

# **Drama as a Tool for Second Language English Acquisition**

**by**

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# **CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This research report aims to discuss a teaching strategy that will aid in the facilitation of the three Learning Programmes for the Grade R or Foundation Phase in schooling. These three Learning Programmes are Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. Action Research was conducted in two classes of Grade R (four to six year olds) learners. The researcher was specifically targeting Second Language English (L2) speakers and had focused on determining the effectiveness of implementing Drama as a teaching strategy for English language acquisition.

In this chapter the background factors to the study, the proposed methodology as well as the concepts related to this research will be presented. This chapter aims to provide the necessary background to the Action Research that was conducted in April 2004.

## **1.2 Background: Factors Giving Rise to the Study**

One of the most controversial debates that South Africa has seen in recent years has been regarding education and education policy. According to Gwalla-Ogisi, N., Nkabinde, Z.& Rodriguez, L. (1998:80) “Along with the transformation of the system is the continuing dialogue and debate about the delivery models that should be employed”.

However, it is not the researcher’s intention to discuss the merits and shortcomings of the current and future education policy but merely to explore the strengths and weaknesses of an additional method of instruction or teaching strategy for the facilitator of the Grade R or Foundation Phase.

The aim is to determine whether this teaching strategy could be used as an alternative tool along with many other approaches in an English Second Language classroom in the Grade R or Foundation Phase. Drama as a teaching strategy will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

There are two factors that the author has identified as obstacles to learning that facilitators deal with everyday in the school environment. These factors are:

1. Lack of teaching resources.
2. Lack of clarity with regard to the kind of facilitator envisaged.

These two factors will be discussed in 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.

### 1.2.1 Lack of Resources

“Few men during their lifetime come anywhere near exhausting the resources dwelling within them. There are deep wells of strength that are never used.” **Richard E. Byrd (1938)**. “Alone: The Classic Polar Adventure”

Available from :

<http://www.ast.leeds.ac.uk/haverah/spaseman/alone7.shtml>

According to Garson (2004:1) “South Africa has 12 million learners, 366 000 teachers and around 28 000 schools - including 390 special needs schools and 1 000 registered private schools”. The majority of South African schools lack adequate resources. Garson (2004:16) claims that education receives a bigger percentage of the national budget than most other countries. “This year education received R59.7-billion, amounting to 24% of non-interest expenditure. Although it sounds like a lot, it never seems to be enough to go around”. School buildings, facilities, stationery, textbooks, not to mention computers, are scarce.

Classrooms are overflowing and effective education is a daily challenge for teachers. Garson (2004:19) stresses that the greatest challenges lie in the “poorer, rural provinces like the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. In the more affluent provinces like Gauteng and the Western Cape, schools are

generally better resourced”. The limited resources but ample classroom or outside space are two of the main factors that prompted the author’s research of this teaching strategy and the benefits for the learner and teacher alike.

### 1.2.2 Lack of Clarity: The Kind of Facilitator Envisaged

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.”

**William A. Ward**

Available from: <http://williamarthurward.com/>

In addition to the lack of teaching resources, another factor that is perceived as an issue relevant to this study is that Outcomes-based Education (OBE) is a relatively “foreign” manner of instruction for most teachers. In 1998, the father of American Outcomes-based Education, William Spady visited South Africa for the second time. He stated, “If political resistance from the Christian right wing spelt the doom of OBE in the USA, then the sheer deprivation of resources and inherited inequalities would damn OBE success in South Africa” (Jansen, 1999:13).

An Outcomes-based Education approach to teaching is often contradictory to the education and training that many facilitators received while at school and when training to become facilitators. Facilitators feel uncomfortable and uncertain when implementing new methods of instruction such as an OBE approach.

It is the author’s observation that educators are still uncertain (if not more confused) of their roles and responsibilities in an Outcomes-based classroom. Because the facilitator is the messenger and stimulus, the input contributes to the success of, lack of and type of learning. The facilitator inspires, encourages, guides, assesses and moderates the learning climate and the learners in it. The facilitator cannot be held responsible for the individual's cognitive processes but is responsible for providing input that can be converted

into intake in a productive learning environment that is conducive to Outcomes- based Education and Training (OBET).

Facilitators may feel uncomfortable when implementing new methods of instruction such as an OBE approach. This is not due to lack of enthusiasm, inability to change or a negative attitude of the facilitator it is more likely based on uncertainty on how to approach the task. Facilitators often resort to their experiences when conducting facilitation.

A facilitator needs to be a “chameleon” regarding teaching methodologies and the implementation thereof. Frequently experienced facilitators/teachers are trapped in an “automatic pilot” approach and feel uncomfortable when expected to implement new strategies and techniques. This is apparent with South Africa’s OBET policy that has left a number of facilitators in a bewildered state. There is evidence of this uncertainty in the many television programmes, such as “Each one; Teach one” (SABC 3) that aim to unravel the mystery of the jargon and approaches available in the highly evolving classroom.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Based on the two obstacles to learning that have been identified in the above section namely, lack of teaching resources and lack of clarity, the author will attempt to highlight a possible solution or tool to address these issues.

Therefore, the author would like to propose that Drama could be considered as a teaching strategy that would be a suitable tool when facilitating a Second Language English classroom; with the intention of meeting all of the outcomes related to the Grade R (these outcomes are included in Chapter Two). This mini-dissertation aims to highlight an additional tool for all facilitators that could ultimately enable the learners to achieve their outcomes and benefit from the skills acquired and the learning process as a whole.

## 1.4 Research Questions

This study will focus on the following research question:

- How could Drama as a teaching strategy facilitate L2 English acquisition?

This question is divided into the following sub-questions:

- Is Drama as a teaching strategy relevant and suitable to an OBE Grade R language classroom?
- How do second language speakers react to Drama activities and techniques in a L2 English language classroom?
- How could Drama as a teaching strategy advance the achievement of the stipulated Learning Programme Outcomes?

## 1.5 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this study is to attempt to provide answers to the research questions above. Through the interpretation of the data conducted and the observations of the learners and their experience of the lessons, the research questions will be addressed and conclusions will be drawn. The theoretical framework will facilitate the analysis of the data.

This study aims to discuss a strategy that will lead to the following objectives:

- To ensure that Drama as a tool is an accessible and practical method for all facilitators (regardless of Speech and Drama training).
- To promote natural, communication-based activities in an OBE classroom.
- To establish the benefits of instructing in the L2, i.e. English.
- To dispel the fear of using Drama as a tool in an OBE classroom.

The ultimate objective is to create an awareness of viewing Drama as a teaching strategy for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the Grade R and Foundation Phase.

## 1.6 Methodology

By positioning the research in a qualitative paradigm with Action Research as a research design, prepared original lesson plans were conducted and the responses and observations were noted in the form of diary entries and then these diary entries were analysed. Action Research includes the following four steps:

**1) Identifying the problem (What is the problem?)**

Is Drama as a teaching strategy relevant and suitable to an OBE Grade R language classroom?

**2) Planning (What is my solution?)**

Using Drama as a teaching strategy in an L2 English classroom.

**3) Acting (How I acted upon my plan?)**

Facilitated workshops at two primary schools and record observations in the form of diary entries.

**4) Reflecting (What happened?)**

Will reflect in Chapter Four.

The sample will be drawn from two public primary schools in the same area. Both groups will be exposed to Drama as a teaching strategy for four lessons of forty minutes each. The author will facilitate the classes and use the same material on both groups. The selected schools are Laerskool Mooifontein and Edleen Primary. Both schools are situated in Kempton Park on the East Rand of Johannesburg.

The Action Research will be recorded in the form of diaries and the observations and impressions of the facilitator/researcher will be interpreted. Qualitative research methods, such as diaries and observations, will be used because it is inductive in nature. The learners' response to the activities and their interactions with other group members and the facilitator will be the source of information.

### 1.6.1 The Literature Review

The second chapter will focus on relevant theorists in the Drama in Education and English Second Language acquisition domains. Theories and literature necessary for the interpretation of this study will be discussed and referred to in subsequent chapters.

### 1.6.2 The Action Research Study

The research methodology and data collection will be discussed in the third and fourth chapter. The selection of schools, the sample and recording of data from the two schools (in diary form) will be provided. In chapter five conclusions and recommendations will be made after an interpretation of the Action Research.

## 1.7 Definitions of Terminology

It is important that certain terminology and concepts are clarified. If definitions of terms are unclear, concepts may be interpreted differently and possibly misunderstood. Even though this mini-dissertation is more narrative in style, there is still some jargon and certain concepts that need clarification when discussing a specific field or area such as Applied Linguistics. The concepts that the author has included and linked to Drama are: Acquisition versus Learning, Communicative Approach and Communicative Competence as these concepts are considered the most important and relevant to this age group and to the language learning environment.

### 1.7.1 Acquisition versus Learning

This is perhaps one of the most fundamental distinctions made in language learning (Chomsky's distinction between Competence and Performance is another). According to Krashen (1987:10) acquisition is a process similar to

the way “children develop ability in their first language”. It is a sub-conscious process and the learners are often not aware of the acquisition of grammatical rules etc. but are aware that they are using the language for communication and the negotiation of meaning. Using Drama as a strategy, learners will acquire the second language sub-consciously. An example of this would be how children develop their first language seemingly without effort. First they “absorb” the language, contain it and then finally produce it - similar to a sponge.

Language learning refers to “conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them” (Krashen, 1987:10). Learning includes learning about grammar, vocabulary and structure explicitly. This may include rote learning. Most people experience this at school such as in a foreign language classroom. The ultimate objective in a language classroom is that learners acquire the language. Which is why, for the purpose of this study, language acquisition through the use of Drama activities is promoted.

### 1.7.2 Communicative Approach

This approach to language acquisition emphasises “real communication” situations and meaningful interactions rather than repetitions. This is an active rather than a passive approach. Learners are encouraged to participate in conversations and aim for speech fluency rather than accuracy. The learners make sense of the language from the immediate context and the interactions they are involved in. This approach has similar characteristics to the Natural Approach and the use of Drama as a teaching strategy. Using Drama as a teaching strategy is one form of the Communicative Approach.

This is the approach that language facilitators should aim to implement. This approach upholds the principles of OBE, for example focusing on acquiring new knowledge (such as expanding vocabulary ) and skills (language structure and use in a particular context) versus being able to write and recognise



written words but not being able to verbally communicate in a particular language.

### 1.7.3 Communicative Competence

The word “Competence” is ambiguous. It is a term that is used in both the Education and Linguistic Fields. “Competent” versus “Not Yet Competent” as an overall outcome in the Education Field is not related to Communicative Competence or any other Applied Linguistic competence. This is not the “competence” that this mini-dissertation will discuss.

This discussion refers to different types of competence found in the Applied Linguistic Field, for example: Grammatical competence, Stylistic competence, Linguistic competence, Pragmatic competence, Strategic competence, Discourse competence, Lexical competence, and Phonological competence.

Hymes cited in Smith (1994:12) viewed competence as communicative and included factors such as appropriateness and acceptability in language usage.

According to Ellis (1985: 294) communicative competence “consists of both knowledge of linguistic rules and knowledge of how these rules are used to communicate meanings”. This means that a speaker needs to learn or acquire “what to say” as well as “when” and “how to say it” in a communicative interaction. Content within a suitable context are necessary in order to communicate effectively.

Communicative competence is acquired through “real life” interactions with native speakers. Through Drama as a teaching strategy, it is the language facilitator's responsibility to create many opportunities where learners can exercise various communicative interactions. By being able to adapt the choice of words (such as a formal tone versus slang) to suit the situation the learner will acquire the language in the most advantageous manner. Displaying

Communicative Competence is often the result of acquiring a language through a Communicative Approach.

In brief, with these three terms and Drama as a teaching strategy, i.e. Acquisition versus Learning, Communicative Approach and Communicative Competence, the author is confident that the manner of facilitating and evaluating learners of L2 English will have a different focus. Therefore, these three terms have been used as the basis for this Action Research.

## **1.8 Brief Outline of the Dissertation**

A brief outline of this mini-dissertation is as follows: Chapter One introduces a brief background, pertinent concepts and proposed methodology relevant for this study. Chapter Two includes an overview of key contributors and the teaching strategy that is used in the Action Research as well as a theoretical framework for this study. Chapter Three contains the methodology. The observations and findings are recorded in Chapter Four. Lastly, in Chapter Five research conclusions and recommendations are discussed. Finally, the appendices and references are provided.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

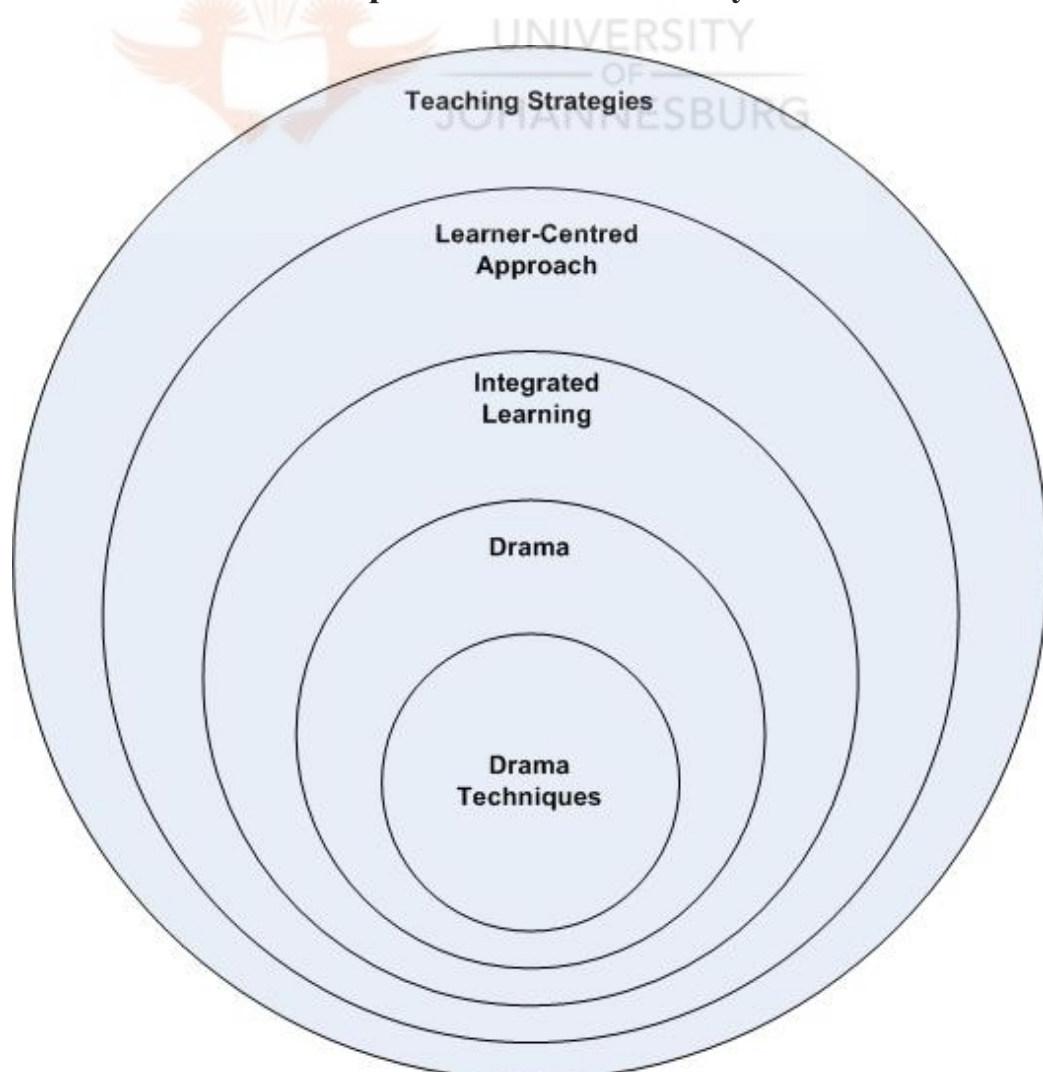
This chapter provides an introduction to this research study. Background factors that prompted this discussion are briefly discussed. The aims and objectives as well as the research questions are stated and concepts are defined. A chapter outline is included to present an overview of the study. Chapter Two will provide the Theoretical Framework pertaining to this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO THE STUDY**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to provide the theoretical framework within which the study has been conducted. This study will focus on Drama as a possible tool or teaching strategy in the Language Learning Area in the Grade R or Foundation Phase. Therefore, the focus of this chapter is to provide all the relevant theory that places “Drama as a teaching strategy” in context. The author will provide an overview of essential concepts and key contributors that have influenced the mini-dissertation and its objective. These concepts should be viewed along with those linguistic concepts as mentioned in Chapter One.

### **2.2 Overview of Concepts Related to the Study**



This diagram or “nest” provides an overview of the key concepts that were identified for the study. Each one of these concepts cannot be viewed in isolation. The author identified that at the “core” of the conducted research was “Drama Techniques” and it fell within a greater framework as represented in the image.

These concepts from the “nest” will be discussed in detail in this chapter and each one of these aspects fall under one of the three key areas below. The order in which these key and related concepts will be addressed in this chapter is:

1. Teaching Strategies.
2. Learning Theories.
3. Drama.

## **2.3 Teaching Strategies**

Any teaching strategy that a facilitator may use has to be used for a specific purpose. There is always a “bigger picture” that the facilitator has to work towards this: “bigger picture” is that according to the Revised National Curriculum Statement there are three Learning Programmes: Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills in the Foundation Phase.

There are numerous effective teaching strategies available to the facilitator of the Grade R phase. However, Drama as a teaching strategy is the only teaching strategy that will be highlighted in this mini-dissertation.

