

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION AND DRAMA
TECHNIQUES WITH LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN SOUTH AFRICA:
A LITERATURE STUDY**

C.L. English

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Supervisor: Dr R. Newmark

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this study project is my own original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university in order to obtain a degree.

SUMMARY

This literature review highlights, with particular reference to the South African context, the emotional needs of learners with special educational needs (SEN) and stresses the importance of therapeutic intervention for these learners if educators wish to promote optimal academic, social and personal development. Due to South Africa's current economic climate a cost effective and time efficient intervention programme that is accessible to a large number of learners is essential.

Action and drama techniques are proposed as possible therapeutic tools, which could potentially be implemented by educators, as therapeutic agents, within the education system. Educators would take on the central facilitation roles within these groups. The roles of director and co-director in this context have consequently been given particular cognizance.

This literature review concludes that the use of action and drama techniques offers the following benefits:

- The techniques appear to be effective treatment options for all learners with special educational needs. including those with limited verbal communication skills
- The techniques appear to be most effective in a group setting and as such, possess the potential to reach a large number of learners.

- Literature indicates that the techniques are adaptable and may be implemented at various levels and in diverse contexts. For example, it appears that the techniques may be implemented at a basic level in the classroom, or in more depth in a therapeutic group scenario.
- The techniques may be implemented in a holistic manner, e.g. psychodrama model, in isolation, or be integrated with other approaches or theories.
- Literature suggests that the techniques allow learners to gain more insight into their functioning, to work through unresolved emotions and to develop new and more functional behaviours.
- The techniques appear to be time efficient in that literature indicates that they are conducive to brief therapy.
- Training educators as directors and co-directors offers a potentially cost effective and accessible intervention option for South Africa.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie literatuur bespreek sekere hoogte punte, met spesifieke verwysing na die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, die emosionele behoeftes van leerders met spesiale onderwys behoeftes (SEN). Dit plaas klem op die belangrikheid van terapeutiese intervensie vir hierdie leerders indien opvoeders ten doel het om optimale akademiese, sosiale en persoonlike ontwikkeling te bevorder. Weens Suid-Afrika se huidige ekonomiese klimaat is 'n koste-effektiewe en tyds-doeltreffende effektiewe intervensie program wat toeganklik is vir 'n groot getal leerders, absoluut noodsaaklik.

Aksie- en dramategnieke word voorgestel as moonlike terapeutiese middels, wat potensieel deur opvoeders geïmplementeer kan word as terapeutiese middels, binne die onderwys stelsel. Opvoeders sou dan die sentrale fasaliterings rolle binne hierdie groepe inneem. Die rolle van 'n regisseur en mede regisseur in hierdie konteks het gevolglike spesifieke aandag gekry.

Hierdie literatuuroorsig kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat die gebruik van aksie- en dramategnieke die volgende voordele bied:

- Die tegnieke blyk om effektiewe behandelingsopsies te wees vir leerders met beperkte verbale kommunikasie vermoëns

- Die tegnieke blyk mees effektief te wees in 'n groepsverband en as sulks, beskik dit oor die potensiaal om 'n groot getal leerders te bereik.
- Die tegnieke is aanpasbaar en kan geïmplimenteer word op verskeie vlakke en in diverse kontekste. 'n Voorbeeld hiervan blyk te wees dat die tegnieke geïmplimenteer kan word op 'n basiese vlak in die klaskamer, of meer in diepte in 'n terapeutiese groep scenario.
- Die tegnieke kan geïmplimenteer word op 'n holistiese wyse, byvoorbeeld 'n psigodramamodel, in isolasie, of kan geïntigreer word met ander benaderings of teorieë
- Die tegnieke laat leerders toe om meer insig te verkry in hul funksionering, om deur onopgeloste emosies te werk en nuwe en meer funksionele gedrag te ontwikkel
- Die tegnieke blyk meer tyds-effektief te wees deurdat die literatuur aandui dat dit kortstondige terapie aanhelp
- Die opleiding van opvoeders as direkteure en mede-direkteure bied 'n potensieel-koste effektiewe en toeganklike intervensie-opsie aan Suid-Afrika

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANCE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

South Africa is a country where many of its children are in dire need of psychological support. Large numbers of South Africans have been subjected to high levels of instability and extensive emotional scarring (Lewis, 1999: 1; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1997: 147). Due to economic constraints worldwide, many people do not have the time or the money to spend years in psychotherapy (Anderson-Klontz, Dayton & Anderson-Klontz, 1999: 113; Wells & Giannetti, 1993: 12). As a result, many South Africans find themselves physically, economically, socially or emotionally disadvantaged (Donald, 1993: 139).

The above is most evident in our education system where it is estimated that for every qualified professional there are approximately 12 000 learners with special educational needs (LSEN) (Kriegler & Farman 1996: 42). The Education White Paper 6 (2001: 9), states that 64 200 learners with disabilities or impairments are presently attending special schools, and it is estimated that approximately 280 000 learners with disabilities or impairments are unaccounted for.

South African society is in a process of rapid transformation. This includes the changes intended to rectify inequalities of the past, as well as those relating to a changing world. The reformation of the South African education system is in

line with the above changes. One such change is South Africa's move towards inclusive education (Education White Paper 6, 2001). Inclusive education is founded on the assumption that all children have the right to attend their neighbourhood school (Ainscow, 1997: 5).

This process of inclusion is complex and is often fraught with difficulties and uncertainties (Heiman & Margalit, 1998: 154–163). The South African context is unique and consequently requires the adaptation of overseas experiences as a basis from which a uniquely South African approach may be nurtured. In view of the time required to introduce, adapt and implement the inclusion process in South Africa, the immediate needs of many learners may not be adequately addressed. This will inevitably result in certain learners experiencing adjustment difficulties.

Besides the above-mentioned additional challenges, children faced with special educational needs, be it physical, educational or social, are as a matter of course more likely to experience some form of emotional distress (Jones, 1992: 135; Botha, 1991: 284; Kapp, 1991: 336; Kramer, Priestal & Glover 1988: 48). The correlation between healthy psychological development, environmental factors and optimal functioning has been theorised by writers such as Erikson (1963: 247-263) and Maslow (1970: 35–58). If learners' basic emotional needs are not met, or their sense of self-worth is low, they often under-achieve (Pajares, 1996: 544–545).

Given that the need for emotional support in South Africa is great and individual professional assistance is considered a luxury, a practical solution would be to empower teachers, social workers and community support personnel with therapeutic skills and techniques that could be used in the classroom or, in more serious cases, in small groups. Learners with special needs often find it difficult to verbalise their feelings and thoughts (Kramer, Priesel & Glover, 1988: 48). In this context action and drama techniques adapted from Moreno's Psychodrama model (Moreno, 1969) may be particularly effective in assisting individuals with poor communication skills to express and work through their feelings. Blatner (1973: 120) asserts that these techniques can assist in emotional problem solving and the strengthening of self-esteem.

Blatner (1973: 1) stresses the point that action and drama techniques that involve physical movement are "... especially important ... for those who have little intellectual and verbal exploration (e.g. children, psychotics, delinquents, etc.)".

The techniques and concepts developed by Moreno (Moreno, 1969, 1974) have, over the years, been adapted and integrated into many different therapeutic contexts, such as Gestalt therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, existential psychological approaches, transactional analysis, family therapy, substance-abuse treatments, stress-management seminars, drama therapy and sensory awakening, to name but a few (Van Impe, 2002: 4; Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000:149–201; Leveton, 1992: ix; Blatner, 1973: 10).

Action and drama techniques have been used in both a one-on-one setting and in groups (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 255–277; Moreno, 1969: 233). These methods have also been adapted for use in classrooms, particularly with regard to subjects relating to the social sciences (Van Impe, 2002: 4; Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 225; Leveton, 1992: ix). In the context of education, these techniques are adapted to promote personal reflection, the growth of self-knowledge and to broaden perspectives.

The key element of psychodrama, which forms the foundation of the proposed action and drama techniques, is that the individual acts 'spontaneously' and not as an invented character interpreted from a pre-written script. As Moreno (1969: 28) notes:

I liberated the actor from the script by insisting that he play himself, to be his own protagonist and act out his real life episodes without a playwright, without rehearsal, with total spontaneity.

To ensure spontaneity the protagonist (refer to 1.6.9.) acts as if the scenario is happening 'here and now' (Blatner, 1973: 16). Trying to recall how events actually took place often stifles the flow and emotional intensity of the process.

The therapist is known as the "director". The director plays the vital role of facilitating the psychodrama process in such a way that the individual and the group benefit from the experience (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000:149–201;

Leveton, 1992: ix ;Blatner, 1973: 10). When working with children with special educational needs, the benefit of including a co-therapist (or co-director) will be discussed in Chapter 4. The co-director shares the leadership of the group, assisting the director with the planning, practical organisation and management of the group. The co-director also acts as an important role model for the group, modeling the different roles and techniques within the therapeutic process (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 158; Van Impe, 2000: 22 ; Hudgins, 1998b: 63).

The roles of director and co-director are central to the purpose of this literature study as it is proposed that educators and support personnel within the South African educational context fill these roles. This may go some distance towards making the therapeutic benefits of action and drama techniques accessible to a greater number of learners.

Much has been written on classic psychodrama intervention (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000; Leveton, 1992; Starr, 1977; Blatner, 1973; Moreno, 1969). In recent years, more interest has been shown in action and drama techniques that have been adapted from Moreno's psychodrama and applied in different contexts (Van Impe, 2002; Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000; Anderson-Klontz, Dayton & Anderson-Klontz, 1999). These contemporary trends are shifting away from classic psychodrama as a holistic approach and have begun to integrate psychodrama principles and techniques with other therapeutic approaches. However, little research or literature could be found on the use of action and drama techniques in a South African context or in connection with

learners exhibiting special educational needs. In particular, the scope of literature and recognised research in the field of psychological intervention for learners with special educational needs, specifically those with disabilities or impairments, appears to be insubstantial.

1.2. PERSONAL MOTIVATION FOR CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

During my years as an educator and emerging trainee psychologist, I have become increasingly aware of the extent of LSEN in South Africa and the dire need for psychological intervention. My experiences include teaching in schools representing various socio-economic levels, conducting community service, and offering academic assistance to Grade 12 students and psychological support to a farm school and pre-schools in disadvantaged communities.

Many of the educators teaching in these communities appeared to be working under considerable emotional strain, placed upon them by the demands of educating LSEN without having the prerequisite training. Many of the learners exhibited serious emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. For many of these learners, the option of being educated in an institution that could provide adequate academic assistance was just not available. Whilst supporting the process of inclusive education, I was obliged to seek the best possible learning environment for LSEN. While I was working with educators and support personnel in an attempt to find appropriate assistance for these learners, I came to the realisation that most of the schools that could offer effective professional service were inundated with requests and had waiting

lists. As a result, the emotional needs of both learners and teachers in the poorer communities were largely not addressed.

Working in the education field left me feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenge of providing effective education for all. This internal conflict is more than likely experienced by many educators, support workers and psychologists in South Africa. Personally, this conflict drives a continuous search for appropriate and practical programmes that could offer potential hope and assistance for the future.

One such opportunity arose when I had the privilege of being included in a training group focusing on action and drama techniques. The project, titled "The development of a training program for teachers in the Western Cape in Action- and Drama therapy for learners with special educational needs", ran from November 2000 to October 2001. This project, sponsored by the Flemish community (Brussels), was a collaborative effort between the University of Stellenbosch, the Flemish community and the Western Cape Education Department. Volunteering educators and support staff of 15 schools in the Western Cape received 44 hours of training in action and drama techniques by the international representative of the project, Anja van Impe. In this project, pioneering research was done using action and drama techniques in the training of educators.

The general progress of this research has been shared with peers at various presentations and a research report with the findings of the project has been

compiled. The research will be disseminated through articles, which are in preparation for publication. From this project, the need for a literature study became evident.

The training group followed a psychodramatic format and was particularly enlightening in that I became aware of the effectiveness of action and drama techniques and the possibility of sharing such techniques with LSEN. The question of whether educators could employ these techniques was often the subject of debate.

1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Many LSEN in South Africa are not developing optimally as their emotional needs are not being addressed. At present there are no co-ordinated intervention programmes that offer therapeutic intervention for LSEN. As research concerning psychological support for LSEN and action and drama techniques is scarce within the South African context, a critical review of both local and international literature was necessary in order to conduct effective and significant empirical research.

1.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (2001: 86) distinguishes between a literature review that precedes an empirical research project and a 'literature study' that consists of a review of literature alone. However, it appears that for the latter the label 'literature review' and 'literature study' are interchangeable (Mouton, 2001: 86; Mertens, 1998: 35; Hart, 1998, 27). As this research project exclusively reviews

literature, it will be termed a literature study. This literature study attempts to establish a conceptual framework, which provides foundation and justification for future research. It does not presume to constitute an exhaustive explanation of action and drama techniques. Its purpose is, rather, to inform future research in the area of action and drama techniques, as research is particularly lacking in this area.

