USING THEATRE TECHNIQUES AS A TOOL TO ENABLE ACTIVE LEARNING: SEARCHING FOR A PEDAGOGY TO TRANSFORM SPECTATORS INTO SPECT-ACTORS

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DECLARATION

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE FOLLOWING WORK IS ORIGINAL AND HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED FOR ANY OTHER DEGREEE AT ANY OTHER INSTITUTION.

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ABSTRACT

In Britain provision is made for students with a low Basic Skills level (literacy and numeracy) to continue with their post-GCSE education in a low level vocational course. These low level courses aim to teach students basic, life and vocational skills necessary to progress to the next level. This study aims to find a pedagogy which is suited to the needs of these marginalised students and transforms them from spectators into spect-actors.

Two programmes were designed, implemented, managed and measured by this study in order to find the pedagogy best suited to the needs of these students. Programme 1 was based on ideas by the educationalists Kolb, Petty, Honey and Mumford; and aimed to empower students with the basic and life skills necessary for progression.

Programme 1 failed as the mostly narrative pedagogy was associated with a similar pedagogy used in schools. Assessment methods were unsuitable and the course paid more attention to the needs of the group than the needs of the individual.

Programme 2 aimed to actively involve students in the learning of skills essential to progression and was based on theatrical techniques. Augusto Boal's **Theatre of the Oppressed** techniques, especially *Forum Theatre*, formed the basis of the student-centred programme. Boal's interactive theatre techniques, together with ideas taken from Aristotle, Artaud, Brecht, Heathcote and Freire formed the pedagogy of an interactive course where the focus fell on the needs of the individual student.

This study found that Programme 2 was successful. Students took to the task-based interactive course where all solutions to problems were found by means of active investigation, no theorem was learned without application and no action

took place without a purpose. Students changed from spectators into spect-actors with a view that the world is not stagnant but transformable. Achievement and success rates back up the findings.

The interactive pedagogy using theatre techniques to teach can be applied across the curriculum and it is suggested that such courses should run alongside main stream academic courses to accommodate the learning of all students.

UITTREKSEL

Voorsiening word in Brittanje gemaak vir studente met 'n lae Basies Vaardigheidsvlak (Letterkundig en Wiskundig) wat na hul GCSE's met opvoeding wil voortgaan met 'n lae vlak loopbaangerigte kursus. Die doel van sulke kursusse is om studente toe te rus met die nodige basiese en lewensvaardighede ten opsigte van bevordering. Soeke na 'n gepaste leerstyl vir die behoeftes van sulke studente is die doel van hierdie studie.

Twee programme is deur die studie ontwerp, geimplimenteer, bestuur en ondersoek om die gepaste leerstyl vir die studente se behoeftes te identifiseer. Program 1 was gebaseer op die idees van die opvoedkundige spesialiste Kolb, Petty, Honey en Mumford en het beoog om studente met die nodige basiese en lewensvaardighede vir bevordering toe te rus.

Program 1 was onsuksesvol, aangesien studente die narratiewe leerstyl met die leerstyl van skole geassosieer het. Asseseringsmetodes was onvanpas en die kurses het na die behoeftes van die groep omgesien instede van die behoeftes van die individu.

Program 2 het beoog om studente aktief betrokke by die aanleer van die nodige vaardighede vir bevordering te maak en was op teater tegnieke gebaseer. Augusto Boal se **Theatre of the Oppressed** tegnieke, veral *Forum Teater*, het die basis van die student-gesentreerde program uitgemaak. Boal se interaktiewe teater tegnieke, tesame met idees van Aristotle, Artaud, Brecht, Heathcote en Freire het die leerstyl gevorm vir 'n interaktiewe kursus waar die fokus op die behoeftes van die individuele student val.

Hierdie studie bevind dat Program 2 suksesvol was. Studente het betrokke geraak by die taak-gebaseerde, interaktiewe kursus, waar alle oplossings gevind is deur middel van aktiewe ondersoek, geen teorie sonder toepassing geleer is

nie en waar geen aksie sonder 'n doel plaasgevind het nie. Studente het van spectators na spect-actors verander en hulle het tot die besef gekom dat hul omstandighede nie onveranderbaar is nie, maar dat hulle die mag het om dit te transformeer. Sukses statistieke staaf die bevindinge.

Hierdie interaktiewe leerstyl wat teater tegnieke as leermetode gebruik, kan regoor die kurrikulum aangewend word en dit word voorgestel dat sulke kursusse langs hoofstroom akademiese kwalifikasies aangebied word om die opvoeding van alle leerlinge moontlik te maak.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Orientation

The United Kingdom is plagued with students who perform poorly in their General Certificate of Standard Education (GCSE), students with a lack of formal schooling, students with inadequate basic skills and students with English as a Foreign Language. Because of this the education sector has started to cater for students who do not meet the minimum requirement to do A-Levels. As fewer and fewer sixteen year olds fail to obtain the necessary GCSE, more and more courses have been designed to meet the needs of these students.

When I started out on this exercise two and a half years ago, I was simply looking to design a course[1] that would benefit students[2] with poor basic skills[3]. I had to design such a course, since none was in existence at West Thames College or any of the surrounding colleges. Every college in the United Kingdom that wants to present a course or programme only receives the basic specifications from whatever governing body they choose and they have to design and deliver the course themselves.

Designing such a course is a daunting task, because it feels at times that you are playing with students' futures, although mistakes can't be helped in the first year of piloting. If such a course is successful, word spreads quickly and more and more students are attracted, especially if you are able to offer something no one else does.

The problems that plague a course like this are manifold. Low level courses are notoriously difficult to run and staff because of the often aggressive and disruptive nature of the students. Ideally a high staff versus student ratio is required, but a

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[1] A Level 1 Vocational Course in accordance with the National Framework for Education.
[2] The age range of the prospective students for the course would be between 16 and 25.
[3] Poor basic skills refer to those students with literacy and numeracy skills at Level 1.

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lack of funding, understanding and room utilisation requirements[4] mean that classes are made up of between 14 and 34 students. Low success rates are commonplace and as colleges are funded per successful candidate, they are apprehensive to run courses which do not guarantee success and profit on their investments from the first year. The result is that courses of this nature are often piloted and ended within the first year and only courses that have proven their success are allowed to continue.

The students themselves are also problematic because of their lack of basic skills. A lack of basic skills not only increases difficulty in teaching, but also forces a low level course to incorporate some form of basic skills training if they want students to progress to the next level.

Students on these courses bring with them a variety of problems which are all factors in the success of the course. Housing problems, pregnancy, socio-economic background, personal problems, violence and drugs are only a few of the problems students bring with them. These problems are also the cause for their lack of basic skills. Lecturers and facilitators do not only try to educate and enrich, but they also have to battle breaking a life-long cycle of truancy, disrespect, poor punctuality and so on. Some students' poor basic skills are due to the fact that English is a foreign language to them or to the fact that they have learning difficulties that have not been spotted and addressed in school.

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[4] Room utilisation requirements are set by the national education authority as the amount of space per student needed. The capacity of an educational institution can thus be calculated by dividing the total area of the buildings by the preset area per student. If an institution is not filled to capacity, local education authorities will not grant loans or give funding for improvements. Room utilisation always present problems within the performing and fine art departments, as rehearsal rooms, performance spaces and studios cannot be judged on the same scale.

1.2 Problem Statement

The biggest question that faces anyone trying to design a Level 1 course is: "How do you design a course that allows you to teach the students basic[5], life and vocational skills?" As so many courses at this level have started and failed, the question is whether the teaching method used is successful?

As I was debating the issue of what theories to use, I was struck with the similarities between teaching and theatre and wondered whether it would be possible to use the conventions, styles and forms of theatre to teach these students. Teaching and theatre are similar on a number of levels, firstly both involve performance, performers and an audience and secondly community theatre and teaching are both concerned with aiding participants to discover self –knowledge and specific knowledge.

I will thus argue that teaching is a performance and that the classroom is a theatre with the students as the audience. My main aim would be to find theatre practitioners and styles that would enable me to teach the students interactively.

As I was not only interested in whether it would be possible and how it would work, I was also interested to see whether it would be more successful than a course designed based on educational principles.

My problem can thus be divided into three parts:

1. Is it possible to design a Performing Arts course based on theatrical conventions and principles within a British Further Educational institution that still adheres to all of the criteria set out by the governing bodies?

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[5] Literacy and Numeracy Skills.

2. Would such a course be more successful than one based on educational principles and theories?

3. Which interactive theatre techniques can be used teach[6] such a course?

For the purposes of this thesis I will focus on the development, implementation, practicality, testing and research of a course, testing whether you can use interactive theatre to teach and if it is possible to design a course based on these principles. This course will be measured against a course based on the accepted learning principles as taught in teacher training courses[7].

As the question of teaching as a performance constitutes a small part of this thesis, I will shortly refer the reader to work by theorists like Schechner, Goffman, Butler, Phelan, Stern and Henderson. However, the reader should take it as a given that teaching can, as all human activity, be considered theatrical and performative.

1.3 Research Method

I will undertake theoretical research on educational and theatrical key practitioners and use these findings to do active research based on practical experiments and observation.

As it would not be possible to evaluate the merits and successes or failures of a course by itself, I would compare two courses, one based on education theory and the other based on theatre theory. I will design and set up both courses

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[6] I would like to point out that genres like theatre in education and community theatre utilises various theatre techniques, however, I am only interested in finding theatre techniques that can be utilised successfully in a Further Education Course.

[7] In order to familiarise myself with the content of a teacher training course, I attend and successfully completed the *City and Guilds 7407 Post Graduate Certificate in Further Education.*

through the official channels and will describe the running, problems and achievement of each course. Because the most important part of the courses are the students, a lot of the observations will involve the behaviour, achievements or failures of the students and this will also be an important factor in the success measuring of a course.

Because both courses will be designed and run within a Further Education College, I will also include reports, findings and comparisons based on what an educational institution uses to measure the success of a course. These criteria are as follows:

1. Retention

2. Achievement

3. Success Rate.

I will compare this data to the National Benchmark for Further Education Courses set by the Government as well as compare the courses on the basis of philosophy, aims, governing body, enrolment, course design and groups and numbers, basic skills and life skills.

I intend to do theoretical research on the theories of theatre and performance theorists such as Richard Schechner, Irving Goffman, Judith Butler, Peggy Phelan and others. For the theatre conventions and styles to be used in the theatre based course, I will look at Paulo Freire, Dorothy Heathcote and Augusto Boal. The reason for the inclusion of Paulo Freire is his absolute disregard for what is regarded as traditional formal education. His revolutionary educatory ideas echo's Boal's educatory ideas, both aim to inform and empower, Boal through theatre and Freire through literacy. Dorothy Heathcote's education through drama pedagogy stems from her performance background.

Chapter 2: Background to the British Educational system

The British Educational System differs from the South African Educational System in more than one way. It not only differs in terms of curriculum, expense and learner responsibility, but is also based upon a different set of values and criteria. In South Africa a learner would start in primary school, progress to secondary school and then, based on performance and opportunity, either progress to college, university or another training institution that requires entry qualifications.

In Britain the Educational System is divided into four sectors. Primary Education, Secondary Education, Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE). Primary Education is equivalent to the South African Primary School, but is divided into Key Stages instead of Standards or Grades. You progress from Key Stage1 to 5 and then go on to a Secondary School. In South Africa a Secondary School will imply that students are between the ages of 14 and 18 and that they will start at Standard 6 or Grade 8 and progress to Matric (Standard 10 or Grade 12). When you attend a Secondary School in Britain, you will only stay to finish your General Certificate in Standard Education (GCSE) which is equivalent to a South African Standard 8 or Grade 10. On the Completion of your GCSE, you can either progress to a College or a Sixth Form Institution to do A-Levels or A-Level Equivalents (South African Standard 9 and 10/ Grade 11 and 12). After the successful completion of your A-Levels or A-Level equivalents, you go to University.

Colleges make up the Further Education Sector and Universities fall into the Higher Education Sector. Colleges, in theory, fill the gap between school and university, but in recent years colleges have broadened to not only take the problematic 14 – 16 year olds that schools can't or won't deal with, but they also offer HE courses.

A College like West Thames College offers, for example, Fresh Start Courses which are designed to re-introduce 14 – 16 year olds to education, Special Needs Courses for students with mental and physical disabilities and ESOL courses (English as a second language) for students who are learning to speak English. There is provision for adults returning to education (New Deal Participants) as well as for working adults who would like to continue with education[8] (evening, Saturday and part-time courses). A-Levels and various Diploma, Certificate, National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses are on offer. Academic provision for HE students is in the form of Higher National Diploma (HND) courses that are equivalent to Year 1 and Year 2 of a University Degree. West Thames also offers an ACCESS course that allows students that have been out of education for a while to refresh their skills before they apply for university.

Students do not pay any educational fees until they are 19, except if they progress to a HE qualification. Education is thus free until university, but even then fees are heavily subsidised.

Entry[9] onto a course in a college is dependent on various factors and the courses[10] offered by a college are divided into levels according to difficulty and according to the entry criteria. The British Educational System works on an inclusion basis, they aim to provide for everyone and not to exclude students based on lack of qualifications[11].

There are different Educational Award Bodies that offer different courses and lecturers choose a course and Award Body that suit their students the best.

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[8] This process of continuing education is referred to as *life long learning* and is actively encouraged in the United Kingdom.

[9] Please refer to **Appendix A** for a detailed explanation of entry requirements.

[10] Please refer to **Appendix A** for a description of the different courses and levels offered by Further Education Colleges.

[11] See **Appendix A.**

Examples of these Bodies are Edexcel, AQA and the Welch Board. Edexcel is the body that I use for the two courses I designed.

The two courses that I will focus on are Level 1 courses. It should be understood that students are on a level 1 course, solely based on their level of literacy and numeracy skills. They are not judged on age, ethnicity or vocational skills. Intake on this level is substantial, but completion is low. Level 1 students pose a particular challenge as they not only have learning difficulties and obstacles, but they also have behavioural[12], socio-economic[13] and cultural-historical[14] problems. I chose to focus on this group as the methods currently employed to teach these students do not have the same success rates[15] as other higher vocational courses and I would thus be able to test my theories on a terrain where little research have been done up to now.

The first Course is a Foundation General National Vocational Qualification in Performing Arts (Foundation GNVQ) and the second course is an Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts (IDPA). Edexcel is slowly phasing out GNVQ's and is replacing them with Diploma Courses.

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[12] Some students suffer from ADHD, anger management and other type of behavioural problems like authoritarian issues, anti-social behaviour, self-harm and so forth. Behavioural problems shall be discussed in more detail later on in this study.

[13] A lot of the students come from low-income families where one or more breadwinner is on unemployment, child support and housing benefits. Some students are asylum seekers whose families also receive benefits as their parent(s) are not allowed to seek employment in the United Kingdom

[14] Even though the class system has been abolished in England, there are still very noticeable class distinctions. Most of the Level 1 students come from working class families with a percentage falling into the lower middle class. Education is often still seen as a waste of time as children are expected to go into employment as soon as possible to gain much needed extra income. Within some families, those seeking a higher education are seen as snobbish and are ostracised in some of the worst cases. The necessary support and encouragement needed to establish habits of attending class and being punctual are thus lacking. A percentage of students are asylum seekers, so even though their basic skills level might be high in their mother tongue, it does not make the grade in English. Add to this that a percentage of students experience violence and abuse at home and that some are surrounded by *easy money*, e.g. the drug trade, it is clear that their backgrounds will influence their education.

[15] Please refer to the national benchmarks in **Appendix H.**

Chapter 3: Programme 1 – An Educational Exercise

3.1 Aims of the Programme

In the designing of Programme 1[16], I only used educational principles and main theorists that are taught on teacher training courses, namely Kolb, Petty and Berne. Please note that no reference is made to Dorothy Heathcote, because her teaching methodology is not a common inclusion in teacher qualifications[17].

The newly designed Level 1 programme was to start in September 2001, but before this, there have been several unsuccessful attempts to introduce an Entry Level Programme to Performing and Creative Arts at West Thames College[18]. The reasons for the failure to establish such a programme were manifold.

Most importantly, there was a lack of knowledge and communication about the Entry Level course amongst the staff. Staff with no knowledge about the course was instructed to teach on it without any unit specifications or support from the course leader. Further more; the course structure was problematic; no support given to lecturers from the course leader; no regular team meetings; no specifications/curriculum available to new lecturers; and a general resistance to teach at this level.

These were not the only barriers to success. The students themselves displayed an unwillingness to take responsibility for their own learning; all of the students had severe behavioural difficulties, some displayed symptoms of ADHD[19] and

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[16] Later sections deal with forms of assessment. This chapter is concerned with the specific aims of the course. Assessment will take the form of summative and continuous assessment. Assessments can take the form of written work, examinations, peer assessment or observation.

[17] A section on Dorothy Heathcote is included in a later part of this work.

[18] Failure to establish an Entry Level left the Performing Arts Department with only three courses, a Level 2 and a Level 3 FE course and a newly established Level 4 HE course. This implied that they could only enrol students with three GCSE's at Grade D and above. Not only did this have an adverse effect on their numbers, but they were also loosing potential students to departments with sufficient provision for lower level students.

[19] Please refer to **Appendix B**.

they had a very poor record of attendance and punctuality. Perhaps the most telling factor was that, since there was no initial testing done to establish their level, ninety percent of the students were on a course that was too difficult for them. This goes a long way to explain absenteeism, failure to pass written assignments and the uncooperative attitude.

The student demographic at West Thames shows that a vast amount of students are Second Language English Speakers, foreign students and Asylum Seekers. West Thames also has a policy of inclusiveness, which means that they aim to provide for all potential students, even those turned away by other educational institutions, and students who failed to achieve in their GCSE's.

Potential Performing Arts students who did not achieve higher than D's were referred to courses on Art and Design. Art and Design was the only department within Creative Arts to successfully manage and run both an Entry Level and Level 1 Foundation Course. Not only did the Performing Arts Department lose out on students for Entry Level and Level 1, but potential students who progressed to Level 2, usually chose to stay within the Art Department, which meant that Performing Arts were also short of Level 2 students.

The main aims of the new Level 1 Foundation Course were thus four-fold.

> (a) Fill the gap in the market by catering for students who achieved lower than a Grade D in their GCSE's.

> (b) Boost enrolment numbers so that the area can receive more funding and achieve optimal room utilisation. (There is always a danger of loosing specialist rooms if they are not in full use)

> (c) Guide Level 1 Foundation students to progress to the Level 2 Performing Arts Course.

(d) Enable students to acquire the necessary Life and Basic Skills to enable them to progress to a higher course and to enter skilled employment.

Edexcel's Foundation General National Vocational Qualification[20] has three main aims; namely giving students a basic understanding of working the Performing Arts Sector; secondly to develop ground level skills in one of the pre-defined six specialist areas of Performing Arts; and lastly to prepare students for employment. These aims correlate with my own in the sense that students will be able to develop ground level Performing Art skills and are prepared for employment. The course level links with my aim of providing a course for Level students. Boosting of enrolment numbers is an aim solely necessitated by the way funding and rooms are allocated in West Thames College at this stage. The fundamental difference is the importance of Life and Basic Skills to progress to a higher level or to obtain gainful employment. The course does not offer sufficient suggestions for these skills and is not closely linked to the Core Curriculum[21].

3.2 The Adult Learning Cycle: Kolb, Honey and Mumford

The decision on which qualification[22] to run was jointly made by the Programme Manager for Creative Arts and me and we decided on the GNVQ Foundation in Performing Arts[23] offered by Edexcel. The course structure was then decided

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[20] See **Appendix G**

[21] The Core Curriculum is a document with all the Basic Skills Requirements for Literacy and Numeracy starting at Entry Level 1 and continuing to Level 2.

[22] There are several types of courses and qualifications to choose from for every level in Britain. Governing bodies offer different course content as well as different examination levels. The types of qualifications are: GNVQ, NVQ, Diploma's, Certificates, Vocational or Academic.

[23] The GNVQ Foundation in Performing Arts is a General National Vocational Qualification course. This implies that students on such a course are taking vocational instead of academic classes and is thus suited to students whose basic skills are low or those who prefer a more practical hands-on approach to learning. Foundation refers to the fact that this course is a Level 1 course seen to cement the necessary skills foundation for progressing to higher courses. Even though it focuses on Performing Arts, it is more generalised than the higher specialist courses.

upon in a meeting by the Programme Manager (PM), the Curriculum Manager (CM) for Performing Arts, the Curriculum Manager (CM) for Music and Media and myself, who would be the Course Leader and tutor for the new course.

Experience dictated the specification and session decisions made; the managers drew on previous experience of students and courses and I was able to make suggestions and offer solutions based on experience I had of working with students with similar learning barriers[24] and of the same literacy and numeracy level. The major drawback as far as I was concerned, was that all my experience is derived from working with people from previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa, not England. This implies that, although the educational barriers and problems would correlate, there would be an enormous difference between my experience of the socio-economic background of the South African Students and the socio-economic background of the English students.

The English students also went through a less rigorous educational system that allows for failure and presents seemingly endless opportunities for gaining a qualification. In South Africa the reverse is true. Students have to work very hard in school in order to continue with further education if they want a well-paid job. Unschooled or unskilled labourers' salaries cannot be compared to those earned by workers in the same positions in England. In Britain salaries tend to be paid to the value of the service to the community, e.g. bin men earn salaries competitive with those of educators in England, while bin men in South Africa are at the bottom of the pay scale. While students in South Africa will have one opportunity at gaining the necessary qualifications to continue in tertiary education, students in England have more than one option available to them should they fail to obtain even the most basic qualification.

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[24] Student with very poor basic skills due to a lack of formal or poor schooling, bad attendance, learning difficulties or socio-economic problems.

While deciding upon the different sessions and their time-allocation we had to keep the college policy in 2002/3 in mind, namely that each student has an allocated three hours of Basic Skills sessions (Communications and Application of Number) per week. This was not the only deciding factor in the allocation and creation of sessions. West Thames also has a tutorial policy[25], which means that a minimum of 1½ hours per week is allocated to tutorials. This means that the actual Performing Arts course would consist of 12 hours per week.

A full time FE course consists of 16½ hours and the timetable at West Thames in 2002/3 allowed four 1½-hour slots per day, with an hour lunch-break and 30 minutes between each session. It is thus possible to offer a full-time course from 9:15 to 15:00 in the afternoon, allowing an hour lunch break and half an hour between sessions. A short day and early finish suits Level one students, as they struggle to concentrate towards the end of the day.

The high number of inquiries about a Level 1 course combined with the high number of applicants for the unsuccessful Entry Level course indicated that it would be possible to fill up two groups. Due to the popularity of sequencing and MC'ing within this age group, one group would concentrate on music instead of drama. The only difference between the two groups would be that one group would have music sessions instead of drama sessions and vice versa. West Thames College's enrolment guidelines states that there should be between 12 and 16 students per Level 1 Group. Although an influx of about 24 students was good news for Performing Arts' numbers, such a big group is problematic at this level, but I will discuss that in more detail in a later section.

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[25] West Thames College follows a trend that believes in the importance of tutoring for successful students. This implies that every student has a tutor who's responsible for their welfare, personal problems, etc. The tutorial policy thus aims to help the student to adjust to college life easily; while they always have someone whom they can turn to if they experience academic or personal problems.

It was decided that the course would be structured as follows:

- Six Performing Arts Sessions of 1½ hours each, 3 Drama/3 Music, Dance, Singing, Special Effects;

- Two Basic Skills session of 1½ hours each, Communications, Application of Number;

- One Therapeutical Art session of 1½ hours;

- One Tutorial of 1½ hours;

- One Review session of 1½ hours;

- 1½ hours allocated for rehearsals.

The reasoning behind allocating six Performing Arts sessions was to give students a broad base in this area. When they progress to higher courses, such classes would be included on their timetables and it is in our interest to train students to achieve their potential in higher courses. Special Effects is a session designed to introduce students to the technical side of performance. These sessions give students the opportunity to experiment and explore sound and visual effects with the aid of computer technology. Modern Theatre trends dictate more and more technological aids during performance, e.g. Knee High Theatre Company, DV8, Rambert Dance Company and RSC, that some knowledge in this department is required. There are also numerous job opportunities available in this sector of Performing Arts, including sound, lighting or visual effects co-ordinator and visual effects designer.

The art session is designed as a therapeutic slot, promoting motor skills, allowing active experimentation and developing creative expression, but ties in with what students are doing in the Performing Arts sessions, e.g. making masks for performance.

Tutorials are weekly meetings between a group and a tutor. These meetings can take place on a one-to-one basis or as a group. Tutorials are handy for action planning, individual student learning reviews, trouble shooting, problem solving, support and life skills. Review sessions are used for reviewing students' own work and the work of others, e.g. theatre performance or movie.

All Performing Arts students have a 1½-rehearsal slot added to their timetables because rehearsals for shows take place out of normal course hours. The 1½ hours does not count towards their total course hours, but are there as a reminder that they sometimes will be required to rehearse after hours.

We set the sessions up with the interest and learning-objectives of the students in mind, but there was also an educational theorem at work. David Kolb (Atherton: 2002) states that adults learn in four stages that follow on one another: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation and Active Experimentation. He called this cycle the Experiential Learning Cycle and it is most easily represented through the following diagram:
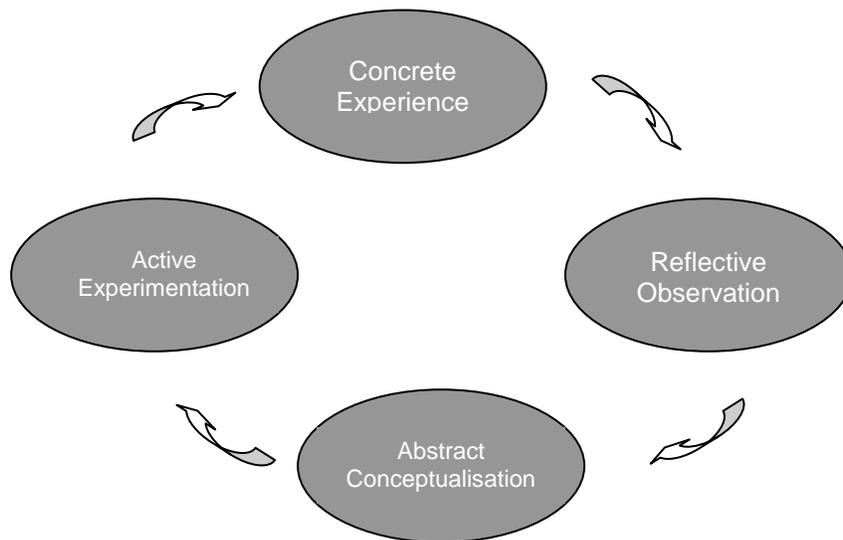
Figure 1. Kolb: The Experiential Learning Cycle[26]

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[26] Adapted from Learning from Experience (Atherton 2002)

Concrete Experience refers to the actual doing of a task by the individual. This leads on to Reflective Observation which means that the individual is thinking about how s/he accomplished the task, what went wrong or what was right. Abstract Conceptualisation is the next phase during which the individual thinks about improvements, different strategies, etc. This then follows on to Active Experimentation during which the individual tries out his/her newly conceptualised theories.

Kolb (Atherton: 2002) argues that all adults learn in this way and that this process might happen in an instant, over a couple of days, weeks or months, according to the topic. (Atherton: 2002) The Experiential Learning Cycle is very popular within British Educational Circles and prospective teachers or lecturers are encouraged to try to introduce this to their students. (It not only teaches the students 'how to learn', but it also allows them to take responsibility for their own learning.) In Performing Arts, this cycle is common-place within most sessions and is even supported by the curriculum specifications.

> **Example**: *Students act out a portion of a text (Concrete Experience). They reflect (Reflective Observation) on their own and their group's performance and suggest (Abstract Conceptualisation) different blocking, characterisation etc. Based on this they then experiment (Active Experimentation) with the portion of text once more. The cycle is completed once a satisfactory result is achieved, but the completion then sparks a new cycle to start.*
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> *The new cycle would be concerned with the performance itself, the reflection and evaluation of the performance and the experimentation with a new performance. The curriculum specifications encourage this, requiring evidence of the preparation for a performance/task, the execution of the performance/task and the reflection and evaluation of the performance/task.*

Alan Mumford and Peter Honey (Honey, Mumford: 2002) developed a questionnaire based on Kolb's learning cycle, claiming that every stage in the learning cycle is also a learning style. The four learning styles they identify are: Theorist, Pragmatist, Activist and Reflector. Theorists like to formulate ideas and theories and fall under the Abstract Conceptualisation; they do not like doing something before they have thought about it. Activists, on the other hand, like doing before they think. They will start with a project without thinking how or what to do and they fall under Active Experimentation. Reflectors like to listen to others before they formulate their own ideas, they would also watch others do, before they decide upon their own course of action. They fall under Reflective Observation. Pragmatist like to try things out and prefer it if they can copy the finished product. Concrete Experience goes hand in hand with Pragmatists.

> **Example:** *If students are asked to assemble a flat pack, Activists will jump in and start constructing without looking at the instructions. Reflectors will look and listen to the others, see the mistakes and successes and will only then decide how they will proceed. Theorists will sit back and think about the best way to construct the flat pack. The will look at the instructions, but that does not mean that they will follow it. Pragmatists will read the instructions and might even ask someone who has already assembled theirs for their opinion and will only then commence to construct the flat pack.*

Honey and Mumford argue that it is important that both lecturer and students are aware of their learning styles. For teachers it is important, because teachers tend to teach according to their own learning style. Classes should be taught to incorporate all learning styles. Students should be aware of their own learning styles, so that they could challenge themselves to learn the other learning styles, but also so that they know how they learn the most effective and so that they can take responsibility for their own learning.

With setting up the session structure, this theory was put to the test. Students would perform the practical tasks[27] in the Performing Arts sessions and then review and reflect upon it during Review sessions. Students will also have the opportunity to review others' performances in the Review sessions and evaluate these against their own. These theories/ideas can then be tested in the Practical Sessions.

The skills they are taught in Basic Skills[28] would be applied in Performing Arts and Review sessions, as well as in Tutorial sessions. Students would then receive feedback that they then take back to the Basic Skills sessions to try out other methods in order to improve their work.

The idea was that students would not only be encouraged to learn this way during sessions, but that the session structure also supports the cycle. The biggest problem was trying to slot the sessions in such a way that the Performing Arts and Basic Skills classes were spread out over the five days. Previous experience shows that students are less likely to attend if they have an entire day made up of e.g. Basic Skills classes. They enjoy the practical classes the most, so these had to be spread out to act as 'bait'.

With the type of sessions decided upon, the rest of the course structuring fell on my shoulders. This includes the allocating and distributing of the specifications[29] between the different sessions.

3.3 Geoffrey Petty and Teaching Today

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[27] Examples: Devising a short play; creating a sound effect.
[28] Examples: Skim Reading; Writing a Review; Spelling; Punctuation; Grammar.
[29] Please see **Appendix G**

Geoffrey Petty, a British Education expert published the book **Teaching Today**[30] in 1993. **Teaching Today** is extremely popular and the latest revised reprint was in 2001. It is a book concerned with teaching and assessing methods and strategies and usually is the first recommended book on reading lists for Post Graduate Certificates in Education, Certificates in Education and other popular Teaching Qualifications. It also offers practical advice for problem situations, course structure, course design assessment, as well as suggesting classroom activities.

I set about following Petty's guidelines[31] and decided that the Foundation Course will employ all three modes of teaching[32] suggested. Some sessions like Basic Skills might combine all three, e.g. The Basic Skills facilitator might present a short session on the use of commas and teach different techniques (Class Teaching). S/he may then ask students to mark and correct previous written work based on this new found knowledge using different methods (Resource-based learning). Finally, s/he may ask students to go onto an interactive Basic Skills Resource Web-site to choose and complete an activity of choice. (Self-directed Learning)

Performing Arts sessions such as Drama might combine two modes of teaching, namely Class Teaching and Resource-based learning. The Facilitator[33] might explain different methods of building a character and the student then applies the method best suited to him.

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[30] "Teaching Today" practical how-to-teach course book, recommended for use in most FE Teacher Training.
[31] Please refer to **Appendix C** for a description of Petty's guidelines and ideas.
[32] Modes of teaching: Class Teaching, Resource-based Learning and Self-directed learning. Please refer to **Appendix C** for more information.
[33] Petty sometimes refers to the teacher as the Facilitator. I also use the term to refer to the educator in later sections.

Next I allocated the specifications to the different lecturers and we set about writing our Schemes of Work[34]. The Schemes of Work were done in the basic College format[35].

As lecturer, you have to provide information on the qualification, group, awarding body, unit number, topic, aims, objectives, learning outcomes, resources, techniques, key skills and use of ILT. Petty (2001: 393) argues that Schemes of Work should only be written after establishing learning needs and I agree with this, but we did not have this luxury as college policy is that all Schemes of Work should be completed at the end of the previous academic year, i.e. August. The Scheme of Work is regarded as a working document, so it is continuously changing, but this is not very helpful as the course outline and planning are not as flexible. We were designing sessions based on previous experience of either higher or lower level students, since none of us had any concrete experience of Level 1 students.

The assessment would mainly take the form of criterion-referenced, continuous formative assessment[36]. This would formally be in the form of Assignments, which consists of a serious of small tasks that students have to complete over the course of the assignment. Students would be continuously assessed according to their completion of these small tasks. There would be three assignments per year in accordance with the Performing Arts Department's guidelines.

Edexcel, the awarding body, expects the students to sit two examinations at the end of the course and this summative assessment would be norm-referenced. The students need to pass these external examinations in order to pass the course. Although the final marks for the formative assessed coursework is allocated by the lecturers, Edexcel verifies the grading by postal-sampling, a

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[34] **See Appendix C**
[35] **See Appendix D**
[36] As mentioned previously, this type of assessment tests the understanding and learning of the students while it creates Resource-based Learning and differentiation opportunities. It also tests what a learner can do and a learner is awarded a pass or a fail.

process where the work of the top, middle and bottom graded students are sent away for moderation. This is to ensure that lecturers are marking students' work correctly.

3.4 Eric Berne and Transactional Analysis[37]

During the course of the Foundation GNVQ in PA the lecturers' pedagogy will be to have Adult to Adult transactions, listening and responding to the students on a level where the exchange of information and ideas are possible. Parent to Child transaction should be avoided if possible, because real communication is not possible during such a transaction. Lecturers will 'stroke' students as often as possible in order to allow students to grow more confident and to increase their self-worth. Lastly, lecturers will follow the "I'm OK, You're OK" approach to changing the dysfunctional behaviour of some of the students.