### **2.3.1 Drama as a Teaching Strategy**

It is essential that when the term Drama is discussed in this mini-dissertation that there is no misconception. When discussing Drama in an educational context, it is often assumed that the focus will be on refining speech and performance skills (for example; articulation, elocution, projection, movement, costumes etc.). However, for the purpose of this mini-dissertation the author

will be focusing on the methods and principles available to the facilitator. The aim of the Action Research conducted in the two schools was to explore Drama as a teaching strategy for facilitators concerned with the learning area of languages in the Grade R phase. Drama will be defined in more detail in 2.5.

Wessels and Van den Berg (1998:162) suggest that “Classroom drama is any activity where:

- learners are asked to portray the roles of imaginary persons,
- the learners are asked to communicate with other learners in an imaginary situation, and
- the learners remain themselves in situations which are reflections of their everyday world”.

The author is of the opinion that this is a limited and somewhat stereotypical view of Drama’s role and potential value to any classroom, especially a language one, and its learners. Other Drama techniques available for the facilitator will be mentioned in 2.5 although the possibilities and variations of activities are limitless.

The reason Drama could be used as a valid teaching strategy is because its nature is specifically suited to language and arts subjects, for example Second Language English. The facilitator may have stipulated outcomes but they are not always achieved due to the unpredictable nature of interactions. However, in a classroom situation, different children gain unique skills and tools through an assortment of tasks. “This stance is a strong affirmation that drama is a method of teaching capable of stimulating and achieving powerful learning” (Byron, 1986:9).

Therefore, it is essential that the teacher engages in a reflection period at the termination of the class. This reflection will highlight the problems and successes of the activities; facilitator and the learners thus moving towards the stipulated outcomes. The facilitator must be critical and objective to the methodologies and approaches that were used. It is essential to remain creative and resourceful, the tutor gains from the learners and the process as a whole. This means that each time the teaching strategy is used the facilitator should

grow in knowledge and confidence on how to better use it for the learners' advantage.

### 2.3.2 Basic “Rules” for Drama as a Teaching Strategy

Through the use of Drama as a teaching strategy the facilitator will implement activities (as mentioned in 2.5), which would become the link between the Learning Outcomes, Assessment Standards and the Critical and Developmental Outcomes. It is through this teaching strategy that there will be a holistic approach rather than viewing the learning areas as non-related subjects or items.

In order to achieve an integrated approach to teaching and learning, there needs to be a shared knowledge or some guidelines for the facilitator. These “rules” are in addition to many others that are common knowledge to most facilitators. These guidelines act as a structure or compass that the facilitator can use to determine whether the learning activities will be beneficial to the learners and successful as a whole.

According to Byron (1986:22), the medium of Drama; and Drama as a teaching strategy, has basic “laws” (these “laws” have been termed “rules” and have been adapted by the author):

1. Drama explores human actions, attitudes, values and relationships, through a shared fiction, by means of an agreement to pretend. This is related to Bolton's “as if” belief.
2. This fiction operates in the present tense, in ‘now’ time: participants (class and teacher) engage with the events of the drama as they are happening.
3. Drama is examined from a dual viewpoint, firstly from the viewpoint where we “become” or “represent” the people in the drama and secondly from our own viewpoint – as people making and reflecting on the interaction i.e. both as spectator and participant.

4. In Drama as a teaching strategy the primary medium of expression is the person. The learner's body and voice is the instrument. Practice and opportunity will develop the control of this medium. This is related to the types of exercises that are conducted in a traditional extra-mural Speech and Drama class such as voice exercises and tongue-twisters etc.
5. Drama activities should occur in a controlled, safe environment. An established set of rules should determine the boundaries and ethos of the classroom. When learners feel safe they are more likely to express themselves in various ways.

As it is stated above in "rule" number five, rules assist the learning environment and process. Rules do not need to be explicitly stated upfront with the learners (this is the case referring to the age group concerned). The rules will become evident through the facilitator's instructions and behaviour during tasks. For example, praising a child for following instructions and pointing the good behaviour out to the rest of the group, is at times more effective than pleading for one learner's attention while reprimanding another.

These are the types of rules that structure the activities with a group of young learners (such as the age group of this mini-dissertation):

1. Look at your friends and at me (facilitator).
2. Listen to your friends and to me (facilitator).
3. Everyone plays all the games.

Another guideline for successful interactions (that most teachers/facilitators use automatically) is "Teacher Talk". This is closely linked to "rule" number two. Because the learning of vocabulary and grammar is the foundation or "building" phase of language acquisition; the teacher should provide activities focusing on vocabulary and grammatical development. After the learners have the "basics" the focus shifts to the development of meaning construction and the negotiation of meaning.

It is possible to compare Teacher Talk to “casting a net”. Teacher Talk is the modifications that teachers make to their language when attempting to “cast a net” of roughly-tuned input. This means that when facilitating “...the questions they [facilitators] ask, the feedback they provide and the types of instructions and explanations they provide can all have an important bearing, not only on the effective management of the classroom, but also on the acquisition by learners of the target language” (Nunan, 2000:7). Thus Teacher Talk is especially important in the language classroom in the Grade R phase because the medium is the message and the learners are acquiring through listening.

Heathcote (1995:26) suggests that the facilitator should use phrases such as,

- “
1. Suppose that ...
  2. If we could...
  3. If people would let us...
  4. I bet if we tried hard we could...”.

Due to the age group the researcher used simpler phrases like:

1. Now let's do...
2. Let's pretend...
3. Okay, now let's see who can...
4. Let's try to...

In addition to the choice of words that are used, the tone of voice and manner of delivery are equally important, when the facilitator gets excited about the prospect of an activity the learners feel the same enthusiasm. Teacher Talk helps to provide a safe, relaxed atmosphere. So, “what is being said” as well as “how it is being said” need to be compatible.

All of the “rules” should structure the tasks and will therefore assist the process by making it more productive and conducive to learning – not restricting, regimenting or inhibiting any of the learners or the activities. It is important that the rules promote a relaxed, safe environment. The facilitator is required to “play along” with all tasks, whether as a “teacher-in-role”



approach or merely to be actively listening and responding to the interactions and activities at hand. The facilitator needs to be completely emerged and engaged in the activities. The class members should feel that the facilitator is part of the imaginary world they have created rather than simply assessing and moderating from the outside. At no stage should the “spell” be broken to reveal a world of “us-versus-him/her”. The above “rules” were followed during all of the lessons at the two schools.

### 2.3.3 Basic Requirements for Drama as a Teaching Strategy

The author suggests that when attempting Drama as a teaching strategy, the basic requirements are:

1. Sufficient time and plenty of space.
2. Uninhibited creativity and use of the imagination.
3. A relaxed, unthreatening atmosphere.
4. Concentration or focus on the task or topic at hand.
5. Support from the class and facilitator before and after the exercise.
6. Enjoyment of the exercise.
7. A critical, constructive reflection and discussion period after the task.

In addition to these components, implementing Drama as a teaching strategy in a class means that the facilitator should be flexible and willing to take risks. Due to the spontaneous nature of drama activities the teacher should not be anxious if the activity changes form and appears disorganised at times. There should always be sufficient time for discussion and reflection to clarify the outcomes. Due to this age group, the outcomes were reflected on in very general or basic terms. The researcher had to be aware of the outcomes and observe whether they were achieved.

Drama is social in nature and therefore involves contact, communication (verbal and non-verbal) and the negotiation of meaning. “The meaning of the drama is built up from the contributions of individuals, and, if the work is to

develop, these contributions must be monitored, understood, accepted and responded to by the rest of the group” (O’Neill, 1995:13).

Therefore, if facilitators view the Learning Outcomes, Assessment Standards and the Critical and Developmental Outcomes as separate items and are looking for a way to handle them in a holistic manner; then the author proposes that Drama as a teaching strategy is the “needle” that would stitch the “golden thread” (L2 English) throughout, and the result would be a “quilt” of integrated learning.

## **2.4 Learning Theories**

In education, learning theories have been constructed to attempt to understand and describe how people learn. In this section the learning theories and the relevant theorists relating to the language acquisition and linguistic field will be provided. Theorists relating to the drama field will be included in 2.5.

The three categories of learning theories which have been included in this section are: Behaviourist Theories, Innatist Theories and Social Interactivist Theories.

### **2.4.1 Behaviourist Theories**

The theory of behaviourism focuses on the study of a person's behaviour and states that it can be observed and measured. It views the mind as a "black box" in the sense that response to stimulus can be observed quantitatively, totally ignoring the possibility of thought processes occurring in the mind. In relation to Drama, this would be like an actor who would learn lines from a script of a play “off-by-heart” and very often recite them without much thought.

Behaviourist theory states that children's language development comes from imitating and associating the stimulus to which they are exposed and as it is reinforced by their parents or caregivers. Some key players in the development of the behaviourist theory were Pavlov, Watson, Thorndike and Skinner.

### 2.4.1.1 Burrhus Frederic Skinner

The name most consistently associated with behaviourism is B.F. Skinner, who was one of the most influential psychologists of behaviourism theory. He is known for developing his model from the theoretical and empirical work of Pavlov and Watson. He applied the Pavlovian principles of animal behaviour to the study of human behaviour in his so-called “Skinner Box”, a research tool used for experimentation with animals in their environment. He believed that if we could change the behaviour of an animal then human behaviour could also change. Skinner states that a measurable learning outcome is only possible if we change the learner’s behaviour.

Moreover, Skinner (1957) influenced education and states that positive reinforcement is more effective, as a teaching approach, at changing and establishing good behaviour in learners than punishment, with obvious implications for the then widespread practice of rote learning and punitive discipline in education. Behaviourism’s theory of positive reinforcement (rewards) deals with the concept of motivation. However, there are many theorists who believe that behaviourism is unable to deal with complex human behaviour because the behaviourist learning theory centered around only that which was observable. The theory of positive reinforcement was used consciously by the author when facilitating the lessons and interacting with the learners.

### 2.4.2 Innatist Theories

The innatist theory states that learning is natural for human beings. The innatist theorists believe that all babies enter the world with an inborn language learning device called the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). This theory explains how children can generate or invent language they have never heard. The innatist theory is evident in Drama in that all learners have the in-

born ability to act, this is clear from their ability to improvise in a Drama exercise as well as in life.

#### 2.4.2.1 Noam Chomsky

Noam Chomsky is one of the most well known theorists in the Applied Linguistics field. His contributions have provided the foundation of many debates and developments concerning language acquisition and are relevant to consider when creating an integrated learning environment. His nativistic theory dominated research on language acquisition throughout the 1960s. The nativist theory stresses that the innate mechanisms and biological mechanisms such as the Language Acquisition Device allow children to quickly acquire the language they are exposed to. His additional research included the Surface and Deep Structure, the Universal and the Transformational grammar to name a few. These theories are relevant as a foundation to this study, however they will not be discussed in any more detail.

#### 2.4.2.2 Affective Factors

In Chapter One, 1.7.1, 1.7.2 and 1.7.3 are all innatist theories and they are critical to this Action Research. There are so many factors and circumstances that influence the effective acquisition or learning of a second language (L2) that it is not possible to attempt to discuss them thoroughly in this mini-dissertation.

According to Ellis (1985:10) the two overriding factors that influence the acquisition of a second language are:

1. the learner.
2. the learning situation.

The learning process will be successful if the facilitator is focused on these two factors.

Ellis (1985:104) identifies general factors that a teacher of SLA should consider when interacting with individual learners in an integrated learning situation. They are general factors namely:

1. Age.
2. Aptitude.
3. Cognitive Style.
4. Motivation and attitude.
5. Personality.

The Personal factors are:

1. Group dynamics (competitiveness and self-image).
2. Attitudes regarding the teacher and the learning material.
3. Individual learning technique.

The Affective factors influence the rate and route of SLA. The facilitator should observe and reflect on the learners and the learning situation during and after the lessons. If the facilitator critically reflects on the successes and shortcomings of each outcome, then the next lesson could be guided to be more constructive in obtaining the Learning Outcomes. Some of the above factors will be discussed in relation to the research findings in Chapter Five.

#### 2.4.2.3 Influence L1 has on L2 acquisition

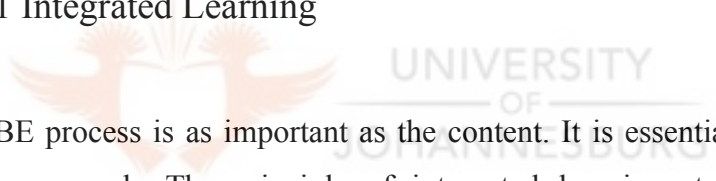
SLA is influenced by the speaker's first language (L1). However, the role of the L1 in SLA is often viewed as a negative one. Ellis (1985:19) claims that even though many believe the L1 interferes and some of its features are transferred into the L2, the role of the L1 is not entirely negative and its influence is perhaps minimal in SLA. This discussion will not be focusing on this element of SLA in detail but it is an important part of the theoretical background of this study.

### 2.4.3 Social Interactivist Theories

The behaviourist theory explains why babies learn a language while the innatist theory explains why babies born to English-speaking parents speak English and not French. Whereas the social interactivist theory shares many of the same views and adds to it by assuming that language acquisition is influenced by a number of factors namely physical, linguistic, cognitive and social. In relation to Drama, this would be like a dialogue on stage between two professional performers.

Below are theories and theorists related to Social Interactivist Theories and which are relevant to this Action Research.

#### 2.4.3.1 Integrated Learning



The OBE process is as important as the content. It is essential that there is a holistic approach. The principle of integrated learning states that all the Learning Areas are related. The facilitator should view the Learning outcomes and Learning Areas, Assessment Standards and Critical and Developmental Outcomes as linked. The facilitator should not deal with these components in isolation. It is the facilitator's responsibility to focus on development and bridging across the curriculum and from grade to grade.

According to the Government Gazette (2002:22) the benefit of ensuring the principle of integrated learning is implemented is that “it supports and expands their [the learners] opportunities to attain skills, acquire knowledge and develop attitudes and values encompassed across the curriculum.”

### 2.4.3.2 A learner-Centred Approach

Included are two theorists who are associated with the learner-centred approach.

#### 2.4.3.2.1 John Dewey

John Dewey is one of the “progressive” writers on education. In the early twentieth century he contributed to the view that education should be child-centred rather than knowledge-centred. “The notion of ‘activity method’ crept into our classrooms at the beginning of the century” (Bolton, 1984:9). The catch phrase “Learning by doing” was transformed into “Drama is doing” by the progressivists. Dewey claimed, “activity in the classroom should have some purpose” (Bolton, 1984:9). He emphasised the importance of the child’s environment and its contribution to successful learning. According to Byron (1986:165) he considered it the teacher’s role to organise and enable “the necessary community life of the classroom”. The concept which is particularly pertinent to this study is Dewey's focus on being “child-centred” or “learner-centred” rather than “knowledge-centred”.

#### 2.4.3.2.2 Rod Ellis

Another theorist affiliated with the learner-centred approach is Rod Ellis. Rod Ellis has done significant work in the Second Language Acquisition field. Ellis (1985:285) identifies seven theories relating to SLA. These are:

1. Acculturation Theory.
2. Accommodation Theory.
3. Discourse Theory.
4. The Monitor Model.
5. The Variable Competence Model.
6. The Universal Hypothesis.
7. A Neurofunctional theory.

All these theories are credible and valuable to a facilitator and the learning process; but their ultimate function and effectiveness is if the facilitator of L2 has a thorough knowledge and practical understanding of all of them. Different circumstances require different approaches. His focus and research has included the role of the first language, the “natural” route of development and the role of formal instruction. Ellis has identified a framework of interrelated factors for investigating SLA.

These factors are:

1. Situational factors.
2. Input.
3. Learner differences.
4. Learner processes.
5. Linguistic output.

#### 2.4.3.3 Towards a Learner-Centred Approach

The educational pendulum in South Africa has swung towards a learner-centred approach where skills, knowledge, attitudes and values are developed and outcomes are continuously assessed and moderated by a facilitator. According to Wessels and Van den Berg (1998:3) “Previously, the emphasis in education was on teacher input through a syllabus expressed in terms of content”.

Formative, rather than summative, assessment plays a pivotal role in an Outcomes-based classroom. Outcomes Based Education forms the foundation in the curriculum (this means that learners need to demonstrate that they understand and can usefully apply what they have learned). By understanding the concepts and content of each lesson and then communicating this understanding; is central to successful learning.

According to Nunan cited in Whitaker (1995:1), “There has been a tendency to perceive learning as something that others do to us rather than as something we do for ourselves”. Piaget initiated the shift in educators' perception regarding the manner in which we view the child. Educators should no longer



perceive learners as empty vessels awaiting liquid knowledge; “children should be able to do their own experimenting and their own research” (Piaget cited in Piers, 1972:27), by doing - children learn. Piaget (Piaget cited in Piers, 1972:27) reinforces the author's view by stating that “ Every time we teach a child something, we keep him from inventing it himself.” By developing skills the learner will acquire knowledge.

“In contrast to a content and time-based method, OBE specifies the ‘outcomes’ students should be able to demonstrate upon leaving the system” (McNeir, 1993:3). Therefore, this study will focus on Drama as a possible tool or teaching strategy in the Language Learning Area in the Grade R or Foundation Phase.

In addition, the facilitator must include the three inherent curriculum design features or components. These three components are:

1. Critical and developmental outcomes.
2. Learning outcomes.
3. Assessment standards.

According to the Government Gazette (2001:29) and the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9, Languages (2002:7), the following Learning Outcomes have been developed for this area:

- “1. Listening: The learner is able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.
2. Speaking: The learner is able to communicate confidently and effectively in a spoken language in a wide range of situations.
3. Reading and Viewing: The learner is able to read and view information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.
4. Writing: The learner is able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.

5. Thinking and Reasoning: The learner is able to use language to think and reason, and access, process and use information for learning.
6. Language Structure and Use: The learner knows and is able to use the sounds, words and the grammar of a language to create and interpret meaning.”