An important consideration when reading a literature study is the researcher's epistemological standpoint and his or her approach to research in the social sciences. The analytical style, conclusions drawn and manner in which the literature is ultimately organised usually reflects the researcher's personal frame of reference. A literature study intends to inform and direct future research, therefore influencing the methodological procedures and regulations governing future research projects (Mertens, 1998: 35).

The methodology adopted by researchers is predominantly determined by the epistemological standpoint of that particular researcher. The human quality of educational research requires a conceptual and an analytical strategy that is appropriate when understanding the richness and the depth of human behaviour (Kincheloe, 1991: 23).

The epistemological view of this study is one that regards human beings as actively constructing their own knowledge. Vygotsky, whose theories of cognitive development are becoming increasingly popular in educational settings, sees knowledge as a social construction (Donald *et al*, 1997: 48). As

human beings interact socially, they develop their understanding of reality. From this viewpoint knowledge is not a fixed phenomenon waiting to be discovered. Rather, knowledge, as a social construction, is constantly changing and developing.

Knowledge as a dynamic social construction that is understood and interpreted through the perceptions of human beings requires a flexible, adaptable methodology that captures the conceptual complexity of human relationships. A qualitative paradigm allows for methodology that emphasises the importance of human perception in the form of descriptions. The qualitative paradigm in line with constructivist thinking places great value on interpretation and analysis (Stake, 1995: 75).

"[H]uman thought and action cannot be separated from human feeling and action" (Kincheloe, 1991: 28). In line with this statement of Kincheloe (1991), qualitative researchers regard themselves as a primary tool in interpreting and understanding the perceptions of others.

A flexible qualitative design is facilitated by the simultaneous collection and analysis of data. As data is collected, it is interpreted and analysed, thus allowing the researcher to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the research (Burgess, 1985: 45). It also assists the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the data. He or she therefore becomes more aware of patterns, idiosyncrasies or extenuating influences that develop in the research. Consequently, each research experience may become richer and

more insightful. As the purpose of this literature study is to inform future research by exploring existing literature and research projects, it is most important that one's assumptions and conclusions are developed and evaluated throughout the research process.

Hart (1998: 27) proposed eight possible characteristics of a literature study. These characteristics were adopted to direct the research process of this literature study. Below is a brief discussion of how this literature study achieves Hart's (1998: 27) characteristics.

1.4.1. Distinguish what has been done, from what needs to be done

Emotional intervention programmes with LSEN in South Africa and the use of action and drama techniques with LSEN are reviewed. To accomplish this, an interlibrary search was conducted for journal articles, book sources and policy documents. South African libraries were generally lacking in recent publications, but a network with the University of Ghent (Belgium) was most profitable, as this University shows great interest in psychodrama and action and drama techniques. Internet articles were also consulted, but were used with caution, as many of the articles were not yet published in recognised publications.

1.4.2. Discovering important variables relevant to the topic; synthesising and gaining a new perspective; identifying relationships between ideas and practice; establishing the context of the topic or problem

This literature study has been organised according to themes and constructs (Mouton, 2001: 91–94; McMillan, 1993: 600). In other words, constructs within the literature were identified and categorised according to particular themes. The analysis of data ran parallel to the collection of data. A non-mathematical inductive analysis was undertaken, where categories and patterns emerged from the data rather than being imposed on the data prior to the data analysis (McMillan, 1993: 592). Procedures designed to highlight and compare salient ideas and patterns within the data were used. A theme analysis was conducted. "Theme analysis describes the specific and distinctive recurring qualitative characteristics, subjects or discourse, or concerns expressed" (McMillan, 1993: 600). A reflexive, systematic and progressive approach to the classification of the ideas, theories, concepts and arguments was adopted.

The literature study provides insight into the emotional needs of LSEN with particular reference to the South African context. In addition, literature in the field of action and drama techniques that have their origins in psychodrama is examined, with the purpose of considering action and drama techniques as a potential intervention option for South Africa. Particular cognisance is given to the roles of director and co-director as these roles could potentially be played by educators within the education system.

1.4.3. Rationalising the significance of the problem

Chapter 2 highlights the extensive nature of LSEN in South Africa and the need for these learners to receive emotional support if they are to reach their full potential as learners. Action and drama techniques and their suitability for LSEN are discussed.

1.4.4. Enhancing and acquiring the subject vocabulary

Specific definitions of pertinent terms are provided throughout the literature study.

1.4.5. Understanding the structure of the subject

A clear outline of the South African context and a description of the action and drama techniques are provided. Examples are given to illustrate the themes and constructs.

1.4.6. Relating ideas and theory to applications

Grounded theories such as those of Erikson (1963: 247–263) and Maslow (1970: 35–58) are offered as an explanation of the high incidence of LSEN in the South African context. The theoretical origins of psychodrama are discussed, highlighting the fact that psychodrama originated primarily as a method and not as a theory. The assimilation of action and drama techniques into other therapeutic approaches is discussed.

As the purpose of this literature study is not to inform a particular empirical study, restricting it to a particular theoretical framework may limit subsequent research and the development of future theoretical frameworks.

1.4.7. Identifying the main methodologies and research techniques that have been used

Accounts of formal research in the areas of psychotherapy with LSEN, and action and drama techniques appear to be very limited. Many of the examples cited in this literature study originate from publications where the authors have commented on and documented anecdotal accounts and transcriptions of the therapeutic process of their clients. In other words, they have not structured their findings into a formal research format. The effectiveness of the therapy techniques proposed by these publications has been based on the personal observations and opinions of therapists, with little empirical support. Consequently, offering a critical analysis of existing research is hindered by the lack of availability of significant research findings in the literature I had access to in my study.

1.4.8. Placing the research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments

LSEN within South Africa is contextualised in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 the historical origins of action and drama techniques are illustrated and contemporary trends investigated. For this purpose both older established texts and very recent sources were consulted.

This literature study is intended to highlight the scope of phenomena still to be investigated and to contribute to the establishment of a theoretical base and conceptual framework for an emerging area of research.

1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the proposed research are to identify the psychological needs of LSEN and to propose the use of action and drama techniques, implemented by educators, as a potential intervention option.

The aims of this literature study are:

- ◆ to review the literature on the emotional needs of LSEN in South Africa;
- ◆ to review action and drama techniques, following the principles of psychodrama, as a possible intervention option for LSEN in South Africa;
- ◆ to investigate the role of the director and co-director in action and drama groups in the light of these roles being implemented by educators and support personnel;
- ◆ to inform and propose future research, evaluating action and drama techniques as an intervention option with LSEN in a South African context.

Creswell (1994: 30) suggests that researchers use a visual map to assist in structuring the literature so that the process and purposes of the review are clearly illustrated. See Figure 1.1. for a visual map of the literature study.

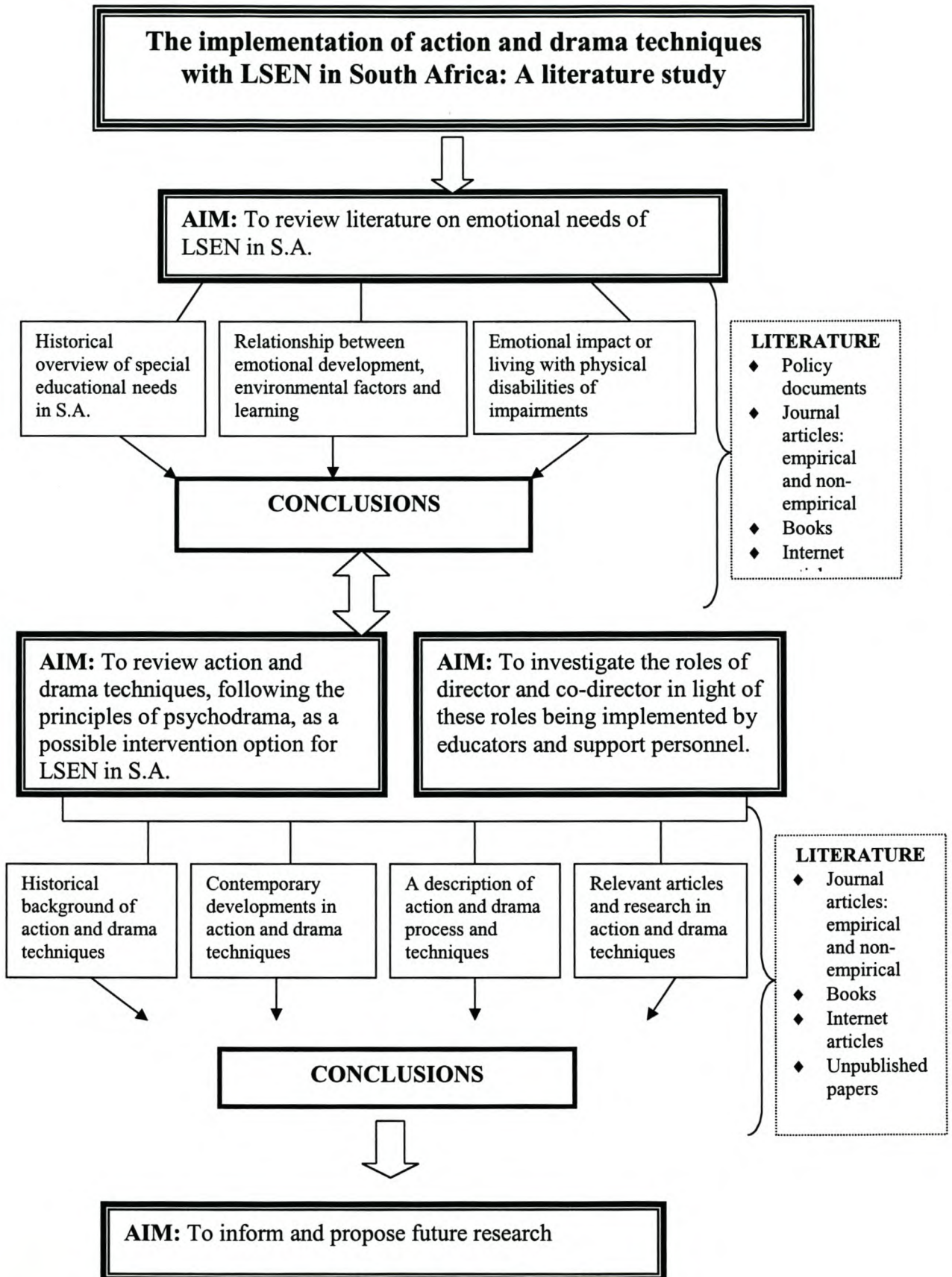


FIGURE 1.1. A diagrammatic representation of the literature study

1.6. DEFINITION OF RELEVANT TERMS

1.6.1. Learners with special educational needs (LSEN)

For the purposes of this literature study the definitions of Donald *et al* (1997) and Naidoo, Burden, Singh and Topham (1996) appear to provide a clear understanding of LSEN within the South African context:

...where students require special help and support if they are to overcome the particular contextual, social and individual disadvantages and difficulties they face (Donald, Lazarus & Llolwana's, 1997: 15).

Special educational needs arise from a range of disadvantages, impairments or learning difficulties which affect learning to the extent that a modified or special curriculum, or specially adapted conditions of learning are necessary if the learner is to be appropriately and effectively educated. Special educational needs may be the result of physical, emotional, intellectual, sensorial, neurological, scholastic and/or ecological factors (i.e. intrinsic or extrinsic factors). In South Africa, the latter would include those learners who have been socially, culturally, linguistically, economically or politically disadvantaged (Naidoo, Burden, Singh & Topham, 1996: 16).

1.6.2. Inclusive education

Sebba and Ainscow (1996: 9) describe inclusive education as:

...the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by recognising its curricular organisation and provision. Through this process, the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in doing so, reduces the need to exclude pupils.

South Africa follows the international trend towards inclusive education (Education White Paper 6, 2001). The implication for our education system is that educators within mainstream schools will have the added challenge of effectively catering for LSEN. Therefore, the move towards inclusive education is important to consider in this literature study because psychological support programmes will have to be made available in both mainstream and special schools.

1.6.3. Educators

According to the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996) an 'educator' is defined as:

...any person, excluding a person who is appointed to exclusively perform extracurricular duties, who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional therapy and education psychological services, at a school.

1.6.4. Support personnel

The restructuring of the education system (Education White Paper 6, 2001: 13) makes provision within the education system for personnel who offer training and support to learners and educators. 'Support personnel' in this context refers to certain of these individuals who are trained in social work, counseling or psychology.

1.6.5. Psychodrama

This is a specific approach that was developed by Jacob Moreno (Moreno, 1974 & 1969). It is a therapeutic method where individuals enact pertinent life events and their performance is enhanced by the use of specialised techniques (Moreno, 1969). This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.6.6. Action and drama techniques

Action and drama techniques stem from psychodrama, but have moved away from the classical psychodrama structure and have been adapted and integrated with other theoretical approaches. These techniques involve role play, reflection through art and visualisation activities that are facilitated by a trained group therapist (director). Some examples of these techniques include role reversals, soliloquies and mirroring. A more comprehensive explanation of these techniques is provided in Chapter 3 (Van Impe, 2002; Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000; Blatner, 1973; Moreno, 1969).

