THROUGH ROLE PLAY TO SELF-AWARENESS: USING PROCESS DRAMA AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL AROUND ADOLESCENT PEER PRESSURE AND DRUG ABUSE

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to raise self-awareness and articulate issues pertaining to adolescent peer pressure and drug abuse through the lens of process drama in South African primary schools. The target group for this project was grade 7C learners of St Theresa's Convent Primary School in Coronationville, Johannesburg. The study's framework is underpinned by Drama in Education, Theatre for Development and Theatre of the Oppressed theories. The study used a participatory workshop case study approach within the qualitative action research paradigm. Data was gathered through focus group discussions and participant observation. Research instruments included interview guides, questionnaire and an observation checklist, and data was also digitally recorded. Mantle of the expert and teacher-in-role were the overarching process drama techniques essential for participants to be able to negotiate, make decisions and solve challenges in drug abusing circumstances. This research findings show how the safety of process drama through the creation of "dramatic elsewhere", distancing, framing and role playing works towards constructive social change. The research notes that, transformation is not an event, but a process which is dependent on encounters, relationships and learning. Findings call for efforts to address adolescent substance abuse, engage the wider population and not just empower the concerned adolescents. The research recommends that process drama be emphasised, because of the dynamic and constantly changing nature of adolescents and the drugs that they use.

Keywords process drama, role playing, adolescent drug abuse, peer pressure, self-awareness, communication tool

This research report reflects on a drug abuse prevention intervention research project which is intended to raise awareness about peer pressure and drug abuse among adolescents at St Theresa's Convent Primary School in Coronationville, Johannesburg. According to Hartshorne

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(2012), St Theresa's Convent School is one of Johannesburg's oldest schools having being opened on October 1, 1887 as a girls' school by the Holy Family Sisters in Johannesburg, but boys were enrolled in later years. The school's vision is to develop and guide children on their journey to responsible adulthood. The school also endeavours to inculcate Christian values and creates a conducive learning environment in which to develop children holistically.

Coronationville is a place with many drug-related problems. Despite being located a stone's throw from Sophia Town Police Station the estate has become a hotspot of crime, social problems and drug abuse. Clifford (2010) points out that Coronationville is one of the joint communities which recently held a protest march through their suburbs under the auspices of the Johannesburg West Community Action Group (JWCAG). This followed the recent increase in adolescent suicides and drug-related crimes in the area.

Motumi (2012) reported that children between the ages of 12 to 21 had gone missing in the Coloured townships of Newlands, Claremont, Westbury, Sophia Town, Bosmont, Noordgesig, Riverlea, Eldorado Park and Ennerdale. The children, according to the report have been forced into prostitution and drug abuse by being lured into houses called "Lolly Lounges". This name is derived from the glass pipe / popper bottle used to smoke substances like crystal meth and tic which is shaped like a lollipop. The houses are used as drug hubs by criminals and gangsters.

Motumi (2012) quotes Frazil Carrim, a former drug addict in Coronationville, who notes that such lounges have been in existence for over ten years in some areas. Motumi (2012) further indicated that different types of drugs including Heroin and Mandrax are consumed in these houses. Young girls are taken in and initiated into drugs only to be used to "trap" men to spend money on drugs through prostitution. Additionally, in 2012, Motumi also reported that four lounges in Coronationville were closed and twelve of the fourteen girls who had gone missing were rescued.

There is an urgent need for the sensitisation of adolescents to drug abuse in Coronationville. This study explored ways in which process drama can be used to enhance adolescents' self-esteem and develop healthy decision-making skills as an antidote to peer pressure and subsequent drug abuse.

Statement of the Problem

Borkum (1999) citing Barber (1996) argues that South Africa is becoming a major link in the global drug trafficking chain. This is substantiated by SANCA (1998) which asserts that South Africa is the world's largest consumer of Mandrax. An aerial survey showed that nearly 83 000 hectares of land in South Africa is used for the cultivation of Dagga (Taljaard, 1996). This could be linked to Potterton and Northmore's (2006) assertion that "Dagga is the most abused drug by adolescents in schools…" (p.5). Stevens and Smith (2001) observe that smoking is on the increase in children aged 12-13.