3.5 Course Specifications

The aims of Edexcel's Foundation General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in Performing Arts are three fold. Firstly it aims to give students a basic understanding of working in the Performing Arts sector; secondly to develop their basic skills in one of the pre-defined six specialist areas of Performing Arts; and thirdly to prepare students for employment. The Foundation GNVQ specification consists of 10 units: three compulsory units and seven optional units. Centres decide which three optional units they want to offer alongside the compulsory units[38].

We decided upon delivering the following optional units: Unit *4: Working on a team event, Unit 6: Extending performance skills and Unit 8: Reviewing performance & entertainment*. The specialist area that will be focussed on in *Unit*

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[37] Please refer to **Appendix F** for an explanation of Terms.
[38] Please refer to **Appendix G** for the course specifications.

2: Skills Development, Unit 3: Performing Work and Unit 6: Extending performance skills would be drama for the one group and music technology for the other.

3.6 The Course structure

In *Chapter 3.2 The Adult Learning Cycle: Kolb,* I have gone into detail regarding the session outlay and course structure, please refer to **Appendix G** to see how the specifications tie in with the outlay and structure.

Students would work towards the City and Guilds Level 1 Literacy Qualification in Communications classes and work towards the equivalent numeracy qualification in Application of Number classes.

West Thames College's policy in 2002/3 allocated each student 1½ hours of additional support per week. I used this to double staffing tutorials with lecturers from the Learning Skills and Support Department. These lecturers specialise in teaching basic and key skills and are trained in recognising and dealing with learning difficulties. The reasoning behind this was to have additional professional input in preparing the students for their two exams and to help with the delivery of *Uni1: Opportunities in performing arts* and *Unit 4: Working on a team event.*

During time-tabling[39] it is essential that the Performing Arts and Basic Skills sessions are spread out, because students are more likely to attend if they have one Basic Skills session in the middle of two Performing Arts sessions and vice versa. The timetable for both groups was to be the same, apart from the obvious difference between music and drama classes.

3.7 The Enrolment Process

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[39] See **Appendix G** for details about the lecturers teaching on the course.

Because of the late decision to run a Foundation GNVQ in PA, the course was not advertised or listed in the college prospectus and fact sheets. We thus had to rely on enrolling students off the street. Established courses have the luxury of interviewing and screening students from the middle of the previous academic year. Prospective students come in for interviews and are conditionally accepted based on target grades. Level 3 and Level 4 courses also audition their students, but because the Foundation GNVQ in PA is considered a course to develop basic skills in Performing Arts, all students are accepted, regardless of performance ability.

West Thames College does not require students to have references, unless specifically asked for by enrolling lecturers. We thus have no inkling of the student's behaviour and attendance at their previous academic institution. In 2002/3 there was no policy in place that empowered only course leaders to interview and enrol prospective students. There was not even a policy in place that allowed only the program area lecturers to enrol their own prospective students. An engineering lecturer could just as easily enrol a music student, as a music lecturer can. Although I was the course leader and tutor for the Foundation GNVQ, I did not enrol a single student for this course. This had not only a dire effect on behaviour, retention and achievement in the Foundation GNVQ, but in all courses. Uninformed lecturers were enrolling students without advising them to seek out the appropriate program area. I will discuss this matter in more detail in a later section.

Chapter 4: Programme 1: Educational Reality

4.1 The Students

Inadequate enrolment procedures at West Thames College resulted in misinformed students with the wrong expectations of the Foundation GNVQ in PA course. Some students thought that it was a Foundation GNVQ in Media and left promptly on the first day of induction after they were set straight about the content of the course.

The twenty-two remaining students all wanted to do Performing Arts and were divided into a music and a drama group. Sixteen students were male[40] and six were female[41]. The male group consisted of three white males, four white British and black Caribbean males, four black Caribbean males and five black British males. Four of the females were white British, while two female students were black British.

M1 was enrolled on the ill-fated Entry to Creative Arts the previous academic year. Although he did not pass the entry level, the curriculum manager for PA made the decision to enrol him on the Foundation GNVQ in PA without asking for a reference from his tutor or assessing his basic skills[42]. This student has severe behavioural problems as well as problems with authority. From the beginning he refused to do any written work and did not participate or co-operate within the class structure. I suspect that he had severe dyslexia[43] and dyscalcula[44], but was not able to prove this because of his resistance to learning.

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[40] The male students will be distinguished by M followed by a number, e.g. M1, M2, M3 etc.

[41] The female students will be distinguished by F followed by a number, e.g. F1, F2, F3 etc.

[42] Most enrolling lecturers tend to give existing West Thames College students a second chance if they did not achieve the previous academic year. This decision is in line with the inclusive policy of the organisation, and the reasoning behind it is that if a student's behaviour or attendance were unsatisfactory, they would have been excluded during the previous academic year. Even though this theory holds water on paper, the reverse is true. Other sections of this paper explain the difficulty faced by course leaders and lecturers trying to exclude students on grounds of attendance or behaviour.

[43] Please see **Appendix B**

M2 came from a special needs school where he did a GCSE equivalent that was heavily supported by a personal tutor. When he left this school, they provided him with a literacy and numeracy improvement and support plan that were formulated to develop his skills and aid the next educational institution to correctly support him. Unfortunately this student's father wanted a 'normal' son and did not disclose any of this information upon enrolment. As far as we were concerned he came from public school without any special support. We only became aware of this situation one month before the end of the academic year when we had an angry phone call from his father, accusing us of not supporting M2 properly.

M2 would have been suited to an Entry level 1 or Entry level 2 course, where there is a lot more support. It was clear from the start that the Foundation GNVQ in PA did not suit this student and we did everything in our power to provide extra support. Two extra classes were organised to develop his basic skills, but M2 failed to attend any of the support classes. Extra support for this student was difficult because his father did not support or agree with M2 going to additional learning support classes. This student had severe behavioural problems and was disruptive at times.

M3 had anger management problems, got bored easily and was disruptive at times. He is extremely bright, but because he has problems concentrating his basic skills are not far advanced. Many of his problems could be attributed to his home situation. His father remarried and his stepmother barred him from visiting, while his mother's partner dislikes him. His mother lives in Wales from Thursday to Tuesday and left him to fend for himself at home.

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[44] Please see **Appendix B**

M4 is highly intelligent, but is held back by his lack of basic skills. He suffers from behavioural problems, suspected Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder[45] (ADHD) and has drug problems. He also had problems with working in a group.

M5 is a soft-spoken and easily intimidated student who did not participate in class activities.

M6 had severe drug problems and this kept him from attending or working when in.

M7 suffered from drug addiction and was best friends with M1, M8, M9 and M10. These friendships contributed to his problems, since he is easily led.

M8 was highly disruptive with severe behavioural and drug related problems.

M9 not only tried to threaten and intimidate students and staff, he also had behavioural and anger management issues and was highly disruptive. He was reprimanded on a number of occasions for behavioural and sexual misconduct.

M10 threatened and intimidated students and staff, was involved in a disciplinary for sexual misconduct towards a member of staff, displayed inappropriate classroom behaviour and was highly disruptive. At times he was anti-social. He suffered from suspected ADHD and had severe behaviour problems.

M11 is extremely bright, but has a very short attention span. He is held back by his lack of basic skills.

M12 is soft-spoken, but a very bad attendee with a resistance to group work.

M13 had a short-attention span and had difficulty committing to the course.

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[45] Please see **Appendix B**

M14 had difficulty communicating with the other students.

M15 was disliked by the other students and was anti-social. He alienated his group members by telling them that they are inferior.

M16 refused to do written work.

F1 was on the Fresh Start course the previous academic year. Since Fresh Start gives a second chance to 14 – 16 year old students who are excluded from schools for behaviour. Highly inappropriate[46] behaviour was displayed at times, as the year continued less of this behaviour was seen. She made a lot of friends and was well liked by members of staff, until she befriended M1, M7, M8, M9 and M10 halfway through the year. She became highly disruptive in class, and her increased resistance to work was mirrored in her dropping grades.

F2 was a highly disruptive student, disliked by students and staff. She displayed anti-social behaviour and signs of ADHD. She made racists comments and displayed inappropriate[47] behaviour in class.

F3 was soft-spoken and drug-dependant. She also suffered from verbal and physical abuse at home.

F4, F5 and F6 were best friends and refused to co-operate or participate in class. They were highly disruptive and anti-social.

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[46] Inappropriate behaviour is a term used to define unacceptable behaviour in class, covering a fast array of actions, from disrupting other students' working, refusing to co-operate, throwing furniture, making sexually suggestive or racially explicit remarks to challenging authority. In F1's case, she tended to refuse to co-operate, challenged authority and was aggressive towards her group members and lecturers at times.

[47] F2 challenged authority, shouted at lecturers, left class without permission, distracted other students, disrupted most classes she attended, was aggressive and was involved in a fight with another student on two separate occasions.

M1, M3, M4, M5, M6, M9 and M10 were in the drama group together with F2, F3, F4, F5 and F6. M2, M11, M12, M13, M14, M15 and M16 were in the music group together with F1. The groups were difficult to handle. Apart from the difficulties associated with teaching Level 1 students (i.e. behaviour, attention span and different learning styles), the students within the groups differed greatly from one another with regards to cultural and social background, beliefs and value systems.

4.2 The Lecturers

The team layout is discussed in Appendix G and this section will give more information about the lecturers' background and experience. All of the lecturers were encouraged to develop their pedagogy by using Berne's transactional analysis as a reference, but also to be supportive, firm and fair.

The tutor for the music group had no previous teaching experience, but has done community facilitating in the past. He did not have a teaching qualification, but had two degrees in Drama and Theatre.

Two of the Learning Support lecturers were highly qualified in delivering Key and Basic Skills, while one communication lecturer was a full-time English and ESOL lecturer. The fourth Learning Support lecturer specialises in delivering basic skills to Entry level and Level 1 students. The facilitating of basic skills was thus in the hands of suitably qualified lecturers with experience of delivering the basic skills curriculum as well as teaching at this level.

The lecturer that taught basic notation was from the music department and was an experienced teacher with a teaching qualification. The other lecturer teaching music technology has a degree in performing arts as well as a teaching qualification and, more importantly, composes music for television and theatre. I taught two drama sessions per week and the other session was taught by a

professional dancer and dance teacher branching out into physical drama improvisations.

A professional costume designer taught art to the drama group. This included the making and correct use of masks and puppets which would be used in future performances. A lecturer specialised in computer-aided design taught the music group. The thought behind this lecturer facilitating the group was that the music students could design and create album covers and posters for the work they produced during the music sessions.

The Dance teacher was not an experienced teacher, but had experience in teaching youth groups. The singing teacher is a professional opera singer that has taught before, but only in an one to one situation. Facilitating big groups was new to her.

The lecturer teaching Reviews had been with a professional touring children's theatre company for four years prior to her appointment. She had no previous teaching experience or qualifications, but holds an honours degree in Performing Arts. The Assistant Lecturer Demonstrator had a very basic teaching qualification, but years of experience.

4.3 The Problems

During the academic year of 2002/3, West Thames College introduced a new disciplinary system that was developed through the year. This system was based on two sections: academic and behaviour. The academic side dealt with work not done, punctuality and attendance, while the behavioural side was in place to deal with all behavioural misconduct, from light offences like swearing at lecturers to inappropriate classroom behaviour to ringing mobile phones. More serious offences like fighting, bullying and intimidation also fell under this category.

Evidence in the form of witness statements had to be sent to the head of student services who then dealt with the offences accordingly. This system had a number of flaws, as little or no lecturer input was required after the initial statements. Punishments were thus either too severe or not severe enough and lecturers felt that the disciplinary framework did not support them.

During a review class, two students made sexual comments and suggestive gestures towards a member of staff. They also touched her in an inappropriate manner. M9 and M10 who were guilty of this extremely serious offence were suspended, temporarily or permanently, as the matter was not deemed serious. This is an extreme example of the failure of the disciplinary system. On other occasions, fair decisions were made that supported lecturers. Every time a bad decision was made, however, it undermined the authority of the lecturers teaching on the course and the guilty students misbehaved even more.

The Foundation GNVQ in PA suffered from a couple of non-education related student problems. M1, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10 and M11 all lived on the same estate and were involved in dealing drugs on and off the college premises. This not only resulted in problems with the authorities, but it also intimidated other students. These students brought a gangster element to the college that was not beneficial for an educational environment with some highly impressionable students.

Unbeknown to us, M1 had a criminal record and have been in a juvenile correctional facility at least three times over the past two years. Since he was a minor, we were not privy to this information, which might have had an influence on the decision to enrol him[48]. M1 was withdrawn from the course five months after the start of the academic year. During this time he was in jail twice and was

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[48] If this information were available to us, we could have contacted M1's social worker and parole officer and they could have testified as to his ability to attend and be punctual. No students will be refused a place because of a criminal record, but enrolling lecturers can refuse a student a place if it is known before hand that his or her attendance, punctuality and behaviour will cause problems for the other students on the course.

being prosecuted for Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) which turned into a murder trial. College procedure did not allow me to withdraw this individual sooner and he had a negative influence on the rest of the group whenever he was present. Fortunately for the rest of the students and unfortunately for his own educational development, he only attended about 30% of his classes during this time. He refused to do any written work or co-operate in class.

M2 had little support from his family and his situation worsened in the second half of the course when his father remarried. He developed some psychological problems and although he discussed his problems with his tutor and support staff, he was resistant to seeing the college counsellor for fear that his father would find out.

M5 left after three weeks without giving a reason and I tried in vain to persuade him to return to the course. He cited personal problems, but I suspect that he felt that he did not 'fit in' with the rest of the group.

M7's attendance was atrocious and he was withdrawn from the course after five months. After a meeting with both him and his mother present, it was agreed that he was allowed to attend classes, but that he would only receive a certificate of achievement at the end of the year instead of the qualification. The reasoning behind this was that he did not achieve anything during the first half of the year, but that it would be beneficial for him to continue with education. Since he did not do enough work to qualify for a GNVQ, he would only receive a certificate with the units that he did pass on it.

I withdrew M8 after three months for persistent behaviour misconduct. He got into three fights with other students and was permanently excluded from attending West Thames College.

M9 was withdrawn after six months in March for fighting on college premises and intimidating students and staff. During this time, he was guilty of sexual misconduct towards a member of staff and dealing drugs on college premises. During a museum trip he mugged another student and was finally prosecuted for GBH.

M10 was withdrawn after six months for inappropriate behaviour but an executive decision was made to allow him back on college premises to conclude his qualification. This upset staff and students alike as he was charged with sexual misconduct on a previous occasion and intimidated students. He was also caught dealing drugs on the premises and had two warnings for fighting.

M15 was withdrawn after six months for lack of attendance.

I withdrew F2 after two weeks for severe behavioural misconduct in class and racial slurs against a student and myself. She also managed to get into two fights with other students.

F3 left after eight months, because she was pregnant, but she was also in trouble for drug related offences. F4, F5, F6 were withdrawn after a week for refusal to participate and co-operate and for inappropriate behaviour in class.

The course also suffered from problems with lectures. Two weeks into the course disaster struck. The lecturer for the music group decided that they were too much for him and he quit teaching all together and went back to his old job. This destroyed the morale of the music group, as they perceived it as him not liking them. Level 1 students need stability and that usually takes the form of the tutor. His leaving thus destroyed the trust in the course as well as the much-needed stability. I became the tutor for this group as well.

The lecturer teaching music notation only turned up for half of her lessons and was slightly intoxicated on a number of occasions. The result upon the music group was once again, disastrous. Students at this level perceive the missed classes as permanent cancelled classes and our best efforts to get them to re-attend this class could only move less than half of the group to attend.

The AON lecturer had a negative attitude towards teaching at this level, proclaiming that she was "too highly qualified". She made a statement during the first session that implied that the students were no good because of their level. The result was that very few students attended this class. One communication lecturer refused to deal with some of the more difficult students and excluded some from his class[49].

The first dance and improvisation lecturer left after a month to get married. Her temporary replacement proved unsatisfactory, as she was more interested in being a popular lecturer than teaching the students. She also supported M9 and M10 during the sexual misconduct charge by telling them that they did nothing wrong and that the lecturer in question was 'asking for it'. She further more informed the students that the rest of the team was racists and denying her a full-time post because of racism and that her children are starving as a result.

This had an adverse effect on most students and since she taught students from Level 1 to Level 4, the whole of Performing Arts went through a very difficult patch. The Level 1 students were negatively influenced towards the lecturing team and we had to work even harder than usual to regain their trust.

The art lecturer from the Art and Design department was more interested in politics and lacked the commitment to teach at this level. His classes were poorly attended.

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[49] The Eric Berne "I'm OK, You're OK" principle failed, as these lecturers were not able to view the students as changeable and worthwhile human beings. They thus transacted in a Parent to Child state with the students, which meant that communication failed totally.

Together with all student and lecturer related problems, the course also suffered from the typical problems all Level 1 courses suffer from. Attendance and punctuality is one of the biggest problems. This problem is not created by the Level 1 course, but a problem the students bring with them from their previous educational institution. As mentioned earlier, poor attendance and punctuality are a big contributing factor to the poor GCSE results of these students. Colleges are thus faced with facilitating students with a low basic skills level and a habit of not attending.

Their low basic skills level make these students less confident, with the result they tend to attend selectively, usually skipping those classes that they need to improve in, like communication or AON. They also lack commitment and dedication to the course, a problem they again bring with them.

At West Thames College we were thus faced with not only trying to break the vicious selective attendance cycle, but also with breaking poor attendance and commitment habits. We also had to provide these students with the necessary basic skills to progress to the next level.

4.4 The Run of the Course

At West Thames College, an induction week precedes the normal timetable. Induction week is designed to welcome the students, introduce them to college resources and support systems, get to know their tutor and get some important paper work out of the way. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday students are taken on tours of the college facilities and library and they meet the principal. They fill in medical questionnaires and sign a college contract. The contract is between the student and the principal and covers regular attendance, completion of work and appropriate behaviour.

Initial skills assessment and target setting takes place and students are given an induction assignment to do. On the Thursday students are allowed to stay at home, except if they need to come in for additional skills assessment or other tests. Friday is Fresher's Fair Day, which gives new students the opportunity to make friends, participate in a variety of fun activities and have a free lunch.

Problems started during induction when it turned out that the majority of students were operating under the misapprehension that they were enrolled on a Media course. This was the result of allowing uninformed lecturers to enrol students without contacting the relevant course leader or department. These students were not suited to a Performing Arts course and were extremely negative about the college. An understandable fact given that they thought that they were embarking on a media course. In order to try to save the situation, I suggested that an element of media be introduced in review classes. Some of the disgruntled students found this solution acceptable, but for the most part, there was a mass exodus after the first hour.

The music group's tutor who left after two weeks did not aid matters and the music group was in danger of falling apart. I took on the role of tutor for the music group, but because of timetable difficulties, their tutorial had to take place in conjunction with the drama group. The students enjoyed the mingling in this combined class immensely, but it was hard work trying to control the group. It was also difficult to have one to one tutorials, because the class was so big.

One of the biggest problems was the poor attendance and punctuality of the students. They attended selectively; i.e. they would only go to which ever class they felt like going to. It was common practice for some students to arrive for classes thirty to forty minutes late. The fifteen-minute lock down rule, where the classroom door is locked after fifteen minutes and no late students are allowed in had no effect in curing lateness. With higher level students this rule works very well, because students want to be present for class, but it appeared that some of

the Level 1 students could not care less about missing a session. We had to break this rule at times in order to facilitate the learning of some of the students.

A retention officer was appointed halfway through the course and continuously telephoned absent students. This had a positive effect on attendance, but no affect on punctuality.

Facilitating the two Level 1 groups required more preparation and flexibility than the higher levels. Lecturers did not know whether they would have seven students or only one, so even the most well prepared lesson had to be structured to change at the last moment. When the whole group was in attendance, the atmosphere tended to hyperactive and highly disruptive. This was in direct opposition to when only one to 3 students attended, when the classes were marked by apathy and silence.

Some lecturers were just as unreliable as the students when it came to attendance and punctuality. When a lecturer is absent, cover is organised. College policy requires staff to telephone in before nine to inform the relevant people that they will be absent. Appropriate cover is then arranged. However, when lecturers fail to turn up for a lesson, there is no way cover can be organised on such short notice and course leaders only learn about this at a much later stage. Students stop attending the classes without lecturers and this destroys the timetable, especially if the class is in the middle of the day. They decide either to have a late start or early finish, with the result that it is not only the absentee lecturer whose session suffers, but also the sessions of the other lecturers teaching on such a day.

As mentioned in the previous section, the music notation lecturer was quite often absent or inebriated and the other music lecturer was often late. Some lecturers never handed back homework or took forever marking the work. This discouraged the already reluctant students from doing homework.

There is a general resistance from lecturers to teach at this level. Lecturers usually feel that it implies they are not competent or they feel that the level is not worth teaching. Negative and unwilling lecturers are not as effective as their more positive colleagues and are less willing to adapt to the situation. They way in which these lecturers perceive and treat students differ as well. The students are aware of the lecturer's negative feelings, which in turn cause students to feel negative towards the lecturer, resulting in a downward communication spiral[50].

More than 80% of the students were involved with drugs. Students came into class quite often under the influence of drugs. We refused to teach these students especially the ones very clearly suffering from the side effects of smoking cannabis. They displayed telltale signs such as giggling for no reason, red eyes, subdued behaviour and the smell of cannabis on their breath or person. Students did not seem affected by being forced to miss a class and a high number of students were sent home or temporarily suspended for smoking cannabis on the college grounds. West Thames College did not have a clearly defined policy for dealing with students smoking cannabis on college grounds, although it is classified as a Class C drug and illegal to use. Under English law, minors are arrested when caught, but adults are just given a warning unless they are caught at or near an educational institution. The college's lack of policy and action towards dealing with illegal substances of any kind only encouraged students, as they did not have to suffer any real repercussion of being caught.

Students displayed a general resistance to written work. Although the Foundation GNVQ in PA is mostly practical, students are still required to submit some written evidence in order to pass. This attitude was particularly difficult in basic skills and review session where writing and reading forms the basis for the lessons. Students enjoyed watching movies, but despite sessions informing them about how to write reviews, what to look for and how to formulate their ideas, they failed

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[50] Refer to **Appendix F**.

to do the set work. Unit 8: Reviewing Performance and Entertainment was delivered in the review session and students handed in reviews which consisted of two or three sentences. They also did not want to reflect on work done in other classes or discuss possible changes.

The Basic Skills sessions were a struggle. Students were given the opportunity to gain two extra qualifications: a City and Guilds Level 1 Numeracy and a City and Guilds Level 1 Literacy qualification. Unfortunately, the students did not seem interested in the possibilities that such a qualification can offer them. Despite their best efforts, lecturers did not enter any work for consideration because students failed to complete even the most basic written evidence required.

Unit 1: Opportunities in Performing Arts is an externally assessed examination and was delivered during the tutorial sessions. Students were introduced to the terminology and content by completing worksheets, role-play, games, simulations and case studies. I was very confident that they would be well prepared for their exam, but I was proved wrong. When it came to completing the Edexcel booklet that accounts for 50% of their grade, the support worker and I had to go over the work again repeatedly. I organised extra exam classes to prepare students for the written examination but no students turned up for any of the sessions that were supported by a lecturer from learning support.

Unit 4: Working on a Team Event was delivered by lecturers in music, drama, art and review sessions. Students opted for a movie screening, with the drama students devising and acting in the movie and the music students providing the soundtrack. The students had to book a pre-determined room, do a Health and Safety check, organise equipment and decide upon a role which they would fulfil during the screening. They would design and create tickets and posters in art class, do organisation in review and tutorial sessions, film the movie during drama sessions and create the soundtrack in music sessions.

Despite the initial interest and excitement that the project generated, attendance did not improve for drama or music sessions and it was really hard to create sound or visuals with out ever knowing whether all students will attend or not. Although the lecturers did all the groundwork for the organising of the event, students failed to organise a single thing. They did not book the room or equipment and they did not carry out Health and Safety checks. Two students designed and created posters, while the rest either did not attend art class or refused to participate in sessions. Only three students created music tracks and only five students were involved in the final filming of the short film.

Without a screening organised the project was doomed and the students could not pass the unit. We created a second opportunity for them to organise an event, but they again failed to complete. When it came to completing the Edexcel Booklet that again accounted for 50% of their unit grade, they had to write extensively about organising the event. Their knowledge of organisation was thus theoretical despite two chances to put what they had learned into practise.

This negative attitude towards learning and improving was echoed through-out the course. The students did not want to take responsibility for their own learning. Apart from their poor attendance and punctuality, they did not do their homework, did not carry paper or pens with them, refused to bring handbooks along to college and were generally unprepared for sessions.

I attempted two performances with the drama group. The first performance failed because the students were not interested in rehearsal. They wanted to create an ontological performance, unrehearsed and not repeated. Because of this, I structured the second performance as an improvisational performance.

The students' attitude and behaviour proved that this course that was based on sound educational principles was not the success it ought to be. Students were only interested in concrete experience. They had no interest in reflection,

conceptualisation or experimenting. This was evident in every class through out the course.

4.5 The Techniques

We tried different tactics during the run of the course to improve performance, attendance, punctuality and commitment, but it seemed that most of the tactics had little or no effect. I handed out student questionnaires at regular intervals during the academic year. These questionnaires fulfilled a two-fold purpose. Firstly it monitored the student's perception of his/her own learning and secondly it gave me valuable feedback on the run of the course and of the student's needs and preferences. We tried to incorporate as much of the students' preferences as possible in order to make the course as attractive as possible, but these changes seem to have little effect on the overall student behaviour.

I removed a dance class from the music group's timetable and a communication class from the drama group's timetable. These were the most hated and least attended classes on the timetable and the removal was supported by a cutting of the course hours due to the drop in student numbers. The drama improvisation session broadened in content as it changed to incorporate the communication session. The hope was that the drama students would be more interested in communication if it was presented with drama.

The lecturer that taught the added media class (the media class was added to pacify the wrongly enrolled students) suggested making a horror movie which would have a public screening. The students were thrilled because they got the opportunity to work the camera, draw the storyboards and write the scripts. I was surprised by the students' enthusiasm and supported the project in every way. Unfortunately the students lost interest after the planning session and refused to draw the storyboards or write a script. After a few weeks of trying to re-enthuse the students, the lecturer gave up on the idea.

I also moved the start and end times of the timetable; e.g., early morning classes would only begin at 9:30 instead of 9:00. This was to try to curb the punctuality problem, but was unsuccessful, as students were still half an hour late for the later start sessions. I compacted the timetable by making the lunch breaks shorter in order to end the last sessions earlier. The earlier finishes had limited success, as the students who attended stayed until the end of the day's lessons instead of leaving early, but it did not convince the usual absentee students to attend these sessions.[51]

We tried to replace unreliable lecturers with reliable lecturers as far as possible, but this was difficult due to staffing shortages and time tabling. We could not remove a reliable lecturer from teaching, as this would destroy other courses. Replacement lecturers could thus only be used if their teaching hours were below the required minimum and if they were free at the specific time. The 'new' lecturers found it difficult forging a bond with the students, as they were negatively influenced towards such sessions by the previous unreliable lecturer. Some students also found it impossible to break the habit of not attending these sessions, despite the fact the new lecturers were prepared and punctual. The lecturers replaced were the music notation and dance lecturers.

We offered weekly and monthly good attendance rewards. The weekly award took the form of a certificate, while the monthly reward offered varied from a box of chocolates to a movie ticket. I tried to make these rewards more official by asking the programme and curriculum managers to present them. I gave each student an attendance sheet, which had all their classes, class times and lecturer's names on. The students had to carry these sheets with them and had to ask each lecturer to sign next to their names at the end of the lesson. At the end of the week or month, the student with the most signatures won the reward. The dual purpose of the sheet was to give students an active reminder of their

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[51] Please refer to **Appendix I** for the finalised and restructured time table.

timetable, but also to encourage them to attend all their classes. This was very effective for the first month and we had an increase in attendance, but the effectiveness dwindled there after. Students stopped carrying their sheets with them, asking for a new one every lesson. They also started to forge the signatures on the sheets. The scheme had to be abandoned after a month and a half.

The appointment of a retention officer improved attendance as she constantly phoned-up students who were absent. She also made appointments with absentee students to encourage them to attend regularly and to listen to any problems the students experienced. This was a great relief to lecturers, as they do not have the time to chase after students. Unfortunately, her best efforts to increase punctuality were ineffective.

Guest speakers were organised for tutorial sessions. These speakers ranged from professionals to college staff. Professional musicians and actors gave talks on how to become an actor or musician, the qualifications needed and the life style changes necessary. I hoped that this would inspire the students to attend and work harder to achieve the qualification and fulfil their dreams.

Other speakers spoke about support for students, e.g. student services, the student body, sport activities, extra-curricular activities and talent evenings. The reasoning behind this was that if the students became more involved and committed to other college activities, they would be more likely to attend classes and commit themselves to the course.

We also organised theatre and museum trips. The theatre trips were successful in the sense that the students enjoyed the performances, but unsuccessful from the point of review writing. The students did not want to join in discussions reflecting upon the performances or write critical reviews about it. The first two museum trips were successful and the students enjoyed the outings. All trips

stopped after the third museum trip, when M9 used the opportunity to mug and sexually assault a female student. He was arrested and charged, but used the museum trip as an alibi. Two lecturers had to testify that he was absent from the trip on a number of occasions.

I tried to encourage group responsibility through teamwork and trust exercises, but this was not very effective, as certain group members were not interested in 'games'. This destroyed the positive work of the rest of the group and I was not able to move the group to a more harmonised ensemble.

Many of the tactics used were based on techniques suggested by Geoffrey Petty in **Teaching Today** Petty (2001: 22 to 34) states that learners should be self-directed by setting their own goals and targets[52]. Individual Learning Plans were negotiated on at least four occasions by the learning support staff and me. Individual Learning Plans[53] (ILP) requires the student to list areas for improvement, set targets that they want to reach and describe how they will reach these targets. The targets and goals are discussed on a one-to-one basis with the student and a date for review is decided upon. The ILP is then signed by both lecturer and student and reviewed on the stated date. The students did highlight areas for improvement and discussed strategies of reaching their targets, but that is how far their commitment to the ILP's went. Very few of the targets were reached.

Petty also urges lecturers to allow students to take responsibility for their own learning, by encouraging them to be active instead of passive. The students did not adopt this mantra and as mentioned earlier, fail to carry with them even the most basic educational tools needed. They forged signatures on attendance sheets and were not interested in critical analysis. No homework was done and all opportunities for self-development were missed.

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[52] Examples of own goals and targets would be, improving my technical vocabulary, attending 75% of all classes by the end of the term, getting a distinction on my next project.
[53] Please refer to **Appendix E**

In **Teaching Today**, Petty further argues that self-assessment is preferable to teacher assessment. As mentioned earlier, students were not interested in critical assessment of themselves or their peers. E.g. they would enjoy watching a video of their work, making rude comments and laughing at others, but they would fall silent when asked to reflect upon their work. They also had trouble critically evaluating themselves, laughing or reacting aggressively when asked for suggestions for improvement.

During course meetings we discussed alternate strategies and tracked individual student behaviour and performance. One of the important issues was reinforcing students' self-confidence, but this was difficult as students needed lots of encouragement to embark on new projects and then refused to analyse their behaviour and actions or performance. Eric Berne's[54] "I'm OK – You're OK" principle, an undertaking to establish and reinforce the position that recognises the value and worth of every person (Berne: 2004) was re-introduced to the classes in order to try and boost student's self-esteem and value.

Berne's Book **Games People Play** discusses and analyses amongst other things Ego States. The lecturers on the Foundation GNVQ in PA went to great lengths to ensure that communication took place on an adult to adult level, because patronising speaking and childlike treatment would only further alienate these students as well as confirm their feelings of low self-esteem.

Our best efforts to try to boost their low self-esteem seemed to go to waste, because the majority of the students did not prioritise a good education. The reality was that some of them were earning more money than we do, by illegally selling drugs and stolen goods and functioned under the misapprehension that gangsterism is a good way of life. Since most of the students grew up with

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[54] See **Appendix F**

gangsterism and drugs, their value system is different and money is more important to them than basic skills.

4.6 Preliminary Observational Conclusion

I followed all the educational principles and rules while setting up and running the Foundation GNVQ in PA and consulted regularly with the rest of my team, as well as with more experienced lecturers. I experimented with different techniques suggested by educational experts such as Petty and Kolb and I acted upon student feedback through out the course. Nevertheless, it was a struggle to run and teach the course, not only because of difficult criteria, but mostly due to student behaviour and attitude.

The students were willing on a one to one basis, the groups however, were extremely difficult to teach. They were disinterested and unable to cope with the pressures of a learning environment. Not one student was willing to commit him or herself to the course or to take responsibility for their own learning. The standard response to questions about poor attendance was: "Nobody else was going". It was hard to involve them in any tasks and even harder to sustain their involvement. Just as you think you had a winning formula, something would happen and you would find yourself right back where you started, searching for a commonality between the students and yourself and for a starting point which captures their interest.

One of the theorists that is included in Teaching Qualifications is Maslow[55] and his Hierarchy of Needs[56]. Teachers are encouraged to design their course round this pyramid and also use it when preparing classes. Maslow's Hierarchy[57] of

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[55] Maslow seems like a truly inappropriate source to draw from, but I wanted to stay true to what is taught in Teaching Qualifications. Maslow is to be drawn from for programme creation as well as lesson planning.
[56] See Figure 3.
[57] Please refer to **Appendix J** for a teacher's guide to Maslow's Hierarchy.

basic needs contains five stages and although we can not do anything for the first level, we can help with the other levels in college.

According to the hierarchy, your lower level needs need to be satisfied in order to attain the higher level's needs[58]. Physical needs at home are outside our control, but we tried to provide and satisfy these needs in an environment we can control, namely the college environment. We implemented this by protecting students from danger and threat by removing certain students who tried to intimidate and threaten their way through the course. We did group exercises and team building as well as trying to boost the students' self value and esteem. We encouraged students to be productive and experimentive and recognised their achievements, but despite all of this, students did not reach self- actualisation.

All the education experts and all education principles work on the basis that the students want to learn and I am sure that we would have achieved wonderful results using these methods if we had willing students. What educators seem to forget at times, is that the reason for Level 1 courses usually is failure in a school environment, due to lack of commitment and the right attitude. The students enrolled on this course were not interested in furthering their education or learning skills in the performing arts. They were not interested in *learning* at all, despite our best efforts to interest and involve them.

