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A conceptual analysis of the role of play as an educational and therapeuric tool in a Johannesburg primary school setting

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CHAPTER 1 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Study Background

"All curriculum models reflect a set of beliefs and values about what is considered to be educationally and developmentally worthwhile in terms of children's immediate needs, their future needs and the wider needs of society" (Wood and Atttfield, 2005; 138). Since every education system functions within a social context and a set of political imperatives, it is unfortunate that the 'Bantu' education system that was in place in South Africa prior to 1994 did not provide a conducive environment for Wood and Attfield's utterances to apply. The education system operated in a setting where children were not only subjugated in their education but in all facets of their lives. Besides, the education system of that day hardly considered the children's developmental needs and emotional well being. In line with the need to redress and reverse the effects of apartheid on the general population and on children's education, the South African education system has undergone dramatic transformations since the attainment of democracy in 1994. Changes in the education system were also necessitated by the need to address the disparities in education opportunities and resources among races. To cater for these needs the National Department of Education introduced the Outcome Based Education (OBE) system of education through the implementation of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in schools in 1997.

OBE was conceived after a realisation that the education system of that day was not geared towards developing the full potential of a learner. The aim of the new curriculum was to foster a student- centred approach to pedagogy. This was with the view of enabling learners to develop critical thinking powers and problem-solving abilities fostering the development of knowledge, skills and values. OBE was also meant to address present day socio-cultural challenges inherent in South African schools and society. These challenges include the prevalence of HIV and Aids, poverty, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, high levels of crime and violence and the related trauma, amongst others. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), a revised version of C2005, states that one of its goals is to "promote the holistic development of learners". The statement goes on to argue that in this endeavor it will take all of the

different components of the individual learner into account. Thus, the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of every child would be taken into consideration in teaching and learning. This is a laudable initiative and is in line with current trends in education systems around the world. However, the implementation of OBE was problematic. Prior to implementation little preparation was made for the numerous practical implications it posed for the educator, learner, administrative bodies and society as a whole. There is also very limited guidance provided in the RNCS or teacher training programmes with regards to how one should take the "holistic development of learners" into account in a classroom situation.

In recent years some of the societal ills and problems in schools that the new curriculum was meant to address have escalated. This raises the need to focus on the mental and emotional requirements of children to help address and provide insulation from the stressors that surround them. It also necessitates the imperative to 'catch them young', before some of them decide to vent their anger, hostility and frustrations in destructive ways, as is manifesting in a number of schools today. It is with the realisation of the implementation methodology deficiency of the RNCS and the call for alternative ways to speak to violence in schools that this study was conceived.

This research puts forward the argument that, the use of play, specifically structured dramatic play in a classroom situation has the potential of achieving the 'holistic learning', which the new curriculum aims at. Through this holistic development the learner is potentially equipped with the knowledge, skills, abilities, emotional healing and emotional preparedness to deal with traumatic and stressful situations that are created by the high levels of crime and violence in South African schools and society. The study argues that dramatic play has both an educational and a therapeutic capability within the South African primary school context. This is because the use of play enables a child to be mentally and emotionally prepared for cognitive learning even in the light of many unconstructive mitigating factors.

I am not calling for the introduction of play as a subject in the primary school curriculum, although this might be an excellent idea, rather, my argument is that, since play is a process, many of its activities provide opportunities for learning through the already present subject disciplines.

1.2 Statement of Intention

A school setting provides a number of varied contexts in which play can take place. These contexts vary from the playground, the sports field, gymnasium, physical education to the classroom. This study challenges conceptions on what play can and should provide for learners within a classroom context. It focuses on the use of play within the classroom set up and not as a separate activity from curriculum learning. Using play philosophy and practice as a standpoint this research analyses how dramatic play can be used as a teaching and learning component in an integrated thematic unit, or as a means to enhance specific areas of learning. The function of play as a tool for learning, child development and emotional healing within a classroom context is also explored. Basing its analysis on available literature on play, education, teaching and learning methods and current South African curriculum and socio-cultural realities, the research conducts a theoretical assessment on how dramatic play can be applied in a primary school curriculum context. It is intended to add to literature and debate on the use of multi-disciplinary approaches to education. This is done through the justification of the need and relevance of play within an educational setting.

The traditional system of education places emphasis on cognitive intelligence, principally based on mathematical logic and linguistic methods. This generates complications for individuals who are not superior at these methods and society sometimes calls them 'slow', ‘dull’ or ‘unintelligent’. This is without regard of the fact that not every human being is equipped with the same type of intellect. Moreover as Smith in (Moyles, 1994) argues, children vary in development levels even when they are at the same age, hence learning that might be very easy for some, might be slightly complex to others and totally incomprehensible for others. This makes cognitive learning alone inadequate for the classroom. Cognitive intelligence on its own is poor preparation for the emotional

challenges one encounters in life. This study aligns itself with literature that views intelligence not only as a cognitive entity, but also a social and/ or emotional one (Gardner, 1993; Goleman, 1995). Using theories on multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence, this research argues for the use of play to 'tap' into these forms of intelligences. The study seeks to examine ways through which the educator and learners can use play to combine the cognitive, emotional and social faculties to achieve a holistic and integrated form of learning.

In no sense am I trying to reformulate a theory of classroom behaviours and knowledge acquisition, rather I am only attempting to use the existing structures, literature and models from other parts of the world to suggest a framework of play that can work within the South African primary school context. This research is also not postulating that play is *the* one single teaching and learning tool that can be applied in all situations and by all educators to all learners. Rather, it acknowledges the existence of a varied number of pedagogical methods that can be used to achieve the same. It however argues that for a child, play is a natural developmental stage and also a form of expression. Hence it's appropriateness as a pedagogical tool for primary school children.

The study views the use of dramatic play in the classroom as a means to enable learners to relate their curriculum learning to what they experience in their everyday lives. Rather than seeing education as a process of instruction, and transaction, holistic education looks at a transformative form of learning. It aims at enhancing a learner's capacity through working from the point of what he already knows and understands, building on it to show its interconnectedness and integration to other issues and events in his life. Knowledge is an entity that is constructed by the context in which an individual exists. This study analyses how a teacher can enable holistic learning through the use of dramatic play.

The study focuses on government schools which preliminary research revealed as being the most exposed to such problems like poor infrastructure, few educators, low educator morale, high numbers of students, a strict adherence to OBE and higher prevalence of violence and crime. This is not to suggest that private and independent schools do not

suffer from the same issues highlighted above. They however suffer to a comparatively limited extent or do not have all the listed issues affecting them. Johannesburg is also the largest urban sprawl in South Africa, presenting it with some of its own unique problems. Although this study is applicable to the rest of South Africa, it was conceived with government schools in Johannesburg in mind. This is because the researcher is more familiar with schools in this city.

The study also places a special emphasis throughout on primary school children in the 5 to 8 age range. It is argued that this age range is one of the normative stages in cognition in a child's development. This is because of a significant growth in a child's mental faculties evidenced by the moving from just using symbolic play to becoming 'concrete operational' (Piaget, 1962). Anecdotal evidence shows that play is a technique that features prominently in pre-school and kindergarten and somewhat to a limited extent in some grade zero and R classes. The concern of this study is the abrupt transition to more formal and less interactive methods of learning the moment a child enters primary school. It is at this age that a child's thinking becomes more orderly, more purposeful, more structured and more logical. According to Wood and Attfield,

> Play becomes more realistic and rule-oriented and reveals a developing need for order, a need to belong and a need for industry. Children's play involves more cognitive activity (*epistemic* play- what does this do?) as opposed to sensory exploration and physical manipulation (*ludic* play- what can I do with this?). Children build knowledge about play and become increasingly skilled as players. (2005; 153)

It is a pity that it is exactly at this stage that curriculum designers, the school and classroom systems choose to restrict the opportunities for play. Moyles (1989) also talks of this age range and states that play in this age range is a vital ingredient of development, social and intellectual learning.

Play is characterised by expressions such as freedom, spontaneity, player ownership, exuberance and fun among others. This appears to be in direct conflict with traditional classroom experiences and expectations which are characterised by long term rigid

planning, discipline and summative testing. This study seeks to assess the meeting points. This study places emphasis on the use of structured dramatic play, because left to their devices, the type of play that children indulge in can just remain repetitive and end at imitation. Hence the educator's key role is to help children develop their play, through stimulation, challenges and or encouragement, within or outside the make- believe world. Kiston in Moyles (1994) notes that,

> Working on their own, children will frequently repeat the same type of behaviour, and resolve similar problems. Effective intervention can channel this learning, helping children construct new dilemmas and challenges, encouraging and supporting individuals and extending and motivating language, performance and competence. (1994; 88)

Calling for a structured but not prescribed form of dramatic play, this study puts forward a case for teacher involved play in the classroom. It is in no way suggesting that "free" fantasy play should be restricted in the classroom, rather that the play experience can be extended through the involvement of the teacher, with minimum changes in the play activity but an enhanced opportunity in learning potential for learners. This in turn creates a classroom environment that enables education that goes beyond skills acquisition, curriculum and testing.

1.3 Rationale

The potential of play as a tool for learning has been a subject of interest since as early as Froebel. It is how to include it within the confines of the school syllabi that creates difficulties for most educators especially in the case of a restrictive curriculum. The role of the primary school educator in South Africa is complicated. This is with regards to curriculum restrictions and expectations, school set up, infrastructure, training and the amount of time and levels of interaction between the teacher and her pupils. As highlighted earlier, the OBE system implementation was problematic and suffered from a lack of overt methodological clarifications. As a result teachers were left to their own devices with little or no training in the teaching techniques that the curriculum policy required of them. This study is aimed at highlighting dramatic play as a possible

pedagogical methodology in an attempt to address this shortfall and assist in the attaining of the holistic learning that the curriculum is advocating.

Many studies have highlighted the decline in primary children's play opportunities, (Moyles, 1994; Cohen, 1987; Wood and Attfield, 2005). These studies have cited the school structure and curriculum demands as the main causes of this decline. I tend to agree with this view and believe that in the Johannesburg situation one can also add crime, violence and lack of play areas as other mitigating factors in the decline of play opportunities. The trauma that can result from being subjected to, or witnessing crime and violence can cause children to withdraw into themselves and not want to interact or indulge in play activities with their peers. In some children the post traumatic stress might manifest itself through 'improper' play. In this sense one can become sadistic, anti-social and a bully during play. In severe instances the child may end up enacting the same crime or violence which they witnessed or were subjected to. It is this study's view that in some instances children impacted by violence and crime need to be re-taught how to play 'properly'. This can take place through dramatic play in the classroom.

The prevalence and effects of violence and crime on South African children and society in general has been widely publicised in both the print and electronic media. That this violence has become a common feature in schools has been a cause of much concern. Projects such as the 'Safer Schools Project', 'Journeywork' and 'Acting Against Conflict', to mention but a few, have been conceptualised along the lines of using life skills techniques and drama as intervention in an endeavor to curb the escalation of violence in schools. This study is intended to add to research and the creation of intervention frameworks in line with these endeavors.

Most interventions on school based violence happen outside learning hours and outside the classroom. These interventions are also mainly targeted at adolescents and use more elaborate and complex drama techniques such as Forum Theatre and Process Drama. This research calls for the integration of such an intervention within the classroom and curriculum subject context. The argument being that, learning to deal with violence,

stress and trauma should be viewed as significant to the learning process and not as an after school extra- curricula activity. Furthermore, at the age of five a child is expected to have gone through the symbolic play development stage (Piaget, 1962). Hence the role of the teacher is not to introduce new concepts but to harness for classroom use a notion and process that the child is already familiar with. Dramatic play is based on the ability to 'play' rather than to 'act' as in other forms of drama. Through classroom based dramatic play a child is presented with a safe opportunity to vent their anxiety, learn problem solving techniques, understand and make meaning (and sometimes control) of their emotions and the emotions of others. Concurrently the child would also be cognitively learning material that is prescribed by the curriculum. Huizinga (1955) has shown that play is an essential feature in all societies and all beings regardless of age. Therefore planning progression for play needs to be a feature within and beyond ones pre-school and early primary school years. The status and complexities of play and drama can then be developed beyond the primary school years and continue to provide stimulating contexts for a holistic learning in the classroom and beyond.

Interactions with a number of people involved in education and child care have revealed that the concept of play and its role in education is largely misunderstood. There is ample evidence revealing the relegation of play to 'after work' exercises of games and playing with toys or on the play ground or specifically designated physical education hours. This research calls for the inclusion of play as a process within the teaching of subjects in the curriculum. Just as a teacher sets writing or reading tasks in the classroom she should also place equal emphasis on hands-on exploratory and interactive activities.

Some of the theoretical underpinnings of the RNCS are problematic. It is apparent that the RNCS under the OBE system is what Moyles (1994) calls a 'power cohesive model'. It places emphasis on a mechanistic view in which learners and their educators are not valued as individual beings but on what they produce, 'the outcomes'. The other anomaly with the curriculum is that it operates from an unrealistic expectation that all children can learn effectively in a classroom. This is in spite of factors such as, their abilities, weaknesses and other personal, economic and socio-cultural constraints. These factors

have psychological, emotional and social impacts on the learner and his peers, hence they need to be addressed before any fruitful learning can take place. Alternatively, as this research suggests, through the use of play in the curriculum, emphasis is placed on what an individual learner brings into the classroom. This then forms the foundation of all learning and understanding. From this foundation stage, educators can then encompass Vygotsky's (1978) concept of 'zone of proximal development' from which Bruner's (1966) notion of 'scaffolding' by the adult will enable progress in learning to proceed from the point of a learner's current understanding.

This study also stems from the realisation that teachers deal with children's psychological and emotional problems on a daily basis but are inadequately equipped to deal with these. I am not arguing that teachers should practice 'Play Therapy' in classrooms. Rather, the argument is that, through the emotionally rehabilitative constitution of play, teachers can at least create a conducive atmosphere that can enable a psychologically challenged child engage in learning. The challenge is to make interactive pedagogical methodologies readily available, train teachers in their implementation and package classroom learning in such a way that each child is afforded the opportunity to engage with the material and make meaning of his life and the environment in which he exists. Herein lies the rationale of using dramatic play. Dramatic play provides a safe environment through which individual and community existence can be explored.

1.4 Research Aims

This research argues for the vital importance of play in childhood education. It aims;

1. To explore the links between the emotions, the intellect and society in child education and development through dramatic play.

2. To generate more thinking and inform debate on educational issues in South Africa with regards to the generation of methodologies in interactive student based learning methods.

3. To analyse the place and relevance of play within the current Johannesburg primary school curriculum and schooling system.

4. To make an attempt to challenge conceptions of what play can and should provide for learners in the classroom.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the role of play in the mental, intellectual, emotional and physical development of a child?

2. How can a teacher structure dramatic play in a classroom situation within the overall educational objectives of the South African primary school curriculum?

3. What role does the educator play in a lesson that uses dramatic play?

1.6 Limitations of study

Some of the concepts and theories utilised in the study as a basis of argument are either marred by a lot of contentions or very difficult to ascertain. This might be because they are still fairly new areas of study hence, a lot is still being discovered and rediscovered. A good example is the case of multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence. As concepts a lot is still being debated as to their boundaries. This is with regards to what they cover and what they do not cover. Assessing multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence has also proved to be incredibly complex. To date there is no sure way of measuring this type of information in humans and unquestionable tests to prove their effectiveness. There is also little empirical evidence, especially from Africa, to support Gardner's and Goleman's theories and conceptualisations.

Because this research is theoretical in nature, it relied mostly on literature on play and child development. Such literature tends to be romantic and idealistic in nature. Of all the literature I came across there was very little or no reference to the 'other side of play', they all tended to place emphasis on the wonders of play in child development. This research notes that conflicts and coercion also occur in play as is human nature. We ought to restrain ourselves from idealising play since it is not value neutral but is value laden (Nebe, 1991). Children in South Africa are known to play games like '*rape me rape me'*, and '*stab me stab me'* (www.sahrc.org.za/sahrc_cms/downloads/schoolviolence_Hellen Suzman Foundation, accessed 12 January 2009). These games involve the simulating of

the act of rape and stabbing. This type of play can hardly be regarded as constructive for a child. Rather it might actually lead to the normalisation and de-sensitisation of such acts in the lives of the children.

This study focuses on concepts of play in education and as therapy and how it can be used in a school system using available literature. Most of this available literature is not from the South African context. This has the limitation that what has been practiced in some countries and sounds theoretically plausible to the South African educational context might not be easily applicable. Thus, even though play has been used effectively in countries like the USA and New Zealand, this research does not provide existential testimony that play can be an effective cognitive and therapeutic tool in a Johannesburg primary school context. Moreover, Johannesburg is so vast and diverse with each individual child faced with his own unique socio- economic and educational challenges. This equally applies to the vast and diverse primary schools in Johannesburg. The efficacy of play in a South African primary school context stands to be validated through a practical implementation of the theoretical framework raised in this study. Further research needs to focus on the practical classroom implementation of play as a teaching and learning method.