These statistics and observations reveal that South Africa is a country not only rife with economic and political problems, but also with the societal problems associated with a well-developed and growing drug culture. As a result, substance abuse is recognised as one of the greatest health and social problems in South Africa. It has wide ranging consequences which include; physical debilitation, chronic impairment, injuries, marital and family problems, child abuse, violence in families and communities, trauma, depression, crime, traffic accidents, social misery and economic costs (Draft White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997). In addition, Schickerling (1992) asserts that substance abuse is ever increasing and is costing South Africa more than R2 billion a year in fatal accidents, hospitalisation, crime, productivity loss and the break-up of families. This is substantiated by Potterton and Northmore (2006) who argue that in South African communities more and more people are turning to drugs and other harmful substances irrespective of wealth, education or social standing.

According to Cotton (1998), South Africa is in a drug crisis and unless something is done, one third of the next South African generation will be lost to drugs. Cotton (1998) highlights that although drugs and drug cultures are not a new phenomenon, the availability and prevalence of drugs has never been so high in South Africa and the world at large. Naidoo (2012) confirmed this when he reported that on July 25 the Crime Intelligence Unit confiscated drug manufacturing equipment and drugs with a street value of approximately R100 million from three houses in Johannesburg. Hence, Cotton's (1998) warning that, "South Africans are standing on the brink of a national tragedy larger than apartheid" (p. 36). As much as Cotton's description of the adolescent drug scene in South Africa may be an exaggeration of the problem, the harsh reality is that the issue of adolescent drug abuse can no longer be ignored.

Rocha-Silva, De Miranda and Erasmus (1999) observe that one in five South African adolescents between the age of 10 and 21 years who are living in disadvantaged communities have used alcohol or other drugs inappropriately. Moleko and Visser (1999) argue that children as young as 10 years use drugs, and that there is an urgent need to extend drug abuse prevention intervention projects to primary school learners. Robertson (1997) underscore that prevention intervention programmes should also focus on substance abuse, such as the under-age use of legal drugs like alcohol and cigarettes. Hence, this study targeted a selected group of 20 learners aged between 11 and 13 years from St Theresa's Convent Primary School in Coronationville.

Wagner and Waldron (2001) believe that during adolescence, drug use generally progresses both in terms of the frequency and quantity of use as well as the number of different drugs used. Vulnerable adolescents in hotspot places of drug abuse like Coronationville fall under the target market for these drugs. South African schools are vulnerable to substance abuse since drug use by learners is increasing in both rural and urban areas (Potterton & Northmore, 2006). This is squarely against St Theresa's vision of developing and accompanying children on their journey to responsible adulthood. The school's endeavour to inculcate Christian values and create a pleasant learning environment in which to develop children holistically is also at stake. Therefore there is an urgent need for the sensitisation of adolescents on negative peer pressure and drug abuse in Coronationville which has informed this study.

Research Objectives

The study was framed within the following objectives:

- ❖ To examine how process drama can be used as an effective communication tool to raise self-awareness about peer pressure and drug abuse among adolescents aged between 11 and 13 from St Theresa's Convent Primary School in western Johannesburg.
- ❖ To investigate ways in which process drama can be used to enhance self- esteem and develop healthy decision-making skills as an antidote to adolescent peer pressure.

Motivation for the Study

The research was motivated by Itin's (1999) assertion that, experiential learning is more effective in changing beliefs than legislation. To read or hear about the dangers of drug abuse is not the same as experiencing it, and it is often only through actual experience that understanding and change can be achieved. Goffman (1959) argues that through role taking, one is likely to experience a different perspective.

Rooth (1995) posits that knowledge is never a concrete thing presented by an expert to the unknowing. Rather, true knowledge comes from experiential learning where learners are responsible for and active in the production of their knowledge and the power of learning lies in them. As such, this paper argues that interactive learning is a critical tool to raise self-awareness about adolescent peer pressure and drug abuse among learners. Peer pressure and drug abuse awareness cannot be communicated to adolescents when the pedagogy used sees them as passive vessels waiting to be filled by an educator. Process drama becomes important because it aids learners to be active and responsible when choosing ways of increasing resistance to negative peer pressure and drug abuse.