There are numerous Critical and Development Outcomes (previously known as the Critical Cross Field Outcomes) that learners are expected to acquire during their school careers. It is the premise that when exiting a school, learners will have acquired the following Critical Outcomes:

- “1. Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking.
2. Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, or organisation.
3. Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively.
4. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
5. Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic, and/or language skills in various modes.
6. Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environments and the health of others.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation” (Government Gazette, 2002: 20).

Furthermore, the Developmental Outcomes envisage learners who are also able to:

“

1. Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively.
2. Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national, and global communities.
3. Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts.

4. Explore education and career opportunities.
5. Develop entrepreneurial opportunities.”

(Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools)2002:2)

It is the author’s prediction that all of the above-mentioned skills will be developed if Drama as a teaching strategy is used regularly in a language classroom. However, the approach to teaching and learning and the attitudes to education need to be altered if OBE, along with a Drama mode, is to be a successful strategy in South African schools. With all these Outcomes in mind it is clear to see that a learner-centred approach is more complex in its expectations regarding the learning situation for the facilitator as well as the learner.

#### 2.4.3.4 Lev Vygotsky

Another theorist who is synonymous with social interactionist theory is Lev Vygotsky. Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) is the main contributor of the sociocultural approach that is prominent in both the psychology and the Applied Linguistic fields. Vygotsky’s model of human development incorporates the philosophy associated with Marxism (he began work shortly after the Russian revolution). This model is termed a sociocultural approach and proposes that the individual’s development is a product of his or her culture. This development refers mostly to the mental development, such as thought, language and reasoning processes. “Vygotsky assumed that these abilities develop through social interactions with others...” (Vasta, Haith & Miller, 1999:20).

Vygotsky emphasised the importance of play and argued that it creates a Zone of Proximal Development in a child. He identified the dialectical process that stipulates that children learn through shared problem-solving experiences.

Vygotsky (1962:51) states that “Thought development is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought and by the sociocultural experience of the child.” This is particularly relevant to this study as learners and facilitators are often from different sociocultural and linguistic

backgrounds. This makes finding a “common ground” for understanding and communication more challenging. Vygotsky made numerous contributions relating to memory, assessment and speech development.

#### 2.4.3.4.1 Zone of Proximal Development

In order for a facilitator to be aware of being learner-centred it is important for a facilitator to be cognisant of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. The Zone of Proximal Development is defined as the “difference between what children can do on their own and what children can do with help” (Vasta, Haith & Miller, 1999:381). According to Vygotsky, two developmental levels determine the learning process: egocentricity and interaction. The difference between these two types of development forms has been called the “Zone of Proximal Development”. This zone refers to the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in co-operation with more capable friends of the child.

Vygotsky in Thornton (2002:166) explains that “too small a stretch, and there is too little to learn. Too big a stretch, and there is too much to manage.” It is the facilitator's responsibility to determine the suitable zone. This technique is also called “scaffolding”. Thornton (2002:166) states that by increasing the “ability to understand the child's needs and limitations” will develop the ability to scaffold. Thus, identifying the “gap” in the learner's understanding.

#### 2.4.3.5 Appropriacy

Appropriacy or Appropriateness in the SLA field relates to the context within an utterance or sentence is produced. This means that the L2 speaker should not only be concerned about a grammatically well-formed sentence but if it is used appropriately in a specific context. The L2 speaker has to acquire the skills of appropriacy whether it is relating to the cultural or the stylistic modifications that need to be made in different speech communities.

At this age group, learners are encouraged to experiment with the language and discover new words, monitoring their own use is not possible. The facilitator should also be focused on promoting fluency rather than accuracy at this early stage of development. The facilitator should not highlight the learner's errors as it may be destructive and act as a deterrent to language acquisition.

Giles' Accommodation theory and Schumann's Acculturation Theory are related SLA theories but they will not be discussed in this mini-dissertation as at this level learners are hardly aware of adapting speech based on appropriacy.

## **2.5 Drama**

The theorists and learning theories relating to the language acquisition and linguistic fields have been provided in 2.4. In this section the theorists relevant to drama and drama techniques will be discussed.

### **2.5.1 When is it “Speech and Drama”, “Theatre” or simply “Drama”?**

For many years various South African universities and schools offered Speech and Drama as a subject. Moreover, it was offered as an extra-mural or after school activity for primary and high school learners. Speech and Drama is associated with theatre, performance and an audience as well as the development of voice, good speech and characterisation skills. Recently most universities and schools have changed from “Speech and Drama” to “Drama” Departments. This may be due to the perception that Speech and Drama is often associated with prioritising aligning and correcting speech and accent in line with Standard English in the British tradition. Bolton (1984: 25) states that “effort was spent on imposing a speech style (often 'received', 'standard' or 'BBC' speech)..., a kind of external grafting that had little to do with the pupils' own expressiveness.”.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Drama in Education became a movement that was conscious of realising the importance of Drama as an alternative approach to learning and Education regardless of subject matter. With reference to the theorists included, there was an “awakening” in education and teaching. These theorists all agreed that there was more to Drama than performance for an audience. This new approach abandoned the context of Drama used only for theatrical purposes and it promoted that Drama should be used as a method for learning in a traditional classroom or within an educational environment. The theorists had different ways of implementing this tool, for example Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert. However they all realised the merit of using a tool that promoted experiential learning, testing and questioning knowledge. It is with this as a framework that the author has decided to explore Drama as a teaching tool for the South African language classroom.

### 2.5.2 Drama as a Subject

Speech and Drama has been discussed briefly as either an extra-mural activity, school or university subject. Very seldom is it seen as a method of teaching regardless of subject. This mini-dissertation is concerned with the development of learners in relation to the required knowledge and skills rather than developing potential performers.

### 2.5.3 Drama as Text

Literature and plays are usually the only opportunity where learners experience any form of drama in a traditional English Language classroom situation. Traditionally, in the language classroom the teachers allow the learners to act out scenes from a play, such as Macbeth. This isolates Drama as a written, scripted form and neglects the possibility of an improvised, unpredictable, spontaneous text where the learners' own dialogue makes up the text.

## 2.5.4 Drama Theorists

Only a few relevant theorists have been included in this section even though there are many others.

### 2.5.4.1 Peter Slade

Peter Slade is considered a pioneer in Drama in education. He wrote the book *Child Play* in 1954 this revolutionised the way educators view the learning process. *Child Play* and its principles will be discussed as it forms one of the foundations of this study. *Child Play* is also a prime example of Dewey's child-centred activity discussed in 2.4.3.2. According to Bolton (Bolton, 1984:31) this meant that facilitators needed to focus on “creating the opportunity for 'spontaneous doing'.” This spontaneous doing is what the author advocates for learners at this level. Experimenting and testing the world and the things in it including the learner.

#### 2.5.4.1.1 Child Play

Peter Slade states that the manner in which a child thinks, tests, creates and absorbs is inborn. He identified two types of *Child Play*, firstly Projected Play (an ordinary object is used as an imaginary article, e.g. a pencil becomes an aeroplane with relevant sound effects). Secondly, Personal Play (a child uses his whole self to become an object e.g. Aeroplane). Slade includes Personal Play in improvisation and characterisation. The child acquires the skills necessary for adjustment to the environment around him. The most beneficial form of *Child Play* results where an adult provides both opportunity and encouragement. Through repetitive emotional and physical attempts the child discovers life and self. Bolton (1984) claims *Child Play* to be Romantic child-centeredness at its purest (refer to 2.4.3.2).

For Child Play to be advantageous, as far as meeting specific outcomes or developing skills, it needs to be structured. Play needs to be monitored and facilitated in a safe and controlled environment. I have termed this type of “educational play” Structured Play. There should be certain rules and an overriding structure to the games and playing activities. Implementing Drama as a teaching strategy in a language classroom means taking risks but it does not mean permitting learners to run rampant for no reason. It is essential that the teacher is aware of the stipulated outcomes or skills that are promoted with each activity. Play for play’s sake is useless in a language classroom where facilitators have outcomes in mind. The facilitator should observe each activity bearing in mind the focus and objectives of each task.

#### 2.5.4.2 Brian Way

Brian Way developed the methodology and philosophy of Slade’s *Child Play* in the 1950s and 60s. His work concentrated on children’s theatre, classroom drama and the integrated arts. Way claimed Drama to be the basis for a learner’s own personal development. In his publication, *Development through Drama* (1967) he coined the term “Creative Drama”. Creative Drama will be discussed below in 2.5.4.2.1. Way was opposed to the authoritarian stance of traditional education, “his primary concern is the human being, not education” (McCaslin, 1990:296). He focused on developing a child’s life skills rather than the refinement of speech and performance skills. Inspired by Stanislavski and the Method Acting technique; Way devised a theory of participatory theatre. Bolton terms this the “exercise mode” of dramatic behaviour. This approach develops the child’s intuition, concentration and sensitivity. Way was interested in introducing “direct experience into education” (Bolton, 1984:50), this first-hand learning was not necessarily always Drama. “Thus Brian Way opened the door to all kinds of activities...to be done in the name of drama” (Bolton, 1984:51).



#### 2.5.4.2.1 Creative Drama

The terms Creative Drama and Process Drama are often discussed relating to the language classroom. “In essence, creative drama is dramatic activities which have the experience of the participants as the goal” (<http://www.creativedramaintheclassroom.htm>). Both these classifications of Drama operate in the same manner, require the same skills from the facilitator and provide the same outcomes. Communicative competence is the ultimate objective and Drama is a viable mode that all facilitators, regardless of experience, can implement.

Structured Play through Drama as a teaching strategy was tested in both schools, I found implementing this mode in a language classroom quite natural and effortless. This approach is also easy to implement due to the age group. Many educators may not feel comfortable experimenting with a Drama mode because they are not (by their standards) experienced or qualified for this approach. This attitude should be challenged and modified, however it is not feasible to address this important issue in this discussion.

#### 2.5.4.3 Dorothy Heathcote

Dorothy Heathcote is concerned with drama in all subjects across the curriculum. She works “from the inside out”, and her concern is that children use drama to expand their “understanding of life experiences, to reflect on a particular circumstance, and to make sense out of their world in a deeper way” (McCaslin, 1990:291). In brief Heathcote states, “Drama enables children to understand what they know, but do not yet know they know” Heathcote cited in Byron, (1986:19).

Heathcote believes the content or subject-matter of any particular dramatic experience is what gives it its significance. According to Bolton (1984:52), where Heathcote looks “beyond the facts to more universal implications of any particular topic”. Heathcote looks at content from a literary, thematic way.

Both Heathcote and Way emphasise the importance of intuition by the facilitator as well as of the learners. Heathcote stresses the merits of a “teacher-in-role” and “mantle of the expert” approach. She claims that the Arts and the Sciences should be part of each other.

Heathcote in Heathcote and Bolton (1995:16) states that the Mantle of the expert needs to be “an approach to the whole curriculum, not a matter of isolating one theme.” Furthermore, she insists that “Any one thing you want to teach must become meshed within broad curriculum knowledge and skills” (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995:16). It is this approach that is particularly relevant to the Outcomes-based approach. Learners need to acquire and demonstrate competence of their new knowledge and skills.

#### 2.5.4.4 Gavin Bolton

Gavin Bolton shares the same educational philosophy as Dorothy Heathcote, however his approach is intellectual and analytical at times. Bolton emphasises the benefits of questioning and discussion. Bolton (1984:46), claims “Drama is not about self-expression” it involves a group’s expression of what people share and the similarities between them. Bolton in O’Neill (1995:22), defines three modes of dramatic activity, namely Exercise, Dramatic Playing and Theatre. According to McCaslin (1990), Bolton is primarily concerned with the cognitive aspect of the drama experience. Bolton’s aims in Drama education are “to help the student understand himself and the world he lives in; to help the student know how and when (and when not) to adapt to the world he lives in and to help the student gain understanding of and satisfaction from the medium of drama” (McCaslin, 1990:292).

Bolton (1984:142) states that the teacher's most effective tool is the “as if” behaviour, by emerging oneself in a situation and believing it the learners break “ordinary habits of conception and perception”.

Bolton (1979:157) identifies four types of orientation of drama teaching in schools:

Type A: Exercise, a short term, structured form.

Type B: Dramatic Playing, a ‘living – through’ experience, more loosely structured than exercise.

Type C: Theatre, a performance orientation, a structured form.

Type D: A special combination of all three of the above”.

Teachers should aim to implement a “Type D” approach. This would be a Drama approach or Drama as a teaching strategy as it was used in this Action Research.

### 2.5.5 Drama Techniques

Drama as a teaching strategy includes and requires “learning through doing” activities and is therefore a natural and suitable mode for an OBE environment regardless of the level or subject.

“When children begin learning an additional language, they acquire it mainly through listening. For example, they listen to stories with built-in repetition of new words and structures. The storyteller uses gestures, pictures and real-life objects to make the meaning clear. Learners start to make sense of what they hear. They begin to pick up words, structures, sounds and ways of communicating. At this stage their understanding is much greater than their ability to speak the language. This is what Krashen terms the Silent Phase. As learners grow in confidence and understanding, they will begin to speak. They will:

- use formulaic language (e.g. greetings);
- repeat frequently-used words and phrases;
- respond to simple questions with one or two word answers;
- sing simple songs; and
- perform action rhymes.

It may be necessary for learners to use their home language, for example, when discussing how a story makes them feel. They will need constant praise and encouragement if they are to become confident users of the language. *“Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools)(2002:9)*

If a child learns through doing, then the facilitator should provide as many active, real life activities to encourage emotional and intellectual development. There are numerous categories of activities or exercises suitable when implementing Drama as a teaching strategy in any classroom.

Here is a list of some of the activity types or drama techniques available:

1. Improvisation.
2. Role play.
3. Teacher-in-role.
4. Games.
5. Mime.
6. Small group work.
7. Whole group Drama.
8. Story telling.
9. Public speaking.
10. Poetry.
11. Choral Verse speaking.
12. Puppetry.
13. Video, radio, photography etc.

The lesson plans in Chapter Three have exercises that fall into a few of these categories albeit inconspicuously. Although the lesson plans have only been tested in Grade R classrooms, it could be proposed that they are suitable and adaptable for the Foundation Phase.

A brief overview of Improvisation, Role-play and Teacher-in-role will be included in this section.

### 2.5.5.1 Improvisation

Improvisation is one of the most common and beneficial activities used in language and drama classrooms alike. Improvisation provides the opportunity to explore the body, mind and imagination through expression by trial, error and testing. Life is a fluid, dynamic “happening”; people are unpredictable and situations are inconstant. The unexpected stimulus is discovered, interpreted and responded to in a spontaneous manner. It is a union between thought, movement and speech. The learner perceives, adjusts and reacts to an impromptu situation. There are various methods available to initiate an improvisation activity for example, a word, a phrase, a character, a situation or a theme to name a few.

Because the learners are young, improvisation is used in a very basic form (refer to the lesson plans in Chapter Three). The learners have limited reasoning and vocabulary so adapting their language use for improvisation tasks is not the main focus. The facilitator is focused on exposing learners to express themselves in a free manner. They should learn to adapt to unusual situations and unpredictable stimuli.

Therefore, it could be argued that the skill of improvisation is a life skill (we improvise everyday, all day) over and above a tool for a performer and L2 learner. The learner will acquire behavioural, cultural and linguistic skills for everyday communicative interactions.

### 2.5.5.2 Role-plays

When a learner thinks from within a situation it forces a different kind of thinking. This is the type of thinking that promotes true learning. O’Neill, Lambert, Linnell and Warr-Wood, (1976) insist that teachers remain aware of the aims of each role-playing exercise to prevent the situation from morphing. Through role-playing learners are expected to “project themselves into a

fictitious situation, and assume attitudes which are not necessarily their own”(O’Neill, et al. 1976:61).

Eby, Herrell and Hicks (2002:36) identify two major phases in successful role-playing, firstly the role-playing itself and secondly the subsequent discussion and evaluation period. Role-playing exercises (and the discussion and reflections that follow the activities) teach social awareness and appropriateness. Through role-plays the learners “live” social interactions and are directly confronted with social issues e.g. HIV/AIDS, this may be seen as a form of immersion. This is an opportunity for the teacher to facilitate and intervene only if it is necessary because the learners discuss and discover by themselves.

Role-playing requires imagination and concentration. McCaslin (1990:19) describes the imagination as the spark that sets off the creative impulse. One of the many benefits of role-playing is that the distracted child learns to concentrate, his imagination is enriched, speech fluency and vocabulary improved and confidence develops. Younger children often embark on an imaginative adventure or a “play situation”. This highlights the difference between playing and role-playing. Role-playing helps a learner understand and explore emotions and situations that often are not directly affecting their immediate lives. Role-playing does not strictly refer to human interactions and characters, younger learners are often encouraged to become animals and other inanimate objects that interact with each other – this would also be classified as role-playing. This is the form of role-playing that was used in the lessons for example “Lesson 1: Exercise IV” and “Lesson 2: Exercise II” (refer to Appendix).

Doing role-plays frequently helps learners gain confidence, express their ideas and practice negotiation, problem solving and using the appropriate level and type of language. The most essential objective and outcome of role-play is speech fluency.

### 2.5.5.3 Teacher-in-Role

Teacher-in-role is a technique or activity that a facilitator can use to sustain the momentum of either a role-play or an improvisation. This strategy provides an opportunity to manage the activity but in the capacity of an equal rather than an external authority. Furthermore, it helps to promote and maintain the “as if” world.

Bolton (1984:135) states that Teacher-in-role is the most subtle strategy available. This is because of the flexibility that allows one of the following functions:

- “ 1. ...it can take the pupils' attention off themselves by allowing them passively or actively to use teacher's role as projection,  
2. or it can be non-projective and challenge the pupils to interact.”

It is vital that the facilitator does not dominate the interaction; a smaller part should be adopted to avoid “stealing the show”. The author explored the Teacher-in-role technique in Lesson1: Exercise V (refer to Appendix), where the facilitator assumed the role of the “sun”.

