

PLAYING FOR DEAR LIFE

Participatory Theatre Praxis as a Positive Intervention in
Cases of Emotional Illiteracy in Children and Young People

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INTRODUCTION

The Elizabethan playwright Thomas Kyd wrote that ‘Where words prevail not, violence prevails.’¹ The following research presents the proposal that this is indeed often the case; that there are circumstances in which poverty and other factors inhibit the development of articulation and emotional range, leading to social exclusion and even criminality. Thus, it is essentially an issue of equal opportunities within society. I will argue that participatory theatre practice can offer the means to address this issue and its undesired transgressive outcomes (both for the individual and for society).

Language is complex; multifaceted and multilayered and children can be very good at hiding their language difficulties, showing other ‘symptoms’ that are more tangible, recognisable or easier to understand – poor literacy, poor behaviour, low self esteem and few friendships.²

In Chapter One I will define the terms Emotional Literacy (EL) and its converse Emotional Illiteracy (EIL), and provide a clear link to the known phenomenon of Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) as being a major contributing factor. I will discuss the need to address this, and its ‘wider social, behavioural and emotional outcomes’³ that include the fact that, ‘60-90% of young people in the youth justice system have SLCN, many of which aren’t identified before offending.’⁴ Further, I will explore whether participation in theatre can act as a positive intervention in EIL’s path to transforming into, or producing, violent or disruptive behaviour, and I will trace the role/s, relevance, possibility and limitations of its ability to help develop EL.

¹ Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedie* (London: Edward White, 1587), e-book

<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6043/6043-h/6043-h.htm>> [accessed 31 August 2016], 2.1.110.

² Wendy Lee, *A Generation Adrift: The Case for Speech, Language and Communication to Take a Central Role in Schools’ Policy and Practice* (London: The Communication Trust, 2013), p. 5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

In Chapter Two I will explain the theoretical conceptual frames that form the lens through which to examine participatory theatre practice as an intervention, and I will identify three principles pertaining to theatre that can be of particular benefit in developing EL, namely; framing, choosing/sourcing of dramatic content, and using various 'frequencies' of communication. Throughout this research, I will refer to both participatory theatre practice and praxis. I wish to define praxis according to Paulo Freire, as: 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it'.⁵ Where used, it is to emphasise the 'action' and potential 'transformation' therein.

In Chapter Three I will examine the case of Speech Bubbles, as a successful example of participatory theatre intervention with children and young people, where clear outcomes have been defined alongside a rigorously well thought out method of reaching them.

Jonathan Barnes' evaluation describes the programme succinctly:

The 'Speech Bubbles' team developed a framework designed to provoke authentic, fantasy play in children [...] Through this play, channelled into a series of dramatic 'plays' performed each session by supporting adults and referred children, participants are gently guided into being kind to each other, speaking out, listening, expressing in facial and body movements, collaboration and taking turns.⁶

Finally, I will conclude by presenting a clear case for the need, potential, and subsequent responsibility of fellow theatre practitioners to hone their craft and act to benefit children and young people whose lives are compromised by EIL.

⁵ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos (London: Penguin, 1993 [1970]), p. 33.

⁶ Jonathan Barnes, *Promoting Social and Personal Wellbeing in 5-7 Year Olds Through the 'Speech Bubbles' Drama Project* (Folkestone: Canterbury Christ Church University, 2012), p. 6.

CHAPTER ONE

Emotional illiteracy and its effects on individuals and society

Jean-Paul Sartre identifies certain emotions as being alternative paths to the actions that cannot be taken in a given situation. Talking of anger in particular, and considering the work of P. Guillaume in his *Psychologie de la Forme*, Sartre says that there is, 'a weakening of the barriers that separate the deeper from the more superficial levels of the self which normally ensure the regulation of action by the deep personality and maintain the self-control'⁷ and further that, 'because the path to action is blocked, tensions between the external and the internal continue to augment: a negative character extends uniformly to all the objects in the field, they lose their proper value'.⁸ He asserts that the person acting in anger is in that moment, 'a being for whom the grossest and least adapted solutions are good enough'⁹ and that 'the 'angry' conduct, though less well adapted to the problem than the superior – and impossible – behaviour that would solve it is still precisely and perfectly adapted to his need to break the tension, to shake the leaden weight off his shoulders.'¹⁰ Reflection, says Sartre, is not part of this process: 'it is not necessary that the subject, between his failure in action and his anger, should turn back upon himself and interpose a reflective consciousness.'¹¹

Sartre also alludes to a lack of articulation present in these moments where anger takes over, saying:

I make use of inferior alternatives (*ersatz*) to vanquish my adversary – insults, threats which have to 'do instead of' the shaft of wit I failed to think of; for the

⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, trans. by Philip Mairet (London: Routledge, 2002 [1962]), p. 25.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid. p. 26.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 35.

abrupt change of attitude that I impose upon myself makes me less exacting about the choice of means.¹²

Summing up his interpretation of what an emotion is, Sartre states that it is an attempt to subdue (in the case of negative emotions) the object that is causing the inability to act, even to make it appear to not exist at all.¹³ Thus:

It is a transformation of the world. When the paths before us become too difficult, or when we cannot see our way, we can no longer put up with such an exacting and difficult world. All ways are barred and nevertheless we must act. [...] But, be it well understood, this is no playful matter: we are cornered, and we fling ourselves into this new attitude with all the force at our command.¹⁴

What then, does the term emotional literacy (EL) mean in relation to our understanding of what emotions are? Claude Steiner first coined the term in his 1979 book *Healing Alcoholism*. He interprets it as a set of abilities: 'the ability to understand your emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathize [*sic*] with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively.'¹⁵ Steiner likens empathy to a sixth sense, saying that, 'Emotional illiteracy occurs when we fail, in our formative years, to develop that sixth sense.'¹⁶ He states:

To be emotionally literate is to be able to handle emotions in a way that improves your personal power and improves the quality of life around you. Emotional Literacy improves relationships, creates loving possibilities between people, makes cooperative work possible, and facilitates the feeling of community.¹⁷

Similarly, according to Brian Matthews, 'a crucial point about emotional literacy: [is] that a person's emotional literacy has to be seen in conjunction with that of others.'¹⁸ This

¹² Ibid. p. 27.

¹³ Ibid. pp. 40-41.

¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 39-40.

¹⁵ Claude Steiner with Paul Perry, *Achieving Emotional Literacy: A Personal Program to Increase Your Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Avon Books, 1997), p. 11.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 43.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 11.

¹⁸ Brian Matthews, *Engaging Education: Developing Emotional Literacy, Equity and Co-Education* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006), p. 45.

emphasis on how we interact with others is echoed by David Spendllove who states that EL is, 'the ability to recognize [sic], understand and express your emotions, helping yourself and others to succeed.'¹⁹ He goes on to say that it covers, 'an important range of skills, which includes listening to others, recognizing [sic] other points of view, managing conflict, arguing a case and dealing with recognizing [sic] their own feelings and those of others.'²⁰

American psychologists Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer first formulated the concept 'emotional intelligence' in 1990 as,

...a set of skills hypothesized [sic] to contribute to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and in others, the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life.²¹

This was subsequently further developed by Daniel Goleman²² who, according to Matthews, 'is the main popularizer [sic] of the term 'emotional intelligence' and his book has been influential and stimulated thinking in this area.'²³ The main divergence from definitions of EL appear to be that emotional intelligence is more concerned with the individual's personal emotional development and less to do with how they interact with others.²⁴ In 1997, Mayer and Salovey refine its definition as, 'the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.'²⁵

¹⁹ David Spendllove, *Emotional Literacy* (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 8.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 14.

²¹ Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, 'Emotional Intelligence', *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9, no. 3 (1990), p. 185.

²² Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996).

²³ Matthews, p. 37.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, 'What is Emotional Intelligence?' in *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Emotional Implications*, ed. by Peter Salovey and David J. Sluyter (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 5.

According to Spendlove, 'Generally emotional literacy is an educational term, as opposed to emotional intelligence, which tends to be used by industry and businesses.'²⁶

Matthews states that, 'Emotional literacy is a term used more in Britain than other parts of the world.'²⁷

A third term, 'emotional competence' is favoured by Katherine Weare and Gay Gray in the context of working with children and young people. They state that, 'the term 'competence' implies knowledge, attitudes and behavioural components, which makes it particularly appropriate for use in school and other settings.'²⁸ According to Maurice J. Elias et al., this term can be considered as:

...the ability to understand, manage and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development.²⁹

Throughout this investigation into how bespoke theatre practice interventions can improve outcomes for children and young people, the term emotional literacy has been chosen to define the characteristics of the issues being addressed. I will, however, refer at times to evidence and findings taken from writings on both emotional intelligence and emotional competence, since the similarities and strategies for improvement are more significant than the differences between them. Specifically, the ability to access emotions other than anger and frustration³⁰ and have empathy for others³¹ are relevant in all cases.