In order for learning to take place, three criteria have to be satisfied:

- There has to be a change in attitude

- There has to be a change in knowledge

- There has to be a change in behaviour

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[58] See *Figure 3.*

The students on the Foundation GNVQ in PA were unsuccessful on all these counts. No matter what the results, i.e. whether they pass the course or not, I can not in all honesty say that they have learned anything. They might have been informed about options, but they have not been *educated.*

Chapter 5: Programme 1: Educational Outcome

5.1 Examination and Outcome

This section on the Examination of the GNVQ in PA is two fold. Firstly there is the Externally Assessed Unit 1 and Unit 4 examinations, and secondly there are the internally assessed, externally verified Units 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8. Externally Assessed implies that we do not assess any of the work. The students write an examination that is send of to the Edexcel Examiners. Internally Assessed, externally verified implies that we mark all of the student work and then send a sample to Edexcel who moderates our grades. They can shift the group's grades up or down based on their evaluation of your marking.

Unit 1: Opportunities in the Performing Arts consists of a written exam worth 50% of the grade and a booklet that makes up the other half of the grade. The booklet is completed in class before the exam takes place and students take it with them into the room. The questions asked on the question paper are based on the questions answered in the booklet. The exam is thus an open-book examination that requires interpreting questions and transferring information.

During the delivery of Unit 1, students study a local venue in relation to its use, facilities, publicity etc. The local venue studied by the students on the GNVQ in PA was the main theatre at West Thames College. This is a very busy, well-managed venue which caters for the needs of the local community, the demands of the Performing Arts courses as well as coping with the needs of West Thames College. Students had regular access to it, not only to study the working thereof, but also to watch shows.

Although Edexcel advises lecturers to hand out the booklets at least six weeks prior to the examination date, we only received our booklet three weeks before

the students sat the test. Up to that point, we held mock exams using the students' worksheets as reference. The worksheet contained gathered information of the local venue, based on the criteria of Unit 1. I organised extra classes with learning support to prepare for the exam, but no students turned up to these, despite the persistence of the learning support lecturer and myself.

Once the booklets arrived, the students had to transfer the information from their worksheets onto the booklets. The students found this very hard to do, a worrying fact since that is what will be required of them in the test. The Learning Support lecturer and I, spent the remaining three time-tabled sessions not only helping students identify required information, but also holding sessions on how to read and answer questions. Not even this alarming problem could shake the students into attending the extra exam classes.

On the morning of the examination, 40% of the students turned up half an hour late and special permission had to be granted in order for them to enter the examination room and complete the test. Two students arrived on time, but without their booklets, so they had to complete these outside of the examination room, before they could enter and write the exam. These two students were admitted with the late students.

Unit 4: Working on a team Event also consists of a written exam worth 50% of the grade and a booklet that makes up the other half of the grade. The booklet is again completed in class before the exam takes place and students take it with them into the room. The questions asked on the question paper are based on the question answered in the booklet. The exam is thus an open-book examination that requires the student to interpret questions and transfer information.

During the delivering of the unit, students were granted two opportunities to organise and run an event. They failed on both accounts. We thus faced the

problem that our students had the theoretical knowledge of organising an event, but that they lacked that practical experience of running an event.

In order to try and compensate, I took them to a performance to observe the running of the productions. This proved a wasted exercise as they either fell asleep or were disruptive enough to be removed.

In awaiting the booklet, the students completed worksheets and I concentrated on the failed screening event, as this was the event, which enthused the students most at the start. The booklets arrived on time, but we were faced with the same problem as we experienced with the completion of the Unit 1 booklets. The students were unable to identify the correct information to transfer. By a stroke of luck, the booklets (and thus the test) only dealt with the organising of an event and working as part of a team. These were topics that the students carried some knowledge of, even if it was theoretical.

The learning support lecturer and I once again gave students mock exams to prepare them for the test. We also spent time on how to read and answer questions.

Since the exam for Unit 4 took place three weeks after the exam for Unit 1, I hoped that the students would know what to expect and how to prepare. However, nine students turned up without writing materials, two students were forty minutes late and had to get special permission to enter the examination room and sit the exam. M13 did not turn up at all.

When the results came, only one student, M11 passed the test for Unit 1 and only two students, M11 and M3 passed the test for Unit 4. This was shocking, since their booklets contributed half of their mark. They needed 60% to pass the test.

Although these are shocking results, it has to be said that this is an extremely ineffective way of testing Level 1 students. These students not only lack the basic skills to effectively sit an exam, but they did not achieve in their GCSE's. GCSE's grades are based on examination grades. They have thus already demonstrated that they are not suited to the taking of formal tests as final assessment.

The rest of the units were internally assessed and externally verified. We thus marked and graded them and had to send six samples of student work for each unit to the moderator. These six samples had to contain two passes, two merits and two distinctions. If students failed to achieve two distinctions, two further merits have to be send off.

Unit 2, 3 and 6 was a combination of Drama, Music and Dance work. We sent filmed workshops sessions and filmed completed projects together with student evaluations to the moderator. We only had two merits to send in each Unit. The moderator, however, marked all students down a grade because the student evaluations for Unit 2 and Unit 6 were not substantial enough. This meant that we only had four passes over the two units. The students were marked down a grade for Unit 3, because of a lack of written planning and rehearsal support. The written work and student evaluations did not support the grades according to the moderator and he only awarded two passes for the unit.

The problems experienced with delivering Unit 8: Reviewing Performance and Entertainment has been discussed extensively elsewhere in this work, so it would suffice to state that it was a struggle to gather enough evidence for passes. I dedicated the last four tutorials to support the lecturer delivering this unit and organised extra learning support during both sessions. These extra measures were not too successful, as the students did not make use of them. The requirements were three written reviews, but despite learning about review writing in sessions through out the year, the students handed in final efforts consisting of

basic statements like: "I did not like "**Blithe Spirit"** because it was long[59]" or "I like Ice-T because it is cool". Only one student passed this Unit.

The end-result was that some students passed some of the units, but no student passed all of the units. This was a shocking result even to the lecturing team, who expected bad results, but not this dire. In order to achieve the qualification, all units have to be passed. The result caused uproar and great upset from students, parents and the executive board of the college, but the results, in all honesty, reflected the students' commitment, dedication and level of work.

It was a pity that the end result was as bad, as it was devastating to all of the lecturers who put in a great deal of effort through-out the course, but it was not unexpected. As course leader, I was responsible for the outcome. The bad results did not only mean that the college lost one third of government funding for the students, but the bad results also negatively influence potential new recruits. I was adamant through-out that the blame could not be attributed to one factor, but that it was a combination of four main factors:

- **The course was unsuitable for the students**. Not only were the Units hard to deliver and offered little support for lecturers, but two units were assessed through examinations, even though the students results prove that they are not suited to this assessment method. We could not foresee any of these problems, as the course was not run before at West Thames, nor did any of the lecturers or managers have previous experience of Level 1 courses.

- **The enrolment procedure is ineffective**. Because more than one examination bodies offers GCSE's there is no way of assessing the students' basic skills by looking at the grades. An Initial Assessment test is required for every student. Only lecturers who know the course

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[59] *Long* in this instance is student speak for boring.

and can assess the students accordingly should enrol students. The lecturer would preferably be the course leader, as intimate knowledge of the course would lead to better assessment of student potential, as well as correctly informing students about the course.

- **Class Numbers.** Twelve students is too big a number for a Level 1 group. The students need a lot of individual attention and support and it is impossible to do this satisfactorily with such a high number. Most of the Level 1 students have some sort of behavioural problem and big groups only make this worse. Eight is small enough for the lecturer to facilitate efficiently and big enough for the students to develop life skills.

- **Student attitude.** The students did not want to accept responsibility for their own learning despite the best efforts of the team. We did not leave a stone unturned in searching for a way to change their attitude, but nothing worked. The students did not have the correct attitude to learning and we could not alter that.

My reasons were accepted in part by the members of the executive team. They agreed that the course was unsuitable and that the enrolment procedure needed an overhaul, but they refused to see reason on the class numbers as well as on student attitude. The members of the team described this as shifting blame and were of the opinion that failure to achieve could not be attributed to students.

I am confident that the team did everything in our power to help and support the students to achieve. You can lead a student up to a point, but then it is the student's responsibility to take it further. You can encourage that change, but you can not make it happen.

5.2 Basic Skills[60]

One of the main aims of the Foundation GNVQ in PA was to increase the level of basic skills of the students in order for them to either progress to the next level or to be able to go into skilled employment. Increased basic skills also lead to increased self-confidence which in turn leads to a feeling of increased self-worth that results in self-enrichment.

The basic skills were delivered in two ways. Firstly the students attended the Communications and AON sessions and secondly sessions like Reviews and Drama had basic skills incorporated in the assignments. Lecturers experienced problems with delivering Communications and AON sessions as the students would show resistance to sitting down, co-operating and doing written work as well as display challenging behaviour which constantly questioned authority. Students' difficult behaviour and attitude in these sessions are easily understandable. Because of the lack of basic skills the students suffered from a lack of confidence and were scared that others would laugh at them if they make a mistake.

Lecturers employed different tactics, one to one sessions, teambuilding and confidence boosting, but the basic skills sessions were marked by non-responsive students who either showed apathy or ran amok. The most remarkable factor was that the students claimed not to understand why they need to improve their basic skills, even as they were struggling to read a script or do music notation they were resisting tuition in literacy and numeracy. One lecturer described the attitude as *a lack of desire to better him or herself.*

Perhaps this "lack of desired" attitude can be explain as well. Earlier on in this work, I referred to most of these reasons, so I will just shortly list and explain them again.

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[60] Refer to **Appendix K** for an explanation of Basic Skills

- *Lack of future options*: Most of the Foundation GNVQ students do not realise that they can progress from the Level 1 course to a university degree. They also do not understand how a good education can aid their future options. This has a lot to do with environment and an aberrant set of social values.

- *Environment*: Many the students on this course grew up on an estate well known for its gangs and drug dealers. The parents of these students are almost all on the dole. The example they are set is one of not needing education to be a success or to get by. Success to them is dependent on their set of social values, which differs from most students on higher level courses.

- *Aberrant set of Social Values*: Social success and standing to these particular students means money, flashy jewellery and flashy cars. What society regards as a good job has no meaning in their reference framework. These students are members of gangs, which defines what they are and thus also defines their social status. Most of these gangs are involved in drug rings and/or theft which are a highly profitable business.

- *Money*: As explained earlier, some of the students' income from illegal activities is considerably higher than mine, so the age old adage of a good education will get you a well-paying job has no effect on them.

In order to pass the City and Guilds Level 1 Numeracy and Literacy Qualification that the lecturers of the communication and AON classes work towards, the students need to master a series of basic techniques.

In communication, they had to compile a portfolio of work, which included worksheets on basic literacy skills like punctuation and capitalisation to reviews and essays on their favourite celebrity. They also had to do a presentation of some of their written projects. Not one of the students on the Foundation GNVQ in PA managed to compile a selection of even the most basic requirements for the portfolios. The only work submitted to lecturers was work done in class, e.g. worksheets or comprehension tests. None of the projects given as homework were completed.

The lecturers did their utmost to encourage the students to complete the work, but when the deadline for student work submission loomed, they had to admit defeat. They reviewed all the work, but could not find any portfolio completed enough to submit for the Qualification.

AON requires students to master basic math techniques like addition, subtraction, simple multiplication and division. It also incorporates principles like temperature and time measurement, volumes and writing numbers in words. Worksheets and short tests continuously assessed students' learning.

The qualification requires students to sit a short written test in class after they have passed a series of worksheets on all the topics. Not one of the students committed themselves enough to even complete the worksheets, with the results that no students were entered to sit the test. Consequently, no one passed.

Incorporated Basic Skills in classes like Reviews was also a struggle to facilitate. Students showed a hardened resistance to even the faintest suggestion of written work. Opportunities in the Performing Arts required students to fill in a worksheet to keep a record of what they have done and later ask them to transfer the information to a booklet for the exam. Students only recorded the bare minimum on the worksheets. During drama sessions, they resisted the reading of scripts and it was hard to get them to write evaluations of their work.

At the end of the year, it was clear from the City and Guilds Level 1 Numeracy and Literacy tests fiasco that the target of improving students' basic skills level was going to be hard, if not impossible. I still hoped on a slight improvement and sent all the students away for a final Initial Assessment test. The results were dreadful. Most of the students test at exactly the same level without showing any improvement. About 20% of the students tested at a lower level than when they joined the course.

As far as improving basic skills were concerned, the course was a failure. No student could progress to a Level 2 course and their basic skills did not improve, they stagnated or worsened.

This was a bitter pill to swallow. We set up all the basic skills classes in accordance to government guidelines, as well as with educational principles and techniques. The communications and AON classes were badly attended and disliked. A different course of action would have to be followed if we were going to succeed in this target.

5.3 Life Skills

Another important aim of the Foundation GNVQ in PA was to improve and teach life skills to the students enrolled on the course. The absence of life skills would result in an unavailing course, as it would have no impact on student progress or improving their way of life. It was important to me that students would either be able to progress to a higher course or find suitable employment after the completion of the course.

Various meanings and implications can be derived from the term life skills, but for my purposed I will classify it using the following six skills:

- *Basic Skills* (Obtaining the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to be able to carry out skilled labour, so that students can become self-sufficient.)

- *Problem Solving*

- *Creativity* (Creating and suggesting new ideas as well as recognising the potential of ideas put forwards by others. Developing own and others' ideas.)

- *Responsibility* (Responsibility for self and own actions. Responsibility for own learning.)

- *Compromise*

- *Social Skills* (Being able to relate to people of all walks of life and respect their differences.)

- *Communication Skills* (Being able to get a point across without resolving to violence. Obtain active listening skills.)

Unlike basic and performance-based skills, life skills cannot be measured or assessed through assignments and tests, but constant observation of behaviour in and outside class will give an indication whether a student has mastered a certain skill. A combination of the results of basic and performance-based skills will throw light on life skills such as responsibility and creativity.

- *Basic Skills***:** The first life skill, basic skills, is easily measured as basic skills form part of the course. As discussed in the previous chapter 5.2 Basic Skills, students failed to achieve even the most basic requirements.

- *Problem Solving*: If you look at the results of Unit 4: Working on a Team Event it is evidently clear that the students did not acquire this skill. The unit required basic problem solving abilities such as who's responsible for what; what to do when something goes wrong; the best way to organise an event; how to keep every one working happily and when to start planning and/or organising. The event did not come off the ground because of poor problem solving and organisational skills. Students also failed to practise this skill during the year in class.

  There were a number of occasions when a simple solution like e.g. moving a table to face the board or working with a different partner, would have solved a problem like not being able to see on the board or not being able to work. The students however did not see it this way and it was left up to lecturers to instruct them even in basic matters such as these. Students resorted to complaining or fighting when a problem arose and not to discussion or the suggesting of alternative solutions. I do not think that any student gained or practised this skill during the course.

- *Group Work:* I base the assessment of this skill on behaviour in class. Some students were obvious team players and went along with the majority vote. A big part of their compliance was that they were afraid of being ridiculed when suggesting new ideas.

  Most of the students were not able to work in a group, even if the group only consisted of two members. If they did not get their own way, or if the group did not use their ideas, they would refuse to co-operate and do their best to stop the rest of the group working. They would not tolerate any discussion about other's ideas; they would try to force their own ideas on the rest of the group.

This skill thus has mixed results, with the majority of the students failing to achieve. Some students succeeded in working as part of a team, while most of the students did not. Being able to work in a group is very important, no matter what job you have. The course thus failed to teach most students this employable skill.

- *Creativity:* The minority group that worked well as part of a group used this enforced predicament to improve and heighten their creativity. They developed and exercised the ability to recognise the dramatic potential of others' ideas, but also to develop these ideas to their full potential. They were sometimes too scared to suggest their own ideas, but found ways to work elements of their own ideas into the idea worked on. They made the best of their situation and developed an important skill to any one planning to work in Performing Arts.

  The majority of the group came up with ideas, but could not develop them any further. Their ideas were also not very original and tended to fall repeatedly in the same category, e.g. gangsterism, drugs, etc. These students were unable to realise the dramatic potential of ideas suggested by others, as they did not listen. They were also too busy distracting themselves to pay any attention to the developmental process.

  This skill also had mixed results, with the majority of the students, again failing to achieve. The non-achievers on this skill were also the learners who did not gain group work skills.

- *Responsibility:* Responsibility for own learning. Students failed to do this even in its most simplistic form. Students never carried pens or paper and were constantly unprepared for lessons. They did not do home work and had poor attendance and punctuality.

Responsibility for self and own actions. Not one of the students would ever own up to what they have done and thus never took the responsibility for their own actions. E.g. After a fight not one of the guilty parties would concede that violence is not a solution or would be prepared to look for alternative solutions should such an incident arise again in the future. They would lay the blame for the fight at the other student's door and would not accept any responsibility for their actions. They had difficulty understanding the repercussions of their actions, as they did not do anything wrong in their own eyes.

Students tended to lay all the blame on other students, but never on themselves. It has to be said that a small group of students understood cause and effect better and took a little bit more responsibility for their own actions, but they would still accuse others for most of the blame. The facilitating of this life skill was thus unsuccessful.

- *Compromise*: The group that achieved group work and creativity skills also acquired the skill to compromise. They learned to compromise their ideas and suggestions, because this was the only way in order to have some creative input.

The rest of the group did not learn to compromise. They tried to force their own way without discussion. They not only directed this attitude towards learning and the rest of the group, but it was also the attitude they adopted for their lives.

This again, was a mixed result, with the balance swung in favour on non-achieving. I assessed this skill based on behaviour and attitude in and outside of class.

- *Social Skills*: This skill involves being able to talk and relate to people of all walks of life and respect their differences. It is clear that most of the students did not know how to behave as part of a group, with prejudice and racism being a constant melting-pot, waiting to explode. Instead of respecting one another's differences, they highlighted these differences in racist and offensive ways.

  Students also had trouble relating to students of different social spheres, often ostracising or ridiculing such a student. Students lacked respect for others, but demanded it for themselves, it was thus not surprising that most students did not master a basic interview technique, not understanding why it is important to wear the correct clothes, use Standard English instead of gangster slang, etc.

  I assessed this skill based on behaviour in and outside of class, as well as on comments made by other lecturers. The majority of the students did not improve on their social skills.

- *Communication Skills*: I assess this skill based on in and outside of class behaviour, as well as comments from other lecturers and members of staff.

  Students did not learn to listen, digest and answer. For the most part, students had one-sided conversations with themselves, as they would dominate every conversation, talking incessantly without allowing the opposite party time to talk or acknowledging them by listening. They also did not learn to express themselves in different and alternative ways. We were encouraging students to listen, compromise and explore alternative solutions. The students, however, continued in the same pattern as when they first joined the course. If someone disagrees with them or if the student disagrees with something someone is saying, they would start a fight or a shouting match.

The facilitating of this skill was thus unsuccessful.

In conclusion, the teaching of life skills was on the Foundation GNVQ in PA was not successful. The students did not gain skills that would help them progress onto the next level and they did not gain skills that would make them more desirable for employment.

5.4 Destination Data

At the start of the new academic year I managed to contact fifteen of the original twenty-two enrolled students to question them about their current activities and future plans. West Thames College expects all tutors to record the progression of their students for college statistics and to determine how many students progress to the next level within the college. This is also important information for course leaders, as the destination data provides you with an alternative means to measure to the success of the course. If not one of the students progress to a higher level, basic skills teaching was unsuccessful. The same applies to life skills, if all working students are employed as unskilled labourers, or if they find it impossible to find and hold down a job, it was unsuccessful. Course leaders also measure the success of the life and basic skills facilitating according to these statistics. The following table best displays the given information.
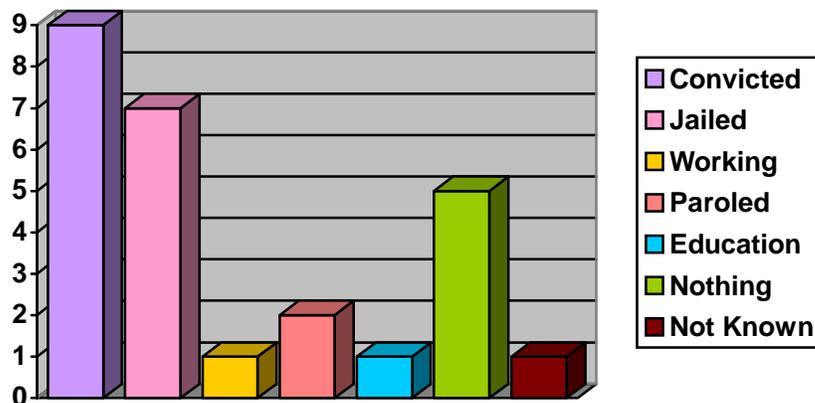
Figure 4: Destination Data 2002/3

M1, originally charged for two offences of Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), was standing trial for the first GBH case, when the victim passed away and the charge was changed to manslaughter. He was found guilty and sentenced, but as he was still a minor, he got a heavily reduced sentence.

I received a reference request for M2 from a well-known Sixth Form College where M2 was applying to do A-Levels. (South African Equivalent of Standard 9 and 10) This was a ridiculous application, as the student in question did not even pass a level 1 vocational course and was applying to do a Level 3 academic course. After a telephone call from the particular Sixth Form College, I established the fact that his father, again, withheld information about his learning difficulties and behavioural problems. He also made false claims about M2's qualifications. I was not able to make contact with M2 after the ill-fated attempt to enrol for A-Levels, so I do not know where M2 turned to after being denied access to the A-Level course. I never again got a reference request, but another student told me he was considering doing an apprenticeship.

M3 came to see me during enrolment and asked to have another chance at completing the Level 1 course. He passed the Initial Assessment Test and I enrolled him after he agreed to a three-week probation period. This meant that he had to attend all his classes on time and complete all of his work on time. Failure to comply would result in his expulsion from the course.

M3 brought M4 along the next day, after he convinced him to give education another go. M4 also wrote and passed the test and was enrolled on the same terms as M3. M4 did not attend the first two weeks of the new course and promptly dropped out in the third week. He is currently working in Fulham Hospital, setting up conference rooms and doing general odd jobs. He did not get the administration job he originally applied for, as he did not have the necessary basic skills.

The mothers of M6 and M7 informed me that both are doing a two-year stint in a correctional facility for possession and dealing of Class A drugs. M9 was convicted on a robbery and assault charge and received a two-year sentence. M10 was convicted with M6 and M7 but received a lighter sentence, only being convicted on possession charges. All these students are serving their sentences in the same correctional facility.

M11 was not planning to do anything; he said that he just wanted to "chill out". M13 was also just sitting around at home and not planning to apply for a job or another course.

M12 was standing trial on possession and dealing of a Class C drug on school premises. I do not know the outcome of his trial. M16 was charged with the dealing of a Class A drug, the outcome of his trial also unknown.

F1 tried to enrol on a level 1 Leisure and Tourism course, but was denied due to a combination based on reports of her behaviour the previous two years and the fact that she did not pass the Initial Assessment Test.

F2 tried to re-enrol on the new Performing Arts course. I did not re-enrol her, stating her racism and bad behaviour as causes. She did not accept this and started shouting in the enrolment hall, proof that she did not mature enough to be on the course. She also tried to enrol on the Level 1 Leisure and Tourism course, but was denied outright based on her behaviour in the enrolment Hall. F2 was also on probation for a minor assault charge.

F3 was on probation for a drug-related charge but did not want to divulge any more information. She is not working or continuing her studies.

The Destination Data concerning these students was shocking. The two girls who were not accepted at West Thames did not apply to any other educational institution and are currently doing nothing. It is obvious that most of these students do not need to work to get money. Whether they receive money from their parents or whether they make money from illegal operations is open to discussion. This is a sad state of affairs as I was hoping that completing the course would allow them to change the ways they see the world and that they would adopt a different value system, a value system that not only reinforces self-belief and achievement, but also a desire to gain a qualification in order to apply for a job, instead of falling back on crime or going on the dole. I was hoping the course would change the students sufficiently so that they would seek to positively change their circumstances and lives.

The course thus failed to teach the students any basic or life skills and failed to allow them to progress to a higher course. In all instances the course was a failure.

Chapter 6: A New Direction

At the end of the 2002/3 academic year it was clear that the Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts was a failure, as the course failed to achieve any of the goals set at the start there of. The course had been set up using well-known and sound educational theories and ideals, but failed to involve the students or improve their basic and life skills.

One of the biggest problems with the set-up of the course based on educational theories is that all of the theories and models are based on the assumption that the students *want* to learn as well as know *how* to learn. The truth is that many students in Further Education have little or no basic skills, bad educational habits and experiences and little or no desire for improving their educational background. It is an environment where students do not value education or the purpose of education and they have a different value system and a totally different lifestyle from those who try to facilitate their learning.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle was developed for students who want to learn and know how to learn. He based it on students who are interested in their studies and want to further themselves in education. It is a good model for learning under these circumstances, but it is of no use in an environment where students have no interest in Education.

Similarly, Petty also works from the point of view that all students want to learn and have the necessary skills to do so successfully. Unfortunately Petty did not aim his much acclaimed book at teaching at Levels 1 and 2. He also does not advise new teachers on how to handle difficult and disinterested students.

Maslow's hierarchy is principally designed for those who strive for self-actualisation and creativity and works on the humanistic principle that all people are inherently good and want to reach their creative potential. This model proved

once again to be of no use as material things were more important to these students than personal development. I have also always found it strange that educational teacher programs favour business orientated Maslow over educational orientated figures such as Heathcote and Freire.

It is clear that the above principles would work well in a traditional educational establishment where the students do not have a background of 'failure', where they do not have the personal or behavioural problems one encountered on the course, where education is important to become something and where their value system is not based on gang-related respect and wealth.

It is thus evident that a new direction is needed. If I want the course to succeed I have to learn from the mistakes made in the 2003/4 year and try different tactics and theories. I have decided not to design a course based on educational principles again, as it does not aid developing student interest or growth. The principles and ideas that I decided to base the new course on came from an area in which I am much more knowledgeable, i.e. theatre and performance.

Theatre, or performance, asks some kind of involvement of the audience. In a traditional theatre show, the audience is asked to watch and listen, and experience a catharsis of some sort. Some modern shows ask the audience to watch, listen, and think about what they see and hear and leave it up to them to act upon it later. Others demand participation from their audience, they do not only want passive spectators who watch and listen, but active participants who get involved and dictate the action on stage.

I know of a number of people who went through education because they were forced to attend school, college or university. All of these people hated these institutions and as a result have not achieved well. Theatre goers, on the other hand, are seldom forced and even those who are dragged along to performances are mostly entranced by the spectacle (Exceptionally bad shows are excluded). It

is also rare that a spectacle or show of some kind does not affect or touch you in some way. Whether it stimulates creativity, cultivates better understanding, induces serious thinking or allows a participant to laugh and forget about the world for the duration of the show, no-one leaves unaffected.

This is the ideal that I want for the classroom. An experience which allows students to want to participate and which affects their lives for the better. If you look at a traditional classroom set-up with a teacher in front and the students sitting down listening and watching, it reminds me of traditional western theatre: An actor on stage confirming the expectations and beliefs of the audience in front of him. The actor and the teacher are both placed on a podium and use this stage to aurally and visually communicate with their seated audience. The communication is one-sided for the most part, with a wall between performer and spectator. The wall is only breeched on occasion, but the set-up causes an unequal division of power. The performer has the freedom to move, dictates the rules and has the power of speech, while the spectators are seated without the freedom to move around at will, no freedom of speech and are at the considerable disadvantage of having to look up at the performer. All of the power is thus with the performer.

What is needed is to modernise the roles, so that spectators can become involved in the action and have a more equal input with the teacher, who takes on a more facilitating, directorial and steering role. This shift of power would ask involvement and commitment from the spectator as they would be responsible for at least half of all the work done.

Chapter 7: Teaching as Theatre and Using Theatre to Teach

7.1 Teaching as Theatre: Schechner, Goffman, Butler, Phelan, Stern and Henderson

This Chapter will make reference to the work done by theatre and anthropology theorists. As mentioned in my problem statement, the purpose of this thesis is not to prove that teaching is theatre and/or performance[61], as the above mentioned theorists have already done so. It is evident from theories and research put forward by them, that performance occurs in everything we do everyday. An example would be the ritual of waking up in the morning, the ritual of meeting a new person, the difference in the way we behave towards a college student and towards our manager or boss. The theorists I refer to are the ones I will be using during the design and run of the course.

Performance is not only something that takes place in a theatre; performance can happen any place, any time, with or without drama training. Schechner (2002: 1 – 21) defines performance as the relation and interaction between the audience and performer and how these interactions have different meanings to different people, how it changes over time, how it changes in different contexts, etc. Performance is thus not only something that happens on the stage of a proscenium arch theatre, but rather something that can be found in every human action.

Performance implies putting on a show, or doing something to a certain standard, but according to Schechner it also implies being, doing, showing doing and explaining showing doing. He concludes by saying (2002: 23) that because of the wide range of meaning of the word performance, all human development can be studied as performance.

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[61] Programme 2 is created on the assumption that teaching is theatre and will be investigating whether theatre techniques will be successful in creating an active teaching and learning environment.

Schechner (2002: 24) uses the following example to demonstrate performance[62]:

Whilst feeding her baby, a mother lifts up the spoon to her own mouth to demonstrate to the baby, before lifting it to his/her mouth. The performance takes place in the action of lifting the spoon when the mother is the performer and the baby the spectator. The baby becomes the performer when s/he tries to imitate the action. The performance thus takes place 'in between' the action of showing and the baby's reaction. (Schechner: 2002)

The education is not in the performance as much as in the imitation and action, one of the principle ways of learning. I will refer to Boal's theories on imitation in education and theatre in a later chapter.

Goffman (1959: 15 - 16) uses performance to metaphorically define every day life. He uses theatre as a model to research social life and defines performance as all the actions of an individual during a specific social gathering which influence the actions or behaviour of any of the other individuals present, in any way. Every one who contributes to the performance, through e.g. conversation or interaction, is to be regarded as the audience.

By analysing students' social interaction the explanation for their behaviour should become apparent. Since their behaviour links with their social role or part, a change in this status might induce the formation of different roles and consequently different actions.

A student who has been told through out his/her school career that s/he would amount to nothing and will never succeed, might be encouraged to change this behaviour if s/he is accepted and achieves something early on in the course. This

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[62] Performance only occurs during actions, interactions and relationships. The performance does not take place in these things, but in between them.

change in behaviour would be brought about by a change in social status, as well as by a desire to repeat the success. Such a student will then acquire a new role.

Judith Butler, (1988: 427 – 228) whose work concentrated on developing a theory of gender performance, argues that gender is rehearsed actions which are played out on a pre-set and pre-determined stage. The gender roles exist continuously, but it is up to the individual's performances to make it real. Society's sustained performance created gender reality.

If a facilitator is able to understand a student's gender role, whether that role fits in with society's pre-determined rules or not, it would be easier to communicate with a student, as well as to understand their needs. Together with observing their social performances, a facilitator would be able to understand what roles they are portraying and the reasons for this.

Carol Simpson Stern and Bruce Henderson (1993:3) argue that performance includes all human activities and that it varies from verbal action in every day life, to staged performances and performance art. Peggy Phelan states (1998:3) in *Another History, Another Future of Performance Studies* an introduction to *The Ends of Performance* that *"performance [is] a universal expression of human signification, akin to language."* Performance can thus be used to communicate with students in a code with which they are familiar and understand.

7.2   Using Theatre to Teach: Dorothy Heathcote

Dorothy Heathcote[63] is an important figure in British Educational sectors and is well known for her teaching philosophy of using drama and theatre as a teaching tool. Her own life experiences and learning methods were used to shape a challenging and creative teaching philosophy. She ran the Diploma in Drama in

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[63] Refer to **Appendix L** for a description of Heathcote's teaching methods.

Education Course at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, while continuing teaching school children. Her successes with mentally disadvantaged and special needs students were phenomenal[64].

The core of Heathcote's teaching methodology is that drama and theatre can be used as a learning tool across the curriculum, also believing that formal education should be freed from the one size fits all principle[65]. Her system is based on the most basic theatrical principles, which for her is man's ability to identify with others[66], thus being able to put oneself in someone else's shoes. She employed a task-based methodology and made use of repetition, improvisation and role-play to teach across the curriculum.

In a concept adopted from Paulo Freire she included the *dialectical movement of action and reflection* (Heston 2003:15) in her methodology. This dialectical movement implies that every action leads to reflection which in turn causes action which leads to reflection and so forth. The key to generate this relationship is purposeful activity and it aims to strengthen the bond between idea and action. She described the improvisations used as a *game of elaboration within a strict frame work of intent*. (Heston 2003: 47)

It is important to Heathcote that teachers do not rely on what they know, but on what they are. (Heston 2003: 35) It is of equal importance that children are accepted for what they are and not what they know and that teachers affirm their person.

Teachers have to know themselves in order to know how much power they have and how much they are prepared to relinquish to the class as the teacher image

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[64] Heathcote uses non-verbal and kinesthetic methods to teach.
[65] Please see chapter on Paulo Freire whose educational principles also oppose accepted formal educational practices.
[66] Heathcote echoes the work of theatre theorists like Richard Schechner when she states that this identification (or role-playing) is a constant in our lives, whether we are at work, school or home. (**Teaching through drama** : 1971)

is powerful in the classroom and will dictate the means of communication. (Heston 2003: 40)

One of the things that I like most about Heathcote's methodology is that it is task-based and that no activity takes place without purpose. This allows students to generate interest and understanding from learning material. I also agree with the fact that formal education does not suit everybody. Students have different learning styles and all of the learning styles should be accommodated during a lesson. Her affirmation of the person is an important principle that I will incorporate in the new course. Level 1 students need a constant affirmation of who they are and what they can achieve. Another important principle is that teachers should accept students for what they are and not for what they know. This acceptance of students will benefit the student-teacher relationship tremendously.

Students are also at the core of the decision making process and her child-based pedagogy favours the needs of the individual child, as well as the needs of the group above accepted teaching practise. This is another factor that I would like to include in my new course, a course based on servicing the needs of the particular students. She also highlights the importance of using space to create interactive learning centres, another innovative practise, that in a Level 1 course would allow students to learn in their preferred method.

Heathcote's ideas about relinquishing power, correlate with my own ideal of a power surrender by teachers to students in order to create an interactive learning environment. The dialectical movement of action and reflection is another idea that I will try and incorporate. Reflection upon actions is one of the skills the GNVQ Foundation in PA students could not master.