For Drama as a teaching strategy to be successful in an L2 classroom, the facilitator should be in “role” and an active participant in all the exercises. The class members should be comfortable enough to express themselves and interact with the other learners without feeling the pressure to “perform” for the “assessor”. Therefore, if the facilitator is actively involved in the activities, the learners are not as self-conscious and begin to relax, when they are more relaxed they can enjoy the experience and thus ultimately learn.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the context of this study. It has been stated that an Outcomes-based Education (OBE) approach to teaching is often contradictory to the education and training that facilitators have received.

The author proposes to explore Drama as a teaching strategy in the language classroom with the main objective being the acquisition of the English language while the secondary focus is on reducing the negativity and inadequacy often associated with this mode of instruction. Drama as a learning tool will improve both the facilitator and the learners' experience of the learning process.

This chapter explores the most pertinent elements or theory associated with SLA and Drama in Education. It would be impossible to examine all the theory that would be applicable for this study. Therefore, only the elements that recur or are fundamental for this mini-dissertation have been identified. Peter Slade's theory of Child Drama and the mode of Creative Drama are the main principles that have given rise to the notion of using Drama as a teaching strategy for Second Language English Acquisition.

All of the aforementioned theorists have one common goal; they are interested in developing people and their skills (language or other).

For the purpose of this discussion, Drama in the second language classroom is a tool available to the English facilitator. This mini-dissertation will illustrate how Drama as a teaching strategy in the Grade R classroom will provide an opportunity for the effective acquisition of English as a second language and the development of other essential skills.

The following chapter will include the associated Research Methodology.



## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the general approach, the research design and the methods that were used will be presented. This chapter includes the arrangements for the study, general information about the two schools and the sample that was taken. The educational background of the learners from the two schools, namely Laerskool Mooifontein and Edleen Primary will also be included in this chapter. The findings and analysis of the research from the two Pre-Primary schools are documented in the form of diary entries in Chapter Four.

### 3.2 Qualitative Research

For the purpose of this study a qualitative research *approach* was chosen. The research *design* was Action Research and the selected *method* was in the form of diary entries, as it was most suited for the problem statement.

Qualitative and quantitative research paradigms differ vastly in their approaches to collecting and recording data. There is an ongoing debate concerning the rationale and merits of researching in a “soft” or “hard” approach. Quantitative research is more deductive in reasoning whereas qualitative research is more inductive “They [qualitative research] involve documenting real events, recording what people say (with words, gestures, and tone), observing specific behaviours...These are all concrete aspects of the world” (Neuman, 2000:145). This mini-dissertation will not provide the differences, advantages, disadvantages or characteristics of these two approaches to research. Qualitative research is often seen as “soft” and subjective, it is the preferred approach in the social sciences.

There are a few essential factors to consider when conducting qualitative research. When using field notes, or in this case diary entries, the researcher should maintain an observer status. Observations are common in qualitative

research. According to De Vos (1998:278) there are two types of observers; namely the participant observer and the non-participant observer. The term “participant observer” was first used by Lindeman cited in De Vos (1998:279). There are many definitions regarding the notion of a participant observer however for this study it is the central characteristic that will define the term. The main characteristic or element of a participant observer is that the researcher is observing while being involved in the “action”. The author interprets this form of observation as: observing the action from the “inside-out” rather than the “outside-in”. The researcher is recording (albeit simply cognitively) perceptions and impressions of the experience and actions through observations.

A participant observer approach is used in this study. However, observational notes should be as factual as possible. They should merely provide an account of what happened. “Little or no interpretation is provided” (De Vos, 1998:285) the interpretation is done during the analysis and conclusion stage of the process. Distance should be created to avoid allowing the data from becoming personal and subjective. It is almost impossible to remain completely neutral and objective when observing because qualitative research often includes the researchers’ perceptions and interpretation of data even before it has been formally analysed.

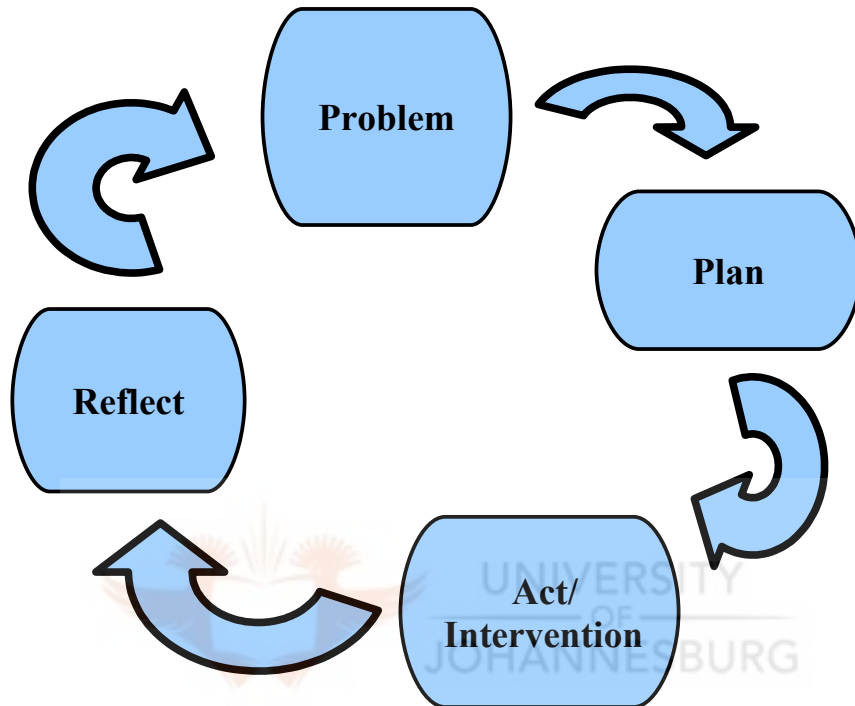
The development of the study has been documented in the same manner that the Action Research was conducted. The four stages of the Action Research are provided in the remainder of this chapter. These are:

- 1) The Problem.
- 2) The Plan.
- 3) The Action.
- 4) The Reflection.

A diagram of the “cycle” of the Action Research is presented to provide an overview.

### 3.3 Action Research

Action Research is orientated toward the enhancement of direct practice often in the Education field. It is viewed as a “cycle”. This cycle is provided below:



#### 3.3.1 The Problem

As discussed in section 1.3 and 1.4 the researcher identified that if a facilitator uses Drama as a teaching strategy in the Grade R classroom it could facilitate L2 English acquisition.

The researcher would conduct four forty minute lessons at the two mentioned schools. Each lesson plan is divided into exercises (approximate time for each exercise is indicated) and a reflection section. The researcher would conduct the exercises and then spend time at the end of each lesson to reflect with the learners on their experience. The researcher compiled field notes after each lesson based on the observations of the lessons and learners. After the four lessons the researcher formulated the notes into the format of diary entries.

### 3.3.2 The Plan

The Action Research was conducted over four consecutive days at each school. The four forty minute lessons (included in Appendix II) were prepared by the researcher who would facilitate each lesson. Each lesson plan was designed with an aim as well as specific outcomes that were the focus for each lesson. As the researcher was fairly inexperienced with designing original material, one of the initial concerns was that the material may be pitched incorrectly i.e. too advanced or too basic for the Grade R phase.

The drama strategies would be used by the facilitator within the forty minute interventions. The classes' teacher e.g. Mrs Blom, Adri Lombard and Marna Welgemoed would sit in and observe every class that was conducted for the four days. In addition, the facilitator requested that they keep notes of their observations in order to provide feedback verbally and in the form of an evaluation form at the end of the four days. (Evaluation forms provided in Appendix III).

#### 3.3.2.1 The Research Setting

As part of the planning it is essential that the researcher considers the following:

- Selection and background of schools,
- selection and background of participants, and
- the sample.

These are provided in this section.

#### 3.3.2.2 Selection of Schools

On the 8 March 2004, the researcher sent a letter to the schools that she intended to research (Copy of letter Appendix I). Two primary schools in the Kempton Park area were selected because both schools had a pre-primary school and the learners were English Second Language speakers. An arrangement was made to meet with the principal of Laerskool Mooifontein

(Mr Jordaan) on 25 March 2004 and the principal of Edleen Primary (Mr van Wyk) on 19 April 2004.

Once the researcher arrived for the meeting with Mr Jordaan she was informed that he thought it best to speak directly to the principal of the Pre-primary school (Die Fonteintjie) Mrs Adri Lombard. Mrs Lombard seemed enthusiastic and four consecutive days were arranged for the classes: from Tuesday 20 April 2004 to Friday 23 April 2004. The researcher met the other teachers at “Die Fonteintjie” and was given a tour of their facilities.

On 19 April 2004, the researcher met with Mr van Wyk at Edleen Primary and he discussed the potential plan and asked for a copy of the lessons that would be used. After being introduced to Mrs Sandra Blom (Head of the Pre-Primary school) and Mrs Robertse, an arrangement was made for the four days - Monday 26 April 2004 to Friday 30 April 2004 (excluding the public holiday on Tuesday 27 April 2004).

Both schools were accommodating and genuinely interested in the views of the researcher. There were numerous discussions regarding the approach and both schools suggested that they would provide feedback on the classes verbally and in the form of an evaluation form (refer to Appendix II).

## General Background of Laerskool Mooifontein

<b>History of the school:</b>	Founded in 1976 as an Afrikaans primary. Became dual medium in 2001.
<b>History of Pre-Primary school:</b>	“Die Fonteintjie” was founded in 1994.
<b>Principal of the school:</b>	Mr Jordaan
<b>Principal of the Pre-Primary school:</b>	Mrs Adri Lombard

**Additional teachers at Pre-**

**Primary school:** Ms Marna Welgemoed; Ms Mary Matthews

**School begins and ends:** 07:30 – 13:30  
**Pre-primary begins and ends:** 08:00 – 12:30

**Typical day:** 08:00 –09:00 Breakfast and toilet routine  
09:00 –10:30 Lesson  
10:30 – 12:00 Break (Lunch)  
12:00 – 12:30 Story time

**Facilities:** Jungle gym; swings, sandpit, lawn

**Activities:** Learners are encouraged to participate in the extra-mural activities after school. However, it is not compulsory. The activities are: Gymnastics on a Monday, Speech and Drama on Wednesday and computers on Thursday. These extra-mural classes are conducted by “outside” teachers and the parents pay them directly.

**Additional information:** The school is divided into three classes namely:

Grade RR – 3/ 4 yrs (Mary – “Green” class)

Grade R - 5/6 yrs (Adri -“Yellow” class)

Grade R - 4/5 yrs (Marna – “Red” class)

### General Background of Edleen Primary

**History of the school:** Founded in 1973

**History of Pre-Primary school:** Founded in 1992

**Principal of the school:** Mr Van Wyk

**Principal of the Pre-Primary school:** Mrs Sandra Blom

**Additional teacher/s at Pre-Primary school:**

Mrs Robertse

**School begins and ends:** 07:45 – 13:30

**Pre-primary begins and ends:** 08:00 – 13:30

**Typical day:**

This timetable was provided by the school:

TIME	ACTIVITY	LEARNING PROG/ AREA
07:15 – 08:00	Arrival, register, welcoming (play with educational toys)	Cognitive Development Numeracy, Literacy, Life skills
08:00 – 08:30	Daily news, weather chart, songs, poems, Table discussion	Literacy, Numeracy, Natural Sciences, Social sciences, Arts and Culture
08:30 – 09:30	Creative activities: Main table, clay table, drawing table, cut and paste table	Arts and Culture, Technology, Creative Development
09:30 – 09:45	Tidy up and toilet routine	Numeracy, Literacy, Life skills
09:45 – 10:00	Light snack and tidy up	Numeracy, Literacy, Life skills
10:00 - 10:30	Movement (x3 per week) Music (x2 per week)	Life skills, Arts and Culture, Cognitive Development
10:30 – 11:30	Freeplay: outside	Physical Development, Numeracy, Literacy, Life skills
11:30 – 11:55	Tidy up and toilet routine	Numeracy, Literacy, Life skills
11:55 – 12:20	Story time	Numeracy, Literacy, Life skills
12:20 – 13:30	Rest and departure	Life skills

**Facilities:** Jungle gym, climbing tyres, bean bags (small), dress-up clothes, swings, lawn.

**Activities:** No extra –curricular activities are offered.

**Additional Information:** Most of the children live in Tembisa and come to school early in the morning. Each week’s lessons have a specific theme e.g. “I am important”. Mrs Blom uses cue cards (incidental reading). She does not teach them to write the alphabet but they do

learn the alphabet song and “a is for apple” etc. All of the lessons are worked out according to Freda Wilkens’ book: “Grade R Learning Programme”. Mrs Blom is a dedicated, experienced teacher who has, despite initial skepticism, incorporated an OBE approach in her pre-primary school. She has been teaching for over twenty years.

### 3.3.2.3 The Participants

The participants were all the learners that were present in the classes that were selected for the research. The sample provides the details of the participants.

### 3.3.2.4 Sample

The sample was taken from one of each of the classes at the selected schools. The sample group was small and due to time restrictions it was only feasible to focus on one class from each school. The class that was selected for the action research at Laerskool Mooifontein was Marna’s class also known as the “Red” class while Mrs Blom’s class made up the sample from Edleen Primary. As this is a qualitative study there are limited statistics, however the relevant data or quantitative information from this study is recorded below.

#### Laerskool Mooifontein

<b>Number of learners in school:</b>	754
<b>Number of learners in pre-primary school:</b>	62
<b>Number of Boys in “Red” class:</b>	8
<b>Number of Girls in “Red” class:</b>	9
<b>Age:</b>	4 and 5 years
<b>Number of first language English speakers:</b>	6
<b>Number of first language Afrikaans speakers:</b>	8
<b>Other home languages: Sepedi:</b>	2



	<b>Shona:</b>	1
<b>Race groups:</b>	<b>Black:</b>	5
	<b>Coloured:</b>	2
	<b>Indian:</b>	1
	<b>White:</b>	9

**Introverts (according to Marna):** Tamlyn, Ryno, Kutlo, Lyzette, Heidi

**Extroverts (according to Marna):** Jessica, Damian, Chaney, Christopher

**“Problem” learners (according to Marna):** Heidi (Dyslexic), Ryno, Amber-Leigh, Lizette (Dyslexic), Sean (Hyper-active)

### Edleen Primary

<b>Number of learners in school:</b>	900	
<b>Number of learners in pre-primary school:</b>	29	
<b>Number of Boys in pre-primary class:</b>	5	
<b>Girls:</b>	10	
<b>Age:</b>	5 yrs old	
<b>Number of first language English speakers:</b>	2	
<b>Number of first language Afrikaans speakers:</b>	0	
<b>Other home languages: Sotho:</b>	7	
	<b>Zulu:</b> 4	
	<b>Venda:</b> 2	
<b>Race groups:</b>	<b>Black:</b>	15
	<b>Coloured:</b>	0
	<b>Indian:</b>	0
	<b>White:</b>	0

**Introverts (according to Mrs Blom):** Rinae, Nompumelelo, Thembi

**Extroverts (according to Mrs Blom):** Zihle, Amo

**“Problem” learners (according to Mrs Blom):** None

### 3.3.2.5 Educational Background of the Learners

Both Laerskool Mooifontein and Edleen Primary are Primary schools situated in Kempton Park on the East Rand of Johannesburg. These two schools were both founded in the 1970s and have undergone changes since 1994. Both of these schools have a Pre-Primary school that prepares the learners for Grade 1. After speaking to the facilitators at both Pre-Primary schools it was noted that the learners who attend the Grade R year or years are more likely to “fit in” and adjust to the Grade 1 classroom environment than those learners who attend Grade 1 directly from home.

#### Laerskool Mooifontein

There are three classes at “Die Fonteintjie” (the Pre-Primary section of the school); there is one Grade RR (three to four years old) class and two Grade R classes (one class has four to five year olds and the other class has five to six year olds). Some of the children start attending “Die Fonteintjie” when they are three years old and therefore experience three different teachers and classes before they attend Grade 1. The learners from all the classes come from very different social, economic and linguistic backgrounds. The class that was selected and facilitated was the “Red” class. This class consists of four and five year old learners. It is a multicultural class consisting of seventeen learners where English is a second language for the majority of the class.

All of the lessons are presented in both Afrikaans and English (as the school is dual medium). According to Gonzalez (1979:9) dual language instruction is where “the learner is exposed to instruction in two languages throughout the course of the day”. Because the school is a dual medium (as opposed to a parallel medium - where two identical lessons are presented; each with only one language of instruction), the facilitators code-switch during each lesson. Most of the learners are more familiar with one of these two languages when they begin at this Pre-Primary school. Two of the three facilitators are

Afrikaans first language speakers and as a result they use more Afrikaans in the classroom. As the learners progress through “Die Fonteintjie” their language skills in their second language of instruction are developed and hopefully by the time these learners attend Grade 1 they should understand and communicate in both of these languages. The learners are instructed in various modes, OBE is slowly being introduced although there is some resistance from one of the three members of staff. The learners have a strict routine and are expected to participate in all activities.

### Edleen Primary

There are two Grade R classes at the Edleen Pre-primary School. The learners from both classes are from similar cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. However, linguistically it is still a diverse group. Most of the learners live in Tembisa and have little or no exposure to the English language before they attend school. The predominant L1 languages are Sotho, Zulu and Venda.

According to school policy, the facilitators at this school have to teach these learners English and often rely on the other more proficient children to interpret when there are miscommunications. Mrs Blom stated that the beginning months of the school year are confusing and frustrating for some of the learners and the facilitators due to the lack of communication. But through repetitions and lots of activities and examples the progress is remarkable.

The learners in this class of fifteen are generally five years old and only spend one year at the Pre-primary school. The learners become well disciplined through a meticulous routine. Mrs Blom explained that a routine and timetable was necessary because most of the children did not have one at home. Some of the learners were not familiar with bathrooms and general activities such as eating food at a table and saying grace etc. The lessons are prepared and presented according to the OBE criteria.

