

MA Applied Theatre: Community, Education and Wellbeing
Part Time
ADPA7008
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The Applied Theatre Practices module has not only made me question who I am as a facilitator but I have also spent a lot of my learning questioning who I am as a person, taking time to consider my values. I am a huge empath and now understand that I value human connection and communication. It was important for me to discover where my passion lies as this will now inform my work moving forward. My experience lies solely with children aged between 4 & 14. I have noticed working within this age group that a lot of their decisions are prompted by emotions, perhaps because they don't understand them or how to express them. I would like to use this brief as an opportunity to create a workshop that surrounds the theme of emotions, pairing exercises that will allow the participants to further deepen their knowledge and understanding of their emotions and others:

'A Workshop for Key Stage 2 children (7-11) with "behavioural issues" - Week 6.'

Aim: to explore emotions and the impact of how we express these emotions on our relationships and friendships

Objectives:

- Build an understanding of the different types of emotions we could feel
- Start to consider what triggers changes in our emotions, both positive and negative
- Reflect on how our emotions may impact the people around us

Intended outcomes:

By the end of the session the participants will..

- Have an understanding around their emotions regarding certain situations and people, helping them to make choices that benefit their wellbeing

Ethical considerations are discussed throughout. The verbal contract I will give my participants (Appendix 2) at the start of our workshop will highlight the importance of our space being a safe and non judgmental one. I will discuss choice, reassuring them that they always have a voice that will be listened to and respected. Other considerations have been highlighted in **YELLOW** with a key to show what they're regarding:

- (1) Choice
- (2) Competency (my own)
- (3) Safety of participants (mentally & physically)

(3 - mental) Considering the age and perhaps the vulnerability of some of the participants I need to ensure I am creating a safe, brave and ethically correct space. To aid my planning I will use the drama spiral, where Baim (2020) discusses the importance of distance

regulation. A process in which I, the facilitator, creates a session that sits inside fiction and reality, ensuring that the material and/or issues explored stay comfortably within the personal boundaries of my participants. Starting purely fictional and spiraling towards personal if necessary. I don't believe that it will be necessary for me and my participants to spiral past a 3 on the scale, because I want to always be working one step removed but by choosing exercises and activities that allow space for reflection we can, as a group, push those boundaries if required.

(3 - mental) I am basing my choices for this workshop from the emotional competency levels and readiness of my participants. I have imagined this workshop to fall at week 6 of a 10 week programme, meaning that I have already built up a rapport with the participants and have a wealth of knowledge around their willingness to be vulnerable, share, and communicate. Having really connected with Geese Theatre as a practice I want to really consider levels of focus within my workshop. Baim, Brookes and Mountford (2002), discuss the differences between low, medium and high focus placed on an individual within group work. It is suggested to start with activities that have a low focus level before moving towards a higher level of focus. This prompted me to think about the participants in the room and their backgrounds. I personally started my career as an actor, therefore am very used to having people look at and listen to me. Given that my participants are in a P.R.U due to behavioural issues they potentially might have a negative relationship with attention, perhaps they associate the focus being on them with being told off. To protect their emotional wellbeing and avoid conflict I will strive to compile a workshop that floats seamlessly between low, medium and high focus, passing from one person to the next. I want to challenge them and their thinking but also give them the choice to share/reflect with the group to avoid feelings of pressure.