The contention, according to Taljaard (1996), is that there are no real fundamental prevention mechanisms which have been introduced in South Africa to reduce the rate of drug abuse. Hence, he argues that there is an urgent need to come up with alternative prevention intervention strategies to address the challenges posed by adolescent substance abuse. This study explored the possibilities of process drama as a prevention intervention strategy. Botvin and Griffin in Wagner and Waldron (2001) also note that, the challenge to prevention for researchers has been to identify promising intervention approaches. Borkum (1999) argues that current drug prevention programmes are seen as ineffective by adolescents, particularly those in their early teens who express a need to be listened to and taken more seriously. Process drama can solve the challenges of the "top-bottom" communication strategy because it promotes the shifting of the power structure between the researcher/teacher and the learner/ participant. Hence, "listening" to those directly affected.

Boon and Plastow (2004) note that process drama, like theatre, has the power to engage actively, productively and meaningfully with a wide range of issues; from extreme poverty to AIDS, drug abuse, violence, sexual and racial intolerance and human rights. A most pertinent point here is that, more often than not, researchers concentrate on the effects in an attempt to address contentious social issues ignoring the root cause. This project intends

to raise awareness of a possible cause (peer pressure) and the subsequent effect (drug abuse) among Coronationville adolescents using process drama as a medium of communication. The choice to work with adolescents was prompted by the realisation that at this stage of human development, adolescents begin to form independent attitudes towards the world they live in.

Literature Review
Process drama

Process drama, as perceived by the British drama educators, Heathcote & Bolton (1995), is a sequence of structured improvisations that explore a central theme or guiding concept. The process of improvisation means that a topic is under constant review, and every participant is author of their own work within a collective statement governed by cultural parameters (Taylor, 2000). Expanding on this definition, O'Neill (1995, p. 7) views process drama as a "complex dramatic encounter", proceeding without a script, lacking a separate audience, whose outcome is unpredictable. She goes on to explain that, in process drama, the outcome of the journey is the journey itself; the experience is its own destination. The dramatic encounters may include games and activities, individual work role, small group improvisations and role-play, and even full class improvisations.

This redefinition aligns with Bowell and Heap (2001) who define process drama as a term used to describe the genre in which performance to an external audience is absent, while presentation to the internal audience is essential. This means that, in process drama, the onlookers are also actors in the event (O'Neill, 1995).

It is important to remember that process drama is not a play or a skit and that there is no audience. Process drama is much more like a game, with all participants actively involved during the process (O'Toole & Lepp, 2000). Negotiating, renegotiating and reflection are the cornerstone of process drama (Bowell & Heap, 2001; O'Neill, 1995; O'Toole & Lepp, 2000). Therefore, process drama is an offshoot of Drama in Education which borrows from the principles of Drama in Education as propounded by Bolton (1998). According to Bolton, Drama in Education should aim for internal actions that have significance for change in understanding. The drama teacher should build the drama using what children already know, through a selection of the dramatic elements that suit the learners' needs.

Adolescents, peer pressure and drug abuse

Cotton (1998) notes that because of individual and cultural differences, the age at which adolescence begins varies from 11-13 years of age, and the end of this stage of life varies from 17-21 years of age. It is the 11-13 years age group that this study is targeting. Potterton & Northmore (2006) remind us that peer pressure plays a fundamental role in adolescent drug abuse. They highlighted that adolescents who have not tried drugs before are more likely to start during times of transition from pre-adolescence to adolescence, in order to cope with stress.

According to O'Toole, Burton and Plunkett (2005), negative peer pressure may lead to drug abuse when adolescents use drugs during this transition in order to fit in with a desired group of friends. Cooling Conflict project used drama and peer education as a tool to manage conflict and bullying in Australian schools (O'Toole et al, 2005). Because of its success, the project was adopted in Sweden and New South Wales. Cooling Conflict puts the responsibility into the hands of the students themselves, thus empowering them, inviting them and challenging them to change the situation in their schools.

Unlike Cooling Conflict which is a long term research project on the effectiveness of drama as a conflict management tool, this is a strictly limited project which focuses on using process drama to raise self-awareness about peer pressure and drug abuse among adolescents and to increase self-esteem and positive decision making skills. Blake (2007) describes self-esteem as how we feel about ourselves and how in control of our lives we feel. This includes being able to stand up for what one believes in and living according to those beliefs. This study used process drama to explore Ross's (1994) road blocks to self-esteem such as inferiority, fear, worry, guilt and anger.