### **3.3.3 The Action**

The lesson plans that were designed and then used by the researcher for the two schools are included in Appendix II. Each lesson that was conducted at both schools has been documented in the form of diary entries in Chapter Four.

The lesson plans that are included in the appendix were used in both schools, the researcher did not make any changes to the material. It was decided to keep the material/ lesson plans the same for both schools and to try and facilitate the lessons in the same manner. This would help to ensure that the researcher was focused on the observations of the learners experience and not on trying to ammend the material.

The observations of the learners and their interaction with each other and the facilitator were noted when the lessons were taught and these observations have been included in the diary entries.

### **3.3.4 The Reflection**

After the Action or Intervention Stage of the cycle, it is essential that there is always a period of reflection where the researcher “takes stock” or spends time assessing what was successful in the lesson and what should be changed in order for future interventions to be more worthwhile for the learners.

The content analysis and the findings from the diary entries will be provided in Chapter Four. This content analysis is comprised of three sources of data namely:

1. The observation of the learners during the action stage
2. The diary entries
3. The evaluation forms and discussions that were held after the lessons were conducted, with the two facilitators from the schools (Adri and Mrs Blom)

The researcher identified certain common trends or “patterns” from the diary entries and observations from the research that was conducted at both schools. These patterns will be included in Chapter Four.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The research methodology and the process of collecting the data were included in this chapter. Moreover, the Action Research “cycle” was presented diagrammatically and discussed. The diary entries and their findings will be provided in Chapter Four.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND CONTENT ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

As stated in Chapter One, the aim of this Action Research is to propose that Drama could be considered as a teaching strategy in the Second Language English classroom. This chapter includes the findings and content analysis of the Action Research that was conducted in April 2004. The findings from the two Pre-Primary schools are documented in the form of diary entries. The lesson plans (refer to Appendix II) provide the outcomes and specific details concerning each lesson. The author has not re-written the information and instructions from the lesson plans, only the observations such as responses to the material.

First the initial/pre-intervention observations are recorded which will provide a description of what happened in the diary entries from both schools. Then an analysis of the findings will be provided and the common patterns from the diary entries will be presented in the Content Analysis section.

### **4.2 Initial/ Pre-Intervention Observations**

#### **4.2.1 Initial/Pre-Intervention Observations from Laerskool**

##### **Mooifontein**

The children in all three classes are well behaved. Adri is quite authoritative in her style of teaching and the children seem well-disciplined. The classroom environment is pleasant, controlled and safe. None of the children seem upset or traumatised. The children are aware of the routine and follow instructions without any objections.

#### 4.2.2 Initial/ Pre-Intervention Observations from Edleen Primary

According to Mrs Blom most of the learners have not come into contact with English until they commence the pre-primary school. The learners are enthusiastic and energetic; at times Mrs Blom needs to raise her voice to get them to settle down. The learners are very eager to hold the facilitator's hand and to give hugs. These learners are more playful; they are spontaneous in their contributions to the lessons.

#### 4.3 Diary Entries and Findings: Laerskool Mooifontein

**20 April 2004**

**Day 1: Lesson 1**

Lesson time: 09:00 – 10:15

08:15 I arrived at the school and had a cup of tea with Adri. We discussed the timetable and decided it would be best if I took Marna's class. The "Red" class has mostly five year olds and one or two bright four year olds. They have one more year (Adri's class) before they go to Primary school. Adri told me that there were a few "difficult" children in this class and if I was not comfortable I could take another class. I decided I wanted to test out my material on children who were classified as "hyperactive" with attention problems.

The lessons are usually conducted in English and Afrikaans; I decided not to explain any of the instructions in Afrikaans as the focus is on L2 English acquisition.

**Exercise 1: Oranges and Grapefruits:** This game was an excellent icebreaker; the children enjoyed it. We briefly discussed fruit in general and I explained what a grapefruit was. They were familiar with oranges but not grapefruit.

**Exercise II: Clapping Game: "My name is..."** The children took a while to get the gist of this exercise. The learners repeated everything I said and instead

of waiting for their classmates to respond there were times where they shouted out their friend's name. After each new name the class repeated the whole sentence again. A brief discussion on colours was necessary before they could provide "My favourite colour is..." The shy children copied the response of the learner who answered before them i.e. there were four "browns" in a row. This was the same for their favourite food. The clapping was chaotic at times.

**Exercise III: Making a Hamburger:** This exercise worked well all the children mimed along with me. I asked them questions such as "What goes on next?" and they answered confidently and logically.

**Exercise IV: Strange Walks and Sounds:** Initially I did all the movements with the class. The main movements were: walk, run, stretch, bend, skip, hop, jump and wiggle. The children enjoyed wiggling. In the beginning they waited to mimic their classmates or me. After a while when they became familiar with the words I got them to repeat the word while performing its movement. We played the game "Simon says" as "Lorraine says". This game was a success and I think they enjoyed it because there were a lot of giggles and smiles.

**Exercise V: Relaxation: Raindrops:** As I described a storm the learners added sound effects, e.g. the wind, thunder and rain. When I asked, "How does the thunder go?" Monoko said, "Boo". They stood up and first became clouds then trees and finally raindrops. When the raindrops fell slowly they repeated the word "slowly" and then "quickly".

**Strange Walks (continued):** I divided the class into two groups and asked them about the different movements we had done previously. I instructed them to select three movements and practice the order of their "sequence". The first group came up with "walk, run, skip" and showed the other group. The second group did "jump, stretch, and wiggle". I had to prompt them. I was trying to repeat the new words to the whole group and elicit some responses from them. This was quite confusing for them and the confident children dominated this exercise.



**Exercise VI: The Knot Game:** In the same groups as before they tried this game, I think it is too advanced for this level. They got confused. If I untangled them step-by-step it worked, otherwise they simply slapped each other's hands restlessly. I tried untangling the whole class in one big circle but they did not hold on to each other's hands and some of them became incredibly fidgety.

**Clapping Game:** We played "My name is..." again and this time I told them to shout their names above the clapping. They spoke with more confidence than the first time.

**Exercise VII: Reflection:** There was not much reflection. I did not ask enough specific questions. I think they were uncertain of what I was asking and stared blankly at me. They wanted to play oranges and grapefruits again. So we did.

**Pre-analytical insights:** Marna and I decided that an hour is too long. The class gets distracted if the lesson is too lengthy. From tomorrow the lesson is not going to be longer than 40 minutes. Marna said that she thought the children enjoyed themselves and she saw the advantages of using this mode. Adri who had observed portions of the lesson did not think that the children had learnt anything.

In the first couple of minutes Marna helped explain to those who were unsure of the instructions in Afrikaans. If a child answered in Afrikaans I repeated what s/he said in English for the whole group. This worked well as it was a natural reaction for me to switch over into English and at times I rephrased and simplified my instructions. After sometime the learners became accustomed to this technique, they followed my movements, gestures and the other learners if they were initially confused.

**21 April 2004**

**Day 2: Lesson 2**

Lesson time: 09:00 – 9:40

08:25 I discussed with Adri the place and role of Speech and Drama in the classroom. She told me that she works out specific themes with outcomes for her class each week. The whole school focuses on the same theme but it is up to the individual teacher as to the manner in which they present it. This week the theme was hygiene.

The children were pleased to see me; I met three new children who had been absent yesterday (Christopher, Amber-Leigh and Chaney)

**Exercise I: Relaxation: Bubblegum and Ice cream:** They all followed along and giggled. I asked each one about the flavours and colours of their chewing gum. The answers were mainly chocolate and strawberry.

**Exercise II: Vocal and Verbal Expression:** I asked them if they had pets and we discussed cats and dogs. They closed their eyes and pictured their cats, even those that did not have cats. We played the clapping game, “My cat is...” The responses included colours and one “sleepy” even though we had discussed many other adjectives. Next we briefly discussed animals in the zoo. They stood up and became elephants. I asked questions such as “Is an elephant big or small?” I asked what the nose of an elephant is called, Jessica said, “pipe”. We became elephants, mice, rabbits, snakes then Sean asked if he could be a lion, then we all became lions. They added sound effects and noises as they moved. Next they became any animal of their choice and I went around identifying them. There were mainly lions, cows, tigers, and snakes and there was one crocodile (Kutlo). We had not mentioned crocodiles, so I was impressed with his originality.

**Exercise III: Bubble Car Story:** I started reading the story to them but I noticed they were becoming twitchy so I told the rest of the story. They stood

up and mimed the main events of the story. Together we drove our bubble cars, went to the shops, cooked food and did aerobics.

**Exercise IV: Relaxation: Giraffes:** This exercise worked particularly well. The class repeated the rhyme twice after I said it then I walked around with an exaggerated gesture of my hand-to-my-ear and listened to each of them for a word or two. This prompted some nervous giggles from a few of the shy learners. Some individuals shouted out the words and the class copied their outbursts. At times I had to encourage one or two of them to do the actions with the words. They did remember the sequence of words without my help.

**Exercise V: Reflection:** They remembered bending and stretching from yesterday. We spoke about what different animals looked like and what they ate etc. I asked the learners specific questions and told them to put up their hand before they answered. This worked more successfully than yesterday.

**Pre-analytical insights:** Forty minutes is the right amount of time. If the lesson is too long the children get distracted and fidgety. There were very few instances where the class asked Marna for an Afrikaans translation or clearer instructions. I think the children are becoming more familiar with this mode. When I asked the class if this way of playing was different to how they usually had class they said “yes”. Sean said that he wanted to play oranges and grapefruits again. Jessica wanted to know when they could become raindrops again.

I stayed to observe Marna’s lesson on hygiene. They learnt a poem and discussed washing with the help of water and bubbles in a container. They went outside and blew the foam at each other. She speaks Afrikaans for about 60% of the lesson. I observed the end of Adri’s class, she was teaching them the letter “C” and they had coloured in and were also learning a poem. The children sat in a semi-circle and repeated each line after Adri. They did not really do any actions and remained seated for the entire time, the children who said the poem out loud and correctly received a star on their forehead. Adri

uses more of an authoritarian approach. I felt that the children are not as relaxed and eager to volunteer answers as they are in Marna's class.

**22 April 2004**

**Day 3: Lesson 3**

Lesson time: 08:50 – 9:40

**Exercise I: Bees and Blossoms:** We all became germinating flowers, the group needed to follow me the first time we “grew”. The learners did not know what a sunflower was, so we discussed it. They described their flowers with colours rather than adjectives like “pretty” etc. Nkateko was the only one to repeat his word as he grew -“pink”. When I asked what insect makes honey they all answered with “bzzz” rather than “bees”. They enjoyed flying around saying “bzzz” then “mmm” then “nnn” and “zzzz”. They got progressively louder and more excited – they moved more vigorously and at times I had to warn them not to bump into each other.

**Exercise II: Going Shopping...** : I divided them into pairs. One person pulled out an item the other had to guess what it was. After each pair had had a turn they switched. They seemed to enjoy it. I demonstrated a basic dialogue including the phrases: “Good morning”; “I would like to buy...” “How much does it cost?” “Thank you, goodbye” with one of the learners. Each pair presented their dialogue for the class. I prompted them when they got stuck. When they present or “perform” their dialogues for the class, the mood changes and the atmosphere becomes tenser. The learners are suddenly aware of each other and become nervous for example, Heidi started fidgeting with her fingers and ringing her hands, Tamlyn spoke with her hand in front of her mouth and at times was inaudible. The dialogue is forced and unnatural.

**Exercise III: Party Game:** I told them they were not allowed to bring the same item (I used the word “thing”) as someone else. There were times when some of the learners repeated an item, depending on the learner (shy or not) I either allowed it or I made them think of something else.

**Exercise IV: One-two-three FREEZE!** : They did not strike a pose on their own so I changed it to “one-two-three-point” or “Touch your ear” etc. Other commands were: “comb your hair”, “brush your teeth”, “wash your face”, “stretch”, “bend”, “hop” etc. I did not demonstrate the actions they had to follow my commands alone and each other.

**Exercise V: Reflection:** We revised the animals; I got them to volunteer answers again. I asked “What do you say when you go to the shops?” and broke down the dialogue step-by- step.

**Pre-analytical insights:** I did not need to explain anything in Afrikaans today. Marna did not repeat anything or help out with the class; she sat at her desk and observed the lesson. Sean (L1 Afrikaans) said a sentence or two in English; Heidi (L1 Afrikaans) answered half of a question in English. Ryno (L1 Afrikaans) identified his items in English. Tamlyn is still very shy and speaks with her hand in front of her mouth. The class followed one another and could follow my instructions if they are in basic language. Christopher asked if they could be animals again. They are comfortable with each other and enthusiastic to participate in all of the exercises. The class works well but I felt the learners are not used to speaking in front of the class and find it stressful, if activities such as the dialogue are repeated regularly they may become more relaxed.

**23 April 2004**

**Day 4: Lesson 4**

Lesson time:09:30 – 10:10

08:15 – 9:00: The whole school had a “Go-cart day”. I helped out with “Die Fonteintjie’s” go-carts. The children were excited from the races of the “Seepboks Derby” and we took a while to get settled for class.

**Exercise I: Popcorn:** Briefly discussed popcorn i.e. “What does it look like?” “How do you make it?” “What does it taste like – salty or sweet?” etc. Next we all became the popcorn and curled up on the floor while saying “sizzle, sizzle, sizzle” until we jumped up and shouted, “pop!” We did this a couple of

times; I let them do the actions while I directed their verbal expressions (some of the girls giggled and peeked out from behind their hands to watch what the others were doing before quickly burying their faces into their hands again) e.g. whispering “sizzle”, placing emphasis on the “s” and “z” by drawing it out etc. They seemed to enjoy it.

**Exercise II: Tongue Twisters:** This exercise was extremely successful. Said “p-p-p” then “d-d-d” then the “Pass the pens...” we discussed pens and pencils. We mouthed and whispered the sentences (over articulation). I corrected the pronunciation of “Red lorry...” Christopher says, “Led lolly”. I noticed during previous lessons that Chaney says “v” instead of “th” so we all pushed our tongues out between our teeth and blew out a long burst of air in an audible “th”. Then they attempted “Red leather”. We stood up and walked in a circle while repeating the tongue twisters in various styles; for example, first, loud and with a high pitch, then slowly and deep, next quickly and staccato etc.

**Exercise III: Mirrors:** We discussed the theme of the week (hygiene), we mimed washing our faces, brushing our teeth and hair etc. They copied me enthusiastically. We spoke about a mirror and its function. I divided them into pairs and told no.1 to brush his hair and no.2 to mirror him, as a reflection in a mirror would do. The children were confused and watched me for instructions rather than their partner. They all copied me when I mimed how a cat cleans his ears. When I expected them to become cats they got down on all fours and crawled around. I think this exercise is advanced for their level. It was interesting to see how they interpreted my instructions. I have to monitor my speech and adapt it for their level. The instructions should be short and clear otherwise they get confused.

**Exercise IV: Once Upon a Time...:** The learners listened and contributed to the story, some called out even though the ball had not been rolled to them. The basic storyline was: King Andrew had two daughters who went to school and walked through the woods, they met a lion along the way and ran to a jumping castle. The jumping castle was magical and they flew away and

landed back in their father's castle and were safe. After I had ended the story with "And they all lived happily ever after..." we stood up and jumped on the magic castle and flew around the room. We mimed some of the other actions from the story.

I noticed that when the children are focusing on the ball and watching to whom it goes, there is a shared sense of concentration and involvement. They do not get flustered or nervous when they are required to make a contribution. When they have the ball in their hands I think they do not realise everyone is watching them because they are excited that they caught it and do not notice that they are speaking. Because the ball is rolled in no particular order there is a relaxed atmosphere and the individual does not feel as if he has been singled out or "put on the spot".

**Exercise V: Peter and the Wolf, Music Interpretation:** I reminded the class of the animals we had become during the week. First, they sat down and listened to the music with their eyes closed. Next, they moved around freely, I had to call out a few suggestions to a few of them who stood watching the rest of the class. Some learners spontaneously added sounds. A few of the boys were tigers and lions. Tamlyn became a butterfly. A few of the girls danced. Some kept looking at me for reassurance even while they were moving. I had to praise them continuously which seemed to encourage them.

**Exercise VI: Reflection:** We recapped the animals and dialogues of the week; they remembered that an elephant's nose was called a trunk. I asked specific individuals for answers; Lizette (L1 Afrikaans) who is quite shy volunteered an answer and even spoke in English! I called out commands such as stretch, bend, and hop but did not show them; and they demonstrated them successfully on their own.

**Pre-analytical insights:** In general I found that the class could follow the instructions extremely well. This pre-primary school is well organised and the children are disciplined. The environment is friendly and the children feel comfortable and safe. I believe these factors all contribute to the success of the

classes. I feel that nearly all of the exercises worked effectively and the learners benefited from them and acquired some skills (even those exercises that were too advanced for their level). The more introverted children began to relax and at times were extremely expressive. If this mode is used on a continuous basis I think the inhibited children will become more confident and will begin to express themselves more freely.

#### **4.4 Diary Entries and Findings : Edleen Primary**

**26 April 2004**

**Day 1: Lesson 1**

I arrived at the pre-primary when the learners were about to have lunch. They all sit at their desks with a place mat in front of them and say grace together. I discussed various issues and difficulties Mrs Blom has experienced throughout her years as a teacher. It is quite clear that she is not very enthusiastic about OBE. She does implement it and follows the lessons and guides in the “Grade R Learning Programme” book by Freda Wilkens. She had made nametags stickers for the children. This helped me identify and address the learners by their name.

**Exercise I: Oranges and Grapefruits:** This icebreaker worked very well, I found out later that the class had played musical chairs before. The learners waited for me to give the command, “go” while clapping my hands and then “stop” before they found a seat. They were unsure of grapefruits but they did name various types of fruit when we discussed fruit and fruit salad. One learner even shouted out “mango”.