²⁶ Spendlove, p. 4.

²⁷ Matthews, p. 44.

²⁸ Katherine Weare and Gay Gray, *What Works in Developing Children's Emotional and Social Competence and Wellbeing?* (London: Department for Education and Skills, 2003), p. 14.

²⁹ Maurice J. Elias, Joseph E. Zins, Roger P. Weissberg, et al., *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1997), p. 2.

³⁰ Mayer and Salovey, p. 5.

³¹ Sue Cornwell and Jill Bundy, *The Emotional Curriculum: A Journey Towards Emotional Literacy* (London: SAGE, 2009), p. 2.

Examining the term EL in a more literal way, since our understanding of the word 'literacy' is commonly applied to words, may seem redundant. It leads us, however, to a potential area of actionable considerations. Since we are, in fact, concerned with a *lack* of EL in some children and young people, we need to consider the possible causes of this phenomenon. If we consider that EL involves, 'our ability through thinking to recognize [*sic*], manage, comprehend and suitably communicate our emotions and to understand how they shape our actions and relationships and influence our thinking',³² then it is hardly surprising that, 'it is generally recognized [*sic*] that children who have a wider vocabulary are able to locate their emotions and feelings more effectively and as a consequence are happier.'³³

At this point we come to what could be the crux of the problem for some children and young people. According to *The Bercow Report*, 'The ability to communicate is an essential life skill for all children and young people and it underpins a child's social, emotional and educational development.'³⁴ Many children, however, experience difficulties and delays with developing the adequate speech and language skills to communicate effectively. The umbrella term for this under the Special Educational Needs (SEN) banner is Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). SLCN, 'can include difficulties with fluency, forming sounds and words, formulating sentences, understanding what others say, and using language socially.'³⁵

According to language expert David Chrystal,

Listening and speaking are natural behaviours. Unless there is something wrong with the child or something lacking in the child's environment, speech will

³² Spendlove, p. 4.

³³ Ibid. p. 36.

³⁴ John Bercow, *The Bercow Report: A Review of Services for Children and Young People (0-19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs* (Nottingham: DCSF, 2008), p. 6.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 13.

emerge towards the end of the first year and develop steadily thereafter.³⁶

In the case of the latter, where there exist, ‘articulation problems that cannot be explained by such factors as deficient anatomy or poor motor coordination’,³⁷ a language delay can develop, which means that, ‘Their speech displays poor rhythmical ability and immature sound formation, and they have difficulty in discriminating sounds. Delays range from a barely noticeable few months to one of several years.’³⁸

Difficulties with reading and writing can develop in tandem with speech, or separately, since they, says Chrystal, ‘have to be taught and painstakingly learned’.³⁹ Reading is essential for ‘intellectual and emotional development’,⁴⁰ states Chrystal, who also identifies that ‘many such children become anxious, withdrawn, or aggressive – with deteriorating behaviour in some cases leading to them being described as maladjusted. Career prospects, in such cases, are poor.’⁴¹ John Bercow states that,

Approximately 50% of children and young people in some socio-economically disadvantaged populations have speech and language skills that are significantly lower than those of other children of the same age.⁴²

This correlation with poverty is backed up by Julie Dockrell et al., who say:

There is a strong social gradient for SLCN, with the odds of having identified SLCN being 2.3 times greater for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) and living in more deprived neighbourhoods.⁴³

³⁶ David Chrystal, *How Language Works* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), p. 133.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 95.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 133.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 141.

⁴² Bercow, p. 13.

⁴³ Julie Dockrell, Jessie Ricketts and Geoff Lindsay, *Understanding Speech Language and Communication Needs: Profiles of Need and Provision* (London: Department for Education, 2012), p. 7.

One possible reason for this may simply come down to the sheer number of words heard in a child's early years.⁴⁴ As Freire states in his study of education in Brazil:

The child who is a daughter of intellectuals, who sees her parents working with reading and writing, is one case; the child of parents who don't read and, furthermore, who do not see more than five or six flashes of electoral propaganda and the occasional commercial advertisements is another.⁴⁵

According to a Department for Education report, children with SLCN 'experience an impoverished quality of life compared to their peers.'⁴⁶ The report authors go on to say that, 'studies suggest elevated levels of social exclusion in children with SLCN.'⁴⁷ According to Freire,

One of the violences perpetrated by illiteracy is the suffocation of the consciousness and the expressiveness of men and women who are forbidden from reading and writing, thus limiting their capacity to write about their reading of the world so they can rethink about their original reading of it.⁴⁸

The results of SLCN can include behavioural problems⁴⁹ and emotional and social problems.⁵⁰ According to Bercow, outcomes are not good: 'This increases the risk of their exclusion from school and, in the most extreme cases, can lead to young people entering the criminal justice system.'⁵¹ He goes on to state that, 'Vulnerable young people with

⁴⁴ Jean Gross, *Time to Talk: Implementing Outstanding Practice in Speech, Language and Communication* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p. 4.

⁴⁵ Paulo Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*, trans. by Donaldo Macedo, Dale Koike and Alexandre Oliveira, expanded edn (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2005), p. 149.

⁴⁶ Sue Roulstone and Geoff Lindsay, *The Perspectives of Children and Young People Who Have Speech, Language and Communication Needs, and Their Parents* (London: Department for Education, 2012), p. 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 12.

⁴⁸ Freire (2005), p. 2.

⁴⁹ E. B. Brownlie, Joseph H. Beitchman, Michael Escobar, et al., 'Early Language Impairment and Young Adult Delinquent and Aggressive Behavior' [sic], *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 32, no. 4 (2004), 453-467.

⁵⁰ Geoff Lindsay, Julie E. Dockrell and Steve Strand, 'Longitudinal Patterns of Behaviour Problems in Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties: Child and Contextual Factors', *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77, no. 4 (2007), 811-828.

⁵¹ Bercow, p. 18.

communication problems may be unable to express themselves effectively, resulting in disruptive and aggressive behaviour.⁵²

These statistics are borne out in the criminal justice system, as Bercow clarifies:

An example of the potential impact of SLCN is represented by the 7,000 children and young people aged under eighteen passing through young offender institutions (YOI) each year, of whom at least 60% are estimated to have difficulties with speech, language and communication that are sufficient to affect their ability to communicate with staff on a day-to-day basis, to prevent them from benefiting from verbally mediated interventions such as education and offender behaviour work and, if not addressed, to contribute to re-offending.⁵³

Sue Cornwell and Jill Bundy consider that there is indeed, 'a high price to pay for having children who lack the skills associated with emotional competence.'⁵⁴ Boys fare worse in this scenario than girls. A recently published report, *The Lost Boys*, alerts attention to the widening educational gap between boys and girls:

The difference in outcomes for boys and girls is having a devastating impact; nearly a million boys have fallen behind with their early language skills since 2006. That is nearly a million five-year-olds who may struggle with skills like explaining what they think and how they feel, and engaging with the adults and children around them.⁵⁵

Claire Read, the author of the report, goes on to confirm the negative outcomes of this:

The immediate impact blights childhoods. Poorer than expected early language and communication skills slow down the incredible amount of social and emotional development that children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It can stop them being able to express themselves and prevents them from beginning to build their own identities, engage with the world around them and participate in everyday activities. For example, boys who have difficulty making themselves understood may express their feelings through challenging behaviour (affecting both them and their classmates).⁵⁶

⁵² Ibid. p. 42.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 41.

⁵⁴ Cornwell and Bundy, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Claire Read, *The Lost Boys: How Boys are Falling Behind in Their Early Years* (London: Save the Children, 2016), p. 4.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

According to Spendlove, 'How emotions and language work together is not fully understood.'⁵⁷

One theory makes the link with vocabulary clearer. Spendlove says:

...it appears that by naming a feeling we help our subconscious processing access the emotional part of the brain where feelings are located... [the more opportunities] ...to locate the emotional vocabulary associated with an activity, the more emotionally literate the learners will become.⁵⁸

It makes sense that vocabulary plays a large part in EL when we consider that, 'In the English language we have around 3,000 words that help us to locate, identify and express our feelings.'⁵⁹

Other causes of emotional illiteracy (EIL) can range from childhood neglect and trauma to physical abuse and injury.^{60 61} Whether it is due to the particular effects of SLCN, or other problems such as these, I argue that society simply cannot afford to ignore EIL.