The reason for the success of Heathcote's system is the Stanislavskian *magical what if-ness* of it. Students are encouraged to use their imagination to create

make believe worlds, characters and situations, play taking responsible roles and are encouraged to be creative and active. A teaching method that thus requires active participation from all involved as well as creativity and imagination. This is the very reason why it is an excellent method to use when teaching young children and students with mental disadvantages. However, Level 1 students do not often have the ability to put themselves in someone else's shoes and creative expression is not familiar to them. That's why I'll be using some of Heathcote's ideas instead of adopting her complete pedagogy.

7.3   Theatre Practitioners

Aristotle argues that imitation and recreation is a pleasurable way to learn which everyone enjoys[67] and that we learn this way since childhood.[68]   I find this concept thought-provoking as the Level 1 students view learning as a lot of things, but they definitely do not associate it with fun. Using theatre to change their view on education and developing theatrical activities that will interest them to participate will form a large part of the course design.

Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty* introduces the idea of using the whole theatre as a performing space, i.e. the auditorium and the stage. Artaud (1970: 64 - 67) suggests the abolishment of the fourth wall, which is a step closer to the two-way communication required.   This correlates with Heathcote's rearranging of a classroom space to suit the needs of a specific lesson and the use of the whole space. It also ties in with my desire to remove the invisible barrier between teacher and student in order for the students to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process, in other words I want for them to become part of the performance.

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[67] Fragments of "**On Poets**" translated by Richard Janko (1987)
[68] "**Poetics**" translated by Richard Janko (1987)

An interesting point Artaud makes (1970: 65) is that the audience needs to be shocked in order to awake from their coma-like existence. He proposed to do this by violating all five senses, using new imagery and fewer words. During the run of the new course, I plan on implementing the use of new imagery and by allowing a power-shift; fewer words will be used as students will actively participate in their learning.

Brecht used the *verfremdungseffekt* in order to separate the character from the role and to raise the audience's awareness that they are watching a show. His actors would quote their characters instead of conversing with them. This relationship enabled them to interrogate, intervene and change form through out the performance. The actors do not hide behind the qualities of the role and are able to 'watch' the action unfold in some way.

I would like to build some element of *verfremdung* into the new course, where by students are able to distance themselves at times from their behaviour and work to reflect and analyse it. This analysis of own behaviour and work ties in with Goffman and Butler's theories on social interaction and gender roles as performance. In order for students to take responsibility for their own actions and learning, they need to be able to analyse their own behaviour and work critically, not only be analysed by lecturers aiming for optimum communication.

7.4   Theatre as Revolution: Augusto Boal

Augusto Boal was born in 1931 in Brazil and is most famous for creating the concept of *Theatre of the Oppressed*[69]. Boal sees theatre as a weapon and believes that change is imminent in the audience.

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[69] **The Theatre of the Oppressed**, **Games for Actors and Non-Actors, The Rainbow of Desire**.

His aim is to break oppression and bring about social reform. He believes to speak is to take power and that when an individual becomes a speaker, that individual is empowered. He also believes that the audience must become the characters; they have to take the place of the character and be free to invade the scene and the power of the actor.

By taking possession of the stage, the spectator becomes the spect-actor, a doer who takes responsible action. The stage represents fiction, but the spect-actor is real. The stage thus becomes real and by changing from spectator to spect-actor, the stage and the individual is transformed. (Boal 2000: xx - xxi)

To act is to do and also to perform. The spectator acts and transforms into the spect-actor, who not only performs, but also does. This transitional act breaks the oppression.

For Boal (2002: 11 – 15) the definition of theatre is many-fold. A theatre is a place designed to house shows, but it also implies all of the paraphernalia that surrounds a theatre production, i.e. the performance elements. It is also the setting for major events and great social occasions which he refers to as rites. Most importantly for Boal, theatre is also present in our every day lives. This theatre is the capacity of human beings to observe themselves in action, the art of looking at ourselves. He also describes theatre as the most essential human language, a language that can be used by anyone with or without artistic talent. He continues by stating that the function of the artist is to teach the public how to be creative and creators.

Boal's aim of breaking the oppression and bringing about social reform echoes my own aspirations for the students of the new course. Improving their basic and life skills will allow them to progress to a higher educational level or enter skilled employment and either of the afore-mentioned options will bring about social reform in their lives. Taking power by speaking is another idea that ties in with my

planned course. My aim is to encourage students to take active part in classes, become Boal's spect-actors, and voice their opinions, ideas and suggestions. Their transformation in spect-actors will signal that they take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. The idea of theatre enabling humans to observe themselves in action closely correlates with Brecht's *verfremdung* and my desire for students to be able to review situations, their own behaviour and their own work. Boal (2002: 11 – 15) echoes Phelan (1998: 3) when he describes theatre as the most essential human language and I hope to use this accessibility of theatre to communicate with the students and to entice them to participate on the course.

Boal (2000: 120 - 155) uses seven main forms of theatre, which I will list and discuss below. These seven theatre forms make up the Theatre of the Oppressed.

- *Simultaneous dramaturgy:* Actors act out a scene proposed by local residents. The actors stop at a certain point and ask the audience for solutions. The solutions are then all acted out. The audience 'write' at the same time the actors act.

- *Image Theatre*: Spectators are asked to express views on themes of common interest using the bodies of the other group members to visually sculpt their viewpoint. These images are then discussed among the group.

- *Forum Theatre*: Actors act out a scene based on local incidents, grievances, etc. Audience members are asked to intervene in the action. The performance is usually based on a story told by the local residents. Audience members intervene in the action by taking up the role of an actor or by directing. The solutions to the problems are discussed and acted.

Forum Theatre makes use of something called the Joker[70] to help facilitate and organise.

- *Newspaper Theatre*: Actors transform newspaper articles and other non-dramatic material into dramatic format. This enables local residents to understand the news and be informed, enabling them to take part in the political discussions.

- *Invisible Theatre*: Performance of a scene in a venue other than a theatre before people who are not spectators. People (bystanders) who witness the scene become involved in the action and transformed into spect-actors. The truth is never revealed to the spect-actors, because it would undermine the success of the scene and patronise them.

- *Myth Theatre*: Performances aimed at dispelling myths and legends and discovering the truth behind them.

- *Analytical Theatre:* Actors act out a story told by audience members. After the performance every character is broken down to his/her social role and analysed.

The Theatre of the Oppressed, especially Forum Theatre, seems to be much more appropriate for a classroom situation than any of the other theatre forms. Forum theatre uses familiars and gives power to the spect-actor. This implies that the student (spect-actor) is interested and asked to take supervised control. The lecturer takes the position of the joker (facilitating). It is the appropriate role-reversal where at least half of the power is with the students.

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[70] The Joker acts as the official overseer of the performance. He converses with the audience, halts the performance and facilitates the incorporation of spect-actors into the performance.

7.5   Teaching as Revolution: Paulo Freire

No study regarding teaching methodology can be complete without a reference to the work of Paulo Freire. In the forward to **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** (Freire: 1996) Richard Shaull comments on the work done by Freire in the following way:

> …*those who, in learning to read and write, come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves, often take the initiative in acting to transform the society that has denied them this opportunity of participation. (1996: 11)*

To me this is the core of Freire's work, he believes that education is the key to revolution and revolution is the key to change.

The pedagogy of the oppressed works in two stages. Firstly the world of oppression has to be identified, recognised and exposed. Secondly, the oppressed persons have to commit themselves to changing this world. Freire states (1996: 36) that the process of transformation changes the pedagogy from one of the oppressed to one of every one in the process of continuous liberation. The realisation will dawn that oppression is not a locked cell which offers no hope of escape, but is a *limiting situation* (Freire 1996: 31) which can be changed through transforming action.

It is hard to facilitate the understanding of Level 1 students' of their own oppression, since their oppression is not physical but due to the lack of basic skills which interfere with the quality of their lives. Skilled employment is thus out of the question and students with a low skill level can quite often not perform simple everyday tasks like reading an index to look for information, using a dictionary or more complex tasks like reading a lease-agreement or job contract. They can thus not take full responsibility for their lives and are marginalised.

Freire (1996: 27) believes that the person best qualified to teach the oppressed, are the oppressed themselves, as they best understand their circumstances and abilities. Should any other person wish to facilitate the oppressed, this person has to be willing to change quite dramatically, for the oppressor, can never teach the oppressed.

One of the biggest problems suffered by the oppressed is self-depreciation. They put themselves down to confirm the general view[71]. However, this view is one of the first attitude changes during the educational process[72]. Freire (1989: 63) argues in **Learning to Question** that student-teachers rediscover power before they rediscover the struggle. They discover what power is, where it is located and who takes ownership of it. Affirmation of the student is thus of the utmost importance to Freire's pedagogy and in **Learning to Question** he states that an educator must be able to affirm themselves without disaffirming their students (1989: 34).

One of the causes for a Level 1 students' behaviour is quite often that they have failed and have been affirmed as failures so many times that they start to believe it and put themselves down. Affirmation of the student and allowing them to rediscover their own power while allowing their self-confidence to grow will be some of the most important elements in the new pedagogy that we will adopt for the new course.

In order to change the attitudes of the oppressed, allow them to break free of oppression as well as receive an education, Freire has developed a system which is in direct opposition to the generally accepted method of formal education. According the Freire, (1996: 52) a traditional teacher-student relationship consists

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[71] General View: All farm laborers are illiterate, good-for-nothing drunks. Self-depreciated View: I am not going to attend a literacy class; I won't be able to achieve anything in any case.
[72] Achievement, even in a small way, increases self-worth and self-confidence and allows the student to realise that he can rise above the accepted view.

of the teacher as narrative subject and the student as listening object. Freire (1996: 53) calls this banking education[73], education as an act of depositing. Banking also diminishes creative power, for the student is not actively involved in his/her education.

Freire (1996: 52) is adamant that the oppressed are not marginalised, in other words people who live on the outer edges of society, but that they are living inside society caged inside structures made for them by others. In order to educate the oppressed, they should not be integrated into the existing structure, but the structure should be changed to accommodate them. Freire (1989:122) states that a new pedagogy implies the changing and recreation of a pedagogy, a pedagogy which is constantly changing. Freire (1996: 60) thus rejects banking education in favour of problem posing education, where education takes place through acts of recognition versus a transfer of information.

Such an active learning environment can only be achieved if the teachers become students and the students become teachers as well. Freire (1996: 61) proposes a teacher-student and a student-teacher principle in which the teacher-student is always cognitive and never narrative. Student-teachers are increasingly confronted and posed with problems relating to their lives and themselves. Freire (1996: 62) is adamant that students will then feel challenged and will respond. During this process students start to critically analyse the world they live in and find that it is not stagnant, but changeable. The process of critical analysis *affirms men and woman as beings in the process of becoming* (Freire 1996: 65). The point of development of movement and motivation thus lies in the student-teachers themselves.

Even though I agree with Freire's statement about a non-narrative teaching environment, I disagree with his assertion that learners presented with problems

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[73] Narratives supplied by the teacher, which are often alien to the students, lead to mechanical memorisation by the students. Students are thus reduced to receptive vessels which have to be filled by the teacher.

familiar to them will engage in an educational programme. During the run of the Foundation GNVQ in PA course, students have been presented with familiar situations, problems relating to their lives and themes that were of their choosing and they still refused to participate in class or take an active interest in the learning environment. With students on a Level 1 course, teachers are faced with breaking bad habits, trying to transform mindset, prejudice, pre-determined ideas, bad self-esteem, environment and attitudes.

In a **Pedagogy of Hope** (1996) Freire (1996: 76) states that a progressive educator shows his/her students viewpoints other than their own, viewpoints that are only obtainable through critical thinking. Student-teachers are thus required to go to the prospective teacher-students and get to know their situation objectively. An awareness of this situation is only possible through dialogue[74]. Progressive development of course material must concern the people and their problems.

I do not totally agree that *all* course material must concern the people and their problems. In direct opposition to Freire's groups, the students in a Further Education College do not come from the same ethnic, religious, social or economic background. Part of the personal and educational development of these students is obtained through the introduction of new cultures, innovative ideas and alternative viewpoints. A broadening of their horizon will make them more tolerant towards others and help them understand the world.

Courses must be centred round themes that are investigated[75], which would result in teacher and students being co-investigators. Student-teachers discover the decoding of a situation and reflect upon these actions. This allows for the development of critical thinking which leads understanding.

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[74] In **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** it is stressed that critical thinking is necessary for dialogue to take place, that dialogue is essential for communication and that when communication is lacking, no true education can take place.

[75] In **Learning to Question** Freire states that teaching and learning is about asking questions (1989: 35) and investigation-type education forces students and teachers to question the material and each other.

In order to prepare a thematic investigation, educators should firstly identify a theme for investigation, before the theme is broken down in smaller pieces, Secondly they have to decide on the code(s) in which it will be presented to the student-teachers, e.g. film, pictures, photos.

I agree with Freire's view that the educational system has to be changed to accommodate the students, not that the students should change to accommodate the system, and that is what I will try to create with the new course. I agree with the fact that those who want to teach Level 1 have to be prepared to get to know the students and their circumstances, have to be prepared to enter dialogues with them and have to be prepared to identify themes, break it down in smaller chunks, code the information and prepare an interactive lesson. They thus have to change their pedagogy from narrative to dialogue, the teachers themselves thus have to change before they can facilitate the students' transformation.

7.6   Drama, Performance and Theatre

The difference between drama, performance and theatre and the way it will be used is an important issue that needs some clarification. Performance will refer to the performance of a teacher or a student in a classroom situation, in other words all actions. Theatre refers to the theatre techniques and genres employed, e.g. improvisation or Forum Theatre. Drama refers to the written word.

7.7   In Conclusion

I was able to identify at least one theory or idea of each of the theorists and practitioners that I will be able to apply to the new course. These theories will form the basis for the new structure.

Schechner demonstrates that teaching is a performance. The performance lies in between the showing of something and reaction there upon. This showing and reaction can be from either side, i.e. either the facilitator or the student showing and either the facilitator or the student reacting. He highlights the important of imitation, not only in performance, but also in learning.

His theories on restored behaviour and ritual behaviour shed interesting light on the way certain students behave. It also allows the changing of these behaviours if its context or function is change.

Goffman's theories on social behaviour that can be read as performance shed a lot of light on the way we interact, not only student to student, but also student to lecturer. The fact that he argues that social role determines some social actions, allows the opportunity to try and change a student's social role and function in order to encourage different actions. It is also important to keep in mind that good actors can convince themselves of their roles. The question arises, will students be able to change their roles and acknowledge that their reality is fake?

Butler's gender performance ties in with Goffman's social behaviour and sheds light on how students perceive themselves and others. Stern, Henderson and Phelan identify performance as a language, a statement echoed by Artaud, Brecht and Boal. I hope that performance would allow us to reach our students. The language of the performance would be created by them, so hopefully there would be a two sided conversation.

Aristotle enforces the importance of mimesis (recreation) as an enjoyable learning process. He also highlights the political and ritual aspect of all arts. Artaud's proposal of the abolishment of the fourth wall is vital if the programme is to succeed. Although it would be nice to use some of his techniques to shock the students out of their passive existence into freethinking individuals, it would not be practical, but we do need something to awaken their hearts and nerves.

Brecht tries for emotion through understanding and I would like to incorporate some of his role and social analysis on the course. This might bring about the social change needed to captivate the students. I also favour his idea of *verfremdung* to allow students to distance themselves from every day life and behaviour and critically analyse their actions.

Heathcote's task-based and child-centred pedagogy together with her belief that teachers should affirm the individual and accept students for who they are and not what they know will provide a different learning experience to the students. A teaching methodology where no activity takes place without purpose, yet consists of mostly practical work is one custom-made for students who prefer to do instead of sit and listen. Her use of creative space and relinquishing power will allow students to take a much more active role in their own learning and thus accept a lot more responsibility for it.

Freire states that once the oppressed recognise their oppression and the potential for change, they will commit themselves to transformation, take responsibility for that transformation, break the oppression and transform their world. He also states that the motivation to do this lies inside the students. If I can get the Level 1 students to realise their oppression as well as boost their self-confidence enough to ensure their transformation, hopefully they will take an active interest in the learning process. I would also like to incorporate his ideas of the student-teacher and teacher-student in the pedagogy of the new course, together with the importance of accepting, understanding and affirming the student.

Lastly, Boal's Forum Theatre would be the main base for the new course. His idea of turning a spectator into a spect-actor is what we need. This type of theatre hands the power over to the students, which not only makes them feel important

and valued, but it also empowers them. The facilitator will take up the position of the joker.

Using all of the above I hope to bring about the change in behaviour, attitude and knowledge that is required for leaning to take place and that was so clearly lacking this year. The challenge would be to find a course structure that can be moulded to the theatrical base.

Chapter 8: Programme 2 – A Theatrical Spectacle

8.1 Aims and Philosophy

The aims of the new course would be basically the same as the aims for the Foundation General National Vocational Qualification in Performing Arts. There were still a vast number of students at the start of the 2003/4 academic year who had failed to achieve in their GCSE[76]'s. The number of students with English as a second or foreign language also increases every year, as more asylum seekers and European Union members flock to live in England.

These second language English speakers' basic skills are quite often not up to the required standard to join Level 3 courses, even though they might hold relevant qualifications in their own country. The reason for this, is that all education and learning takes place in English and a student that did not master English to the desired level will consequently not be able to pass a course which requires a high level of basic skills, regardless of their previous educational or vocational experience. (Basic Skills are tested in English.)

The main aim of the Level 1 course would thus still be to cater for this enormous sector and to provide them with the necessary basic and life skills to succeed in higher courses or vocational areas. The second aim links with the first in the sense that the course aims to allow and encourage students to progress to a Level 2 course. The third aim also links to the first aim, because this aim is concerned with the improvement of the basic and life skills of the students in order to improve their quality of life. Fourthly, the programme aims to boost the enrolment figures for Performing Arts in order to receive more funding and to optimise room utilisation[77].

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[76] General Certificate in Standard Education (Nearest South African Equivalent: Standard Eight/Grade Ten).
[77] Funding and Optimising Room Utilisation are discussed in **Chapter 1.1 Orientation.**

I also decided to include a fifth aim for the new programme, based on the problems and results of the previous course. The new aim is concerned with engaging the students in the course and interesting them in wanting to learn. The course will also aim to motivate students to want to be successful and to take responsibility for their own learning.

In order to achieve all five aims, a different philosophy and course structure are needed, as both proved to be disastrous in the 2002/2003 academic year. I searched for a new specification that would allow the students to be more in control of their own learning, as well as a specification that would allow them to develop a specialist area, which in turn will give them a feeling of self-worth and achievement. Edexcel proposed a new Level 1 frame work in June 2003 which was developed based on research done in Further Education Colleges with Level 1 students. This new specification had a different grading structure than the old framework and also included units on personal development. I decided to try out this new course, as it was more student centred[78] than any of the other specifications on offer. I also liked the idea that specification included personal development (life skills), as this was something that lecturers had to develop alongside their vocational classes with the old specification.

 I also decided to use a new philosophy to design the new course. This new philosophy is based on theatrical conventions instead of educational theories, implying that the classroom is viewed as a theatre, with the lecturer as actor and the students as spectators. However this theatre would not adhere to the conventions of a more traditional theatre, but rather try to change and challenge boundaries set up by a more conventional approach. The aim is to shift the power from the lecturer (actor) to the student (spectator) so that the lecturer takes on a more facilitating role and the student becomes more of a spect-actor. With this shift I hope to interest and involve the students in the work and in the learning

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[78] A more student centred course would allow me to use a theatre form that is more audience based, like Boal's Forum Theatre.

process and motivate them to take responsibility for their own learning as well as manage their own learning process.

The ultimate goal of the new Level 1 programme would be to teach and allow students to learn, i.e. to bring about a change in behaviour, attitude and knowledge, something in which the previous course failed.

8.2 The Prerequisites of the Course

The time-table for the 2003/4 academic year changed dramatically[79]. The new time-table was not divided into 1½ hour slots, but into 15 minute segments which allows for open time-tabling, which in theory, would allow Programme Managers (PM) to time-table any way they want. In practise, this meant that there was no structured framework as with the old time-table, but rather that each PM had to work out a time-table structure for each programme area and each course.

Although PM's were promised that they have the freedom to use the time-table as they see fit, they still had to adhere to certain rules. One of these[80] was that each course has to have a lunch break of at least 2 hours once a week. This 2 hour lunch break is especially problematic for Level 1 students, as they struggle to cope with a break this long and previous experience has taught us that it is an uphill battle to get them to remain on the college premises.

The other rule was that classes had to start at 9 o'clock, despite vehement opposition from lecturers and adult students[81]. If lessons start at 9:15, lecturers and students tend to be on time, but a 9:00 start seems to be impossible.

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[79] Please refer to **Appendix N** for Course Specification and Structure

[80] This decision was very unpopular and the cause fervent debates, as students tend to leave the college premises and go home or get into trouble during the break, causing them to miss classes.

[81] Most London schools start between 8:45 and 9:00 and those with young children in their care, can not be on time for start of a 9 o'clock lesson if they have to do the school run. The roads are also clogged up during this time, and it takes longer to travel during the school rush hour than outside of it.

Management did not relent on these two presets and course leaders and PM's were forced to work around it.

As I was going to run a music and a drama group again, I asked that they were time-tabled for a three week day. This means that they only attend college on three days a week, which helps to eliminate big gaps in which they have to sit around and wait for the next lesson to start. It also aids with the running of the course, as all of the sessions and days are in an easily definable block. The only drawback would be the long lunch sessions. The other important benefit of a three day timetable is that it allows students two days in which they can catch up with homework, attend additional learning difficulty classes or get a part-time job. This also allows two extra days in which rehearsals can take place before a show.

I decided against formal basic skills classes as the students made it clear that they resented these during the 2002/3 academic year. Since the students did not attend these classes, their basic skills did not improve. I decided to embed[82] basic skills into the new course. Embedded basic skills works better, as they are delivered in vocational classes and not in formal lessons. It also allows students apply the skills and thus see why it is important to be able to master these skills. The lack of basic skills classes also provided me with more time for vocational classes, which in turn allowed the course to be delivered mainly by Performing Art lecturers[83]. This made course management a bit easier.

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[82] Embedded Basic Skills: Basic Skills for Entry 1, 2 and 3 and Level 1 and 2 are contained in a publication called the Core Curriculum. Each basic skill that the government believes a student should be able to do at a certain level is contained and referenced within this. During Formal Basic Skills classes, lecturers work through the Core Curriculum systematically, delivering formal AON and Literacy classes. With the embedding of Basic Skills, all of the skills are delivered in the vocational classes by the vocational lecturers, the skills are thus applied vocationally and students either do not realise they are doing it or they are able to see the merits and function there of.
[83] Please refer to **Appendix M** for the recording of embedded basic skills.

I was looking to develop and design a new course that would not require students to write exams[84] in order to pass, but a course that would fit together well and which would allow students to develop at their own pace and helps them to achieve a qualification. This course still had to adhere to college and national guidelines and I had to keep this in mind whilst designing the course.

8.3 The Course Structure

The brand new Level 1 course that I have decided to use is called the Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts (IDPA) and the governing body is once again Edexcel. The new programme has never been piloted and I applied to be one of the first colleges to test the new course. Permission was granted and I started to design the course based on the specifications.

The specifications[85] of the IDPA consist of three compulsory, two personal development and three vocational units. Centres are allowed to choose the personal development and vocational units that best suit their candidates. The IDPA does not require students to write any exams, but two of the compulsory units are internally assessed and externally verified. These units do not have to be completed on pre-designed forms or in a preset format, but leaves the decision of format and form up to the lecturer, arguing that lecturers know their students and their needs better. The students are allowed to complete the units when the lecturer feels that they are ready and they are also allowed more than one attempt. The lecturer marks the completed units and sends them away for verification. The tasks are not set by Edexcel, but by the lecturer who is allowed to present them in various different ways to suit the students.

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[84] Assessment will take the form of continuous assessment where students are assessed on their work throughout the course. These assessments can be for example observations, recorded practical work, performance based courses and written assignments.
[85] See **Appendix N** for the full course specifications.

Once during the course of the academic year, the external verifier will pay a visit to a centre and will look at two units. The units do not have to be completed, but can consists of work in progress. S/he then checks to see that paper work is completed, grading is consistent and that centres are delivering and testing the correct work. If an external verifier (EV) is not satisfied with the work presented by a centre, the centre would have three weeks in which to address the problem areas. The work will then be resampled. The externally verified units work on the same principle. If the EV is not satisfied, work is returned within two weeks and a student would get an additional three weeks to complete. The work is then resubmitted.

The compulsory units and the two personal development units are concerned with the wider performing arts, while the optional units, allows students to develop specific and individual skills. Life skills and basic skills delivery are aided by the personal development units.

8.4 Course Design

I had to keep the following points in mind while designing the new course: West Thames College's Tutorial policy; Embedded Basic Skills; Support Entitlement; Course Hours; Time Tabling; Session Design which allows a shift in power to allow students to manage their own learning. All of these elements are as important as finding the appropriate course, lecturers and philosophy. Paying close attention to these elements will ensure the smooth running of the course as well as guarantee acquiescence at college and national level.

I decided to keep the session slots 1½ hours long. The reason is that 1 hour is too short for vocational sessions and 2 hours too long, students start losing interest. 1½ hour sessions allow for practical work to be completed and it also allows for one to one attention in more theoretical classes.

No argument or proof swayed management's decision that all lessons should start at 9 O'clock, so I used this to my advantage. This allowed me to deliver the whole course in three days.

I decided against formal basic skills classes, as the students voted with their feet in the 2002/3 academic year, they did not attend. Embedding basic skills in the vocational subjects allows vocational lecturers to teach the application of basic skills in the Performing Arts sector. The application of basic skills in vocational areas, allows the students to see the why they need these skills and how they can be applied, the embedded basic skills also allows students to develop at their own pace and at their own level. Students choose the intensity of a specific skill that they develop and although this will not solve the problem of Spiky Basic Skills Profiles[86], it will encourage and allow students to develop and achieve according to their abilities and not to the average of the group's progress.

I decided on the following vocational sessions to make up the course. Two Drama/Music slots, one Movement for Actors/Musicians slot, one Singing slot and one Introduction to Media slot. Students would also have one Art session per week, as well as one each of Personal Effectiveness and Money and the Music Business/Performing Arts. The session would be a session called Working in the Performing Arts. There is a rehearsal slot per week and one Tutorial slot per week according to West Thames College guidelines[87].

The two groups would have the same classes on the same day. This will make control and management of the course and the students a lot easier. It will also

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[86] Spiky Basic Skills Profiles: Research conducted by the English Government in 2002/3 concluded that all people have spiky basic skills profiles, i.e. all individuals are more advanced in some skills than others, e.g. excellent skills in English and Information Technology, but less advanced skills in Mathematics. Level 1 students have spiky profiles, in the sense that they have not acquired the basic skills expected at the end of their GCSE's. The Level 1 course does not aim to level out the basic skills profiles of the students, but to develop the different skills so that they are at least up to Level 1 standard.

[87] Please refer to **Appendix N** for the reasoning, explanation and allocation of the units.

do away with the problem of students being jealous or complaining about the other group's time-table and classes.

I feel that the design of the new course is more structured and therefore easier to control. I also kept in mind the main problems I experienced during the run of the previous course. I included only one dance class, no basic skills classes, eliminations of gaps and trying to close big gaps, plus the addition of an extra lecturer to tutor the other group.

The Timetable[88] is set up in such a way that the Tutorial and WIPA[89] sessions are at the same time. This allows for classes to be run together, which makes it easier for guest speakers and group trips.

With the Foundation GNVQ in PA I was not able to choose the team teaching on it, but one of my conditions for designing the IDPA was that I could pick and choose my own team. I picked people that I knew well and that I could trust to facilitate the students in the way that the course demanded. All of these people have practical theatre experience and I felt that this was vital, not only because they would be able to relate the course work to industry, but also because I knew that they are open for change and able to accommodate the new teaching philosophy I had adopted for the course.

All the team members were part of the Performing Arts department, which meant that I was able to exercise more control over the course and that it would be easier to keep up to date with student progress. I also knew that this team was dependable, as the fickle lecturers on the previous course had proved that unreliability causes students to drop out. It is also important that the students do

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[88] See **Appendix O**
[89] See **Appendix N**

not have too many lecturers, at Level 1 stability and structure is a big part of a successful course[90].

8.5 The Enrolment Process

The lack of organisation and guidelines during enrolment crippled the Foundation GNVQ in PA from the start. I was determined that this year would be different. I insisted that the enrolment for the IDPA had a total overhaul and I put measures[91] in place to ensure that we did not enrol unsuitable students again.

One of the measures I've put in place is to request that all prospective students do an Initial Assessment (IA) test. IA tests the basic skills of the students and gives the lecturer the information of the skills level of the student, e.g. Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 or Level 2. It also breaks down the literacy, written and numeracy skills. This is very helpful for the enrolling lecturer as you are able to determine whether a student would need extra support and whether or not a student would be able to pass the course, even though they might not be a 100% at the desired Level[92].

I also drew up Enrolment Forms[93] which I asked the prospective students to complete. These forms contained important information like phone numbers and next of kin, as well as learning difficulties and disabilities. Students thus went through a rigorous and controlled enrolment process.

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[90] Level 1 students need a structure and stability in order to succeed at college. A lack of structure and stability causes them to be unsuccessful and drop out. This lack is usually also the reason for them not being successful at school. If these students have developed the necessary life skills to deal with unpredictability and little or no boundaries, they would not be at this level.

[91] Only members of Performing Arts were allowed to interview students, but these interviews were only preliminary interviews. I insisted that I see all students for final interviews in order to give them the correct information about the course and also judge their suitability based on Initial Assessment (IA) tests and their interview.

[92] A student with a high Entry 3 Numeracy skill and a Level 1 Literacy and Written skill will come out over all as Entry 3. It is then obvious that the student would be able to pass at Level 1, with a little extra Numeracy support.

[93] Please refer to **Appendix P.**

Chapter 9: Programme 2 – Theatrical Reality

9.1 The Students

The change in enrolment procedures in the 2003/4 academic year ensured that all the enrolled students were well informed about the course and what would be expected of them. It also ensured that I and the other lecturers were knowledgeable about the basic skills level of all of the students and I was already able to work on extra support for students. This meant that I knew what to expect of the students and I was able to organise the course and classes accordingly.

Twenty-six students started the IDPA in September 2003, of which six were female and twenty male. Six of the students were white and twenty were of black or mixed decent.

F1[94] is a sixteen year old white British female with severe personal problems at home. Her mother is an alcoholic and they live on benefits. Her mother has a boyfriend who is often violent at home and F1 sometimes has to sleep at friends or at her grandmother's house. She was initially shy, but was motivated and very committed from the start. She has a slight reading difficulty, which is the result of poor literacy development, but she challenged herself to better her reading.

She excelled in all of the Performing Arts disciplines and took part in several professional productions during the course of the IDPA. As she improved in the disciplines her self-confidence grew and she was a different student at the end of the course. She sang solo's and played lead roles in productions. Her increased self-confidence allowed her natural talent to come to the fore.

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[94] The female members of the group will be categorized as follows: F – to indicate a student is female, together with a number to differentiate between the different individuals.

F2 is an eighteen year old black South African student who recently moved to England. She completed her South African Standard 9, but tested at Level 1 because English is her third language and Initial Assessment test skills in English. Still influenced by Apartheid experiences she was convinced that the white lecturers at the college would discriminate against her. After a week she was persuaded otherwise and blossomed, but she still needed a lot of encouragement to participate.

She was bullied by one of the male members of the class, but handled the situation to the best of her ability and came out the victor. She has pre-conceived ideas about most subjects, but became open to suggestions. Her talents only came to the light later on in the course, after she received praise for one the roles she portrayed. This positive reinforcement seemed to boost her self-confidence and gave her a sense of increased self-worth and accomplishment.

F3 is a sixteen year old black British female who is slightly aggressive and easily distracted. She is a highly skilled performer, but needed lots of encouragement to pursue her talents. She is easily led, but her behaviour changed for the better towards the end of the course when she became one of the leaders of the group.

F4 is a seventeen year old white British female who is highly disruptive and extremely aggressive. She has few social skills and consequently does not work well within a group. She has some personal problems at home, but a lot of these problems can be attributed to her aggressive attitude towards her mother. She is a large girl and some students find her size and aggressive attitude intimidating. She also suffers from learning difficulties, namely dyslexia and dysgraphia, but refused to go to additional classes or to receive individual attention in class.

F5 is a sixteen year old white British female with extremely bad attendance. Her poor attendance is due to a lack of commitment, but also severe personal problems. F5's parents are locked in a divorce and custody battle which turned

violent. She and her mother had to move around a lot in order to get away from her father, they are in protective custody and special measures have to be taken to ensure her safety. This unfortunate situation has been going on for years and influenced her schooling, as they have to move the moment her father finds their location.

Unfortunately, the amount of moving has made her apathetic to a learning environment and she is very reluctant to commit to anything. This developed into a habit of going to school or college, but not attending lessons. It is an understandable attitude, but one that is almost impossible to change and very detrimental to her education.

F6 is a seventeen year old British female of mixed decent. She is a bad attender and tends to hijack the classes she does attend. She is highly intelligent, but unfortunately also extremely skilled in fabricating excuses in order to get her out of tough situations, including accusing her mother of not paying her college fees (college is free for her) and saying that they moved house (she used this excuse five times in a four week period).

She craves attention and this attitude does not allow for her to work well within a team. The rest of the group resented her for only attending sporadically.

M1[95] is a seventeen year old British male of mixed decent who is highly intelligent but also highly apathetic and suffers from a total lack of commitment and dedication. He is an extremely bad attender who makes no attempt to join the group when present. His negative attitude influence the other students and he wants the maximum results with the minimum input. He has very poor basic skills and this can be attributed to a mixture of not attending school and not completing set work. He suffers from mild epilepsy which is controlled with medicinal drugs,

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[95] The male members of the group will be categorized as follows: M – to indicate a student is male, together with a number to differentiate between the different individuals.

but his doctor assured me that the drugs should not influence his performance in any way. He uses the excuse of 'not feeling well' when he does not attend, even though calls to his doctor and his mother prove him wrong.

He also displays an aggressive attitude and lacks social interaction skills. He complains easily, but refuses to do anything about it. His most common complaint is that he does not feel welcome and that he does not learn anything. This is a dubious claim seen in the light of his non-attendance and unfriendly attitude to the rest of the students. The pity is that he is a highly skilled performer, but cannot be counted on to attend rehearsals or even shows.

M2 is a seventeen year old British male of mixed decent who lives with his aunt and uncle. His father and mother died at a young age and they have adopted him. He has severe behavioural problems, which teamed with his bulky frame intimidates other students. His behaviour is highly disruptive and aggressive and he refused to cooperate in group events or to do written work.