**Exercise II: Clapping Game:** “My name is...” The learners all clapped enthusiastically but we had to stop every time someone spoke. Together the whole class repeated what each individual learner had said. One or two of them created their own clapping rhythm when they spoke. When we continued with, “My favourite colour is...” nearly every child mentioned a different colour. This originality was remarkable to me. For “My favourite food is...”



the learners provided very healthy choices of food; for example “fruit” “vegetables”; there was one “orange” and one “beetroot”. No-one mentioned “pizza” or “chocolate” but when I asked directly “Do you like chocolate?” then they all called out, “Yes!” I found out after the class that the previous week’s theme was “Healthy Living” and they had become familiar with these “healthy” food groups.

**Exercise III: Making a Hamburger:** They were not too familiar with the ingredients or order of making a hamburger. They called out random words like “pumpkin”, “polony” or “sweets” when I asked “What do we put on next?” They did concentrate and mimed along with me. I think the word “hamburger” is unfamiliar to them. As soon as I started to call it a “burger” then I could see that there was a clearer understanding. This exercise highlighted the importance of being culturally aware of differences and not to make assumptions, such as choice of food for meals or treats etc.

**Exercise IV: Strange Walks and Sounds:** This exercise works particularly well; the learners enjoyed it and were focused on following my movements exactly. When we played “Lorraine says” they follow each other and the more reserved learners tend to wait for the others to make the move before they attempt it (even when it is wrong they reproduce the movement). Initially when the group repeated the word “wiggle” they could not say it, I had to break it down into syllables and slowly say “wi-ggle” while simultaneously demonstrating the movements in slow motion. I feel that in general they need to work on their pronunciation; at times the learners are inclined to slur all their words together.

**Exercise V: Relaxation: Raindrops:** When describing a storm, I asked, “How does the wind go?” they all gestured flowing waves with their hands. Only when Mrs Blom interjected “What sound does it make?” did they say, “Woo”. While falling as raindrops I got them to say “quickly” or “slowly” they moved according to the word. This was effective for illustrating the different adverbs.

**Exercise VI: The Knot Game:** Compared to Laerskool Mooifontein it was a success. It worked if I untangled them step-by-step myself. They held onto each other's hands better than the other group but they still do not understand what is required of them. I still think the exercise is advanced for this age group.

**Exercise VII: Reflection:** I asked them to name different colours. We discussed fruit for example, "What do you find in a fruit salad?" they knew many different types and colours of fruit but they were still not sure what a "grapefruit" was. Lastly, I gave commands such as "stretch and bend" without demonstrating for them, I asked them to show me. For the most part they could do the correct movements.

**Pre-analytical insights:** The movements compliment the vocabulary and make it accessible for them, for example Exercise IV, wiggling and shaking one's body clearly illustrates the meaning of the word. The knot game is a relaxation exercise focusing on co-ordination (motor-skills) and teamwork. It is a Speech and Drama exercise, however I do believe that if this were done with an older group it would encourage verbal communication and contact. The children have a general understanding of English and seem to follow instructions quite easily.

**28 April 2004**

**Day 2: Lesson 2**

**Exercise I: Relaxation: Bubblegum and Ice cream:** When I asked the class if they had eaten chewing gum or bubble gum before they looked blankly and silently back at me. When Mrs Blom shouted out "chappies" then suddenly they knew and were very excited. The learners were also not familiar with the word "flavour" I had to ask, "What does it taste like?" The responses were colours such as "pink" or "white" rather than flavours like strawberry, chocolate etc. They enjoyed sticking out their tongues and "eating their ice-creams". A lot of them giggled and watched each other intently. One learner (Zihle) called out "Mine is white and brown, yum!" I acknowledged that those

were its colours and when I asked what the flavour was she could identify the brown as chocolate but I needed to assist her with classifying the white as vanilla (I had to prompt the whole class e.g. “It starts with a ‘v-v-v’, ‘vah-nn” etc.) Lastly, I named a few flavours and the class had to repeat each name.

**Exercise II: Vocal and Verbal Expression:** The group made “meow” sounds when I asked them to tell me about cats. I had to ask specific questions such as “How many ears, legs etc. does a cat have?” We briefly discussed and illustrated through movements “big/small”, “tall/short” and “fat/thin”. They all sat down and closed their eyes and pictured a cat (even imaginary cats for those who did not have a cat). We played the clapping game with “My cat is...” it worked very well; they did not repeat a previous answer. There was hardly a hesitation and the rhythm was consistent; one child even said “white and black”. We repeated the whole sentence together after each learner made his contribution. I think demonstrating opposites before we started helped facilitate the learners because there were a couple of adjectives fresh in their minds.

**Vocal and Verbal Expression: Animals:** First, the class followed me and together we moved around the room as a specific animal, then we made a sound associated with the animal and finally added a word or phrase. For example, move like an elephant, next trumpet and finally repeated “big, fat elephant”. The animals were: “elephant”, “snake”, “rabbit”, “duck”, “mouse”, “tortoise”, “lion”, and “frog”. When I said the phrase for repetition I modulated it according to its meaning or its associations, for example “Big, fat elephant” in a deep, loud, drawn-out manner.

**Exercise IV: Relaxation: Giraffes:** When I asked, “What animal is tall, thin and orangey-brown in colour?” no-one knew but when I asked, “Do you know what a giraffe is?” then they knew, one of them even pointed to a picture of a giraffe on the wall. The learners needed to follow me the whole time during this exercise, I mouthed the words and did the movements with them as they called out the sequence. When we came to the “crunch, munch” section Zihle shouted out “bunch”. We had not mentioned bunch, she had made the

association herself. This exercise is very effective and I think it displays the new words in a tangible manner.

**Exercise III: Bubble Car Story:** I first showed the class the picture in the book – a couple of them said “car” when I pointed at it. I told them the story rather than read it; next we all stood up and drove our car, while making appropriate sounds. We mimed shopping, cooking and eating. I went around to a few of their “houses” and asked them what they were cooking. Rinae called out that she was cooking meat. I have noticed that they all say “begger” rather than “hamburger” (this might explain their unfamiliarity with the word “hamburger” yesterday!). We mimed the rest of the story i.e. eating too much and getting fatter and fatter. When I asked them what must he do to get thin, someone shouted out “go gyiming”. Lastly, we mimed doing aerobics and getting thinner and driving around in the bubble car again. I emphasised some opposites such as, thinner and fatter.

**Exercise IV: Relaxation: Giraffes:** I decided to repeat the exercise again. This time I allowed the learners to do the sequence entirely unassisted, I weaved and crouched down in between them and at times did the movements when they needed a bit of prompting. They remembered the words and actions more successfully this time around.

**Exercise V: Reflection:** I revised the animals, asking questions such as “What sound does a mouse make?” they generally remembered the movements and sounds. When I asked about an elephant Zihle called out that it was “fatter” rather than just “fat”.

**Pre-analytical insights:** I noticed that when the class lines up to go to the bathroom Mrs Blom gets them to move like animals, for example “Girls, walk like ducks and boys, walk like frogs” so they are familiar with some of the animals and their movements. This explains why when we did the animal movements at times the whole group interpreted an animal’s movements (specifically the tortoise) in exactly the same way. Rinae seems to be more comfortable with the activities but is still following the other’s movements and

looks around for reassurance. Mrs Blom told the learners to draw pictures of the animals we had discussed.

**29 April 2004**

**Day 3: Lesson 3**

Mrs Blom gave me a few of the pictures the children had drawn the previous day (Refer to Appendix IV).

**Exercise I: Bees and Blossoms:** I asked the class to sit in a circle and close their eyes and imagine becoming a flower. Next we all curled up on the floor and grew from a seed to a flower. The learners copied my movements. I asked them if they knew what colour a sunflower was, Andani said “Yellow”, and we briefly discussed sunflowers and after that we became a sunflower following the sun. I asked questions about bees and their movements and sounds. Firstly, we moved in zigzags as bees and secondly we added “zzzz”, followed by “mmm” and “nnn” sounds; finally we flew around the room “buzzing”. When we did the “mmm” and “nnn” sounds I showed them how to puff out their cheeks and feel the sounds in their nose, next we blocked our noses and deflated our cheeks and I told them to feel the tickle on their lips (this promotes resonance). There were some nervous giggles when we did this section of the exercise.

**Exercise II: Going Shopping... :** I divided the class into pairs, one learner pulled out the item and the other identified it (after that they swapped). Most of the children could identify the items correctly. Each pair presented a short dialogue about buying an item at a shop, one at a time. Mrs Blom interrupted every now and then which was a bit distracting, every time the learners relaxed and began to play she would tell one or two of them not to be “silly” – this breaks their concentration and the fantasy world we have created. After the individual dialogues, I divided the class into two rows facing each other and they alternated in presenting the dialogue. Row one was the shopkeeper and row two was the customer. The more confident learners (Zihle, Andani and Derrick) called out the dialogue - the others merely copied them. I feel the learners are intimidated when they are expected to “perform”.

**Exercise III: Party Game:** This exercise is very useful; it provides the children with the opportunity to speak in a stress-free “game” atmosphere. We added clapping, however at times the learners get preoccupied and forget to speak because they are concentrating on the rhythm. There are moments when someone needs prompting - this can cause giggling from other members of the group. I think that the laughing is good because it seems to lighten the mood and when they do speak the learners are not aware that everyone is listening to them. Thembi and Nkosinathi are still very shy and speak softly and slowly. I had to ask Thembi to repeat her sentence. Nkosinathi never says the entire sentence himself he only gives one word at a time, I have to encourage him to repeat each phrase directly after me.

**Exercise IV: One-two-three-FREEZE!** When I asked the class what does it mean to freeze, nearly all of them struck a pose (frozen picture). They enjoyed this exercise, they ran around quite wildly and when they had to freeze they created dramatic frozen pictures. After a while I added, “1-2-3 touch your nose!” or “Stretch!” etc. They are not afraid to use their space and express themselves through big movements with all of their bodies.

**Exercise V: Reflection:** I asked questions about the shops; we revised a couple of items and the order of the dialogue. One of the learners said “How many...” rather than “How much does it cost?” Reflecting is difficult because they cannot seem to sit still for very long.

**Pre-analytical insights:** They listen and follow basic instructions. Adding clapping is valuable; it distracts the shy children (such as, Rinae, Thembi and Nkosinathi) who then concentrate on the rhythm and not on talking, while it simultaneously preoccupies the extrovert and hyperactive learners. All the learners are relaxed and participate enthusiastically; they really enjoy “playing these games”. I believe if this mode were used more often the learners would become comfortable and would benefit from it.

**30 April 2004**

**Day 4: Lesson 4**

**Exercise I: Popcorn:** The children knew a little bit about popcorn; what it was, its colour, taste, texture and how to make it (Palesa called out that you make it in a machine). They enjoyed the exercise and giggled along when I “popped” with them. We said, “sizzle” while curled up in a ball then shouted “pop” when we jumped up. I corrected those who were saying “sissle”. We varied the manner in which we said, “pop” i.e. in a whisper, staccato and loudly.

**Exercise II: Tongue Twisters:** We sat in a circle and repeated the sounds “p-p-p”; “d-d-d”; and the words “pop-pop-pop” and “popcorn” numerous times. We briefly discussed the function and appearance of pens and pencils, they were not sure of pens but are familiar with pencil crayons, crayons and paint. I had to divide the tongue twisters into shorter phrases; it was difficult for them to say the whole sentence at once. A lot of them did not include the word “pens” they merely repeated the word “pencils” twice. I asked certain individuals to say the tongue twister by themselves; I helped them when they got confused. After a while those who I hadn’t asked volunteered, even Rinae! Nkosinathi cannot say the whole sentence alone I need to prompt him after each phrase. Zihle, Derrick and Hazel could say it on their own.

When we focused on the “r-r-r” and “l-l-l” sounds I had to roll the “r” to emphasize the difference, the learners seem to have difficulties with the combination of “r-l-r-l”. They were not familiar with the word “lorry” (Nompumelelo said it was a machine that sharpened pencils!). As luck would have it, there was a truck passing by outside and I asked, “What was that outside?” They stated that it was a “car”. I continued to ask if it was “big or small car”, suddenly, Palesa called out that it was a truck. I explained that a truck was also called a lorry. “Red lorry...” is a tricky phrase to pronounce; a few of the learners say, “Led lolly” and they let the two words slur into each other e.g. “Leh-lolly”. Nkosinathi’s (speech is very mumbled) and Rinae says “lolly”. Finally, we stood up and mimed driving a lorry and repeated the

tongue twister over and over again – whispering, mouthing and sirening our voices up and down etc.

**Exercise V: Peter and the Wolf, Music Interpretation:** After letting them listen to the music once I told them to stand up and move about or dance. At first they did not move on their own, I had to call out names of animals and provide specific commands. However, Zihle and Hazel waltzed in between everyone. After a while their movements became more spontaneous. It was obvious that they were waiting for me to demonstrate and were feeling slightly nervous because I was watching them. I do not think they are familiar with this type of activity and feel self-conscious.

**Exercise III: Mirrors:** To begin with we sat in a circle and the class all mimed along with me copying my movements e.g. brushing hair, teeth etc. I asked several questions such as, “What do we do next? Do you swallow your toothpaste?” “Do we use the same brush to brush our hair?” etc. It is interesting that a lot of their vocabulary consists of brand names and their associations, for example when I asked, “What do you put on your toothbrush?” Rethabile said, “Colgate” rather than toothpaste. Nearly all of the children say that they wash rather than brush their teeth. After that, I got them to follow my every move exactly (my speed changed spontaneously and I mimed in silence) – they managed well; there were a few uneasy giggles.

I divided them into pairs. Learner no. 1 had to mime and learner no.2 was the reflection so he had to follow learner no.1’s actions exactly. Firstly, I called out a command such as “Wash your hair” secondly, I told them that no.1 had to decide what they were going to do, and I was going to watch all of them. Some pairs worked well together, others simply did their own movements and called out “Look at me teacher”. Hazel and Zihle were creative - they put on make-up and painted their nails and were very focused on the task at hand. However, as soon as I said, “Good Hazel, those two are painting their nails over there” then everyone stopped their actions and copied them. When I said, “Look in your own mirror” the learners suddenly mimed holding a hand mirror; I had to say, “Look at your partner, do it like your friend”. I still am



under the impression that this exercise is a bit advanced for this age group but they do follow the gist of it. I did not attempt the cats; I decided it would add to the confusion (as it did at Laerskool Mooifontein).

**Exercise IV: Once Upon a Time...** : This exercise is extremely effective. They all pay attention and watch the ball, there is excitement concerning who will receive the ball next. The learners are distracted and comfortable when they are expected to contribute to the story. The story was particularly short - there was a cloud who wanted to be the sun and did not do its job i.e. rain; it spoke to a tree and the tree convinced it to rain on a village and everyone was happy. I decided to try another story. The next story was about a king who had two daughters; these daughters went to the shops to buy food for a birthday party (a few of them provided the names of various items we had done yesterday) and then went to the party. When the children had to supply names for the characters they used names from other members of the class. The conventions of a fairy tale were included e.g. "And they all lived happily ever after..."etc. I think if this exercise is repeated on a regular basis the class will become familiar with these conventions. Mrs Robertse observed this lesson and afterwards she asked if we had done the stories earlier on in the week, she commented on the effectiveness of this exercise and asked if I would mind if she used it for her own class. Needless to say I was thrilled to hear this!

**Exercise VI: Reflection:** I told the class to stand up and show me "fat/thin"; "tall/short" etc. and the various animals and their sounds. They were all very enthusiastic when I asked questions e.g. shouting "teacher, teacher" with their hand straight up above their head. The children remembered most of what we had done during the week and I am sure they enjoyed themselves.

**Pre-analytical insights:** Mrs Blom admits that she is a disciplinarian and feels she cannot leave the children to "just play" because it will be "chaos". At times during the week, Mrs Blom would interject and this broke the concentration and world of make-believe that we had created. Generally, the lessons were successful. The shy children participated and could "blend in" when they felt uncomfortable. Mrs Blom told me that the parents have

commented that their children are improving and are more disciplined and listen more effectively since they have started Pre-Primary school. This school provides rules and a predictable routine that is essential for their development and adjustment to school life. This mode is most appropriate for this level. If they are exposed to these types of exercises more often they will relax and begin to confidently express themselves verbally and non-verbally. I believe that when the children are in a safe and structured environment they relax and experiment and will ultimately learn.

In addition, Rinae is volunteering answers - she gets onto her haunches and her hand shoots up eagerly. It is evident from their expressions which of the learners understand and who are “lost” whenever I explain or give instructions. I need to adjust my instructions and speak slowly and over-articulate at times (I find repeating and rephrasing, helps clarify the information). They seem to enjoy it when I join in and participate in the exercises.

## **4.5 Content Analysis**



### **4.5.1 Reflection: common “patterns” identified from the diary entries**

After a reflection period, the patterns that were identified from the four lesson plans at each school (regardless of cultural differences) and their diary entries, observations, evaluation forms and discussions with the facilitators were noted. These common “patterns” or “trends” have been divided according to four main categories, and they are:

- I. Learner Needs.
- II. Flexibility of Teaching Mode.
- III. Creative Use of Drama as a Teaching Strategy.
- IV. Suitability of the Level of Learning Material/Lesson Plans.

## **I. Learner Needs**

### **1. Emotional Needs**

The challenge for a facilitator is to develop an awareness and understanding of an individual learner's particular needs. As I did not spend a lot of time with the learners I asked the facilitators who they considered "introvert" and "extrovert". In addition, the facilitators made comments as to who they considered "trouble-makers", "dyslexic" or "hyper-active". I used this input as a guide for when I conducted the lessons. During the lessons I looked for signs that confirmed or opposed the input from the facilitators as well as any other signs that suggested that other learners may have emotional needs.