Rizwi (2010) relates drug abuse to taking a performance enhancement drug for a non-medical effect. Use of the drug may either be licit or illicit. In most cases, the drug interferes with a person's ability to make sound decisions with the result that the person is unable to be law-abiding and self-supporting. In the same vein, Searll (1995, p. 68), describes drug abuse as "…..the excessive or addictive use of mood-altering drugs for non-medical purposes." Thus, drug abuse refers to more than the use of drugs that are classified as illegal. The reasons for adolescents acquiring drugs in order to experience a non- medical effect is the thrust of this study, hence, the use of process drama as a medium to explore attitudes to peer pressure and the dangers of using illegal drugs in South Africa.

Practical uses of process drama

O'Connor (2003) explored how process drama assisted people to reflect on attitudes and behaviours associated with mental illness in a Maori community in rural New Zealand. He used process drama to investigate how attitudes and behaviours could change mental health perceptions in communities. This paper rests squarely on the same conviction about human behaviour and attitude. Specifically, it posits that human behaviour is formed, enacted and relearnt. The research project used reflection as the relearning stage. Nevertheless, the above position differs from O'Connor's in that it conscientized adolescents about a possible cause and its effect when using drama as a communication tool in the classroom.

Bolton (1998) points out that Heathcote's (1995) pioneering work in drama in education in England was developed to stimulate student participation in the classroom. Heathcote's (1995) teacher-in-role is used to empower learners through active participation in their learning when they create roles for themselves. Bowell and Heap (2001) corroborate this when they note that process drama, particularly with teacher-in-role as a central strategy is a powerful means by which teachers can empower learners. The possibility that teacher-in-role could be one of the most effective ways of managing the power shift between teachers and pupils in the context of a fictional world is shared by this research project.

However, for this study teacher-in-role was complimented by hot seating as a way of empowering adolescents to raise their awareness about peer pressure and drug abuse. O'Neill (1995) posits that process drama gives access to "dramatic elsewhere" in which students become empowered when they experience new roles and fresh relationships. This research focused on how the safety of process drama through the creation of "dramatic elsewhere", distancing, framing and role playing, works towards raising self-awareness.

Methodology

The research examined how process drama could be used as a communication tool to raise the level of self- awareness about peer pressure and drug abuse among adolescents. The target group for this research was 20 learners aged between 11 and 13 years from St Theresa's Convent Primary School in Coronationville. The study as qualitative action research was characterised by a series of workshops in the classroom with adolescents using process drama techniques to explore peer pressure and substance

abuse. During the workshops, the researcher worked as a facilitator who, based on the findings, reflected, re-planned, reviewed and re-organized the workshops. The class was divided into three groups. Each group was expected to find similarities in their individual actions or mimes from the "Action and Name" game so that they combined them to come up with one freeze-frame (Tableau) of their understanding of drug abuse. This means that each of the three groups was going to describe and explain their understanding of adolescent drug abuse through a freeze frame. The data collection techniques included qualitative video analysis, action learning/participant observation, research journal, hot seating and reflective writing.

Hot seating

This is when players question or interrogate a role to find out information, ascertain why the role player behaved in a certain way, or offer role advice (O'Toole & Lepp, 2000). This is corroborated by Ahirirwe (2012) when he highlights that, under the technique of hot seating, a role player is questioned by the group about his / her background behaviour and motivation. Ahirirwe also notes that hot seating has its origins in Theatre of the Oppressed, which is a brainchild of Augusto Boal.

This study used hot seating as an interview technique to gather information. Students and the researcher assumed roles in the improvised performances and answered questions from others whilst in role. Roles may be hot-seated individually, in pairs or in small groups. For this research, the hot seated character would take the centre stage in a chair in front of the class in a semi-circle. Questioning at this stage is crucial and the type of questions asked should not be close-ended questions (Boal, 1982). These are questions which can be answered by a 'Yes' or 'No' response. The teacher is encouraged to take on the role of a facilitator to ensure constructive questioning by posing open-ended questions which provoke the hot-seated role player's imagination in order to get more information.