1.7 Chapter Outline

This research is in five parts. Chapter one contains the orientation and it focuses on establishing the area of study. It contextualises the research through an analysis of the background informing the study. Chapter one also examines the intention, the aims and justifies the need for the research. The chapter also looks at limitations to the study. The chapter ends with a delineation of chapters to follow.

The second chapter gives an in depth rationale for this study. It establishes the context within which a need for play as an intervention is apparent. This is done through looking at crime and violence in South African schools and society. The chapter argues that crime and violence are the major causes of trauma and emotional stress among South African children. It also looks at the OBE system of education, its history, why and how it was

implemented and its efforts in addressing disparities in education. The chapter ends by critiquing the OBE system, its strengths, challenges and limitations in the light of what it set out to achieve. This sets the stage for looking at play and its role in education.

Chapter three of this research makes an overview of play as a construct and outlines some theoretical considerations in relation to play as a therapeutic learning medium, establishing models for both play and learning. This chapter also briefly looks at the categorisation of play in a variety of contexts. It then narrows its focus to dramatic play, its definition and characteristics that make it a cognitive device and a tool for developing emotional intelligence in education.

Chapter 4 takes a pragmatic stance, looking at approaches of how to include dramatic play within the school curriculum. It places emphasis on the role of the teacher within a dramatic play space in the classroom. It also looks at possible ways in which a teacher can go about initiating, implementing, maintaining and evaluating the process.

The final chapter of this paper is made up of the research summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2 **PRIMARY SCHOOLING IN A JOHANNESBURG CONTEXT**

2.1 Introduction

There are a number of barriers to a holistic and integrated pedagogy within the South African schooling context. These range from societal problems, lack of school facilities, challenging curriculum issues, to individual pupil's concerns. Hence this chapter of the study will explore the context within which this theoretical research was conceptualised. This research was motivated by recognition of the fundamental role that the school can play in shielding children from some of the harms of society. It analyses the prevalence of violence and crime as some of the most prominent socio-economic ills affecting South African communities. One of the reasons for the introduction of OBE was to try and curb the violence and crime which characterised apartheid schools and society. Besides addressing these societal ills OBE was also meant to provide a holistic and intergrated pedagogical experience for all learners. Hence this study will also look at the OBE curriculum and its impact on schooling and society as a whole.

The first section of this chapter looks at the prevalence of crime and violence in South African society. This section will also make an attempt at explaining the origins and causes of this 'culture of violence'. It will then pay attention to the effects of this crime and violence on children. The second section of chapter two will focus on the provisions of the South African schools curriculum. This is done in light of the number of dramatic changes in the South African schools curriculum brought about by the attainment of democracy. These transformations have created multiple challenges for both teachers and pupils. Schools have had to adapt to a new curriculum based on the concept of OBE. It is within this particular context that this section of the chapter seeks to explore the configuration of the South African Primary Schools curriculum in relation to child cognitive and emotional development.

Chapter two proffers the rationale and need for the use of play as an educational and therapeutic tool for primary school children in Johannesburg. It establishes the necessity of using play as an interactive educational technique in light of the tenets and expected

outcomes (for learners) of the OBE system.

2.2 South African Society, Crime and Violence

2.2.1 A Culture of Violence

According to Lewis 'the term 'culture of violence' is used to describe the high rate of violence in South Africa' (1999; 122). Lewis adds that in such a situation the majority of people in society think that violence is the most effective solution to any crisis and the satisfaction of their desires, and that they will draw on violent behavior to attain their goals. As a result violence is normalised and made acceptable. Altbeker (2007) claims that South Africa has the highest record of violent crime and the highest death rate amongst civilians for a country that is not at war, making it one of the most violent nations in the world. Altbeker's claims are supported by crime statistics provided by the South African Police Services (SAPS). The statistics show that in Gauteng Province from April 2007 to March 2008 there were 3674 murders, 5257 attempted murders, 8073 incidents of rape (April to December 2007), 46993 incidents of assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and 50970 incidents of robbery with aggravating circumstances (http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2008/_provinces/gauteng/gauteng.htm/ accessed 9 January 2009). The statistics only show incidences of reported crime and those that go unreported are not part of the SAPS statistics. Hence the crime figures might actually be way higher than what the noted statistics depict. In her analysis Lewis (1999) concludes by saying that, many South African children are affected by trauma because of the high levels of violence, both within the home and in the wider community.

2.2.2 A History of Violence

South Africa has had a predominantly violent history and this has remained deeply entrenched in its culture. The violent society within which South Africa finds itself needs to be contextualised within the history of the country and the violence attributed to apartheid. Simpson argues that, 'the legacy of Apartheid has bequeathed to South Africa a 'culture of violence' (1993; 1). The transitional period from the end of apartheid to the embracing of democracy became a time of great struggle for power. Hence violence,

predominantly political, was used as a tool for both maintaining power and attaining change or resolving conflict (Simpson, 1993). Consequently this 'culture' permeated all facets of South African society, particularly in the black townships. As the violence took on its own momentum some political interest groups were responsible for 'switching on the violence' and it became difficult thereafter to simply switch it off, the separating line between political and criminal violence has become more and more hazy. South Africa's political, social and economic state of affairs has all been shaped and influenced by the violent legacy of apartheid. This violent legacy in turn places a heavy burden on the country's services, inclusive of the education system.

2.3 Violence in Schools

2.3.1 Overview

> A matric pupil, camouflaged with black face paint, a black balaclava, and armed with a ninja sword killed a 16-year-old and stabbed two gardeners at a Krugersdorp High School on Monday morning. School is clearly becoming an increasingly dangerous place to be. The reasons for the attack are unclear, but allegations have been made that he was involved with Satanism and that he was high on drugs. Whether this is the case or not, it seems that meaningless school violence is hitting the headlines with increasing regularity. (http://www.24.com.violence in schools/Health 24 _ Teens, At school.html. accessed 28 August 2008)

As severe as this example sounds, it gives a factual representation of what is happening in South African schools today. It is however difficult to get a comprehensive picture of the violence that is transpiring in South African schools. This is because the figures are not maintained and also because many incidents go unreported. However such reports attest to the exceptionally high levels of violence to which South African children are exposed. These media covered events are just instances of a plethora of serious occurrences that affect South African classrooms on a daily basis. Johnson (1998) notes that, violence has increasingly developed into an integral part of the school system, even in elementary school. He also argues that, gang culture has become glorified and that single- incident cries and single-problem situations are becoming the exception of a brutalising norm.

Because classrooms are not insulated from the rest of the world, classroom events often occur in response to societal problems. Incidences of violence are much higher in high schools than in primary schools. However, it is the view of this research that an individual does not resort to violence at the spur of the moment. Rather it is a manifestation of feelings and emotions that would have gone unchecked and unresolved over a period of time. When a high school learner commits extreme acts of violence, the causes of this act may have started manifesting in his early childhood. This study argues that instilling a sense of self awareness and self management through focusing on emotional intelligence has the probability of assisting an individual to deal with stressful and traumatic events that they might encounter without necessarily resorting to violence.

2.3.2 Factors Contributing to Violence in Schools

A number of factors have been attributed to the violence in schools. These include; discipline models in school and unclear management roles, unattractive school environments, educators' misconceptions regarding the human rights of learners, the impact of community poverty, the presence of gangsterism and drug and alcohol abuse in the community, conditions in the home environment, and the social de-sensitisation of youth to a culture of violence. This citation is not exhaustive, neither are these factors mutually exclusive. Children's exposure to violent behaviour and lack of respect in their home and community also influences their levels of discipline and violence at school. Children who come from violent or abusive personal backgrounds are more likely to exhibit behavioral problems whilst at school. These influential environments range from gang violence through to domestic violence.

Violence in schools can not be divorced from the general violence in the larger South African community and what is happening in schools merely reflects the various fault lines that exist in the general society, violence simply being one of them. The violence that is taking place in South African schools is a manifestation of what is happening in society since schools are a reflection of the communities in which they exist. Learner-on-learner violence seems rampant in most schools. Learner-on-teacher violence also occurs. Monahon (1993) argues that during the past several years, a new era of adolescent

maladaptive behaviour has become vogue fostering the growth of violent behaviour among youths. One should also note that school based violence is not unique to South Africa. It is a disturbing norm the world over. What makes the violence in South African schools noteworthy is its intensity and prevalence.

Brewer et al (1995) cite several risk factors related with the escalation of violence, many of which are family and community based. These include such conditions and occurrences like, family discord and violence, economic deprivation, low neighborhood attachment and community organisation, transience and mobility and the availability of drugs and firearms. The media is not helping the situation. The manner in which violence is romanticised in some media as well as in several music genres has led to its easy internalisation by young people, keen on emulating their heroes.

> It is not news that this is a society that is fascinated by violence, and clearly our entertainments of choice favour flash, glitter and quick resolutions….
> During the ages of 4 to 6, community norms favourable to crime and substance abuse, availability of drugs and weapons, frequent transitions and exposure to media violence have an adverse effect predicting later violence, as does early academic failure. (Brewer et al, 1995; 40-41)

The manner in which children are affected by violence and the trauma and post traumatic stress disorder associated with it directly affects the learning, behaviour and development of children. Events that occur to an individual child affect his performance in class and may also affect the class as a whole. Brewer et al argue that events that affect the class have far reaching effects in terms of classroom cohesiveness, school academic performance, learning, interpersonal interactions, behaviour out of school and the inclination toward behavioural problems later on.

2.3.3 School Violence and Trauma

Trauma is a problematic term and concept to put parameters on. It has been defined from a number of view points. For the purpose of this study we will adopt the definition that views trauma as

1. Experiencing a serious injury to yourself or witnessing a serious injury to or

> death of someone else, 2. Facing imminent threats of serious injury or death to yourself or others, or 3. Experiencing a violation of personal physical integrity. These experiences usually call forth overwhelming feelings of terror, horror or helplessness. (http://www.nct.net.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=faq_def/ accessed 28 January 2009)

Trauma is also a manifestation of a feeling of loss of control over events and a feeling of powerlessness (Tedeschi and Calhourn, 1995). When a child goes through, witnesses or is affected by a violent ordeal, he is normally left in a state of shock and numbness and an inability to deal with the situation. Whether or not children who have been exposed to violence go through a traumatic experience is a point hardly worth arguing. Suffice to say that studies have revealed that a vast number of children who are subjected to a violent ordeal end up withdrawing into themselves or behaving in socially inappropriate ways (Joseph, Williams and Yule, 1997; Cattanach, 1992; Tedeschi and Calhourn, 1995).

> Statistics presented suggested that the schools were the most likely place where children would become victims of crime including crimes of sexual violence, assault and robberies. In many communities there was almost the anguished acceptance that violence was so deeply ingrained that it had become the norm with children playing macabre playground games such as 'Stab me , Stab me 'or 'Rape me , Rape me'. While in the past bullying was the most common manifestation of violence in schools, now the growing use of weapons including guns and knives has seen many fatalities. In many communities the phenomena of gangsterism has found its way into schools with gangs recruiting and organizing amongst school goers and using the school as a site for spreading the power and influence of the gang. (www.sahrc.org.za/sahrc_cms/downloads/school violence_Hellen Suzman Foundation, accessed 12 January 2009)

According to a recent study published by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention;

> ….young people between the ages of 12 and 22 are victims of crime at twice the adult rate, with even higher rates for violent crime. Among pupils interviewed, 20% said that they were victims of some form of violence. (Many others were victims of theft; 52.4% of victims of theft said that their property was stolen at school.) The Centre's study shows that teachers also regard their schools as dangerous. According to the Centre, more than 40% of the teachers who participated in the study did not feel safe in their schools while teaching. Almost one in ten (8, 9%) of school principals at primary schools reported cases where pupils inflicted, or attempted to inflict, physical harm on their teachers. However, teachers also contribute to the culture of violence in schools. In addition, perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the recent deadly attacks on foreigners was that

> many perpetrators were of school-going age, wielding knife and hammer instead of clutching pen and paper. (www.violence in schools/SAIRR Today Violence in schools - 15 August 2008 — SAIRR.htm, accessed 12 January 2009)

If a child does not feel safe at school, it would be difficult for him to focus on learning. As the Centre rightly points out, a developmental approach that identifies young people at risk and intervenes before they slide into a culture of violence is necessary. It is with the view of coming up with workable approaches to classrooms conducive for learning and appropriate social interaction that this study was conceived. The study argues that through the use of dramatic play, learners can confront their fears and events that are traumatic within the safety of the symbolic world. This symbolic world acts as a space in which the learner can come to terms with his 'brutalised' emotions. It also helps in equipping the child to deal with such situations and emotions if and when they arise. The aim being to let the child heal, rather than leaving the trauma to manifest into some post traumatic stress disorder or socially unacceptable behaviour.

There is a correlation between socio-economic conditions and violence. One can argue that poverty and harsh economic conditions have rendered the family unit and the broader society so dysfunctional that the environment where positive values can be imparted and inculcated is almost non-existent. Economic, social and political conditions inherent in South Africa are a complex network of factors that render children susceptible to the development of emotional distress. The majority of children in South Africa are living below the poverty datum line, predominantly black children in the South African townships and informal settlements. Studies have revealed that deprived socio-economic standing is related to symptoms of post- traumatic stress in children exposed to violence (Butchart et al, 1998). One can construe that socio-economic status is a significant mediating feature in determining the psychological well being of children who have been exposed to violence in South Africa.

On the other hand, the manifestation of violence in various middle and upper income schools questions the impact of poverty on patterns of violence in schools. Contrary to popular belief, it is not only poor children who are affected by the scourge of violence in schools (Duncan & Rock, 1994). For school children the apprehension and insecurity of

being a casualty of a serious crime also has a negative effect on their personal confidence, sense of security and ability to function optimally. The environment for a holistic and integrated pedagogy, for the development of shared trust and support between the teacher and the pupil is adversely compromised in a hazardous and insecure atmosphere where violence reigns. If such a learner is engaged with the material he will be learning in class there is need for the educator to focus attention on pedagogical interactions that can help the child regain his lost confidence in order for him to function optimally and reach his potential.

South African schools can, on the one hand, be treasured as places where children can learn values in order to sever the cycle of violence. On the other hand, the schools also have the potential to maintain and reinforce the culture of violence. This study is based on the premise that many children in South Africa have been subjected or affected by a number of violent crimes. It is, therefore, assumed that these children would have been exposed to traumatic events. Lewis (1999) claims that in South Africa, violence can be viewed as one of the chief causes of trauma in children.

2.3.4 Existing Efforts in Preventing Violence in Schools

Schooling has a critical function in the socialisation of children and it is crucial that schools offer a safe environment in which learning and growth are enabled. What is apparent is that South African schools have developed into unsafe places for a substantial number of learners. The development of suitable responses to the problem of violence has proved to be a big challenge for the DoE and society at large. Measures that have been adopted thus far include things like school fencing, use of video cameras, employing of security guards, conflict-resolution and gang-prevention programmes and in some areas 'school safety' interventions that involve the DoE, other government departments and the communities in which the schools are situated. It is conceivably still premature to judge the accomplishment of most of these initiatives.

In the National Crime Prevention Strategy, school safety, violence prevention and victim empowerment are listed as core strategic programmes that are school-based. Similarly, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk, the National Programme of

Action, and the Protocol on Child Abuse and Neglect have all identified the school as a key site for early assessment of children who are at risk. The Department of Education has responded with a 'No Crime in Schools' call as a central theme in its Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLTS) campaign and with the national launch of its Safe Schools Project. Over the years government and non-governmental organisations have initiated a number of programmes throughout the country in an attempt to promote safer school environments. This study will briefly look at the Safe Schools project which is perhaps the most notable and widespread of all interventions to curb violence in schools.

The core idea behind the Safe Schools model is to promote the creation of schools in which the students are at the most minimum possible risk of bodily, emotional and psychological harm.

> Recognising that crime and violent behaviour are products of societal problems, it logically followed that safety in schools could not be the schools' private responsibility, but that communities needed to get involved as well. Hence the CSVR believes that any intervention processes should consider internal mechanisms of response while encouraging school-community partnerships. The Safe Schools project built upon what used to be called Children and Violence Intervention Project (CVIP), which prioritized trauma management with learners who had witnessed or experienced violence during the political transition in the country. (www.Unisa Online - safe schools programme.htm, accessed 9 January, 2009)

The Centre for Peace Action's safe schools notion which has successfully been implemented in the U.S.A. and Canada has been modified to address issues within the South African context. Its philosophy is based on the idea of collective ownership, responsibility and self-reliance in the process of reducing the occurrence and prevalence of violence and unintentional injury within defined communities. It argues for the generation of diverse pockets of health and safety that ultimately overlap to form safe communities (www.Unisa Online - safe schools programme.htm, accessed 9 January, 2009). The Safe Schools project is therefore a much needed step in moving towards safe schools and safe communities.

