexual relationships by building self-confidence. The learners were able to describe sexual relationships as involving sexual intercourse between a man and a woman, a boy and a girl. Self-confidence was therefore a good starting point for audience interaction throughout the performance.

5.3.2 Describing sexual relationships

Talking about sex among youth has become challenging for many teachers and adults. Educators continue to approach the topic of sex education with hesitation due to the discomfort associated with educating youth on sexuality. Sex education appears to have more impact in the context of HIV/AIDS prevention, especially when it comes before the individual engages in sexual relationships. As explained by the South African HIV/AIDS Life Skills Education Materials Directory (1999):

> Research on curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS has indicated that interventions and educational programs on HIV/AIDS and sexual health appear to have greater impact if they are offered prior to the onset of sexual activity. It has been suggested by various researchers that it may be easier to establish the desired patterns of behaviour from the beginning of sexual involvement, rather than trying to change pre-existing habits. (1999: 5).

The main objective of *The Right Time* was to provide young learners with informed choices that would help them understand the nature of sexual relationships and to understand the elements that need to be taken into account. The play started by unfolding the meaning of sexual relationships.

When the teacher finds Dumy and Chomy talking in the classroom about Katlego who was about to have a sexual relationship, she changes the topic of the lesson, and asks a question to the learners, “What is a sexual relationship?”

The description of sexual relationships was unpacked through problem posing which according to Freire (1993) is a trigger to dialogue between the educator and the learner in a liberatory education. Problem posing consists in the teacher presenting the material of the learning to learners. It creates the conditions under which knowledge is processed in the learning space, and empowers young learners to take ownership of the learning process, and become agents of the learning. Their involvement in providing the answers and asking questions enables the young learners to critically engage with the problem at hand in order to generate meaning and understanding of sexual relationships.

Young learners' engagement in answering the actor-educator's initial question, enabled them to become active subjects of the learning and critical co-investigators in dialogue with the actor-educator. Their responses enabled them to begin to describe the nature of sexual relationships. They suggested different views and definitions of sexual relationships, based on their background knowledge of the subject, and reflected on the answers they had initially suggested.

The involvement of the learners enabled them to finally agree that a sexual relationship was an intimate relationship between two individuals, which includes sexual intercourse. This description of sexual relationships was finally agreed to by the learners, and written on the board.

Problem posing was used by ITT as an instance of peripheral participation. Although dialogue was created in process, the learners' involvement in the performance did not have an effect on the course of play. This peripheral mode of participation can be instrumental because the actor-educators tend to impose their organization's agenda on the young learners.

5.3.3 The question of 'where'

Understanding sexual relationships starts by understanding the elements that enter into consideration for a sexual relationship to happen. *The Right Time* was concerned with providing elements that could enable the young learners to be able to locate the right setting for engaging in sexual relationships. This section of the chapter examines how participation in *The Right Time* enables the learners to unpack the problem of 'where' sexual relationships can take place.

After they had collaboratively described what sexual relationship is, the teacher asked 'where' sexual relationships happen. The question of 'where' in the play was unpacked through dialogical participation framed around participants' questions. According to Freire (1995), dialogue builds the capacities of learners to affect change by themselves through the development of a critical consciousness. In *The Right Time*, dialogue was made possible by means of a set of questions directed towards situations that were familiar to learners. It facilitated the engagement between the learners and the actor-educators by prompting the learners' ability to recall, identify, define, and recognize issues from identical situations in their lives.

The young learners gave different answers concerning where a sexual intercourse should take place, basing their answers on personal experiences. Each of their answers was then critically examined by the group, and together the learners agreed whether they would amend it or not. For instance, when some learners suggested that sexual intercourse happens at the following three places *bush, lifts, and public toilets,* a challenge was raised relating to public indecency. They then agreed to amend the list of answers they had given.

By agreeing and disagreeing on what they had suggested, learners concluded that sexual relationship can happen in the house, a car, in bed, on a sofa, or a couch. Their involvement was

motivated by their trust in the process and the level of self-confidence which was expressed by their enthusiasm and willingness to express their views based on their personal involvement.

5.3.4 The question of 'when'

One of the things that young learners also need to know when it comes to sexual education and relationships is 'when' the right time to engage in sexual relationships is. It is important to provide the youth with informed choices that enable them to understand the right time for them to engage in sexual relationships. After they had agreed on the different places where sexual relationships can occur, the young learners were made to consider the question concerning the right time for a youth to have a sexual relationship.

Understanding the right time for a youth to have a sexual relationship was made possible through dialogical participation. Freire conceives dialogue as the *raison d'être* of communication, without which no education is possible (*in* Flanagan, 2006). Dialogue has the ability to give people the responsibility to think and take decisions that are going to affect change in their lives. When properly facilitated, dialogue breaks the assumption that learners cannot teach themselves, or that they do not know enough especially about sexually related topics.

The youth engaged with the play by answering questions from the actor-educator. They developed a critical understanding of the nature of sexual relationships and the right time for such relationships to occur in their lives. Their involvement in discussions enabled the learners to reconsider what they had initially said through realization of the implications and shortcomings of what they had previously said.

This was the case when one learner, I engaged with another learner's response that a school going youth could not have a car. The former argued that if a youth was from a rich family s/he could have a car, even though that car was not his/hers but their parent's car. Thus through dialogue young learners shared views and expressed their satisfaction with this argument between their peers until they finally agreed that the right time for a youth to have a sexual relationship was when the youth has her/his own car, house, couch, sofa, and table; not dependent on the parents' property.

Dialogue created a platform for the young learners to understand that the right time for a sexual relationship was when the youth had finished his/her studies, was working and was earning enough money to be able to live independently from his/her parents.

Even though ITT's use of dialogue did not include the learners from the beginning of the performance, it managed to create a space for reflection and enabled the young learners to understand the nature of sexual relationships, and the right time for them to start having sexual relationships.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the significance of participation in unpacking the problem of sexual relationships among youth in ITT's performance entitled, *The Right Time.* The chapter showed how dialogical participation enabled the young learners to build self-confidence and begin to talk about sexual relationships. The nature of sexual relationships was unpacked through problem posing techniques that created dialogue, although at a peripheral participation level. This chapter also revealed how dialogical participation can enable learners to develop understanding of the nature of sexual relationships and 'where' and 'when' to have such relationships. The next

chapter examines ITT's use of participation to unpack the problem of peer pressure in their performance entitled, *Virtual Dynamics*.