1.6.7. Director

This is the chief therapist or facilitator in a psychodrama or action and drama group (Yarblonsky, 1976: 111; Moreno, 1969: 235; Haskell, 1967: 14). His or her primary role is to ensure the development of a favourable atmosphere that promotes trust and spontaneity. The director structures the group and organises the basic scheme to best suit the group. He or she will introduce appropriate action and drama techniques at appropriate times (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 157).

1.6.8. Co-director

The co-director, as an assistant therapist, acts as a support for the director and for the protagonist. Having a director and a co-director is beneficial when working with children, especially those requiring additional physical and emotional support (Van Impe, 2002: 24; Shapiro, 1978: 114–115). The co-director also helps the director plan future sessions by adding his or her observations of the group and opinions regarding the needs of the group (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000:158).

1.6.9. Protagonist

The protagonist is a volunteer from the action and drama group who wishes to enact or work through a real-life or fantasy experience. He or she is the main character in the action (Van Impe, 2002: 19; Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 155; Kumar & Treadwell, 1986: 156–163; Blatner, 1973: 6; Moreno, 1969, 234–235).

1.7. STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

Chapter 1 provides the motivation for and a brief overview of the literature study, as well as an outline of the research design.

Chapter 2 explores the emotional needs of children with special educational needs, with particular reference to the South African context.

Chapter 3 focuses specifically on the roles of the director and the co-director within a special-needs context. It emphasises the benefits of working collaboratively with a co-director. In this context, Moreno's psychodrama will be discussed to provide a historical overview of the origins of the action and drama techniques. Finally, contemporary trends and research will be outlined.

Chapter 4 summarises the relevant issues raised in the preceding chapters and offers a proposal for the implementation of action and drama techniques in a uniquely South African context.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief historical overview of LSEN in South Africa. The relationship between the emotional needs of LSEN and their motivation for learning is highlighted in order to emphasise the necessity for psychological support.

Literature concerning psychological intervention with LSEN in South Africa appears limited and much of what exists addresses issues on a superficial and non-empirical level.

2.2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Individuals with disabilities have always been present in our societies. Historically, they have been persecuted, executed and admitted to asylums. In South Africa, it was not until the late 1800s that a view of furthering their development began to emerge (Du Toit, 1996: 6). Christian organisations were the first to provide schools for children with disabilities. These tended to be disability specific. When educationalists eventually became involved in the education of children (primarily white children) with disabilities, the methods of diagnosis and the understanding of the etiology of learning difficulties were largely based on the scientifically driven Medical model (Burden, 1996a: 99).

According to Kriegler and Skuy (1996: 109) the Medical model considered individual learning differences to be measurable (e.g. IQ testing) and primarily physiologically based. The problems that the learner was experiencing stemmed from deficits within the learner. Very little consideration was given to social and environmental factors. This model with its reductionist nature helped to develop a complex system of labeling and categorisation. Those that were 'normal' attended the mainstream schools and those that did not fit these typical standards were generally sidelined (Burden, 1996b: 3). In many cases they were sent to schools that were far from home, and in this way, became detached from their communities.

As schools are, to a large extent, considered to be microcosms of wider society, the isolation experienced by disabled children in special schools was largely carried through to their adult life. In other words, many remained detached from mainstream society throughout their lives.

In South Africa the domain of special education was further aggravated by policies of racial discrimination. The educational needs of black children were considered subordinate to those of white children. The disparities in the provision of educational services between the different racial groups with regard to LSEN are illustrated below. Table 2.1. is cited from NEPI (1992) in Du Toit (1996:13).

TABLE 2.1. Number of pupils in special schools as a ratio of total enrolment for the various race groups, 1990.

Race group	No. of pupils in special education	Total enrolment	Ratio
Whites	14 969	932 181	1 : 62
Indians	5 580	233 101	1 : 42
Coloureds	6 558	841 387	1 : 128
Africans	9 811	8 143 217	1 : 830

In 1994, South Africa made a commitment to change to a democratic system. In 1996, a new constitution was signed. This constitution prioritised the need to redress past atrocities and to promote the human rights of all South Africans. The Bill of Rights within this constitution states (Thompson, 1998: 2):

...all learners have a right to basic education including adult basic education and further education... In order to ensure the effective access to and implementation of this right the state must...take into account

- a) Equity;
- b) Practicability; and
- c) The need to redress the results of the past racially discriminatory laws and practices.

The above represented a commitment of nations to address discrimination in the area of special education. The Salamanca World Conference on Special Educational Needs, under the organisation of UNESCO, strove to unite

nations by advocating a policy that was designed to eliminate discrimination in the education systems of the world (Ainscow, 1998: 70).

Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities, children from other remote or nomadic populations and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups (the Salamanca Statement, 1994).

This prompted an international movement towards inclusive education. "Inclusive schools...are those designed to meet the educational needs of all their members within common, yet fluid environments and activities" (Skrtic, Sailor & Gee, 1996: 149). Green (1991) translates inclusive education to mean that all learners "...receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment that is consistent with their needs" (Green, 1991: 84).

A possible conceptual definition of inclusive education:

The separate systems of education which presently exist ("special" and "ordinary") need to be integrated to provide one system which is able to recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the learner population. Within this integrated system, a large range of options for education provision and support services should be provided. Learners should have the ability to move from one learning context to another, e.g. from early childhood education (ECD) to general education and training (GET), from specialised centre of learning to an ordinary centre of learning, or from formal to a non-formal programme.

The system of education should be structured in such a way that, irrespective of the learning context, opportunities for facilitating integration and inclusion of the learner in all aspects of life should be provided.

(NCSNET/NCESS report, 1998: 6)

In my opinion, implementing an inclusive education system in South Africa is an extremely complex task. This is because South Africa struggles with a shortage of qualified educators and financial constraints that have resulted in many mainstream schools functioning with a very high educator-pupil ratio. Material resources are also, to a large extent, lacking (Engelbrecht, 1999: 77). Furthermore, the adjustments of LSEN entering mainstream schooling for the first time will certainly be challenging. These learners and those already in mainstream schools will face many changes during the restructuring process, which will possibly have both positive and negative impacts on their lives. The manner in which learners are included is of vital importance. Simply placing LSEN into a mainstream context may be detrimental instead of beneficial. Inclusive programmes need to be carefully planned and combined with the necessary support.

Vaughn, Elbaum and Schumm's (1996: 404–412) study concluded that the level of peer acceptance and academic self-concept was lower among learning-disabled students than non-learning disabled students in inclusive schools. Heiman and Margalit (1998: 154–163), while reviewing literature for their research project, noted that within inclusive schools learning-disabled students appeared to display a lower social status, have fewer friends and be rejected socially more often than non-disabled students. Their study, however,

found that the placement of students with mild mental retardation in self-contained classes in mainstream schools tended to decrease their feelings of loneliness and depression and increase their social skills (Heiman & Margalit, 1998: 154–163).

It follows from the above discussion that, during the transitions towards equality and inclusion, the primary focus of South African governmental policy seems to have been on the provision of financial aid, material resources and the restructuring of the education system. Although the emotional challenges of LSEN have been recorded, not much literature could be found relating to programmes that support their emotional development.

Educational development in South Africa aspires to nurture the development of the whole child towards holistic development (Education White Paper 6: 2001; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 1997: 26). This means not only ensuring academic growth, but also the nurturance of the physical, social, emotional and spiritual aspects of each learner. However, due to the volatile nature of South African society, many learners in both mainstream and special education require greater levels of emotional support. At present, South Africa does not have sufficient trained professionals to meet this ever-growing need (Kriegler & Farman, 1996: 42). Furthermore, many of those learners requiring additional support fall within the lower socio-economic bracket of society where provision of basic needs is a daily challenge. It is due to the above factors that I am of the opinion that South Africa desperately requires emotional support programmes that can be adapted for classroom use, or

alternatively, for use in a group context, rather than in a limited one-on-one scenario.

Dealing with being "different" is a challenge on its own. In South Africa the challenges faced by youth with special educational needs are even greater. Du Toit (1991a: 23–27) makes the distinction between restraints and disabilities. In the case of restraints, a child has no physical deficiencies in sensory, physical, neurological or intellectual functioning. The difficulties experienced by the learner are primarily the result of environmental factors. However, when a child is described as having a disability or handicap, there is usually an identifiable sensory, physical, neurological or intellectual deficiency, which tends to be permanent in nature. Du Toit goes on to suggest that often there is a reciprocal relationship between the two. Donald, *et al.* (1997: 233) talk about the special needs of learners in disadvantaged areas being exacerbated by inadequate resources.

According to Kruger and Adams (1998: 17–23), those environmentally disadvantaged learners may suffer from factors such as lack of nutrition, inadequate healthcare, insufficient parental stimulation and a lack of resources for stimulation (e.g. books). These learners often lack the emotional and physical energy, parental support and motivation necessary for effective learning. Consequently, they will more than likely experience difficulties, both socially and academically, at school.

The Western Cape Education Department (1998, Circular 1036: 1) identifies the following barriers to learning that are affecting learners in South Africa:

...poor socio-economic conditions, lack of support services, negative attitudes lack of parental support, lack of appropriate education programmes (curriculum), lack of learning/teaching media, lack of access to physical facilities, poor communication and intrinsic disabilities such as vision and hearing loss and neurological defects.

2.3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND LEARNING

When considering the South African context, I find the theories of Erikson (1963: 247–263) and Maslow (1970: 35–58) particularly informative, because both of these theories examine the interaction of the individual within his or her environment.

Erikson's (1963: 247–263) theory of psychosocial development examines identity development and places emphasis on self-concept. His eight stages of development represent progressive emotional needs that interact with increasing social relationships. At each stage, the individual will experience conflict between two alternatives, which influences the development of one's self-concept in either a positive or negative manner. Positive social interactions encourage the individual to develop positive and functional attributes whilst adjusting to each new phase. Similarly, negative social interactions may lead to dysfunctional adjustments. See Figure 2.1.

APPROXIMATE LIFE PHASE	EGO QUALITY TO BE DEVELOPED
HIGH SCHOOL	IDENTITY VS ROLE CONFUSION
PRIMARY SCHOOL	INDUSTRY VS INFERIORITY
PRE-SCHOOL	INITIATIVE VS GUILT
TODDLER	AUTONOMY VS SHAME & DOUBT
INFANCY	BASIC TRUST VS MISTRUST

FIGURE 2.1. Erikson's first 5 stages of development (Erikson, 1963: 247–263).

Maslow's theory (McCown, Driscoll & Roop, 1996: 282–285; Maslow, 1970: 35–58) of human motivation based on his hierarchy of needs (See Figure 2.2.) reasons that before an individual can function optimally he or she must have satisfied basic motivations such as hunger, safety and belonging.

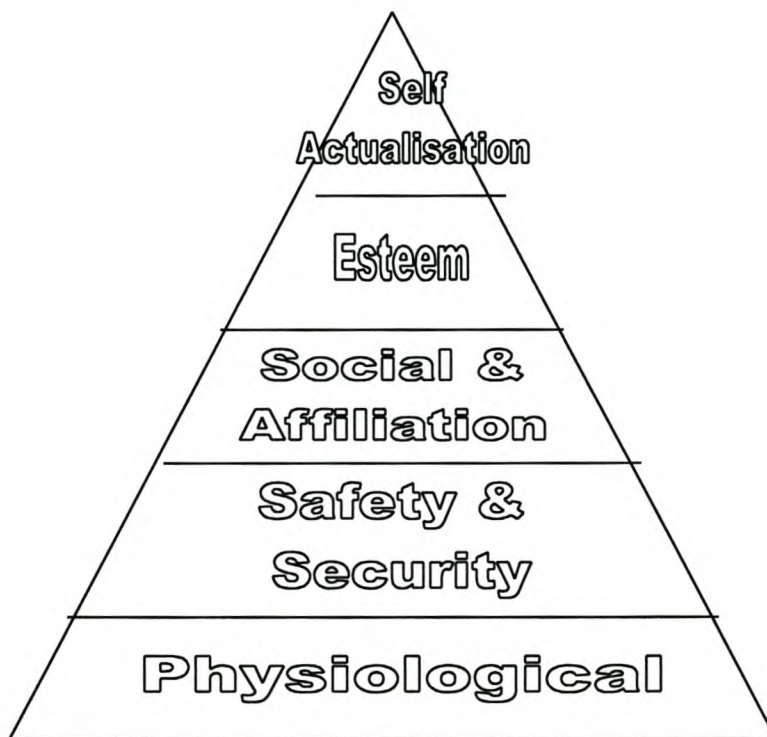


FIGURE 2.2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow ,1970: 35–58).

Maslow (1970: 35–58) theorises that human beings prioritise their needs according to the above hierarchy. Beginning with the basic physiological needs that sustain life, Maslow (1970: 35–58) argues that if these needs are not adequately met, the individual focuses much of his or her energy and attention on meeting these needs. If the basic physiological needs are gratified, then the safety and security needs, i.e. the individual's need for self-preservation becomes predominant. If the individual's safety is threatened, then other areas such as social interaction seem unimportant. Once the physiological and safety needs are reasonably satisfied the individual's need to be accepted and belong to various social groups becomes significant. The person then has the energy to strive for meaningful interpersonal relationships. Maslow (1970: 35–58) maintains that the individual will only then be ready to develop self-confidence and experience a sense of control, and will focus on fulfilling his or her needs for esteem. Once all of the above needs have been adequately satisfied, the individual experiences the need to maximise his or her true potential. At this stage, the individual will have the capacity to become everything he or she is capable of being. There is a dynamic interplay between the levels of the hierarchy. As an individual passes through different life stages and experiences, his or her level of self-actualisation will vary, as the primary focus of the individual varies.