Steiner makes a clear case for the link between a compromised, or insufficiently developed, EL and violent outcomes:

A far more dramatic and particularly horrifying example of this hunger for emotional experience is laid out by James Gilligan in his book, *Violence*. Gilligan has worked for many years with prison inmates guilty of savage murders. These men, he has found, invariably live in a state of extreme emotional numbness. They report having almost no feelings, emotional or physical, to the point of thinking of themselves as living dead. They say they commit their unspeakably violent acts hoping that such excesses will break through their numbness and cause them to feel something. [...] Obviously, there's an urgent need to break the cycle of violence and emotional numbing.⁶²

The evidence that EL matters is compelling, and certainly many experts agree on what needs to be done. Cornwell and Bundy assert that, 'the emotional development of children cannot

⁵⁷ Spendlove, p. 36.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Steiner with Perry, pp. 19-20.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 214.

⁶² Ibid. p. 21.

be taken for granted and [...] it should be addressed in a proactive manner.’⁶³ Benefits of this range from improved academic performance,^{64 65} to feeling like a part of society⁶⁶ and being able to contribute positively to it,⁶⁷ to simply being able to negotiate the emotional landscape of life.^{68 69} This, says Matthews, ‘can be contrasted with [young people] who are at ‘war with themselves’, unable to control their desires, needs and actions.’⁷⁰

While Steiner considers that, ‘Emotional literacy is best developed in Childhood, when information is learned by example’,⁷¹ there are interventions that can be effective later on. Bercow, in fact, believes that later intervention is essential, stating that, ‘awareness should be raised among employers, youth workers, the judiciary, police, prison staff, probation workers, college staff and staff in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) etc. about SLCN’.⁷²

There are a multitude of strategies for improving EL recommended for schools, a wealth of which are outlined in Public Health England’s *Promoting Children and Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing*.⁷³ Some existing methods for improving EL include those contained in Cornwell and Bundy’s *Emotional Curriculum*, one of a range of books that aims to suggest ways for schools to increase EL and, ‘To develop or extend emotional vocabulary.’⁷⁴ Confirming the link between actual literacy and EL, many suggested activities involve writing, such as writing short stories that are based on children’s own experiences of

⁶³ Cornwell and Bundy, p. 1.

⁶⁴ Matthews, p. 68.

⁶⁵ Christine Kerres Malecki and Stephen N. Elliott, ‘Children’s Social Behaviors [*sic*] as Predictors of Academic Achievement: A Longitudinal Analysis’, *School Psychology Quarterly*, 17, no. 1 (2002), 1-23.

⁶⁶ Matthews, p. 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 14.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 2.

⁶⁹ Neil Portman and Charles Weingartner, *Teaching As a Subversive Activity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971 [1969]), p. 204.

⁷⁰ Matthews, p. 15.

⁷¹ Steiner with Perry, p. 172.

⁷² Bercow, p. 114.

⁷³ *Promoting Children and Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing* (London: Public Health England, 2015).

⁷⁴ Cornwell and Bundy, p. 6.

a given emotion, and using a 'feelings diary' as a tool for reflection.⁷⁵ These may, in fact, be compromised by the heavy reliance on vocabulary. One such activity, however, writing a script for a puppet show, does include the possibility of making the puppets whereby, 'Particular attention should be paid to the facial expression and body language of the puppets.'⁷⁶ Other means include group and 'circle time' which emphasise the need to communicate with others,⁷⁷ and building metaphorical models to help understand emotions such as anger.⁷⁸ Spendlove presents a bank of one hundred and ninety words, a vocabulary of emotions that can be also used in various activities.⁷⁹

Conflict resolution is another popular strategy that is often employed. Matthews says that, 'In conflict resolution situations, pupils are encouraged to find creative solutions to their difficulties.'⁸⁰ Mayer and Salovey state that such activities can teach, 'how to identify the feelings of your adversary, your own feelings, and the feelings of others involved.'⁸¹ They also discuss storytelling and relating to characters as a way of developing emotional intelligence, stating, 'Literature is probably the first home of the emotional intelligences. But so, too, are art programs, music, and theater [*sic*].'⁸² This emphasis on relating to others, is in keeping with Matthews' view that, 'one's identity does not appear individually, but is worked out through negotiation in dialogue with oneself and others.'⁸³

Throughout this chapter I explored various definitions of EL and its kindred terms, 'emotional intelligence' and 'emotional competence', which are all concerned with a set of

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 19.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 24.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 7.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 26.

⁷⁹ Spendlove, p. 36.

⁸⁰ Matthews, p. 56.

⁸¹ Mayer and Salovey, p. 21.

⁸² Ibid. p. 20.

⁸³ Matthews, p. 30.

abilities that could potentially pave a path to an improved quality of life, creating possibilities for individual personal and professional fulfilment as well as facilitating cohesive communities. This set of abilities could be summarised as including three main points: the ability to understand one's emotions; the ability to express them in a productive manner; and the ability to listen to, and empathise with, others. The differences or variations between the terms relate mainly to geographic or sectorial uses and to the focus being placed on the individual or the community. Those variations notwithstanding, there is a general endorsement of the notion that EL is essential to a healthy and successful life. Another testament to this is the wealth of strategies and programmes that seek to develop and promote EL, especially among young people, effectively presenting compromised or underdeveloped EL – which I refer to as EIL – as a serious societal concern. The consequences of a compromised ability to communicate, and the possible pitfalls of a harmful chain reaction that is set off by EIL, impact individuals as well as society as a whole, as it has been shown to lead to the negative labelling of young people, social exclusion, violent behaviour and recidivism. Moreover, the mounting evidence that children and young people from poor backgrounds are most affected by EIL, renders this phenomenon greater acuteness, as it presents it as an equal opportunities issue that demands attention. The following chapter, therefore, will be an investigation into the relevance and means of participatory theatre practice in the effort of making a positive intervention.

CHAPTER TWO

Employing theatre practice principles to promote emotional literacy

As we have seen, education, psychology and creative arts professionals are already engaged in intervening where EIL is present. In this chapter, I will look specifically for elements in participatory theatre practice that may assist in the development of the range of skills that allow for a healthy EL. Specifically, I will look for actionable principles from theatre practice that can: potentially tackle SLCN's 'symptoms' (expressed in *The Bercow Report* as 'difficulties with fluency, forming sounds and words, formulating sentences, understanding what others say, and using language socially'⁸⁴); assist individuals in forming positive relationships and encounters; and contribute to self-confidence with a range of emotional responses in keeping with having empathy and respect for others.

Qualifying what is meant herein by participatory theatre practice, I am referencing creative activities whereby a content – by a writer (i.e. playwright, novelist or poet); found text (for example a newspaper article); verbatim; fictional/improvised; or autobiographical – is explored and processed into a performative medium such as a show (private or public, of anything from a scene to a play) or a film, and co-created by practitioners and participants. This practice would generally fall under the umbrella term of Applied Theatre, or participatory arts.

The contextualising frames of the research: Applied Theatre, Freire and Goffman

It is important to understand what we mean by Applied Theatre [AT] as the umbrella term,

⁸⁴ Bercow, p. 13.

or field, within which we look specifically on participatory theatre praxis, as it is the frame that renders our discussed praxis its political, ethical and aesthetic DNA. The field is extremely vibrant and ever expanding, thus, I am not attempting to offer a definitive term for AT – and, within it, of participatory theatre praxis – but rather to point out the relevant attributes. According to Helen Nicholson, ‘applied drama and theatre are interdisciplinary and hybrid practices’⁸⁵ that encompass a goal, namely to create a ‘society of equals’. She considers that, ‘applied drama, with its particular emphasis on the social, personal and political impact and effectiveness of theatre, is part of a wider cultural ambition.’⁸⁶ The journal *Applied Theatre Research*, first published in 2013, defines itself as being concerned with, ‘theatre and drama in non-traditional contexts’, as it ‘focuses on drama, theatre and performance with specific audiences or participants in a range of social contexts and locations.’⁸⁷

James Thompson regards AT as, ‘a practice by, with and for the excluded and marginalised.’⁸⁸ Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston offer the view that AT, ‘experienced both as participant and as audience, might make some difference to the way in which people interact with each other and with the wider world.’⁸⁹ They also discuss the content upon which AT can be based and state that, ‘the material from which theatre is being made may draw exclusively on the factual (as in the case of verbatim theatre), or may be entirely fictional in form while still being based upon actual events.’⁹⁰ I will look closely at this aspect of AT with regard to EIL in this chapter, and examine the different outcomes or effects that

⁸⁵ Helen Nicholson, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 19.

⁸⁷ ‘Applied Theatre Research’ in *Intellect Books* <<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=218/>> [accessed 11 August 2016] (para 4-5 of 7).

⁸⁸ James Thompson, *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003), p. xv.