Yin (1994) argues that quantitative research should be combined with qualitative research approaches for a better understanding of the case being studied. This project was treated as a collaborative process between the researcher and informants or participants of the research.
Most of the data for this research was gleaned from answers to hot seating questions. It was hoped that learners' emotional engagement through this experience would enable learning. Participants were regarded as knowledgeable role players while the researcher took different roles as

facilitator, catalyst, observer, and/or participant during the hot seating sessions.

Action learning/Participant observation

Participant observation refers to the understanding of the participants' activities through first hand observation while participating in the process as facilitator or while in role. Reeler (2005) suggests the following structure to an action learning process: Action, reflection, learning, and planning. Under action, the researcher, as a participant carried out a pre-planned interaction which encouraged St Theresa's Primary School learners to participate during the drug and substance abuse intervention workshops. It was during such workshops that the researcher, as participant/facilitator obtained learners' attitudes towards peer pressure and drug abuse through first hand observation while in character. This research tool proved to be effective since learners enjoyed the close interaction with the researcher as teacher and opened up to provide answers.

Research journal

Taylor (2000) describes a researcher as a theory generator, critical thinker, risk taker and flexible facilitator. A researcher's journal should be a very effective resource and research tool which helps the researcher to meet the above description. For this project, the journal documented my analytical individual response and critique of the work covered during workshops. I also recorded my observations, challenges as well as developments in the classroom. The journal helped with the basic documentation to support future plans and actions in order to improve the processes of subsequent sessions. Based on reflections from previous workshops, process drama theory was consulted to support alternatives for blunders encountered during the workshops. Description, analysis, theory and self-reflection were the major components of my journal. This journal was of fundamental importance during the research process because it assisted with future referencing and data analysis after the workshops.

Results and Discussion

This study's findings show that where adolescents do not have a better grasp of substance abuse, they easily indulge in drug-related life-

threatening behaviour. It emerged that, the pedagogy of process drama confronts participants with the decision-making and problem-solving necessary to negotiate the central dilemma of drug abuse. Various process drama techniques were used in the classroom to find out how they can be used to enhance self-esteem and develop healthy decision-making skills among the adolescents. The choice to work with primary school adolescents was motivated by the fact that this early stage of human development is critical as adolescents begin to form independent views about the world they live in.

My key research question was "in what ways can process drama be used as an effective communication tool to raise self-awareness about adolescent peer pressure and drug abuse? Using its various techniques, process drama has vast potential to be used as an effective communication tool around adolescent substance misuse. The capability of the majority of process drama techniques to elicit empathy and allow for the exploration of situations from different perspectives has a major bearing on the enhancement of self-esteem and the development of healthy decision making skills. The democratic and inclusive atmosphere created by drama encourages communication as does the various modes of communication – verbal debate, and questioning, non-verbal embodied modes, and drawing.

With the belief that action results in constructive social change, as opposed to intellectual theorising, this research showed how the safety of process drama through the creation of "dramatic elsewhere", distancing, framing and role playing works towards raising self-awareness on adolescent substance misuse. Metaphorical and symbolical roles were used to distance the subject of drug abuse from the participants both in time and space, but at the same time represent participants' reality. Metaphor protected the adolescent learners, and also served to increase their involvement in the learning process, especially when it was used as a process and not as an end product.

Suspension of disbelief set participants free from their real life worries; hence learners were free to engage with the drama. Boal's (1982) metaxis, a state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different autonomous worlds enabled the participants' engagement with the process drama. Sustaining two different worlds simultaneously enabled the participants to role play and watch themselves at the same time. Process drama's simple role taking was used to give participants ownership of the process and a set of attitudes towards drug abuse that they were able to question at a distance. Ownership meant the shift of power structure within

the classroom, so that participants were able to question and negotiate things without fear of violating the teacher's authority. This ownership was stimulated by the process drama techniques that worked to engage participants at an emotional level.