(2) My initial considerations for this workshop were either lift the mask or forum theatre. When considering the 6 different masterclasses we participated in, I felt that these two practices had the highest rate of success. They were engaging, interactive and thought provoking. However, when I applied my chosen group to these practices it didn't feel right. Something that has been discussed and has really stuck with me is competency. Ali asked us to consider our competency levels as a facilitator, lift the mask and forum theatre have to be carefully crafted and considered in order for them to be successful for the participants. Further research surrounding lift the mask led me to 'Lift your mask'- Geese Theatre Company in Performance where Watson (2021) discussed the importance of the work accurately mirroring its audience's lives. In order for the audience to connect and feel compelled to interact we must ensure that the characters, story and situation are recognisable. Having the character share their thoughts and feelings regarding a situation that is very real for the audience, encourages them to consider their thoughts and feelings, to process externally as opposed to internally perhaps. Truthfully, being this early on in my journey I think that I currently lack the competence and confidence to create something that will resonate with them, willing them to connect and share. My job is to honour my participants, give them a space to feel seen and heard. I can't do that if I am doubting my abilities, using this brief and workshop to find who I am as a facilitator and how I operate will allow me and my competence space to grow.

Planning:

(please refer to Appendix 1 for my full, detailed plan)

When faced with the prospect of learning, discovering, connecting etc the difference between it being successful and unsuccessful for me is a warm up. Life in general is incredibly complicated, at any age we have so much to think about and consider. How can I ensure my participants leave that at the door and come into my session fully present - a good, strong warm up. Having watched Sensory Specific Warm ups by People like us (2022) it highlighted the importance of establishing the energy levels and feelings of those in the room. This will determine if your warm up is high or low energy, if it focuses on grounding or more dynamic movements. Gathering that information quickly and adapting the warm up accordingly should help us achieve our warm up aim - to connect with our bodies and minds, connect with each other and focus on the present moment.

To ensure that my warm up isn't high focus on one individual for a long period of time I will create a passing level of focus asking each person to indicate with their thumb how they're feeling. I think having a nonverbal check in relieves any initial pressure to be vulnerable, I am still able to gather information without causing any uncomfortable feelings. We are also working towards the aim of the workshop straight away by asking them to consider how they're feeling.

I am good at reading the room and being able to adapt if needed. If the group in general feel quite tired, sluggish, disinterested, Keepy Uppy will be the perfect game. I also know that if the group feels energised, loud, maybe boisterous I can still do Keepy Uppy but I need to pair it with a grounding exercise. Something I've learnt from being a participant in the multiple workshops we've had is that I find it difficult to be present in the room if I haven't had a fun, engaging warm up. Keepy Uppy has now become a frequent pass time amongst the group and I do genuinely believe it's helping us connect on a deeper level. We're working together as a team, encouraging each other and laughing a lot which can instantly boost mood/morale.

I am very keen to bookend the workshop with Keepy Uppy, at the beginning of the session it can help relieve nerves and at the end my hope is that it will lighten their load, a way of shaking off the content we've been exploring. It's a chance to have fun whilst also prompting personal reflection. We will look at reflecting on Keepy Uppy at the end of the session, because I want them to consider how setting them a goal at the start affected them throughout the workshop - is it something they held onto or dismissed? Did they put pressure on themselves or others? Asking these types of questions will help us reach the objective: ***Start to consider what triggers changes in our emotions, both positive and negative.***

As previously mentioned I am aware that my participants may not come from a drama background, so to ask them to dive into improvisation or script work would be unfair and thoughtless, therefore, I want to use techniques learnt through 'Theatre of the Oppressed' (T.O). A practice coined by Augusto Boal, where theatre is used to promote social & political change. In an article written by Gewertz (2003) we're told that Boal believed oppression to be when one person is dominated by the words of another and given no opportunity to reply. Boal chose to put those people first, giving them the tools needed to express themselves and find a way out of their powerless position. I want to do the same for my participants, giving them space for personal processing as well as general, asking them to consider how certain things relate to

their lives will hopefully prompt them to recognise links between their emotions & behaviours. By finding these links they can understand why they're behaving in a certain way and start to identify ways of helping themselves. Thus, finding their voice and combating oppression.

There are lots of different elements within T.O but I have chosen to focus on Image Theatre (I.T). Farmer (2014) wrote about how I.T is a flexible tool for exploring emotions and issues. It can enable people to explore their own feelings and experiences in a less forbidding way, creating physical images as a response to a prompt. It should be done quickly, without pre-thought. I.T is open to interpretation, with no right or wrong answers, which I believe is perfect for participants still within an educational setting as it relieves pressure.