⁸⁹ Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston, eds., *The Applied Theatre Reader* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010 [2009]), p. 9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 10.

can be achieved through working with different types of content. Finally, I would like to offer Prentki and Preston's definition that AT is '*Theatre (for) a community*', '*Theatre (with) a community*' or '*Theatre (by) a community*'⁹¹ as it is important to emphasise that the ultimate aim of working with individuals is to facilitate their inclusion and/or improve their relationship with their wider community, whereby social cohesion and integration is sought for all.

Having acknowledged the phenomenon of EIL, and the need to make a positive intervention that will promote development of EL among individuals, the next phase of my investigation is contextualised by two thinkers. The first is education scholar Paulo Freire, whose political ideology and practice advocates for equal opportunities for the oppressed and thereby the creation of more cohesive and egalitarian societies, where all are allowed and encouraged to strive towards fulfilling their potential in life. Freire's highly influential book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* asserts the idea that freedom from oppression 'must be forged *with*, not *for*; the oppressed'⁹² and that it is through giving people the tools to reflect on their own oppression that they are able to free themselves from it.⁹³ Instrumental in this is something that is pertinent to this study, the issue of literacy. Freire's work has produced such testimonies from formerly illiterate people as, 'Before this, words meant nothing to me; now they speak to me and I can make them speak.'⁹⁴ Central to my theory that theatre can help people with EIL is that it can open up ways of empowering people to reflect and use words in a new way, and that in doing so it can break down the social barriers that they currently experience. This is confirmed by Nicholson, who states:

⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 10-11.

⁹² Freire (1993), p. 30.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 15.

The idea that literacy, power and social equality are intimately linked, a significant Freirean insight, remains particularly important to applied drama as the process of theatre-making also relies on communication between participants. Freire stressed the relationship between language, thought and human agency, describing literacy as 'word-and-action' rather than 'mere vocabulary'.⁹⁵

Nicholson goes on to say that Freire has influenced many AT practices, including that of Augusto Boal, and his development of *Theatre of the Oppressed*.⁹⁶

The second frame of context to inform my investigation is provided by the work of sociologist Erving Goffman. In his seminal 1959 book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman introduced an analysis of an individual's behaviour and social encounters from the perspective of a dramatic performance. Thus, while Freire provides the political ideology behind this phase of my investigation, Goffman alludes to its possible mechanisms. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman examines social encounters in terms of the mechanisms of performance, stating:

Socialization [*sic*] may not so much involve a learning of the many specific details of a single concrete part – often there could not be enough time or energy for this. What does seem to be required of the individual is that he learn enough pieces of expression to be able to 'fill in' and manage, more or less, any part that he is likely to be given.⁹⁷

Goffman also considers the particular nature of talk, stating in his work *Forms of Talk* that, 'deeply incorporated into the nature of talk are the fundamental requirements of theatricality.'⁹⁸ This boils down to the basic 'organization [*sic*] of talk into two-part exchanges',⁹⁹ which must follow certain rules as a system of communication,

⁹⁵ Nicholson, p. 51.

⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 42-43.

⁹⁷ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin Books, 1990 [1959]), pp. 79-80.

⁹⁸ Erving Goffman, *Forms of Talk* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 4.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 12.

Given a speaker's need to know whether his message has been received, and if so, whether or not it has been passably understood, and given a recipient's need to show that he has received the message.¹⁰⁰

These fundamentals of communication are often missing where young people experience SLCN, for example, yet are consistently reinforced in participatory theatre practice involving dialogue.

A phenomenon that Goffman calls 'ritual interchanges'¹⁰¹ could show how theatre can literally help a person to *practice* acceptable modes of exchange, ones that make up the complex array of interactions that someone with EIL may find themselves unable to navigate. As Goffman says, 'communication access is itself caught up in ritual concerns: to decline a signal to open channels is something like declining an extended hand, and to make a move to open a channel is to presume that one will not be intruding.'¹⁰² Some of the questions posed by Goffman, might be questions posed to participants in a participatory theatre project:

When a respectable motive is given for action, are we to suspect an ulterior one? When an individual supports a promise or threat with a convincing display of emotional expression, are we to believe him? When an individual seems carried away by feeling, is he intentionally acting this way in order to create an effect?¹⁰³

Goffman's writings on face-to-face conduct prefigure the work that can be done with participatory theatre praxis participants in reading emotion and developing self-esteem. He states that, 'One's own face and the face of others are constructs of the same order; it is the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 12.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. pp. 16-17.

¹⁰² Ibid. p. 18.

¹⁰³ Erving Goffman, *Strategic Interactions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), p. 85.

rules of the group and the definition of the situation which determine how much feeling one is to have for face and how this feeling is to be distributed among the faces involved.¹⁰⁴

Another significant part of Goffman's corpus, his *Frame Analysis*, is also relevant to the contextualisation of our investigation. Gareth White offers a concise interpretation of the essence of Goffman's theory, stating that, 'we look at our experiences in different ways, bringing to them different assumptions about their meaning: we place them into frames that enable our understanding.'¹⁰⁵ These frames become, 'a network of shared assumptions about what an interaction means for its participants, and what is appropriate behaviour at these interactions.'¹⁰⁶ Thus, the rationale for identifying elements of theatre practice that could be utilised to address EIL successfully is rooted in Goffman's identification of dramatic and performance elements as embedded in human behaviour and social encounters.

Others too, may fortify the case for participatory theatre praxis in attending to the requirements of EL. John Carey considers Ellen Dissanayake among a selection of practitioners that believe in the power of the arts.¹⁰⁷ Dissanayake, 'attaches special importance to group arts – song, dance, mime, drama'.¹⁰⁸ According to Carey, she:

...believes that [arts] grew from the sounds, play, facial expressions and rhythmic movements of mother-and-baby interaction. This also, as she sees it, builds the adult's ability to feel and express love.¹⁰⁹

Jonathan Shailor, discussing Brent Buell's prison theatre programme Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA), states that Buell observed that 'the prisoners develop their capacity for

¹⁰⁴ Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior [sic]* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Aldine Transaction, 2008 [1967]), p. 6.

¹⁰⁵ Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 34.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ John Carey, *What Good Are the Arts?* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), p. 155.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 153.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

empathy through repeated opportunities to explore others' perspectives through the medium of theatre.¹¹⁰ Carey also cites Professor Robert Graeff and his report on the arts in prisons, stating that Graeff believes,

Art 'can break the cycle of violence and fear'. Taking part in the making of art 'dramatically improves inmates' attitudes and behaviour both in the short and long term'. Performance in operas, musicals and dramas 'gives voice to anguish, pain and confusion that each inmate felt was only their private hell'.¹¹¹

The many successful programmes aligned with participatory theatre praxis run in prisons and the encouraging reduction in recidivism¹¹² and anger levels,¹¹³ as well as improvements in literacy,¹¹⁴ are well documented.¹¹⁵ They provide a clear indication of how intervention at an earlier, pre-offending stage in an individual's life would be beneficial. Of the many examples provided by Carey is a young man who:

...has joined the prison's drama group and plans to go to college when he is released. Finding that they can manage and respond to literature has helped to repair their crushingly low self-esteem, derived from their often traumatic upbringings and their consequent failure to cope at school.¹¹⁶

I, therefore, concur with Carey who states, 'Perhaps if more money had been spent on, [...] art in schools and art in the community, Britain's prisons would not now be so overcrowded.'¹¹⁷

Caution must be exercised, however, when thinking that art and violence cannot and do not co-exist, as George Steiner points out, 'qualities of literate response, of aesthetic feeling, can coexist with barbaric, politically sadistic behaviour in the same individual.'¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Shailor in *Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre*, ed. by Jonathan Shailor (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011), p. 26.

¹¹¹ Carey, pp. 158-159.

¹¹² Ibid. pp. 159-160.

¹¹³ Shailor, p. 19.

¹¹⁴ Carey, p. 160.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p. 212.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 167.

¹¹⁸ George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Re-definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 63.

Even when this is not the case, potential problems can still arise around whether outcomes turn out to be beneficial, as pointed out by Evelyn Ploumis-Devick who says that, ‘Without well-designed interventions to address personal exploration and change, most treatment, transition, re-entry and other programs prove to be unsuccessful.’¹¹⁹ Indeed, Mayer and Salovey advise caution in exactly how to engage young people with EIL, stating:

...programs that seem to adopt an “emotions are good” philosophy untampered by the fact that emotions exist in the context of other personal characteristics and interpersonal relationships are troubling to us. Presumably, those students who need emotional education most desperately have come from households in which emotional communication is skewed in some way of another. These individuals already employ maladaptive emotional responses. We are not sure such severely damaged children profit from, say, being required to share their emotions in a class discussion, or whether they will be overwhelmed by it, or feel coerced.¹²⁰

Does participation in theatre, however, have the particular ability to circumnavigate some of the more direct emotional charges that other arts interventions perhaps risk confronting? As I will now explore in more depth, choosing/sourcing of dramatic content, using various means of communication, and the use of framing to allow for reflection and practice, are all specific aspects to consider in identifying participatory theatre practice’s potential to reach those with EIL in ways that other interventions may not.