The project involves surveillance/monitoring of violence and injury at schools;

> developing behaviour/conduct/discipline codes; staff/learner training and evaluation; learner leadership and responsibility; parental participation; after-school safety activities; safety promotion/crisis management teams; broader community involvement; and environmental changes to the school to prevent and reduce violence and injury. (www.Unisa Online - safe schools programme.htm, accessed 9 January, 2009)

Safe Schools pilot projects were initiated in all the provinces at the beginning of 2007. However, there are many incidences of crime and violence still occurring, despite the Safe Schools Programme (Medved, 2007). Although efforts to address violence in schools by the Department of Education are laudable, they are still yielding few results. Besides the Safe Schools Programme there are a number of other initiatives that have been conceived to help curb the violence in South African schools. It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse each initiative in detail suffice to say that one common feature about these endeavors is that they are structured in such a way as to restore, rehabilitate and reintegrate essential life skills in the lives of young people. In the wake of much-publicised violence in South African schools, it is apparent that the existing approaches to addressing school-based violence are not being effective. This research will draw from these initiatives and wishes to add to available research and literature on bringing to an end the problem of school-based violence.

2.4 South African Education System

2.4.1 A Legacy of Apartheid

One of the most effective instruments of subjugation during the apartheid era was the education system. The imposition of the 'Bantu' Education system had a devastating impact on the black community in South Africa and its effects are still lingering up to today (O'Brien, 1998). Prior to 1990, the then ruling party, the National Party, was the sole participant in educational policy formulation. The National Party's educational policies were aimed at reinforcing apartheid ideology. In 1994 apartheid came to an end with the ascent to power of the African National Congress (ANC) as the first democratically elected post-apartheid Government in South Africa. According to Marneweck (2004), the new South African government inherited an educational legacy that was characterised by the contestation of authority emerging over years of opposition

to apartheid. Integrated in this legacy was a vehement rejection of 'Bantu' Education and its fundamental pedagogies.

This section of chapter two was aimed at merely highlighting the kind of Education system that was in effect prior to 1994 which stirred the need for change, leading to the introduction of the OBE system through the implementation of C2005. Analysing the transformation of the South African education system from the apartheid era to the introduction of OBE is beyond the scope of this study. A number of scholars have focused their attention on the need for transformation in educational policies a few years prior to the end of apartheid. These include Unterhalter et al (1991), Hartshorne (1992) and Jansen (1999) who make a comprehensive analysis of the complex and contested origins of OBE in South Africa from 1990 to 1996. The next section of this study looks at the OBE system of education which is the existing system in South African schools today. Hence it is of more significance to this study.

2.4.2 Introduction of Outcomes Based Education

> In 1996 the newly formed National Department of Education produced a key document outlining its proposals for a national curriculum for schools in line with the Constitution and the White Paper. This document, A Lifelong Learning Framework for Further Education and Training in South Africa, saw a particular version of the pedagogy of OBE, officially named 'Curriculum 2005', entrenched in curriculum policy. (Marneweck, 2004; 23)

Adoption of the South African Schools Act in 1997 was followed by the introduction of a new curriculum framework, OBE (Chisholm, et. al, 2000). The new curriculum aimed at redressing the imbalance caused by the apartheid education and training system whose tenets had been based on racial segregation. Deriving its conceptual framework from American educationalist William Spady's model of OBE, the South African OBE system is modeled on similar systems in Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Scotland.
The South African OBE framework owes its existence to the "left wing" educational policy deliberations of the early 90's period. These leftist organisations, such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), non-governmental organisations, liberal educational institutions, and a range of other community, civic and political

organisations challenged the prevailing apartheid educational models and discussed alternative educational models to replace the apartheid education system.

Marneweck (2004) argues that while the South African Constitution set the broad framework for social and political change, it was the initial post-apartheid White Paper on Education and Training of 1995 that clarified this change with regards to education. The document set out to establish a curriculum that placed learners at the centre of the learning process. It emphasised the need for the participation of communities and other stake holders in the education of children. It also focused on the need to develop equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. C2005 and OBE emerged out of the need to come up with a relevant curriculum for a new South Africa (Mdaka, 2006).

The South African model of OBE was also envisaged in terms of its possible contribution in redressing the poor educational achievements of the majority of South African learners and creating an enabling environment for skills development for the bulk of workers who previously had been denied such opportunities during the apartheid era. Primary deliberations on the most suitable educational models for a democratic South Africa were a result of diverse and politically charged educational backgrounds such as mastery learning, competency based education, life-long learning, education for life, peoples' education among others (Jansen, 1997; Chisholm, et al. 2000).

2.4.3 Basic Tenets of OBE

The South African model of OBE curriculum focuses on outcomes, which can be defined as the results of learning or what learners know and can do at the end of their learning experience (Mdaka, 2006).

> OBE is defined as a learner-centered approach and in it the emphasis is on what the learner wants to achieve and on what the learner should be able to know, to understand, to do and to become. This new curriculum involves a shift to curriculum design by outcomes, skills and thinking from curriculum design by objectives, content and examinations linked to Universities. Outcomes of this new curriculum focus on enabling learners to develop critical thinking powers and problem-solving abilities, and not on subjects that linked to tertiary institutions.
>
> (Northern Province Department of Education, quoted in Mdaka, 2006; 14)

The design process within the OBE curriculum starts with the intended results of learning in terms of knowledge, skills and values rather than a prescription of content to be learnt. These outcomes are explicitly stated and these statements guide the process of teaching and learning. Evaluation of learning is based on the assessment criteria that are related to the specific outcomes. The criteria indicate the observable processes and products of learning, simultaneously serving as culminating demonstrations of learning achievements (Department of Education, 1996; 1994; Spady & Marshall, 1991). On paper OBE presented a major paradigm shift from a content-based, authoritarian, teacher-centered approach to an outcomes-based, progressive, learner-centered approach, which integrated education with training (Cross et al, 2002).

The focus on outcomes is meant to encourage the development of flexible and relevant learning programmes. OBE outcomes can be divided into two broad and distinct categories, namely, critical cross-field outcomes and specific outcomes. Critical outcomes express the intended results of the education and training system in a broad sense while the specific outcomes express the more immediate and context-specific results of the learning process (Department of Education, 1996; Chisholm, et al, 2000). Through specification of broad nationally-based outcomes, the South African OBE curriculum framework aimed, to align the new curriculum goals with the social project of the transformation of society and overturn the legacy of the apartheid political and schooling system (Muller, 2000).

The South African model of OBE is based on eight Learning Areas that were created by means of amalgamating groups of related knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes from subject disciplines of the 'old traditional' curriculum. The eight learning areas are Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, Life Orientation, Economic and Management Sciences, and Technology (Department of Education, 2002). Arts and Culture, Life Orientation as well as Technology, are completely new areas of study. There are specific expected outcomes for each of the Learning Areas. These outcomes are not designed to be separate entities, rather, they are

meant to correlate across all Learning Areas. In addition, twelve critical outcomes were also developed for all education and training and were aimed at the application of knowledge, skills and understanding. These outcomes include, being able to think and to solve problems, to collect, organise and analyse information, to work in a group as well as independently, to communicate effectively, and to make responsible decisions (DoE, 1996). There are three defined levels of learning within the policy framework for the compulsory schooling phase known as the General Education and Training Band (GET). The first level is named the Foundation Phase and runs from Grade 0 to the end of Grade 3. The Intermediate Phase is the second level and includes Grade 4 to Grade 6. The third level runs from Grade 7 to Grade 9 and is known as the Senior Phase. Another non-compulsory educational level, namely the Further Education and Training Band (FET) is defined to accommodate those learners from Grade 10 to Grade 12 who wish to continue on to tertiary educational institutions in the future.

Spady (1994) states that OBE should be viewed as a pedagogical technique that allows for every student to be successful at the end of his/ her educational experience. This is because learners are not assessed on what they should be able to do at that age or in a specific grade, but rather against their own ability. In Spady's concept of OBE, outcomes are clear, observable demonstrations of student learning that occur after a significant set of learning experiences. They are not values, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, activities, assignments, goals, scores, grades, or averages. The National DoE Policy (1997) further suggests that if a learner is not meeting the expected outcomes or assessment criteria that the teacher should design more programs, which will enable the learner to meet the assessment criteria. Therefore, OBE is based on assessing what the learner can do as well as facilitating learning in an environment where cognitive skills go much deeper than simply choosing the correct answer (Spady, 1994).

2.4.4 OBE Challenges

The implementation of OBE encountered a number of structural problems. The problems included, lack of expertise on the curriculum by the master trainers, usage of inappropriate training models, lack of sufficient training time, and narrow focus of

training programmes based on defining new terminologies rather than on the substantial aspects of curriculum implementation (Mdaka, 2006). Further, OBE was hastily packaged, teachers were inadequately trained and not familiar with the theoretical concepts underpinning OBE and the international advisers contracted by the DoE lacked an understanding of the South African context. The lack of training for the school managers within the OBE model added to the problems that teachers experienced in the implementation process. There was also poor coordination between curriculum development, teacher development and learning materials (Potenza & Monyokolo in Mdaka, 2006).

Marneweck (2004) argues that, the structural complexity of OBE and the new requirements associated with it were extremely complicated for educators to absorb into their existing understanding of teaching practice. For example, the 'traditional' school subjects were changed and clustered into eight new learning areas in an attempt to make the new curriculum more holistic and integrative than its predecessor. Each of the new learning areas had its own set of outcomes that indicated the knowledge, attitudes and understanding that learners were expected to display in that particular learning area. This made a total of sixty-six specific outcomes. Each outcome was attached to slightly more detailed range statements. Assessment criteria and performance indicators were also finalised across the eight learning areas. The specific outcomes were anything but 'specific', and were open to high degrees of confusion and misuse in terms of how they were interpreted. In the Languages, Literacy and Communication learning area, one of the outcomes stated that learners would, "make and negotiate meaning and understanding" (DoE, 1996; 23). In Life Orientation, a specific outcome was phrased that learners will, "understand and accept themselves as unique and worthwhile human beings" (DoE, 1996; 222). "Any real notions of content and conceptual processes were missing from these and most of the other specific outcomes" (Marneweck, 2004; 30).

One of the many challenges facing the Department of Education was how to support and train teachers so that they would be in a position to play their part in the broader reformation of the education system, particularly in the implementation of OBE. The

introduction of OBE meant that many educators were suddenly required to teach new learning areas, despite having little or no training in the specific areas. New learning areas such as Life Orientation (LO), Economic Management Sciences (EMS) and Arts and Culture (A&C) were introduced and most educators had no formal training in these learning areas. OBE placed particular demands on teachers as key agents in educational change as they were now required to individualise instruction, plan remediation and enrichment, administer diagnostic assessment, keep extensive records, and select appropriate content, come up with teaching methods, resources and organisational procedures. The demands were overwhelming on the teacher who had not been accustomed to all these responsibilities (Mdaka, 2006).

OBE is also swamped with irregularities. Nearly all classes of activities with almost nominal effort have the potential to be subsumed under one or more outcome statements. As a result the outcomes are generally so vague that almost anything the child does can be manipulated to suit one or other outcome (Berlach, 2004; 3). Jansen (1998) echoes Berlach's conclusion on the unpredictability of attaining outcomes when he states that not only is the language of OBE often too complex, confusing and often contradictory but that individual understanding of terminology leaves much room for misinterpretation. Each specific outcome has three or four 'assessment criteria' against which a learner is assessed to have achieved an outcome. The assessment criteria are explained and detailed in terms of what and how much learning constitutes an acceptable level of achievement of an outcome, through the 'performance indicators'. The performance indicators describe the quality of achievement of a learning outcome, in terms of whether a learner had surpassed the achievement of an outcome, achieved the outcome, partially achieved the outcome, or not yet achieved the specified outcome (Chisholm et al. 2000).

Concerns were also raised regarding OBE's borrowing of Western educational policies without due consideration, consultation or research being given to adaptability and applicability to South African context (Jansen, 1998). Educational systems are context specific and socio-culturally based. OBE was taken out of its original well-resourced, Western world context and placed in an under-resourced setting with a large contingent

of under-qualified teachers (Crossley & Watson, 2003). Mdaka (2006) notes that further to these challenges, learning support materials were not evenly available to all the schools and in most cases their quality was questionable. Lack of basic resources and basic infrastructure in the majority of schools placed serious limitations on the effective use of the learning materials while the majority of teachers lack the skill, time, and the resources to develop their own materials. This study intends to offer one learner centered approach for the implementation of OBE.

As a result of the challenges noted above, the curriculum faced enormous criticism in the first three years of its implementation. Mdaka (2006) notes that, in the classrooms, educators have indeed been struggling to make sense of the often vague, highly complex, and overly academic system of curriculum and its application. Byers (2007) also writes that research completed by Jansen (1998), Malan (2000) and Berlach (2004) shows that in the South African context, it is not the principle of OBE that is problematic but its implementation. These and other more complex problems with regard to the implementation of the new, post-apartheid, curriculum framework led to the appointment, by government, of a committee to review the Outcomes Based Education curriculum.

2.4.5 The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)

The curriculum review committee set by government prepared a report that proposed a revised and streamlined national curriculum statement, within the confines of broad outcomes based curriculum framework. In accordance with the recommendations C2005 was revised into the RNCS. An attempt was made at simplifying OBE terminology and streamlining content to remain with vital learning outcomes and assessment standards. Subsequent to the revision of the original policy as there was a reduction of the number of outcomes while specifying more clearly the critical outcomes, specific outcomes, assessment criteria, and performance indicators for every level of schooling.

According to Dix-Peek (2007), the RNCS argues that it takes all of the different components of the individual into account when attempting to educate each learner. It states that one of the goals of the statement is to promote the ‘holistic development of

learners', and continues by contending that the holistic development of the learner includes the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of the child. However, there is very little guidance provided in the RNCS or teacher training programmes with regards to how one should take the 'holistic development of learners' into consideration. Moreover, it does not illustrate how the teacher is able to engage with the social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of a learner within the classroom context. For this reason, this research focuses on whether it is feasible for educators to take the 'complete child' into account, with particular reference to the emotional dimension of the learner through the use of dramatic play. This is in line with bridging the gap between OBE theorising and classroom implementation. The research also focuses on whether educators in schools feel adequately prepared to engage with learners emotions. The study also looks at the implications of 'engaging with emotions' and 'holistic learning' in terms of relationships and the role of the teacher and that of the learner in the classroom. What methods will be most effective in producing learners who are able to '…make informed, morally responsible and accountable decisions about their health and the environment… while playing an active and productive role in the economy and society' (DoE, 2002; 3).

The dramatic changes in the curriculum have created difficult challenges for those working in the field. Shifts in philosophy, methodology and curriculum have led to transformations at all levels in the education system. OBE, C2005 and RNCS were necessary policy changes, however, educators were left with the ambitious task of understanding and translating these policy changes into classroom practices on their own.

2.5 Conclusion

Considerable shifts have taken place in South Africa over the last decade and these transformations have had a phenomenal impact on the school system. The new curriculum was conceived as a means to develop the full potential of the learner. Consequently, the new system of education endeavors to grow learner potential by adopting an inclusive approach that stipulates that all learners, despite capability levels, should reach a set minimum standard of competence (RNCS, 2001).

The new role of the educator is to change from being an instructor who transmits knowledge to that of a facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to guide the learner through the learning experience, challenge the learner to think differently and ensure that the learner has adequately grasped the important concepts. OBE was intended to replace the teacher-centered method of teaching by encouraging children to become actively involved in the learning process, to gain knowledge as well as skills, and to think independently and creatively (DoE, 1998).

OBE is based on outcomes, these outcomes range from health, social, personal and physical development to a focus on preparing learners for the world of work. The specifications of the new curriculum are laudable, at least on paper. The reality is however far different. This chapter noted the number of challenges associated with the implementation of the OBE system of education in South Africa. It is this study's contention that many methods currently employed in schools do not actively challenge learners' attitudes and values. Neither do they essentially result in change of behaviour and perceptions with regards to the perpetration of violence. OBE has failed to contain and process the transformation in education and child development that it aimed at achieving. This is with regards to failing to shield learners from societal harms and also failing to foster an educational curriculum that creates 'well rounded' citizens.

Coupled with the problems associated with the curriculum is the escalation of violence in schools and in the larger community. Crime and violence 'contaminates' the school environment and jeopardises the learning process. There can be severe long-standing physical, emotional and psychological implications for both teachers and pupils including, distress, reduced self-esteem, risk of depression and suicide, reduced school attendance, impaired concentration, fear and a diminished ability to learn (WHO, 1997). Hence the need to focus the imparting education through means that not only equip the child with a healthy level of self esteem but also prepares him to deal with problematic situations and develop into an endowed social being.

With the increase and intensification of violent behavior at various levels in South African schools, the need to curb the violence and conflict resolution has become more crucial than ever. Outside of the family, schools are by far the most influential institutions shaping children's lives. Over the years the family structure has been disintegrating due to socio-economic challenges. The school has since emerged as the most definitive space for children to develop, acquire skills and learn socially. In the South African setting the child is not adequately afforded this alternative since he is surrounded by violence both at school and at home. It is perhaps much more pragmatic to attempt to provide for a child's rehabilitation and building of self esteem and self confidence at school than engaging with the maze of complexities that make up South African homes and families today. Provision of an environment conducive to learning is one of the necessary pre-requisites and important roles that an educator can play in children's lives. Creating a safe and structured context to help children develop emotionally is undoubtedly within the educator's range of activity. The basic premise of this study is that of crisis prevention, it argues that while crises can never be eradicated, their effects can be softened considerably by effective intervention, moderating their effects.