I believe that applying these theories to the South African context offers a comprehensible explanation of the motivations of South African learners. Many of our learners are struggling to satisfy their most basic needs. South Africa has a history of violence and crime that permeates all communities,

particularly those in the lower socio-economic bracket. This may go a long way towards explaining why South Africa has such a high percentage of LSEN. Furthermore, an inadequate education system that is, by default, not equipped to build a sense of self-confidence and control in its learners inhibits them from reaching their maximum potential.

Lewis (1999: 67) explains the effects that post-traumatic stress can have on a learner's conduct and performance at school. Activities such as listening to instructions and paying attention in class become difficult because the child often experiences intrusive thoughts and feelings regarding the trauma that he or she has faced.

Many South African learners have been exposed to traumatic incidents. Some have experienced repeated trauma "...due to the high levels of violence both within the home and in the wider community" (Lewis, 1999: 1). For example, these learners may have witnessed an accident, experienced a highjacking or burglary, or been victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse. Unresolved emotions often manifest as concentration difficulties, behaviour problems, lack of energy and motivation, difficulties with memorisation, heightened anxiety, and negative self-speech.

Learners whose basic needs are not met often become victims of unnecessary failure. Beveridge (1993: 92) discusses the effects that repeated failure has on the emotional state and self-esteem of learners:

Where children repeatedly experience failure in their learning, this will almost certainly have a negative impact on their self-esteem. They are likely to begin to doubt their own competence as learners and see any successes they have as arising from factors outside their control. In such situations, they may feel anxious, frustrated and personally helpless, or they may start to view curricular tasks as boring and irrelevant and become disaffected with classroom learning.

Pajares (1996: 544–545) discusses the impact that an individual's sense of self-efficacy has on his or her thought patterns and emotional states. For the purposes of his article Pajares (1996: 544) quotes Bandura's definition of self-efficacy as follows:

The beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations.

Low self-efficacy tends to result in an individual's perception of things being tougher than they actually are. This in turn generates stress, depression and a limited perspective when problem-solving. Pajares (1996) consequently argues that self-efficacy is a strong determinant and predictor of an individual's ultimate achievements. He goes further to link a person's sense of self-efficacy and the influence it has on academic performance. Those exhibiting a high level of self-efficacy tend to achieve their potential, whereas those exhibiting low levels of self-efficacy tend to under-achieve, or to avoid subjects where their confidence is low.

The physical restructuring of educational resources, both human and physical, is extremely important. Included in this restructuring process are support personnel who could act as co-ordinators of school-based intervention programmes for emotional support, to ensure that our learners are ready and able to learn effectively (Education White Paper 6, 2001: 29–30). It is my view that providing learners with emotional support would not only protect learners from under-achievement and possible failure, but also hopefully decrease drop-out statistics and increase academic performance. Hall and Engelbrecht (1999: 233) suggest that as South Africa moves more fully into a system of inclusive education, special school educators should move away from direct service provision and use their experience and knowledge in a consultative role. In other words, they should offer specialised assistance (e.g. therapists, psychologists) and support programmes to mainstream schools.

2.4. THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF LIVING WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES OR IMPAIRMENTS

Reviewing literature on the emotional impact on learners with sensory, physical, neurological or intellectual functioning impairments has highlighted the additional emotional burdens borne by these learners. Offering a comprehensive overview of all sensory, physical, neurological and intellectual impairments and their related emotional needs goes beyond the scope of this research project. This section attempts, by means of examples, to illustrate some of the emotional challenges faced by learners with specific disabilities, and to motivate the necessity for psychological interventions.

Jones (1992: 135) investigated the self-concepts of learners with mild intellectual disability and noted that:

...failure to learn leads to adverse emotional responses including feelings of self-derision, poor ego perception, and anxiety which augment the failure to learn syndrome.

Robinson & Robinson (1976) cited in Du Toit (1991b: 307) assert that:

...research has shown that mentally handicapped children often have affective problems. Anxiety, tension and other signs of affective lability occur five times more often in these children than in normal children.

Zetlin and Turner (in Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow, 1993: 206) over a period of 18 months carried out a study of 25 adults with intellectual disability. They concluded that these adults were very aware of their "differentness" while growing up. They experienced their parents as overprotective, which they felt restricted their social life. They also mentioned the frustrations of being teased by children at school and in their neighbourhoods.

...at least 84% of them had some type of emotional or behavioural reaction in secondary school – drug or alcohol abuse, temper tantrums, destructive behaviour, or withdrawal (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow, 1993: 206).

Kramer, Priestal and Glover (1988: 48) suggest that due to limitations in language and communication skills, assessing the self-awareness and emotional states of mentally retarded people is particularly difficult.

While other individuals can explain their cognitive responses, the mentally retarded people have a more difficult time organising and expressing their thoughts (Kramer, Priestal & Glover, 1988: 48).

Kramer *et al.* (1998: 48) suggest that role-play activities assist in offering insight into the psychological world of individuals with intellectual disability.

Botha (1991: 284) discusses the frustrations that a child with cerebral palsy may experience with regard to his or her restriction of movement, as this interferes with his or her sense of freedom. Botha (1991) also mentions the impact that the derogatory attitudes of members of society have on his or her self-esteem. "The cerebral palsied child often experiences his own physicality in such a negative way that it may cause a distorted self-concept..." (Botha, 1991: 284).

Referring to hearing-impaired learners, Kapp (1991: 336) argues that emotional disturbances are exacerbated by speech and language deficits. Language assists in the organisation of one's emotions and fantasies. The hearing-impaired child faces the challenge of expressing him- or herself in a hearing world, where his or her unintelligible speech and limited hearing may result in the possibility of easily being misunderstood or ridiculed. Kapp (1991: 336) suggests that this "...may lead to an inclination to withdraw, feelings of

inadequacy, inferiority, uncertainty and even depression being present". Van Impe and Verhofstadt-Denéve mention the risk that deaf learners have of developing emotional and behavioural disorders (2002:1).

The child with severe visual impairment has missed out on the visual assurances of love and security that most infants experience (Pauw, 1991: 363). Erikson (Donald *et al.*, 1997: 54) proposes that the first few years are vitally important in developing an individual's sense of trust. It is important to note that group therapy may seem more threatening to these learners. Visually impaired learners may feel more exposed in a group setting because they cannot count on the visual cues of acceptance and approval from other group members.

Smith (1991: 430) illustrates the experiences of physically disabled learners, explaining that many experience themselves as different or conspicuous and, as a result, often experience problems interacting with other learners.

Rock, Fessler and Church (1997: 245–263) state that various international studies have shown that between 24% and 52% of learners with learning disabilities have clinically significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Handwerk and Marshall (1998: 327–338), while researching this phenomenon, indicated that the incidence of severe social or emotional disturbances among learners with learning disabilities appears largely to have been undocumented worldwide. This has resulted in a lack of psychological provision and intervention for these learners.

These individual emotional stressors, combined with a threatening environment or a history of traumatic experiences, leads me to the assumption that many South African learners would benefit enormously from emotional support. This emotional support should address the learners' emotional needs at a deeper level than just providing a nurturing classroom environment. For such intervention to be effective, a structured programme needs to be implemented that allows learners to express their feelings in a safe and therapeutic environment.

Fidell (2000: 308–323) asserts that historically, few psychotherapeutic interventions have been carried out with learners exhibiting intellectual difficulties. He proposes that the opinions of influential theorists such as Freud, who considered therapeutic interventions in the context of individuals with cognitive deficits to be of little benefit, may have adversely affected therapists' interest in this area. Fidell (2000) goes on to suggest that this trend is changing and work in the area of psychological support for learners with intellectual disabilities is on the increase. As this is an emerging trend, there are few published accounts of such research.

Although the above refers to intellectual difficulties, the limitations and associated lack of research apply similarly in the case of other disabilities and impairments, such as sensory, physical and neurological impairments.

2.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the emotional needs of LSEN and provided a brief historical overview of the South African experience. The socio-economic climate has contributed to the high incidence of LSEN in South Africa. The theories of Erikson (1963: 147–263) and Maslow (1970: 35–58) are offered as an explanation of the impact of extrinsic factors on motivation, learning and emotional development. The necessity for LSEN to receive cost-effective and accessible emotional support was stressed. Due to the lack of trained professionals available to implement emotional support programmes, it was suggested that educators and education support personnel could act as therapeutic agents.

CHAPTER 3

A LITERATURE STUDY OF ACTION AND DRAMA TECHNIQUES

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the historical development of action and drama techniques, beginning with the historical origins of psychodrama. The recent development of action and drama techniques, which have been adapted and integrated with other therapeutic approaches, is discussed and a review of contemporary trends and current research in the field of action and drama is conducted.

The roles of the director and co-director are given particular cognizance throughout this chapter because, as discussed in Chapter 2, South African learners' need for emotional support is great and individual professional assistance is considered a luxury. The practical solution would be to empower educators, social workers and community support personnel as directors and co-directors. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to illustrate the roles of the director and co-director through action and drama, with the expectation that carefully trained educators and support personnel could fulfill these functions.

Learners with special needs often find it difficult to verbalise their feelings and thoughts (Kramer, Priesel & Glover, 1988: 48). Action and drama techniques, adapted from Moreno's Psychodrama model, may be particularly effective in assisting individuals with poor communication skills to express and work

through their feelings. These techniques can assist in emotional problem solving and improving self-esteem (Blatner 1973: 120).

3.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ACTION AND DRAMA TECHNIQUES

The proposed action and drama techniques stem from Jacob Moreno's psychodrama. Moreno, who lived between 1889 and 1974 studied philosophy and medicine in Vienna (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 151). Moreno's psychodrama was conceived as a result of the time he spent in the gardens of Vienna observing the imaginary play of children who acted out familiar fairy tales and stories. He was amazed at the "...freedom, openness, and creativity of young people" (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 109). He was particularly interested in the positive emotional outcomes that this imaginary play had on the children. Moreno (1969: 28) had the following to say about his psychodrama techniques:

I developed psychodrama methods which could be used in the course of daily existence, without transplanting the participants from the places in which they live. They may use such methods on the spot. In situ. Then life equals drama and drama equals life. When a change in territory is necessary and the participants are moved from their natural settings to the psychodrama stage, what we lose in reality we gain by the interpolation of numerous techniques which serve to broaden and intensify experiences of the psyche far beyond what actual life is able to offer e.g. role reversal, double, mirror, soliloquy etc.

Van Impe (2002: 7) states that Moreno began self-help support groups for prostitutes, which led to the discovery of the effectiveness and therapeutic nature of shared experience, thereby stimulating his interest in group therapy. Moreno also worked as a medical officer in a refugee camp in Mittendorf (Van Impe, 2002: 7). There he noted the relationship between the individual's internal psychological structures and the external social structures. Moreno considered the private psychological concepts of the individual (psychodrama) and the collective societal roles (sociodrama). Following the above realisations, he began integrating these principles into his work as a psychiatrist. In 1925 he emigrated to the USA and began formalising the psychodrama approach (Van Impe, 2002: 7).

Psychodrama originated as a method, and as a result was largely not underpinned by a specifically formulated theoretical framework. Verhofstadt-Denéve (2000: 154) argues that psychodrama's lack of a theoretical base allows it to be easily applied within diverse theoretical contexts. Verhofstadt-Denéve (2000) for example, based action and drama techniques on developmental psychotherapy relating to an existential-dialectical viewpoint.

The predominant therapeutic approach at the time of psychodrama's origins was Freudian psychoanalysis (Van Impe, 2002: 8–9; Moreno, 1969: 24). Moreno's basic criticisms of the psychoanalytic approach were as follows:

- ◆ psychoanalysis ignored the bodily expression of emotions (Moreno, 1969: 24);

- ◆ psychoanalysis was primarily retrospective rather than proactive, focusing on past experiences instead of working in the 'here and now' (Collins, Kumar, Treadwell & Leach, 1997: 147);
- ◆ the therapist rather than the client was considered as the expert (Moreno, 1969: 24);
- ◆ and psychoanalysis is inherently negative, rather than concentrating on creativity and spontaneity and giving as much emphasis to laughter as to tears (Van Impe, 2002: 8–9; Moreno, 1969: 24). Moreno (1969: 24) argued that psychodrama constituted, in its method, a more effective and comprehensive approach for human development.

In comparison to psychoanalysis the key element of action and drama techniques was to transform the act of narration into motor representation, by emphasising the significance of movement. Starr (1977: 4), in emphasising the benefits of an action technique, suggested that:

Action involves the interaction between psychological states and motor behaviour. The connection between emotional states and behaviour is individually expressed. To a certain degree, every emotion finds some bodily expression...

It was from this historical foundation, set by Moreno (1969) and subsequent writers such as Blatner (1973), Shaffer & Galinsky (1974) and Starr (1977), that the idea of utilising action and drama techniques developed.