Chapter 6

The Problem of Peer Pressure

in

Virtual Dynamics

6.1 Introduction

Peer pressure can be defined as being influenced by peers to "do something or to refrain from doing something, no matter whether you personally want to or not" (Clasen and Brown, 1985:458) It is also described by Cotterell (1996) as the conformity to a group, or set of values that one thinks are of 'acceptance' to his/her friends or group. Peer pressure often appears to be a negative concept, although positive forms can also be noted. It occurs when an individual experiences implicit or explicit persuasion, which sometimes amounts to coercion, to adopt similar values, beliefs and goals, or to participate in the same activities as those in the peer group (Mueller, 1998). Often recognized as a youth practice, peer pressure has negative effects in most cases. However, it is important to note that it can also have positive effects when people are pressured towards acceptable behavior, such as volunteering or excelling in academic work by their peers.

The phenomenon takes serious proportions among the youth, especially learners in their mid-school years. These negative consequences include risky sexual behavior, drug abuse and juvenile delinquency. Gardner and Steinberg (2005) argue that peer pressure is a common factor in the youth's decision to not only become sexually active, but to engage in unsafe sexual

practices (*in* Mpofu, and 2012:14). It often leads to the proliferation of youth gangs in communities and schools.

There is therefore a serious need to start engaging with the issue of peer pressure with young learners at school level, one of the environments where it is mostly manifested. Trying to understand the motivations, causes and consequences of peer pressure can create awareness in the youth on the risks associated with its negative influence. Theatre in education creates a platform that allows young learners to engage in dialogue and reflection on negative peer influence.

Gordon (1995) argues that, the most successful programs in terms of behavior change have been those where groups with a mutual interest have come together, explored the problem in relation to their own lives and developed acceptable alternatives to risky practice (*in* Mayo and Craig,1995:181). During the performance of *Virtual Dynamic* by ITT, grade 11 and 12 learners at New Model High school in Johannesburg, together with ITT actor-educators, engaged in dialogue and reflection on the topic of peer pressure. By taking part in the activities of the performance, the young audience members were made to engage with the problem using interactive theatre approaches.

This chapter explores the role played by participation in unpacking the problem of peer pressure during the performance of *Virtual Dynamic*. It focuses on how paradigms of participation were at work in the performance and how they helped to enable young learners to understand the problem of peer pressure.

6.2 Context of performance.

The play entitled *Virtual Dynamics* was performed on the 15th of August 2012 at New Model High school in Johannesburg. The play involves the story of Thandeka, a young Christian school girl who is raped by Casanova, the leader of a youth gang, after she had been pressurized by her friend, Louis Vuitton to join the gang.

The play explores the phenomenon of *Izikhothane,* a display of unusual and inappropriate 'opulence and what effect this has on the lives it affects, especially when this gets abusive and publicly displayed on social media. This is increasingly popular amongst the youth and often leads to devastating effects, such as violence and substance abuse.

6.3 Manifestations of peer pressure

This section focuses on the manifestations of peer pressure in the performance of *Virtual Dynamics*. It deals with factors that enabled young learners to identify and engage with problems of peer pressure emerging in the play.

6.3.1Rape as a negative factor

When prompted by the question of the actor-educator about what they saw in the play, young learners instantly responded in a unanimous way: 'A girl was raped'. They were referring to the scene of rape which they had witnessed in the play. At this stage learners did not reflect on the rape as associated with peer pressure, but it came up from their involvement in answering questions from the actor-educator. Although 'rape' can be considered as a consequence of peer pressure, it emerged as a manifestation of negative peer pressure during the performance of *Virtual Dynamics.*

Problem posing education advocated by Freire (2000) regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. It encourages young learners to become active in 'thinking about' the issues at stake in the play. Their thinking activity opens results in the realization of concrete actions in their world. In Freire's own words, "problem posing education is based on creativity, and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of men as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation" (2000: 85). It is rooted in dialogue and critical consciousness, a democratic partnership between learners and educators and a curriculum that privileges the learners' interests and experiences. Problem posing is therefore a good trigger for dialogue and reflection in education. In educational theatre it enables the learners to think critically about situations developed in the play, in order to develop understanding of the circumstances and realities surrounding these situations.

When the learners responded to the actor-educator's question about what they saw in the play, they did not limit themselves to a description of the rape as seen in the play, rather, they provided information about the level of violence in their local communities. They developed an understanding of the culture of violence in their respective communities. For instance young learners' engagement in dialogue in answer to the actor-educator's question enabled them to explore the problem of rape in the play.

The learners reflected on the rape not only as it was presented in the play, but mentioned cases of youth and children who had been raped in South African schools and communities. One of the learners mentioned that the school environment has shifted from a safe environment where they acquire knowledge into a place where violence happens, especially sexual violence on young girls.

The problem reveals itself as an effective mode of participation that not only enables the youth to respond, but also to envisage diverse perspectives regarding the problem at stake. According to Freire (1995), this approach is not so much concerned with providing the right answers, but rather, with posing the right questions.

6.3.2 Youth gangs

There has been a considerable growth in the number of youth gangs[1] across South Africa. The *Izikhothane*, a new form of youth gang, has members who are known for their extravagant display of opulence and tearing of expensive items including bank notes. *Izikhothane* means "those who lick" in *Zulu*, a local language. Any youth gang has its principles and conception of the ideal member who qualifies to join the 'fraternity'. Youth gangs are often presented as a manifestation of negative peer pressure.

Thandeka wanted to please *Louis Vuitton*, her friend whom she had seen wearing expensive clothes and using expensive items. This resulted in her introduction to a group of youths of almost the same age as her, which leader finally raped her.