He is severely dyslexic but although he agrees to additional classes, he never goes. Every time I addressed this issue he became defensive and swore at me. His basic skills are very poor and I only allowed him on the course because he promised to take additional classes. At times he is apathetic and refuses to cooperate and participate and at other times he is hyper-active and takes over the class. He is intelligent, but extremely hard to teach. He has a deceptive mask of compliance when spoken to by strangers, but changes dramatically when he is with peers or people he knows.

M3 is a sixteen year old black British male who is highly intelligent, but has some behavioural problems. He suffers from dyslexia, but works very hard to overcome this learning difficulty. At times he is hard to engage, but he is a gifted performer who is dedicated to the group. He has some commitment problems between productions and also suffers from some personal problems at home.

Both his father and older brother are in jail for murder and he has to look after his five younger siblings. His mother is a racist and encourages him to join a gang. He has had a brush with the police because of this one year previously, but his mother provided an alibi and he got off scot-free. This behaviour of his mother is problematic, because while we encourage responsibility his mother encourages the opposite.

M4 is a sixteen year old black British male who tested suitable for a Level 2 course, but requested to stay in the Level 1 group. He is very talented and extremely committed.

M5 is a sixteen year old black British student who has experience of dancing with the Riverside Studio Company. He is an extremely gifted performer in all of the Performing Arts disciplines, but is unable to commit himself to anything. His unreliability is only matched by his ability to perform. He has some behavioural problems and this is due to his personal circumstances. Because of his sexual orientation, his mother threw him out of her house and he lives in care. He is very confused and does not use his talents to his best advantage.

M6 is a white seventeen year old British student who was on the Foundation GNVQ in PA course the previous year and failed. He wanted to reregister, against his mother's wishes. He still had the same emotional problems as the previous year, but his behavioural problems have improved. Unlike the previous year he participated in classes and became quite popular with his off-beat sense of humour.

His mother moved to Wales full time and left him to fend for himself in London. He had to pay off the mortgage on her house in order to have a place to live. He consequently did two cleaning jobs on his off days and after college as she did not give him any pocket money. This was not the ideal solution, as he was tired

quite a lot and had to leave early on Thursdays in order to be on time for his job. He quit his job and got lodgers in to help cover his rent, but this did not work out either. At long last, his aunt took him in and he rented out the whole house.

Unlike the previous year he showed tremendous dedication and was determined to make a success of it second time around. He persevered and became a model student and one of the success stories of the group.

M7 is a twenty year old white British student who wanted to give education another go. He has some emotional problems.

M8 is a seventeen year old white British male who was also on the Foundation GNVQ in PA course the previous year. He tested at a lower level than the previous year and although I had my doubts, he convinced me that he has changed and is dedicated to succeed.

It was clear from the start that this was not the case. He thought that he was better than the other students and did not make himself popular with the rest of the group when he told them as much. He is cocky and arrogant and refused to participate in some of the group activities.

M9 is a seventeen year old Filipino student who is highly intelligent, but who struggles to commit. He has been in England for three years.

M10 is a seventeen year old black British student who is highly disruptive. He has some behavioural problems and craves attention. He also lacks commitment and drive.

M11 is a sixteen year old British male of mixed decent who is easily influenced by his peers. He is easily distracted and mildly disruptive.

M12 is a seventeen year old black British student who is highly disruptive and challenges authority at every given opportunity. He likes to push the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and is very aggressive. His behavioural problems stems from his learning difficulties (dyslexia and dyscalculia) and he is very hard to teach.

M13 is an eighteen year old black British male who attends sporadically. He is highly intelligent but lacks basic skills and commitment.

M14 is a nineteen year old British student of mixed decent who lacks basic skills due to bad attendance at school. He is still in the habit of not attending, but he works very hard when in class.

M15 is a sixteen year old Indian student who lacks commitment and drive. He has poor basic and life skills and suffers from dyslexia. His attendance is poor.

M16 is a seventeen year old black British male who is slightly disruptive, but highly intelligent and very talented. He is hard working when in class, but lacks the life skills to organise his time correctly. His basic skills are poor, but he is very articulate.

M17 is a well-spoken seventeen year old black British male who is slightly apathetic in class. He is a poor attender, but very intelligent.

M18 is a sixteen year old black British male who is highly disruptive and has severe behavioural problems. He constantly challenges authority and makes racial slurs at regular intervals. He has extremely poor basic skills and this is due to a combination of poor attendance and an aggressive attitude at school. He is not popular with the other students because of his behaviour and negativity.

M19 is a seventeen year old Indian student with English as a second language. He consequently has poor basic skills.

M20 is a sixteen year old British male with poor attendance and who also suffers from dyslexia.

Most of the students suffer from some sort of learning difficulty that gives rise to behavioural problems, usually aggression. The students are divided into two groups, a Music and a Drama group. The Drama group is made up of: F1, F2, F4, F5, F6, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7 and M8 and the Music group consists of: F3, M9, M10, M11,M12, M13, M14, M15, M16, M17, M18, M19 and M20. The following students, F3, M11 and M16 should have been in the Drama group, but peer pressure made them switch. They were not happy in the Music group and excelled in the other Performing Arts disciplines.M10 and M12; and F3 and M11 were great friends and it was hard to teach classes with these pairs, as they were disruptive when together.

9.2 The Lecturers

Measures were taken to ensure that the new philosophy was incorporated in teaching and that it will be a success.

We held various meetings before the start of the course to discuss how to implement the new teaching style. It was decided that students should be allowed to set their own goals and that these targets should be reviewed regularly. All decisions made will focus on the best interests of each student and that all students are accepted for who they are and not what they know. This implied a lot of work for lecturers since they would have to intimately get to know each student's background, basic skills profile, preferences, learning styles and interests. All of this is necessary to create an active learning environment which suits the needs of every student, not the majority. Lessons will thus have to be

carefully planned and preparation would have to be done thoroughly. Lecturers voted to share ideas, lesson plans, materials and resources to ease the load. All successful lesson plans and resources were also to be kept for the future.

Lecturers were also in favour of the discovery method; where students are encouraged to finding the solution to problems themselves via research or practical activities. Students will also be allowed to chose their own themes, ideas and plays and students will be required to gather the information used in projects and classes. They will further more be asked to draw up and stick to their own rehearsal schedules as well as decide upon a set of class and group rules that they will adhere to. The punishment for breaking these rules are also set by them.

Care will also be taken to make classes as practical and creative as possible. This was important in order to bring the "fun" element back into learning. Self-analysis and reflection were also to be incorporated into every lesson in a non-judgement and positive manner, focussing on what students' did right instead of what they did wrong.

A decision was made to empower the students gradually and not throw them in the deep end at the start of the year. The facilitators would demonstrate, allow the students to mimic and then allow them to experiment and take over. This way they would be guided to manage their own learning gradually. It was also decided that students should show their work as often as possible, so that they can receive peer and lecturer feedback. This will encourage peer marking and critical self-assessment. A final decision was made to allow students to do all of the work on their own shows, i.e. the technical side as well as the performing side. This will shift the power considerably.

Class rooms were to be "redesigned" so that they could be changed at a moment's notice. Traditional tables and chairs were shunned in favour of lecture room like chairs with a foldaway writing table attached.

These decisions were taken before the course started, but they and the practical implementations would only begin once the course starts.

9.3 The Problems

No change occurred in the disciplinary structure of West Thames College in the 2003/4 academic year, despite protests and complaints from staff. All of the problems lecturers experienced with the structure the previous year persisted and students were still ignorant of the consequences[96] the academic[97] disciplinaries can have on their academic future. The paper work surrounding this system was still cumbersome.

There were only three significant behavioural incidents in the 2003/4 academic year with IDPA students. M18, apart from regular abhorrent behaviour in class, starting making sexual suggestions and comments to four members of staff and group members. He was immediately taken to the head of Student Services with the necessary paperwork, but was not suspended or warned because the offence was deemed 'not so bad'. Lecturers were forced to facilitate him again and he felt that he won.

When complaints were brought in against him for persistent lateness, a refusal to cooperate and non-completion of work, lecturers were accused of 'targeting' the student. Once again no disciplinary procedures were taken against the student and lecturers were cautioned for 'favouritism'. I made a formal complaint against Student Services for coming to this ridiculous conclusion, but was overruled and warned to comply with college guidelines.

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[96] Serious Academic Disciplinaries can result in exclusion, expulsion or suspension.
[97] Academic Disciplinaries deals with issues such as work not completed, attendance and punctuality.

Lecturers were once again forced to facilitate this difficult student who not only disrupted classes, but also influenced other students with his negative attitude and apathy. This was worsened by the fact that he did not face any consequences for previous serious behavioural charges.

In January 2004 he called me a "bitch" and his tutor a "cracker"[98] in one day. These serious incidents were reported using the correct channels but Student Services deemed these offences as 'overreaction by staff'. This was the last straw and I made another formal complaint regarding the handling of the offences of this student. Once again I was told to abide by college judgement and once again lecturers were forced to accommodate the student in class.

It became crystal clear that, although we went through the correct channels to discipline this student, we would not achieve the desired result and victimised lecturers would be forced to facilitate M18. When M18 made another provocative racist comment towards a group member I decided to take matters into my own hands. I asked him to come and see me in my office where I had his tutor, the retention officer, the Curriculum Manager of Performing Arts and the Programme Manager of Creative Arts present. I confronted him with his long list of offences and asked him what his defence was. He had no defence and his behaviour was defiant, even though the whole management structure was present to talk to him. I made it clear that I do not want him in the course and gave him a choice, he would both comply with group rules and behave in a tolerant fashion or he would be faced with early completion and subsequent exclusion from the Creative Arts department of West Thames College.

This seemed to shake him up and he behaved in a different fashion over the cause of the next few months, he completed his work, attended all of his classes and behaved in an acceptable manner towards staff and his fellow group

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[98] 'Cracker' is a debauched term used by black persons for debasement of white persons. It is a serious racial slur meant to affront.

members. In May 2004 he made sexually abusive comments towards a member of his class and with the support of the CM and PM I applied for the early completion[99] of the student. Permission was granted and M18, in order to obtain the qualification, had to complete all of his work and hand in his student card, which meant he did not have access to college grounds.

M2 proved to be a trouble-maker. Apart from his general apathy and refusal to participate and do written work, he also displayed other severe behavioural problems like aggression, intimidation and bullying. His burly build teamed with his behaviour made him particularly intimidating to other students. I believe that most of this behaviour stems from the fact that he lost both his parents at a young age teamed with his severe learning difficulties. Unfortunately he does not want to do anything to change this. His learning difficulties are not disabilities, i.e. they can be rectified, but this will take some time and hard work. And time and hard work is not something M2 is prepared to give. The attitude of his aunt and uncle is also problematic, instead of encouraging him to change his aggressive attitude and work on his difficulties; they use it as an excuse. On every occasion when I spoke to them about his behaviour in class and towards other students, they said he could not help it since "he is dyslexic". This is a sad state of affairs, because it can be changed.

I organised additional sessions with a dyslexia specialist, but despite promising that he would attend, M2 never turned up. These sessions were organised on four separate occasions but he never attended. Because it is large college, the slots could not be kept forever, so after his second no show for the course, his place with the specialist was cancelled.

In class M2 would at times refuse any help and refuse to do any work and at other times he would demand help and focus all of the attention on himself. More

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[99] Early Completion implies that a student completes all of the necessary work to pass a course some time before the deadline or end of the course.

often than not he would be asked to leave a class because his disruptive behaviour kept other students from learning. His rude and abrasive manner only started up after the first month of the academic year.

His aggressiveness and intimidation led to bullying and for the first two months of the course he targeted F2 and other students. He was charged with bullying, but denied it and Student Services asked for concrete evidence, which in a bullying case is almost impossible to get. Since I was powerless to do anything else, I convened the whole course and asked the other students what was going on. M2 was pointed out as the culprit and it transpired that F2 was not the only student being bullied by him; she was the only one brave enough to speak out.

I decided to try *forum theatre* combined with *analytical theatre* in order to solve the problem created by M2's behaviour, since he was ostracised together with F2 and three other students who testified against his behaviour. I asked students to act out the "convention" (as they started calling it) that had taken place and asked them to suggest and act out different ways of bringing M2's bullying to the light. After a couple of suggestions were acted out, students decided that there was no better way to do it. I then suggested we started breaking down the roles of each character and try to find the reasoning behind their actions. It was important to me that, even though M2's behaviour was unacceptable, that the group do not see him as a horrible individual, but that they instead try to understand the reasons for his actions.

The group lead the discussions and also dealt out the punishment, M2 was allowed to attend classes for the next two weeks, but he was not allowed to participate in any way or hand in home-work. He thus had to catch up in his own time.

As all bullies are inherent cowards, it turn out that M2 himself was the target of bullying towards the end of the course, by the same students who he tormented

at the start of the course. Another round of *analytical theatre* followed and the misbehaving students received the same punishment that M2 did.

M2 was involved in hundreds of arguments and bust-ups with students and members of staff, but it was hard to get disciplinary action taken against him. He wears a deceptive compliant and friendly mask when dealing with strangers or trouble situations, but this mask disappears as soon as the situation is over, or the stranger leaves. The result of this was that his innocence was believed despite the evidence against him. The lack of disciplinary action added defiance to his already arrogant attitude and he was even harder to facilitate within a class.

He got into a fight on college grounds during the second week of college and he was suspended for a week. In week three he was involved in a brawl off college grounds, but in public. He was suspended for an additional three weeks, but I appealed this decision as the fight was not on college grounds and thus outside of college jurisdiction. My appeal as upheld and he was allowed back on college grounds after a week and a half.

He brought a dangerous weapon to college during June 2004 and was excluded from West Thames College, although he was allowed back to write his literacy exam, but he did not attend.

F4 was also a trouble maker and displayed a lot of the same behavioural problems of M2. She also has learning difficulties, but not as severe as M2. During the fifth week of term, she hit another student with a brick at a party off college grounds. She was suspended even though the incident was outside of college jurisdiction. I compromised with student services and she was allowed back on the condition that she saw the college councillor at least once a week. She did not come back despite the best efforts of myself and her mother, as she refused to see the college councillor. She was withdrawn from the course after two months.

F5 was withdrawn from the course after two months, not due to the fact that she missed lessons because of being in protective care, but because she did not attend classes when she came to college. She preferred to spent her time in college in the student common room and canteen and although I had a lot of sympathy for her, I had no choice but to withdraw her. I made her appointments with the college councillor to try and challenge her non-committed behaviour, but she did not show up for these meetings either.

F6 was an extremely bad attender, but was a bright student who worked relatively hard individually when in attendance. She blamed personal problems for her poor attendance, but unbeknownst to her, I was in constant contact with her mother. Her incessant lies about her home circumstances were a characteristic which she apparently displayed at her previous academic institution as well. I withdrew her after three months of extremely poor attendance.

M1 displayed signs of disturbing behavioural problems like aggression and intimidation and influenced groups negatively with his apathetic and negative attitude. He refused to participate and attended selectively and extremely poorly. I could not withdraw him from the course due to a lack of paper evidence.

M7 ran into trouble with the police after two months when he set a car alight after the police chased him through the streets of a West London suburb. All charges were dropped due to extenuating circumstances. Unfortunately he became fixated on F4 after she decided not to come back and he left after three months of pining after her. He was thus withdrawn.

M8 believed he was superior to all of the other students on the course and he had severe behaviour problems. He refused to cooperate and participate in sessions and made several racist comments about his class members. He influenced M6

in a negative way and he hardly attended. I withdrew him after one month due to poor attendance.

M12 had severe behavioural problems and was the subject of several disciplinaries, but despite numerous complaints he was not suspended or excluded.

M20 was suspended after a month due to a lack of attendance.

The students were not the only problems I experienced during the run of the course; I also experienced a substantial problem with the lecturer who facilitated Personal Effectiveness. She turned out to be highly unreliable and was not present for classes without warning or notice. Since I learned how this can destroy a group the hard way in the previous academic year, I asked her to leave after the third week of non-attendance and appointed a new part-time member of staff. This new lecturer is a well-known Performance Art artist as well as an accomplished actress. She is very reliable and very popular with the students.

Introduction to Media was not able to be facilitated by one lecturer and the music group was moved to have this lesson with the same lecturer that takes them for music classes.

I also had a problem with college funds. West Thames College receives a substantial amount from the government each year to fund students with financial problems. This fund is called the hardship fund and is open to all students. F1, who is an excellent attender, started to miss classes during January 2004 and admitted after probing that her mother was drinking away all of the benefit money and that she was unable to come to college due to a lack of funds. I took her to Student Services to apply for travelling money, but we were refused on the grounds that she had to apply for this fund in September 2003. This ridiculous state of affairs meant that I was in danger of loosing one of my best students. I

funded her travel to college for two months and helped her to find a part-time job to support her travelling money.

Another problem was the ignorance of M1 and M2 regarding IDPA shows. Both students fail to turn up to shows on two separate occasions. I was powerless to do anything about it, since Student Services deemed shows 'a matter of small importance'.

The problems experienced during the first year of the IDPA were a considerably lower than the problems experienced during the first year of the Foundation GNVQ in PA.

9.4 The Run of the Course

In accordance with West Thames College policy, the 2003/4 academic year for the IDPA started with an induction week during which students are introduced to the college, course and lecturers. They come to college on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and are allowed to stay at home on Thursday, except if they need to come in for additional tests. During these three days initial tutorials are held, team building exercises and drama games are played, students get to know each other and induction assignments are handed out. Students go on an official tour of the college and meet the principal. They are also introduced to the staff at the Resource Centre where information gathering and other important functions are demonstrated.

After the fiasco of the 2002/3 induction week, I was apprehensive at the start of the IDPA induction, but the students were interested in the course and worked well as a group. I also had the tutor of the music group with me, so the students got to know both of us at the same time. We were able to successfully complete the induction tutorials where vital information about the students is gathered. We also asked the students to do skills assessments and then asked them to list

want they wanted to improve on, learn and gain from the course. This information was used during session planning later on in the year.

The students were well-behaved during the official tour of the college and displayed a positive attitude towards team building and trust exercises. We handed out course handbooks and explained the mechanisms of the IDPA. I explained how the sessions would work and that the onus would be on the students to create and manage their own learning. Throughout the induction week, the students determined the progression of things. We held discussions, debates, rehearsals and shows. The group also drew up class and course rules to which they would have to adhere to. Punishment for breaking the rules was also discussed and recorded.

They threw themselves into the induction assignment with gusto, rehearsing on their own time and in class. The performances of the assignments were a roaring success and the students were able to critically evaluate their own performance and those of others. It was a thoroughly enjoyable process for both staff and students. On the Friday was the Fresher's Fair where new students get a free meal and participate in college activities.

After induction week, classes started immediately and although the attendance was much better than with the previous course, there were still some problem students who attended sporadically and selectively. Punctuality was also greatly improved, but there was still a lot of room for improvement.

Lecturers planned sessions according to the new philosophy of shifting power and empowering the students. The lecturers participated in all activities from the start, which put them on a level with the students. This was already a major departure point from when lecturers stood in front of the class talking all the time. During activities in which lecturers participated, more and more time was spent allowing students to take control. Students excelled in taking control for short

periods of time and this did wonders for their self-confidence and self-worth. During the different sessions lecturers made it clear that the sessions were a supportive environment where no opinion is right or wrong and where anybody can have a say and experiment with new things. The length of time during which students took control gradually lengthened and lecturers' role changed slowly from teacher-participant to overseer-facilitator. This meant that the students became more and more empowered as the year went on and the learning process became a mutual one.

The attitude change and power-shift started off with lecturers demonstrating and students mimicking which lead to experimentation. This gradual process allowed students to get use to the idea and to train them into taking control within mutually accepted and agreed upon boundaries. This made the students feel safe enough to try out and suggest new and innovative things. The sessions did not go from *oppression* to *freedom* in a single session, but rather over a period of months. Even though the students did not have a hundred percent control over the sessions from the start, they immediately became spect-actors as they took control of their own situation and participated.

Students created a show reel during the first trimester of the Introduction to Media course and followed this up with, TV Presenting footage and movie scripts. They produced a short film that was screened during Creative Arts[100] week. The students were responsible for the creation and production of the movies and show reels with the aid of the lecturer. Introduction to Media sessions were enjoyed by the lecturer *and* the students and an environment of mutual creativity was established, where students and lecturer were hungry to investigate new subject matter. The interesting thing about this part of the course was that the lecturer used the same Scheme of Work for the IDPA that she used for the

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[100] Creative Arts week is five days during which West Thames College showcases the best work of the Creative Arts students. The Media department screens movies produced by their students, Music builds a stage to give their student bands the opportunity to play open air concerts, Art and Design holds exhibitions and Performing Arts produces two plays, performed by the best groups of the year.

Foundation GNVQ in PA in 2002/3. 2003/4's classes were presented differently from the start, with the result that a different teaching environment existed, in addition to different students. With different students I imply that the attitude and behaviour of the IDPA students were light years away from that of the Foundation GNVQ in PA the previous year.

When the new lecturer took over the Personal Effectiveness class, she was at her wits' end as to what to do for this session that would interest the students and give them some industry experience. She came up with the idea of an event that the students would have to create, organise and run. I was not too excited about her idea, as this was tried during the 2002/3 academic year as part of their course and it failed miserably. I did not see how this event would be different, but still gave her all the necessary support and enthusiasm.

She started off her project by introducing the idea to the students, who took to it like a fish to water. They decided on holding an MC competition with prizes, live music and judges. Once the event type was finalised, the lecturer ran the sessions like professional team meetings to organise and discuss the event. The students participated in the meetings, took notes, drew up itineraries, minutes and proposals and organised the event on paper as far as they could. It was then the students' responsibility to put the proposal to the event branch of Student Services, organise the acts, room, lights, tickets and hire the technician and lighting designer. Students created posters and tickets and also presented the event. 'Flow Sharpe', the name of the event, was a huge success, with a hundred strong paying audience.

The aftermath of Flow Sharpe was that students had a lot more confidence in themselves and their own abilities and were prepared to try out new and different ideas. Students also put portfolios together, containing their head shots, Curriculum Vitae and photos of productions they were part of. They also wrote letters to employers and did skills audits.

Movement for Actor/Musicians was facilitated as a mixture of lecturer taught/student taught activities. A lot of emphasis was put on creation and less on technique. The lecturer also focussed in equal amounts on individual and group work, while she constantly asked students to show and demonstrate their work to others. This way she was able to get the students to peer teach, a technique which not only benefits the student doing the teaching, but also the student doing the learning as things are explained or demonstrated on their level.

Some of the IDPA students enjoyed this so much that they joined an additional dance course at the college, which is the equivalent of half an A-level. The five students enrolled passed this course, a major achievement for a Level 1 student. All of the IDPA students participated in a large collaboration dance show, during which their rendition of *Grease Lightning* received a standing ovation. This was a significant accomplishment for students who believed that they could not dance. Compared to the amount of effort that went into cajoling the 2002/3 students only to attend a session, this was an achievement to be proud of. Two of the IDPA students also participated in two professional dance shows.

During Singing sessions students were encouraged to try out new things. Confident students experimented with different music styles and the less confident students were encouraged to try to sing. A lot of voice exercises took place and students were able to take the warm-ups taught in singing and apply them to drama sessions. The Singing sessions resulted in a number of solo performances and two group performances during productions.

In the Music sessions students produced two CD's of their own work. They experimented with different sampling and writing styles and genres and were allowed the freedom to try out new ideas. The CD's with samples of their work are used when applying for jobs in the music trade and the students were very

proud of their work. They also got the opportunity to play a selected sample to the audience at Creative Arts week 2004.

Drama sessions and rehearsals resulted into four performances. The first performance was a production of *Sweeney Todd, the Barber* in which students learned their lines, sang the songs and did some of the lighting. Singing, Movement and Drama sessions all contributed to the success of the show. The show ran for four performances and the feedback was very positive and encouraging, even though some students used scripts on stage and other's refused to participate in the singing and dancing numbers. During the review of the show, students were not very happy. Upon my questioning they admitted that they did not think that they were entirely professional or well-enough prepared. I thought that this demonstrated their commitment and dedication to the subject and discussed with them ideas for improvement.

The second show was the presentation of an advert about West Thames College to the members of the executive team of the college. Students came up with the ideas, did research, drew the story boards, acted and shot the advertisement. The presentation was very professional and the members of the executive team were suitably impressed.

Thirdly the Drama students prepared individual pieces that they performed to all of the Performing Arts students as well as a panel of judges. The students chose their own pieces and directed their performance with some supervisory help from myself. Performing Arts lecturers made up the panel of judges and gave students feedback on their performances. Judged by the comments students wrote in their critical evaluations, the opinions of the lecturers were highly regarded and they learned a lot from the experience.

A Production of *Blood Brothers* during Creative Arts week 2004 was the highlight of the year. Singing, Movement and Drama sessions contributed to the success

of the show. Students were very honoured to be picked and the show was acted by Drama students, but both groups participated in the songs and dances. The show ran for ten performances and played to packed houses every time. The feedback from audience members interviewed afterwards was very positive and encouraging and boosted the self-esteem and confidence levels of the students enormously. For the students this experience was not only rewarding due to their hard work, but also because they have not been responsible for anything so successful before in their lives. They were very proud of their final product and they had every right to be.

One of the biggest successes of the IDPA course was the embedded basic skills. The application of basic skills in vocational subjects worked incredibly well. Students completed set homework and written work on time and to a high standard. It was very interesting to see the improvement in reading of most of the students. This improvement was especially noticeable in drama, where students read a lot of scripts/extracts. Where students struggled at the beginning of the year to read a word like *pronouncement* and stopped and asked for help, they were able to read at the end of the year with out stopping.

The two basic skills lecturers that worked very hard with the students during the two support classes suggested that we enter the students for the City and Guilds Literacy and Numeracy exams. The City and Guilds (C&G) exams are certificates that prove your basic skill level[101]. Although I was very impressed with the idea[102], I was not sure about its execution. Results of the Foundation GNVQ in PA's examinations were disastrous and I was not sure whether the students would look favourably upon this idea. I put the idea to the students and they were in

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[101] A Level 2 C&G Literacy Certificate is equivalent to a grade A – C GCSE in English and a Level 1 C&G Literacy Certificate is equivalent to a Grade D in English etc.

[102] In the U.K. you need English and Mathematics GCSE's of a certain grade if you want to train for certain jobs. E.g. In order to become a teacher you need to show prove that you have obtained at least a C in English and Mathematics in your GCSE's. Students, who complete diploma courses and do not have these Grades, can't become teachers and would have to retake the exams before they are allowed entry to Teacher Training. The C&G Certification replaces the GCSE results, so students with this qualification would be judged upon its results/level.

favour of writing the examinations to obtain the qualifications. After the completion of the work in WIPA, these sessions were dedicated to preparing the students for this qualification.

All of the students wrote the tests and all of the students passed. Most significantly, all of the students moved up at least two levels since their initial assessment that were done at the beginning of the year[103]. The only student who did not show any improvement was M2, but he also missed his test.

Students designed and created CD covers for the CD's that they made during music sessions in addition to posters, masks and costumes. The masks and costumes were used in performance.

Financial Management was another surprise success, as students excelled in opening online bank accounts, drawing up business plans, budgeting and graphing. Students successfully completed the WIPA units. During Tutorials, students were given the choice of what subject matter to do and this resulted in sessions on black history, civil rights, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, war and so forth. The students researched the topics and shared information on a discussion basis. I provided visuals and sounds.

9.5 The Techniques and Tactics[104]

Apart from using theatre techniques to attempt to turn the students into spect-actors instead of passive spectators, I also decided to use as much outside stimulation in the course as possible. With this I hoped to motivate the students to achieve as well as to provide them with ideas that they can use the IDPA course. During the WIPA sessions I organised guest speakers and trips every second

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[103] A student who is deemed suitable for a Level 1 course has the basic skills of an Entry 3 student. The AI only tests their current skills and suitability. A suitable Level 1 student thus has the skills to acquire the necessary skills to pass the course.
[104] Techniques refer to theatrical techniques, while tactics refer to the outside motivation I employed to facilitate students to take responsibility for their own actions.

session. These trips and speakers also contributed to the work done in Unit 1: Starting Work in Performing Arts and in Unit 2: Working in Performing Arts.

The guest speakers included people from all three sectors of Performing Arts, namely Performance, Technical, Administration. For the Performance sector speakers included a film director, composer, theatre director, actress and a singer, while a set designer, technician, photographer, music producer, stage manager and stage hand spoke on behalf of the technical sector. A front of house manager and box office official represented the administration side. Representatives from Equity, the British Union for jobbing actors and actresses also spoke to the students and explained the function of organisations as well as the importance of belonging to one.

Students were encouraged to ask questions after the demonstration/presentation of the various guest speakers and were encouraged when they heard that many of the guest speakers have backgrounds not dissimilar to their own. This seemed to encourage the students and some realised for the first time that they have an opportunity to succeed in a world outside of gangsters and poverty. Many of the guest speakers alerted the students to the fact that a lifestyle change is needed in order to succeed in the Performing Arts Business. This lifestyle change includes laying off marijuana, getting up early, being on time, working hard and having basic skills.

I also organised various trips for the IDPA students. Trips to the theatre were successful and Drama students had the option to attend the theatre at least once a month. I also took the students on a trip to The London Dungeon during the third week of term, so that they can experience the performance, technical and administrational side of a live event. The students and accompanying lecturers enjoyed this tremendously and students were surprised at the amount of work that went into staging the continuous live performances and action.

Tactics involving guest speakers and trips worked very well. Students were excited at the prospect of these events and were enthused at the end of them. The information gathered from the events was used in the completion of Unit 1 and Unit 2 and gave students a practical idea of how jobs in the Performing Arts work.

Music students had the opportunity to go to several studios and meet producers as well as experience the recording and creation of tracks first hand. During these music industry trips students made valuable contacts and some students successfully applied for part-time jobs at these companies.

A decision was also made to treat the students as professional actors and musicians and most of the vocational sessions were thus run as rehearsals or studio time. Students also took turns to be responsible for aiding the technician rigging lights, recording sound or building set and props, as well as having a go on the sound board. I hoped that this would not only aid in creating spect-actors, but that it would also motivated the students to become involved and work harder.

This tactic seemed to work as all of the students performed the technical duties with enthusiasm, realising that they are partly responsible for the success of the performance. The method of running sessions as rehearsals (drama students) and studio time (music students) worked increasingly well as the year progressed. At first students were reluctant and did not adhere to the rules of rehearsals/studio time. After the first term students knew and felt comfortable with the rehearsal/studio time structure and used it to their advantage to improve their skills.

The retention officer appointed the previous year achieved mixed results with the IDPA students. She was ineffective with regards to punctuality, but achieved good attendance results in the first half of the year. During the second period of the 2003/4 academic year she lost interest in the course and stopped her

constant phoning and counselling of problem students. The result of her inefficiency meant that I had to phone absentee students in order to get them to attend. This understandably took up a lot of my time and since I had to phone these students in between my teaching and administrative responsibilities, I was not able to do it as often as I would have liked. It is a pity that she did not persevere, as I believe that retention officers play a vital part in the retention of students on a course.

The principal asked to become involved with the IDPA group and I invited her to all of the performances and other important events surrounding the course. The students felt enormously valued by this, they were on a first name basis with the principle while most other students did not know what she looked like. My main reason for getting the principal involved was for her to get first hand knowledge of what teaching a Level 1 group involves. The experiment was successful, as the students liked the principal and she liked them and this relationship encouraged students to want to achieve in order to impress her.

This tactic was very successful as it gave the students a sense of self-achievement and made them feel special which encouraged a growth in self-worth. They were the only group with whom the principal was involved and they received constant praise and Thank You letters from her. This made them feel like they had achieved something, a feeling not many of them have experienced in their academic lives.

We also gave students shorter assignments broken down into small tasks to prevent students from becoming bored. Level 1 students struggle with long assignments as they have not yet acquired the necessary attention and focus required to successfully complete a three month assignment. The vocational assignments were assessed together, e.g. drama, movement and singing assignments worked towards a performance of a musical. Assignments working towards one goal worked extremely well as students were able to focus on one

main goal towards which all of their assignments led. It also formed a pleasing coherent whole.

Official movie screenings and performance gave students an added sense of accomplishment as these were events centred round them and their abilities. The feedback on these events was positive and students took pride in the final products. Creative Arts week was a big success and students played to full houses every show. The feedback received from lecturers, peers and other important invited guests was very encouraging and optimistic and students' self-confidence was boosted.

We also organised two end-of-term parties for the students, one just before the Christmas break and one just before the Easter break. The students chose what they wanted to do and this resulted in two movie screenings in the theatre, complete with popcorn and hot-dogs. Students enjoyed this tremendously and we felt that this was a well-deserved treat for all of the hard work that they had done during the term.

The last party was held at the end of the year and I invited the principal, PM, CM, retention officer and all of the IDPA lecturers. Awards were handed out for achievement, attendance and improvement. Speeches were made by the Principal, PM, CM and retention officer and snippets of movies and recorded performances were screened. This was the first time that an event like this was held in honour of the students and most of the students had never been the focus of attention for academic achievement. This was also the first time during the year that power was focussed on lecturing staff.

Regular team meetings were held to check the progress of the students and to control the development of the course. Tactics and problematic students were discussed at these meetings and lecturers had the opportunity to bounce ideas off each other, and also to inform each other of problems and to suggest possible

solutions for difficult situations and students. These regular meetings allowed me to keep my finger on the pulse of the course to keep up to date with any problems or successes.

With using the new chairs in the now *changeable*[105] classroom, teachers found that arranging the chairs in a circle for the start of the class and then moving them around afterwards to suit the needs of the lesson, worked the best. The shift in power created by this simple measure was tremendous. Since teachers no longer stood in front of students sitting behind desks in rows, they were able to communicate with students at their level. Students also joined in the dialogue without needing too much encouragement, they were able to see one another's faces and quite often the dialogue became very animated. Lecturers were able to sit back and observe while students discussed, disagreed, formulated and theorised.

Individual Learning Plans[106] (ILP) were drawn up in conjunction with the students in order to continuously encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. Goals were set by students and regularly checked to measure progress on the ILP's. Students were encouraged to set SMART[107] targets and goals and these goals were distributed to the appropriate lecturer. Support and guidance were then provided to aid students in obtaining these goals.

Lecturers build up a good rapport with the students and mutual respect existed between facilitators and students. A class environment was created where students were work-driven, especially if it was a vocational session. The focus during the course was on the accomplishment of the students to increase their self-confidence and self-worth and lecturers used constructive criticism when assessing assignments.