Identifying theatre practice principles that allow for positive interventions in cases of emotional illiteracy

The types of principles and/or elements in participation in theatre that we seek to identify are the ones that, first and foremost, are relevant to promoting EL among individuals, as

¹¹⁹ Evelyn Ploumis-Devick in *Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre*, ed. by Jonathan Shailor (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011), p. 11.

¹²⁰ Mayer and Salovey, p. 21

they address the main abilities that are essential to a healthy EL: understanding one's own emotions, expressing them productively and listening empathically to others. Secondly, they may address some of the contributing factors and negative symptoms of EIL, namely: the inability to articulate, lack of reflection, uncontrollable anger and the violence it may eventually produce.

The first principle I will explore is the creation of a framed space for reflection, practice and personal enrichment. Matthew Maguire talks of framing as one of the essences of performance, something that provides the particular conditions in which it can occur, stating:

Performance occurs when the meaning of an action is heightened by an awareness of its presence within a framed space: a stage, a bed, an altar, a witness stand. When we draw a circle on the ground or on the floor and agree that everything that happens within the circle will have resonance, we have created the conditions of performance.¹²¹

The frame within which a performance takes place separates it from normal everyday interactions, so that a kind of distance is created. That distance is what I would argue makes theatre particularly useful as a way of engaging hard-to-reach young people. As Caoimhe McAvinchey explains in her account of working on an AT residency within a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) (educational provision for children excluded from mainstream schools), it was only when a designated 'performance space' was physically built for the participants (a cube within which they eventually installed sound and video works), that they began to engage with the process, this physical space giving them the psychological distance they required in order to feel safe enough to perform.¹²² John McCabe-Juhnke considers that theatre work in

¹²¹ Matthew Maguire, 'Heat Bath' in *Theatre in Crisis?: Performance Manifestos for a New Century*, ed. by Maria M. Delgado and Caridad Svich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 204.

¹²² Caoimhe McAvinchey, 'Is This the Play?' in *The Applied Theatre Reader*, ed. by Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston (Oxon: Routledge, 2010 [2009]), pp. 276-282.

prisons, 'opens space for personal reflection in which actors can explore their emotions freely.'¹²³ As is the case with Forum Theatre (Boal), this frame within which the action is performed is what allows the participants to reflect and work with and through the content.

Anthony Jackson describes this as:

...the presentation in dramatic form of the problem being addressed culminating in a dilemma or crisis for the protagonist (the 'oppressed' character) but also to the interactive investigation that follows: the attempts to find alternative ways through the crisis.¹²⁴

As mentioned earlier, a participatory theatre activity could help someone with EIL to understand agreed upon social frames of engagement in keeping with Goffman's 'frame theory'. Furthermore, Goffman's 'keyed frames', which include activities such as acting, explains White:

...may resemble serious forms of behaviour, but [...] this activity is not to be taken seriously: at least not so far that promises made have to be kept, views expressed have to be maintained, or that action undertaken by a participant in the interaction is to be taken as part of their presentation of their 'real selves'.¹²⁵

Therefore, freedom exists within this frame for play and the potential of emotional enrichment. That liminal space between real life and play acting, the frame that is created in participatory theatre practice, is hence a unique space for freedom, subversion and extension of reality and a space to practice and rehearse actions that are a manifestation of notions-of-self in a public setting.

The second principle I will look at ties into developing two of the skills proven essential to a healthy EL, the ability to express oneself and the ability to positively

¹²³ John McCabe-Juhnke, 'Faith, Hope, and "Sweet Love Re-Membered": "Restoration" Theatre in Kansas Prisons' in *Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre*, ed. by Jonathan Shailor (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011), pp. 138-139.

¹²⁴ Anthony Jackson, *Theatre, Education and the Making of Meanings: Art or Instrument?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 26.

¹²⁵ White, p. 36.

acknowledge and respond to other people's self-articulation. The question of content used in participatory theatre practice is one that can be addressed from the perspective of fiction versus non-fiction (and their possible mixtures), insofar as we may be dealing with an existing play text or, as is often the case with certain types of applied theatre practice, the content may be generated by the participants themselves in an autobiographical manner. Each approach has pros and cons for dealing with EIL.

Using an existing play text can bring with it immense benefits in terms of providing a space for reflection. Nicholson, who considers that scripted drama provides 'aesthetic distance',¹²⁶ seems to support this perspective, stating:

...identification with fictional narratives involves both a process of self-reflexivity and emotional engagement with others. Drama, which invites multiple forms of identification, is potentially a very good vehicle for extending understanding of oneself in relation to others. Physical embodiment of the narratives of others can be a particularly powerful way to 'become' another temporarily or to 'inhabit' another's story.¹²⁷

Shailor also appears to see the power of an existing text in creating what he calls 'dual consciousness', which he says can help people to learn empathy. He says:

This opens up a space for reflection and evaluation: How am I like/ not like this character? How do my own interpretations, motivations, and choices compare to those of this character? What is the best choice in this situation?¹²⁸

The participatory theatre practitioner also risks, however, the over-focus on the play text and performance becoming detrimental to the process and the benefit to the participants. This can happen particularly in cases where literacy is an issue, such as is described in McCabe-Juhnke's case study of a prison project where participants were not learning their lines.¹²⁹ Perseverance, however, can be worthwhile, as is illustrated by the testimonial of

¹²⁶ Nicholson, pp. 52-53.

¹²⁷ Ibid. pp. 71-72.

¹²⁸ Shailor, p. 22.

¹²⁹ McCabe-Juhnke, p. 135.

the Inclusion Manager at a Learning Support Unit (LSU) in Buckinghamshire where a project by the Mirror Circus Film Company took place:

They have low literacy levels and so reading from a script was a real challenge. For them actually to be reading A4 sheets of words in front of each other in the last couple of weeks has been a huge step forward. At the beginning, they wouldn't have attempted this.¹³⁰

Paul Heritage makes an excellent point in stating that it is *because* the language (in this case Shakespeare) is challenging that it works. He says:

If it were not beyond us then it would not serve its purpose, which is to extend the ways in which we think and speak. Who needs this more than those members of our society that, for whatever reason, have had the expectations of how they think and speak set so low that there IS no hope of them ever growing beyond these boundaries?¹³¹

Generating personal content with participants, on the other hand, has its own particular benefits. A good example of this is described by Peter Sellers in regard to a project with homeless LGBT young people. According to Sellers, 'homeless people primarily are very alone and very isolated. They don't talk to other people.'¹³² Using autobiographic material in an activity thus allows the publicly voiceless to be heard. Furthermore, the experience offers an invaluable possibility for the individual to gain understanding and perspective, as participants spent time writing their personal stories and reflecting before performing. Sellers points out, 'It addressed their ability to articulate their own situation and understand it and then change it.'¹³³

¹³⁰ Richard Ings, *Creating Chances: Arts Interventions in Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Units* (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2004), p. 34.

¹³¹ Paul Heritage, 'Stealing Kisses' in *Theatre in Crisis?: Performance Manifestos for a New Century*, ed. by Maria M. Delgado and Caridad Svich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 172.

¹³² Peter Sellers, 'The Question of Culture' in *Theatre in Crisis?: Performance Manifestos for a New Century*, ed. by Maria M. Delgado and Caridad Svich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 141.

¹³³ *Ibid.* pp. 141-142.

Interestingly, the participants then performed each other's biographic material: 'You had to take someone else's life and become that person. It turns out, of course, that you knew more about another person than they knew about themselves.'¹³⁴ This fits with what Nicholson attributes to Lisa Delpit, saying, 'A less threatening way for young people to try out voices which are not their own, she suggests, is through drama, both improvisation and scripted plays.'¹³⁵ My own assertion would be that trying out voices that are not their own may be hugely beneficial to young people with EIL, and the fact that this can be achieved with either fictional or autobiographical materials is important to clarify.

The third principle I will examine is that of the ability within theatre practice for communication to be conducted by various means that are not exclusively verbal. The richness of means of communication is of extreme importance when seeking a praxis that could respond to EIL.

According to John D. Greenwood, there is no particular need for a verbal vocabulary of emotions. Citing examples of different cultures who have more or less actual words to describe emotions, he states his belief that it does not follow that cultures with more words lead more psychologically fulfilled lives.¹³⁶ While this would appear to be in conflict with some opinions on EL, it may give an insight into another aspect of theatre practice that is of benefit – that it is in fact the *mechanics* of dialogue and not the words themselves, and the physical encounter of theatre that have power to be transformational for those participating. Nicholson, discussing Delpit, would seem to support this:

Translated into drama, the idea that literacy is not a set of isolated skills but encourages creative and critical thought draws attention to the different 'languages' which are available to actors as a means of communication and

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 141.