The problem of youth gangs was explored through extrinsic participation, which according to O'Toole (1976) implies that, the young learners do not take any roles, and are only asked to respond to the play outside the drama. Although this mode of participation allows young learners to explore themes and problems raised in the theatrical experience, it has an instrumental

[1]Youth gang is not in this context used to qualify a group of criminals or hoodlums who band together for mutual protection and profit, or whose members are young. As pointed by the definition in the free online dictionary. The expression is used in this context in reference to a group of teenagers who associate together on a social and identity basis. As pointed by James C. Howell in the *Fact Sheet, 1997. #72 '*a youth gang is commonly thought of as a self-formed association of peers having the following characteristics: a gang name and recognizable symbols, identifiable leadership, a geographic territory, a regular meeting pattern, and collective actions to carry out illegal activities.'

appeal as it gives no role or power to the learners. Learners do not take part in the play, but are asked questions about their feelings on a pre-packaged agenda.

In *Virtual Dynamics,* the young learner's ability to reflect on the young girl's rape, and the reasons why was she raped, was prompted not so much by a question asked by the actor-educator, but by the questions they asked the actor-educators. The 'hot seating' technique is used to create an interaction between the learners and the actor-educators. It is a drama technique which consists in the participants asking questions to people in their role of characters from a story. The characters interrogated have to answer the questions in as much detail as possible. This activity enables an understanding of the character's behaviour and feelings, as well as what it feels like being in their shoes.

For instance, Casanova's response to one of the young learners question about his motivation to rape Thandeka was that he wanted to demonstrate to Lloyd, the new initiate, how he was a real Casanova boy. After this response, another learner came forward to ask another question. It was through this activity of question and response that young learners were enabled to understand the practice of youth gangs. The interaction created around Casanova's intention to show Lloyd what he needed to do when he also became a Casanova boy helped to reveal the formation of youth gangs in local communities.

The actor-educator also used a simplified form of forum theatre in which learners do not replace characters on stage, but try to give meaning to the actors' actions by asking questions about their motivations for the actions posed in the play. This simplified forum theatre helped to reveal the reasons why each character reacted the way they did. For instance, the interaction of the audience with the actors provided the learners with the motivations for youths to join the youth gang.

The forum dialogue that came after was driven by the intention to place the learner at the center of the learning experience (Auerbach, 1992). It provided learners with the opportunity to critically think about youth gangs. Participation in educational theatre can only be effective when people are placed at the center of the learning process and are given the responsibility of identifying the problem, addressing it and designing the solutions. Unfortunately ITT's use of a simplified forum theatre simply questioned the actor-educators' actions, and took away the participatory power of the activity. If the forum theatre was used effectively it could have been a powerful moment for popular participation.

6.3.3 'Being cool'

Adolescents often want to feel accepted in the group in which they want to belong. In order to achieve that objective, they want to 'look cool' in the midst of their peers. The 'cool' image is presented by Milkman and Wanberg (2005) as a distorted notion that fleetingly augments adolescents' social status as it is perceived as beneficial within a peer group. It entails being sophisticated, looking smart and being able to get the attention of peers especially the opposite sex. 'Being cool' becomes a dream nourished by many youth.

In the play, Lloyd and the other gang members decided to join the youth gang under the pressure of their peers.

Reflection implies a critical activity of thinking about a situation presented in the play, and making meaning of the circumstances surrounding it. According to Moon (2005), reflection enables the young learners to develop greater 'ownership' of the material of learning, making it more personally meaningful to them and improving their grasp of it. Reflection also enhances the students' 'voices' in the process of learning, and is effective in generating interaction between

the actor-educators and the learners. Although it might not give participants more power over the object of learning, it triggers extrinsic participation which consists in learners' involvement in post-performance activity. No matter how the young learners may attempt to engage in reflection on the issues raised in the play, their active involvement is limited to a vocalization of their thoughts.

It was not easy for the learners to admit that youth gang practices have a serious influence on their peers. For most gang members in the classroom, their intention was to simply carry out their activities as a normal group, but not to invite people to join them. One of the learners, a member of the *Ama Vandals* (I will call him Bozo), argued that:

> We do not force them to come and watch our shows; if we have decided to stand somewhere and do our thing we do not care and we do not invite people. They will come and watch us, when they are tired they will leave. We cannot chase them away; we cannot command a huge crowd of more than hundred people to leave. It is a public space and we are not masters of it (Bozo, 8 August, 2012).

According to the youth, the activities of the youth gang have no influence on their peers that can make them want to join. In this dialogical environment the young learner could defend himself and deny some of the accusations that are often made concerning youth gangs.

Although learners started by denying that they wanted to 'be cool', as they engaged with questions from the actor-educators and counter-reactions from their peers, they began to realize that the cool image was a diversely conceived phenomenon in different youth gangs, and that according to their gangs' definition of the term *cool*, they were victims of their desire to 'be cool'.

The problem with extrinsic participation is that the learners engage with actor-educators from an instrumental perspective because the learning object is not defined by them. The theatre organization's agenda remains at the center of the learners' preoccupation. The effectiveness of participation in educational theatre lies in the ability of actor-educators to give ownership to participants from the start of the performance (Mavrocordatos, 1997).

6.4 Consequences of peer pressure

Although peer pressure can be positive, when its consequences are considered, negative results are often produced. This section focuses on how participation worked in *Virtual Dynamics* to unpack the consequences of peer pressure.

6.4.1 Rebellion

Rebellion is a form of resistance to an established order, principle or structure destined to regulate behavior among a group, family, society or a nation. Pickhardt (2007) remarks that adolescent rebellion and resistance is about opposition against parents and teachers for its own sake. Although self-confidence and self-esteem can demonstrate a strong defense against negative peer influence, young people's association with peers appears to be one of the strong 'predictors' of deviant activity (Cullingford and Morrison, 2006).

Such deviant activities include rebellion against a disciplinary system established by elders. The youth think that what he/she does is correct and acceptable. Any attempt to correct the youth in such circumstances can become chaotic, and turn into violence. Rebellion was unpacked in *Virtual Dynamics* through the young audience's participation in the performance.

Rebellion came up when Louis Vuitton disrespected her mother because the mother could not give her daughter the money she needed. The daughter's rebellion was demonstrated by her wanting to prove her sense of maturity and self-reliance to her mother.

According to Laurence and Silverberg, (1986) a sense of self-reliance by youth can be more effectively demonstrated among peers and not with parents. This was presented in the play, when the young girl started using violent and disrespectful language addressed to her mother, and later walked away. The girl wanted to prove that she was worth being accepted by members of the youth gang.