3.3. CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS IN ACTION AND DRAMA

TECHNIQUES

Psychodrama was traditionally viewed as a holistic approach that needed to be implemented in its totality. However, the literature suggests that distinct psychodrama schools have begun to evolve.

Van Impe (2002: 11) identifies three major schools of psychodrama:

- ◆ The classic psychodrama according to Moreno.
- ◆ Ancelin-Schützenberger's triadic psychodrama. This is an intra-group approach, which relies rather more on the sociometric elements of group dynamics...whereas Moreno places the individual at the heart of the group, she stresses the group itself and the processes taking place in the group.
- ◆ The third school, the psychoanalytic psychodrama. Here the Freudian concepts such as transference, projection and psychoanalysis are mainly used. They work primarily with the unconscious, and through analysis of transference and the removal of resistances, they help the protagonist.

Recent developments have seen psychodrama principles and techniques being integrated with other therapeutic approaches. In response to a general trend within the profession, psychotherapy, out of necessity is transforming to become more time efficient and cost effective. Psychotherapy has also extended to cater for a broader population of clients, which has resulted in the expansion of psychotherapeutic models into group therapy settings that have adopted techniques that are conducive to brief therapy (Anderson-Klontz, Dayton & Anderson-Klontz, 1999: 113; Kipper, 1997: 100). For example, Anderson-Klontz *et al.* (1999: 113–121) integrate psychodramatic techniques

with solution-focused brief therapy. They utilise the 'social atom' technique together with future progression and regressive dramatisation. The 'social atom' is a picture or diagram that portrays a protagonist's significant relationships. These relationships may be with people or with ideas, eating habits, drugs etc. These relationships may be represented in a drawing or using props from the stage (described in 3.4.5). Each 'social atom' can then progress into an action stage (described in 3.4.6.2). 'Social atoms' may reflect relationships from the past, present or future (Anderson-Klontz *et al.*, 1999: 113–121).

Psychodrama is predominantly a group-therapy approach and the experiential nature of its techniques often facilitates intense emotional responses within a relatively short time span. As a result, its techniques have received increased assimilation into other therapeutic approaches (Blatner, 1995: 1). Anderson-Klontz, *et al.* (1999:113–121), for example, have found a theoretical and technical integration between psychodramatic techniques and solution-focused brief therapy.

Action and drama techniques have also been integrated into educational settings and training institutes, firstly, as a learning tool. Propper (1999: 99–112) describes his use of role-play methods used to study literature and legend in the college course he administered. His approach included empty-chair dialogues (refer to 3.4.6.1.) and role reversals (refer to 3.4.7.1.) with the characters in the literature.

Secondly, action and drama techniques have been integrated as a tool to build understanding and relationships between team members. For example, Remer and Remer (2000: 147–155) have developed an activity called 'the alien invasion exercise' where action methods are used to explore diversity and the effects of stereotyping within society. Remer and Remer (2000: 147–155) integrate the principles of empowerment feminist therapy with psychodrama methods. They are primarily concerned with gender stereotyping. The therapy group is divided into an equal number of males and females. They are then instructed that they are aliens from another planet and that they need to learn how to function unobtrusively as earthlings. The group members form two groups according to gender. These groups then form circles, an inner circle and an outer circle. The members of the outer circle are given the role of trainers, and they have to instruct the members of the inner circle how to pass as males or females on earth. If the inner circle is a male group then they are 'trained' to be female earthlings. As the trainers give instructions, the members of the inner group must adopt the suggested behaviours, thoughts, etc. For example, if told that earthling females sit with their legs together, the members of the inner circle must do so. According to Remer and Remer (2000: 147–155) this exercise is designed to identify and challenge gender stereotypes and thus promote team building among colleagues.

3.4. AN OVERVIEW OF ACTION AND DRAMA TECHNIQUES BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHODRAMA

The following explanations and descriptions are by no means an attempt to describe psychodrama or action and drama techniques in their totality. Rather, the purpose of this chapter is to give the reader a clear indication of the essence of action and drama techniques, with particular focus on the roles of director and co-director. As South Africa lacks trained professionals offering psychological support (as indicated in 1.1.), particularly in the lower socio-economic areas, educators and support personnel working in the education system offer a potential source of support. Specialised training and supervision would be a prerequisite. In my opinion, the depth, nature and complexity of the action and drama techniques would need to be adapted to meet the competence levels of those leading the groups. It would be preferable for all leading these groups to work in collaboration with a co-therapist.

Although psychodramatic principles form the basis of the action and drama techniques discussed in this chapter, ideas from authors adopting other therapeutic approaches (Cantor, 2000: 54; ; Fidell, 2000: 308–323; Eliasoph & Donnellan, 1995: 549–560; Guldner & O'Connor, 1991: 184; Knittel, 1990: 118; Skynner, 1987: 228–229; Oaklander, 1978: 125;) have been integrated to form a more flexible and comprehensive approach.

3.4.1. The roles of director and co-director

Shapiro (1978: 114–115) argues that there are a multitude of factors involved in successful group therapy. However, the role of leader is pivotal. Effective leadership not only entails enthusiasm, interest, knowledge and skills, but also personal experience of troublesome interpersonal relationships (Shapiro, Peltz, Bernadett-Shapiro 1998: 112–117). The merits of a co-therapist have been discussed by Van Impe (2002: 22), Verhofstadt-Denéve (2000: 158), Hudgins (1998b: 68) and Guldner & O' Connor (1991: 185) whose experiences and opinions of co-therapy will be included in various sections throughout this chapter.

3.4.1.1. *The advantages of co-therapy*

Price, Hescheles and Rae-Price (1999: 55) quote the following advantages mentioned by Roller and Nelson:

1. Co-therapists can aid each other in avoiding counter-transference issues. Much depends on the partners' maturity and ability to communicate.
2. Two therapists are less likely to be manipulated by a patient or a group.
3. Two observers contribute greater objectivity.
4. "Clients" learn about relationships as they observe two equals in power and self-esteem and model behaviour as individuals in a relationship.
5. Patients have opportunities to reveal differing aspects of themselves as they relate differently to each therapist.
6. Co-therapists model different behaviours for a patient to follow. A patient can see that there is more than one right choice to the same stimulus.

7. Patients can see two persons forge a relationship over time.
8. "Co-therapy softens the tyranny of one... A co-therapist can correct misperceptions by his or her partner and counterbalance his or her excesses (Roller & Nelson, 1991: 20).
9. Role and treatment flexibility should exist between co-therapists. One can be active while the other observes and evaluates. They may then alternate roles. Attention to the individual can be maintained while the co-therapist watches the group process.
10. Co-therapy permits synergy to develop. One + one is more than two.
11. Co-therapists amplify the impact of treatment in a manner not possible with an individual therapist. A co-therapy team through modeling "teaches by example the exquisite crafting of human relationships" (Roller & Nelson, 1991: 21).
12. Disagreement can be openly acknowledged and not threaten the standing of either partner nor will it lessen the attention to patients.

In psychodrama literature, the role of the director (as indicated in 3.4.1.2) has been carefully recorded (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000; Leveton, 1992; Starr, 1977; Yarblonsky, 1976; Moreno, 1974; Blatner, 1973; Moreno, 1969; Haskell, 1967). However, the role of the co-director has been given less attention. This may be because many action and drama groups are led by a single director. The importance of a co-director when working with learners with special educational needs will be illustrated in the following pages.

3.4.1.2. *The director*

The director has multiple roles, all of which contribute to the success and effectiveness of the action and drama group (Yarblonsky, 1976: 111; Moreno, 1969: 235; Haskell, 1967: 14). The director can be viewed as the 'producer', the 'therapeutic agent' and the 'analytical observer' (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 117–118). The director, as chief therapist, acts as the facilitator. His or her primary role is to ensure the development of a favourable atmosphere that promotes trust and spontaneity. The director structures the group and organises the basic scheme to best suit the group by taking into account the time available per group session. He or she will also introduce appropriate techniques or actions at appropriate times. There is no recipe or set script recording the order of techniques, instead, the director decides when to introduce certain techniques, depending on the needs of the particular individuals and the group. For this purpose the director needs a clear understanding of the background and contexts of each group member. He or she needs to observe non-verbal and verbal cues that provide an indication of how the group is feeling and responding. (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 156–157; Leveton, 1992: 1–15; Starr, 1977: 4; Yarblonsky, 1976: 111; Moreno, 1969: 235; Haskell, 1967: 14–16; Blatner, 1973: 6).

While structuring a group of learners with special educational needs, the director needs to take into account adaptations that may need to be made to the programme (Hollander, 1999: 131; Guldner & O'Connor, 1991: 184). For example, learners with short concentration spans may find it difficult to observe quietly for a long period of time and more breaks may be required.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 2, many LSEN have experienced feelings of rejection, alienation or being different from others. The director must ensure that this does not occur in the group's activities or interactions.

The director designs the process to promote catharsis. Starr (1977: 3) describes 'catharsis' as "cleansing and purifying...a release of tension being its primary goal and benefit. Action catharsis brings relief as an individual relives events that he has not been able to understand." Catharsis can result in a flood of emotions. It is therefore essential that this process is not forced. The director should let the protagonist direct the pace and intensity with which he or she wishes to allow the exploration of emotion to progress (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 174). The director, "...must be able to function in a highly volatile state and keep control at all times" (Greenberg, 1974: 19).

Considering the above, it appears that this form of catharsis would not be appropriate for regular classroom use as the groups are usually too large and may threaten the protagonist's sense of safety. This stage should only be included in smaller groups with a well-trained director who possesses good therapeutic skills. The director, with the assistance of the co-director, may need to contain both the group and the protagonist if there is an explosion of emotion (Hudgins, 1998b: 63–65; Greenberg, 1974: 19;).

To perform his or her role effectively, the director would require certain personal characteristics and qualities. The director should act as a model of spontaneity and creativity (Starr, 1977: 4). To co-ordinate the process he or

she would require high functioning levels, skillful timing, warmth, empathy and congruence (Shapiro, 1978: 134). Furthermore, good conflict-resolution skills would be beneficial (Danielson & Eveson, 1997: 4). A sense of self-knowledge is essential. (Shapiro, 1978: 136). An awareness of one's own emotional needs is important so that the therapist's emotional needs do not influence the therapeutic process. This does not mean that the director should be conflict free, rather he or she should be aware of his or her own strengths and weaknesses. This is particularly necessary when working in a multicultural setting.

Working as a therapist within the multicultural context of South Africa, one must understand the implications of counselling across cultures (Pedersen, 1996: 3–10). Therapists (directors and co-directors) must maintain an awareness of their own values, cultural experiences and idiosyncratic perceptions of human beings (Lynn & Garske, 1985: 11). They also require an understanding of the different cultures within the group. An open and trusting relationship will only occur in an atmosphere of acceptance, understanding and true empathy (Pedersen, 1996: 3–10).

I believe that the complexity of the role of director requires a therapist to exhibit a multitude of therapeutic skills. Therefore, it follows that those chosen to fulfill the role of director must be adequately trained and experienced in both psychodrama techniques and therapeutic principles.

3.4.1.3. *The co-director*

The co-director acts as a support for the director and the protagonist. It is vitally important that the relationship between the director and co-director be a supportive one. Each needs to have clearly defined roles so that they do not intrude on or contradict one another (Van Impe, 2002: 24; Shapiro, 1978: 114–115). Having a director and a co-director is beneficial when working with learners, especially those requiring additional physical and emotional support. The co-director can assist in ensuring the flow of the group process by attending to the needs of other group members while the protagonist is enacting his or her experience. Learners with physical disabilities may require physical support, or those with behavioural difficulties may require reminding not to interrupt the protagonist. By providing this practical support, the process occurring in the action and drama group is allowed to flow uninterrupted (Van Impe, 2002: 23).

The co-director also helps the director plan future sessions by adding his or her observations of the group and opinions regarding the needs of the group (Verhofstadt- Denéve, 2000: 158). The roles of the director and co-director will be expanded on and discussed throughout the following explanation of action and drama techniques to illustrate the nature of these roles within the group setting.

3.4.2. The group

Action and drama techniques were initially designed for use in a group setting (Moreno, 1969; 233). Even though they are primarily individual-centred

techniques, all those within the group can experience and participate in the action. Learners, as social beings, do much of their exploration and identity formation in social groups. This starts within the family group and expands into the wider community (Silveira, Trafford, & Musgrove, 1988: 1–3; Erikson, 1980: 3). According to Silveira *et al.* (1988: 2):

The substitute parental or other authoritative figures that the group therapists come to represent, allows the child the opportunity, within the safety of the group, to re-examine relationships with the adults in his own life. Other therapeutic factors relate to the small group dynamic that fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability of the group members towards each other, to the general framework of the group which comprises preset boundaries and limits, which presupposes therapist consistency, reliability and trustworthiness, and offers suitable group composition...

In South Africa with its large numbers of learners in need (Education White Paper 6, 2001: 9), I believe that a group-therapy programme is preferable. The director and co-director could signify parental figures for certain group members. In cases where learners have experienced a lack of positive parental role models, it is advantageous to structure the group with a male-female co-therapy couple to provide positive gender role models (Skynner, 1987: 228–229). Van Impe, (2001: 23) goes further to suggest that in a multicultural setting, a director and co-director from different ethnic groups may prove beneficial in the promotion of multicultural understanding and acceptance.