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[105] Heathcote's interactive classroom
[106] See **Appendix E**
[107] SMART targets are targets that are Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Retainable and Time-bound.

At the end of the course many students who never gave a second thought to continuing with education or going to university applied for interviews to progress to a Level 2 or Level 3 programme. Tutors provided forms and students were granted interviews almost immediately. I stayed in regular contact with the students to check how far their applications for a higher course had advanced.

Rewards were also used as a tactic to encourage students to achieve and work hard. These rewards were not monetary and were set by the students, e.g. an early morning class starting thirty minutes later than usual as a reward for a extra-long strenuous rehearsal. Rewarding students in this way was effective as the rewards benefited the students, but equally important was that lecturers were rewarded as well by occasional later starts.

Students were given the responsibility to phone late or absent students from the office during the second part of the 2003/4 academic year. This tactic was very successful as students realised their responsibility towards the group and the effect they have when they are not there. It also helped students to manage their own learning more effectively as they took turns to be responsible for getting the whole group in on time.

Boal states that a spectator becomes a spect-actor the moment that s/he 'acts' and that this transformation is irreversible as the spect-actor shakes off his/her oppression during this moment. He also says that the spect-actor will never be oppressed again by the oppressor. The students are forced to be spectators due to various circumstances, especially due to their lack of basic skills. By doing something about this, they shake off the oppression that would have forced them into menial or illegal jobs.

Because many of the students were apathetic when they arrived as the results of years of failure and difficulty at school, they had to be shocked out of this state of

non-caring. The only way in which this was possible was to put the responsibility of working on them and to do this in such a way that students want to become involved and want to take on that responsibility. Achievement and success played a big part in enticing the students to take part in the sessions. Lecturers levelling out the playing field with regards to power in the classroom also helped enormously and gave students the courage and self-confidence to try out new things and become involved.

A lot of Boal's theatre techniques were used during the course of the year. *Simultaneous dramaturgy* was used instead of official disciplinary hearings and students felt more comfortable telling a story while others act it out, than testifying. The visual action was used to analyse and reflect upon what happened, what could have been done to ensure a different outcome and identifying the reasons for the incident.

Image Theatre was used a lot in Tutorial classes and students were asked to use this method to show, for example, how they are perceived by the world[108] and how they would like to be perceived by the world and then discussions would follow on what is necessary to make this happen.

Forum Theatre is the technique that was the most widely used, as this was the model on which most lessons had to be planned. Lecturers were only present in a facilitator/joker capacity, while the students had to find solutions to the problem or problems posed. Quite often this would require students to perform a series of tasks[109] in order to be able to act out possible solutions. This allowed students to

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[108] Example: In one such a class, M3 and M2 showed that they are perceived as gangsters and that if they walk around late at night with their hooded tops on, people tend to cross the street in order to avoid them, because they fear that M3 and M2 might mug them. After the initial discussion it transpired the M3 and M2 have mugged people before and that they do not think it would be wrong to do so again. The other students on the course were quick to point out the problem with the situations and the transformation needed.
[109] These series of tasks can take the form of for example: small research assignments, information gathering, essay writing, article reading, questionnaire completion, painting a picture, creating a costume, making a mask.

take responsibility for their own learning, but also enticed them to do the necessary preparation in order to join a class.

Lecturers used *Newspaper Theatre* at the start of the year to explain the course handbook, a document that is aimed at students with a Level 3 Literacy capability. Although attempts have been made to simplify this handbook, some of the official wording and terminology continue to be problematic. Students enjoyed this performance on the first day of induction and I think this encouraged them to apply themselves to their own performances with rigour. *Newspaper Theatre* was also used successfully during the rest of the academic year to explain difficult and problematic terminology.

Invisible Theatre was used during a performance by the Level 1 students to inform the other West Thames students about the consequences of fighting on the premises and alternative ways to defuse an explosive situation. The performance was a success in the sense that the Level 1 students gave a good performance that got their message across, but also that in preparing for this performance, they had to do the research regarding the consequences and alternatives and thus taught themselves the exact "lesson" they taught others.

Myth Theatre was used mostly in tutorials and performed by lecturers and students. During student performances the focus was on exploring the myth and during lecturer performances the focus was on dispelling the myth. An example of a successful lecture performance was dispelling the myth that all lecturers are biased on grounds of the racial authenticity, religious orientation and subject knowledge of a student. The students then explored the myth by finding correlations between student behaviour and the consequent lecturer attitude.

Analytical Theatre was used a lot during the first trimester of the course in tutorials. Students' social and gender roles were identified and analysed during performance based on real-life events. Discussions regarding the reasons for a

specific role and (when applicable) the possibility for change became very animated and at times argumentative. Analytical Theatre was replaced by myth theatre towards the end of the first trimester when the transformation in social roles of the students became apparent.

Chapter 10: Programme 2 – Theatrical Outcome

10.1 External Verification and Outcome

External Verification of the IDPA takes place in two ways. Firstly an External Verifier visits an institution and secondly two units have to be completed, graded and sent away for External Verification. The first External Verification of the IDPA takes place in February or March of each academic year. Our appointed External Verifier (EV) visited West Thames College in March 2004 to verify two units of the IDPA.

Verification consists of two units chosen by Edexcel that are verified to make sure that they measure up to the national benchmark. EV's check that the correct and necessary paper systems are in place and correctly used, they monitor the quality of teaching, the quality of learning, the quality of assignments and the quality and appropriateness of assessment.

The two units do not have to be completed and work in progress can be shown to the EV together with future assignments. Edexcel only expects that the units have started already. If a centre has not started with a unit yet, they have to ask for special exception and then another unit is put up for verification. The units chosen by Edexcel for External Verification were Unit 6: Financial Management and Unit 10: Showing Your Work.

Unit 6: Financial Management was almost completed when presented to the EV. One completed assignment and one half-finished assignment were on show. The EV passed the unit and praised the lecturer for innovative vocational application of the unit.

Unit 10: Showing your work was covered in Drama, Music, Singing, Movement and Introduction to Media. The only disciplines that had covered the unit thus far

were Drama, Movement and Introduction to Media. Completed assignments for these three disciplines were presented and assignment sheets as well as work in progress were put forward for Singing and Music. The EV passed the unit and we were praised not only for innovative assignments, but also for the range across which the students were assessed.

A deadline is set for all Externally Verified units and this deadline is the same every year, 30 April. I sent all of the Externally Verified units' work away three weeks before the deadline so that the External Verifier could moderate the students work and our assessment. When work send to an External Verifier is deemed incomplete or unsatisfactory, it is returned to the educational institution within two weeks together with a two week extension in which the work can be rectified and send back for re-verification. The two Externally Verified Units are Unit1: Starting Work in the Performing Arts and Unit 2: Working in the Performing Arts.

Unit 1: Starting Work in the Performing Arts (SWIPA) is concerned with finding jobs in the Performing Arts sector, the lifestyle changes accompanying these jobs and organisations a jobbing actor, technician or administrator can belong to. Students completed this unit in December 2003 by completing a booklet that I drew up.

Students completed worksheets in class and used these worksheets to complete the booklets. One of the criteria that need to be fulfilled is that students have to talk about their ideal job, the lifestyle changes that accompany it and an organisation they can belong to. I decided to digitally record their answers, so I asked students to prepare a little talk that they could deliver to the camera. My reason for this decision was two fold: it brings a little variation to the unit and the students will be able to explain themselves better vocally than through their pens. Recording them will also enable us to ask them leading questions, should one of their answers miss out important information.

The second reason is concerned with the high number of students suffering from learning difficulties. Even though the whole group improved their basic skills, the mere idea of anything resembling an exam sets off panic and they do not always perform to the best of their abilities. Allowing students to do some sections orally, boosted their self-confidence and reassured them of their own capabilities. Alternative assessment methods through out the course gave the students with learning difficulties such as ADHD and Dyslexia an equal chance to achieve in a (active) assessment method they favoured.

I also asked the students to prepare for a job interview based on job advertisements I had selected and copied for them. They had to attend these interviews as prospective employees and had to be aware of the qualities and qualifications needed to do the job successfully. These were also digitally recorded. The interviews acted as another completion of a criterion and the students enjoyed themselves. Students were interviewed by other students, so every group member had to be knowledgeable about every job in order to ask questions of the interviewee.

The Music tutor and I marked the booklets and digital recordings according to the assessment criteria supplied by Edexcel. Out of the twenty students, eight achieved passes, six achieved merits and six achieved distinctions.

Unit 2: Working in the Performing Arts (WIPA) is concerned with the terms and conditions surrounding a job in the Performing Arts, as well as induction procedures and monitoring performance. This is a shorter unit than Unit 1: SWIPA and the facilitation of it was more intense than that of Unit 1. We were able to do a lot more work more quickly as the basic skills, attention and focus of the students improved. The unit was completed by March 2004 by means of completing a booklet that I designed.

Worksheets were used to record information gathered in class and these were used in turn to complete the booklets. I once again used digital recording to record a part of the unit, this time I asked students to do a presentation on suggestions for improved induction at an institution they have studied, as well as their views on why induction is important.

The booklet and digital recordings were marked by the Music tutor and I. Out of the twenty students ten students achieved passes, five achieved merits and five achieved distinctions.

When our work was returned after two weeks, all marks were upheld apart from one student who we have awarded a pass for Unit 2: WIPA. The External Verifier awarded this student a merit. Out of the twenty students, nine have now achieved a pass; six achieved a merit and five a distinction. We received praise from the External Verifier for innovative methods of assessment; he recommended our method of using part digital recording in his official Moderator's report sent out to all educational institutions.

Completion of the Externally Verified units was not all successful. M2, who steadfastly refused to do written work on a regular bass, refused to complete his booklets. When he finally acknowledged that he needed to complete the booklets to pass, he took them home to work on them there. The work for Unit 1: SWIPA was completed in his aunt's handwriting. When I confronted him with this, he denied it and we were once again powerless to do anything about it. For Unit 2: WIPA he only sat down on the last day before the student deadline for handing in work and completed the minimum amount of work[110]. We decided to pass him and asked him more questions on his recording to make up for the information that he missed out in his booklet, but I had not doubt that the External Verifier

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[110] Not all of the booklet could be completed by means of oral assessment. Part of it expected students to create and design an advertisement. Since this was in part practical drawing work, I could not see how it could be done orally. M2 also refrained from preparing for this interview, so his answers were weak and his performance lacked conviction.

would not uphold the grade. To our surprise he did and M2 passed both of his Externally Verified units.

If one compared the work done on Unit 1: SWIPA and Unit 2: WIPA, it is interesting to see how the basic skills of the students improved[111]. They used better sentence construction, improved spelling and punctuation; grammar improved over all and used improved creative and imaginative writing. The Externally Verified units were a success; overall students have achieved seventeen passes, twelve merits and eleven distinctions out of forty assessments.

Two-thirds of the grading process was completed when the course passed the External Verification. The other third were completed when the grades for the Externally Verified Units were upheld by the EV. All that was left to do was to compile and send in the final grades for all of the other units.

I called a team meeting at the end of June in order to discuss and agree on all of the grades for the different students. All the lecturers had their marked and graded work with them and discussions ensued about the final grades for the units. This took rather long as an average grade had to be found for each unit, since each unit is tested at least four times in the different disciplines.

When entering the grades on the grade sheet sent out by Edexcel the course leader has to work out the average grade each student receives for the course. Edexcel's guidance[112] on the matter states that the two top grades students received in any two vocational units are put together and the average found. This average is then the student's average for the unit.

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[111] This judgement was made by the specialised basic skills lecturers after comparing the work. Copies of the work were graded and included in each student's basic skills portfolio kept in the skills centre.
[112] Please see **Appendix N** for Edexcel's guidelines on calculating average grades.

The overall results and grades that I entered on the grade sheet were upheld and the final result was that all twenty students passed: twelve with a pass grade, four with a merit grade and four with a distinction grade.

10.2 Basic Skills[113]

One of the main aims of the IDPA was to increase the basic skills level of the students to enable them to either progress to a higher level course or to enter skilled employment.

Basic skills were imbedded in the vocational sessions of the IDPA course. This means that the core curriculum is incorporated into vocational classes and taught with vocational application. Two of the IDPA sessions had additional support staff in the form of highly skilled Learning Support lecturers, namely Money and the Music Business/Performing Arts and Working in Performing Arts. These two classes demand the most written and numerical work of the students, so it makes sense that students should have extra support in them.

At the start of the IDPA students sat an Initial Assessment test which determined their basic skills level and what course they would be suited to. Most of the students tested suitable for a Level 1 course, but this means that they only have basic skills at Entry 3 level. They still have to acquire Level 1 skills, but they have the necessary foundation to acquire and master these skills and deal with the appropriate level of theoretical and conceptual work.

M2 was the only student who tested below Entry 3 suitability, his literacy level was established at Entry 2. The main reason for this low skills level was his dyslexia and after a consultation with a dyslexia specialist, I was satisfied that this failing can be quickly rectified by attending additional classes aimed specifically at overcoming dyslexia. Neither M2 nor his guardians had a problem with him

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[113] See **Appendix K**

attending these classes and welcomed the opportunity that would allow him to overcome his learning difficulty. Unfortunately M2 refused to attend even one of these classes.

The basic skills progression of the students led to them being enrolled in the City and Guilds Literacy and Numeracy Qualifications. After the completion of the two units covered in the Working in the Performing Arts sessions, the sessions were used in preparation for the examination that they would have to sit in order to achieve the qualification. The examination took place on-line[114], to make it easier for the students to complete[115].

Students were entered for the qualification based on the results they achieved in several mock tests. Most of the students were entered for the Level 2 Literacy Qualification, no small achievement, as this is an increase of two literacy levels since the start of the 2003/4 academic year. Five students were entered for the Level 1 Literacy Qualification, an increase of one level and one student, M2, was entered for the Entry 3 Qualification, another increase of one level. All of the students passed their examinations apart from M2 who did not show up to take the test.

Ten of the students were entered for the Level 2 Numeracy Qualification and nine students were entered for the Level 1 Numeracy Qualification. M2 was entered for the Entry 3 Numeracy Qualification. This was a big achievement, since most of the students tested suitable for Entry 3 numeracy upon enrolment, which means that their skills level lay at Entry 2 level. While all students have improved

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[114] Many of the students were not computer literate, so apart from preparing for the exams in class, students also received computer classes where they were taught basic computer techniques. These classes not only prepared them for their exams, but also provided them with skills which they applied to other parts of the course.

[115] Most of the students panic when they hear the word test or exam, as their past experiences has not been pleasant. Since these exams were literacy and numeracy it cannot be completed orally. As entering the exam was optional, students had to make the decision to write it themselves and this motivated them to practise and prepare. The fact that all of the students chose to take the exams is a bigger accomplishment than their consequent successful grades.

by at least one level, some students improved with three numeracy levels. All of the students passed apart from M2 who withdrew from the qualification.

The results of the basic skills qualifications were an enormous accomplishment for the IDPA students. Those students with Level 2 basic skills qualifications were now suitable for a Level 3 course, meaning that they have improved enough to skip Level 2. Four IDPA students were accepted onto Level 3 courses and the rest of the students progressed to Level 2 courses.

The reasons for the success of the basic skills tuition are that there were no official basic skills classes that students were forced to attend. During the run of the Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts in 2002/3 students voted with their feet and did not attend these classes and it was logical that their basic skills could not improve if they do not attend. Embedding the basic skills in vocational classes meant that students constantly practised the skills, as well as practised applying them. Because of the constant practise, the students were able to see the improvement in their own work, which increased the self-confidence and the willingness to improve even more. I also think that their new found self-confidence and success with basic skills were the reason why they chose to write the City and Guilds Literacy and Numeracy Qualifications. Students prepared for the examination by working on old question papers and the good results that they achieved in these mock exams encouraged them even more.

The basic skills tuition was thus an enormous success and this aim of the IDPA course was achieved successfully. M2 did not write the exams and one could view this as a failure, however even though he did not sit the examination and had not received the formal qualification, he did improve his basic skills level by one in both literacy and numeracy.

10.3 Life Skills[116]

Life Skills cannot be measured or assessed by means of assignments and tests, but are measured though observation of behaviour in and outside of class. I measured the life skills, or lack there off, based on six criteria for the Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts in 2002/3 and I will be using the same criteria to measure the improvement of life skills for the IDPA.

The six criteria and their explanations are as follows:

- *Basic Skills* – Literacy and numeracy ability of a student.

- *Creativity* – Creating and suggesting new ideas, as well as recognising the potential of ideas suggested by others. Developing ideas of others and their own.

- *Problem Solving* – Analytical, Diagnostic, Systematic, Critical, and Methodical approach to problems.

- *Responsibility* – Taking responsibility for one self and one's own actions. Taking responsibility for own learning.

- *Compromising* – Negotiation and Cooperation

- *Social Skills* – Able to relate to people of all walks of life and to respect their differences.

- *Communication Skills* – Get a point or difference of opinion across without resorting to violence. Acquiring active listening skills.

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[116] See **Chapter 5.3 Life Skills**

I will now continue to measure the performance of the students during the 2003/4 academic year against these criteria.

- *Basic Skills:* All but one of the students were entered into a literacy and numeracy examination for a City and Guilds Literacy and City and Guilds Numeracy qualification. Every student increased with at least two basic skills levels[117] and some improved with a four level increase.

  M2 did not write any of the exams but did test at a higher level for both his literacy and numeracy skills. He was entered for both qualifications but did not show up for the literacy exam and withdrew from the numeracy exam. Apart from the fact that he did not achieve the qualification, he did acquire new skills and have moved up two levels. He was thus successful in improving on his existing basic skills.

  Embedding basic skills were a successful way of facilitating the improving of existing basic skills. Applying theoretical knowledge in a vocational situation proved the usefulness and necessity of them to the students. This skill was a success.

- *Creativity*: The students proved their innovation by the successful shows, screenings and presentations that were held through out the 2003/4 academic year. They suggested new and interesting ideas for movies, scripts and show reels produced in Introduction to Media. Interesting music was created and composed in Music sessions and the individual work that they created in Art was new and interesting. Most of the ideas for group productions or projects were thought of as a group and this taught students to listen to and recognise the potential of ideas suggested by others. They displayed the same enthusiasm for ideas

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[117] A Literacy Level improvement counts as one level and a Numeracy Level count as another level. Students with an one level increase in Literacy and an one level increase in Numeracy have thus increased with two levels.

suggested by others as those ideas suggested by themselves. All students got an opportunity to voice their suggestions and ideas and there was no-one who drowned out the voices of others completely.

Flow Sharpe is an excellent example of the students' creativity. The idea for the genre and style of the show was suggested by the students and although all of the students are not followers of MC Music, they none the less worked hard as a team to make a success of the show. These students also found alternative ways to express their creativity, e.g. F2 designed the tickets, F1 developed a control system for the Front of House and Box Office and M6 designed the stage and lighting.

The life skill of creativity was successfully achieved by the students.

- *Problem Solving*: Both IDPA groups displayed an ability to work through difficult and problem situations as a group. The class and group rules were decided upon as a group and the punishment for breaking the rules was also decided and executed as a group. Awards for achievement and achievers were also group decisions.

The use of Theatre Techniques like *analytical, simultaneous dramaturgy* and *forum theatre* taught students how to find alternative solutions to problems.

Students were able to apply problem solving in their vocational sessions. They decided what acting style or technique to use, what their set would look like, how to use their props etc. Camera angles and shots, Genre of Music, Movement and sequence creation were all problems students were faced with on a day to day basis. Numeric problem solving was also practised by the two groups. Decisions on the

best price for equipment, budgets and ticket prices were successfully negotiated.

Problem Solving was successfully taking place on all levels of the course.

- *Responsibility*: There were very few fights on the IDPA compared with the Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts of 2002/3 and the other Level 1 courses of the college. Four students were involved in fights, but all the brawls took place in the first month of college. M2's behaviour was the most challenging, especially because he has a tendency to bully others and consequently got bullied himself. Despite his objectionable behaviour, he never denied his responsibility and took responsibility for his own actions by accepting his punishment as fair.

M18 was another problematic student, but unlike M2, he did not accept responsibility for his own actions. He always believed he was treated unfairly and never admitted to doing wrong, even when caught red-handed. His firm belief that he is right and the world is wrong remained unshaken throughout the year.

Students took responsibility for their own learning by rehearsing in their own time, completing home work and assignments by the hand-in date and by being prepared for class. Lecturers were able to leave students alone for periods of time and the students would continue with their work, a huge departure from the students of the 2002/3 academic year who could not be left alone for a second without running the risk of total destruction of the classroom. Research for projects and sessions were completed in advance and students were able to contribute greatly to sessions requiring some background knowledge.

They also took control of the sessions in an organised and structured manner. I think that the reason for this is that they were allowed to ease into the role of the controller and that they were not pushed to do something they had no experience of.

Based on all of the observational evidence and final results I think that most students acquired added responsibility during the course. M18 did not take responsibility for his own actions, but the remaining nineteen students did.

- *Compromise*: Students were able to bargain and compromise with lecturers and fellow students alike. As individuals were not able to have it their way all the time, it was interesting to watch what each student was prepared to give up in order to obtain something else and how much importance they awarded to certain ideas and suggestions.

  An example of their compromising skills was bargaining for the end of year production. Some students wanted to do a musical, while others were not excited about the idea. After a class discussion, the group decided to perform *Blood Brothers* as it would satisfy the desires of all of the students: the story line was appealing to one group, while the others liked the songs, others hoped to play the lead characters and others wanted to start working on the dances straight away.

  This skill was a success.

- *Social Skills:* Students communicated with the principal, guest speakers and lecturers with the same ease as they communicated with one another. They also tolerated one another's differences and were respectful towards other group members and lecturers. The mutual

respect that existed between students and lecturers made for a trusting and hard-working active learning environment.

Only one student displayed a total lack of respect towards lecturers and fellow group members. This student was M18 and he was reprimanded severely on a number of occasions as well as being sent for disciplinaries. The disciplinaries' outcomes were not desirable to the lecturers as M18 suffered no repercussions for his actions. What was interesting about the behaviour of the group were that they verbally dealt with M18 instead of picking fights or threatening violence.

Apart from M18's behaviour this is a successful outcome for this skill.

▪ *Communication Skills*: Communication Skills improved as the year continued and students grew more confident to articulate their needs and desires. Physical fights only occurred in the first term of the 2004/5 academic year and after that students sorted out their differences verbally. Students were able to express themselves in more than one way and lecturers were able to facilitate heated debates without the situation becoming violent.

An example of the greatly improved communication skills of the IDPA students is the way in which they dealt with M18. After M18 was particularly offensive in a Working in the Performing Arts sessions, the stronger students told M18 in a non-threatening way that his behaviour was not acceptable in the group. They asked him politely to rather leave the room if he feels that he cannot behave as they do not want to be guilty by association.

Dealing with a peer in such away demands courage and a certain degree of self-confidence, characteristics that one would not normally associate with Level 1 students.

This skill was a success.

Towards the end of the course, students were able to attend interviews correctly dressed and well prepared. They also were able to identify the appropriate manner of speech for different situations. I tested this ability by hosting interviews for Unit 1: Starting Work in the Performing Arts and students passed with flying colours. At the end of the course I was confident that students would not only excel in the interview part of a job, but also in the job itself. They have acquired all of the necessary life skills to be successful in a skilled job, but also to progress to a higher level.

One of the reasons for the success of the Life Skills tutoring was the way the course was designed, it allowed students the opportunity to hone and acquire these skills without it being formally taught. Another reason was that students moved from being a spectator to being spect-actors, they started to act, throwing off the oppression, wanting to better themselves. Lastly as the self-respect of the students increase, so did their respect for others. Without respect for others and their differences, very little of the life skills will be attainable.

I thus conclude by saying that Life Skills were a success and another aim of the IDPA was successfully completed.

10.4 Destination Data

I managed to gather information on all of the students in order to comply with West Thames College Destination Data[118] policy. Of the twenty six students that started, twenty completed and passed. Another goal of the IDPA was thus a success, Performing Arts numbers were boosted and the retention of the course improved from the previous course, namely the Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts. Retention[119] for the 2002/3 academic year was 55% and for the 2004/5 academic year was 77%. Achievement[120] also showed an improvement. For the 2002/3 academic year, achievement was 0% and for the 2003/4 academic year achievement was 100%.

Destination Data determine how many students progress to the next level with in the college and also gives course leaders an idea as to the overall success of a course. Progression to a higher course means that course design, lecturing and assessing were successful together with successful basic and life skills tutoring. Should students progress to a job, details of their position informs one of their skills level, another indication that basic and life skills tutoring were successful or not.

The following table best displays the Destination Data[121] I gathered for the 2003/4 academic year.

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[118] West Thames College expects lecturers to contact students at the end of the academic year to find out where they have progressed to after leaving the course. This data is used by the college auditors.

[119] Retention is calculated by putting the completing student number of the number of starters.

[120] Achievement is calculated by putting the number of successful candidates of the number of completers.

[121] Destination Data has to be compiled for all students enrolled on a course, whether they have successfully completed or not.
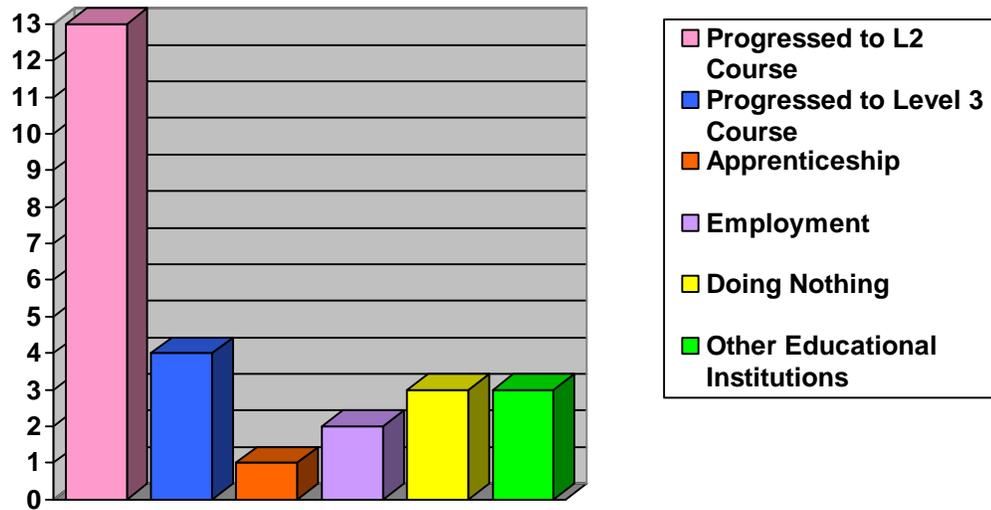
Figure 5: Destination Data 2003/4

Thirteen Students progressed to a Level 2 course, with four students progressing to a Level 3 course. One student progressed to an apprenticeship, with three students entering some form of employment. Three students were not doing anything, while another three students moved to other educational institutions.

The following pie chart illustrates the progression of the IDPA students to Level 2 and Level 3 courses. Seventeen of these students progressed within West Thames College.
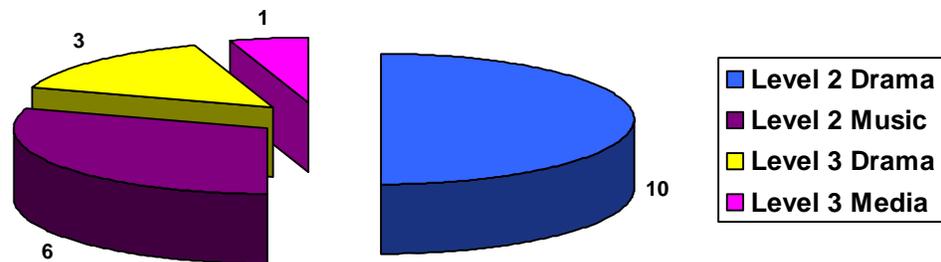
Figure 6: Progression Data 2003/4

Ten students progressed to Level 2 Drama with six progressing to the Level 2 Music course. Three students were accepted to the Level 3 Drama course, with one student progressing to Level 3 Media.

F1 was accepted onto the Level 2 Drama course and is very determined to be successful in a career in the Performing Arts. Her natural talent together with hard work ensured that she acquired and developed some exceptional skills and she also overcame dyslexia and dysgraphia to succeed in Level 1 City and Guilds Literacy and Numeracy Qualifications. She achieved a distinction in all of her vocational subjects and passed the course overall with a distinction. Her achievements did not stop there as she not only passed the additional dance course she was enrolled in, but she also took part in two professional dance productions. She was nominated for the Annual College Awards[122] for 2003/4 and won the category of *Exceptional Achievement*.

F2 brushed up on her basic skills and improved her English and got accepted on the Level 3 Drama course. She worked hard to improve her English and succeeded as she passed the Level 2 Literacy and Numeracy City and Guilds Qualifications.   All of her original misgivings about living in England have disappeared and she has made many new friends both in and outside of college.

F3 progressed to the Level 2 Drama course, admitting that peer pressure made her decide to do the IDPA music course. She also completed an additional dance course and passed with flying colours. Her biggest accomplishment was a solo she choreographed herself that was included in a professional dance show. There is no sign of the aggressive teenager who joined the course and she became one of the natural leaders, achieving a merit overall.

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[122] West Thames College holds an annual award ceremony that honours students from across the college in categories of Distance Travelled, Support to others and Exceptional Achievement. These awards are coveted as only a couple of them available across the whole spectrum of college degree and diploma programmes.

F4 is still at home doing nothing, having been refused by another educational institution because of her behaviour. She still argues profusely with her mother and has been threatened with being kicked out. Her basic skills have not improved and she still refuses to see a councillor about her abusive, intimidating and aggressive behaviour. She still has outbursts of anger which easily turns to violence.

F5 has been accepted by another educational institution for the 2003/4 academic year after being asked to leave West Thames, but has been excluded from there for the same reasons. Her attendance when in college has not improved, but sadly, neither have her personal circumstances. They have lived in the same house now for six months, the longest period in one place for years. Currently she is at home and has not been doing anything for about seven months.

F6 did not do anything after being withdrawn from the IDPA but applied for a Level 1 Tourism and Leisure course at another College for the 2004/5 academic year. She was accepted and will start the new course in September 2004.

M1 managed to scrape through and his behaviour and attitude only showed small signs of improvement. He applied for the Level 2 Drama course, but was refused entry on grounds of his asocial behaviour and general resistance to work. His application was consequently not successful and he applied to another college for their Level 2 Drama course. He was accepted conditionally.

Another student who was refused re-admittance was M2. After his exclusion from the college he applied to do a Level 1 Sport and Leisure course at another college and was accepted conditionally.

M3 passed the IDPA with a merit overall and applied for and was accepted onto the Level 3 Drama course. His behaviour improved a lot towards the end of the course and he became of the natural leaders of the group. He excelled in

performance and applied himself to his City and Guilds Numeracy and Literacy Qualifications, which he passed at Level 3. This is an impressive result, since he was not able to concentrate for more than ten minutes at the start of the IDPA course.

M4 threw himself into achieving the best qualifications possible from the course and achieved a distinction over all as well as Level 2 City and Guilds Literacy and Numeracy Qualifications. He was accepted onto the Level 3 Drama Course.

M5 progressed to Level 2 drama course on the condition that he attends every class and hands in all of his work on time.

The other big success story of the IDPA is M6 who came back to the Level 1 course, despite not achieving on the previous course. His attitude and behaviour improved considerably and he displayed maturity and responsibility towards the group and his own work. He became the Technician's assistant and consequently acquired new skills in rigging and controlling lights, recording and controlling sound and set building. In the City and Guilds Numeracy and Literacy Qualification he achieved at Level 2 and progressed to the Level 3 Media course, the course which he aimed for since the beginning of the 2002/3 academic year.

M7 found employment as a delivery man and although he speaks of returning to education, he has not applied for any courses to date.

M8 dropped out in the third week of the 2003/4 academic year. His arrogant and disrespectful behaviour did not improve from the previous year and he went back to work at Fulham Hospital, setting up conference rooms and doing general odd jobs. He reapplied for the administration job he originally applied for, but was passed over again, as he did not have the necessary basic skills.

Two students who have managed to turn themselves around were M9 and M10. Both students struggled to commit at the start of the course, but eventually became so involved that they were supporting other students on the IDPA. They applied for the Level 2 Music course and were accepted without any problems.

M11, who was also influenced by his peers to go on the IDPA Music course and not the Drama course as he originally intended, was accepted onto the Level 2 Drama course. He is hard working, but is still very easily distracted in a group situation.

M12 was accepted onto the Level 2 Music course against all advice. He is still disruptive and uncooperative.

M13 also decided to apply to the Level 2 Drama course instead of progressing to another music course. He is an excellent dancer who took part in a professional dance show and he also completed an additional dance course at the college. He is very interested in choreography and aided the dance lecturer in choreographing some of the end of year shows.

M14, M15 and M19 progressed onto the Level 2 Music Course, while M16 and M17 progressed to the Level 2 Drama Course. All of these students persevered and achieved good results in the City and Guilds Literacy and Numeracy Qualifications. They are different students from what they were at the start of the IDPA course. Apart from showing increasing maturity, they take responsibility for their own actions and learning and were very involved in the activities on the course.

M18 entered employment and was much to my surprise, offered a modern apprenticeship in plumbing. His future employer contacted us and congratulated us on the preparedness of M18 to enter gainful employment. This was hard to

believe, considering the enormous problems we experienced with him during the run of the course.

M20 was not doing anything and had no plans for the future.

Students were able to progress to higher courses or skilled employment through the successful acquirement of life and basic skills. The only student who did not progress in education, even at a different educational establishment, was M18, but he received a modern apprenticeship which means that he will get further training. The course was thus able to achieve the goals it set out.

10.5 Preliminary Observational Conclusion

The five aims that the Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts set out to achieve are as follows:

- Cater for the Level 1 sector and provide students with the necessary basic and life skills to succeed in higher vocational courses and areas.

- Encourage and aid students to progress to a Level 2 course.

- Improve Basic and Life Skills to improve the students' quality of life.

- Boost Performing Arts enrolment figures to receive more funding and optimise room utilisation.

- Engage and interest the students in wanting to learn as well as be responsible for their own learning. Most importantly to achieve.

All of these aims were successfully achieved during the 2003/4 academic year.

The IDPA course was much more student-centred than the Foundation GNVQ in PA course of 2002/3 and was concerned with empowering students and to engage them in learning. It was not concerned with the system of learning.