Dialogical participation creates possibilities for the learners to voice their feelings and emotions on the problem at stake in the play. It challenges teacher-centered education and promotes a more learner-centered learning approach (Freire, 1974). The idea of partnership as a vital element in dialogical learning has been developed by Mary Jane Zander (2004) who argues that 'dialogue is not just a matter of asking the right questions or understanding a teaching strategy but a matter of creating an environment in which the teaching relationship becomes one of open-ended discovery' (2004:49). Learners and teachers come together and discuss the consequences of the problem at hand. According to Freire (2005), dialogue is the medium of transformative education, and dialogical participation begins from what people know and works with them as subjects, rather than objects who are simply fed information.

Dialogue helped to foster a deeper understanding of the negative consequences of peer pressure among the youths. According to Mavrocordatos (1997), a two way communication is inherently developmental, the existence of dialogue between stakeholders will lead to new action, and a new relationship of increased trust and co-operation. What I found interesting was that when it

comes to rebellion against parents, elders and teachers, the gangs do not support the member who is responsible. One of the learners mentioned that in his gang, when a youth has been accused by his/her parents of disobedience or rebellion as happened in the play, the accused 'will be permanently suspended from any activities of the gang'. Most youth gangs function with a disciplinary constitution, with sanctions ranging from paying fines to final exclusion from the gang. Although youth gangs are not appreciated by the entire community, there is a sense of discipline among their peers.

When asked what would happen in case the suspended youth decided to join another gang, the same young boy replied 'we will report him to the other gang and make sure they know he is not a good person. And they will not accept him.' The young learners talked about rebellion as a negative factor in understanding peer pressure. They also revealed that their gangs have a set of disciplinary measures, to deal with cases of rebellion among gang members. Hence dialogical participation brought another perspective that enabled them to understand the reasons for rebellion among peer groups.

6.4.2 Substance abuse

Substance abuse refers to the pathological use of a medication, non-medically indicated drugs, or toxins. It is also the excessive use of a substance, especially alcohol or drugs. The medical dictionary defines it as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by social problems such as repeated absence from class or at work place, poor academic performance, suspension or expulsion from school.

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Medical Research Council (MHSAMRC) of South Africa (1998) demonstrates that peer pressure is a principal cause of substance abuse among

youth (1998:10). It further argues that 'alcohol remains the most commonly abused drug in South Africa, followed by dagga (cannabis) and the dagga/Mandrax (white pipe) combination' (MHSAMRC South African report, 1998:6). These substances are the most consumed by youth because they are the most easily accessible. Their availability and accessibility makes it easy for youth to afford them without parental control. Thus school-going youth find it easy to purchase alcohol from bottle stores, supermarkets, bars and shebeens[2] (Tibbs and Parry, 1994) they become easily addicted and dependent on drugs or alcohol with immediate negative result such as a lack of concentration in their studies which leads to school dropout.

One of the learners I have decided to call her Tamy in post-performance discussion argued that even though each gang member present in the classroom claimed that their gangs functioned with a disciplinary constitution, these constitutions seemed not to say anything about the use and abuse of alcohol by the same gang members.

Dialogue has the ability to empower the learners who develop an understanding of their surrounding world (Freire, 1995). This enables young learners to explore different problems related to the issue at stake in the play without the influence of the actor-educator. They do not only intend to solve the dilemma presented to them in the play, they also examine their attitudes towards the unresolved dilemmas arising from their interaction with actor-educators. However dialogue requires a voluntary and democratic involvement of the audience, who starts to make meaning and develop understanding of the situation presented in the play (Midgley, 1986).

The comment made by Tamy about what the different youth gangs' constitutions suggested in terms of drug and alcohol abuse by peers raised a new problem to be explored. A new dilemma

[2] The expression *shebeen* was first used in 1787 to designate an unlicensed drinking establishment, especially in Ireland, Scotland, and South Africa. It is a place where alcoholic substances are sold illegally.

needed to be solved by the entire classroom through dialogue. It revealed that many youth in the learning space had experiences of substance abuse. Their involvement in dialogue to provide responses to the comment enabled the young learners to understand the significant role of pressure in favoring substance abuse with regard to their personal experiences.

Moreover dialogue implies freedom, it supposes that arguments are expressed freely, acknowledged, respected, and questioned. I think contradiction and opposing views and arguments are important in learning. They are the manifestation of the sense of critical thinking in the learning space, supported by the idea that knowledge is not static and that truth can be questionable. Simpson and Courtney (2002) point out that critical thinking requires active argumentation, initiative, reasoning, envisioning, analyzing complex alternatives, and making contingency-related value judgment.

The learners' engagement in dialogue at this stage created space for them to engage in a share of views and opinions, which in its turn enabled them to develop mutual understanding of the impact of substance abuse on their lives. By so doing learners came to the conclusion that substance abuse was one of the consequences of peer pressure. Almost all of the youth who admitted having consumed alcohol or drug before said they had been pressurized, directly or indirectly. Substance abuse among youth appeared to be the result of the youth's desire to be accepted in peer groups. One of the learners mentioned that he had been *high* once, after he had smoked *dagga* and some other herb mixed by some boys slightly older than him. This was the price to pay for him to become a member of a certain circle in his youth gang.

Young learners managed to unpack and understand the influence of peer pressure on peers. Substance abuse through dialogue operating as a mode of popular participation was also raised

up by young learners as a major concern and a scourge that needs to be addressed. However I believe ITT's use of popular participation is instrumental in the sense that it only gives the learners a central role in designing the solutions to problems on the theatre organization's agenda not theirs.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the manifestations of peer pressure in *Virtual Dynamics*. It revealed how the problem posing education was used as a trigger to extrinsic participation which enabled the learners to unpack the rape as a manifestation of peer pressure. The problem of youth gangs in school milieu was unpacked through a simplified forum theatre that acted as a mode of dialogical participation.

Reflection was used as a form of extrinsic participation to engage the learners in understanding the cause of peer-pressure, which appeared to be the youth's desire to be cool.

This chapter finally explored the consequences of peer pressure. Rebellion was unpacked as the first consequence of peer pressure through dialogical participation, and substance abuse was revealed through questioning acting as a mode of popular participation. However it came up that ITT's use of popular participation was instrumental because the organization's agenda prevailed and not the learners'.