Referring to appendix 1, I have chosen two I.T activities. Circle of emotions will act as an introduction into I.T, they'll learn what is expected of them and I will ask them to begin to consider their relationship with different emotions, positive and negative. - This supports part of our aim: **to explore emotions** and objective: **Build an understanding of the different types of emotions we could feel**. There will be moments of medium to high focus but it is a group exercise so the focus will be passing.

(1) Emotive images, an exercise inspired by Miranda Ballin's masterclass, could see us as a group move passed 3 on the drama spiral. I predict this section of the workshop could be the most challenging for participants because they're having to discuss what emotions look like to them and create said emotions with their bodies. It will be a high focus activity but I will strive to keep my participants safe by reminding them that sharing is always optional and there are no expectations.

→ Emotive images was rehearsed pre assessment, I learnt that:

- I am calm, collected and in control when leading activities
- My instructions, the majority of the time, are clear, however, my aim was too broad. I need to pinpoint what I want to achieve and how - to combat this I am going to slightly change the format of the activity (any changes are noted in appendix 1) by asking them to tell me what they see objectively and subjectively before guessing the emotion - from there we can open up a discussion around body language, facial expressions and the notion that emotions look and feel different for everyone.
- The activities don't have to have perfect, clean cut endings, embrace a little messy.
- I am removing Bomb and shield from the workshop, as I don't want to rush this activity.

★ Based off of this experience I am going to write a script (Appendix 2) to aid me during my workshop

(3 - physical) Throughout the above, I have highlighted how I am going to protect my participants from any mental harm, considering their wellbeing throughout. Appendix 3 is my risk assessment where I have outlined the possible physical risks. On the day of the workshop I will make these risks clear, asking them to be aware and responsible for their physical safety.

Evaluation:

What went well:

- I personally felt like I was in control at all times, calm and considered which in turn put the participants at ease creating a willingness to share.
- Gave ample time for reflection, allowing my participants to really consider their answers to any questions given. Having been told previously that I hadn't done this I wanted to make sure the participants did not feel rushed - I honored the silence instead of being frightened of it.

Growing edges & future considerations:

- It's very hard to know if the workshop I planned would be successful with my proposed group of 7 to 11 year olds. Something that I perhaps did not consider was that children mature at different rates, some a lot younger than others, some a lot older as a result of their upbringing. Perhaps I was overambitious grouping children ages 7 to 11 together because there can be a big difference in maturity, intellectual and cognitive development. Would it be more beneficial for my participants if they were closer in age, with similar life experiences, aiming it at children ages 10 to 11 and specifically in Year 6? I personally believe the content of the workshop was suitable for ages 7+, it would've been challenging but I don't think anything was unattainable, I just now question if having those different age groups in the room would have worked well. - Something I would like to discuss further as a class is grouping people together as a facilitator. The participants are attending a workshop because of one or two common denominators but if there is a wide range of ages how do you make sure things are suitable for all.
- As a facilitator it's important for us to remain neutral, refraining from showing any personal opinion or judgement. I think my choice of words sometimes hindered this. I was using 'lovely' 'great' 'awesome' as a response to people sharing, is this considered pushing my opinion on others? What other words could we use to show we acknowledge and appreciate a participant sharing but also remain neutral? - I had a comment from Aimee regarding my use of the word 'guys' when referring to the group as she has been told before that some can find it to be a masculine term. I always believed guys to be gender neutral so I am intrigued by this and want to open up more of a discussion about the importance of being gender neutral and how can we do more to protect ourselves and the participants from this ever evolving topic.

To conclude, I am very aware that there are areas where I need to improve, self evaluation being probably the main thing, however, my confidence walking away from this assessment has definitely improved and I feel competent enough to start taking more risks.