¹³⁵ Nicholson, pp. 52-53.

¹³⁶ John D. Greenwood, *Relations and Representations: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Psychological Science* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 48.

expression. In drama, communication is embodied and meanings are created and read through the body, aurally, visually and kinaesthetically. As such, drama is a form of literacy – you can think, feel and represent ideas and experiences with your body as well as with your mind.¹³⁷

Thompson gives the example of an anger-management course based on Boal's Image Theatre¹³⁸ where scenes were used as images to examine violence and practice 'new behaviours'.¹³⁹ Elaine Aston and George Savona discuss conversational body language in drama, saying, 'It is through the use of gesture that intention and attitude are commonly marked out in dramatic performance'.¹⁴⁰ Importantly, they identify dialogue as 'the means of creating action through speech'.¹⁴¹ Indeed, the myriad ways in which emotion can be explored through theatre and act as a springboard for developing EL is supported in the requirements identified by Cornwell and Bundy as, 'An awareness of body language, facial expression and tone of voice [...] necessary to develop an understanding of how you express your emotions in a non-verbal manner'.¹⁴² Phyllis Nagy considers the different ways in which scenes can be played out through the frame of a news broadcast:

The plot of the crash is fixed. What changes is the particular emphasis placed on the details of the narrative by individual reports. Depending on the selection of detail, we may experience – and therefore respond emotionally to – the story in different ways.¹⁴³

Goffman provides us with a view that clarifies the extent to which emotive expression is learnt but not easily communicated through anything other than visual means, stating:

¹³⁷ Nicholson, pp. 52-53.

¹³⁸ Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, trans. by Adrian Jackson, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2003 [1992]), pp. 174-215.

¹³⁹ Thompson, p. 11.

¹⁴⁰ Elaine Aston and George Savona, *Theatre as Sign-System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 117.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 53.

¹⁴² Cornwell and Bundy, p. 11.

¹⁴³ Phyllis Nagy, 'Hold Your Nerve: Notes for a Young Playwright' in *Theatre in Crisis?: Performance Manifestos for a New Century*, ed. by Maria M. Delgado and Caridad Svich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 78.

A theatrical performance or a staged confidence game requires a thorough scripting of the spoken content of the routine; but the vast part involving 'expression given off' is often determined by meagre stage directions. It is expected that the performer of illusions will already know a good deal about how to manage his voice, his face, and his body, although he – as well as any person who directs him – may find it difficult indeed to provide a detailed verbal statement of this kind of knowledge.¹⁴⁴

It seems that theatre, however, may have the added benefit of helping also where we have identified that actual literacy is needed to help develop EL. Isabel L. Beck et al. demonstrate this through talking about oral versus written language:

Written context lacks many of the features of oral language that support learning new word meanings, such as intonation, body language, and shared physical surroundings. As such, written language is a far less effective vehicle for learning new words than oral language.¹⁴⁵

In addition to the principles already explored, I would like to briefly focus on possible outcomes of employing participatory theatre praxis, namely those I have identified as being closest in nature to hope and catharsis, and with it enhanced confidence.

McCabe-Juhnke speaks of how theatre can offer hope to people in prison, stating, 'hope can be rebuilt in prison when theatre establishes a performance community that stimulates the imaginative life of incarcerated individuals.'¹⁴⁶ In *Utopia in Performance*, Jill Dolan alights on hope as an outcome of both participation and observation of theatre, specifically as an act of 'togetherness'. She states:

This is where the utopian performative might be found: in feelings of pleasure and hope that often come before the security of articulation, that require a process of arriving in speech, the sense of possibility for something never before seen but only longed for, that glimpse of the no-place we can reach only through *feeling, together*.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Goffman (1990), pp. 79-80.

¹⁴⁵ Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown and Linda Kucan, *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*, 2nd edn (New York: The Guildford Press, 2013), p. 5.

¹⁴⁶ McCabe-Juhnke, p. 132.

¹⁴⁷ Jill Dolan, *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater [sic]* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008 [2005]), p. 65.

Examining the show *Def Poetry Jam*, Dolan discusses the impact on the performers – young people from disadvantaged backgrounds – and identifies the hope they exude. Dolan notices that the performers even mouth one another’s words, saying that ‘their attention brought almost physical support [...] I could feel their energy straining toward each other, holding each other up’.¹⁴⁸ She interprets this as being because, ‘this show belonged to all of them, and they presented it to the audience [...] as a declaration of their own reenvisioned independence, their own claim to citizenship, as a [...] hopeful march of dissident sound.’¹⁴⁹

Discussing catharsis in relation to Aristotle, Jackson says:

The emotional process undergone by the tragic protagonist in his journey of discovery was one that [...] was not merely witnessed by the audience. By means of empathy with the hero, it was a process they too, if vicariously, shared. In turn, they would be 'purged' of the distressing emotions of pity and fear that that empathy had generated.¹⁵⁰

In applied theatre practice, the audience can be read as the participants themselves, and for those who are not trained actors, the act of performing is in itself a cathartic process as they are to some degree also an audience for their own performance. This is confirmed by

Constantin Stanislavski, who states that this applies even to the seasoned actor:

An actor is split into two parts when he is acting. [...] An actor lives, weeps, laughs on the stage, but as he weeps and laughs he observes his own tears [...] It is this double existence, this balance between life and acting that makes for art [...] Moreover, we lead a double existence in our actual lives.¹⁵¹

Jackson says that as audience to a play we are in the position of being able to see the bigger picture, in a way that the character cannot,¹⁵² and I would argue that what participatory

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. pp.110-111.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p.111.

¹⁵⁰ Jackson, p. 34.

¹⁵¹ Constantin Stanislavski, *Building a Character*, trans. by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood (New York: Routledge/Theatre Arts Books, 1989 [1949]), p. 173.

¹⁵² Jackson, p. 34.

theatre praxis affords the participant is a chance to see the bigger picture of their own life and emotional responses to things that happen.

Shailor talks of the benefits to participants in a prison theatre project of being involved in a successful performance noting, 'the self-esteem that grows from their sense of accomplishment, and the trust and respect that they develop through their collaborations with others'.¹⁵³ Improvements in 'self-confidence and self-esteem' and 'communication and listening skills', are identified by Anne Wilkin et al. as two of the clear impacts of participatory drama and arts projects being run in PRUs and LSUs.¹⁵⁴ As Carey, citing Rollo May, says, 'Acts of violence are performed largely, he notes, by those who are trying to assert or protect their self-esteem, and are oppressed by their own inconsequentiality.'¹⁵⁵

Beginning this chapter with a brief observation of AT as the field of activity (mainly regarding its intentionality and ethics) within which participatory theatre operates, I then moved on to examine two influential thinkers whose own respective research provided the rationale that informed my search for principles of participatory theatre practice that may have a positive impact in the development of EL. These were the education scholar and activist Paulo Freire, who provided the political-ideological inspiration and sociologist Erving Goffman, as the grounding for human behaviour performative elements that can become beneficial practical mechanisms. I explored the principles of framing, content and means of communication and the possible outcomes of their utilisation; catharsis, hope, and self-confidence. The next chapter will examine a case study, in which these principles have been employed to shape a programme that seeks to engage and benefit children and young

¹⁵³ Shailor, p. 26.

¹⁵⁴ Anne Wilkin, Caroline Gulliver and Kay Kinder, *Serious Play: An Evaluation of Arts Activities in Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Units* (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2005), p. 11.

¹⁵⁵ Carey, p. 154.

people with SLCN, a condition that as we have seen inhibits the development of a healthy
EL.

CHAPTER THREE

Speech Bubbles: a case of drama for communication intervention for children and young people with SLCN

Having explored various elements of theatre practice that could be relevant for tackling EIL, this chapter examines Speech Bubbles (SB), a project that is overwhelmingly relevant to this investigation of participatory theatre praxis that can promote and assist the development of EL skills among children and young people who are in need of this intervention. SB, a project of London Bubble Theatre Company (LBTC), also makes for a strong case study due to its longevity, the research that evaluates its impact and its award-winning status.¹⁵⁶

Founded in 1972, LBTC is ‘a company that make [*sic*] theatre with its community and makes a community with theatre’,¹⁵⁷ with a mission ‘To provide the artistic direction, skills, environment and resources to create inspirational, inclusive, involving theatre, which shares stories that animate the spaces of the city and the spirits of its citizens.’¹⁵⁸ LBTC is based in South-East London, and currently employs ten staff members and a host of freelancers.¹⁵⁹

A precursor to SB began in 2006 as Speak Out, a project that worked in Lewisham schools to support children with SLCN through a ‘story drama approach’. Delivery was undertaken by drama practitioners and complimented by speech and language therapists. SB itself was set up in 2009, adapting Speak Out’s practice to work within the context of

¹⁵⁶ In 2012, the project was awarded a Special Commendation in the Royal Society of Public Health, Art and Health Awards for its innovative contribution to practice and evaluation. Source: *Speech Bubbles Resource Pack* (London: London Bubble Theatre Company, 2014), p. 28.