A group should not be larger than eight to 12 members (Van Impe, 2002: 16). However, in many cases the nature of the members of the group usually determines the size. For example, learners with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder or other behavioural difficulties often become very distracted in a large group and would function more effectively in a small-group setting, e.g. four members (Starr, 1977: 184).

When selecting a group of learners, it is important to note that some form of homogeneity is preferable. This may be in terms of age, life phase or similar emotional backgrounds. This adds to the sense of group cohesion as the learners may identify more readily with others in the group and the actions portrayed will be of relevance to all group members (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 158). For example, if a child re-enacts a frustrating scene of being restricted physically due to a disability, others who have experienced similar frustrations would be able to relate to the feelings associated with the restriction. However, forming a group on the basis of symptoms must be carefully evaluated. For example, a group consisting only of learners with speech difficulties may result in slow action. A director working with a group that consists only of overly withdrawn or dependent learners may struggle to initiate participation or to warm up the group (Starr, 1977: 184). Group cohesion is essential to create a safe and trusting environment. Grouping a selection of aggressive or negative, attention-seeking learners together may prove counter-productive as they may continually disrupt the group process (Cantor, 2000: 54; Bannister, 1995: 185).

The director and co-director play integral roles in establishing and maintaining group cohesion. Firstly, the relationship of the director and co-director must be one that demonstrates clear communication and trust. Any animosity or competitiveness between the leaders of the group would certainly result in an atmosphere of distrust. If minor conflicts occur, an option is to deal with them in the presence of the group, to serve as a model of effective conflict resolution (Danielson & Eveson, 1997: 4). Modeling attitudes of acceptance, understanding and respect for all individuals is crucial.

Co-therapy is a relationship in which two therapists embody and model, both verbally and non-verbally, emotional congruence, high self-esteem, and clear and direct communication (Roller & Nelson, 1991 in Price *et al.* 1999: 54).

Secondly, the director and co-director must be aware of underlying concerns and attitudes of the group members, and unmask them if necessary (Van Impe, 2002: 21 & 23). This procedure would need to be handled in a very delicate and positive manner. Orchestrating a warm-up activity that elicits self-disclosure is preferable. This can then be promoted in the action phase.

Thirdly, the director and the co-director should, in collaboration with the group, draw up a set of boundaries. This is particularly important for those learners who do not possess appropriate boundaries (Bannister, 1995: 182; Knittel, 1990: 118).

Finally, it is important to create the space for group members to get to know one another. Creating a safe environment involves continuity and building trusting relationships over time. Group members should preferably remain unchanged once the group sessions begin (Van Impe, 2002: 16). Absenteeism should be discouraged and no new members admitted, unless by mutual consent of the entire group.

3.4.3. The protagonist

The protagonist is a volunteer from the group who wishes to enact or work through a real-life or fantasy experience. He or she is the main character in the action and is considered to be an expert in interpreting his or her own feelings, thoughts and life experiences (Van Impe, 2002: 19; Moreno, 1969, 234–235; Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 155; Kumar & Treadwell, 1986: 156–163; Blatner, 1973: 6). Moreno (1969: 234) states:

The subject must act out 'his truth' as he feels and perceives it, in a completely subjective manner (no matter how distorted this appears to the spectator).

The protagonist enacts an occurrence (real or imaginary) from his or her past, present or future. Each occurrence is enacted as if it was happening at that moment, in other words, as if he or she is experiencing the thoughts, feelings and events in the 'here and now' (Moreno, 1969: 234). This is especially important to ensure spontaneity of actions, thoughts and feelings. If the scene is drawn from a past experience, trying to recall the exact events and feelings will restrict the protagonist's spur-of-the-moment insights that usually result

from perpetual action. The intensity of the emotional experience and the protagonist's sense of affiliation with the scene are heightened by producing it in the 'here and now' (Shaffer & Galinsky; 1974: 116; Blatner, 1973: 16).

Even the best artifact, the greatest conserve, the best simulation of reality in the theatre cannot replace a simple moment, one flash of true, genuine spontaneity which emerges from a real person.

(Moreno, 1969: 29)

The director should refrain from making verbal interpretations or 'psycho-analysing' the protagonist in front of the group (Van Impe, 2002: 19). He or she should rather let the protagonist make sense of his or her own experience and feelings. This can be encouraged through the implementation of various well-orchestrated techniques. In other words, the director should instead, use his or her interpretations to assist him or her in structuring the group session (Moreno, 1969:236). Moreno (as cited by Bannister, 1995: 19) illustrates this point well:

We don't tear down the protagonist's walls, rather we simply try some of the handles on the many doors, and see which one opens.

The co-director can act as a continuous support for the protagonist. Verhofstadt-Denéve (2000: 158) explains how the co-director identifies with the protagonist and as far as possible tries to enter his or her thoughts and feelings. This gives the protagonist the feeling that he or she is not alone and

that his or her 'alter-ego' or 'containing double' is always there as both a physical and psychological support (Hudgins, 1998b: 63). The co-director could assist in this process by enhancing the protagonist's sense of self-reflection by acting as an 'expert' auxiliary ego or double.

3.4.4. The audience

The audience refers to other members within the group. The members of the audience do not merely observe the protagonist at work. They are encouraged to become actively involved in assisting the protagonist explore his or her feelings and thoughts by taking on relevant roles within the drama. All members of the group take part in the warm-up and the sharing phase. Even those members of the audience that are not physically involved, actively reflect on the drama and their own experiences (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 1; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 121; 59; Blatner, 1973: 7).

The protagonist may choose to have his or her mother, father or teacher present and will then choose a member of the audience to play these roles. Alternatively, the protagonist may wish to play out an inner psychological conflict and may choose a member of the audience to represent one side of this conflict. When the members of the audience are playing these roles they are acting as 'auxiliary egos'. 'Auxiliary egos' are extensions of the individual himself, such as a relative, a figure created in the individual's imagination or dreams, or a component within the psyche of the individual (Van Impe, 2002: 14; Starr, 1977: 121; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 120; Blatner, 1973: 6).

3.4.4.1. Utilising auxiliary egos

The director may choose to bring in some group members to role-play as auxiliary egos. The co-director is trained and has experience in playing an auxiliary ego and can, if required, be called upon to do so. The co-director will then act as a model for the other group members. This is particularly beneficial in relatively inexperienced groups (Van Impe, 2002: 14; Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 160).

The group members, as auxiliary egos, may represent the protagonist's mother, sister, friend or family doctor (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 120). They may also personify and externalise a psychological aspect of the protagonist, such as the protagonist's angry side, or his or her sense of inferiority (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 120).

The members of the audience may also spontaneously 'double' whilst the drama is in play, identifying with the feelings of the protagonist and reflecting these to the group (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 122).

3.4.4.2. Doubling

During the enactment, the members of the audience are encouraged to act as doubles. Doubling is an opportunity for group members to demonstrate their identification with the protagonist by placing themselves in the protagonist's shoes, as it were (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 122). The 'double' stands behind the protagonist and describes his or her thoughts and feelings. The double is

encouraged to speak using the pronoun "I" (Leveton, 1992: 45). His or her purpose is not to interpret or judge the protagonist's thoughts and feelings, but rather to identify with them (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 170). This often helps the protagonist to clarify his or her understanding of his or her emotional state more explicitly. After the double has spoken, the protagonist is given the opportunity to acknowledge or reject the double's expression. Leveton (1992, 47) describes the double as follows:

The double is the inner voice. The voice of conflict, of self-pity, of irony. The double is the coward inside the hero, the saint inside the sinner, the needy child in the lonely eccentric (Leveton, 1992: 47).

Hudgins (1998a: 43–47 & 1998b: 63–75) and Kipper (1998: 113–122), while working with victims of trauma, suggested that the co-director or a well-trained group member could take on the role of 'containing double'. Trauma victims are often at risk of becoming re-traumatized if they experience a flooding of intense emotion. The 'containing double' presumably works to put boundaries on the protagonist's experiences to prevent uncontrolled regression. The 'containing double' acts as part of the protagonist, identifying his or her strengths, no matter how distressed the protagonist appears, and thereby increasing ego development. The 'containing double' offers unconditional support and stability.

3.4.5. The stage and set-up

The stage is usually in the centre of the circle of seats. It is important to create a balance between space in order to move freely (Van Impe, 2002: 17), and proximity in order to provide a sense of containment where the participants do not need to project their voices to be heard. The protagonist must feel the presence of the group members as a support (Van Impe, 2002: 17).

According to Blatner (1973: 8) additional furniture should be readily available to act as symbolic representation of physical and psychological aspects of the protagonist's world. For example, a chair may be used to represent a tree, car or person. A blanket may represent an individual's sense of inhibition. Art equipment should also be readily available for spontaneous use.

3.4.5.1. Seating arrangements

According to Leveton (1992: 17), arranging seats in a circle with the "stage" or action area in the middle works well. However, in groups that include hearing-impaired learners, factors such as direct line of sight to the director and protagonist is important for effective communication in the form of speech reading or sign language. As the protagonist is encouraged to move around while he or she is enacting his or her scene, this is not always practical (Van Impe & Verhofstadt, 2002: 5).

Factors such as adequate lighting and sufficient space for wheelchairs or other essential equipment are vitally important. The intention is to allow the actions to flow. The set-up should be carefully planned before the group

sessions begin (Van Impe, 2002: 17). This helps to ensure that learners do not feel restricted or inhibited by physical barriers. For example, a learner in a wheelchair may refrain from 'doubling' because access to the protagonist may be difficult.

Hollander (1999: 131–136), in accommodating a group member who was almost completely immobilised by a physical disability, used the 'split screen' technique. The gentleman with the disability had been chosen by the protagonist to play her father in a scene from her childhood. The protagonist and the doubles moved around him to allow him to remain stationary. Hollander (1999; 136) remarks that in his opinion this did not seem to stifle the flow of the action phase. When the protagonist wished to move to a new scene that had occurred recently, the director created a split screen. The 'father' figure remained in the previous scene, lying on the bed, and a new scene was created adjacent to this scene. As a result, the gentleman with limited mobility could remain where he was. Hollander (1999: 136) asserts that having the presence of the 'father' as he was in the protagonist's childhood was pertinent to allowing the protagonist to come to terms with her feelings.

3.4.6. The three stages: warm-up, action, sharing

The psychodrama method is structured into three phases. Firstly, there is the warm-up stage. This stage is used to relax both the group and the director and to open up possible areas of focus for the action stage. After the warm-up, the group members discuss their experiences and a protagonist is

identified. Phase two is the action stage. This is an individual-centred stage where the protagonist enacts an incident or issue that he or she would like to share with the group. Following the action stage, the director holds a sharing stage where all members of the audience are invited to share with the group their personal reflections experienced during the action stage (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 162–165; Leveton, 1992: 21–43; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 111; Blatner, 1973: 37).

3.4.6.1. *The warm-up*

If the group is meeting for the first time, this stage is lengthened to build group cohesion. It is suggested that in the first session the director and co-director use the time to disclose information about themselves and how the group will function. Activities that promote communication between group members are suggested, particularly if the members do not know one another (Verhostadt-Denéve, 2000: 162–165; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 111). The director and co-director should participate as members of the group, modeling spontaneity, self-disclosure, acceptance of withdrawal from communication, and warmth (Blatner, 1973: 37). The director is cautioned not to move too quickly into an action stage if the group is not sufficiently warmed-up. The director and co-director need to be aware of possible resistance and should take the time to introduce activities that help to lessen resistance (Blatner, 1973: 37).

This research is not attempting to propose specific activities to be used, but some suggestions of activities will be made to give the reader a clearer picture of what action and drama techniques entail.

Some suggestions for initial warm-up activities include:

- ◆ Having the group members pair up, preferably with someone they don't know well, and tell each other about themselves. They then report back to the group by introducing their partners to the group (Van Impe, 2002: 7).

- ◆ Self-presentation. This is where each group member introduces him- or herself to the group. Background information and expectations of the group sessions can be explored (Blatner, 1973: 39).

- ◆ Going on a trust walk is also beneficial. This is where the group members pair up and one member of the pair is blind-folded while the other leads him or her around the building, garden or playground (Blatner, 1973: 39).

- ◆ The clock warm-up entails drawing a large clock on the floor and having group members (this is best with a children's group) place themselves at their favourite hour. The group members are then given the opportunity to express verbally or non-verbally what they like best about that hour (Kranz, 1991: 164).

The director needs to be creative and flexible when working with LSEN. Action and drama techniques may need to be adapted to open

communication channels. To make the expression of feelings more effective for children who experience language or communication difficulties, ideas such as those of Guldner and O'Connor (1991: 184), Oaklander (1978: 125) and Starr (1977: 191), who have had years of experience working with children, may be worth incorporating:

- ◆ younger children or those with communication difficulties may prefer to draw or cut out pictures of their favourite things;
- ◆ a feelings chart with faces depicting different emotions may assist children who can't write or verbalise their feelings;
- ◆ art materials such as clay, sand, water and fingerpaint tend to have a soothing effect when manipulated;
- ◆ using tactile and kinesthetic activities helps to calm children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Starr (1977: 191) suggests using puppets, as children confide more readily in puppets. Guldner and O'Connor (1991: 184–190) as therapists, dressed up in the character of Alf. ALF stands for acceptance, love and family (Guldner & O'Connor, 1991: 184–190). By dressing up in character, the therapist seemed to relate better to the children and to hold their attention for longer periods of time.