Appendix 1

Workshop Plan

Warm up:

How are you feeling?

- Thumbs up = feeling good, happy, energised
 - Thumbs in the middle = feeling quite neutral, around a 5 or a 6
 - Thumbs down = feeling tired, maybe a little grumpy, sad
- ★ A nonverbal check in to relive potential feelings of anxiety around having to be vulnerable right away, I can still gather the information needed from a visual check in - **consider what the overall energy of the room is as you may need to adjust your plan to accommodate their needs**

Keepy Uppy

- Entire group have to keep the ball in the air as long as possible by tapping it back up in the air if it comes to you
- You can use hands, head, feet or any other body part to keep the ball up
- Group members all count each tap out loud
- One person cannot tap the ball twice in a row
- If the ball touches the ceiling or the walls it is counted as a tap

Something to consider:

- Be aware of the space, we don't want any collisions between people or things like the wall
- We're going to take the highest score from this round and see if we can beat it at the end of the session

Development activities:

Circle of emotions

- Have the group form a circle, facing outwards
- You will stand in the middle of the circle, shout an emotion, e.g. happy, then count down from 3
- On 1 the group will turn around and reveal a frozen image of what comes to mind when you say happy
- Ask them to remain in their images but have a look around the circle at everyone else
- Repeat however many times you would like, if they seem willing ask them to shout out an emotion

Suggestions:

- Happy
- Sad
- Confused
- Angry
- Joyful
- Excited
- Calm

Something to consider:

- No right or wrong way of doing this, it is completely open to your interpretation of the emotion
- Don't overthink, lean into the first thing that comes to mind

Questions to prompt reflection:

(give them space & time to reflect, sharing is optional)

- Did you find any of the emotions difficult to portray in an image?
- What emotion resonates with you the most in your life right now?

Bomb and shield

(After rehearsing in class I have decided to remove this from my workshop, purely because of time, I don't want to rush any aspects of my workshop)

- Ask the group to spread themselves around the room
- They need to look around the room silently and choose two people in the group, without letting them know they've been chosen and without choosing me
- Label those people A and B - A is a shield and B is a bomb
- You now need to keep person A in between you and person B at all times as you move around the room
- After enough time has passed ask them to pause and discuss who did the game 'correctly'

Something to consider:

- Be aware of the space, we don't want any collisions between people or things like the wall
- Avoid taking being chosen as the bomb personally
- How can this relate to your personal lives

Questions to prompt reflection:

(give them space & time to reflect, sharing is optional)

- Do you have any bombs in your life right now? They could be people, places, anything you want to avoid / keep at arms length?
 - Do you have a shield, something that can either soften the blow of the bomb or defuse it?
 - Could you be someone's bomb?
- ★ Give an example if you can - be vulnerable with them

Emotive images

(Changes to the plan will be written in RED)

- Ask the group to form a circle
- In the middle of the circle you are going to place all your emotion cards on the floor
- Ask the group to stand by or on the emotion that speaks to them the most, maybe it's because they don't know what it is or they feel that emotion right now etc
- Invite them to talk about their choices, encourage a discussion
- Put the group in pairs and ask them to pick up the card that they chose, gifting them an extra one (should have 3 in total)
- As a pair now ask them to create three images that portray those emotions, encouraging them to move lyrically through the images so they're not completely stagnant
- As a pair they are now going to create three images, or freeze frames that they think best represent their emotion cards.
- After some time every pair will show back their creation, presenting one image at a time, I will invite the audience to tell me what they see objectively & subjectively before guessing the emotion, discussing body language, facial expressions and general feelings.

Something to consider:

- No right or wrong way of doing this, it is completely open to your interpretation of the emotion
- Don't overthink, lean into the first thing that comes to mind
- Can be literal or interpretive
- ★ Encourage discussion, prompting them to consider how each sharing made them feel

Questions to prompt reflection:

(give them space & time to reflect, sharing is optional)

- What is your interpretation of what's happening here?
- How did it make you feel? (people sharing & people watching)
- How is it hearing people's assumptions / interpretations of your piece?