Chapter 7

The question of teenage pregnancy
in
Is That You?

Introduction

ITT's performance entitled *Is That You?* was carried out in Johannesburg Hospital School. It provided participants with opportunities to critically engage with the play in order to understand the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy. This chapter examines how participation enabled the young learners to understand the question of teenage pregnancy. ITT used hot seating throughout the performance to engage with the learners. Hot seating is a technique which consists of young learners asking questions to the characters of a scene or play. After the question is repeated by the facilitator the character answers in role taking the form of an interview. Hot seating was applied as a participatory technique for unpacking the problems of inadequate sex education, peer pressure, school dropout and family conflict.

7.2 Context of the play

The play is about the trial of two students, Mandla a male student and Palesa, a female student. The play provides learners with a platform for understanding the risks involved in teenage pregnancy. The setting of the performance is a court room with the audience acting as members of the court, and one of the actor-educators as the judge.

The play involves the story of Palesa, who falls pregnant from Mandla as the result of her disobedience to her mother. Mandla denies responsibility for the pregnancy and threatens Palesa who reports him to the authorities. This leads to a court involving Mandla and Palesa.

7.3 Causes of teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy is a phenomenon gaining increasing importance among the youth. The causes of teenage pregnancy range from substance abuse and rape to peer pressure. This section explores the use of hot seating by ITT to unpack the causes of teenage pregnancy.

7.3.1 Inadequate sex education

The problem of inadequate sex education was depicted as the first cause of teenage pregnancy in the performance of *Is That You?* After the performance, the two characters, Palesa and Mandla are hot seated by the audience. One of the participants a school teacher sitting on the front row interviewed Palesa as follows:

Teacher *Do you talk about sex with your mother?*

Palesa *My mother never talks to me about sex. Sex yoh!*

Teacher *Do you think if she had spent more time telling you about sex instead of giving you condoms, you would not have fallen pregnant?*

Hot seating is often used to explore the relationship between character's attitudes, and how such attitudes affect the characters in the scene (Neelands, 1990). This technique enables the audience to question the characters to find out the reasons behind their behaviour and the motivation for their actions (Propes, 2005).

The interview between Palesa and one of the teachers explored the source of Palesa's pregnancy as the inability of her mother to spend time educating her daughter about the risks associated

with unsafe sex. This hot seating could have been catalyst for further reflection on the importance of sex education. However the presence of school teachers was an obstacle to the learners' involvement in the performance. As a result the hot seating process did not create much space for dialogue between the learners and the actor-educators. The young learners were not given clear instructions by the actor-educator on what was expected from them. They therefore did not develop enough confidence to be able to fully engage with the process. As Braeken, De Silva and Saidy (2004) have argued:

> Participation in which young people don't quite know why they are there, what the goals are, how it will work and what will come afterwards is a recipe for disaster […] In any participation the process, the purpose, assumptions, limits and ground rules need to be clear to all (2004:15).

This lack of clarity coupled by the indifference of the actor-educators to the presence of school teachers sitting in front of the class deterred learners from participating in the discussion. Since learners did not get fully involved in the performance, hot seating became a peripheral level of participation that could not enable the learners to realise that inadequate sex education was one of the causes of teenage pregnancy.

7.3.2 Peer pressure

There is a common misconception that a young girl cannot fall pregnant the first time she engages in a sexual relationship. As a result two teenagers having a sexual relationship do not think about protection. Most teenage girls therefore find themselves misled and pressurized by peers who have already become sexually active. In the play, Palesa is told by her friend, Chomy, that a young girl can never fall pregnant the first time she has a sexual relationship with a boy.

That she should give it *full flesh* (without protection) to Mandla, for that would be the ultimate proof of her love to him.

Hot seating was used to enable the young learners to ask questions to the characters about their thoughts and motivations for the behaviour. Hot seating creates direct interaction between learners and the characters. For instance one of the learners asked Palesa as follows:

Young Boy1 *Why did you allow yourself to be pressurized by your friend, and to follow what she asked you to do?*

Palesa *My friend Chomy is more experienced than me in these things (sex). She told me that a girl cannot fall pregnant the first time.*

The learners' immediate reaction to Palesa's response led them to ask more questions that revealed how the young girl was victim of peer pressure. At this stage of the play hot seating was empowering to the learners who became more willing to participate in the performance, and expressed the desire to interrogate the characters.

7.4 The consequences of teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy affects not only the teenagers concerned, but also their studies, families and their future. These consequences are often negative on the young girl who finds herself shouldering the responsibility of being a teenage mother with all the sacrifices it implies on her own education and the fulfillment of her dreams. This section explores some of the consequences of teenage pregnancy as they were unpacked in the performance.

7.4.1 Dropping out of school

Teenage pregnancy is often associated with withdrawal from school such as poor attendance or unsuccessful academic performances. However, divergent views appear when it comes to an

understanding of the relationship between teenage pregnancy and school dropouts (Meekers and Ahmed, 1999; Eloundou-Enyegue, 2004; Grant & Hallman, 2006). Some scholars view teenage pregnancy as the prime cause of school dropouts among youth, but others tend to refute this view.

ITT's performances in Johannesburg Hospital School used hot seating to unpack the consequences of teenage pregnancy. When the judge as the main facilitator asked Mandla and Palesa if they continued going to school after the pregnancy,

The Judge *Mandla, did you continue going to school when you found that Palesa was pregnant?*

Mandla *I… I admit it was not easy but yes. Yes I am still going to school.*

Judge (to Palesa) *And you Palesa?*

Palesa *No! I had to stop going to school because I have to take care of the pregnancy.*

The learners' involvement in the subsequent discussion generated by Palesa's response enabled the young learners to share divergent views and develop an understanding of the circumstances in which Palesa had to drop out of school. The learners came to realize that it is not advisable to fall pregnant during their studies because this can seriously affect their academic performance. However they had the right to continue with their studies if they found themselves in Palesa's situation.

Although they managed to express their views on the problem of school dropouts, the young learners' willingness to participate was overshadowed by their school teachers who intervened to blame the characters. The young learners then decided to remain silent and let the adults take over the remaining activity.