¹⁵⁷ ‘About Us’ in *London Bubble Theatre Company* <<http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/page/about-us/>> [accessed 15 August 2016].

¹⁵⁸ ‘Mission’ in *London Bubble Theatre Company* <<http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/page/mission/>> [accessed 15 August 2016].

¹⁵⁹ ‘About Us: Staff and Board’ in *London Bubble Theatre Company* <<http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/staff-and-board/>> [accessed 15 August 2016].

Southwark Council's Pupil Development Centres that operate in nearly eighty-three percent of the borough's primary schools.^{160 161} In 2014, SB became a Social Franchise that is now available UK-wide for theatre companies who work in their local schools using its tried and tested model.¹⁶²

At the core of SB is a 'story-telling, story acting approach',¹⁶³ originally developed by American teacher and education specialist Vivian Gussin Paley, a passionate advocate for the need for young children to play and have unstructured creative time. Gussin Paley argues that role-playing and storytelling have a critical role in children's psychological, intellectual and social development.¹⁶⁴ Harnessing Gussin Paley's techniques, SB aims to promote 'social and personal wellbeing through story and play'¹⁶⁵ in children and young people with SLCN.

The project's activities are delivered in primary schools, special schools, schools for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and referral units, by SB-trained theatre practitioners, and with participation from relevant staff members from within the institution. Participation is by referral of the individuals and, in some cases of behavioural school settings with small class sizes, SB sessions are a compulsory part of an entire class's curriculum.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ The centres' mission is 'To teach children a range of personal strategies for developing healthy self-esteem and self-awareness so that they can be resilient and confident and be able to manage their behaviour and social difficulties in order to improve their learning opportunities in and out of school.' See <<http://www.southwarkpdc.org/pdc/pages/index.php>> [accessed 23 August 2016].

¹⁶¹ *Speech Bubbles Resource Pack*, p. 27.

¹⁶² 'Speech Bubbles Social Franchise' in *London Bubble Theatre Company* <<http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/page/speech-bubbles-social-franchise/>> [accessed 15 August 2016].

¹⁶³ *Speech Bubbles Resource Pack*, p. 15.

¹⁶⁴ Vivian Gussin Paley, *A Child's Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

¹⁶⁵ *Speech Bubbles Resource Pack*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 26.

Speech Bubbles Resource Pack presents SB as being comprised of three components: planning the sessions, delivering them and evaluating their impact on the participants.

PLANNING

Session activities are planned with ‘an emphasis on playfulness, imagination and enthusiasm’, and are in keeping with SB’s aims and desired outcomes. Their clear structure and inclusion of repeated routines and activities serves to allow the children to gain expertise and confidence, while also enabling the facilitator to ‘keep verbal instructions to a minimum.’¹⁶⁷ The framework for each session includes four elements.

The first is *opening activities* that are repeated each session, and are designed to establish the session as the creative space it essentially is (both physically and metaphorically), along with the rules that make it a safe space for all. They include activities such as call and response chants and songs with actions; a check-in (to gauge how each person is feeling); and a clear presentation of the line-up, or timetable, of the day’s session.¹⁶⁸

The second element in each session are the *games, or warm ups*, designed to stimulate the senses through fun and playfulness and prepare the individuals and the group as a whole for the core element of each session. These would typically include games that involve movement, sound making and mirroring; exploring how certain emotions feel in the body; the acting out of a list of discussed sequenced items such as ‘things you do in the morning [...] daytime [...] evening’; and stating one’s favourite things or places.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 9.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. pp. 13-14.

The third element is *story making*, which is the core activity of SB sessions. Stories are gathered, prepared for, then acted and finally further explored or 'extended' through follow-up activities. These core activities centre on engagement in stories, narratives and characters, and render the participants ownership over the content explored in the sessions.¹⁷⁰ Gathering of the stories is conducted in a number of ways: by a participant telling a story to a scribing adult; by creating a group adaptation of a known story or a traditional tale; by using 'story starters' that excite the group into creating a story (these are used to 'address issues of concern'¹⁷¹ to participants); by the group creating a story together through a chain of individual contributions; or by the group choosing three small objects – 'a bus ticket, a floral scarf, a toy car'¹⁷² – and weaving them into a story that has a beginning, a middle and an end. Preparation is carried out through activities linked to the theme of each story, such as the making of group statues and creation of soundscapes. Once a story has been acted out, follow up activities include: a child hot-seating as one of the characters and answering questions from his peers; an adult taking a role of a character in the story who has a problem, and facilitating a discussion with the participants about possible solutions; and holding a discussion and acting out of possible 'what might happen next' scenarios.

The final element in each session is the closing activities, designed to 'provide a positive end to the sessions and leaving the characters and stories for further exploratory work in future sessions.'¹⁷³ They include singing songs with actions; saying in turns to the group one thing each participant enjoyed in the session; and 'washing off' of all the session's characters using an imaginary, personal showerhead.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 15-20.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p. 16.

¹⁷² Ibid. p. 17.

¹⁷³ Ibid. p. 21.

DELIVERY

According to Jonathan Barnes' 2015 evaluation paper on SB, each cycle of sessions comprises of '24 weekly practical drama sessions, usually of 45 minutes, for up to 10 children.'¹⁷⁴ Delivery of sessions is conducted in a room with some visuals (such as the timetable) on display, a bag of objects that can be used for storytelling and/or games and other activity aids such as a ball or a cuddly toy that serves as the group's mascot.¹⁷⁵ In most cases, children and adults sit on the floor, whereas in special schools chairs are used, to render the space even safer.¹⁷⁶ The most pregnant space in the room is the Story Square, 'a ritualised performing space marked out with tape where individual children's stories are re-enacted by the group.'¹⁷⁷ A practitioner as narrator of each story facilitates the children offering, or being invited, to 'take part as characters, objects or settings.'¹⁷⁸

EVALUATION

Evaluation of individual engagement is executed utilising three key areas for children with SLCN: attending ('listening and watching attentively [...] taking their turn with confidence and generosity'¹⁷⁹); receptive language (ability to comprehend verbal and non-verbal communication and speed of processing and responding appropriately); and expressive language, a 'whole body interpretation of communication',¹⁸⁰ whereby the ability of the child 'to express an idea, a story, a character or an emotion'¹⁸¹ is observed.

¹⁷⁴ Jonathan Barnes, *Speech Bubbles: An Evaluation of the 2013-14 Extended Programme Funded by the Shine Trust* (Folkestone: Canterbury Christ Church University, 2015), p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ *Speech Bubbles Resource Pack*, p. 15.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 24

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p. 15.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 10.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Evidence of the impact of SB can be found in research papers carried out by external partners, as well as in LBTC's own internal, annual evaluation papers (which together span several years), 'based on pre- and post- project teacher assessments'¹⁸² of the participants.¹⁸³ The most recent internal evaluation concludes that '89% of children showed improvement in Learning, Speaking and Listening, with 22% showing a striking improvement'.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore and directly linked to our investigation's concerns, it concludes that '90% of children showed improvement in Emotional Behaviour'.¹⁸⁵

According to Barnes, '*Speech Bubbles* offers what appears to be a highly effective and sustainable means of helping children suffering the resultant poor social, emotional and educational well-being.'¹⁸⁶ The report states that 'Repeat requests come from about 80% of participating schools on the basis of significantly improved outcomes for referred children in their school-based assessments.'¹⁸⁷

Eleanor Samson of M6 Theatre Company composed an evaluation report about the company's yearlong delivery of SB at Sandbrook Primary School, Greater Manchester.

Regarding the project's impact, she writes:

Teaching staff commented on the SB children having made key improvements in their ability to tell stories within class. Teaching staff also commented on the SB children being apparently more imaginative during their playtime and were seemingly having more fun with their friends.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² Ibid. p. 23.

¹⁸³ For all papers and reports see <<http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/page/reports-research-writing/>>.

¹⁸⁴ *Speech Bubbles Resource Pack*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Jonathan Barnes, *Speech Bubbles – An Evaluation of the 2013-14 Extended Programme Funded by the Shine Trust: Executive Summary* (2015), p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ Barnes, *Speech Bubbles: An Evaluation*, p. 4.