To end:

Keepy Uppy

- Remind them that the goal is to beat their high score from their previous game

Questions to prompt reflection:

(give them space & time to reflect, sharing is optional)

- How did it feel when the ball dropped?
- How did it feel when you were given a goal to hit?
- Is there something in your life right now that you're trying to keep up/keep afloat and how would it impact you if it dropped?
- Are you able to identify people in your life that can help you keep your thing up?

How are you feeling?

- Thumbs up = feeling good, happy, energised
- Thumbs in the middle = feeling quite neutral, around a 5 or a 6
- Thumbs down = feeling tired, maybe a little grumpy, sad

- ★ Hopefully their feelings will have changed from the start of the workshop, a good way of checking in with the participants after delving into some potentially difficult content. If there is time and you feel it is needed you can ask them questions about where they're at, why that might be and if there is anything you can do to support them.

Appendix 2

Workshop Script

Pre Introduction:

Hello my name is Elicia, I am going to be running a workshop today that is specifically aimed for Key Stage 2 children (7-11) with "behavioural issues" at Canolfan Bro Tywi Behaviour Support Services. Today's session would fall at week 6 of the programme, so I have already built up a rapport with the participants, and know their emotional competency levels. I don't need you to act 7-11 years old, just want you to be yourselves.

Introduction:

Good Morning/Bore Da, in today's session we are going to be looking at different types of emotions and feelings, now I will be asking you questions and asking you to think about times in your life where you've felt certain emotions but I want you to know that I will never expect you to share anything. If you feel at any point you do want to share with the group or with me that is fine, we're here to listen and support but you won't be forced into anything. This is a safe space, the only expectation I have of you is to treat everyone in this room with respect, including yourselves. If at any point you need to leave the room please do but don't go any further than the area outside the door, I will give you 5 minutes alone and then I will come and check on you. Remember that we are a team, and teams stick together. Right, let's go!!

Warm up:

Please can you form a nice circle for me, I want everyone to be able to see me and each other. We're going to do a quick check in, so I'm going to go round the circle and 1 by 1 you're going to show me how you're feeling. Thumbs up means feeling great, energised, ready for the day, Thumb in the middle, not really sure how you're feeling, maybe a bit tired and thumb down means you're not feeling okay, a little sad, grumpy. There's no right or wrong, no one will be mad if you're feeling thumbs down okay. Be honest.

I'll start and we'll go this way ...

Thank you so much guys, I appreciate you.

We're going to remain in our circle and play a game called Keepy Uppy. Now as a team we're going to work together to keep this ball up in the air as long as possible. We're going to do that by tapping it up into the air if it comes to you, you can use your hands, head, feet any part of your body really, just as long as the ball doesn't touch the floor. We're all going to count each tap out loud, if the ball touches the ceiling or the walls it is counted as a tap, however you cannot tap the ball twice in a row. For example, if I tap the ball but it stays within my vicinity and I tap it again we stop the game and start from the beginning.

Something to consider: this is a physical game, only you know how your body is feeling so if you have any injuries please don't push yourself.

Also, please be aware of your surroundings, spacial awareness is key, I don't want you accidentally hitting someone in the face or falling into a wall. You are in charge of your physical safety for this game okay.

Awesome job, what was our highest score?

Okay, we're going to play this game at the end and see if we can beat that high score, sound good?

Development activities

Does anyone know what I mean when I say emotions? What is an emotion?

Can you give me an example of an emotion?

Could anyone give me an example of when they felt ?

We're going to stay in our circle but in a minute I'm going to ask you all to face outwards. I will stand in the middle of the circle and shout out an emotion, for example, happy. I will then count you down from 3 and when I say go I would like you all to turn round and reveal a frozen image of what comes to mind when I say happy. I will show you an example.