### **2. Emotional Types**

These were the signs that I observed that suggested introverted or shy behaviour in various learners:

- In Mooifontein, in the "clapping game" the shy children copied the exact response that the previous learner said, i.e. There were four browns in a row.
- In both schools, in the "Strange Walks" , "Popcorn" and "Peter and the Wolf" exercises the shy children looked around and waited for the more confident children to move first.
- In both schools, I noticed uncertain body language at times such as nervous giggling, looking around and fidgeting of hands when we started with many of the exercises (particularly in the Giraffe exercise)
- In both schools, when the learners were expected to present their role-plays in the "Going Shopping" exercise they became self-conscious and unfocused. Their body language became extremely nervous e.g. Heidi pinned her hands behind her back and started wringing her hands, Tamlyn placed her hand (which was made into a fist) in her mouth and turned her body away from the group as she spoke. Their voices became softer and when asked to repeat themselves it was in a higher, strained pitch (evidence that the larynx had contracted due to tension).

### 3. Emotional Behaviour

These were the observations that were signs of the learners need to please the “teacher”. In both schools, this was evident in the manner in which the learners tried to “out do” each other. There were many instances where I noticed that the learners had become quite competitive with each other for example:

- In Mooifontein, in the clapping game the group would shout out the learner's name before the learner who was supposed to speak could say anything. This was if there was hesitation from the learner who had the turn to speak. When the learners shouted out the name they looked at me with huge grins, proudly seeking reassurance that they were “better” than their peer.
- In Edleen, during the Mirrors exercise when the learners were making their movements; as soon as I acknowledged and praised one pair, the other learners would start calling out, “Look at me teacher!” until I acknowledged them too.

## II. Flexibility of Teaching Mode

This was observed mainly in the learners requirement to adapt to L2 English only as a means of instruction. In Mooifontein, I was informed that the classes are conducted in both English and Afrikaans. I explained to Adri and Marna that I would not speak any Afrikaans, only English. On the first and second day the children would look at Marna for assistance when they were unsure of an English word or instruction. It was clear that the learners were “leaning” on the interpretation less and less as the lessons progressed. I think that if this strategy was used more regularly the children would become more comfortable with an English only “language policy” during the classes. (Refer to the comments on the Day 3 diary entry)

### **III. Creative Use of Drama as a Teaching Strategy**

In both schools, the learners enjoyed “playing games”, there were a few occasions where learners demonstrated creativity or initiative. These were signs of adapting Drama as a teaching strategy:

- In Mooifontein, when discussing animals we mentioned various domestic and wild animals but we did not mention a crocodile. When they had to start moving Kutlo moved as a crocodile. This was an indication that he had understood the topic and was thinking about it, in addition to this he felt comfortable enough to express himself vocally and through movement with confidence.
- In Edleen, during the clapping game the learners created their own rhythm when it was their turn to speak. Their clapping was in rhythm to the manner in which they spoke. This created excitement within the group. Each learner added a different colour to any that had been mentioned before.

### **IV. Suitability of Learning Materials/Lesson Plans**

I found that the level of the lesson plans was not always appropriately pitched, it seemed as if I was pitching it too high in certain exercises.

- In Mooifontein, when the learners were expected to provide a sequence they needed to be prompted. In addition, they could hardly remember what new words they had learnt. They only recalled the words once I reminded them of the words and actions.
- In both schools, the knotting game was too advanced . The learners simple stood in a circle slapping each other's hands – it did not work unless I manually moved them to where I wanted them to be. I hope that by this demonstration that they would follow however, they seemd confused and distracted. This exercise did not achieve any of the expectations I had in mind.

- In both schools, the length of the lesson was shortened from one hour to forty minutes. This was due to the lapse in concentration after forty minutes.
- In both schools, when attempting the Mirrors exercise the learners struggled to maintain focus on their partner. They kept looking at me and following my movements rather than their “mirror”.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

Each lesson was tested and were divided into exercises, and these lesson plans are provided in Appendix II. The main observations and initial perceptions of each exercise are captured in narrative form. These four main findings were:

I. Learner Needs.

II. Flexibility of Teaching Mode.

III. Creative Use of Drama as a Teaching Strategy.

IV. Suitability of the Level of Learning Material/Lesson Plans.

As this is a qualitative research study, the data is empirical in nature and it is therefore suitable for numerous means of interpretations. Chapter Five will conclude the study and will provide the recommendations and suggestions that have been produced from the interpreted data.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with summarising of the findings of the two case studies in the light of the aims upon which the research was founded. A reflection on the aim of the action research will determine the success of the study. Lastly, recommendations arising from the research will be highlighted and suggestions for further research will be provided.

### **5.2 Reflection on the Study**

The main focus of this action research study was whether Drama as a teaching strategy could be used to facilitate L2 English acquisition. The main objective was to test Structured Play in a multi-cultural classroom of Grade R learners. A Drama mode was introduced to promote communication-based activities in the L2 OBE classroom. The study aimed to highlight Drama as a tool for developing skills such as working with other members of a team, communicating effectively and thinking creatively. This mode aims to serve as a tool when gaining knowledge of a language and achieving the stipulated outcomes of that learning area (refer to Chapter Two) .

### **5.3 Findings from the Literature Study**

The four main findings that were identified from the content analysis and that resonate with the literature study are as follows:

- I. Learner Needs.
- II. Flexibility of Teaching Mode.
- III. Creative Use of Drama as a Teaching Strategy.
- IV. Suitability of the Level of Learning Material/Lesson Plans.

These four findings are discussed along with the relevant theory provided in Chapter Two. Of course, there are numerous other elements from the data collected that could be examined with theories from the language acquisition field but the subsections below are what the author considers to be the most significant.

### 5.3.1 Learner Needs

Of the five general Affective factors that Ellis (1985) identifies (see Chapter Two section 2.4.2.2); the researcher believes that from the observations recorded, personality is the factor that is most influential at this stage of the learning process. The personality of the learner very often determines the learner's needs that results in emotional behaviour.

Age, motivation, cognitive style and aptitude are not significant factors in my opinion. This is because these children are approximately the same age, they are also at a stage where they are enthusiastic about their facilitator, classmates and lessons - they enjoy attending school! Generally, it was found that both groups were relaxed, disciplined and motivated. The facilitator does not have to motivate (by threatening or rewarding) the class to participate in any of the activities. There is a sense of belonging and the learners depend on the security of participation and strive for peer acceptance. This is an enormous benefit for the facilitator because the main focus is on the lesson and its outcomes rather than “handling” difficult learners.

Moreover, aptitude and cognitive style are not applicable factors because the children are roughly on the same “academic level” and have not entered into the “mainstream” schooling system where they are formally assessed. For example, they have not learnt to read or write yet. If there are any exceptions or learning problems, usually the teacher will have detected them by the early stages of the school year. For example, Mrs Blom at Edleen Primary said that she noticed that one of the learners (in a previous group) had trouble understanding her lessons and communicating with the other learners, she



soon realised that he was partially deaf. A remedial approach needed to be taken with this delegate.

As stated previously, personality is the factor that was observed as the most pertinent to the action research. From the first day at both of the schools the researcher asked the teachers who they considered to be the more introverted and the more extroverted children. After the facilitator had identified them she watched them closely throughout the rest of the week and identified their emotional needs, and their behaviour (refer to 4.5). Furthermore, the researcher believes that group dynamics play a role as it influenced the learning situations at both of the schools. It was as if the group had a personality of its own for example, there was an element of competition between the learners from Edleen Primary i.e. the learners would compete for the researcher's attention (refer to 4.5) For example, they would run to the facilitator and want to sit down next to her when we formed a circle or they would call out, "Teacher, teacher, look at me" when the researcher was occupied with an individual learner. These outbursts and "scramble-for-my-free-hand" behaviour needed to be managed in an orderly way otherwise chaos would have resulted.

It is also often felt that if children have a strong personality they tend to dominate class interactions whereas the more timid personalities are left merely to listen, become distracted or even resort to daydreaming. It is a challenging task for the facilitator to "juggle" these personality types, i.e. encouraging the introverts and restraining the extroverts. This "juggling" demands a lot of attention and sensitivity because it should be done in such a way that neither of these two extreme personality types are made to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed.

Furthermore, self-image, which the author believes is strongly related to and based on an individual's personality, contributes to the group dynamics and a learner's needs. One of the most important outcomes of Drama activities over a long period of time is improved self-confidence and as a result improved self-image. Children, regardless of age, need to feel valued and when they do

feel valued their confidence increases. It is the author's opinion that Drama activities provide the opportunity for the shy child to “blend in”. Through these activities the introverts are distracted by the action and relax, when children are relaxed they lose their inhibitions and are unaware that they are contributing and participating in the learning process. A relationship of trust and respect develops between the learner and facilitator - if the child feels safe.

Enthusiasm and genuine motivation inspires a productive climate where the individual develops an understanding of him/herself and the world. The author strongly believes those children with a negative self-image and low self-esteem (refer to the lists of introverts from both of the schools in Chapter Three) will benefit from Drama activities such as improvisations if they are facilitated correctly over a long period of time.

However, it is important to remember that in between these two “extreme” personality or emotional types are the learners who are a mixture of both. It is these “normal” children who are often neglected because the facilitator is focused on managing the others.

### 5.3.2 Flexibility of Teaching Mode

Many facilitators are under the misconception that “Child Play” (refer to Chapter Two) implies allowing children to play freely among themselves. Educators may fear it will “cause chaos” (Mrs Blom, Edleen) and be of no benefit to the learners. Vygotsky insists that social interaction plays an important role in the learning process “...play enables a child to become what he or she is not; it creates a zone of proximal development (ZPD) in which the child explores not-yet-acquired adult roles and values that are socially appropriate” (Schinke-Llano in Eckman, Highland, Lee, Mileham, Rutkowski Weber, 1995:21). Vygotsky emphasises the role of “shared language” in the development of thought and language. The term “shared language” refers to social interaction and can be best elucidated through the notion of the “zone of

proximal development". This is why when the play situation is structured and managed effectively it will produce positive results. However, the facilitator needs to be flexible when experimenting with this approach.

In general, the researcher found that the learners could appreciate the “games” and that they behaved in an orderly way. Structured Play was introduced and was tested in both schools; the author feels that it is an indispensable tool for learners and facilitators alike. However, it is essential that the facilitator is actively involved in each activity and is not afraid to take risks and allow the learners to dominate and “shape” the progression of the exercise. If a facilitator is an active participant then the author would suggest that the Drama mode be implemented for short lessons (approximately 45 minutes to an hour) rather than intense periods of time as it can become physically demanding (see 5.8 for further recommendations).

### 5.3.3 Creative Use of Drama as a Teaching Strategy

When discussing Drama as Teaching strategy it is important to remember that the facilitator's input and manner of facilitation is the tool that will result in a successful interaction. One ought to consider the debate on quantity of input versus quality of input, input has been briefly discussed in Chapter Two. From the data collected; quality of input or more specifically, Comprehensible input has proven to be more important than the quantity of input. Although, repetitions and revision were part of every lesson the main focus of achieving intake was when the facilitator focused on Comprehensible input.

Comprehensible input is necessary when the learner attempts to convert input to intake. While presenting the lessons the researcher was constantly aware of modifying her speech. At this age level, Teacher talk needs to be simple and often takes the form of commands (see 3.12). James Asher cited in Krashen (1987:140) advocates the Total Physical Response method when facilitating L2 acquisition. This is where direct commands result in direct actions. Lesson

1: Exercise IV: Strange walks and sounds, is an example where commands result in actions.

Krashen (1987:9) states that Comprehensible input is not sufficient, the learner needs to be “open to the input” in order for Comprehensible input to be received and understood. The learner should feel comfortable and focused on the activity if not, the input will be “lost”. For example, at Edleen Primary one of the learners (Rinae) is shy and a times seems frightened, her timid personality and lack of concentration contributed to her misunderstanding my instructions. She resorted to following the other learners and it was clear to me that she was not fully engaging with the tasks but merely “going-through-the-motions”. On the rare occasion her inhibitions were broken and she expressed herself in a confident manner. This is why the author believes that personality is the most crucial affective factor that contributes to the success of converting input to intake at this level.

Dodge (1999) states that the way in which a second language is acquired is often “mechanistic and artificial, depending on a theory of teaching which ignores the emotional and non-verbal content of language”. He advocates the use of creative dramatics in the language classroom “...(it) not only addresses the nonverbal aspects of language, but also provides a satisfactory linguistic base on which to build communicative competence”.

(<http://www.creativedramaintheclassroom.htm>).

#### 5.3.4 Suitability of the Level of Learning Material/ Lesson Plans

According to Piaget (see Chapter Two) the Grade R and Foundation Phase learners are at the Pre-operational phase. At times the researcher found that the learning material/lesson plans were not pitched at an appropriate level (see 4.5). It was determined that some of the activities found in the lesson plans were pitched too high and included too many abstract instructions.

Learners at this level, are making meanings through interacting with concrete objects and engaging in “here-and-now” activities. From the observations recorded from the four lessons at each of the schools they indicate that the learners of this age group require concrete references when they are expected to interact with the facilitator.

It is vital that the facilitator does not refer to abstract ideas or “things” when providing explanations or instructions. For example, in Lesson 2: Exercise I: Bubblegum and ice-cream, if I had produced a piece of chewing gum and asked, “What is this?” rather than asking “Do you know what chewing gum is?” it would have eliminated the confusion over different vocabulary and it would have resulted in eliciting a response rather than asking a closed question. The researcher noticed that when the children were expected to identify items they had pulled out of a bag (Lesson 3: Exercise II: Going shopping...) they seemed comfortable to venture a guess if they were unsure because they could refer back to the object by looking and touching it.

Long (1980) cited in Krashen (1987:51) claims that using verbs and the present tense is not only for teaching “foreigner talk”. Both Krashen and Long maintain that using a “here-and-now” approach is not necessarily more beneficial for facilitating L2 acquisition.

The author disagrees with this because it was apparent from the experiences and observations that the learners in the Grade R phase can manage present tense and commands much more successfully than abstract notions, projections into the future and reflections on the past. This means that L2 learners at this level require “here-and-now” examples.

In addition, the author agrees that a facilitator should “cast a net” of roughly-tuned input. However, this “net” should contain the present tense and verbs. Learners at this level need to know what they are expected to do now, immediately, not next week Tuesday. Piaget (1926:60) emphasises the importance of children learning through play interactions therefore the

facilitator should provide a stimulus that contains exercises that require “association with action”.

## **5.4 Findings from the Empirical Study**

The facilitator may have stipulated outcomes but they are not always achieved due to the unpredictable nature of interactions. However, often if the learners are having fun and are relaxed they are unaware of the learning process and its outcomes. In a classroom situation, different children gain unique skills and tools through an assortment of tasks. Therefore, the facilitator must be critical and objective to the methodologies and approaches that are used. It is essential to remain creative and resourceful, the facilitator gains from the learners and the process as a whole.

According to my content analysis of the data collected through the observations, diary entries and evaluation forms and discussions with the facilitators, there are two main factors that a facilitator should consider when working with young learners and using Drama as a Teaching Strategy . Firstly, the content has to be suitable and presented in a comprehensible and relatable manner and context. Secondly, a learner’s confidence and self-perception influences his/her level of participation and as a result the learning situation is impacted either positively or negatively.

### **5.4.1 Creating a Suitable Context**

One of the main objectives of Outcomes-based Education is to encourage group work and learning through interaction and engagement. A Drama mode provides the opportunity for discovery and interpretation; through this discovery and interpretation genuine learning takes place. From the first lesson that was attempted the researcher tried to “contextualise” the content of the lessons, for example Lesson 1: Exercise IV: Strange walks and Sounds; the learners learnt new words through actions that depicted their meanings. By the end of the week if I demonstrated an action such as, skipping or wiggling and

then asked for the corresponding word the group could respond correctly. Through movements and actions the learners seem to be more “open” or receptive to the content. Bolton in Day and Norman (1983:62) refers to the “symbolisation process” as the process where the facilitator provides the context or “door” that the learners have to “go through” so that they will “crystallise” rather than simply conceptualise meaning. If we take Bolton’s metaphor a step further, then it could be argued that it is the facilitator’s responsibility to make this “door” available for the learners but it is each individual learner’s responsibility to “open the door”.

The facilitator can use certain conventions and phrases that immediately identify and clarify the context. For example, by using phrases such as “Once upon a time, in a faraway land...” (Lesson 4: Exercise IV: Once Upon a Time...) the children realise that they are participating in a fairy tale exercise where they will be expected to listen to a story.

Furthermore, if the facilitator gets involved in the action and adopts a teacher-in-role approach to an activity this will also help to create the new reality in which the action is taking place. When the facilitator becomes an active participant the learners interact in a different manner and these interactions provide the context. For example, after the researcher told the children the story about the “Bubble Car” (Lesson 2: Exercise III: Bubble Car) we all mimed driving a car around the classroom. When some of the children came too close to the researcher she “hooted” at them and when one or two of them followed her into her “house” she asked them what they were doing in her kitchen. This prompted nervous giggles from the other learners and the “guilty” children realised very quickly that they could not simply copy the facilitator's actions.

By adopting a teacher-in-role approach the researcher had created the context of the exercise through a character rather than explaining the “rules” of the activity to them as a facilitator. Through the creation of the context the learners become aware of suitable behaviour and the content of each interaction will make sense. Understanding the context is the first step to

understanding the content. The context of each activity should be familiar to the learners in order for the input to be received. Creating the context works hand-in-hand with creating Comprehensible input (see 5.3.3). Krashen (1987:32) summarises the role of an effective language teacher as “someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation”.