Several success stories emerged from the course, e.g. F1 and F6 and although not all of the students achieved everything they set out to, 90% of the students did and achieved higher than they could have hoped for. Students who did not even consider going to university only a year before, are now planning what to study in order to achieve their goals. The IDPA changed the value system of many of the students, giving them something other than gangsterism and drugs to look forward to

The IDPA also experienced a number of failures in the sense that their improvement was not considerable or life changing. M2 left without ever being more cooperative or showing more respect, but he did improve his basic skills. M18, a difficult student at best, seemed to have a turn around shortly after he left the course and gave the credit for this change to the course and the lecturers.

Chapter 11: Comparison – Programme 1 versus Programme 2

I will use the following ten criteria to compare and contrast the Foundation General National Vocational Qualification in Performing Arts that I designed and managed in the 2002/3 academic year and the Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts that I managed and designed in the 2003/4 academic year. The criteria are as follows:

- Governing Body

- Philosophy

- Enrolment

- Course Design and Structure

- Groups and Numbers

- Aims

- Retention

- Achievement

- Success Rate

- Students

- National Benchmarks

- Comparison with other Level 1 Courses

Governing Body

The Governing Body for both courses is Edexcel but the specifications and course titles differed. Specifications for the Foundation GNVQ in PA were very wide and difficult to manage because, despite the word *Vocational* in the title, the course was anything but. The course did not seem specifically geared or

designed for Level 1 students, especially because it requires students to write examinations in two units.

Specifications for the IDPA were designed especially for Level 1 students, research were done on the problems, habits and likes of this level of student. The IDPA did not expect students to write any exams, but asked them to complete two externally verified units. Edexcel also performs an External Verification of two pre-determined units during February or March of each academic year.

Philosophy

The philosophy on which the Foundation GVNQ in PA was built were sound Educational Principles as proposed and discussed by Maslow, Petty, Berne and Kolb and taught in Teacher Training courses. These principles are concerned with how to learn and learning processes and not with involving or engaging students. It is not effective with students who do not want to learn and whom do not know how to learn. Neither Petty nor Kolb practise their teaching in Further Educational Institutions, although they write about teaching in such places with great authority. Their writings and philosophies are not in touch with the students they supposedly write for, but are excellently suited to students in a Higher Educational Set-up, students who are not suffering major personal problems, are not hampered by a lack of basic skills, students who know how and more importantly *want* to learn.

When designing the IDPA course, I changed the philosophy the course was based on from the dogmatic educational approach to a much more active learning approach. This course was centred on and around the students and their needs and was mainly concerned with empowering them and putting them in control of their own learning and subsequently of their own lives. I was able to apply theatrical techniques to the design and facilitating of the course and used interactive theatre genres like *forum theatre* to change the pedagogy and skills facilitating on the course.

Theatre Theorists that I referred to are Schechner, Goffmann, Butler, Phelan, Stern and Henderson whom all state that every day activities, all human action, gender and imitation are performance. The theatre practitioners I was influenced by was Aristotle, Artaud, Brecht, Heathcote and Boal. All of these practitioners were looking at ways to involve the audience in the spectacle and, apart from Aristotle, to mobilise them for some sort of revolution. I also used ideas, e.g. problem-solving education, from Freire's writings.

Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed is concerned with the empowering of his audience members by transforming them from spectators to spect-actors. This transformation is achieved when the spectators act, forever throwing off their oppression, a transformation which is not reversible.

Level 1 students are oppressed by their lack of basic and life skills, as well as poor prospects and low education expectancy. The first step to improvement is getting students to recognise the oppression and then commit to transformation[123]. By getting students to act on these oppressions i.e. **take** the first step to improvement, students are transformed to spect-actors who shake off the oppression. This success and involvement encourages students to achieve more and enables them to succeed in their goals. The IDPA is thus concerned with the students and their wellbeing and development as opposed to the Foundation GNVQ in PA who was concerned with a process of learning.

Boal's theatre techniques were also used to facilitate the acquiring of amongst others, problem solving and social skills, as well as *forum theatre* forming the base of lesson planning. Heathcotian and Artaudian ideas of an interactive changeable communicative space, student-centred learning, tasked-based pedagogy, Freire's investigative pedagogy, student-teacher and teacher-student dialogue and relationship, Aristotle's enjoyable imitative learning, Brecht's self-

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[123] See **Chapter 7.5 Teaching as Revolution**

analysis together with Boal's spect-actor all contributed to the overall success of the course.

Enrolment

Any enrolling lecturer, knowledgeable or not, was allowed to enrol students on the Foundation GNVQ in PA in 2002/3. The result was that I ended up with a large number of students who thought that they enrolled for a media course. This caused a lot of trouble on the first day and they left after only a couple of hours on the course. Students were not tested and I was not aware of their basic skills level. It turned out that most of the students were not suited to a Level 1 course, with many of them having troubled backgrounds and a history of run-ins with the police.

For the IDPA in 2003/4 I made sure that I was the only lecturer allowed to enrol any students. Other lecturers were allowed to conduct preliminary interviews, but I made it clear that I was the only one allowed to enrol[124]. All students were also subject to an Initial Assessment test which tested their basic skills level and their suitability for the IDPA course. Only students who satisfied the strict enrolment criteria were allowed to enrol. Despite these stringent measures a couple of troublesome[125] students were still enrolled, but serious behavioural problems can not always be screened during an interview. The correct enrolment procedures ensured better informed and prepared students and made a huge difference to the Level 1 course.

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[124] This approach implies a lot of work for me, especially if you take in consideration that every lecturer is on duty at the enrolment desk for a certain amount of time per day, regardless of course. However, I think that this is a sustainable solution as students are informed about the course at the desk by the enrolling lecturer and then immediately sent of for Initial Assessment testing if they display an interest. Since all lecturers have to be in for full days, enrolling lecturers inform me when a prospective student has been sent for an IA test and I would come interview them afterwards. If I am not available, enrolling lecturers make an appointment for the prospective student to see me another time. I think that this approach is sustainable if all lecturers follow this approach. The only duty of the enrolling lecturer at the desk is thus the sharing of basic course information, while the responsibility and decision making is handed over to the course leader.

[125] Even though most of the students enrolled were enthusiastic and prepared to work, all of these students displayed some behavioural problems at the start. Level 1 courses are designed for "difficult" students and one of the purposes of the course is to teach them the necessary life and basic skills to progress.

Course Design and Structure

The Foundation GNVQ in PA was designed together with the Curriculum and Programme Manager of Performing Arts and we all drew on our collective expertise to try and set up a course suitable for Level 1 students. Because none of us had any concrete experience in designing a Level 1 course, we based most of our assumptions and decisions on educational principles designed for FE institutions. The course structure was based upon the three main Performing Arts disciplines, namely Dance, Drama, Singing and Music, as well as Art and basic skills classes.

For the IDPA I designed the course drawing on my experience of the 2002/3 Level 1 students as well as theatrical techniques. The course was more student-centred and designed to aid and empower students to achieve their full potential. Structurally the course based was on five Performing Arts disciplines, namely Dance, Drama, Singing, Music and Media. It still included Art, as well as other vocational sessions centred on preparing students for jobs in the Performing Arts Sector. Basic Skills were embedded in order to help students improve on them.

The main problems for the Foundation GNVQ in PA were the students' attendance, class numbers, enrolment and unsuitable criteria. I tried to rectify all of these during the design and structure of the IDPA. I found a better suited course, improved the enrolment criteria and based the course on a philosophy better suited to the students needs. I was not able to do anything about class numbers, despite numerous pleas to the executive board to lower the class numbers for Level 1 students.

Groups and Numbers

Both courses had a Music and a Drama group during the course of both academic years, the Drama group had a higher drop out rate than the music group. During 2002/3 twelve students finished the year with five students in the

Drama group and the remaining eight in the Music group. Twenty students completed the IDPA in 2003/4 with eight students achieving in Drama and twelve students achieving in Music.

Aims

There were four main aims for the Foundation GNVQ in PA. They were

- Cater for the Level 1 sector and provide students with the necessary basic and life skills to succeed in higher vocational courses and areas.

- Encourage and aid students to progress to a Level 2 course.

- Improve Basic and Life Skills to improve the students' quality of life.

- Boost Performing Arts enrolment figures to receive more funding and optimise room utilisation.

The aims for the IDPA were exactly the same, apart from a fifth aim that I added based on the poor results of the Foundation GNVQ in PA. This aim was as follows:

- Engage and interest the students in wanting to learn as well as be responsible for their own learning. Most important to achieve.

Sadly, the Foundation GNVQ in PA was unsuccessful in all of the aims and objectives I set out. The IDPA, however, achieved success in all five aims and objectives.

Retention

The following graph illustrates the difference in retention between the Foundation GNVQ in PA and the IDPA.
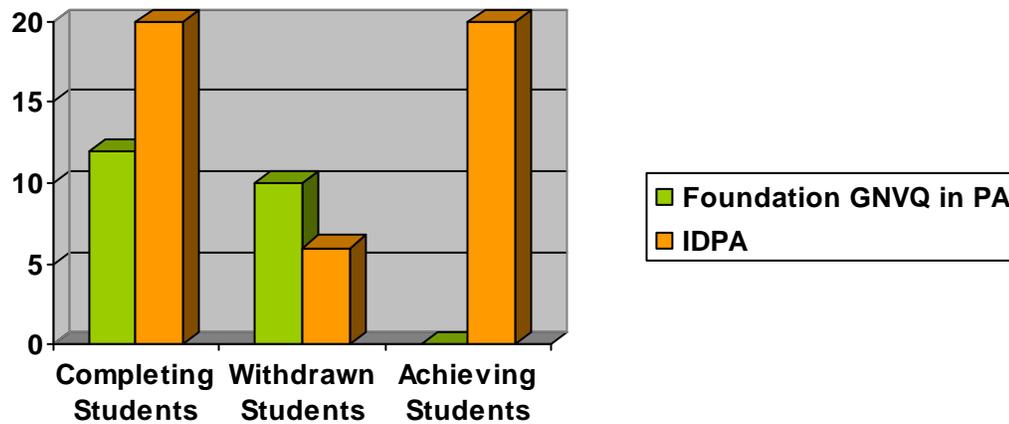
Figure 7: Retention Data 2002 – 2004

The enrolment total for the IDPA, despite a stricter enrolment process, was slightly higher than that of the Foundation GNVQ in PA, as were the number of completing students. Fewer students were withdrawn from the IDPA and more students achieved on this course.

Achievement

Achievement for Level 1 courses can be measured in three ways, firstly with the results for the course, secondly with the results of basic skills and thirdly with the acquiring of life skills which translates to progression.

These statistics for the Foundation GNVQ in PA and the IDPA can be illustrated as follows:
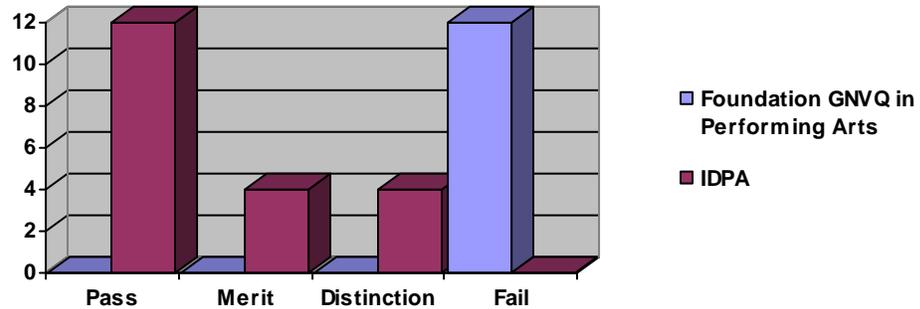
All of the IDPA students completed the course successfully with twelve students achieving a pass, four students achieving a merit and four students achieving a distinction. All of the Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts students failed.
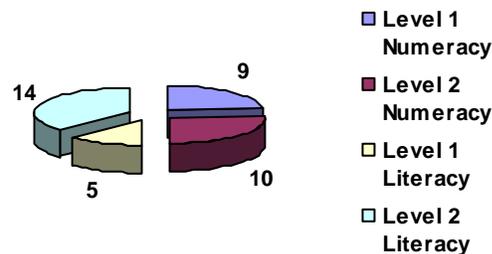
Figure 9: Basic Skills: IDPA

Not one of the students on the Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts achieved basic skills. All of the IDPA students increased their skills level. *Figure 9* illustrates the outcome of the City and Guilds Literacy and Numeracy Qualifications. Fourteen students achieved Level 2 literacy and 5 students were successful at Level 1 literacy. Nine students passed Level 2 numeracy and 10 students passed Level 1 numeracy. The student who did not write the examination still increased a skill level in both literacy and numeracy.
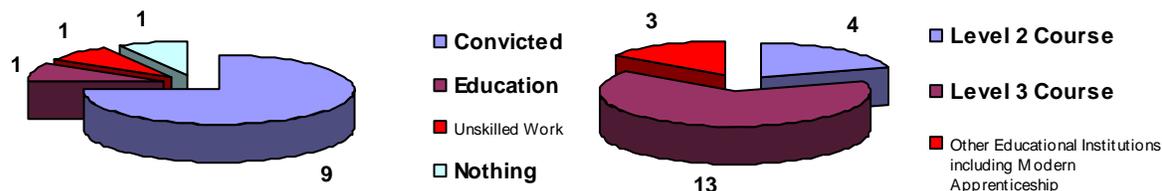
Figure 10: Progression for Foundation GNVQ in PA and IDPA

Figure 10 illustrates the Level 1 students. Nine students on the Foundation GNVQ in PA were convicted, one continued with education, one is busy with and unskilled job and one is not doing anything. Of the contrasting IDPA students, four progressed to a Level 3 course, thirteen progressed to the Level 2 course and four is continuing their education at other educational institutions and businesses in the case of the apprenticeship.

Success Rate

The success rate for successful completion of the IDPA was 100% while the success rate for successful achievement of the Foundation GNVQ was 0 %. Success rates for Basic Skills (based on qualification results) were 0% for Foundation GNVQ in PA in contrast with the 95% success rate in the IDPA.

Students

Students on the Foundation GNVQ in PA did not get a lot out of their course and there are consequently no achievers that one can highlight.

On the IDPA, all students excelled in something, but I will continue to highlight a few extra special accomplishments: Students completing additional dance courses that are Level 3 equivalents; students participating in professional dance shows. Students choreographing solos for professional dance shows and aiding with choreographing end of year shows, A student winning an Annual College

Award; students achieving Basic Skills two levels higher than when they enrolled, successful screenings of movies and successful shows, being asked to perform in Creative Arts week, successful collaboration with outside artists, *Flow Sharpe* and progressing to higher levels as high as Level 3.

National Benchmarks

The English Government sets National Benchmarks for every course and qualification each academic year. National Benchmarks is an alternative and a somewhat controversial[126] way to test whether a course measures up to national expectations. Should a course fall below these statistics, it does not meet the minimum requirements set out by the government and the course will need to change in order to try and meet the goals. National Benchmarks are concerned with the Retention, Achievement and overall Success of a course. Success is calculated by dividing the number of achievers by the number of students retained on a course.

The National Benchmark for GNVQ Performing Arts in 2002/3 was 74% for Retention, 72% for Achievement and 53% for Success. The GNVQ in PA's retention was only 63%, while there was no Success or Achievement Rates.

Because the IDPA qualification is new, there will only be National Benchmarks[127] set for the 2004/5 academic year. However, if you compare the statistics to the National Benchmarks for the GNVQ Performing Arts, one gets an idea of how successful the course was. With a 77% Retention figure it is 5 % higher than the benchmark, the 100% Achievement statistic is 28% higher and the 77% Success

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[126] Lots of criticism and complaints have been received and made against the National Benchmarks, as they are set considerably higher than the numbers achieved by most courses. Very few courses thus achieve the National Benchmarks and some FE colleges disregard it as a measurement of success and set their own yearly benchmarks for a course.
[127] Please refer to **Appendix Q** for more in-depth analysis of all of the Level 1 courses offered by West Thames compared to the available National Benchmarks in **Appendix H**.

is 24% higher than the benchmark set for the 2002/3 Level 1 Foundation GNVQ in PA.

Comparison with other Level 1 courses

To put the results of the two Performing Art courses in context, I will compare it with other Level 1 courses offered at West Thames College, since the student demographic remains the same.

The other departments at West Thames College that also run Level 1 courses, have mixed success rates. One of the more successful Level 1 courses at West Thames is run by the Art and Design Department and is called the GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design. Students on the Art and Design course are involved with a more unstructured creative course, and the course is designed based on educational theory.

The course consists out of four basic skills session per week, two literacy and two numeracy. Furthermore, the students have one tutorial session per week and the rest of their time is divided into the different art disciplines taught, e.g. ceramics, drawing, painting and Computer Aided Design (CAD).

The course is run on the premise that students do little or no written work in their practical sessions, so that they can experiment and concentrate on acquiring the required art skills. Written evaluations, essays and research are done in one literacy session per week, while planning occurs during tutorial time. With this they aim to complete the Adult Learning Cycle.

Results achieved on this course are not constant[128], with some years achieving some success and other's none. Comparison between the successful years and the IDPA results favours the Performing Arts course. As the IDPA has only run for

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[128] See **Appendix H** and **Appendix R**

a year, it is not possible to do a full comparison, but I am confident that it will keep up the success rates as the course was designed for and around the students' and their needs.

Conclusion

Both courses were plagued by problems not related to course design or philosophy, but that is to be expected at a Level 1 course. A lot of the sessions remained the same, e.g. drama, art, dance, but the method of teaching changed. The pedagogy change meant a power shift from the lecturer to the student as practised by Augusto Boal in his **Theatre of the Oppressed**. The student was empowered and given the responsibility to create and manage his own learning instead of passively watching the teacher. By empowering and interactively involving the student, the student wanted more responsibility and the course became student driven instead of lecturer driven. The students became actively involved in their own learning and the whole classroom was utilised as an interactive space.

The success of the interactive course was not only evident in the behaviour of the students and the change of emphasis in the course (i.e. change from lecturer centred to student centred), but also in the achievement statistics.

Chapter 12: Conclusion and Recommendation

I started off this thesis by asking three questions:

1. Is it possible to design a Performing Arts course based on theatrical conventions and principles within a British Further Educational institution that still adheres to all of the criteria set out by the governing bodies?

2. Would such a course be more successful than one based on educational principles and theories?

3. Which interactive theatre techniques can be used to teach such a course?

These questions have been answered through out the course of this project and I will now continue to address each question briefly.

1. Is it possible to design a Performing Arts course based on theatrical conventions and principles within a British Further Educational institution that still adheres to all of the criteria set out by the governing bodies?

A course (Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts) has been designed using ideas from theatre theorists, anthropologists, theatre practitioners and a revolutionary educator. The course design and structure had its roots in the ideas of all of the discussed theorists and practitioners, but the main success of the course was the adopted pedagogy based on the theatrical ideas and practises put forward by these people. Theatrical techniques used to facilitate the learning of skills and problem solving were supported by applying Heathcotian and Freirean ideas such as task-based and problem solving education, acceptance of students based on who they are and a constant

interactive dialogue between lecturer and student to determine student's needs. The course drew heavily on ideas put forward by Boal and his spectator transforming into a spect-actor.

All of the Externally Verified units of the Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts have been passed by the External Verifier on a visit to a college, praising the innovativeness of methods used. Grades awarded to Externally Verified Units by lecturers were upheld by the External Verifier during sampling. The twenty retained students all passed the course and the retention, achievement and success rates were the highest Level 1 results in the college. It also surpassed the National Benchmark set out for the Foundation GNVQ in PA.

2. Would such a course be more successful than one based on educational principles and theories?

The conclusion drawn from comparing the courses on the basis of retention, achievement, success rate, governing body, national benchmarks, philosophy, aims, governing body, enrolment, course design and structure, groups and numbers, students, basic skills and life skills is that the Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts was the more successful course.

3. Which interactive theatre techniques can be used to teach such a course?

The course drew heaviest on techniques used by Augusto Boal. The idea of turning a spectator into a spect-actor was the starting point of the investigation into finding suitable techniques to teach. *Forum Theatre* was the most used concept and also the underlying philosophy of the course: students are allowed to act out solutions and suggestions to problems set out by the joker/facilitator and at times by the students themselves. As *Forum Theatre* formed the base for the course, it also formed the format for lessons. By allowing students to find

solutions through doing and investigation, they discovered their own strengths and weaknesses, acquired and applied new skills, gained self-confidence and consequently shook off oppression. Other concepts used by Boal also formed part of the pedagogy. *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*, Image *Theatre, Newspaper Theatre, Invisible Theatre, Myth Theatre* and *Analytical Theatre* were all used in some way to explain, encourage, facilitate or educate.

Part of the newly created pedagogy for the Level 1 students included interactive, multi-purpose and changeable classrooms where the whole space was used to aid discovery and teaching. Teacher-student and student-teacher communication (dialogues) was an important part of self-discovery, but also discovering the needs, circumstances and desires of each person. Communication allowed lecturers to design assignments and choose themes that would interest and suit the needs of the students, while personal contact also helped all involved to accept one another for whom they are, not where they come from or what they know.

Self-analysis formed a big part of the pedagogy, however, the accent was on what students were doing right and how to help them excel even more, instead of focussing on negative aspects.

Recommendation

Students with learning difficulties and bad educational experiences are quite often ostracised and viewed as lazy, difficult, stupid or useless as they might display behavioural difficulties, literacy problems, poor punctuality and low class participation. Students without learning difficulties but with poor basic skills are often similarly characterised with the same problems and difficulties. Some of the problems and difficulties can usually be traced back to the fact that they are embarrassed about not being able to read or do math and since they cannot express themselves in different ways, this embarrassment may show itself in the

form of aggression, truancy, absence, refusal to co-operate or complete work and general unaccepted classroom behaviour. They have negative self-esteem, believing that they cannot achieve academically because they have been told this repeatedly. Students are forced to accommodate an educational system that is unsuited to their needs; and this leads to poor punctuality, class participation, bad attendance and a general dislike of education.

Students like these also deserve a fair chance to obtain an education. A system like the IDPA will be far better suited to their needs as it is student-centred, offers alternative assessment methods, vocational application of theory learned, task-based assignments, interactive learning environment and support. No educational system should ever have only one accepted pedagogy, but should cater for the needs of all students. I am thus not in favour of abolishing what is generally accepted as formal education, but suggesting that interactive learning courses should be taught alongside the more traditional academic qualifications. The IDPA proved that such an interactive learning course with alternative assessment does not imply that students obtain qualifications by drawing and painting[129], but by improving basic and life skills, in some cases with three levels. Running more courses like this will allow all students to have a far chance at obtaining the necessary basic and life skills needed to succeed.

It should be noted that there is a big difference between using Performing Arts techniques to teach and teaching Performing Arts. An interactive learning environment is possible in all subjects across the curriculum. Please refer to **Appendix S** for an example of the application of the principles of the course to another subject.

In South Africa we have a situation where a large part of the population is illiterate. Adults are quite often afraid of going to basic skills classes, mostly due

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[129] The general view is that alternative assessment makes it easy for students to achieve and that students do not have to work in order to obtain passes.

to the fact that they are afraid of failure and do not believe that they can achieve anything. Many schools have the problem that pupils' basic skills are not up to standard[130], but yet they are passed from one year to the next without gaining the required basic skills to complete the year. Higher educational institutions consequently end up with students that have such a variety of basic skills levels, that students are tested upon application to ascertain their level of skills.

An interactive learning environment might be the solution to draw adults to skills classes where they participate and achieve. Similarly, an interactive learning environment might suit those scholars with poor basic skills better than the narrative education currently delivered in schools.

Unfortunately interactive courses are expensive to fund, as the student-teacher ratio is much lower than that of a normal classroom. However, the implementation of interactive learning courses alongside traditional formal education might give all South Africans an equal chance of achieving academic success.

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[130] Western Cape Educational Authority Afrikaans Workshop on Standards for Grades 6, 7, 8 and 9 in February and March 2005.

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Appendix A

Entry onto a course in a college is dependent on various factors. Some courses require a certain number of GCSE's at a certain grade, while others judge students on Initial Assessment Tests[131], portfolios, auditions, interviews or experience. A number of options are available to students, no matter what grades they achieved in their GCSE's. They usually have a choice between an academic or vocational course in their chosen field of interest. The British Educational System works on an inclusion basis, they aim to provide for everyone and not to exclude students based on lack of qualifications.

The courses offered by a college are thus divided into levels according to difficulty and according to the entry criteria. E.g. In order to gain entry to an A-Level Course, which is classified as Level 3, a student would need at least 5 GCSE at grade A to C. If a student failed to meet the entry qualifications, he/she would go to a Level 2 or Level 1 course.

The Post-GCSE Courses start at Entry Level, which can be divided in Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3. An Entry Level course would suit a student whom failed to achieve in GCSE's. Entry Level Courses provide lot of support, both educational and therapeutical and is aimed to improving student's basic skills so that they can progress to Level 1. The support is in the form of highly trained staff that accompanies the students from class to class and support both lecturer and student.

Level 1 Courses are for students that scored E's and F's in their GCSE Exam. Level 1 Courses still offer a high level support, but there is only provision for 3 hours of support on these courses in contrast to the 6+ hours of support on the entry level courses. Level 1 Courses are still aimed at improving basic and life skills, but on successful completion of the course, students are awarded a Diploma. This Diploma is equivalent to three GCSE's at D-Grade. They are also more vocational than Entry Level Courses.

Level 2 Courses' entry requirements are at least three GCSE's on D Grade. There is no extra support at this level and students move on to do Key Skills instead of Basic Skills. The Diploma awarded on the successful completion of such a course is equivalent to five GCSE's at Grade A – C. Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 courses' duration is one year.

Level 3 Courses are divided into academic and vocational courses and are offered over two years. Academic courses are A-Level courses in which students choose four Subjects out of the following four fields: Business; IT; Humanities and Science. Vocational Courses are courses that focus specifically on the students' interest, e.g. Performing Arts, Media or Music and works on the same basis as Level 1 and Level 2 Diploma Courses. On the Completion of a Vocational Level 3 Course, students receive a diploma that is equivalent to three A-Levels.

Level 4 Courses are equivalent to Year 1 and Year 2 of a university degree. These courses are thus classified as Higher Education and entry requirements consist of A-Level or A-Level Equivalent Qualifications. Students are also required to provide a portfolio or pass an audition; students can thus also gain access to these courses through experience.

If a student does not have any qualifications, he/she takes an Initial Assessment Test and is entered based on the outcome there off. For the Entry Level and Level 1 Courses, students have to take the Initial Assessment Test during enrolment, so that lecturers can identify different students' needs and facilitate the learning of basic skills accordingly.

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[131] Initial Assessment Tests are designed to ascertain the Literacy and Numeracy Level of a prospective student.

Appendix B

Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Attention-Deficit /Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)

Also commonly known as Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD) since 1980, until the American Psychiatric Association officially redefined and renamed the disorder in 1994.

AD/HD can be divided into three subtypes, according to the main features associated with the disorder, namely Inattention, Hyperactivity and Impulsivity. The subtypes are *Combined Type* (multiple symptoms of inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity), *Predominantly Inattentive Type* (multiple symptoms of inattention with few, if any of the other two features) and *Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive Type* (multiple symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity with few, if any, symptoms of inattention).

Student suffering from AD/HD can often have trouble sitting down, have a short attention span, are easily distracted, seeks attention, restless or fidgety behaviour, act without thinking, interrupt others, engage in risk-like behaviour or speak out of turn.

Symptoms like those mentioned above, not only hampers the student's development and learning, but it also influences the learning and the learning environment for other students.

(Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Organisation. 2003)

Dyscalcula

Mathematical Learning Disability

Student experiences difficulty solving arithmetic problems and grasping mathematical concepts.

Dysgraphia

Writing Learning Disability

Student experiences difficulty forming letters of writing within a defined space.

Dyslexia

Language-based Learning Disability

Student experiences difficulty understanding words, sentences or paragraphs. Also a reading disability where students experience difficulty recognising and decoding words.

(Coping.Ord. 2004)

Appendix C

Petty advises that the first step in course planning is deciding upon which of the three modes of teaching you would use in the course (Petty. 2001: 381):

- Class Teaching: Where learning is teacher lead and all the students learn the same things at more or less the same rate.

- Resource-based Learning – Where all the students learn the same things but at different rates.

- Self-directed Learning – Where all the students learn different things at different rates.

The next step is to write Schemes of Work according to the specifications. Schemes of Work are documents that record the planning of the course. It records the content, resources, rooms, aims and objectives of every session. Petty (2001: p 393) urges that Schemes of Work should ideally only be done after assessing learner's needs, as it may be a "*disaster"* otherwise.

The final step is deciding upon which form of assessment you are going to use to measure your students' achievements. Petty (2001: p 401) divides assessment methods into two main groups: formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment is an ongoing assessment method, i.e. continually assessing student learning. Summative assessment, also referred to as final assessment, usually takes place at the end of a course to test what the learner can do.

Petty (2001: p 401) also differentiates between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment. Norm-referenced assessment "*compares candidates with each other and rewards the best*". These assessments show how each student achieves compared with the norm of the group. Criterion-reference assessment "*measures what the candidate can do*" and awards students a pass if they succeed and a fail if they are unsuccessful.

Formative Assessment is used for the day to day assessing of students. Petty (2001: p 402) argues that this form of assessment should be criterion-referenced, as the intention is to test what students can or cannot do. It thus checks the learning of students and is helpful for both lecturer and student as it can indicate pace and problem-areas. It also creates Resource-based Learning and differentiation opportunities.

Summative assessment that takes place at the end of the year, usually is criterion-referenced, but can be a combination of criterion and norm-based referencing. The continuously assessed Coursework students complete during the year can form part of summative assessment.

Scheme of Work 2004-05

	Programme / Course/ Level /Year:		Notes:	**Appendix D**
	Qualification aim & awarding body:			*West Thames College in Hounslow*
	Lecturer(s):			

Session	Topic / module	Main intended outcomes: skills or knowledge. Include Basic Skills and ILT opportunities.	Main activities: show variety of methods.	Differentiated assessment methods: how will you check their learning?	Main resources and materials to be used. Show variety where practical

Term One

Date	Goal	Action Needed	Date Achieved	Review Date

Additional Comments:

Lecturer Signature

_____

Student Signature

_____

Appendix F

Eric Berne argues that human personality is composed of three ego states. The three ego states are: Parent, Adult and Child, and the interaction between these three states form the basis of transactional analysis theory. Complex interpersonal transactions are easily defined and made understandable by Berne's analysis.

A short description of each state follows

> **Parent**: The Parent represents the recording of external events experience in the first five years of life. These events can be perceived by the child from their parents or from individuals in parent like roles. The Child has no way of filtering the data and records the events without *question or analysis. Examples of recordings: "Never talk to strangers" and "Always chew with your mouth closed".*

> **Child**: The Child represents the recording of internal events associated with the perceived external events. These recordings are the emotions or feelings that accompany an event in the first five years of life. *Examples of recordings: "When the light went out I was really scared" and "The clown at the part was really funny".*

> **Adult**: A child begins to exhibit gross motor activity around one year of age and learns that s/he can control a cup or grab a toy. This is the beginning of the Adult in a child. Adult data is comprised of the ability to differentiate between what s/he see and between what s/he observed (Parent) or felt (Child). This ego state is concerned with evaluation of Parental and Child data, processing and transforming stimuli into information which is processed and filed based on previous experience. *Example: "It is true that pot handles should be turned into the stove" after you see your brother burn himself when he grabbed a pot handle that stuck out from the stove*

A very simplistic summary of the three ego states suggested by Dr. Thomas Harris (2004: http://www.ericberne.com) is as follows:
> Parent – taught concept
> Child – felt concept
> Adult – learned concept.

A communication exchange between two people is referred to as a transaction, where one person initiates a transaction with a transactional stimulus. The response is referred to as a transactional response. Transactional Analysis takes place when the analyst identifies which ego state directed the stimulus and which ego stage in the other person responded.

Complimentary and closed ego states can be illustrated as follows:

Figure 2. Eric Berne's Transactional Analysis

Berne (2004: http://www.ericberne.com) defines a stroke as a unit of recognition, in other words when one person recognizes another person verbally or non-verbally. Berne notes that all people are recognition-hunger and that any stroke, negative or positive is better than no stroke at all.

Transactional analysts use the "I'm OK, You're OK" expression as the basis of their analysis. This reinforces and establishes the value and worth of every person. Analysts thus regard people as "OK" and thus capable of change, growth and interactions.

Appendix G

The compulsory units are:

- Unit 1: Opportunities in Performing Arts
- Unit 2: Skills Development
- Unit 3: Performing Work

The optional units are:

- Unit 4: Working on a Team Event
- Unit 5: Promoting an event
- Unit 6: Extending performance skills
- Unit 7: Providing quality service to customers
- Unit 8: Reviewing performance & entertainment
- Unit 9: Health and Safety
- Unit 10: Preparing for employment

Unit 1: Opportunities in performing arts; Unit 4: Working on a team event and Unit 5: Promoting an event are externally assessed units. The other units are internally graded and verified by postal sampling at the end of the academic year.

In the following section, I will briefly outline each unit's content and assessment structure.

COMPULSORY

Unit 1: Opportunities in performing arts

This externally assessed unit consists of six sections and is concerned with teaching the students about local performances and entertainment, venues and jobs opportunities.

The six sections are:

- jobs and employment;
- where performances happen;
- what events and performances happen;
- who goes to these performances;
- publicity;
- and facilities.

Firstly the students are introduced to these topics in a general way, e.g. they learn about different venues and what performances it can facilitate, what type of publicity is suitable for what event, etc.

Secondly, students study a local venue in relation to job and employment opportunities; the venue itself; the performances it offers; the target audience; publicity and the facilities available. Students record all the gathered information in a booklet provided by Edexcel and then take these booklets into the examination room. The booklet contains questions about the six topics and completion requires both general knowledge of working in the sector and specific knowledge of the local venue studied. Invigilators attach the booklets to the answer sheets during the exam and the booklets make up 50% of the total grade awarded for the unit. Edexcel sends the booklets to centres six weeks before the examination date.

Unit 2: Skills Development

Edexcel divides Performing Arts into the following six categories: dance, drama, music, music technology, technical and production aspects of performance and arts administration and marketing. Students are only allowed to focus on one of the specialist areas and focus on:

- professional practice;
- how to develop skills;
- how to reflect upon their own work;
- and about team work within in the chosen specialist area.

Unit 2 is assessed through the portfolio work of the students and is sampled at the end of the academic year.

Unit 3: Performing Work

This unit is concerned with performance, whether it is solo or in a group. It allows students the opportunity to demonstrate the skills developed in *Unit 2: Skills Development*. Performance covers presentations, performances or events and the rehearsal process is an integral part of this unit.

The unit focuses on teaching students about:

- planning for performance;
- rehearsals;
- performance;
- teamwork;
- and clearing up.