Something to consider: there is no right or wrong way of doing this, it is completely up to your interpretation of the emotion

Don't worry and try not to overthink, always lean into the first thing that comes to mind

How did you find that?

Did you find any of the emotions difficult to portray in an image? Why do you think that is?

Were there any emotions that resonated with you the most?

Turn around, touch the ground and shake it off for me. Lets mix up this circle slightly, swap places with someone making sure you end up in a different place, next to someone new, then if safe to do so please take two steps back.

Here I have some emotion cards, I'm going to place these around the circle. (Read out each one)

I would like you to stand on or by the card that draws your attention, this could be because you feel like that, you don't know what it means, you like or don't like feeling that way. Don't worry if it's the same as someone else. For example, I feel drawn to Because

Would anyone mind telling me why they chose their emotion?

I'm going to have you pick up your emotion and then I will put you into pairs

I am now going to gift you another emotion so you should have 3 in total.

Similar to what we were doing in the previous activity, I would like you to work in pairs to create 3 freeze frame images that represent your emotions. One image for happy, One for sad, One for anger.

You'll have about 5 minutes so remember, no right or wrong, it can be literal or interpretive, run with the first thing that comes to mind.

If you have any questions or you're unsure on what something means come over and ask me.

Find a space in the room and let's go.

Okay team, how are we doing on time? Thumbs up if you think you'll be done in 2 minutes, thumbs down if not. Okay, we'll

Pawb yn hapus? Everyone happy?

Sit down where you are, I am going to need a pair to volunteer going first.

Thank you, this pair are going to show us their images and I am going to ask you to tell me what you see objectively, which means just the facts, tell me what you can physically see, for example....

And subjectively, if subjectively is the opposite of objectively what might it mean?

We're able to add our personal perspective to something, create a little story in our heads about what's going on. For example...

Okay, without telling us please can you show us your first image?

What can we objectively see?

What about subjectively?

Can we guess what emotion this might be?

Okay, why do you think that?

Were these guys correct?

Can I ask you to explain your thought process behind this?

Thank you for exploring emotions with me. I hope that you can see that emotions look different for everybody, I could be feeling sad and Ella could be feeling sad but that'll look different for both of us. If you're unsure what other people are feeling you can always ask, they won't always tell you but they might. Also, when you're feeling something and you're unsure what it is, think about your body language, consider your breathing, it might help you figure out what and why you're feeling a certain way.

Are you ready to try and beat your score from earlier?

We reached Lets see if we can get to

How did it feel when the ball dropped?

How did it feel when you were given a goal to hit?

Is there something in your life right now that you're trying to keep up/keep afloat and how would it impact you if it dropped?

We worked together as a team to keep the ball afloat. I would like you to try and identify the people in your life that can help you keep your thing up?

Thank you for being brave with me.

Appendix 3

Risk Assessment

Name of group/Session:	A Workshop for Key Stage 2 children (7-11) with "behavioural issues" at Canolfan Bro Tywi Behaviour Support Services - Week 6.
Location:	N001
Date of first risk assessment:	09/01/25
Name & Signed:	Elicia Axon 

What is the hazard?	Who is at risk?	What are you already doing to manage the risk?	Do you need to do anything else to manage the risk?	Actions by whom	Actions by when
The legs of the mirrors on the left hand side of the room	The participants	Planned activities that take place in the centre of the space	Ask the participants to put their bags up against the mirrors	Elicia	13/01
The radiator pipes	The participants	Planned activities that take place in the centre of the space	Make the participants aware when they walk into the room	Elicia	13/01
Stacked chairs	The participants	Planned activities that take place in the centre of the space		Elicia	13/01
Hit with a ball	The participants	Found a ball that's soft to avoid any real injury	Remind the participants about spacial awareness	Elicia	09/01 & 13/01