Shor (1987) argues that student silence is created by the arts of domination. She continues by saying that children are not silent by nature (*in* Freire and Shor, 1987:30). This domination was visible and physically expressed in the space. It was clear that ITT's actor-educators management of the learning space was not successful. In this circumstance the learners ceased to be the 'subject' of the learning, and became the 'object' of it (Freire, 1995).

7.4.2 Family conflict

Teenage pregnancy can disrupt the harmony existing in a family. It is a disappointment for most parents to see their daughter pregnant before she even had time to finish her schooling. The atmosphere often gets tense and this can result in separations and break up of families. Teenage pregnancy tends to exacerbate the problem of poverty that some families might be facing already. The instability caused by teenage pregnancy leads to disappointment for parents, who will stop providing for their daughter or son, and can deny him or exclude them from the family (O'Halloran, 1998).

When Palesa is asked by one of the teachers about her relationship with her mother, she replies that "she is no longer talking to me, she is disappointed with me, and worried about where we will get the money to prepare for the baby".

Hot seating was employed to enable the young learners to unpack the conflict in Palesa' family. By exploring the missing element in Palesa's story, learners understood that poverty was the reason behind the family conflict. Hot seating created space for dialogue which allowed the youth to engage with each other. For instance, one of the learners suggested what Palesa needed to do to have peace with her mother. According to her it was not good for the baby to grow up in a potentially violent environment.

The young learners not only explored the problem of family conflict as a consequence of teenage pregnancy, but also reflected on the collective responsibilities of family members. This enabled them to suggest possible solutions that would bring about peace and harmony between Palesa and her family.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the role of participation in unpacking the problem of teenage pregnancy in *Is That You?* a play performed by ITT at Johannesburg Hospital School. The actor-educators used hot seating to unpack the causes and the consequences of teenage pregnancy.

The ability of hot seating to explore the relations between attitudes and behaviour enabled young learners to understand that inadequate sex education can lead to teenage pregnancy. Moreover hot seating helped learners to be aware of peer pressure as another cause of teenage pregnancy.

The consequences of teenage pregnancy were also unpacked through hot seating. The technique enabled learners to the exploration of gaps in Palesa's story, leading to the understanding that school dropouts and family conflicts were consequences of teenage pregnancy. The chapter also revealed that ITT's inappropriate management of the space tended to affect the young learners' involvement in the performance.

Chapter 8

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study explored the significance of participation in educational theatre for young audiences. The study was carried out using the Interactive Themba Theatre Company as a selected case study. It mainly focused on an exploration of paradigms of participation which became the lenses for analyzing ITT's performance interventions in schools located in Johannesburg South Africa.

8.1 Summary of research findings

The study found out that participation can be empowering, through its ability to build confidence and trust in young learners. When it is appropriately used participation gives ownership and agency by creating a safe learning environment that allows young learners to be agents of their learning, and to take part in decision-making. This study has revealed how dialogical participation enables young learners to have self-confidence talking about sexual relationships. Through dialogue, young learners developed an understanding of the nature of sexual relationships, 'where' and 'when' to have a sexual relationships.

The study also demonstrated that problem posing education can be used to enhance extrinsic participation. Through ITT's use of a simplified form of forum theatre, young learners were able to engage with the phenomenon of youth gangs as a manifestation of peer pressure in the play, *Virtual Dynamics.* Extrinsic participation also created a reflective space which enabled young learners to unpack the causes of peer pressure, particularly the desire of youth to 'be cool'. However, it was noted that ITT's use of extrinsic participation was instrumental because once more the theatre organization's interests seemed to be more important than the learners' interests.

This study then examined ITT's use of the hot-seating technique to engage with the young learners using peripheral participation in the performance of *Is That You?* The problem of inadequate sex education was exposed as a major factor contributing to teenage pregnancy. The hot-seating technique was used to generate dialogue which enhanced peripheral participation, and led to young learners' understanding of the consequences of teenage pregnancy.

A critical analysis of the use of participation by ITT also revealed that a mis-management of the physical space and the privileging of the outsider's agenda can be serious hindrances to young learners' participation. These were some of the elements that needed to be taken into account in participatory theatre for a more effective impact.

8.2 Recommendations

ITT's use of the participatory approach to educational theatre for young audiences needs to be acknowledged. However, the techniques and methods of participation need to be revisited and improved for more impact on the target audience. In order for participation to be effective, young learners need to be placed at the center of the process from its conception, and their concerns need to be valued more than the theatre organization's interests.

So far ITT's participatory approaches are mainly based on the inclusion of the audience. However, most of ITT's paradigms of participation are at a peripheral and an extrinsic level. The theatre organization needs to incorporate more dialogic participatory techniques that give more power to the target audience, and can engage the young learners at an integral level. For instance, greater application of techniques such as the 'mantle of the expert' and 'teacher-in-role', can give the responsibility of the learning process to the learners, and by so doing enable young

audiences to wield the power to affect change. ITT's actor-educators need develop ways of prioritizing of the agency of young learners in their performances.

Considering the power of integral participation in giving full ownership of the process to the learners during and after the performance, and considering the complexity of the concept of participation it would be useful to investigate how integral participation can be incorporated in framing ITT's performances for young audiences.

Bibliography

Adams, M., 2010. The Practical Primacy of Questions in Action Learning. In Boshyk, Y. and Dilworth, L. (Eds.) *Action Learning and Its Applications, Present and Future*. (2010) London: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers

Auerbach, E., 1992. *Making Meaning, Making Change. Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL Literacy*. Center for Applied Linguistics Language in Education: Theory & Practice 78. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics

Bartholdson, O., Rudqvist, A. and Widmark, C. 2002. *Popular Participation in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru: A Synthesis of Three Studies. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency*. Available at http://www.kus.uu.se/SAdelstudie.pdf .Accessed 10 December 2012.

Bauman, K.E., Ennett, S.T., 1996. Review on the importance of peer influence for Adolescent drug use: commonly neglected considerations. *Addiction, 91*(2), 185-198.

Billy, John O.G., Brewster, Karin L., Grady, William R. 1994. Contextual effects on the sexual behavior of adolescent women. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. National Council on Family Relations 56, (2), 387-404.

Boal, A. 1992.*Theatre of the Oppressed.* London. Routledge.