In my opinion, these activities should be non-threatening and should take into account the age and the functioning levels of the group members. The director and co-director should be aware of factors such as the verbal skills, motor-development and possible tactile defensiveness of the members of the

group. The activities that are selected should be enjoyable and accessible to all in the group.

After the initial warm-up is completed it is advisable to include a brief warm-up phase at the beginning of each new session. These warm-up sessions are geared to focus and relax the group. The warm-up activity also sometimes helps to identify a possible protagonist for the action stage.

Examples of such activities include:

- ◆ **Guided visualisation exercises.** These may include visualisation journeys to memories, wishes or fantasies. The director can use his or her own creativity to conceive an appropriate journey for the group, e.g. 'favourite object' (refer to Van Impe, 2002: 8).

- ◆ **The magic shop activity.** Here the director or co-director begins by acting as the owner of a magic shop that sells a variety of human qualities. The shop owner explains that group members may barter for the qualities with qualities that they already possess and would like to swap. For example, a group member may wish to exchange some of his or her 'jealousy' for 'self-confidence'. The shop owner then establishes how much 'jealousy' the individual is willing to barter and how much 'self-confidence' he or she requires. The individual then has an opportunity to try on the new quality (self-confidence) to see

how it fits. This may then be taken into the action stage (Blatner, 1973: 40–42; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 123; Leveton, 1992: 101–111).

- ◆ **The empty chair.** This is adapted from Fritz Perl's technique (Leveton, 1992: 79). An empty chair is placed in front of all group members. They are asked to imagine someone significant to them, someone that they would like to communicate with, sitting opposite them in the chair. They are then asked to visualise the conversation that they are having with that person. After a few minutes the individuals are asked to sit in the empty chair and imagine that they are now the persons that they were communicating with. They are to imagine how that person would respond to the conversation. They then return to their own seats and continue the visualised conversation. Group members may then share their conversations with the group if they so wish (Warner, 1970: 31–34).

- ◆ **Drawing a self portrait.** This activity has the group members drawing a picture of themselves with their eyes closed. They may need to draw three or four pictures and choose the one they like best. By drawing with their eyes closed, perfectionism and anxieties around artistic skill are eliminated. Once they have chosen a picture, they then use colour to represent

different feelings that they experience. They need to name the colours themselves. For example, red may represent anger for one individual and love for another. Individuals may then volunteer to share their drawings with the group (Van Impe, 2002: 12).

For further ideas on activities that can be used during the warm-up, consult authors such as Van Impe (2002), Kranz (1991) and Leveton (1992), Starr (1977), Blatner (1973).

In my opinion, these warm-up activities alone could prove very useful in the classroom context. They involve all the members of the group and allow the individuals to express their feelings in a less threatening manner. The group members volunteer to share their experiences. It is important that an individual does not feel compelled to share. These activities may help to create classrooms with an atmosphere of open communication and expression of emotions. The educator may also use these activities to identify learners who may require more intensive emotional support and refer them for further therapeutic intervention.

3.4.6.2. *The action stage*

At the end of the warm-up stage a protagonist is identified. A volunteer is preferable, failing which, the director and co-director can identify a group member who would benefit from playing the protagonist. No one

should ever be forced to participate if he or she doesn't feel ready or comfortable to share his or her experience (Van Impe, 2002: 8).

The director begins by asking the protagonist what it is that he or she would like to share, encouraging the protagonist to describe a scene or event. As the protagonist narrates the scene, the director encourages him or her to illustrate the scene by recreating the physical and psychological aspects of the scene through enactment and using symbols. For example, recreating a room where a particular argument took place using chairs, tables, blankets and various objects. The director moves around the stage area with the protagonist encouraging him or her to recreate the scene in the 'here and now' by continuously speaking in the present tense and encouraging the protagonist to do so too. The director also spends time questioning the protagonist about the characteristics of each symbolised object, person or feeling. Recreating the scene should not be rushed, as it works by bringing the protagonist's thoughts and emotions concerning the scene into his or her present awareness (Van Impe, 2002:32–35; Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000; 166–176; Blatner, 1973: 52–77).

This process can also be used to enact fantasies or dreams. For example, when working with a dream, the protagonist would first recreate the room in which he or she was sleeping when the dream occurred. He or she would then re-enact a typical day before the dream, exploring the interpersonal interactions, thoughts and feelings experienced during the time leading up to the dream. Following this, the protagonist would recreate the actual dream or

certain aspects of it. Once the protagonist has worked his or her way through the dream the director will ask the protagonist if there is anything that he or she would like to change in the dream. At this stage the protagonist has the opportunity to take control in his or her dream by restructuring it into a more acceptable form or theme. This works particularly well when dealing with nightmares, as it allows the protagonist to create a greater sense of power and safety within the dream. The action and drama techniques, e.g. doubling and role reversal, are continuously used during the enactment (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 203–223; Verhofstadt-Denéve, 1995: 405–435).

3.4.6.3. *The sharing stage*

After the completion of the action stage, the director and co-director allow the group to share the emotional responses and reflections that they experienced during the action. First the co-director tells of his or her experience, followed by the protagonist and then the other group members. This stage assists the protagonist and the group members to de-role. The sharing stage is not an opportune time for group members or the directors to interpret the protagonist's feelings or actions, or to give advice. All reflections must be personal in nature, identifying with feelings or experiences of the protagonist. This stage is directed at identifying with the protagonist and normalising his or her experience by demonstrating that he or she is not alone in such feelings or experiences (Van Impe, 2002: 35; Blatner, 1973: 82–86). This stage conveys the group's understanding of the protagonist's experience and allows those group members who were part of the audience to express pertinent

thoughts and feelings, rather than leave still carrying the burden of confusing emotions. It is important for the director to ensure that the group members share their own experiences and do not pass judgement on the protagonist. All sharing should begin with the pronoun "I". The director and the co-director are encouraged to share as members of the group (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 264–265; Blatner, 1973: 83–85).

3.4.7. Additional techniques

3.4.7.1. *Role reversal*

The director can initiate role reversal if he or she feels that the protagonist would benefit from experiencing the scene from the perspective of a particular auxiliary ego. The protagonist takes on the role of an auxiliary ego (e.g. mother, sister, friend), role-playing his or her perception of that person. Equally important is the protagonist's interpretation of how that person experiences the interactions that he or she has with the protagonist (Verhofstadt-Denéve, 2000: 172; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 123; Blatner, 1973: 73).

3.4.7.2. *Soliloquy*

In this instance the protagonist is encouraged by the director to step aside from the enactment for a moment and talk through the feelings and thoughts that he or she is experiencing. The purpose of this is to distance the protagonist from the role and through the process of self-reflection, to provide the protagonist with a clearer understanding of the emotional dynamics at play (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 122).

3.4.7.3. *Mirroring*

Mirroring involves providing the protagonist with an instant replay of his or her behaviour and attitudes. The co-director or a group member will re-enact a scene exactly as portrayed by the protagonist. The protagonist is thereby provided with feedback on how others view him or her, and he or she can, through self-evaluation, create a better understanding of his or her actions and feelings (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974: 123; Blatner, 1973: 79). Van Impe (2002: 51) warns that this can be experienced as very confrontational and the director must use caution when implementing this technique.

It follows that the age and functioning levels of the learners will determine how appropriate each of the action and drama techniques will prove. Those functioning at a young maturity or intellectual level will require greater assistance from the director and co-director. The modeling and mediation offered by the co-director could assist in scaffolding the techniques for the learners. Therefore, I suspect that for some, the action stage may be better experienced in a one-on-one setting rather than in a group. For those who appear to have a very low functioning level, simply utilising the warm-up techniques, using non-directive drawings and movement to music, may be more appropriate.

3.5. RELEVANT ARTICLES AND RESEARCH IN ACTION AND DRAMA TECHNIQUES

Fidell's (2000: 308–323) research interest examined the effectiveness of a group psychotherapy approach with learning-disabled adults who experienced difficulty adjusting to life in a group home. He found the action and drama technique of role-playing every-day occurrences particularly useful. He also states that as many of the learning-disabled clients experienced difficulty appreciating the passage of time or anticipating future events, working in the 'here and now' was effective.

Eliasoph and Donnellan (1995: 549–560) studied the value of group therapy with a small group of individuals with autism. These individuals displayed extremely limited verbal communication skills. The writers incorporated techniques from psychodrama, gestalt and music therapy and they measured their progress by comparing them to a control group who received no formal therapeutic intervention. They employed the assistance of facilitators who sat beside the group members with letterboards or keyboards. These facilitators would read aloud to the group the information generated on the letterboards or keyboards. Remarkably, they found that these group members were:

...quite able to identify with one another, express emotion, show empathy, take roles, give comfort, feel guilt, participate in the 'here and now', look at their own process, evaluate the effectiveness of the group and engage in thoughtful discussions..." (Eliasoph & Donnellan, 1995: 559).

Van Impe and Verhofstadt-Denéve (2002: 1–9) discuss their use of action and drama techniques with deaf adolescents. In their article they discuss the benefits that role-playing, soliloquies, mirroring and doubling have in building the self-knowledge of adolescents with hearing impairments.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, many learners in South Africa have been victims of trauma. International articles (Hudgins, 1998a: 43; Hudgins, 1998b: 63; Kipper, 1998: 114; Greenberg, 1998: 47) discuss the effectiveness of action and drama techniques in the context of working with trauma victims. Experiential methods are proposed to provide direct access to unprocessed traumatic memories and to allow the individual to re-process these memories in a more functional manner. The above claim is yet to be supported by empirical research and grounded theory (Hudgins, 1998a: 44; Kipper, 1998: 114).

3.6. CONCLUSION

As pointed out in Chapter 1, empirical research in the area of action and drama techniques is limited. Much of the insight originates from the personal experiences of therapists within the field, who have written articles citing anecdotes of their own therapeutic experiences. As anecdotal records potentially provide a significant source of data for qualitative researchers, these records could prove useful for future research.

The pivotal roles of director and co-director were discussed and the complexity of the action and drama process was highlighted. I can only

conclude therefore that individuals selected to play the roles of director and co-director should possess good therapeutic skills as well as positive personal attributes. An objective of my study was to establish whether educators could successfully implement action and drama techniques. In my opinion, successful therapy usually requires years of training and reflection, therefore, I question the competence of educators to take on the complex role of director. Perhaps education support personnel who have had psychological and counselling training would be more qualified to lead such a complex process. I believe educators are more suited to the role of co-director or to making use of action and drama techniques, which are conducive to classroom use or team-building activities.

This literature study also highlights the need for development in the area of action and drama techniques. South African research is particularly lacking in this field. However, this void may be filled in the future, given that certain South African universities, e.g. The University of Stellenbosch, have begun implementing action and drama programmes, which may result in a greater focus on empirical research in this area.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This literature study has attempted to summarise the circumstances of LSEN with particular reference to the South African context, highlighting the need for emotional support programmes. The process and techniques of action and drama are critically discussed with a view to these techniques forming the basis of emotional support programmes to be implemented with LSEN. To this end, the roles of the director and co-director have been outlined. For a diagrammatic representation of the objectives of this literature study and the conclusions reached refer to Figure 4.1. Figure 1.1. (refer to Chapter 1: 16) provided a diagrammatic representation of the objectives and the progression of the literature study. Figure 4.1., working within the framework of Figure 1.1., provides a summary of the central themes and concepts critically reviewed and the subsequent conclusions drawn. In the light of the above conclusion the literature study culminates in implications and suggestions for future research.