This research found that O'Neill (1995)'s mantle of the expert and Heathcote (1995)'s teacher-in-role as the overarching process drama techniques are essential for participants to negotiate, make decisions and solve challenges in difficult circumstances. Teacher-in-role is a process convention and teaching strategy where the teacher manages a class from within a drama by taking a role to deepen and extend the students' inquiry and learning (O'Neill (1995). In the same vein, O'Toole & Lepp, (2000) define teacher-in-role as when the drama leaders or teachers take part in role themselves. He or she can help to control what is happening in a crowd scene by finding a way that will make the drama more tense and exciting. For example, one can come into a scene with an unexpected message. Put simply, the teacher / facilitator assumes a role in the dramatic world and relates to the pupils as that role in the drama rather than a teacher (Ahirirwe 2012). The effectiveness of teacher-in-role resides in the skill of the teacher and his / her ability to solicit participation from a group used to conventional passive learning. The teacher's usual position of an authority with all the answers is supposed to be subverted by becoming a fellow explorer involved in solving challenges posed in the fictional dramatic world created by the group.

Through mantle of the expert; everything during the research workshops was achieved by means of situation, role and task (Heathcote, 1984; O'Neill, 1995). Each learner carries a particular body of knowledge, level of expertise, authority and responsibility (Bowell & Heap, 2001). Mantle of the expert involves the creation of a fictional world where learners assume the roles of experts in a given field. Participants become characters endowed with specialist knowledge relevant to the situation of the drama.

The situation is usually task- oriented so that expert knowledge or understanding is required to perform the task. As the teacher (researcher), I created a 'situation' which was gradually claimed by the students (participants) as their own. My introduction of the workshop (pretext) was supposed to convince participants to believe that they were social and intellectual experts (role) of their own challenges. Thus, as a result, they were expected to negotiate solutions to the challenges of adolescent substance misuse (task). Mantle of the expert means, as a researcher, rather than distancing myself, looking in and directing the flow of events from outside, I was expected to create a role for myself in the improvised "fictional world"

school consultation day (O'Neill 1995). Mantle of the expert is based on the premise that treating children as responsible experts in a designated field increases their engagement and confidence (Ahirirwe, 2012).

During the course of this research, pupils enrolled themselves as specialists in adolescent drug abuse in South Africa. The social positions that learners chose for themselves support the fact that children appreciate that the power to control and change challenging situations lies in the hands of adults. Pupils created roles for themselves ranging from drug addiction counsellors, social workers, psychology professors, doctors, lecturers, teachers and health ministers. As a facilitator, my duty was to guide the process, stepping in and out of character as necessary, providing encouragement and motivation to the 'expert' learners (Ahirirwe, 2012; Heathcote, 1984).

Through the use of the process drama techniques, most participants started to develop positive self-esteem and healthy decision-making skills during the discussions that role play aroused. These techniques stimulated reflection and the gaining of new insights in as far as substance abuse is concerned. Because participants assumed some roles in the drama, they went through an internal process of change which ushered a change in their understanding of drug abuse.

The findings indicate that most process drama techniques require the presence of a facilitator for process drama to have a major impact in stimulating awareness around substance misuse and the enhancement of positive self-esteem. It was noted that the success of all the six process drama workshops resided in the skill of the facilitator and his ability to solicit participation and encourage dialogue among individuals with different perspectives so that diverse options could be explored. In addition, Rooth (1995) warns us that, facilitation is not merely a technique for running workshops, but a belief that knowledge is gained through participation in the workshop.

Due to the complex nature of role play within process drama, the facilitator took cognizance of ethical considerations so that participants were not exposed to any physical harm or psychological embarrassment during and after the workshop. The ability of the facilitator to notice the mood and energy of the group and decide on the appropriate tasks called for high levels of attention and flexibility during this study (Ahirirwe, 2012). As a result, this research concluded that, transformation is not an event. Rather, it is a process and is dependent on encounters, relationships and learning which these research workshops provided.

Just like many other arts-based prevention intervention projects, this research was concerned with bringing about a change of understanding with a small number of participants rather than with setting up a quantitative research process. The pedagogy of process drama tends to assume that a change in understanding should happen within the learning context. Unfortunately, there is no applied drama and theatre framework for monitoring and evaluation as yet, like those in the social and physical sciences, to gauge the extent of the participants' learning. The arts industry is ill- equipped when it comes to monitoring and evaluation. There are no indicators to point at tangible outcomes after the project, when the objective is dealing with social transformation of a given group of participants. Knowledge acquisition does not amount to behavioural change. There is a possibility that, perhaps participants may have enjoyed a good time during the "edutainment" process rather than a serious and committed engagement with the learning of substance misuse.