Boal, A. 2000.*Theatre of the Oppressed.* London. Pluto.

Boal, A., 1979.Theater of the Oppressed. London. Pluto Press.

Bolton, G. M.1979.1979. *Towards a Theory of Drama in Education.* London. Longman.

Boonzaaijer, C., Millar, D. and Apusigah, A. 2008. *Endogenous Development in Africa: Towards a Systematization of Experiences*. Leusden. COMPAS.

Bruner, J. 1990. *Acts of Meaning.* Cambridge (Mass.) Harvard University Press.

Burton, P., 2008. Merchants, Skollies and Stones: Experience of School Violence in South Africa. *Monograph series* No. 4. Cape Town. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.

Cahill, H., Murphy, B., and Kane, C., 2005. *Leading Education about Drugs: Student Participatory Approaches*. Melbourne. Australian Youth Research Centre.

Chambers, R., 1997. Editorial: Responsible well-being: A Personal Agenda for Development, In. *World Development*, 25(11), 1743-1754.

Cheminais, R. 2008. *Engaging Pupil Voice to Ensure that Every Child Matters: A Practical Guide*. New York. Routledge.

Chinyowa, K. C. 2005. Manifestations of Play Aesthetics in African Theatre for Development. PhD Thesis, Griffith University, Brisbane (Australia).

Clasen, D. R. and Brown, B. B., 1985. The multidimensionality of peer pressure in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 14, 451–468.

Conquergood, D. 2002. Performance Studies. Invention and Radical Research. *The Drama Interview* 46, 145-153

Cornwall, A. 2011. *The Participation Reader*. London. Zed Books.

Cornwall, A., 1997. *Performance and Participation: An Overview*. PLA Notes. *Issued 29, pp.23-28*.

Cornwall, A.1997. Men, Masculinity and 'Gender in Development', *Gender and Development*, 5:2, 8-13.

Cotterell, J. 1996. *Social Networks and Social Influences in Adolescence*. London. Routledge.

Courtney, R. 1989. *Play, Drama & Thought: The Intellectual Background to Dramatic Education.* Canada. Les Editions Simon and Pierre**.**

Cullingford, C. and Morrison, J. 1997. The Relationship between Criminality and Home Background. *Children and Society* 11, Issue 3**,** pages 157–172.

Davis, Jed. H. 1961. Prospectus for Research in Children's Theatre. *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Dec), pp. 274-277.

Deldime, R. 2002. *Le Théâtre et l'Ecole Dote de Sens*. Bruxel. De Boeck Université, Pensée Plurielle.

Diddington, C. and Hilton, M. 2007, *Child-centered Education: Reviewing the Creative Tradition.* London. SAGE.

Donkor, D. 2007. Performance, Ethnography and the Radical Intervention of Dwight Conquergood. *Cultural Studies* 21(6):821–825.

Eggers, K. and Eggers, W. 2010.*Children's Theater: A Paradigm, Primer and Resources.* Boston (Maryland). Scarecrow Press.

Fels, L. 1999. In the wind clothes dance on a line. Performance Inquiry: A Research Methodology. Possibilities and absence within a Space-moment of Imagining Universe. PhD Thesis. University of British Columbia.

Fels, L. 2004. Complexity, Teacher Education and Restless Jury: Pedagogical Moments of Performance. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education.* Volume 1, (1) 73–98.

Fels, L. 2012. *Collecting Data through Performative Inquiry: A Tug on the Sleeve*. *Youth Theatre Journal*, 26 (1), 50-60.

Fisher, K. and Urich, P.B., 1999. Information Dissemination and Communication in Stakeholder Participation: The Bohol-Cebu Water Supply Project. *Asia-Pacific Viewpoint* 40(3):251-269.

Flanagan, F.M., 2006. *The Greatest Educator Ever*. London. Continuum.

Freire, P. 2005. *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Freire, P. and Shor, I. 1987. What is the "dialogical method" of teaching? *Journal of Education, 169* (3), 11-31.

Freire, P. 1995. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* London. Continuum Publishing

Freire, P., and Macedo, A., 1995. A dialogue: Culture, language, and race. *Harvard Educational Review*, 65 (3), 377-402.

Freire, P., 1974. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London. Routledge.

Freire, P., 1995. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* London. Continuum Publishing.

Gallagher, J. and Gallagher, A.1996.*A young women's guide to teenage sexuality*. New York. Harper Collins.

Gardner, M., and Steinberg, L. 2005. Peer Influence on Risk taking, Risk Preference, and Risky Decision Making in Adolescence and Adulthood: An experimental study. *Developmental Psychology*, 41, 625–635.

Goldberg, M. 1974. *Children's Theatre: A Philosophy and a Method.* Englewood Cliff (NJ), Prentice-Hall.

Gordon, L. 2007. Children's Theatre: An Effective Method for Entertaining, Educating and Engaging .MA. Thesis, Michigan State University.

Graig, G. and Mayo, M. 1995. *Community Empowerment: A Reader in Participation and Development*. London. Zed Books.

Harris.K., 2003.Theatre, Therapy, and Social Responsibility: An Interdisciplinary Critique of Project Rainbow. MA thesis. Ball University State.

Hunter, D. 2009. *The Art of Facilitation: The Essentials for Leading Great Meetings and Creating Group Synergy*. San Francisco. Jessey-Bass.

Inge, J. 2008, A Qualitative Analysis of Interactive Performer-audience Methods with Specific Reference to Interactive Themba Theatre (ITT*)*. MA. University of the Witwatersrand.

Isaac, W., 1999. *Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together.* New York. Doubleday.

Jackson, A. (1997) Positioning the audience: Inter-active strategies and the aesthetic in educational theatre, *Theatre Research International*, 22: 48-60.

Jenny Moon 2005. A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice. USA. RoutledgeFalmer.

Kann, L. 2008. A Dangerous Game: Male Adolescents' Perceptions and attitudes towards Sexual Consent. MA Thesis. University of the Witwatersrand. Johannesburg.

Kunene, P. 1988. Teenager's knowledge on human sexuality and views on teenager Pregnancies. Honors Essay, KwaDlangezwa: University of Zululand.

Low, K. 2010. Creating a Space for the Individual: Different Theatre and Performance-based Approaches to Sexual Health Communication in South Africa. *Journal of Applied Arts and Health*. 1 (1). 111-126.