#### 5.4.2 Creating Confidence

Building self-confidence and promoting self-awareness are two of the most rewarding results of implementing a Drama mode in a classroom. Drama activities such as improvisations and role-plays provide opportunities for learners to immerse themselves in another character or situation. With this immersion comes losing inhibitions and expressing oneself in a different way. By experimenting and observing the world as someone else, the shy child can “hide” him/herself and blend in to the play situation. When children become comfortable with this process they become more aware of those around them and of themselves as individuals. The result is that their confidence grows and they learn to express themselves. Somers (1994:141) suggests that when the main reason for using drama is to encourage learners to communicate through language then “they should not be overly conscious of accuracy” the interaction should be as close to “real life” as possible in order to promote fluency before accuracy. When L2 learners become distracted by incorrect language use then the “play situation” is disrupted. The learners at this level are not really troubled by the pressure of producing “perfect” English but they are anxious of speaking in general so it is the facilitator’s role to put them at ease.

Speaking is an active process where an individual’s cognitive ability is formulated and assessed. All areas of employment and social sectors require competent oral communicators. Drama activities in the language classroom provide the stimulus for communicative relations “...drama provides situations where language use arises out of a genuine need to speak” (O’Neill



et al. 1976:7). Because the researcher only used English as the language of instruction in the classroom; a few of the learners at “Die Fonteintjie” were aware of the lack of Afrikaans instructions and interactions. However, this was only on the first day after which the researcher was pleasantly surprised when on occasion these learners responded in English. Their attempts increased and so did their confidence. The researcher feels that if she had accommodated their Afrikaans they would not feel the “need” to speak English. All the learners were occupied with the “games” they were playing, that they spoke English because it was natural to do so and it was all part of the “game”.

## **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

Language teaching methodologies and learning strategies are as diverse as the learners themselves, it is the facilitator’s role to apply appropriate and effective strategies and tasks to compliment the perceived outcomes of the lesson. This can be done, if the teacher achieves a sound knowledge of the learners, their personalities and learning styles or preferences. The facilitator should treat all the learners as individuals and develop an interpersonal relationship of trust and respect.

Due to the time limitations, the researcher was not able to develop a thorough understanding of each individual child. The author spent time observing the most “obvious” learners i.e. the extrovert and the introverts for changes and noticeable behaviour. There was not sufficient time to focus on the “regular” or “in-between” children. The relationship with the learners developed every day. However, it would have been more advantageous to spend a longer amount of time at each school. It is felt that a researcher’s initial perceptions and observations are intuitively correct but there are always occasions where impressions are interpreted incorrectly. At times, there was also a lot of activity and it was impossible to observe everything so often only the most memorable and noticeable were recorded.

Another limitation of the study may be that the aims in the lesson plans are aimed at a higher level and should be revised to make them more suitable for the target age (refer to 5.3.4).

## **5.6 Strengths of the Study**

Before the action research was attempted, the researcher had a few predictions about the study. For example, firstly, expecting to include and test certain language acquisitions theories and secondly, expecting to observe a few transformations in the learners. Furthermore, the theories that were initially focused on were soon proven irrelevant, and instead theories that had previously been omitted were included. For example, at first not enough emphasis was placed on Communicative Competence and a Communicative Approach but only when the researcher began conducting the lessons and was aware of altering speech and adjusting the manner of giving instructions, did the author realise the importance of including this in the mini-dissertation.

In addition, the researcher did not observe an overwhelming transformation in any of the learners, and the time limit played a greater role than was first anticipated. These predictions may have been erroneous but the result has been that the researcher became flexible in challenging and reflecting on the initial expectations and had to make the necessary modifications. Moreover, this flexibility has been an advantage when working with learners and managing the spontaneous “mishaps” that occur in the lessons (refer to 5.3.2.)

The participants are young therefore it is critical to grasp their attention through an enjoyable yet informative class. Therefore, the focus of the lessons was on practical activities as well as being challenging.

Another strength was that the researcher was given the freedom to test the learning material and observe the learners with minimal interference from the facilitators at both of the schools. The bulk of the lesson material was

appropriate for the age group and the learners participated willingly in all of the activities (see the Appendix III for the evaluation forms).

The advantage of testing and presenting the material personally is that the researcher could monitor her own behaviour as well as that of the learners. Furthermore, the data was recorded in the form of diary entries and was written from a participant observer's point of view. The observations were as objective and neutral as was feasible. However, when participating in the activities and facilitating the process there is always the possibility of failing to observe all the events and interactions.

## **5.7 Recommendations Arising from the Study**

South Africa is a multi-lingual, multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural society, and since 1994 this society has been mirrored in the classroom. A class full of diverse and often unrelated learners may provide numerous conflict situations and many headaches for the facilitator regardless of the subject. The L2 English facilitator has a challenging role. This role includes providing an enjoyable, productive learning climate. The teacher needs to be aware of the learners' backgrounds - social, economic, linguistic and cultural. It is essential that the facilitator is knowledgeable and sensitive to the array of languages, cultures and religions present in the classroom. Even though it is demanding, equal time, attention and respect should be paid to all of the learners. If the facilitator has developed an understanding of each individual, problems and improvement will be noticed more quickly. If each learner feels valued they will be more motivated in the classroom and will be more relaxed in their environment.

One of the critical and development outcomes of Outcomes-based Education is to encourage group work (see Chapter Two section 2.4.3.3) Learning through interaction and engagement are essential skills that should be promoted in all classrooms. Honey and Mumford cited in Whitaker (1995:17),

have suggested that four stances are incorporated into the learning process namely:

1. Learning by feeling.
2. Learning by watching.
3. Learning by thinking.
4. Learning by doing.

We, as facilitators, draw on these elements but develop a preference for one or two and as a result often a disinclination towards the others. Using these elements in different ways and in different combinations means a distinctive, unique learning style is acquired. Honey and Mumford (1995) claim that success in formal learning depends on the extent to which a facilitator and school provide these four elements and support individual style and creativity.

It is clear from this study that facilitators should have a thorough theoretical background. The facilitator needs to be aware of the relevant theories and stages of development in children at this level before they set foot in a classroom. If a facilitator is unaware of the challenges a child should face and the skills that should be acquired then it is my opinion that it may be detrimental later on in a learner's academic life. The author believes that it is the facilitator's responsibility to provide exciting activities that will present a stimulus for experimentation, developing the imagination and exploring the learner's creativity. If the facilitator uses different approaches and varies the presentation of each lesson the learner will be enthusiastic to play a part in the learning process.

Facilitating implies being the channel through which information flows whether this is in either one or two directions. In contrast to teaching that implies a one-way flow of information i.e. from the teacher to the learner. It is my opinion that facilitators should "marry" theory with each selected mode for every lesson. If facilitators are aware of the importance of considering theories

when designing lesson plans facilitation will be successful because the whole learner's development will be the main priority.

OBE implies that both the learner and the facilitator are active participants in the learning process. There is a mutual exchange of ideas and information. Learning is a living process of awakening and developing the courage to test new behaviours through the sharing of ideas. Drama as a teaching strategy provides a safe, productive environment for experimentation and enjoyment. Learning to adjust to the world and its people is an essential tool acquired. Mezzirow cited in Whitaker (1995:1) describes learning as the means, by which people come to perceive, interpret, criticise and transform the worlds in which they live. The author believes that Drama as a tool for learning will ensure this.

Structured Play for the Grade R level is advocated, as it is ludicrous to expect children of this age to sit quietly at a desk for extended periods of time. Play is necessary for all types of development: cognitive, motor, physical, social and emotional. Play promotes language learning and learning in general not to mention acquiring life skills. Through Structured Play the learner experiments and tests the world and his place in it. In addition, if a positive, safe, interactive environment is created the learning process will be an enjoyable experience. Ideally the learners will engage in meaningful tasks and develop a love of life-long learning.

## **5.8 Recommendations for Further Research**

There are various areas of study that have arisen from this research. It is suggested that the following subjects will provide the background to interesting qualitative research topics. Recommendations for further research areas are:

- Implementing a Drama mode in a L2 English classroom in several primary schools from different areas. For example, Grade 7 learners from different provinces.

- Implementing a Drama mode for facilitating L2 and foreign language adult learners.
- A long-term study where a Drama mode is used to develop the self-confidence and self-awareness in individual L2 English learners.
- Experimenting with a Drama mode to facilitate other school subjects such as, History at the Primary school level.
- The problems facilitators experience when implementing a Drama mode in the L2 English classroom.

If this Action Research is to be replicated it would be recommended that the facilitator has a longer timeframe for the action stage, for example one or two months worth of lessons at the schools and that the lesson plans that are designed must be pitched at the appropriate level and with relevant activities.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted the main findings of the Action Research. The aim of the study was discussed in correlation with the initial objectives from Chapter One. Findings from both the literature and empirical study are documented with particular emphasis on structured play, input and the learner's personality. Thereafter, the limitations and strengths of the study are analysed. It has been concluded that insufficient time at the schools was the main limitation of this study. While, having the researcher conduct the research process and lessons, as a participant observer was the most evident strength. And finally, recommendations arising from the study and recommendations for further research were briefly discussed.

## **Appendix II: Lesson Plans**

### Lesson Plan Outline: Class 1

- Group:** Grade R
- Allocated Time:** 40 minutes
- Aim:** To encourage and develop freedom of movement, speech and thought. Inspiring creativity and the imagination in the individual while interacting with members of the group and the facilitator.
- Specific Outcomes:** Learners use language for learning. Learners use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations.
- Method:** Various exercises using Drama techniques.

#### **Exercise I: Oranges and Grapefruits (5 minutes)**

Each learner sits on a chair. The chairs are arranged in one row with the backs of the chairs touching each other. The group is divided into “oranges” and “grapefruits”. The facilitator calls out either “oranges” or “grapefruits” and the learners concerned swap chairs. If the facilitator says “fruit bowl” all the learners have to change chairs. As the game continues the facilitator removes one chair at a time and the learners fall out, leaving a winner.

#### **Exercise II: Vocal and Verbal Expression (10 minutes)**

Forming a circle, the children sit down facing each other. The facilitator begins clapping a specific rhythm that the children imitate. According to the clapping pattern the group introduces themselves. The facilitator initiates each sentence, for example “My name is...” then “My favourite colour is...” etc. This exercise continues until each child has spoken at least three times.

#### **Exercise III: Making a Hamburger (3 minutes)**

The group follows the facilitator as they mime building a hamburger. The group is expected to provide input concerning the order of the procedure.

**Exercise IV: Strange Walks and Sounds (12 minutes)**

The facilitator leads the group around the room. The learners follow the movements and sounds. Next each individual experiments with a sequence, e.g. walking on tiptoes, then large strides, finally slinking backwards. The rhythm of a clap directs the group, when it changes they change. They add a sound or a word to their “routine”. The learners are encouraged to create their own movements and pay little attention to each other.

**Exercise V: Relaxation: Raindrops and Icicles (5 minutes)**

Each learner finds a space and relaxes. Closing their eyes they imagine a brewing storm. They open their eyes to move around the room without bumping into one another, moving faster and more fiercely as the storm builds. With a clap, they become droplets of rain. The raindrops fall and dissolve into the ground. One droplet joins another to form a puddle. The sun draws the water to the sky they float in a cloud. Suddenly, the droplets are frozen to form icicles. A clap releases the icicles and the group melts onto the floor.

**Exercise V: The Knot Game (3 minutes)**

Forming circles of eight or ten, the learners take the hands of two different people. Without letting go they try to untangle and reform a circle. Some may end up facing outwards, or maybe two circles are formed. The class ends with stretching and breathing exercises.

**Exercise VI: Reflection (2 minutes)**

The facilitator asks questions and the group discusses the activities.

**Notes:** Did the group members...

- Express themselves freely and creatively?
- Understand and follow the instructions?
- Enjoy themselves?



## Lesson Plan Outline: Class 2

<b><u>Group:</u></b>	Grade R
<b><u>Allocated Time:</u></b>	40 minutes
<b><u>Aim:</u></b>	To ensure clear intelligible speech.
<b><u>Specific Outcomes:</u></b>	Learners use language for learning. Learners understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context.
<b><u>Method:</u></b>	Various exercises using Drama techniques.

### **Exercise I: Relaxation: Bubblegum and Ice-cream (5 minutes)**

The class and facilitator chew imaginary bubblegum; chewing and blowing bubbles. The bubbles pop on their faces, and they lick it off the sides of their mouths, tip of their noses and chins with their tongues. Next, they eat an ice – cream. There is a brief discussion of the flavours and colours.

### **Exercise II: Vocal and Verbal Expression (20 minutes)**

Forming a circle, the children and facilitator sit down facing each other. The facilitator begins: “My cat Sam is...”. Each learner describes a cat using a descriptive word. The way the word is said suggests it’s meaning. For example, “My cat Sam is FAT!” (said in a long, low, drawn out manner).

General discussion follows on domestic and wild animals; the class moves and repeats the words the teacher calls out; for example, “Big elephant”, “small mouse” etc. The children should be warned not to bump into one another and invited to add sound. Moving on “all fours” is discouraged when taking the role of an animal, as this limits freedom of movement.

### **Exercise III: Bubble Car (7 minutes)**

The facilitator tells a story about a Bubble car (based on the story “The Bubble car and the Elf” by Jane Carruth). The children and facilitator mime the events of the story together.

**Exercise IV: Relaxation: Giraffes (5 minutes)**

Stretching arms to the ceiling, rising on tiptoes, the children become giraffes eating from tall trees. The facilitator and group repeat the words “Reach, bite, eat, crunch, munch, crunch, lunch, rest, sleep”. They slowly drop their arms and swing them next to their sides; unlocking their knees and relaxing. Breathing deeply they return to an upright position.

**Exercise V: Reflection (3 minutes)**

The facilitator asks questions and the group discusses the activities.

**Notes:** Did the group members...

- Understand and follow the instructions?
- Improve their self-confidence?
- Express themselves verbally and physically?
- Enjoy themselves?



**Lesson Plan Outline: Class 3**

**Group:** Grade R

**Allocated Time:** 40 minutes

**Aim:** To experiment with sound and movement by creating living, breathing words and phrases.

**Specific Outcomes:** Learners use language for learning.  
Learners make and negotiate meaning and understanding.  
Learners understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context.

**Method:** Various exercises using Drama techniques.

**Exercise I: Relaxation: Bees and Blossoms (7 minutes)**

Each learner finds a space, closing their eyes they curl up in a ball on the floor. Listening to the facilitator's instructions they "grow" into a flower. The exercise is repeated, the second time the individuals are invited to add adjectives such as "pink, green, tall, beautiful" etc.

Next, the learners become bees flying around the room collecting honey. Humming "Mmms" and "Nnns" focusing the breath forward in the mouth (promoting resonance).

**Exercise II: Going Shopping ...(20 minutes)**

The facilitator and group sit in a circle facing each other. In the centre of the circle is a bag containing several grocery items such as, bread, an apple, a box of milk, and a block of cheese etc. One at a time, a volunteer pulls out an item and holds it up for the group to see. The volunteer says the name and the group repeats the name of each item.

Once all the items are named, the group divides into pairs. Each pair has one of the items in their "shop", one learner is the shop owner the other comes in to buy something. The learners are encouraged to play "shop, shop". All the role-plays take place simultaneously, the facilitator walks around and monitors the interactions, and if necessary the facilitator can contribute in-role.

**Exercise III: The Party Game (7 minutes)**

Sitting in a circle each member has the opportunity to "bring" something to the party. For example, "My name is Lorraine and I am bringing lollipops to the party." The children are encouraged not to repeat an item already mentioned.

**Exercise IV: "One-two-three- FREEZE!" (4 minutes)**

The class runs around while the facilitator says, "One-two-three-FREEZE!" When the group hears "freeze" they have to create and hold their pose until the facilitator starts counting again.

**Exercise V: Reflection (2 minutes)**

The facilitator asks questions and the group summarises what they have learnt.

**Notes:** Did the group members...

- Understand and follow the instructions?
- Improve their control and concentration?
- Communicate with each other and display teamwork?
- Learn any new words?
- Enjoy themselves?

**Lesson Plan Outline: Class 4**

**Group:** Grade R

**Allocated Time:** 40 minutes

**Aim:** To promote an awareness of voice, speech and language production.

**Specific Outcomes:** Learners use language for learning.  
Learners show critical awareness of language usage.  
Learners understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context.

**Method:** Various exercises using Drama techniques.

**Exercise I: Relaxation: Popcorn (5 minutes)**

Each learner finds a space and closes their eyes. The facilitator describes popcorn bursting in a pot on the stove. As the tutor speaks, the learners become the popcorn. They are encouraged to move and speak freely. Verbal and non-verbal expression should be staccato.

**Exercise II: Tongue twisters (7 minutes)**

In simple terms the importance of clear utterances is discussed. The group first mouth, then whisper, say and finally sing several tongue twisters such as: “Pass the pens and pencils please”.

“Red lorry, yellow lorry,  
Red leather, yellow leather”.

**Exercise III: Mirrors (5 minutes)**

Pairs are formed (*A* and *B*). Each pair sits facing each other as if looking into a mirror. *A* becomes a cat and *B* becomes his reflection. Working in perfect unison, *B* imitates *A*'s gestures and sounds. For example, *A* purrs while cleaning behind his ears, *B* mirrors him simultaneously. The pair exchange roles.

**Exercise IV: Once Upon a Time... (15 minutes)**

The class and facilitator sit in a circle facing each other. The facilitator begins the story with “Once upon a time, in a faraway land there lived a...” The facilitator rolls a ball to one of the learners. The learner who receives the ball adds a word and then rolls the ball back to the teacher. The facilitator begins another sentence and rolls the ball to another learner. The story is developed in this way.

**Exercise V: Music Interpretation (5 minutes)**

The learners listen to an extract from Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. Next they respond to it in any way they like.

**Exercise VI: Reflection (3 minutes)**

The facilitator asks questions and the group discusses what they have learnt and what they have enjoyed.

**Notes:** Did the group members...

- Understand and follow the instructions?
- Actively listen to their classmates and tutor?
- Improve their control, concentration and self-confidence?
- Communicate with each other and display teamwork?
- Learn any new words?
- Express and develop their non-verbal and verbal skills?
- Enjoy themselves?

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