Assessment consists of grading the work portfolio of the students and is sampled at the end of the academic year.

OPTIONAL

Unit 4: Working on a Team Event

Unit 4 allows students to gain experience in the planning and running of events. Students have to work in a team and learn about:

- planning an event;
- working as part of a team;
- running an event;
- and keeping a record of their own work.

Students record all the gathered information and transfer it to a booklet provided by Edexcel. These booklets accompany them into the examination room. The booklet contains questions about the six topics and completion requires both general knowledge of working in the sector and specific knowledge of the local venue studied. Invigilators attach the booklets to the answer sheets during the exam and the booklets make up 50% of the total grade awarded for the unit. Edexcel sends the booklets to centres six weeks before the examination date.

Unit 5: Promoting an event

This unit is concerned with publicity and target audiences and requires students to design and create promotional materials for a local event. Promotion of performances worked on in *Unit 3: Performing work* is allowed.

Lecturers cover the following areas with students before they start to promote their chosen event:

- The purposes of promotion;
- audiences;
- how to promote events;
- and how to create promotional materials

Students record all the gathered information in a booklet provided by Edexcel and then take these booklets into the examination room. The booklet contains questions about the six topics and completion requires both general knowledge of working in the sector and specific knowledge of the local venue studied. Invigilators attach the booklets to the answer sheets during the exam and the booklets make up 50% of the total grade awarded for the unit. Edexcel sends the booklets to centres six weeks before the examination date.

Unit 6: Extending performance skills

Students build on general performance skills acquired in *Unit 2: Skills development.* Students are only allowed to focus on one of the six specialist areas, namely dance, drama, music, music technology, technical and production aspects of performance, arts administration and marketing, but they are allowed to choose a different area than before.

Concepts covered in this unit are:

- Specialist skills;
- development of skills;
- performance;
- evaluation;
- and teamwork.

Assessment are both practical and through portfolio work, including records about the student's own skill development.

Unit 7: Providing quality service to customers

Unit 7 introduces students to jobs in customer service, e.g. front-of-house, box office staff, ushers, bar staff. It further more aims to teach students about the type of customer service that the public expect and about the communication and presentation skills necessary to meet these expectations.

Students will concentrate on:

- customer service in practice;
- how to provide customer service;
- and about customer service records.

Students work portfolios are assessed and graded and sampled at the end of the academic year.

Unit 8: Reviewing performance & entertainment

In this unit students are given the opportunity to find out more about the work of others by going to different kinds of events, listening to albums, watching videos, reading reviews and writing their own reviews. Students will learn about:

- reviews;
- how to gather background information before watching a performance;
- how to watch performances/listen to recordings;
- how to discuss performances;
- and how to write reviews.

Assessment and grading are based upon the student's portfolio of work and is verified at the end of the academic year by postal sampling.

Unit 9: Health and Safety

The aim of the unit is to aid the student in identifying hazards and risks faced by people working in the Performing Arts section. Other key issues covered are accident and emergency procedure, keeping and maintaining records and basic Health and Safety law.

Students explore the following five areas.

- common risks and hazards
- ways of reducing risks
- accident and emergency procedures
- and legislation and regulations.

Assessment and grading are based upon the student's portfolio of work and is verified at the end of the academic year by postal sampling.

Unit 10: Preparing for employment

This unit aims to give students the chance to practice and prepare for all four stages of getting a job. Students will learn:

- how to look for jobs;
- how to choose the right job;
- how to apply for a job;
- selection materials;
- and how to prepare for an interview.

Assessment and grading are based upon the student's portfolio of work and is verified at the end of the academic year by postal sampling.

Course Structure and Curriculum

A full time course consists of 16½ hours per week, which can be squeezed into a five-day 9:15 – 15:00 timetable; short days that enable to students to work to their full potential. Only 12 hours per week are dedicated to performing arts sessions, because West Thames College had a policy in 2002/3 that all Level 1 students should have 3 hours of basic skills a week: 1½ hours of Application of Number and 1½ hours of Communications. Every course has a 1½ tutorial session per week and in addition, performing arts courses have a 1½hour-rehearsal slot per week.

The course outline per week is thus as follows:

> 4½ hours (3 sessions) for Drama/Music
> 1½ hours (1 session) for Dance
> 1½ hours (1 session) for singing
> 1½ hours (1 session) for art
> 1½ hours (1 session) for reviews
> 1½ hours (1 session) for special effects
> ___
> 12 Hours
> 1½ hours (1 session) for Application of Number
> 1½ hours (1 session) for Communications
> 1½ hours (1 session) for tutorial
> ___
> 5½ Hours
>
> ___
> Total Course Hours 16½ Hours

Every Performing Arts Course's timetable also has an additional 1½ hour slot dedicated to rehearsals. These 1½ hours does not count towards total course hours, but are there as a reminder for students that they will be required to stay after college hours at some stage for rehearsals.

Unit 2: Skills Development; Unit 3: Performing Work and *Unit 6: Extending performing skills* were to be delivered in the three Drama/Music sessions per week. *Unit 1: Opportunities in performing arts* and *Unit 4: Working on a team event* was to be delivered during the tutorial slot and *Unit 8: Reviewing performance & entertainment* were to be delivered during the review session. Although Dance and Singing were not the chosen specialist area, the lecturers would follow the specifications for *Unit 2: Skills Development.*

The Team

The team for delivering the Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts was fifteen strong and made up of lecturers from four different departments: Art and Design, Performing Arts, Music and Learning Support. All lecturers would report to the relevant group tutor, who would then report to me as course leader.

Four specialist Learning Support lecturers delivered communications and application of number as well as aiding me with the delivery of the two externally assessed units. Music was taught by two lecturers, one lecturer taught basic notation for one session per week, while the other taught music technology for the remaining two sessions. Drama was also taught by two lecturers, one lecturer focusing on improvisation for one session per week, while the other focused on performance-based work for two sessions per week.

Two Art lecturers facilitated the arts sessions, a lecturer from Art and Design taught the music group, while a costume designer taught art to the drama group. Each group had their own dance teacher. The same singing teacher and Assistant Lecturer Demonstrator taught both groups singing and Special Effects respectively.

Appendix H

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success	National Benchmarks		
				Retention	Achievement	Success

1999/2000

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success	Retention	Achievement	Success
Information Technology	75.93%	56.10%	42.59%			
Caring for Young Children	100%	100%	100%			
GNVQ in Foundation Business	61.45%	25%	15.38%			
Foundation GNVQ in Engineering	100%	59%	59%			
NVQ in Manufacture	0%	0%	0%			
GNVQ Fndtn in Health and Social Care	81.82%	44.44%	36.36%			

2000/2001

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success	Retention	Achievement	Success
Information Technology	100%	25%	25%			
Caring for Young Children	60%	33.33%	20%			
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	66.67%	33.33%	22.22%	74	78	58
GNVQ Foundation in Business	27.27%	0%	0%			
GNVQ Fndtn in Health and Social Care	88.89%	75%	66.67%			
Foundation GNVQ in Engineering	54.55%	16.67%	9.09%			
GNVQ in Information Technology	41.18%	71.43%	29.41%			
GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism	0%	0%	0%			

2001/2002

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success	Retention	Achievement	Success
Information Technology	62.5%	100%	62.5%			
Engineering Skills Introductory	63.16%	91.67%	57.89%			
GNVQ Fndtn in Health and Social Care	72.73%	87.5%	63.64%			
GNVQ in Information Technology	75%	75%	56.52%			
ABC Engineering	63%	92%	58%	84	86	73
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	0%	0%	0%			

2002/2003

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success	Retention	Achievement	Success
Engineering Skills Introductory	50%	100%	50%	40	83.33	33.33
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	100%	40%	40%	77.03	83.79	64.54
GNVQ Fndtn in Information and Comm	71.43%	74.55%	53.25%	81.08	80.00	53.73
Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts	63%	0%	0%	74.12	72.49	53.73
ABC Engineering	50%	100%	50%	40	83	33
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	100%	40%	40%			

2003/2004

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success	Retention	Achievement	Success
GNVQ Fndtn in Information and Comm	62%	87.10%	54%			
Trade Skills for School	50%	100%	50%			
Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts	77%	100%	77%			
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	0%	0%	0%			

Where no Benchmark appear, a National Benchmark has not been set for that particular year

National Benchmarking Data for 99/00 to 03/04 as at 10 November 2004: West Thames College

Appendix I

Drama

	Morning		Lunch	Afternoon
T U E	Communication 9:15 – 10:45	Drama 11:15 – 12:45		Application of Number 1:30 – 3:30
W E D	Art 9:15 – 10:45	Singing 11:15 – 12:45		Drama 1:30 – 3:00
T H U		Tutorial 11:15 – 12:45		FX 1:30 – 3:oo
F R I	Physical Theatre 9:15 – 10:45	Drama 11:15 – 12:45		Physical Theatre 1:30 – 3:00

Music

	Morning		Lunch	Afternoon
T U E	Communication 9:15 – 10:45	Music 11:15 – 12:45		Application of Number 1:30 – 3:30
W E D	Art 9:15 – 10:45	Music 11:15 – 12:45		Communication 1:30 – 3:00
T H U	Music 9:15 – 10:45	Tutorial 11:15 – 12:45		FX 1:30 – 3:oo
F R I		Singing 11:15 – 12:45		Physical Theatre 1:30 – 3:00

Appendix J

Self-Actualisation
- Be enthusiastic and supportive
- Encourage projects and plans
- Be positive about the future
- Promote optimism

Self-esteem (Pride)
- Encourage independence
- Praise when appropriate
- Welcome ideas
- Treat students with dignity

Love & Belonging (Feeling accepted)
- Show that you care
- Promote interaction between students
- Promote a cohesive class climate

Safety and Shelter (Safe from Harm)
- Maintain confidentiality/privacy as necessary
- Treat students fairly
- Observe and store accurate information
- Follow Safety rules when necessary

Physical (Comfort requirements)
- Provide adequate breaks
- Ensure comfort
- Arrange seats according to needs
- Be alert to heating and ventilation requirements

(Mandy Kuijvenhoven, 2003)

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Appendix K

Basic skills are the level of literacy and numeracy skills of a student. For students of Level 1 and Entry courses this is very low and their GCSE English and Mathematics grades will fall between an E and a F. Receiving Basic Skills tuition is thus a key point of being on a Level 1 course, as Basic Skills Levels need to improve in order for a student to progress to the next level.

The literacy or *communication* components consists of ground level skills such as sentence construction, paragraphing, punctuation, capitalisation and comprehension, while numeracy or *Application of Number* (AON) reintroduces and enforces basic principles such as simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. When a student progresses to the next level, they supposedly have achieved level 1 literacy and numeracy, which is equivalent to a GCSE in English and Mathematics at grade D.

At Level 2, students are tutored in Key Skills, which also consist of a Numeracy and a Literacy component. These Key Skills build on the student's basic skills and at the end of a Level 2 course, it is assumed that students' literacy and numeracy skills are equivalent to Mathematics and English GCSE grades A to C. It is thus imperative that the students on the Foundation GNVQ achieved their basic skills in order to progress.

Basic Skills are assessed through taking an Initial Assessment test that consists of literacy and numeracy components. The test can distinguish between Literacy Entry 1 to Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2 and above, as well as between Numeracy Entry 1 to Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2 and above.

The reasons for the low basic skills level of students on a Foundation GNVQ course can be attributed to a number to a number of factors.

- **Non-attendance**: As discussed earlier, non-attendance is the major cause of students not achieving the desired GCSE grades. Unfortunately, this implies that even the brightest students cannot progress unless they have mastered the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to achieve on the next course.

- **Illness**: A number of students miss out on important work during GCSE's because they either fall seriously ill during their last year at school or because they suffer from a physical disability such as epilepsy that causes them to be absent for extended periods of time. Level 1 courses give students such as these a second chance to achieve their educational goals.

- **Trauma:** Some students miss large parts of the academic year due to personal trauma, which ranges from loosing a parent to being in a motorcar accident. Missing school means that they do not practise and better their basic skills level.

- **Learning Disabilities**: A vast number of students achieve low GCSE grades and have a consequent low Basic Skill Level due to crippling learning disabilities such as Dyslexia, Dyscalcula, Dysgraphia. The college environment suits these students better than the school environment, because of advanced learning support centres and the increase of practical work in opposition to written or theoretical work.

Appendix L

Dorothy Heathcote

Heathcote used theatre to create an understanding of a concept which then enabled children to identify the inner truth or meaning. This *inner truth* has to be realised by both teacher and child and will ideally reflect on the condition of an individual, a group or an aspect of life.

This task-based methodology often expected children to perform tasks which were intentionally devoid of emotion in order for repetition to take place. Repetition is necessary for the children to acquire necessary skills. Once these skills have been mastered a different task would be set which allows the children to give their emotions free reign. Heathcote believed that any theatre skills practised without emotion could not generate a situation with learning potential, as theatre does not take place in a vacuum (Heston 2003: 14) Theatrical elements is best discovered in the heat of the moment.

She identified the term *role* as the centre of the learning process and deemed everything else as a symbol or aspect of it. *Role* can be explained as standing in the shoes of "*An Other*" (Heston 2003: 10) By using role, teachers are able to teach across the curriculum, e.g. Heathcote told students that they will be parachuted in to France to infiltrate and aid the French Resistance in two weeks in order to motivate them to learn French.

Role did not begin and end with the children. She also termed the teacher in Role concept where teachers also play different roles, e.g. the narrator who sets the mood or the positive withdrawer who allows the children to improvise without interference. (Heston 2003: 49) She urges teacher to recycle material and use it again, but with a twist. Teachers are responsible for directing the group into diverse arrangements so that the inner-truth becomes known.

The *Mantle of the Expert* is another Heathcotian term which refers to the releasing of latent knowledge and experience in children through theatre techniques like improvisation and role-play. (Heston 2003: 18) During a 1980 BBC North East Programme called **Teacher**, she demonstrates this term by allowing a class of children to run a make believe shoe factory. They assume a *mantle* of expertise while running this factory and through the process learn to solve curriculum problems. Heathcote's child-centred approach creates self-motivation, self-actualisation and self-direction while encouraging a depth of feeling and understanding that allows the children to discover latent knowledge through theatre.

Teachers are ideally seen as servicers and their main role is to create learning situations for others. They are expected to analyse the social health of the class and allow this to guide them through the lesson. Children should always be at the centre of the decision making process and their needs and interests should dictate subject matter. Drama lessons are to be stopped at certain times in order to allow time for reflection.

Teachers have to know themselves in order to know how much power they have and how much they are prepared to relinquish to the class as the teacher image is powerful in the classroom and will dictate the means of communication.(Heston 2003: 40) Teachers have to practise to use this symbol effectively. Classroom semiotics, i.e. symbols and signs, are powerful techniques available to the teacher and encourage a continuous interactive learning environment. The classroom space and they way it is set out is of the utmost importance, the space must have the ability to change as well as offer children various "learning" or work stations. Lesson planning has to occur in depth, but has to remain flexible at the same time in order to best serve the needs of the class.

Excerpt from Basic Skills Pack demonstrating the recording of embedded basic skills.

Speaking and Listening

Ref	Skill	Ass	Detail	Sign
SLlr/L1.1	Listen for and identify relevant information from explanations and presentations on a range of straightforward topics.			
SLlr/L1.2	Listen for and understand explanations, instructions and narratives on different topics in a range of contexts.			
SLlr/L1.3	Use strategies to clarify and confirm understanding (e.g. facial expressions, body language and verbal prompts)			
SLlr/L1.4	Provide feedback and confirmation when listening to others.			
SLlr/L1.5	Make contributions relevant to the situation and the subject.			
SLlr/L1.6	Respond to questions on a wide range of topics.			

Ref	Skill	Ass	Detail	Sign
SLc/L1.1	Speak clearly in a way which suits the situation.			
SLc/L1.2	Make requests and ask questions to obtain information in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.			
SLc/L1.3	Express clearly statements of fact, explanations, instructions, accounts and descriptions.			
SLc/L1.4	Present information and ideas in a logical sequence and include detail and develop ideas where appropriate.			

Appendix N

Course Specifications

COMPULSORY UNITS

Unit 1: Starting Work in the Performing Arts
Internally Assessed, Externally Verified

Students will be able to:
- Explore a variety of jobs available in the Performing Arts sector, including jobs in Dance, Drama, Music, Performance Technology and Arts administration.
- Investigate the different jobs needed to put on a public performance and the skills and qualifications needed to do those jobs.
- Investigate the different types of organisation in the Performing Arts sector.
- Explore the effect different jobs would have on your lifestyle, lifestyle changes needed to do a certain job and an understanding of the relationship between your lifestyle and a specific job.

Unit 2: Working in the Performing Arts
Internally Assessed, Externally Verified

Students will be able to:
- Investigate the meaning of working in the Performing Arts sector.
- Explore what it is like being at work, including terms and conditions of a contract and job.
- Investigate procedures to monitor performance
- Investigate induction process and its function.

Unit 3: Developing Skills in the Performing Arts
Internally Assessed and Verified

Students will be able to:
- Identify the skills needed in each of the Performing Art forms.
- Develop and practise these skills
- Develop team work skills and explore individual contribution.
- Investigate good working practise and how this relates to the newly acquired or developed skills.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT UNITS

Unit 4: Personal Effectiveness

Internally Assessed
Students cannot achieve higher than a pass in this unit.

Students are required to:
- Carry out a personal skills audit
- Investigate the job market of the Performing Arts sector
- Compare their skills to the job market of the Performing Arts sector
- Draw up a Curriculum Vita to present to employers.

Unit 5: Social Responsibility at Work
Internally Verified and Assessed
Students cannot achieve higher than a pass in this unit.

Students are required to:
Recognise the contribution you can make in your working environment.
- Explore the workplace, work environment and the importance of legal systems for protection.
- Investigate the influence on society through exploring environmental issues at work.

Unit 6: Financial Management
Internally Verified and Assessed
Students cannot achieve higher than a pass in this unit.

Students are required to:
- Acquired the knowledge and confidence needed to manage personal money.
- Investigate how money is earned
- Developing personal budget skills.

OPTIONAL UNITS

Unit 7: Performance Administration
Internally Verified and Assessed

Students should be able to:
- Explore the different types of administration required for the successful running of a Performing Arts Venue/Company.
- Investigate roles and systems related to Art Administration
- Practically explore skills needed in Performance Event administration and support.
- Explore three important aspects of administration: Financial Control, Customer Services and Marketing and Promotion.
- Managing Budgets and Cost

Unit 8: Technical Support for Performance
Internally Verified and Assessed

Students should be able to:
- Explore the relationship between technical support and performance
- Develop technical skills and understanding
- Practically experience the role of a technician through the rehearsal process and the role and responsibilities during performance.
- Investigate Health and Safety Procedures
- Take responsibility for the safe operation of equipment.

Unit 9: Individual Repertoire and Showcase
Internally Verified and Assessed

Students should be able to:
- Explore performance material through selection, preparation and performance.
- Perform individually or exhibit technical work.
- Show work to an audience

Unit 10: Showing your Work
Internally Verified and Assessed

Student should be able to:
- Explore what is needed for the successful presentation of performance work as a group.
- Plan in a group and be aware of the requirements for the show piece.
- Perform work to an audience.

The units that I will use to design the new IDPA course are as follows:

Compulsory Units

Unit 1: Starting Work in the Performing Arts
Unit 2: Working in the Performing Arts
Unit 3: Developing Skills in the Performing Arts

Personal Development Units

Unit 4: Personal Effectiveness
Unit 6: Financial Management

Optional Vocational Units

Unit 8: Technical Support for Performance
Unit 9: Individual Repertoire and Showcase
Unit 10: Showing your work

Final Average Grades are to be calculated as follows:

Pass	+ Pass = Pass	
Pass	+ Merit = Pass	
Merit	+ Merit = Merit	
Merit	+ Distinction	= Merit
Distinction	+ Distinction	= Distinction
Pass	+ Distinction	= Merit.

Course Design and Curriculum

West Thames College's framework for Level 1 courses changed for the 2003/2004 academic year. Tutorial time increased from 1½ hours to 3 hours, allowing 1½ hours for group tutorial and 1½ hours for individual tutorial. Support hours increased from the allocated 3½ hours per student to 5 hours per student. There was no change in the course hours of a full-time course, this remained at 16½ hours and there were still no definite guidelines or policy on basic skills.

Drama/Music: Drama/Music is the main discipline in each course and thus requires an extra session. Facilitators will deliver Unit 3: Skills Development, Unit 8: Technical Support for Performance, Unit 9: Individual Repertoire and Showcase; and Unit 10: Showing your Work in these sessions. The sessions will be performance based.

Movement for Actors/Musicians: Dance is one of the Performing Arts disciplines and students need to acquire and develop this skill in order to become successful performers. The units that will be covered in these sessions are: Unit 3: Skills Development, Unit 8: Technical Support for Performance, Unit 9: Individual Repertoire and Showcase; and Unit 10: Showing your Work.

Singing: This is another Performing Arts discipline that students need to develop. The facilitator will deliver the following units during the course of the academic year: Unit 3: Skills Development, Unit 8: Technical Support for Performance, Unit 9: Individual Repertoire and Showcase; and Unit 10: Showing your Work.

Introduction to Media: This is a Performing Arts discipline that includes all the other disciplines as well as introduces an element of media and film. The units that will be covered by this session are: Unit 3: Skills Development, Unit 8: Technical Support for Performance, Unit 9: Individual Repertoire and Showcase; and Unit 10: Showing your Work.

Art: Art is divided into two sections: Art and Design and Computer Aided Design. Each of these sections will run for six months of the year. Students will thus have six months of Art and Design and six months of Computer Aided Design (CAD). CAD improves the Information Technology (IT) skills of the students, as well as introduces them to a different field of Performing Arts. Art and Design improves motor-kinetic skills of the students, as well as introducing them to the designing side of Performing Arts.

Working in Performing Arts: The two externally verified units will be delivered during this session. This will allow me to bring in guest speakers, take the students on trips and organise workshops relating to the Working in Performing Arts (WIPA) specifications. It will also act as basic skills session in the sense that this is the session during which students will be required to do the most written and theoretical work. Basic skills like different reading styles would thus be easily applied to set work. Unit 1: Starting Work in the Performing Arts and Unit 2: Working in the Performing Arts will be completed during the run of these sessions.

Personal Effectiveness: Unit 4: Personal Effectiveness will be covered in this session. I chose this personal development unit because it contributes to the course at a whole, a course which aims to prepare students for a working environment. I also feel that it is an important unit even for students who do not want to continue in Performing Arts, as it teaches students how to compile Curriculum Vitae amongst other important life skills.

Money and the Music Business/Money and Performing Arts: The unit covered in this session is Unit 6: Financial Management. I chose this unit, because I felt that it compliments the rest of the course. It is also important for students to be able to manage their own finances and draw up a budget, the session thus adds to their life skills. AON basic skills can also be applied to this session, e.g. reading from graphs or addition.

Tutorial: I decided to have only one group tutorial per week and not to have a fixed individual tutorial slot.

Rehearsal: This is a session added on to the students' time-table to make up for the amount of extra time spent on rehearsals for shows.

Money and the Music Business/Performing Arts and Working in Performing Arts will be double staffed with qualified facilitators from the Learning Support department. The reason is that those are the classes which would require students to apply the most basic skills, it is thus clear that those are the classes in which students would need the most support. Double staffed classes will allow for individual attention and support.

Shifting the power from lecturer to student would mostly take place in the classroom. In order to ease this shift, all of the sessions (apart from tutorial) are vocational; students would thus be able to try things out in an environment that they feel comfortable in.

The reason for my decision to cover Unit 3, Unit 8, Unit 9 and Unit 10 in all four Performing Arts disciplines is in order to give students the chance to excel in at least one discipline. It also provides them with the opportunity to experiment with disciplines previously unknown to them or in which they struggled. It also gives them the opportunity to achieve to their full potential.

The Team

I would be the Course Leader and also the tutor for the Drama group. The two drama sessions per week as well as WIPA will be facilitated by me.

The Tutor for the other group is a professional dancer with an honours degree in this discipline. She was completing her Teaching Qualification. She is also responsible for facilitating the WIPA session for the music group, as well as facilitating Movement classes for both groups. Although

she has little teaching experience at Level 1, she is dedicated and has a lot of experience of dealing with Dyslexia.

Singing for both groups would be facilitated by a professional opera singer and music teacher. This lecturer has an honours degree in music and although she has no formal teaching qualifications, she has been teaching for years.

A Children's Theatre Specialist with a joint honours degree in Theatre and English would facilitate Introduction to Media. She was part of a Children's Theatre Company for a number of years and branched out into film and media. She is completing her Teaching Qualification.

The lecturer responsible for facilitating the music classes has a Teaching Qualification and years of teaching experience. He is a professional musician and singer and composes for theatre.

Art and Design will be facilitated by a professional costume designer. She has no Teaching Qualification, but she does have an honours degree in Theatre Design. She also has a lot of practical experience.

Personal Effectiveness will be facilitated by a Theatre in Education specialist with a lot of experience teaching Special Needs. She does not have a formal Teaching Qualification, but has years of teaching experience.

Computer Aided Design and Money and the Music Business/Performing Arts will be facilitated by the Assistant Lecturer Demonstrator (ALD). He is a thoroughly experienced technician specialising in Lighting Design and CAD. He has years of experience of budgeting and running theatre venues, but he has no formal Teaching Qualification.

The Learning Support Lecturer that will work with the Music group is a renowned Dyslexia Specialist with the relevant Basic Skills Qualifications. She is also a fully qualified teacher.

For Drama, the Learning Support Lecturer is a Literacy specialist with the relevant Basic Skills Qualifications. She is a fully qualified teacher with years of experience.

IDPA Drama

	Wednesday	Thursday		Friday
9:00 – 10:30	Drama	Dance	9:00 – 10:30	Tutorial
10:45 – 12:15	Personal Development	Singing	10:45 – 12:15	WIPA
12:15 – 14:00	LUNCH	LUNCH	12:15 – 13:00	LUNCH
14:00 – 15:30	Financial Management	Introduction to Media	13:00 – 14:30	Drama
15:30 – 17:00	Art and Design			

IDPA Music

	Wednesday	Thursday		Friday
9:00 – 10:30	Music	Singing	9:00 – 10:30	Tutorial
10:45 – 12:15	Financial Management	Dance	10:45 – 12:15	WIPA
12:15 – 14:00	LUNCH	LUNCH	12:15 – 13:00	LUNCH
14:00 – 15:30	Personal Development	Introduction to Media	13:00 – 14:30	Music
15:30 – 17:00	CAD			

Appendix P

Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts
Enrolment Form

1. Personal Information

Full Name of Student: _____

Preferred to be Called: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/19__

Address: _____

                 _____

                 _____

Mobile Phone Number: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

In Case of Emergency Please Contact

Name: _____

Relation to Student: _____

Phone Number: _____

2. Education Information

English GCSE Grade: _____

Initial Assessment Results:
Literacy: _____
Numeracy: _____
Free Writing: _____
Overall: _____

Learning Difficulties:

Physical Disabilities:

Additional Comments:

Appendix Q

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success

1999/2000

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success
Information Technology	75.93%	56.10%	42.59%
Caring for Young Children	100%	100%	100%
GNVQ in Foundation Business	61.45%	25%	15.38%
Foundation GNVQ in Engineering	100%	59%	59%
NVQ in Manufacture	0%	0%	0%
GNVQ Fndtn in Health and Social Care	81.82%	44.44%	36.36%

2000/2001

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success
Information Technology	100%	25%	25%
Caring for Young Children	60%	33.33%	20%
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	66.67%	33.33%	22.22%
GNVQ Foundation in Business	27.27%	0%	0%
GNVQ Fndtn in Health and Social Care	88.89%	75%	66.67%
Foundation GNVQ in Engineering	54.55%	16.67%	9.09%
GNVQ in Information Technology	41.18%	71.43%	29.41%
GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism	0%	0%	0%

2001/2002

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success
Information Technology	62.5%	100%	62.5%
Engineering Skills Introductory	63.16%	91.67%	57.89%
GNVQ Fndtn in Health and Social Care	72.73%	87.5%	63.64%
GNVQ in Information Technology	75%	75%	56.52%
ABC Engineering	63%	92%	58%
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	0%	0%	0%

2002/2003

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success
Engineering Skills Introductory	50%	100%	50%
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	100%	40%	40%
GNVQ Fndtn in Information and Comm	71.43%	74.55%	53.25%
Foundation GNVQ in Performing Arts	63%	0%	0%
ABC Engineering	50%	100%	50%
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	100%	40%	40%

2003/2004

Title	Retention	Achievement	Success
GNVQ Fndtn in Information and Comm	62%	87.10%	54%
Trade Skills for School	50%	100%	50%
Introductory Diploma in Performing Arts	77%	100%	77%
GNVQ Foundation in Art and Design	0%	0%	0%

Actual Benchmarking Data for 99/00 to 03/04 as at 10 November 2004: West Thames College

Appendix R

A colleague teaching maths at West Thames implemented the ideas and techniques used by the IDPA course in a single lesson in his A-Level Mathematics class. Instead of teaching his students a mathematical equation and requiring them to practise it over and over, he created a problem familiar to the students. The scenario he created was as follows:

> *I have a credit bill for X amount, however, I have only spent Y amount in January. I have not paid my bill for seven months, but luckily my bank does not penalise or charge me for late payment. I am getting married in 9 months time and need to clear my account before then, but I only earn Z amount per month. How did get in this situation and how do I get out?*

As most of his students had mortgages, credit cards, debit cards or student loans, they were familiar with the subject of debt and interest. The lecturer started off his lesson with inviting students to give reasons for the situation the person in the scenario finds himself. He then asked the students how they would solve it. A heavy discussion ensued where the students suggested alternatives, solutions and pointed out the flaws in other's reasoning. When a suitable solution had been obtained, which was agreeable to most of the group, he asked them to try and formulate this solution in mathematical terms. They were able to write up an algebra equation based on the discussion and the problems.

The lecturer gave me the following feedback:

- All students participated in the class
- All students understood the equation
- All students were able to formulate the equation based on the discussion
- His role shifted from teacher to facilitator as the power emphasis shifted from him to the students
- Students took responsibility for their own learning
- Students undertook peer teaching and marking, explaining and checking each other's work.
- Students grasped the equation and mathematical theory quicker through the animated scenario than when he would have explained the theory and taught them the equation.
- He got more feedback from students and was able to check their learning by simply observing.
- Communication took place in class instead of just one way information.
- The Class was enjoyed by both teacher and students.

Figure Three

CREATIVE NEEDS

Cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualisation

SELF ESTEEM
Being respected, recognised, productive

SOCIAL NEEDS
Belonging, being valued, friendship

SAFETY NEEDS
Protection from danger and threat

PHYSICAL NEEDS
Food, water, warmth, shelter, clothing
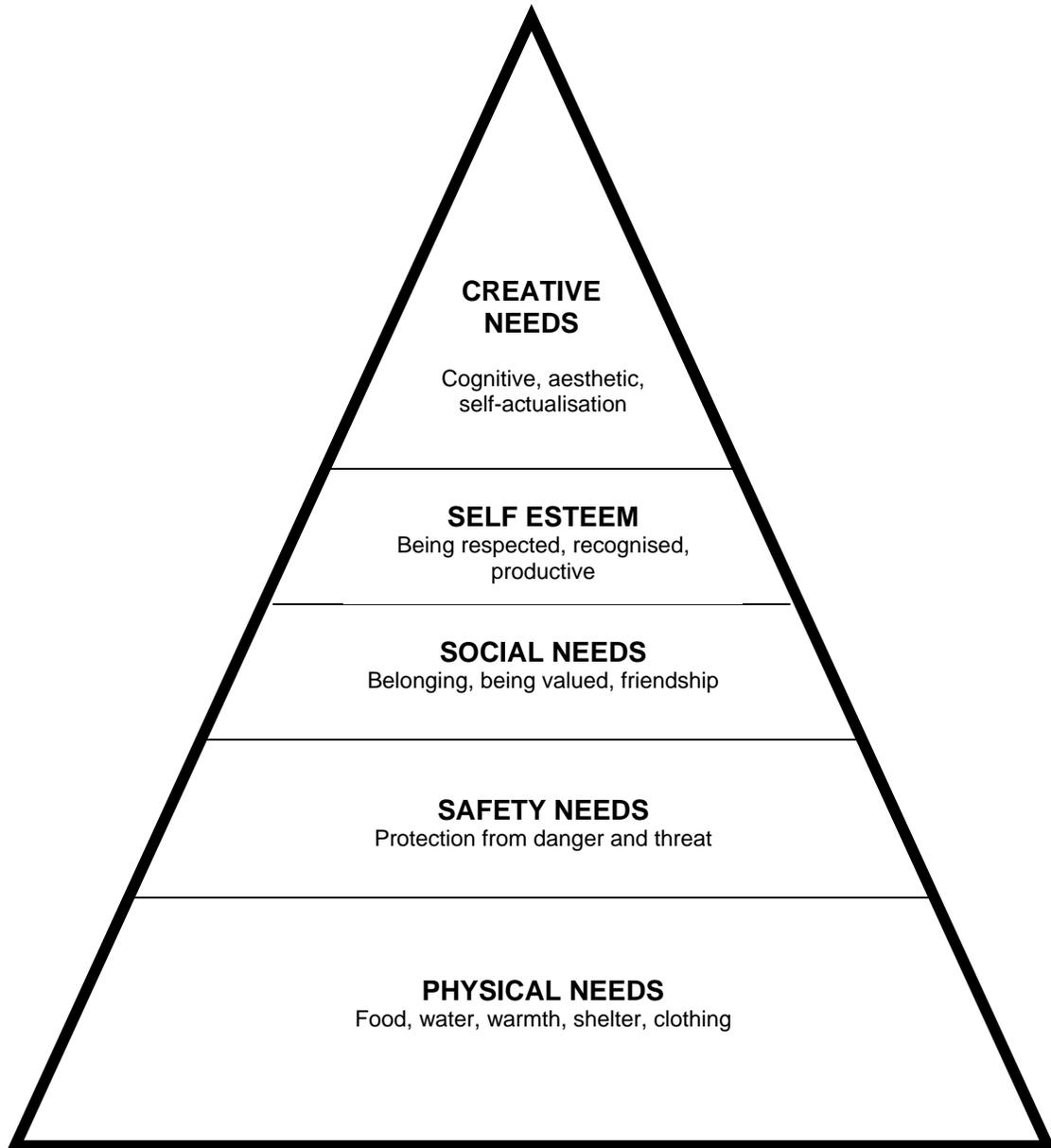
Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Basic Needs