Many educators are skilled at helping learners acquire knowledge and skills, but they struggle to find teaching methods that can influence and challenge learners' attitudes and values. Hence much of the attitudes and values that primary school children would end up possessing are acquired from peers and community with little regulation on their constructiveness. This research argues for the use of play as an interactive pedagogical and therapeutic tool to help achieve the aims and stated outcomes of the OBE system of education. Play has been proved to be effective in creatively solving problems, facilitating the internalisation of knowledge and interpersonal skills. It has also been shown to serve developmental purposes enabling personal growth and enhancing social well being (Moyles, 1994; Cohen, 1987; Jackson and Todd, 1948; Slade, 1954; Landreth et al, 1996; Shaffer and O'Connor, 1983). These are the key projected outcomes of the OBE system.

Children need to be exposed to educational experiences intended to make them more

stress and trauma resilient. Children need to be made conscious of their own emotions and feelings and those of others around them so that they can be in touch with their feelings and needs. They need to have access to feasible support systems, to acquire problem solving techniques and make decisions. It is the contention of this study that the use of play as a pedagogical and therapeutic tool has the potential of enabling the learner to achieve the above noted qualities. The next chapter of this study analyses the concept of play in the context of its use in an educational setting.

CHAPTER 3 **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PLAY AND LEARNING**

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter makes an in depth analysis of the concept of play and elucidates the research, theoretical and practical underpinnings that govern it. It also evaluates the therapeutic and cognitive potential of play by linking it to concepts and theories on psychoanalysis, multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence. This analysis will be conducted through an examination and interrogation of available literature.

The first section of this study will examine theories on play, education and learning with a special focus on theories that relate to play as a cognitive and therapeutic process within an educational context. Many attempts have been made by practitioners and researchers to arrive at a comprehensive and universal definition of play, hence, the next part of the chapter will highlight some of the attempts by scholars to come up with a comprehensive and generalised definition of play. This will be followed by a look at the types of play activity that are characteristic of a classroom setting. In this analysis prominence will be placed on dramatic play since the study is specifically looking at the educational and therapeutic role of dramatic play in the classroom. Chapter 3 concludes by looking at some characteristic features of dramatic play that render it useful in an educational context.

3.2 Overview of Play Theories

Ideas and theories on play and its value in education have been expressed by scholars such as Plato as early as the 360BC. Over the years numerous theories have been postulated to explain the cognitive and therapeutic characteristics and functions of play. Some theories on education although not directly conceived with play in mind, are also applicable to play studies, especially within a learning context. Gilmore (1966) divides play theories into two groups. The first group is made up mainly of early theories that focus on the precursors of play and inferences about its purposes. These have been labeled by Gilmore as 'classical theories'. These theories range from , the surplus energy theory (Schiller, 1873; Spencer, 1875), the relaxation theory (Lazarus, 1883; Patrick

1916), the pre-exercise theory (Groos, 1898; 1901), recapitulation theory (Wundt, 1913), the growth theories (Appleton, 1919) to the ego expanding theories (Lange, 1902; Claparde, 1911).

The other group of theories is made up of what Gilmore (1966) calls 'newer and dynamic' theories and is concerned with the specific form play assumes. These include, Infantile Dynamics, Freud's (1908) cathartic theory, psychoanalytic theory (Buhler, 1930; Freud, 1937), cognitive theory (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1962; 1978; Bruner, 1966), amongst others. Of interest are also the theories and ideas on play by Huizinga (1955), Gadamer (1975), Bateson (1976), Turner (1983), Handelman (1990), Sutton Smith (1997, 2002), Cook (1972), Slade (1954) and Way (1967). Making a comparative analysis of the theories or even analysing each of them in detail is beyond the scope of this study. This paper will briefly look at the cognitive theories, the psychoanalytic theories and theories on dramatic play since these have a direct bearing on the use of play as a learning and therapeutic tool in an educational context. This study will also analyse the theories of multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence and their relevance to the use of dramatic play as a learning medium.

3.2.1 Play as Child Drama

The practical use of play, creativity and the imagination to teach pupils date back to early practitioners and theorists such as Froebel (1887) and Montessori (1910). Froebel saw learning as a holistic process, involving the learner and his/her environment. He proposed that child development can only be achieved through free play, first hand experience, self chosen activities and intrinsic motivation (Wood and Attfield; 2005). Montessori's pragmatic curriculum design involved the provision of life sized environments in which children could explore, experiment and experience real life skills with no intervention from adults. The skills learnt in this make believe environment were meant to be transferrable to real life.

The revolutionary ideas of Froebel and Montessori have influenced much of the thinking and practice in childhood education. There are two notable theorists who have paid

specific focus on the relationship between play and drama with an emphasis on their use in education. These are Slade (1954) and Cook (quoted in Courtney, 1968).

The theories and practice of Slade (1954) emphasise the symbiotic relationship between play and drama. For him, drama emerges from play, play develops into drama and the two are inseparable. Children's play is a form of drama and a whole range of positive attributes emerge from indulging in it. He focuses attention on the role that play assumes in the learning, physical development, speech development, therapy and overall development of a child. Slade argues that,

> Some child observers would make a distinction between Realistic Play and Imaginative Play. But, in fact Play is so fluid, containing at any moment experiences of everyday outward life and of imaginative inner life, that it is debatable whether the one should be judged as a different activity from the other. (1954: 29)

Slade goes on to say that the only true distinction that needs to be leveled on play is between personal play and projected play. According to him personal play is 'obviously Drama; the whole person or self is used. It is typified by characterisation and movement' (1954, 29). Slade's personal play is physical in nature and is characterised by noise and exertion. The physical activities he calls 'forms of acting'. These forms of acting are manifested through imitation and imagination and result in personal attributes such as good leadership skills and personal control. Slade goes on to argue that it is through personal play that children discover and evolve social obligations and graces. On the other hand projected play is 'drama too; The whole mind is used, but the body not so fully.... The main action takes place outside the body, and the whole is characterised by extreme mental absorption' (1954: 29-30). Projected play is intellectual in outlook and has a tendency towards stillness. Projected play and personal play occur concurrently in an individual.

Children can only discover their 'personal rhythm and experience' within their society through interaction and involvement in spontaneous dramatic play (Slade, 1954: 30). He talks of mastering through trying out, which enables the gaining of experience, resulting

in more interest and enjoyment of that form of play as an activity. Child drama, according to Slade, can be intentionally used as a form of therapy. He believed that feelings, emotions and difficulties could be faced through 'confessing' them in the activity of dramatic play. He noted that play could be used in psychology and psychotherapy within the framework of Freud's 'reductive techniques', occupational therapy, Jung's system of 'analytical psychology' (1954, 118). Slade also argues for the use of these techniques in an educational setting when he says that, 'Although these are highly specialised fields they are not unconnected with ordinary schools and schooling' (1954, 119).

This study aligns itself with Slade's idea that the introduction of play as a therapeutic device in school should be as a preventative measure. Slade alludes to this when he states that, 'One of the main reasons for developing Child Drama in schools generally is not actually a therapeutic one, but the even more constructive one of prevention' (1954, 119). He goes on to say that this prevention is achieved through a balancing process, discovery of personal rhythm and by dramatic play.

Way (1967) writes about the use of drama as a way of teaching and learning dramatic literature. He believed that play was a natural medium of study of young people. Way argued that it was only through play and acting out that real understanding can be achieved. His method was founded on three principles;

> 1. Proficiency and learning come not from reading and listening but from action, from doing, and from experience.
> 2. Good work is more often a result of spontaneous effort and free interest than of compulsion and forced application.
> 3. The natural means of study in youth is play (Way quoted in Courtney, 1968: 45).

Way's ideas enabled students to spontaneously act out play scripts before their colleagues. He was not concerned about acting skills and the types of acting characteristic of the theatre, but by letting students develop their own 'expressive abilities ' in an unconfined environment. The ideas of Way and Slade though appearing very romantic,

have influenced trends in teaching and learning and the educational use of play and drama throughout the world.

It is interesting to note that a number of practitioners and theorists on play, conceptualise their ideas in the context of play as both a cognitive and psychological need in child development (see the work of Piaget, 1962; Erikson, 1963; Vygotsky, 1978; Goleman, 1995). As a result most theories on children's play straddle the fields of cognition, psychology and child development. Hence, although placing emphasis in one field most of the theories tend to apply to the other two fields.

3.2.2 Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Piaget's (1962) theory of cognitive development is based on the need to understand and establish the relationship between biology and cognitive development. He placed emphasis on action and 'self directed' problem solving at the heart of child learning and development (Wood and Attfield, 2005). By acting out the world through play children are better able to understand and make meaning of their own lives, hence are able to take better control of it. Although there are fundamental differences between a child's self initiated make- believe play and dramatic playing in the classroom, the skills and attitudes required in classroom dramatic play are established in child initiated fantasy play. It is also the contention of this research that in a simulated (make believe) world of dramatic play, learners are presented with real life problems in a 'fail safe' environment. The safe environment allows them to try out solutions that they can then apply if such a problem arises in a real life situation.

Piaget came up with a series of age related transitional stages in play development in relation to a child's physical, mental and intellectual development. Although Piaget's ideas on age related stages of play development have been challenged (Smilansky, 1990; Meadows, 1993), what is important for this study is that Piaget links these age stages to the readiness to learn. The argument being that if an educator is to introduce concepts or issues that are far ahead of a learners developmental age stage, learning and development

is not facilitated. Rather, in Piaget's view such an intervention could inhibit the child from learning the same issue by himself.

3.2.3 Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

Whereas Piaget argues that development leads to learning, Vygotsky inversely believed that it is learning that leads to development. Piaget does not place any emphasis on the role of the adult in the development of a child through play and it is in this light that Vygotsky's ideas are of value to this study. Vygotsky (1978) states that adults play a very important part in children's learning. He postulated the concept of the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD). This concept argues that the child may have developed a certain level of competency in a skill or ability which can be performed independently and without assistance, this is termed 'actual development level'. If then assisted by an adult, this ability or skill can be stretched to an extent where something beyond the 'actual development level' can be attempted. Vygotsky terms this, the 'level of potential development'. The gap between the 'actual development level' and the 'level of potential development' is the ZPD. This is "the area of development which the child can cope with and understand with adult help or the help of their peers" (Smith in Moyles, 1994; 24).

The idea of ZPD can be used through play to enhance learning in a classroom situation. The educator can start by initiating dramatic play in the classroom to assess the learners' current understanding on the subject matter (actual development level). Then use this as a basis to plan and structure subsequent lessons to bridge the gap between learners' understanding and curriculum expectations on outcomes (level of potential development). Vygotsky's ideas are of relevance for educators in assessing how they can most effectively enhance and support learners play, progression and development. Contemporary research and theorizing in education have shifted from the broad-scale theories towards more detailed descriptions of the characteristics, patterns and processes on how individuals acquire knowledge. The next section of this study analyses one such theory.

3.2.4 Multiple Intelligences Theory

Psychometric and behaviorist theories view intelligence as a single entity that results from a single factor and is inherited. In such a view, children are born 'empty vessels' and can be mentored to learn anything, provided the teaching method is appropriate. Today, research has proved just the opposite. Studies have shown that there are a whole host of intelligences, relatively independent of each other and that each form of intelligence has its own strengths and limitations and that the mind of a new born child is far from being blank (Gardner 1993). Having realised that 'traditional' definitions of intelligence namely, Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is too narrow to fully explain cognitive ability and performance outcomes, Gardner (1983) came up with the idea of multiple intelligences.

Gardner's idea is composed of 'interpersonal intelligence' and 'intrapersonal intelligence'. Whereas interpersonal intelligence is the capacity to understand the intentions, drive and needs of other people, intrapersonal intelligence is the aptitude to be aware of oneself, to appreciate one's emotions, uncertainties and motivations. Gardner (1993) divides intelligences into linguistic, mathematical-logic, spatial capacity, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal skills and intra-psychic capacity. The linguistic involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically, and language as a means to remember information. The mathematical-logic is made up of capacity to analyse problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Gardner's conceptions, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

Musical intelligence involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the ability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Gardner views mental and physical activities as inter

related. Spatial intelligence involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas. According to Gardner, these intelligences are amoral, thus, they can be put to either constructive or destructive use.

Gardner's work in the area of multiple intelligences has had a profound impact on thinking and practice in teaching and learning. His ideas challenge school and society's focus on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. Theory of multiple intelligences resonates with teachers' everyday classroom experience, in its specification that, students think and learn in many different ways. In addition it presents educators with a theoretical outline for organising and reflecting on learning practices and curriculum evaluation. In turn, this also challenges educators to come up with classroom interactions that are geared towards a wide range of learner needs.

While there are a number of significant questions and debates around Gardner's concept of multiple intelligences, it still has an undeniable value in education. It helps educators question their work and encourage them to look beyond the narrow confines of the dominant discourses of skilling, curriculum, and testing. The theory of multiple intelligences suggests key transformations for the classroom. Gardner's ideas also propose that teachers be trained to interact with their students in a wide variety of ways. The theory of multiple intelligences develops the educator's horizon of available pedagogical methods that go beyond the traditional linguistic and logical methods used in most schools. This research argues that the use of play in the classroom enables the teacher and learner to discover learner's form of intelligence. This would then inform the teacher when structuring her lessons to be inclusive of all learners. Moreover, play enhances one's form of intelligence(s) through the provision of space to use it.

The concept of multiple intelligences is closely related to the theory of emotional intelligence. The early Emotional Intelligence theory was initially developed during the 1970's and 80's by the work and writings of Gardner, Salovey and Mayer.

3.2.5 Emotional Intelligence Theory

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been defined as the ability to perceive and integrate

emotion to facilitate thought. It also involves the understanding of emotions, and their regulation to promote personal growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). There are three main models of EI. The first one is an ability model which was proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and views EI as a pure form of mental ability and a cognitive ability. The second model was put forward by Bar-On (1997) and regards EI as a mixed intelligence made up of the interplay of cognitive and personality traits and their application to personal well being. The third model also regards EI as a mixed intelligence comprising of cognitive and personality aspects. It differs to Bar-On's model in that its main concentration is on how cognitive and personality factors determine achievement. It focuses on the integration of an individual's character, abilities and personality and how these can be applied to performance in a set environment. This particular model was suggested by Goleman (1995; 2001). It was with the publication of Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence* in 1995 that the EI behavioral model became prominent.

Like MI, EI was conceived out of a realisation that the traditional measure of intelligence, IQ is too narrow and does not take into consideration situational factors such as, personal traits, environment and/or cultural setting when envisaging achievement. The argument being that IQ does not explain human intelligence in its entirety. The EI model argues that, in addition to IQ there are other essential behavioral and character elements that come into play in learning and skills acquisition. It is based on a premise that to be successful in life, one requires the effective consciousness, control and management of one's own emotions, and those of people around one. Goleman's ideas are based on five main domains of EI. These are, knowing your emotions, managing your own emotions, motivating yourself, recognizing and understanding other people's emotions and managing the emotions of others.

Although EI has been extensively researched in the workplace little has been done in relation to the role it can play in the education arena. This study aims at looking at the possibility of such an endeavor. Some of the positive outcomes attributed to EI would merge well with the expected outcomes of schooling, especially in the light of a holistic kind of learning as advocated by the RNCS. EI is said to lead to creative thinking,

confidence, curiosity, intentionality, self awareness and self control, capacity to communicate and cooperativeness (Goleman, 1995). It is also associated with social awareness, social networks, relationship management and conflict management. It is interesting to note that the attributes of EI are similar to the expected outcomes of employing dramatic play as a teaching tool. Dramatic play possesses numerous opportunities in which to integrate an understanding of EI. It allows for the identification of emotions, their expression and management. It also allows for reflective and interpersonal communication. As Moyles notes, 'Play helps the participants build confidence in themselves and their abilities and, in social situations, helps them to judge the many variables within social interactions and gain empathy with others' (1989; 8).

Despite strides in the construct of EI it is still surrounded by great controversy as to its boundaries and how to measure it. Such debate is however beyond the scope of this study. One should also note that just like in play, EI is not value neutral, for someone with great emphatic insight might use it to inspire colleagues or to exploit them. This study is of the perception that traditional methods of teaching and learning are not geared towards developing EI competencies because of their focus on cognition and conformity rather than individual capacity development. Rodgers (1951) argues that for learning to take place a supportive emotional tone should be set up. This implies that learners should feel safe enough to voice their opinions and take risks without fear. In a classroom situation this is where dramatic play becomes essential. It creates symbolic worlds which afford the learner a safe environment in which to try out their opinions without fear of the results of failure since they would be protected within the safety of the play frame.