Mavrocordatos, A. 1997. Theatre for development, participatory monitoring and cultural. Feedback. *PLA Notes* (1997), Issue 29. 29–33.

Mavrocordatos, A., 1997. Participatory Learning and Action. PLA29. London. IIED,

Mayo, M. and Craig, G., 1995. *Community Empowerment: A Reader in Participation and Development.* London. Zed Book.

McDonald, S., and Rachel, D. 2000. Augusto Boal's *Forum Theatre* for teachers. Retrieved from http://organizingforpower.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/games-theater-of-oppressed.pdf Mann, L., and Janis, I. L. (1968). 17 Nov 2012.

Merriam, B. 1998.*Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. San Francisco. The Jessey-Bass.

Merriam, B. 2002.*Qualitative Research in Practice: Example For Discussion and Analysis*. San Francisco. Jessey-Bass.

Miles, M., and Huberman, A. M., 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis. 2nd Ed.* Thousand Oaks. Canada: SAGE.

Milkman, H.B. and Wanberg, K.W. 2005.*Criminal Conduct and Substance Abuse Treatment for Adolescents: Pathways to Self-Discovery and Change.* California. SAGE.

Mitchell, R. 1925. *The School Theatre: A Handbook of Theory and Practice*. New York. Brentano's Publisher.

Mohan, G., 2001. Participatory development. In. *The Arnold Companion to Development Studies*. 49–54.

Morgan, N. and Saxton, J. 1987.*Teaching Drama: a mind of many wonders*. Portsmouth. Heinemann.

Mpofu, L., 2012. Perceptions on the Role of Peer pressure in Increasing HIV Related Risky Sexual Behaviors in Further Education and Training (fet) Colleges: a Case Study of PC Training and Business College in Gauteng, South Africa. MA. Africa Centre for HIV/AIDS Management. Stellenbosch University.

Mueller, W 1998.*Understanding today's youth culture*. Revised and Expanded. USA, Illinois. Tyndale.

Mwamwenda, T S. 1996. Educational psychology: an African perspective. 2nd Ed. Isando: South Africa. Heinemann.

Neelands, J. 1990. *Structuring Drama Work.* Edited by Goode, T. Brisbane. Griffith University Libraries.

Nicholson, H. 2008. Drama, Education and Narrative. In. Anderson, M. and Hughes, J. (eds), *Drama and English Teaching: imagination, action and engagement.* Sydney. Oxford University Press. 66-97.

O`Toole, J., Burton, B., and Plukett, A. 2005. *Cooling Conflict .A new approach to managing bulling and conflict in schools*. Brisbane. Pearson Longman.

O'Neill, C. 1996.Alienation and empowerment In: O'Toole, J. and Denelan, K. (Eds) *Drama, Culture and Empowerment.* Brisbane. IDEA.

O'Toole, J. 1992. *The Process of Drama: Negotiating Art and Meaning.* London. Routledge.

Parry Charles, D.H. 1998. Substance Abuse in South Africa: Country Report Focusing on Young Persons. Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Medical Report Council South African Report. 1998. Available online at: www.**sahealth**info.org/admodule/**countryreport**.pdf.

Persaud, R. 2005 *The Motivated Mind: How To Get What You Want From Life*. London. Bantam Books .

Pickhardt, C. E. 2007. *The Connected Father. Understanding Your Unique Role and Responsibilities during Your Child's Adolescence*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

Prendergast, M. and Saxton, J., 2010. *Applied Theatre: International Case Study and Challenges for Practice.* Bristol. Intellect.

Prior, L. 2003.*Using Documents in Social Research.* London. SAGE.

Remo, C. 2009. The significance of role in HIV/Aids Interventions: A case study Interactive Themba Theatre Company (ITTC). MA. University of the Witwatersrand. Johannesburg.

Sakkie P., 2006. Sexual Harassment and Violence in South African Schools. *South African Journal of Education*. EASA. 26(2) 305–318.

Saxton, J., and Morgan, N., 2006. *Asking better Questions: Models, Techniques and Classroom Activities for Engaging Students in Learning*. Ontario. Pembroke.

Shaffer, S. 1994. *Participation for Educational Change: A Synthesis of Experience.* Paris, UNESCO.

Siks, B. and Dunnington, B. 1961.*Children's Theatre and Creative Dramatics.* Seattle. University of Washington Press.

Sloman, A., 2011. Using participatory theatre in international community development. *Community Development Journal*. 47 (1) 42–57.

Sullivan, J., Owomoyela, and Brannelly, L. 2009. *Promoting Participation: Community contributions to Education in Conflict Situations*. Paris. UNESCO IIEP/CfBT Education.

Taba, H. 2001. *The Dynamics of Education: A Methodology of Progressive Educational Thought*. London. Routledge.

Taylor, P. and Warner, D. 2006.*Structure and Spontaneity*: *The Process Drama of Cecily O'Neill.* USA. Trentham Book.

Thomas, G. 2011. A Typology for the Case Study in Social Science Following a Review of Definition, Discourse and Structure. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17, 6, 511-521.

Tibbs, J., and Parry, C.D.H. 1994. The influence of the media and other factors in drinking among youth. *Southern African Journal of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 6, 39-41.

Umsobomvu Youth Fund 2005. *Where we're at and where we're going: Young People in South Africa 2005*. South Africa. UYF.

Vosniadou, S., 2001. *How Children Learn*. Geneva. IBE/UNESCO.

Wates, N. 2000. *The Community Handbook: How People can Shape Their Cities, Town and Village in Any Part of the World.* London. Earthscan.

White, S., 2011. Depoliticizing development: the uses and abuses of participation. In: Cornwall, A.*The Participation Reader.* London: Zed Books.

Wooster, R. 2007. *Contemporary Theatre in Education.* Bristol. Intellect

Yule, J., 2012. The Role of Participation in Community Theatre for Development Intervention: A Case Study of the Wadzanayi Farm Project in Lalapanzi, Zimbabwe. MA. University of the Witwatersrand. Johannesburg.

Zander, M.J. 2004. Becoming Dialogical: Creating a Place for Dialogue in Art Education. *Art Education*, 57 (3), 48-53