Generalising results from a case study might be misleading. The fact that this research was carried out with a group of 20 adolescent participants does not mean that its findings may be generalised to the broader population of adolescents in a different environment and time frame (Ahirirwe, 2012). The adolescent drug abuse situation in Limpopo province, for example, may be different from the one in Gauteng province. The qualitative process drama analysis of the focus group has the potential weakness that misinterpretation (bias) may occur.

Moreover, another limitation was that the study did not allow time for impact assessment and project follow-up workshops. There was limited time within which this research had to be carried out with some workshop meeting times re-scheduled owing to clashes of commitment with the school authorities. The research workshops which were of fundamental importance to this study were carried out in two weeks with 50 minutes per workshop. Since transformation is a process and not an event, the social interaction needed ample time so that new insights could take effect among participants. This time was initially meant for the class's Arts and Culture classes; thus it might not have been enough to stimulate self-awareness around substance abuse for some participants. However, even if there is need to take cognizance of the limitations of this study, such limitations were acceptable especially, in terms of the overall aim of the research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major findings of this research have implications for the role of process drama, not only as a communication tool around adolescent substance misuse in the classroom set up, but on education in general even outside the walls of the classroom. Findings call for efforts to address adolescent substance misuse by engaging the wider population (parents, guardians, and teachers), and not just empowering the concerned adolescents. This provides a greater understanding of the adolescents involved in drug use in South Africa; to assess their needs on a larger scale so that more can be done to meet their needs.

This study also points to the educational role of process drama for a deeper grasp on the part of participants not only about substance abuse, but also their response to the broader community which exposes them to drug misuse. There is an urgent need for parents and other stakeholders to have a better grasp of the implication(s) of adolescent drug abuse on the society at large. Arguably, when adults know about adolescent substance misuse, they are more likely to guard against it.

It emerged during the research that there is a need for more human rights education in South African communities, especially the right to a drug-free life style. South Africa has one of the most comprehensive constitutions as compared to other countries (Mtukwa, 2010), but it appears as if this does not cater for the issue of drug use on the ground. The findings call for a shift in policy towards regulating the use of drugs by adolescents in South Africa. There is need for specific mechanisms to be put into place that are within the reach of adolescents, both within schools and the community. This is relevant in communities that have high levels of adolescent drug abuse such as Coronationville.

Regarding drug prevention intervention programmes which use process drama in schools, there should be enough time to allow for project impact assessment in the form of follow-up workshops. The current available statistics about adolescent drug use in South African schools are inadequate, especially when compared to countries like Britain and the United States of America (Borkum, 1999). The recommendation is to improve the statistics by making better use of organisations such as "Drug Wise" who are already working in the schools to facilitate the collection of accurate and relevant data that might help in better understanding of adolescent drug use situations. The use of scare techniques with regard to substance use prevention intervention programmes which has been found to be largely

ineffective with adolescents is still practised in South Africa (Borkum, 1999). The use of drugs by adolescents is a dynamic phenomenon which requires strategies that are not stagnant.

A further recommendation which is linked to this changing pattern of adolescent drug use is that, needs analysis should be done in the schools to assess the needs of the learners so that they can be met. Although there are drug abuse prevention intervention programmes that do empathetically listen to the adolescents they are trying to help, it is recommended that process drama be emphasised because of the dynamic and constantly changing nature of adolescents and the drugs that they use. It is vital that a greater effort is made not only to remain up-to-date with the latest trends in youth drug use culture, but more importantly, to use communication tools such as process drama that engage in open dialogue with the youths and do not negate the importance of their contribution in resolving their own issues and adversities.

Findings indicate that role play gave participants experience in practising a variety of social skills and in discussing, analysing and identifying effective and less effective behaviour strategies (Rooth, 1995). Positive signs of change of drug abuse understanding among participants were shown through sharing their private experiences of drug misuse freely. This freedom of communication also indicated that the pupils were invested in the process of learning through drama and appreciated the opportunity to contribute to their own growth and understanding.

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