The next section of this chapter focuses on the theory of psychoanalysis. Courtney (1968) argues that dramatic play is a reflection of the child's psychological make up hence to understand it one needs to approach psychoanalysis. Brand (1979) also notes that as early as 1900 William James introduced psychology to education in the form of a teacher handbook. The field emerging as developmental psychology was another notable predecessor of school involvement with pupils' psychological health. Luminary theories in child psychology, psychometrics and psychoanalysis laid important groundwork for

according separate and special status to the importance of play in child study. This study is aimed at analysing the therapeutic and cognitive value on play in a classroom set up. Hence the need to explore theories on the psychological impact of play on children to better understand how play can be used as a therapeutic tool.

3.2.6 Psychoanalytic Theories

Psychoanalysis can be traced back to Freud (1922) who believed that dramatic play was an attempt by 'the ego to relate the id to reality' (Courtney, 1968: 78). Freud argued that through play we can understand one's repressed emotions and feeling and that play serves several functions in developing social and emotional life skills. Research, (Creasey, Jarvis, and Berk, 1998; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978) indicate that play with others gives children the opportunity to match their behavior with others and to take into account viewpoints that differ from their own. Piaget (1962) argues that play provides opportunities for children to learn social skills; manage their emotions, learn self-control, and share power, space, and ideas with others. At all levels of development, play enables children to feel comfortable and in control of their feelings. This is achieved through allowing the expression of unacceptable feelings in acceptable ways and providing the opportunity to work through conflicting feelings. This paper is not going to analyse psychoanalytic theories in detail but allude to their impact on developments in the use of dramatic play in children's education and development.

Theories on play, focusing on the value of play for emotional development gave rise to the use of play in psychotherapy. This was pioneered by the Austrian psychoanalyst Klein (1932) through developing the concept of Play Therapy. Play Therapy is a highly specialised counseling process involving the use of play, puppetry, storytelling, games, role play, toys, drawings and other devices to help a child express and address his emotions, thoughts, wishes and needs. It can either be directive Play Therapy, the therapist assuming responsibility for guidance and interpretation, or non directive Play Therapy, leaving responsibility and direction to the child. According to Axline,

> Play therapy is based on the premise that play is the child's natural medium of self expression. It is an opportunity given to a child to "play out" his feelings and problems just as, in certain types of adult therapy, an individual "talks out" his difficulties. (1947; 9)

The structured therapy approach is based on a psychoanalytic framework and a belief in the cathartic effect of play (Schaefer and O'Connor, 1983). It relies on the active role of the therapist in determining the course and focus of the therapy session/s. This form of therapy is based on the relationship that develops between the child and the therapist and how the child is compelled to use this relationship to overcome whatever psychological disorders that will be ailing him. This form of therapy is essential with children who have problems with depression, withdrawal trauma and post traumatic stress. The trusting relationship they form with the therapist has the probability of assisting in bringing them out of their 'shells', to bring out their problems, to express blocked emotions and be able to face them with the assistance of someone they trust (Klein, 1955; Freud, 1946, 1965; Moustakas, 1959). Play also acts as a mirror to a child's subconscious as such it can be used as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool.

> Rogers (1951) is of the view that the efficacy of the 'person centered approach' in play therapy could be extrapolated to educational settings for its therapeutic possibilities. In this context, he argued that the first essential was that teachers be responsible for establishing the psychological climate of freedom and safety in the classroom.

In South Africa, the deliberate use of play as a therapeutic medium with children is mainly limited to clinical settings as a highly specialised field performed only by very few trained therapists. In contrast, there have been great strides in Europe, the USA and Australia on moving Play Therapy, Therapeutic Play and play as a therapeutic tool out of clinical settings and placing it in more accessible community environments (Schaffer and O'Connor, 1983). Landreth aptly sums up the need to have an alternative environment for Play Therapy when he says that 'It is only natural to take this form of therapeutic intervention to the one place where children spend the majority of their time, the schools' (2001: 349). As highlighted in the introduction, this study is not calling for educators to

become therapists or practice psychology in the classroom rather, its highlighting the therapeutic possibilities of play which can be harnessed to assist in educating a child.

Theories explored in this chapter reveal a trend towards viewing the child as a capable and competent learner. The theories highlighted that play activity acts as an integrating mechanism for the learning process. This study looks at the necessity of using play as a cognitive and therapeutic intervention in Johannesburg primary schools. Hence the next section of this chapter will make an analysis of the attempts that have been made to grapple with defining play as a concept. It will move on to take a brief look at the types of play characteristic of a school setting. This is done with due awareness and acknowledgement of the different socio-cultural contexts within Johannesburg, within South Africa and between South Africa and the rest of the world. Emphasis will be placed on structured, teacher initiated classroom based dramatic play. This is because this study specifically analyses how a teacher can use this type of play as a pedagogical and therapeutic device in a classroom setting.

3.3 Defining Play

There is extensive literature devoted to defining play, explaining its existence, and describing its characteristics. This literature on play is rendered even more extensive by the fact that any talk of play often results in debate and controversy. There is no generally accepted definition of play and defining it has been associated with much controversy because of its multi- faceted nature. Play researchers and theorists come from a wide and varied number of fields and practices. As a result play has been defined from a number of diverse view points. It has been defined from the perspective of the disciplines of education, developmental psychology, clinical psychology, behavioral psychology and psychoanalysis, among others. Each discipline has come to a different conclusion about the nature of play. Moyles (1989) believes that the different conclusions are a result of definitions on play acting as a basis for supporting whatever argument a scholar would want to postulate.

Fagan (1974) made a distinction between two kinds of definitions, namely the functional and the structural approach. For Fagan the functional approach suggests that play does not have an obvious end in itself, or an external goal. Thus if an external goal is present, then the behaviour is not play. His ideas are based on the theories by early play purists, who believed that play occurs for no purpose and has no overt goal. Play in this sense is used to provide an escape, sometimes from the pressures of reality, occasionally to relieve boredom and sometimes simply as relaxation or opportunity for solitude rather than any 'useful' tangible purposes. The functional approach places great emphasis on the dichotomy between play and work. In this regard the term ‘play’ has been used to infer something rather trivial and non-serious, the polar extreme of work (Moyles 1989). Over the years viewing play as having no extrinsic function and the polar opposite of work has shifted immensely. Research has shown that play can be used as a medium in education (Montessorri, 1910 ; Way, 1967; Slade, 1954 ; Heathcote; 1984; Bolton 1998), healing (Landreth, 2001; Landreth et al 1996; Cattanach, 1992; Schaffer and O'Connor, 1983; Jones, 1996) and physical development (Smith et al 1988, Pellegrini and Smith, 1998) among other functions. Definitions based on function are also inadequate since the functions of play are varied and also not fully known.

Fagan's structural approach attempts to describe the sorts of behaviour that only occur in play or the way in which behaviours are performed ‘playfully’. In this regard play is defined by typical ‘play’ behaviours, gestures and movements. The main example of behaviours that only occur in play are play signals. He believes that play is a codified type of behaviour that has clear signals as to when one is about to play or be playful and when play ends. Fagan’s template has the weakness that not all play is indexed by play signals. Besides play or ‘playfulness’ permeates all spheres of human life making it difficult to put demarcations on when play actually starts or end.

Cohen (1987) identifies definitions of play as tending to one of three traditions of literature in theorising and the functionality of play. These are the Piagetian, psychoanalysis and education. Cohen states that the most influential today is probably the Piagetian, because of Piaget's seminal contribution to the study of play and child

development, and relationship between play and exploration. The second tradition is closely linked to psychoanalysis. It concentrates on what emotions are expressed in play and, also, on how play can be used to heal. With the third tradition Cohen notes that much of the early work on play was not done by psychologists but by educationalists such as Froebel and Montessori. They were not concerned with the reason children play but with what play could be used for. As a result of the above noted three independent traditions, the literature on play tends to be rather fragmented. Although acknowledging the presence of these three traditions Cohen also notes their limitation in their exclusiveness and lack of integration when he says that, 'Play is not either cognitive, or social or emotional. When children play, they often combine all these three faculties' (1987, 13).

Having found it difficult to come up with a satisfactory definition of play, Turner (1982) resorts to talking about the behaviour of 'playfulness' and Schechner (1993) came up with a template of 'play acts' which can act as an identifying feature for the presence of play. Sutton Smith (1997) on the other hand proposes that each discipline develops a specific rhetoric in studying play. He then identifies seven different 'rhetorics' of play typically employed by theorists and researchers. Perhaps Cohen's quotation can best underscore the complexities of defining play when he says that,

> There is much paradox in all this. Most writers who admit that it is hard to draw boundaries for play argue that play is a free activity and one which has no clear goal or purpose. Nearly all research then contradicts this nice, free-wheeling view. The questions psychologists put attempt to unravel the truer, deeper, more meaningful meaning of play or to find its purposes. (1987; 15)

Some theorists actually claim that play is 'undefinable' (Turner, 1982), whilst others believe that research can continue without an agreed upon definition (Schwartzman, 1978) or we can simply utilise 'paradigm cases' of the phenomenon, leaving the problems of definition until later (Matthews and Matthews, 1982). Schechner (1993) on the other hand asks the question, why do we need to be defining play at all? Laudable though it is to try to reach a comprehensive definition of play, this does perhaps suggest a quantifiable approach which, in practice, has rarely been the case (Moyle, 1989). I

support Smith and Vollstedt's (1985) belief that it may well be a combination of features, rather than the presence or absence of one defining characteristic, which leads observers to characterise behaviour as play.

As much as the definitions of play are many and varied, one common feature in most of them is the acknowledgement of the idea of play as a pleasurable experience, a process that has no end product and is intrinsically motivated (Huizinga 1952, Schechner, 1993, Piaget, 1962, Winnicott, 1971, Moyles, 1994, Wood and Attfield, 2005). Although advocating for the use of a variety of play forms, this study focuses on the theoretical issues pertaining to dramatic play, a category of play that is can be easily identified and is relatively definable.

3.4 Types of Play in a School Context

3.4.1 Pre- Drama Play

Play has over the years been used as a technique to create a relaxed and 'uninhibitive' environment in process drama classrooms. It involves pupils and their teacher taking part in play activity as a precursor to other dramatic interactions. This is not to suggest that in a process drama classroom, play activity is restricted to the beginning of the session. Rather it is imbued within the whole dramatic process and is sometimes difficult to separate from the rest of the other events. Play in process drama also plays a number of other functions. It can be used as warm up exercises and an ice breaker to create a conducive learning environment. In some instances the whole process might actually be based on a play experience. It can also be utilised as a tool of getting participants to 'derole' and step out of the dramatic frame. Alternatively it can also be used as a tool for reflection at the end or during the drama process.

In a process drama lesson, play can also takes a variety of forms. It can be in the form of playing of games and exercises ranging from physical exercise, concentration exercises to the use of song and dance. It can also be spontaneous and unstructured taking the form that participants in the classroom want it to take. The work of Heathcote (1984), Bolton

(1990), O'Neill (1976, 1995) Bowell and Heap (2001), Morgan and Saxton (1986), Wagner (1999), Neelands (1984), Taylor (2000) and O'Toole (1992) among others has ensured that drama is used as a method of learning, as a tool to assist remedial classes, and as part of the whole schooling experience. Play is also a common feature in other school based drama, theatre and education activities such as Theatre in Education (TIE). In Theatre in Education, a professional theatre company prepares a production in such a way that they ensure the participation and interaction of the learner. One method of doing this is through play activities (Jackson, 1993).

Dramatic play is just one of the interactive methods that can be used in process drama. This research focuses on dramatic play rather than process drama for two main reasons. First, process drama is a much more elaborate and complex form of classroom activity as compared to dramatic play. It is also more suitable for adolescents rather than the 5 to 8 year age group that this study is focusing on. Dramatic play is one of the normative features in child development (Piaget, 1962 and Garvey, 1984). Piaget places dramatic play as common in the 2 to 5 age group. Thus this study builds from the notion that at five children are already experienced in dramatic play but not necessarily in the more complex forms of dramatic expression and interaction. The rationale is to use a dramatic technique that the child is already familiar with and build on it as learning takes place. It is this study's view that an inculcation of dramatic processes at an early age is a worthwhile endeavor to ease learners into the more complex classroom drama processes as they grow older and advance in their education and development.

3.4.2 Dramatic Play

Dramatic play (Smilansky, 1968) also known as symbolic play (Piaget, 1962) or pretend play (Garvey, 1984) is one of the most prominent activities in human interaction. Dramatic play has been defined as involving, "pretending to be someone else, role taking, imitating a person's speech actions and patterns, using real and imagined props, using first and second hand experience and knowledge of characters and situations" (Wood and Attfield, 2005; 41). In dramatic play an individual, in this case the child or learner is involved in activities that do not necessarily require him to be anyone other than himself.

Activities are structured in such a way that the learner is compelled to explore situations through simultaneous improvisation. This type of play involves individuals and groups planning, imitation, taking on of roles, and transformation of everyday objects into something else in there endeavor to express their ideas and feelings about the social world (Garvey, 1984). Imitation and most roles that children assume in this type of play normally mirror the child's immediate surroundings. Garvey (1984) argues that by the age of four or five, children's ideas about the social world initiate most pretend play. He goes on to say that while some pretend play is solitary or shared with adults, preschoolers' pretend or socio-dramatic play is often shared with peers in the school or neighbourhood.

To implement and maintain pretend play episodes, a great deal of shared meaning must be negotiated among children. Play procedures may be talked about explicitly, or signaled subtly in role-appropriate action or dialogue. Players often make rule-like statements to guide behavior. Though meanings in play often reflect real world behavior, they also incorporate personal interpretations and wishes. Socio-dramatic play allows one to interact with other people in a make- believe world and has a direct bearing on developing one's everyday social interaction skills (Kitson in Moyles, 1994). It is characterised by interaction, cooperation and communication. It is this genre of play that this research is advocating for its use in the classroom. Dramatic play will be explored further in this and the next chapter.

3.4.3 Creative/Constructive Play

Smilansky (1968) places constructive play as an age development stage, between functional (practice) play and dramatic (pretend) play. She suggests that constructive play is that kind of play that involves making something; it is when children manipulate their environment to create things. Children may be involved in the use of blocks and miniature cars and people to create model situations related to their experience. In the classroom it is also characterised by such activities such as drawing, picture making and a whole lot of other activities mainly based on creativity. It might also feature as an activity within other dramatic processes like process drama highlighted above.

3.4.4 Physical Activity Play

Pellegrini and Smith (1998) noted three development stages in physical activity play. The first one they termed 'rhythmical stereotypes' this is charecterised by bodily movements such as waving arms and kicking legs to be found mostly in young babies. The next stage is ‘exercise play’ which is dominant in pre-school years and features running around, climbing, and other whole body movements that might be done alone or with others. Overlapping and succeeding the 'exercise play' stage is what is called rough and tumble play which is popular in preschool and early primary school years (Pellegrini and Smith 1998). In this play, children run, jump, and sometimes wrestle and play fight. Though this type of play is of great physiological and psychological value to children it requires a lot of space which is not normally provided by the classroom hence it is mainly a feature of physical education lessons performed in the open or in a gymnasium and on the playground.

3.4.5 Games with Rules

According to Piaget (1962) children become interested in formal games with peers around the age five. Older children’s more logical and socialized ways of thinking make it possible for them to play games together. Games with rules are the most ‘prominent’ and easily recognized and widely performed form of play in many schools across different cultures. The main element in game play consists of explicit rules which guide a player’s conduct and interaction with others. Game play is very structured and organised in comparison to play activities to be found within and outside of a school context. Games usually involve two or more sides, competition, and agreed-upon criteria for determining a winner. Children use games flexibly to meet social and intellectual needs. Games provide children with shared visions, activities and goals. Children often negotiate rules in order to create the game they wish to play.

3.5 Some Characteristic Features of Dramatic Play

As much as it is difficult to come up with a general comprehensive definition of play, its characteristic features are largely recognisable. Although features of play are easily discernable it is quite difficult to categorise them because dramatic play though universal,

is culture specific and context dependent, and the contexts are always varied. Researchers use these features to try and understand the concept of play and its purposes. This section of this chapter looks at the characteristics of dramatic play that make it applicable to a classroom context. A number of theorists have examined the most common features of play, (Huizinga, 1955; Schechner, 1993, 2002; Sutton-Smith, 2002; Turner, 1997, 1982). Huizinga (1995) gives a very broad summation of the characteristics of play when he says that,

> Summing up the formal characteristics of play, we might call it a free activity standing consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise and other means (1955: 13).

As wide covering as Huizinga's citing of play characteristics, there are too many generalisations inherent in his summation. Most of the features of play are not as 'cut and dried' as Huizinga seems to suggest. However, generally speaking, theorists and researchers do concur upon a common set of characteristics that distinguish play behaviors from non- play behaviors for children across all ages, domains, and cultures. These unique features include behaviors that are, intrinsically motivated and self-initiated, process oriented, non-literal and pleasurable, exploratory and active, and rule-governed (Fromberg, 1998, 2002; Garvey, 1990; Johnson, Christie, & Yawkey, 1999; Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983).

The study is neither going to attempt a comparative study of these multiple features of play, which is beyond its scope nor is it claiming that the above highlighted characteristics are exhaustive of all the features of dramatic play, which are too varied and different from one context to the other. Not all of the characteristic features unilaterally apply to all dramatic play. Through an assessment of the characteristics of dramatic play, this section of chapter three is also going to analyse particular aspects of

dramatic play that make it both therapeutic and educational when applied in a classroom context.