¹⁸⁸ Eleanor Samson, *Everyone's Entitled to a Proper Turn: A Report into a Yearlong 'Speech Bubbles' Project at Sandbrook School Led and Project Managed by M6 Theatre* (2015), p. 14.

Georgina Davies, a teacher featured in a video on LBTC's website, says: "It helps with their confidence, more than anything else, and just makes them happy and able to engage".¹⁸⁹

Evaluation of the project included comments on the need for the story square to be clearly defined so that the children learn observation skills as well as participation skills, as identified by Samson: 'Being on the outside of the story square is as important as being inside and this is a crucial part of SB. The children learn to be active observers; they learn to enjoy watching and learning from each other.'¹⁹⁰ The relevance of this to the principle of framing discussed in Chapter Two is clear, and the emphasis on space is further raised by Samson:

Routine and structure is essential to the smooth running of SB. The room must appear the same every week for the children to recognise that they are in 'Speech Bubbles' and therefore behave according to 'Speech Bubbles' structure.¹⁹¹

The second principle explored in Chapter Two, that of choosing/sourcing of dramatic content and how this relates to the opportunity to practice social interactions is also present in SB. In her 2010 study of the programme, Paula Robinson recognises that,

...the nature of the Speech Bubbles' drama workshops which contained opportunities for imitation, repetition, mastery of certain games and activities and risk taking (especially in the use of communication skill) recreated opportunities for children to form new attachments with new adults and their peers.¹⁹²

Communication beyond the exclusively verbal was the third principle explored in Chapter Two, and this too is demonstrated in SB. Robinson describes the 'whole-body approach' to communication employed in SB's method: 'children [...] would be invited to use this square

¹⁸⁹ 'A Teacher's Eye View of Speech Bubbles' in *London Bubble Theatre Company* <<http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/page/videos2/>> [accessed 21 August 2016] (0:03-0:25).

¹⁹⁰ Samson, p. 11.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Paula Robinson, *Speech Bubbles: The Art of Building Creative Relationships: Developing Drama Workshops for Small Groups of Referred Children Aged 5-7 Years* (London: Birkbeck, University of London, 2010), p. 46.

as a performance area where stories would be enacted by the children through movement, facial expressions, gestures and words.¹⁹³

SB makes for an inspiring and thought provoking case study of a project that clearly and efficiently uses participatory theatre praxis to benefit young participants with EIL. Although its desired outcomes may at times be compromised by dictations of the institute in which activities take place (due to regulations and resources),¹⁹⁴ it nonetheless demonstrates impressive evidence of fulfilling its aims. Relevant to my investigation in particular are the ways in which the theatre practice principles I have explored prove to be effective contributing factors to creating the benefits and desired outcomes for the programme's participants. SB demonstrates the efficacy of framing a space in which exploration and enrichment of self, reflection, and 'life rehearsing' takes place. The framing is accomplished both by the SB session itself and most clearly by the Story Square. The gathering of stories to be played out at the heart of each SB session evidences the positive implications of various content sourcing. Notably, the invaluable empowerment of each child who gets to have their story scribed by an adult and acted out by his peers; and the use of story starters by the practitioner as a gentle and subtle way of inviting participants to discuss and process difficult issues which affect them. Lastly, SB's method actively promotes in the participants the awareness, understanding and the skills to express themselves in ways and means beyond the constraints of the mere verbal. This is facilitated by SB's utilisation of whole-body and multi-sensory approaches, exploration of soundscape and different movements and the opportunity to embody various characters, objects, and locations.

¹⁹³ Ibid. p. 44.

¹⁹⁴ Repercussions of activity locations and partners are outside of the scope of this investigation. It is worth noting, however, that running SB sessions in schools presents some problems, as reported by Samson.

SB invites each child or young person to take centre stage, where his or her own creation is celebrated and where 'they become at different times, author, performer and audience.'¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ *Speech Bubbles Resource Pack*, p. 5.

CONCLUSION

My investigation was ignited by the phenomenon of a treatable lack of skills that allow for a fulfilling and successful life among children and young people, and was further fuelled by that lack being highly prevalent especially in individuals from poor backgrounds. That set of skills is termed 'emotional literacy' and enables the well-executed expression and managing of one's emotions and the ability to positively respond to those of others. Matthews expands: '...key components of emotional literacy would include dialogue, acceptance of ambiguity and the ability to reflect.'¹⁹⁶ Where those desired life skills are underdeveloped or compromised, I used the term 'emotional illiteracy'. Its harmful effects are evidenced in social exclusion and offending behaviour. The social inequality aspect of this phenomenon is widely recognised: 'As many as 50% of children starting in primary schools in areas of social disadvantage will have a speech, language and communication need and recent studies suggest that figure is rising.'¹⁹⁷

Once I established that EIL and one of its clearly diagnosed causes, SLCN, are a societal concern, and hypothesised that participatory theatre praxis can potentially make a positive intervention in its countering, I explored what Freire and Goffman could offer to my investigation.

Paraphrasing Freire, who acted and advocated for the oppressed in society to be free of their shackles, I looked for children and young people to be free from the oppression of their EIL so they can live their lives to their full potential. Where Freire talks of literacy as the tool for this freedom, I advocate for a participatory theatre praxis that is tailor-made to

¹⁹⁶ Matthews, p. 46.

¹⁹⁷ 'Speech Bubbles Social Franchise' in *London Bubble Theatre Company*
<<http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/page/speech-bubbles-social-franchise/>> [accessed 15 August 2016]
(para. 1 of 10).

develop and bolster the self-expression and communication abilities that overwhelmingly inform a person's life, for better or worse.

Goffman, in particular his 'frame theory', further backed my hypothesis that participatory theatre may be relevant and useful, in his presentation of performative elements being embedded in human behaviour and, therefore, part of human socialising mechanisms.

The next stage of the investigation examined three specific principles that could be part of an EL-promoting strategy: framing, choice of dramatic content and means of communication, as well as some possible outcomes of their utilisation; hope, catharsis, and self-confidence.

The case study for the testing of the efficacy of those principles in countering EIL was Speech Bubbles, which has been using a storytelling, story-acting approach for children and young people to great effect since 2009.

This investigation demonstrated that participatory theatre praxis can allow for a positive/desired life trajectory for a young person, and effectively counter some of the outcomes of deprivation. The benefit to society in this specified employment of theatre and play is asserted by Gussin Paley:

...it is in play where we learn best to be kind to others. In play we learn to recognize [*sic*] another person's pain, for we can identify with all the feelings and issues presented by our make-believe characters [...] as we attempt to create a just society.¹⁹⁸

Boal articulated the idea that the purpose of art is to correct the doings of 'a sovereign art which deals with all men, with all they do, and all that is done for them: Politics.'¹⁹⁹ Indeed,

¹⁹⁸ 'The Importance of Fantasy, Fairness, and Friendship in Children's Play: An Interview with Vivian Gussin Paley', *American Journal of Play*, 2, no. 2 (2009), p. 138.

¹⁹⁹ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, trans. by Charles A. and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride and Emily Fryer (London: Pluto Press, 2008 [1979]), p.12.

there appears to be a great deal of dedication and commitment to countering the effects of inequality in our society by participatory theatre practitioners, not least LBTC. My research focused on the existing and possible future response of said theatre practitioners, as I believe that the very fact that they are uniquely poised to play a role in positively intervening means that the onus is on them to do so. Barnes appears to support this view:

...schools, academies and education authorities should urgently tackle mental health and well-being inequalities among children. Research [...] suggests that such inequalities can be cheaply and effectively addressed by dedicating significantly more resources to creativity, the arts and artists in schools.²⁰⁰

LBTC states that, 'The good news is that theatre makers and creative practitioners are uniquely skilled to make a positive difference to these children's lives.'²⁰¹ Relating to SB in particular, Barnes asserts this notion of specific responsibility that should be upheld by theatre practitioners:

...trained Theatre Practitioners and not teachers should continue to lead SB interventions; the aspects of the SB method that include clear and lived values, creativity, children's own stories, embodiment and drama to explore and understand emotions should be preserved at all costs...²⁰²

Inside SB's story square, the disengaged, oftentimes disruptive child can finally be a superhero, whose special talents are recognised and celebrated by her peers. That experience may take place within four pieces of tape that are stuck to the floor, but is nonetheless entirely real and will forever be a part of that child's biography and future.

²⁰⁰ Barnes, *Executive Summary* (2015), p. 2.

²⁰¹ 'Speech Bubbles Social Franchise' in *London Bubble Theatre Company* <<http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/page/speech-bubbles-social-franchise/>> [accessed 15 August 2016] (para. 2 of 10).

²⁰² Barnes, *Executive Summary* (2015), p. 2.

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