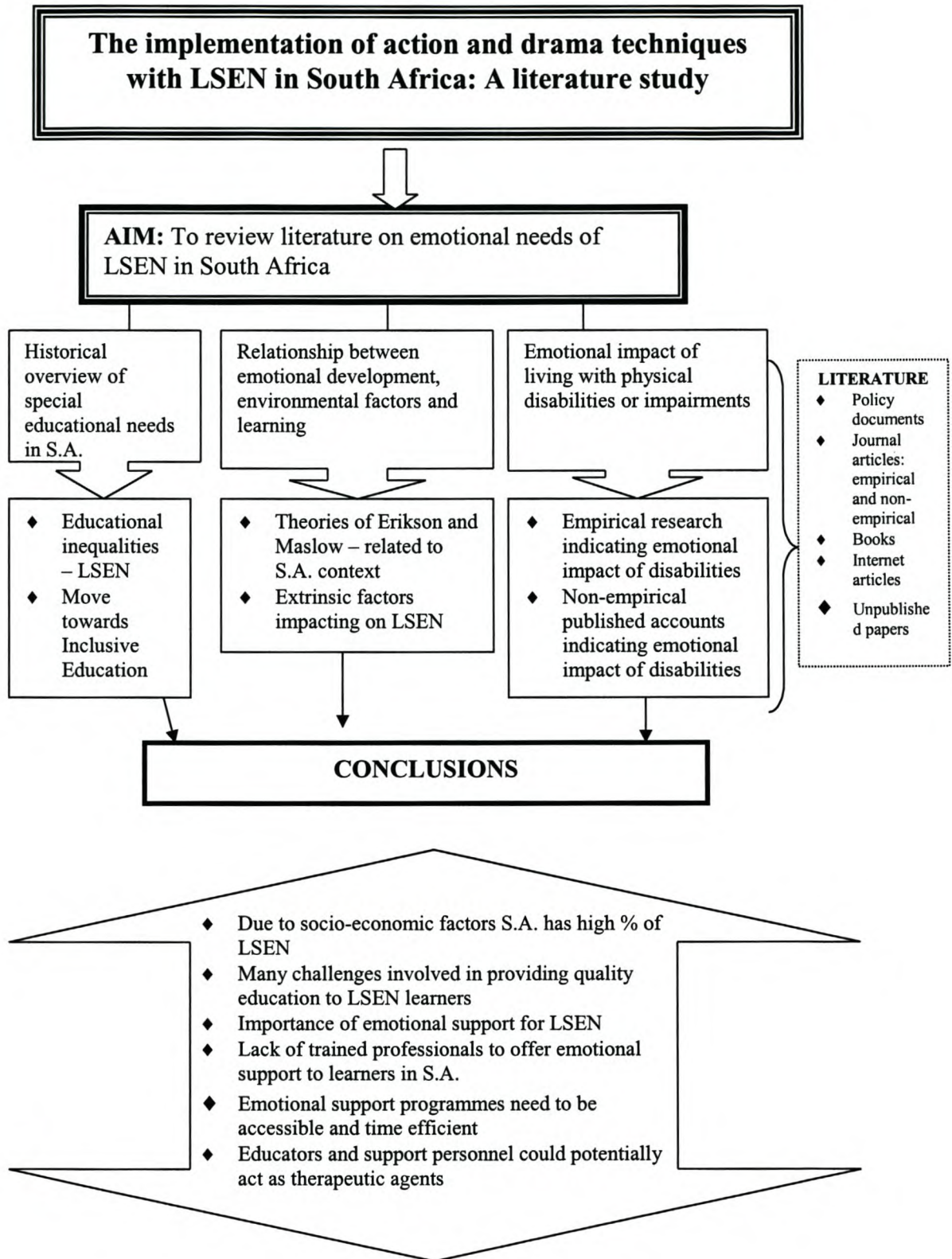


FIGURE 4.1. (cont.)

AIM: To review action and drama techniques, following the principles of psychodrama, as a possible intervention option for LSEN in South Africa

OBJECTIVE: To investigate the roles of director and co-director in the light of these roles being implemented by educators and support personnel

Historical background of action and drama techniques

Contemporary developments in action and drama techniques

Description of action and drama techniques

Relevant articles and research in action and drama

- ◆ Moreno's psychodrama
- ◆ Psychodrama based on a method not a theory
- ◆ Psychodrama method vs theory of Psychoanalysis

- ◆ 3 major schools of psychodrama
- ◆ Assimilation of action and drama techniques into other therapeutic approaches
- ◆ Action and drama in educational and team-building settings

- ◆ Role of director & co-director
- ◆ Advantages of co-therapy
- ◆ Descriptions and examples of the action and drama process and techniques
- ◆ Suggestions of adapting techniques to meet the needs of LSEN

- ◆ Action and drama techniques adapted for learners with:
 - ◆ learning disability
 - ◆ hearing impairment
 - ◆ autism
 - ◆ traumatic memories

LITERATURE

- ◆ Journal articles: empirical and non-empirical
- ◆ Books
- ◆ Internet articles
- ◆ Unpublished papers

CONCLUSIONS

- ◆ Action and drama techniques:
 - ◆ May possibly be adapted to suit LSEN
 - ◆ May be integrated with other therapeutic approaches
 - ◆ May possibly be implemented at various therapeutic levels
 - ◆ Appear to be conducive to brief therapy
- ◆ The roles of director and co-director
 - ◆ Appear complex and require skillful training
 - ◆ The competence of educators in the role of directors is questioned

FIGURE 4.1. (cont.)

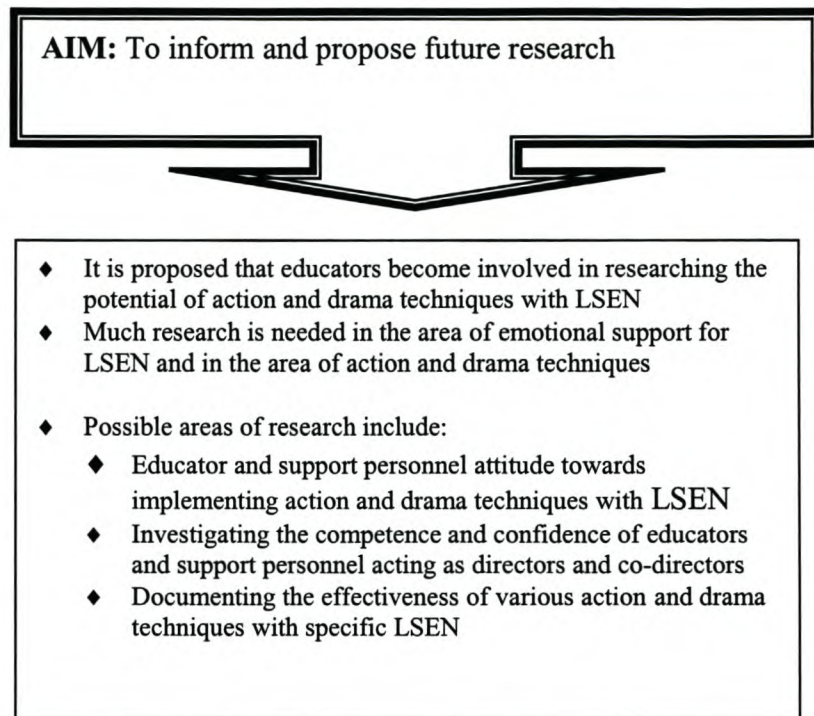


FIGURE 4.1. A diagrammatic representation of themes and conclusions

Chapter 2 highlighted the fact that the emotional needs LSEN are generally not addressed adequately. As a result, learners' potential to develop optimally at an academic, social and personal level is restricted.

The correlation between emotional development, environmental factors and learning was illustrated by the theories of Erikson (1963: 247–263) and Maslow (1970: 35–58). I believe that transferring these theories to the South African context offers a comprehensible explanation of the motivations of South African learners. Many of our learners are struggling to satisfy their most basic needs and these theories may go a long way towards explaining why South Africa has such a high percentage of LSEN. Furthermore, an

inadequate education system that is, by default, not equipped to build in its learners a sense of self-confidence and control, inhibits learners from reaching their maximum potential.

South Africa's current economic climate requires therapeutic intervention that is both cost effective and time efficient. Due to the vast number of learners requiring special attention (as indicated in 1.1) accessibility to therapeutic intervention is most important. To this end it is proposed that educators and education support personnel be trained as therapeutic agents, i.e. directors and co-directors.

Chapter 3 reviews the possibility of using a programme based on action and drama techniques as a potential framework for intervention. Action and drama techniques appear to be most effective in a group setting. Literature indicates that these techniques are adaptable and may be implemented at various levels and in diverse contexts. For example, it appears that action and drama techniques may be implemented at a basic level in the classroom, or in more depth in a therapeutic group scenario. These techniques may be implemented in a holistic manner (e.g. psychodrama model), in isolation, or integrated with other approaches or theories. For individuals with limited verbal communication skills, action and drama techniques have been shown to be effective methods of expressing emotion. The literature (refer to 3.4.6.1 & 3.5) suggests that action and drama techniques allow learners to gain more insight into their functioning, work through unresolved emotions, and develop new and more functional behaviours.

Action and drama techniques appear to be time efficient as the literature (refer to 3.3) indicates that they are conducive to brief therapy. Training educators and education support personnel as directors and co-directors therefore offers a potentially cost-effective and accessible intervention option for South Africa. However, the practical implementation (as mentioned in 3.6.) of action and drama techniques in South African schools requires careful and responsible consideration.

According to this literature study (refer to 3.4.1), the roles of the director and co-director are central to the functioning of an action and drama group. It is therefore advisable that all prospective directors and co-directors receive training in both basic counselling skills and action and drama techniques. In my opinion, the best training would be as part of an experiential group where the prospective director or co-director is afforded the opportunity to experience personally the effectiveness and emotional impact of the techniques. In Chapter 3 the pivotal roles of director and co-director were discussed and the complexity of the action and drama process was highlighted. I can therefore conclude that individuals selected to play the roles of director and co-director should possess good therapeutic skills as well as positive personal attributes (refer to 3.4.1, 3.4.1.2 & 3.4.1.3) An objective of this research was to establish whether educators had the potential to successfully implement action and drama techniques. In my opinion, successful therapy usually requires years of training and reflection, therefore, I question the competence of educators to take on the complex role of

director. Perhaps education support personnel who have had psychological and counselling training would be more qualified to lead such a complex process. I believe educators are more suited to the role of co-director or to making use of action and drama techniques that are conducive to classroom use or team-building activities.

It is therefore not proposed that all the educators and support workers involved in these programmes should become psychodramatists. Rather, this literature study proposes an approach that utilises the principles of psychodrama as a foundation, which can be integrated with ideas from other psychological approaches and adapted to suit the emotional needs of the learners and the *skill and experience* of the director.

The age and functioning levels of the learners will determine how appropriate each of these techniques will prove to be. The extent to which these techniques could be used with LSEN and the establishment of an appropriate level of complexity is an area that requires further investigation.

Educators might wish to begin with warm-up activities in the classroom at a level that is emotionally less in-depth. Initially educators may act as co-directors under the leadership of more experienced directors. Any teacher directing these activities is cautioned against over-exposing the inner worlds of their learners. The depth at which the techniques are used should be geared towards protecting the learners' privacy and self-respect (Verhofstadt-

Denéve, 2000: 226). Many of the action and drama techniques are used most effectively in a safe and contained environment.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While reviewing the available literature, it became apparent that in the South African context, there is a great need for research with practical applications. This includes a wide spectrum of research in special educational needs and action and drama techniques. Educators, being a part of the education system, could form the core of the implementation of action and drama projects on a national scale. Their function at a basic level is two-fold; firstly, to act as hands-on facilitators of the projects and, secondly, to accumulate the data required, not only to kick-start action and drama projects, but also to formulate a regulated policy of application. This policy should not be regarded as static. It should, instead, be a dynamic and flexible policy that is informed by on-going research and is sensitive to the South African context.

Vulliamy and Webb (1992: 1–21) encourage educators to engage in research in special educational needs, and not to leave the investigation solely in the hands of academics. The writers argue that this should assist teachers in changing their attitudes towards their learners, while enhancing their sense of competence in working with these learners. Vulliamy and Webb quote one particular educator's comments after completing a research project:

My attitude to children with learning difficulties is very different now. I'm not prepared to accept that they can't do certain

things and I'm much better at looking for potential strengths in them (1992: 1).

Specific areas to investigate would be to survey educators' attitudes towards the implementation of action and drama techniques, their willingness to act as directors and co-directors, and their competence and confidence to use these techniques after completing specific training courses.

Educators must bear in mind that each individual or group of learners in an action and drama scenario is inherently different. For example, creative and sensitive adaptations may be required for learners with low levels of functioning. This may constitute another possible area of research, namely the development and implementation of specific action and drama programmes to fit the diversity of learners in the South African context.

4.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In South Africa the availability of recent literature concerning action and drama techniques is very limited, therefore, I had to rely on international contacts to source the majority of recent publications. Without direct access to all the available literature it is only reasonable to conclude that this literature study is not exhaustive.

This literature study assumes that educators electing to act as facilitators of action and drama groups possess the essential personal attributes such as true empathy, acceptance, patience, creativity, self-knowledge, self-confidence, flexibility, courage and honesty (Shapiro *et al.*, 1998: 117)

required for effective group facilitation. Furthermore, it assumes that educators have the time, energy and interest in being trained as directors and co-directors.

Another possible limitation is the lack of South African therapists who are qualified to offer training in action and drama techniques. During the initial stages of implementation it may be necessary to rely on international collaboration.

Educators interested in implementing aspects of action and drama techniques in their schools should first undergo careful training and be supervised by professionals to ensure their increasing competence. Training should include basic counselling skills and exposure to a variety of action and drama techniques. It would possibly be most beneficial if educators had the opportunity themselves to participate in action and drama groups. This would encourage the development of self-knowledge and provide them with personal experience of the effectiveness of action and drama techniques.

4.4. CLOSING PERSPECTIVE

If South Africa truly wishes to provide quality education for all, it is imperative that the education system offer structured and well-supervised intervention programmes that target the learners' emotional needs. This is particularly pertinent with regard to LSEN.

In my opinion, intervention programmes incorporating action and drama techniques offer very viable options. The primary challenge will be in the training and supervision of the directors and co-directors, as they are pivotal to the success of such programmes.

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