3.5.1 Fun

One of the main identifying features of play is the enjoyment that characterise taking part in it. It is mainly experienced through fun which Sutton- Smith (1997) calls 'playfulness'. It is this fun and playfulness that has led play to be termed 'not serious'. The pleasure derived from play is contained and derived from taking part in the activity itself and its ability to release tension. In most forms play is characterised by a lot of exuberance, pleasure and enjoyment. In the enjoyment one can forget about issues afflicting him in everyday life, providing a form of emotional healing. Hence it is positively valued by the player. Individuals are aware of penalties for mistakes or misjudgments in everyday life, but in play, a separate world, failing is normally inconsequential.

Dramatic play is very flexible and its fun is rarely hindered by lack of knowledge since one is usually afforded opportunities to keep trying. Besides, lack of knowledge in play never leads to irrevocable consequences rather, they are an opportunity to learn. Through trial and error in play one develops abstract and divergent thinking skills which foster problem solving. Holt (1991) notes that, one of the greatest attributes of play is learning to live with not knowing. This is because play is a non- intimidating approach of coping with learning and still retaining ones self esteem and self image. In the same vein, Moyles (1989), argues that play keeps the psychological and physiological active, motivating and challenging the player to master the familiar and respond to the unfamiliar in terms of acquiring information, knowledge, expertise and understanding. Furthermore, it affords opportunities for the individual to explore his possibilities and limitations. Through encouraging risk taking dramatic play develops a consciousness of ones potential leads to better mastery of process and product so that play provides contexts for expressing ideas, choices and intentions (Wood and Attfield, 2005).

The fun in dramatic play is also a result of the license that the mode offers for exaggerated behaviour. Through playful exaggeration of different emotions in a non-

threatening framed environment a child explores how it feels like to be angry, frightened, abandoned, powerful or powerless. The 'what if' or 'as if' characteristic of play give children permission to behave in different ways. The learner can also experiment with different behaviours and attitudes, that may be his own or those he would have seen or witnessed. Through such play the child is able to better understand his own values, beliefs and attitudes. He is also placed in a situation where he can try out specific different behaviours until he arrives at the one that is most suitable and can be taken out of the symbolic world into his interactions in the real world. Through 'trying out' other people's behaviours a learner is placed in a better position to make sense of the attitudes, behaviours and norms and values of the people he interacts with in society.

3.5.2 Rules

It is the rules, usually negotiated by the players that create, contain and maintain the dramatic play frame. The negotiation of rules is normally done at the beginning of the play process. The negotiations not only equip the student with communication skills but are also meant to foster a sense of learning to respect other people's ideas when they are different from ones own. Through the negotiation skills inculcated the student is also enabled to learn to become part of a collective yet retaining his individual identity. The positive sense of identity that is enabled through identifying with a group of people fosters confidence and the lack of restriction in an individual.

The rules do not only hold the imaginary world of play but also help in making the players feel safe and secure within a play activity. Rules also provide a normative structure for dramatic play. At the same time play opposes determinism in the sense that the players are free to choose their course of action even if the whole process might sometimes be controlled or framed within some parameters. According to Callois (2001) playing is an activity circumscribed within limits of space and time, pre-defined and pre-fixed, at the same time leaving space for creativity and uncertainty to take place. During play children construct their own internal rules and close observation of theses rules reveals that they are embedded in the social and cultural contexts within which the children exist. It is also the rules that ensure that the teacher still maintains 'control' of

the classroom situation if the circumstances threaten to degenerate into an unproductive entity within the play frame. The negotiations do not end at the rules development level but continue throughout the play process and it is through these negotiations that a learner can be able to come to terms with issues such as tolerating other people's views and expectations. Rules also create a paradox in terms of play and its role in child development. On the one hand, through imagination, play liberates children from everyday rules and situational constraints. At the same time, the play episodes created by children carry implicit rules that are necessary to establish and maintain the imaginary situation.

3.5.3 Paradox

Inherent in most play activities is the paradox between reality and fantasy. There is an interplay of the fluid relationship between the make- believe world and the real world within a play activity. According to Huizinga (1955), an activity is play if it is fully absorbing, includes elements of uncertainty, involves a sense of illusion or exaggeration, but most importantly, true play has to exist outside of ordinary life. That is, even though absorbed by the activity, the player is always conscious of the fact that the play is not real and that its consequences will not affect their lives beyond the play activity. Play occupies a distinct locality and occurs within a limited time. It is bracketed, and as another-worldly experience, play allows individuals to create alternative worlds and identities far removed from their everyday lives at the same time informed and modeled by everyday life. The 'masks' and 'disguises' that are characteristic of play offer the player passage into another world, paradoxically allowing the player to face his everyday challenges from the safety of the mask or disguise. Heathcote (in Bolton, 1984) emphasizes that the interactions in dramatic playing are based on the child's observations and real life experiences hence it is a preparation for real life through an 'as if' situation.

In play the make- believe world is removed from everyday restrictions and the consequences associated with the actions. Everyday problems are faced in a controlled symbolic environment and players attempt to come to terms with them. Sometimes, the boundaries between real world and the pretend world are fluid and porous. Ordinary

everyday objects can be used to represent something else through the projection of a child's imagination. For example a stick can become a bicycle or a plane. After undergoing a traumatic experience a child can be motivated to overcome such an experience through projecting the emotions they feel on an object such as a doll to let out anger and frustration. In a classroom situation dramatic play can employ the same representations. Children can use representational objects not only to express their emotions but also to understand the actions of others. According to Piaget (1962), in this sense children create meaning to guide their actions and meaning is separated from the objects that normally embody them, but in real life they remain unchanged. It is not only objects that are treated as something else but human beings as well. Enriching the imagination through symbolism enables an individual to be aware of the availability of possibilities to any arising situations. In such a way one can be in a position to select the most suitable solution in a crisis.

Within the make- believe world the learner assumes another identity. In this one he loses shyness and inhibitions since he would be expressing himself as someone else. The persona that he would assume functions as a shield, if he makes a mistake it can be viewed as that persona's fault.

> Moreover, any problems or anxieties students have from outside the classroom are forgotten in the new situation. Students see the new role, even through novelty, as a safe way to try a new identity without compromising the real or perceived image of themselves. (Purcell, 1993; http://www.jstor.org/stable/343931/ accessed 27 November 2008)

Through interaction in a fantasy world created through dramatic play, a learner coming from a violence ridden background is proffered the opportunity to forget his everyday situation as he grapples with new situations in a new assumed role. The self confidence and control of ones own environment can then be adapted from the fantasy world into the real world.

3.5.4 Spontaneity and Imagination

Theorists have argued that play has no extrinsic goals and that it is voluntary (Huizinga, 1955). Although in a classroom situation dramatic play is usually initiated by the teacher, it should be structured in such a way that it does not coerce individuals into taking part. Rather, one is compelled to take part by the potential for spontaneity that is created. The story is usually not pre-planned, and if it is planned in advance enough room is left for the class to shape it in any way they feel like. While Huizinga's views have been significantly modified since 1938, most researchers still agree that play is intrinsically motivated and occurs in a space distinct from reality. It is viewed as a free activity that is neither obligatory nor imposed by physical necessity or moral duty (Callois, 2001). The process is important in itself with, with players deriving pleasure and contentment from just indulging in the play activity.

Though much of the interaction in the make- believe world is through spontaneous intervention, there is also much imitation. In play the child acts out something familiar. By creating new patterns emerging from the familiarity, the child can transfer the same patterns to other contexts. Chinyowa (2005) argues that imitation leads to knowledge through the function of recognition. It is also a motivational device that capitalises on the child's innate ability to pretend and try out different roles that he would have observed in society. A child may not necessarily have experienced first hand some of the roles he tries out. Hence this acts as preparation for the assumption of such roles and the emotions, feelings and attitudes associated with them. It is through spontaneity and being flexible in imitations that creativity emerges. Objects and actions from everyday reality are symbolically transformed to represent new things. 'These transformations are similar to the novel, imaginative combination of ideas, which are the product of concrete thinking' (Christie and Johnsen, 1983. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1170328/ accessed 27 November 2008).

According to Huizinga play can be beautiful, and the beauty is derived from the aesthetic impulse that emerges from the spontaneous motivation of the player. In the play frame, a learner is afforded opportunities to explore concepts such as freedom, leading to the

development of independent thought rather than conformity. Play frees the player from the confines and obligations of social reality. It exists outside the boundaries and responsibilities of ordinary time and space. The freedom provided provides an opportunity for the players to experiment and generate new symbolic worlds. Bundy and Nicholson (in Chinyowa; 2005) believe that this freedom allows the participant to feel more secure when exploring sensitive painful issues. Having gone through an emotionally disturbing experience, through play the child is able to explore, understand and come to terms with his emotions in the security of the symbolic world. The playful imagination gives birth to concrete dreams (Izzo in Chinyowa; 2005). Imagination endows play with the quality of possibility, of imagining what might exist but is not yet present. Hence this makes it a particularly suitable medium for preparing an individual for experiences that are yet to happen. In the same vein this also makes play a suitable prevention tool. Through play one is better equipped to deal with crisis situations hence they are less liable to let their emotions degenerate into violence.

The interactions that happen in a dramatic play frame are unrehearsed and unplanned. Through spontaneous improvisation the learner is not given an opportunity to 'manufacture' dialogue and actions. As a result the interactions are bound to be from within, and may actually involve issues deeply embedded in ones psyche or emotions that never allowed himself to feel or was aware that they even exist. The interactions in the make- believe world is concretised by imagination. 'Thus if play is an activity set apart from the real context, imagination is the feature that engages with the fictional context by helping to create or bring forth alternative realities' (Chinyowa, 2005; 28). Imagination also involves the transformation of everyday reality into fantasy. Participants in play constantly come up with mental variants on a situation they face.

> Either consciously or unconsciously they manufacture the subjunctive 'as if' or 'what if' worlds to present potential sources of insight into how they can organize and categorise their perceptions of the world. (Chinyowa, 2005; 33)

Through this suspension of reality, ones imagination is let loose and allowed to explore possibilities in a newly framed reality allowing the acquiring and assimilation of new knowledge. The child is also empowered with control over the activity in which he is

involved. This is very essential in South African society where the environment appears to progressively strip individuals of their ability to make their own decisions. One is then enabled to take control and shape one's future regardless of negative external stressors and pressures. Through play learners develop a sense of independence and self confidence and belief in their capabilities. Moreover, as children look for ways to express themselves in the realistic communication situations that manifest through dramatic play, their verbal skills are improved.

3.5.5 Flow

The idea of flow in dramatic play is closely linked to absorption. It talks to the total involvement that one can observe as a feature of classroom dramatic play. Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1981, and 1990) focuses his work on addressing the questions pertaining to what draws individuals to play, and why people are always looking forward to taking part in play activity. Csikszemtihayli also calls flow, 'moments of peak experiences' and analyses their characteristics. He describes flow as an experience in which an individuals total attention is concentrated at some task so much that one becomes so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spontaneous and the individual even loses awareness of themselves as separate from the actions they are performing (Csikszemtihayli, 1990). Deep involvement is essential if the play process is to be challenging and contribute towards learning.

There are parallels between Csikszemtihayli's views and Turners idea of liminality. Turner (1982) examines the 'lumen phase' which he says involves the symbolic death and re-birth of participants undergoing change. It involves channeling efforts and emotions towards a productive end, such as absorption in trying to solve a problem. In such a scenario concern for oneself is suspended. Turnbull (in Chinyowa, 2005) claims that liminality enables willing participants to become something else. It absorbs the players into itself, thus taking way the strain of reason. Thus the player's main concern becomes the play activity itself and not the outside world. One can then take the lessons learnt during play to address challenges in real life. In this way play acts as a rehearsal for action through enabling players to go through a transitional process of making meaning

through play and ultimately to think, act and feel as if they are something or someone else.

Flow is not only experienced by individuals engaged in play, but also in groups. ‘Positive experiences occur when the individual acts with 'a deep and effortless involvement that removes awareness of the worries and frustrations of everyday life’ (Csikszemtihayli, 1990; 49). As the individual experiences flow, the concern for self is absent or suspended. In dramatic play, the individual literally merges his or her efforts with those of others. This is more pronounced when it is used in a classroom situation. This is because, the entire classroom space is converted into a stage or a playing area with the participants performing for one another within a dramatic context (Bolton, 1994). As a result there is no disturbances to the flow by any ‘outsiders’, since everyone is involved in the enactment.

3.6 Conclusion

Besides highlighting the pedagogical and therapeutic characteristics of dramatic play, this chapter also revealed that there is no single definition of play, and no single theory that can explain the role of play in children’s learning and development. This should not deter teachers from using play as a pedagogical tool in the classroom. Wood and Attfield succinctly conclude that,

> Practitioners do not have to limit the way they conceptualize play to how it is defined and categorized by academics, researchers and policy- makers. The theory and research base in early childhood can inform our understanding about the relationship between play and learning but, ultimately, practitioners create their own knowledge about what works, taking into account the complex variables in their settings. (2005; 57-58)

This chapter examined what play and dramatic play are and explored some of the theoretical underpinnings. Having explored ways in which dramatic play can act as a therapeutic and cognitive tool, chapter four of this research will look at the possibilities and implications for the educator when using dramatic play as a pedagogical and therapeutic tool in a South African primary school classroom situation within the

confines of the OBE curriculum.

CHAPTER 4 **THE EDUCATOR'S ROLE IN A DRAMATIC PLAY LESSON**

4.1 Preamble

The previous chapter established play as an invaluable tool in child development and learning. Chapter 4 consolidates and validates this establishment through an attempt at making connections between theory and practice. The chapter focuses on how a teacher can implement dramatic play in a Johannesburg primary school setting. In line with the ideas of Vygotsky (1962) and Bruner (1966) on the significant role of an adult in children's education, this study places significance on the role of the educator in child development and knowledge acquisition. Chapter 4 places emphasis on the role the teacher plays in terms of initiating, driving, guiding, coordinating, monitoring and facilitating the enactment of dramatic play in the classroom. There are a number of ways in which the teacher may initiate dramatic play. This study highlights a few of them. This analysis will be made in cognizance of the confines of the Johannesburg socio-cultural realities and OBE curriculum demands and expectations.

4.2 Preparing for Dramatic Play

This study is not calling for the discarding of the traditional method of teaching. It acknowledges the critical use of instruction and rote memory based methods of teaching and learning and forwards dramatic play as a complimentary tool. A teacher may use dramatic play after having introduced the subject matter through the traditional method of teaching. Dramatic playing can then be used as a way of synthesizing some abstract concepts of the subject matter to the learner's real life situation. It can also be used as a way of reflecting on what has been learnt, to clarify issues. Alternatively dramatic play can be employed to introduce a learning area through exploring its human and social relevance. The teacher might later on use the instructional method with points for debate and interrogation to show the relevance of such issues to the curriculum and wider scope of things. This creates a pedagogy that goes beyond the child's immediate surroundings and current knowledge.

There are two basic forms of dramatic play in the classroom, namely teacher- centered

dramatic play and student- centered dramatic play. In teacher- centered dramatic play, the teacher conceptualizes, plans, structures and initiates play in the classroom leaving enough room for the students to explore and experiment with issues arising in the dramatic play interactions. The teacher retains a vast amount of control on the process and the direction it assumes. It involves the teacher creating suitable roles for the students. Roles created are determined by their ability to interrogate relevant educational themes. This is an ideal form when the teacher is using dramatic play as a teaching tool for the first time. It is also ideal for maintaining focus on curriculum objectives and expected outcomes.

When dramatic play is student centered it is mostly in the hands of students. It involves the teacher creating an atmosphere that allows that students to freely interact, experiment and explore issues within a play context. This is mostly done through improvisation. In this case the main role of the teacher is to create the broader guidelines and parameters that guide student interaction in accordance with expected learning outcomes. This form of classroom dramatic play is only possible when students have gained skills and confidence in the use of dramatic play in the classroom. Hence, when implementing classroom dramatic play, the teacher uses teacher- centered dramatic play in the initial stages until a point in time her students are prepared to assume more control. Thus the teacher builds the foundation of using and appreciating dramatic play in the students, 'scaffolds' them as they begin to use the process in their learning and only removes the scaffold after the students have gained skills and confidence. This chapter of the study focuses on how the teacher initiates dramatic play in the classroom. Hence much of the focus will be on structured teacher- centered dramatic play.

4.2.1 Planning

The initial stage in any lesson is the actual conceptualisation of the subject matter and teaching method. By choosing to use dramatic play in the classroom the teacher places certain obligations on herself and her pupils. After deciding to use this medium the teacher needs to analyse why she wants to use this process. She needs to assess the benefits that play will have on the pupils and on her teaching objectives. Thus the

objectives for the choice to use dramatic play as a medium should be clearly spelt out at the beginning. These objectives would serve as guidelines and parameters as the process progresses. The objectives should also not be closed off and limiting to the scope of the exercise. They should be open-ended enough to allow room for other ideas to come in or for modification and redirection as the process unfolds. Setting objectives at the beginning also enables the teacher to assess and evaluate the value of the lesson or lessons afterwards. Process evaluation would be based on whether the set objectives have been met or not and how they have been met or why they failed. If the set objectives have not been achieved the teacher needs to assess why and how this might have happened and use this as a reference for future lessons. The same applies to a successful process. The teacher would then want to use it as a framework for future work.

In Morgan and Saxton's *Teaching Drama*, Victoria (1986: iv) argues that; 'When teaching drama or theatre, it is not enough for the teacher to know *what* to do. It is important for the teacher to know *why* she is doing what she is doing and *how* to do it'. Hence, besides setting her objectives for using drama in the classroom, the teacher needs to assess the *how* part of it. This involves self assessment and evaluation in terms of what she knows about dramatic play, the techniques and skills she possesses and her general appreciation of the medium and its value in education. It also involves a self analysis in terms of what role and status she is comfortable playing in the classroom, not only in the play frame but also in the general structuring of the lesson. It is interesting to note that although the learner is not actively involved at the conceptualisation stage of the process, his influence is implicitly felt. This is because the evaluations, assessments and decisions the teacher will finally make are largely determined by what she knows about the learners and a concern for their education and emotional welfare.

The RNCS clearly outlines the expected outcomes in the teaching and learning of each learning area. This is with regards to what skills and abilities the child should gain and what he should be able to articulate after going through the stipulated time allocated to that learning area at each grade. In planning for each lesson the teacher should be guided by an understanding of both the immediate and larger scale learner needs, both in terms

of personal growth and stipulated curriculum expectations. In some instances the teacher can select curriculum issues that the learners would be finding difficulties in understanding, conceptualising, or relating to. She can then use these issues as a theme or topic and basis for the dramatic play lesson. In such instances the teacher is still guided by curriculum demands and her student's interests. A teacher may also select material she feels is relevant and essential for the pupils to grapple with. After coming up with the area of exploration, theme or topic, the teacher then comes up with the aim and expected outcomes of the intended lesson. The aim and expected outcomes set the specific focus for the lesson. Hence they need to be well thought through and structured in such a way that they capture what the students ought to explore and experience at the same time leaving enough room for the exploration of other related or even unrelated issues that are part of the student's everyday life.

4.2.2 Creating a Lesson Plan

A properly thought out lesson of any nature is based on a clearly laid out lesson plan detailing each activity and happening to take place or likely to take place in the lesson. In a lesson using dramatic play as a teaching tool, the lesson plan should clearly outline the structure of the lesson, dramatic context(s) to be established, attitudes to be explored, dramatic tensions to be grappled with, relationships to be examined and control devices to be utilised. It should however be designed in such a way that it leaves enough room for expansion or redirection in ways in which interaction within the play frame would dictate. In spite of this flexibility, its aims, objectives and area of learning are clearly laid out and provide guidelines and sets the frame and parameters for the whole process. Bowell and Heap aptly sum up the purpose of having a clear theme/learning area and aim when they say that;

> ....drama should be about something. It must have a content. This is actually what the theatre element 'focus' refers to. It is the *particular* aspect of human condition under examination in the drama. In the educational setting, this focus or content will most likely be drawn from the broad curriculum as the themes and topics or from the cross-curricular issues such as personal and social development. It is from these themes topics or issues that the focus of the drama will be distilled, so that in process drama, we can say that the theatre element of 'focus' is created through the choice of theme or learning area. (2001:10)

In implementing play in the classroom it is not always the teacher who takes the prerogative to select what theme/ topic is to be explored. Selection of theme or topic may be through a joint effort between the teacher and students. This is in line with some aspects of a student- centered approach to teaching and learning. The joint effort can be through brainstorming and discussions on curriculum issues and matters affecting the children in their everyday existence, to come up with a theme/topic of significant concern to the learners. Even with such a structure and enormous potential for unpredictable outcomes, the teacher can still maintain her aim or goal in conducting the lesson and work within the dramatic play to achieve it.

This way of planning a lesson places the devices to create and establish meaning in the hands of the learner and makes him identify with the process and the end product. This is achieved through a reinforcement of the idea that the learning process is in his hands and that he is a co-partner with the other learners and the teacher in the negotiation of art and meaning in the classroom. On reviewing Heathcote's liberal classroom techniques, Wagner (1999) argues that in allowing the students to make most of the decisions as possible, Heathcote always managed to overcome group inertia. Wagner further argues that, Heathcote discovered that the crucial element in teaching is the taking of risk, moving into the unknown and engaging in unplanned improvisations. This also crystallizes the idea that dramatic play in the classroom requires forms of negotiation that create room for bargaining between the teacher as facilitator and the pupils as participants in terms of the nature and content of the process, regardless of the learner's age and predisposition.

The success of the lesson is hinged upon a conscious and consensual interaction and collaboration of those taking part in it and the demand for this falls on the teacher. Heathcote's method cited above creates a good opportunity for participants to accept and collaborate during the process since it would be evident that it is their 'own' process and its continuation depends on them.

4.2.3 Initial Classroom Contact

Having established the more administrative aspects of the lesson, what is left is its actual implementation or enactment. The use of dramatic play as a teaching and learning tool in the classroom should never be sprung as a 'surprise' on the learners. Crinson and Leak (1993) are of the view that when a teacher introduces dramatic play in the classroom for the first time she needs to protect the students. They argue that it poses a threat in terms of emotions and self- esteem to 'first timers'. Crinson and Leak further argue that, the teacher should not demand too much from beginners. She should start with activities that the learners are familiar with and gradually and with proper planning move into the symbolic world. To achieve its intended objectives the use of dramatic play should be clearly explained to the participants. What is expected from the learner, his role in the process should be clearly defined. The teacher's role, expectations and function should also be clearly spelt out. The purpose of using this form of play in the classroom should also be discussed and guidelines and code of conduct established before the lesson(s) even commence.

Neelands (1984) believes that coming up with a learning contract for classroom drama is essential in establishing a good teacher-learner partnership. Neelands further argues that the contract itself may be implicit, it is already in existence in the existing class relations or it can be explicit, thus openly discussed and negotiated in class. This contract should be democratically negotiated, clearly laid out and understood so as to create a structure, safe environment for the children to interact and interrogate issues. This process enables children to create their own rules, determine appropriate behaviours, define roles and test their own boundaries as well as those imposed by society. Everyone should be clear about the activity and what is expected of them.

It is also at this stage that the educator should make an attempt at dispelling some of the inhibitions to the enactment of classroom play. This is especially with regards to the binary that is perceived to exist between play and work and connotations of play that have already been inculcated in both the children and teachers by society. Any initiative to using play in the classroom should challenge this perceived order of things. Through

the interrogation of such issues the educator creates the environment to support the unity between playing, learning and teaching.

4.2.4 Teaching Children How to Play

The notion that all children know how to play is overrated. Children's rates of development vary significantly, as do their abilities and preferences. Moreover, in some instances some children are so traumatised by events in their lives that their normal development is affected and end up withdrawing into themselves and are afraid to play especially with others. Their sense imagination, fantasy and creativity may also be adversely affected. In other instances because of stressors in society some of the play children are involved in is inappropriate and detrimental to their welfare and those they play with. In the first chapter of this study a case of how South African children play games like *rape me rape me* and *rob me rob me* was cited. As a result the educator may find it necessary to teach the learners how to play appropriately. Although the play age is seen as a normative stage in every child (see Piaget, 1962 and Moyles, 1994), its use in the classroom is quite novel. Teaching through dramatic play should take into consideration and be designed in such a way that it promotes optimum development of a child's abilities not only to learn but also to play.

I support Smilansky (quoted in Moyles, 1994) four variants of a method in which children can be taught dramatic playing in the classroom. These are modeling, verbal guidance, thematic-fantasy training and imaginative play training. Smilansky's idea of modeling involves the teacher taking part in the play and acting out a role to demonstrate how it can be performed effectively. Smilansky gives an example of the educator acting out the role of a doctor by pretending that a doll is a baby and a pencil is a thermometer. In this exhibition the educator demonstrates both fantasy and transformation in her character and objects, and some real life aspects of the doctor's role to the children. In verbal guidance, Smilansky states that the teacher lets the children indulge in dramatic play and she does not join in but makes comments and suggestions to assist children to develop and fully explore the potential of the roles they would have assumed. An example is reminding a learner playing the role of a mother to bath the baby before

bedtime and the need for that.

Thematic-fantasy training involves children being assisted by the teacher in acting out familiar story dramas. Thus a teacher would ask students to take up roles in a story like *Cinderella* which the children would be familiar with and know the plot in advance as preparation for using curriculum based improvised dramatic play.

Smilansky's idea of imaginative play training is characterised by the educator's interaction with her class in make- believe activities. This is exemplified by coaching students to use finger puppets and practicing facial expressions to show different emotions. This is aimed at enriching a student's fantasy and feeling comfortable to share their fantasies with the rest of the class in a play space.

In her practice Smilansky (quoted in Moyles, 1994) discovered that such methods of encouragement and coaching by the educator increase the amount and level of complexity of fantasy and socio-dramatic play in young children. This is especially the case if the child did not show much of this play initially. Furthermore, Smilansky also observed that some increase in spontaneous dramatic play is maintained even after the play training has been curtailed. Having made sure that the children are now well prepared and equipped to start using dramatic playing as a classroom learning technique, the next step is to move into the lesson itself but, as highlighted above this should be a gradual process.

4.3 The Dramatic Play Lesson

The beginnings of a lesson are of importance because they set the tone and pace of the whole process to follow. The beginning also has an impact on the engagement and level of commitment of both the teacher and the pupils. There are a number of ways of entering into any play and/or drama encounter. There are various ways in which the lesson can be introduced; this study will only highlight a few that have a bearing on the age range of focus in this study. This study is not going to make a comparative assessment of the weaknesses and strengths that these methods serve to just briefly

highlight their structure and purpose.

One quite popular method is to begin with the playing of games and exercises. This can be done as a means of connecting from real life issues to curriculum concepts and vice versa. Ideally the choice of games should be in line with the learning and lesson aims and objectives and issues to be explored in the dramatic playing. Neelands (1984) claims that, games are useful in building confidence and as ice-breakers for people venturing into any form of drama for the first time. They should set the context of the encounters to follow. Educators need to have in their grasp cross curricular nature of relating subject matter to everyday situations, how connections can be made, and what connections and learning the children should derive from their own activities.

Another method of introducing or getting into the dramatic play is through storytelling. This is where the teacher narrates a story to a certain point where she calls upon the students to enter into the world of the story and complete it. The story is structured in such a way that it revolves around the specific educational areas that the teacher wants the students to grapple with, simultaneously remaining open- ended so as to allow establishment and development fostered through the play interactions. It is also aimed at posing problems and dilemmas that require the participants to explore and experiment with possible solutions.

This teacher can also combine storytelling and active student participation. This is where the teacher would be narrating the story and the learners would be simultaneously physically enacting what is being narrated to a point where the setting and context is set and the teacher stops the narration and lets the story develop through encounters within the dramatic play. Yet another way of introducing dramatic play is the idea of teacher in role. The teacher can for example enter the classroom and tell her students that they are going to engage in dramatic play. The teacher then assumes a role that would motivate the learners to interact with her in the symbolic world in an attempt to question her behaviour and attitude. Besides these three highlighted methods there are a plethora of other methods of entering into dramatic play depended upon the teacher's individual taste,

the availability of material and time, the age of learners and the teachers understanding of her learners bearing in terms of multiple intelligences. The idea of teacher in role will be explored further in the study since it is pertinent in understanding how a teacher interacts with her learners within the symbolic world.

The structural function of any of the methods of introducing dramatic play is to suggest clear purposes and tasks, set expectations, suggest a situation or setting, hints on events that have already occurred and sets the stage for future happenings. It also involves choosing and setting a context for the dramatic encounter. Thus establishing the *who* (is present), *what* (is happening/is the problem) and *where* (is it happening) of the story. The narration sets the stage for engagement in dramatic play to follow without explicitly detailing what is to transpire or equipping pupils with what to say. In order to establish an appropriate context a teacher is guided by a number of variables. These include, the metaphor that is going to be used in creating the symbolic world that would enable learners to identify and relate subject matter to their own lives and interest and current level of knowledge.

Guided by knowledge of her learners, the teacher also structures the story in such a way that there is some level challenge for the learners. The educator should ask herself whether the structure and content of the make believe world and roles to be assumed afford the children enough distance to both challenge their thinking and view alternative perspectives rather than just confirm what they already know and also to safeguard them from their individual emotional challenges. In this way the teacher would be framing the dramatic play space and parameters. This is especially imperative if it is the first time the teacher would be asking the children to work in a different mode from the one in which they are used to for the first time.

This introductory stage also relies on and builds on the 'suspension of disbelief' (O'Neill, 1995) and believing in 'the big lie', (Heathcote quoted in Wagner, 1999). This involves the engagement of participants at a level where they are willing to believe that what is transpiring in a fictional world is actually real. The point that the themes and issues

established in the introductory phase should be of relevance to both curriculum expectations and learners lives is worth reiterating. The role of the teacher is to identify these themes and issues and guide the drama towards engaging with them. This in turn helps in establishing the focus for the drama. An appropriate entry into the make- believe world in most instances would lead to the 'focus' of the dramatic play encounter. The themes and attitudes to be explored emerge from the engagements and interactions in its interpretation. The role of the teacher is to apply these themes to a particular situation, setting and timeframe leading to an analysis of what is really happening and a drive to understand why such a thing is happening. In focusing the moment a teacher can borrow from Heathcote's (quoted in Wagner, 1999) use of the five W's as focusing devices. These are 'who' (is present)? 'where' (is it happening)? 'when' (is it happening), 'what' (is the matter)? and 'why' (is it happening)? More 'whys' deepen the significance of the moment.

Once the teacher has established belief through the introduction and beginnings of the dramatic play the next step is to establish some form of tension. Alternatively she can just heighten the tension if it was already present in the introductory stage. According to Crinson and Leak (1993) elements of tension need not be major disasters or massive conflicts rather they are just complications which should heighten participants' level of exploration. Bolton (1990) refers to this as 'constraint'. There is a tension implicit in the mere act of participating in the dramatic play lesson and taking part in the process. This is termed the tension of the task. O'Toole is of the view that this tension exists because, 'To achieve their purposes, the characters within the fiction undertake tasks in which they are naturally absorbed and which take time to complete, even if there are no other constraints to prevent their completion' (1992: 28).

The role of the teacher in this case is to create dramatic action as a series of tasks for participants to complete before they can reach their intended goals. These actions may consist of physical action or verbal dialogic negotiation in collective decision making or planning. The tension is in the doing, in the discovering and thinking upon information towards a set objective (O'Toole 1992). The interaction of participants in the make-

believe world can also provide tension through their attitudes to each other and contrasts in goals and objectives. This is termed tension of relationships. The interaction of such characters within the dramatic play drives the drama and provides opportunities for exploring attitudes, dilemmas and beliefs within the safety of the play frame. Teacher in role is a good way of injecting and heightening this type of tension. The teacher in this case can select a role that puts her at opposition with the participants, for them to engage with it or its manifestations. This type of tension also explores situations where there is a mismatch between expectations and reality.

The teacher also establishes the point of entry into the drama through what Jackson (1993) calls 'framing the action'. Basically, the teacher will create boundaries and parameters around the piece of experience she wants the pupils to grapple with. This provides more focus and places significance on the human experience to be explored in the dramatic enactment. The teacher can move or shift and refocus the frame of the drama as it unfolds. This she does through selectively picking on the issues that are being raised in the enactment. She uses the control devices she would have established at the beginning to interject in the drama, be it in role or out of it, to narrate the story further, to give instructions, to highlight a point, to change or shift roles, to inject more tension or to redirect the drama.

The central purpose of dramatic play is to contextualise learning in such a way that it has purpose and meaning for the students and enables them, through reflection, to reach new levels of thinking and understanding in their intellectual, emotional, social and language development. Having come this far the teacher ought to let the play develop through spontaneous improvisation to situations and interactions happening within the dramatic play whilst still monitoring and minimally guiding this development. Her role at this stage would be to make sure that there is enough tension and focus to sustain the dramatic playing. One of the most notable ways of being within the drama at the same time in a position to add or heighten tension is through the notion of teacher in role.

4.4 Teacher in Role

Healslip (in Moyles 1994) sees the role of the educator in dramatic play as being neither active nor passive rather, as pro-active. The teacher is neither 'outside' the event as an instructor, a director or a mere observer nor is she the central focus of the enactment but, she is a 'pro-active' co-artist with the pupils, involved in both the structuring and enactment of the process. She is a co-player and assumes roles alongside the students and interacts with them within the play context. The teacher is actively involved within and outside the drama to ensure that the process takes place and is fruitful. Wood and Attfield (2005) lament the lack of involvement in children's play by most educators and adults in general. They argue that adult involvement in play is usually confined to a superficial level. Through involving herself in the play structure, the educator can capitalise on the numerous pedagogical potential of the dramatic play process. Vygotsky (1962) views learning as a social process, affected by the child's immediate surroundings. He finds substance in the adult's role in child development and argues that the educator should not wait for the child to individually move along the developmental stages. Rather, the role of the educator is to intervene and assist in the acquisition of knowledge. Thus an educator is much more involved as a partner and guide in learning.

In the Vygotskian (1962) sense, learning can only be achieved if the teacher works very closely with the learner so that he is always aware of the child's actual level of development at the same time keeping sight of curriculum goals and potential learning to be achieved. This enables her to be able to intervene productively in the ZPD. Vygotsky ideas on ZPD are echoed by Bruner's concept of 'scaffolding'. Bruner (1966) finds an appropriate analogy between the role of scaffolding in building construction and the role of the educator in child education. In building construction, a scaffold is a structure that is used to support a building structure. The scaffold grows along with the building structure as it develops. The scaffold is only removed when the building is now able to stand on its own. Analogously a teacher supports the learner's skills, ability and knowledge acquisition from the point where the learner actually is (current development level) and supports the learner as the learner gains knowledge and skills and the support is only removed after the child has shown mastery and understanding of a specific task.

Verriour (1994) makes the valid observation that dramatic playing affords a teacher a wide variety of teaching strategies and notes the notion of teacher-in-role as probably the most effective way to engage student's interest. When in role, the teacher plays a dual role, the role she is playing within the make- believe world of dramatic play and role as observer, monitor and guide for the whole process. With regards to this duality of role the teacher needs to be able to observe and interpret what is happening in the play process and what is happening to and amongst the students. She needs to have a 'third eye'. Equipped with this the teacher is 'ahead' of the events taking place hence she is bound to notice when the process is going to wane or lose momentum or when the students are about to lose interest before it actually happens. With these devices in hand, the teacher still in role or having stepped out of it can inject more tension into the dramatic play. This also implies that the teacher has to have the ability to be spontaneous. In classroom dramatic play, the teacher needs to be able to immediately pick on what the pupils say in or out of the play frame and use it to further the dramatic process.

As a teacher one should not envisage teaching as a finished product, but rather as a process. This is because when using dramatic play and the process is not going according to what the teacher would have planned she might be tempted to become controlling and want to channel it to achieve set aims and objectives. She would then ignore and disregard learners' contributions that are not in line with the initial planning. The teacher ought to have faith in the play process and in her learners and relinquish control and let the learners build the narrative. The teacher should thus be able to take note of where and when she should draw the line in initiating and channelling the process and when to allow learners to take charge. Further, she should not take the pupils for granted, she should not enter the play process with unsubstantiated notions on what the students know or do not know. Rather she should use the process as a means to discover what the children already knows, and use this for curriculum planning.

4.5 Pedagogical and Therapeutic Guiding Principles

In planning and implementing dramatic play as a classroom learning tool the teacher is guided by a number of intellectual, emotional and social learning considerations. The

intellectual considerations involve designing of a play encounter that involves the learner changing and/or enhancing understanding in the human themes, concepts and values that are explored within the 'symbolic elsewhere'. In order to create a dramatic context learners not only need to develop a sense of awareness of what they already know but also discover gaps in their existing knowledge and understanding (Verriour, 1994). Hence the encounter should be structured in such a way that it requires them to think critically, think through a sequence of events, pose questions to themselves and others and explore and experiment with alternatives. In this endeavor new knowledge is acquired.

Learners should be compelled to recall past experiences, thoughts, ideas, relevant information and images to make sense of new knowledge and situations within the fictional world. It also involves the learner being put in a position that requires him to make choices and decisions and seeing implications and consequences of one's choice of actions. In this way the learner's decision making and problem solving skills are improved and he is also encouraged to take responsibility for his actions. The educator also has to come up with strategies that enable the child to see and explore relationships, between human beings and also between areas of learning. This fosters the ability to think metaphorically, allegorically and hypothetically in the 'as if' mode enriching the learner's imagination. It also relates issues and makes the learner consider possibilities, hence preparing him for something that is yet to occur.

There are a number of emotional considerations that the teacher ought to take into consideration when planning a classroom dramatic play encounter. These include, individual child's belief systems, norms and values, attitudes and state of mind at a point in time. These factors are crucial elements that affect the learner's interaction within the dramatic space and beyond it. If properly structured, the lesson should involve children playing with crucial emotions such as grief, fear, anger, jealousy, love, hatred, guilty, anxiety, betrayal, rejection and injustice. By appropriately framing the understanding of the real/not real boundaries of play, learners can play with these emotions in relatively safe contexts.

In trying to understand and come to terms with the emotions cited above, the learner should be made to confront situations where they are compelled to confront their personal beliefs, attitudes and values and express their emotions and feelings. They should also face the emotions and feelings of others and try to identify and understand the root causes. Children should also be made to step into other people's shoes expressing emotions, beliefs, values and attitudes which are not necessarily similar to their own. The understanding of ones emotions and feelings and those of people around you has the probability of making one value oneself and feel a sense of self worth and also feel empowered to act and change things (Verriour, 1994). It is also in such a frame that play can be used to provide an outlet for children to vent out their emotions. Failure to vent out these emotions can result in behaviours, covert or overt, that interfere with their learning ability and ability to interact.

Besides the emotional and intellectual considerations, in planning the educator also needs to be guided by the social learning benefits that the learner could potentially acquire through using dramatic play. Dramatic playing provides social learning by means of the collaborative nature of the socio-dramatic encounter itself. There are numerous instances provided for negotiations, tolerance of other people's ideas and working together towards one goal, that are inherent in the play structure. As Wood and Attfield note,

> Play provides many different opportunities for children to learn about social and cultural norms: appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, society's rules and conventions and boundaries. (2005, 82)

Essential social learning areas within dramatic play include, sharing one's ideas with others, learning to acknowledge other people's ideas, tolerating divergences in others, being conscious of and respecting other people's thoughts. It also involves taking a contrary point of view and taking and expressing a point of view that may be different from ones own. This enhances a child's capacity of problem solving through learning to understand and identify with other people's views and considering possibilities. Communication proficiency and the use of appropriate language may also be improved

through the negotiations, dialogue and interactions within the dramatic play.

> Play helps the participant to build confidence in themselves and their abilities and, in social situations, helps them to judge the many variables within social interactions and gain empathy with others. It leads to the development of perceptions about other people and understanding the two-way demands of expectations and tolerance. Opportunities to explore such concepts as freedom implicitly exist in many play situations and lead eventually to providing bridging points in the development of independence. (Moyles, 1989; 8)

Through dramatic playing learning should be contexualised in such a way that it becomes pragmatic and has the ability of making the learner reach a heightened level of intellectual, emotional, social and cognitive realisation. This can only happen if learners are confronted with play situations that require them to practice, choose, persevere, imitate, imagine, master, gain control, gain competence and confidence, create, observe, experiment, think, memorise and remember, communicate, question, interact, be flexible, tolerate and be self disciplined. Structuring a lesson that fosters these skills and attributes is one of the main roles of the teacher when using dramatic play and any other pedagogical method.

4.6 Observation and Evaluation

The lesson does not necessarily end with the interaction within the dramatic play frame, but it also needs to be evaluated to assess its impact and what would have been gained. This evaluation is mainly done through observation, reflection and assessment. It is often quite difficult to see learner progression within the play context. Being a good observer also takes time, intimate knowledge of the learners and experience. It involves the educator being attentive to classroom dynamics and individual learner relations with others and situations and/or issues being raised or explored in and outside the play structure. It then enables the teacher to identify ways through which she can support, focus, extend or redirect play to ensure learning outcomes are achieved for each individual child.

Observation also acts as the educator's way of showing interest in and valuing the play

process. It is guided by considerations like, when to observe, what to observe, how to observe, and how you record the observations. The teacher is normally involved in participant observation since he is part of the process. This is where she would be within the play structure at the same time observing the process. This type of observation requires good listening techniques. Wood and Attfield (2005) argue that being a good listener makes it possible for the teacher to respect and engage with the learner within the children's' own frames of meaning. This respectful listening also implies emotional engagement on the part of the teacher enabling her to take interest in each individual student. The listening is not confined to the verbal communication alone but also to other ways in which a people can communicate, such as body language.

Besides acting as an evaluation technique, observation also enables the teacher to identify possible emotional and physical threats that might arise during play. It also enables the teacher to ensure that no child is lagging behind in skills and knowledge acquisition. The teacher can then assist such learners in 'catching up'. In the frame of enabling each individual child reach his full potential as specified by OBE, skilled observing and noting each individual child's play and interaction with others is of utmost importance. Through careful observation the teacher is in tune with children's activities and understanding (Vygotsky's actual level of development) and with knowledge of curriculum requirements (potential level of development) she can restructure or plan the next lessons to cover the existing gap (ZPD).

Evaluation of learning that would have occurred within dramatic playing includes reflecting on the process through assessing the children's change in perceptions and interrogation and reconsidering of previously held notions. This type of analysis can take place either within the dramatic experience or outside of it. In the dramatic experience it is normally characterized by the teacher observing these changes in the leaner's attitude, and interactions within the fantasy world. Outside play it is sometimes done through reflective discussion or through the teacher asking the learners questions. Reflective discussions are usually conducted in an atmosphere that fosters free and open communication. The child should be able to share with the peers his experiences and try

to make sense of it. In such a way learning and new knowledge is acquired and consolidated.

When questioning the educator ought to ask open- ended questions that are not meant to solicit a yes or no answer from the learner but are meant for the learner to reflect on the experiences he would have gone through in the dramatic play. The questions the teacher asks should be able to make the pupil explore his feelings and relationship to the issue in question further, thereby deepening his insight and understanding of the subject matter. Reflection outside the play process can also be in the form of journaling and/or reflective writing, on the part of the teacher. Another reflection method involves asking learners to draw how they would be feeling or their emotions after the dramatic process. Alternatively the teacher can ask the learners to come up with a song or poem based on what feelings and emotions the dramatic play would have evoked.

As closure to the dramatic play process it is imperative that the teacher facilitates a reflection process. It is during reflection that the learning that would have transpired is consolidated. Reflection is also meant to allow the pupils to 'de-role' and realise and accept that they are now out of the fictional world, out of the drama and back in the real and actual world. Through reflection learners make sense of the meaning that would have been created in the drama at individual and group level. It also assesses the strategies and techniques employed in the drama. It is at this juncture that the concept of action, reflection and transformation (praxis) is to be experienced. A new understanding of attitudes, behaviors and human tendencies are seen in a new light or better understood. It is characterized by personal, self and individual analysis and relationship with others and with the issue(s) being addressed.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the role that the teacher needs to play in implementing dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy within classroom curriculum based learning. It highlighted that the inclusion of dramatic play within a lesson should not be at the spur of the moment on the part of the educator. Rather it is a well conceived and well planned

process. For the lesson to be relevant it should take into consideration a number of educational, emotional and social learning concerns for the learner. This is clearly a demanding task, but the possible rewards in terms of child learning and development are vast. Yet the role of the teacher cannot be over-emphasised, play should remain learner centered with minimum intervention from the educator. For it to be challenging and have meaning it should be the initiative and directive of the learner (Wood and Attfield, 2005).

CHAPTER 5 **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrated the educational and therapeutic potential of dramatic play within the South African primary school curriculum. Chapter 1 served as an orientation and introduction to this study. It contextualised the study through an exploration of the background informing the study and the intention and rationale that motivated conducting this particular research. Chapter one also articulated the research aims and questions that guided the carrying out of the study. This chapter also looked at the issues that the research could not adequately cover or address as limitations to the study. The chapter ended with a brief delineation of the chapters making up the body of the research paper.

Chapter 2 of this study placed the research within the socio-cultural context of Johannesburg, South Africa. In this chapter it was highlighted that the prevalence of crime and violence in Johannesburg has an adverse effect on children's education and development. In this chapter it was also revealed that the 'culture of violence' that is manifest in South African society has its roots in the colonial legacy of apartheid. It was also shown that this violence can also be attributed to the struggle for emancipation that characterized the pre- 1994 period. Chapter 2 noted the disturbing fact that this violence has become 'normalised' and has survived the attainment of democracy and is a prominent feature of contemporary South African society. It was also highlighted that this violence has proliferated into South African schools. Efforts have been made to curb this violence in schools to no avail.

Chapter 2 also focused on the introduction of Outcome Based Education (OBE) as a means to curb the challenges imposed on society by the apartheid education system. The chapter emphasised that the new student centered curriculum was introduced as a remedy to the apartheid education system. The study also noted with regret the anomalies and challenges that impacted the implementation of the OBE system. Chapter 2 portrayed the lack of teacher preparedness and training and a lack of implicit implementation methodology on the part of the educator as the most notable of these challenges. Chapter 2 set the stage for coming up with alternative teaching methods to assist in the delivery of the OBE curriculum and also to intervene in school violence. This was duly achieved in

Chapter 3, which proposed the use of dramatic play as a pedagogical technique in the classroom.

Chapter 3 deconstructed the concept of play. It analysed the theoretical and practical underpinnings of play in an educational context. The chapter traced play theory from early notions to contemporary theories. Emphasis was placed on the cognitive and therapeutic role of play. The chapter presented the case that a child who is emotionally well is better prepared for intellectual learning than one who is not. The argument was carried further through the presentation of theories that showcase the existence of other forms of intelligence that are not alluded to in traditional definitions of intelligence. MI and EI were presented as alternative and more comprehensive intelligence measurements as compared to IQ. Chapter 3 raised the argument that play can enhance ones emotional intelligence. It also argued that through dramatic play an educator can discover each individual learner's form of intelligence.

Chapter 3 also emphasised the difficulty of arriving at a generalized definition of play and the noted that any definition of play is subject and context based. It also looked at the types of play activity that are characteristic of a classroom setting. This exploration led to the analysis (and preference) of dramatic play as the most suitable form of play to employ in addressing the cognitive and psychological needs of children in the 5 to 8 age group in a classroom situation. Chapter 3 concluded by presenting characteristic features of dramatic play that render it useful both as an educational and therapeutic device within an educational setting.

Chapter 4 served as a guideline and gave some possible methods and techniques for teachers interested in using dramatic play within the curriculum. It demonstrated the role of the teacher in planning, designing and implementing of a lesson using dramatic play. In this chapter emphasis was placed on the importance of proper planning and consideration of children's, intellectual, emotional and social learning when designing a lesson plan. It highlighted how a teacher's knowledge of her learners and curriculum objectives combine in coming up with a relevant dramatic play lesson.

Successful teaching and learning of any subject within the curriculum is highly dependent on the teacher. One of the limitations in the implementation of C2005 under the OBE system was that teachers were never trained beforehand or given an opportunity to interrogate the teaching ideologies and philosophies that they were being asked to apply in the classroom. The teacher has to be first convinced of the merits of a particular philosophy, method or style of teaching before she is genuinely compelled to apply it. Hence in trying to ensure that teachers implement a student-centered approach as stipulated by the new curriculum, an attempt should be made to 'sell' the philosophy to the teachers. This includes showcasing its necessity and relevance and how it fares in terms of teaching and learning in comparison to the teaching philosophy the teacher would be currently using. An educator ought to be given the opportunity to reflect on her practice, and be given a basis to widen her focus and to attend to what would be lacking. It is essential to provide teachers with the opportunity to develop sound constructs of interactive classroom methods such as drama, and play to justify their using them. This can be achieved in teacher training institutions.

Schools should be seen as places where students and educators work together towards a mutual goal. Open and honest communication is expected and differences between people are respected and appreciated. Cooperation is the norm, rather than competition. This research has showcased how dramatic play can create such an enabling environment in the classroom. Dramatic play also creates conducive environments that enable learners to overcome constraints imposed on them by society and interact consistently and openly with both their teacher and peers. This is especially imperative in the South African context where children are susceptible to violence on a daily basis.

There is a general lack of time for teachers to initiate and complete play activities in the view of time limits and curriculum expectations. This is in view of the fact that in most instances the play process takes time to plan, initiate and build up to a logical end whilst simultaneously making sure that it enables learning of curriculum subjects. However, one should note that its use should not be confined to singular 'time periods' for specific curriculum subjects. Rather play lessons can go astride learning areas linking for example

Life Orientation to Languages to Mathematics then to Natural sciences. Moreover, the process does not have to be limited to a single day activity, but a thematic learning area can be explored through play over a number of days with the play developing with each new day.

Moyles (1989) succinctly sums up the role of dramatic play within South African primary schools when she says that,

> The role of the teacher is to ensure that, in the school context, learning is on-going and developmental in itself and encompasses factors in addition to the purely intellectual. The emotional, social, physical, aesthetic and moral combine with the intellectual to incorporate a total construct of learning. Each is interdependent and interrelated to produce a rational, divergent thinking person who has powers of problem solving and questioning in an infinite variety of situations and performances. (1989; 32)

This study was a theoretical analysis of the possibilities of integrating dramatic play within the South African primary school curriculum. Literature based theory alone cannot be sufficient confirmation of the crucial role that dramatic play serves in the emotional and cognitive development of children. There is a need for substantiating the claims that this study makes. Further research ought to be action based and focus on the practical implementation of dramatic play in classrooms in contemporary South Africa.

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