

Enhancing Self Esteem and Building Self Awareness of a Selected group of Grade Five Students in an Inner-City Primary School in Jamaica

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Abstract

This research reports on a life skills programme conducted among a select group of grade five students at an inner city primary school located in Kingston, Jamaica. The programme was conducted for six weeks. The purpose of the programme was to enhance self-esteem and build self-awareness of these students. Forty-two students participated; twenty girls and twenty-two boys. Convenient sampling was used to select the participants for the research. A pre-test was conducted to evaluate the students' awareness of their self-esteem. The data revealed that 50% of the students were not aware of their self-esteem. Based on the results of the pre-test the researcher developed the components of the programme to enhance students' self-esteem and build their self-awareness. The post-test data revealed that there was a 50% increase in students' awareness of their self-esteem.

Keywords: Life-skills programme; self-esteem; self-aware

Introduction

Child development is the product of the interaction of biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional processes that are put forward by various developmental theorists (Patterson 2007). Santrock (2008) postulates that behavioural and social cognitive theories hold that development can be best described in terms of the behaviours learned through interactions with the environment, and that behaviour, environment, person and cognitive factors are important in understanding development.

As children grow and experience the world, self-esteem becomes more distinct. Self-esteem can be defined as the way people evaluate their various abilities and attributes (Patterson, 2007). For example, a person who doubts his ability in school may be said to have low academic self-esteem and a person who thinks she is good at sports may be said to have high athletic self-esteem. Both Erikson (1963) (as cited in Harmon & Jones, 2005) and Freud (1914) (as cited in Erwin, 2002) believed that one's personality is a major contributor to self-esteem; while Skinner (1997) (as cited in Toates, 2009) looks at one's environment and how this environment contributes to one's behaviour.

Children's self-esteem may vary among different domains. For example, a child may have high academic self-esteem but low physical self-esteem; a child might regard himself or herself as a talented musician but poor in maths or spelling. Children with low self-esteem are usually described as being hesitant to take risks or move out of their comfort zone. They often talk and think negatively about themselves. In contrast, children with very high self-esteem may be described as 'cocky', boastful, or arrogant.

According to Tartakovsky (2011) persons with extremely high self-esteem are often perceived as threatening and aggressive. Having healthy self-esteem is a balance between being too guarded and too egotistical; it is also a balance between thinking too negatively or too positively about oneself. Self-esteem is related to a number of life factors. Healthy self-esteem is related to

experiencing school success, feeling happy and satisfied, making healthy lifestyle choices, having rewarding relationships, and demonstrating effective coping skills (Tartakovsky, 2011). Low self-esteem is related to several physical and mental health disorders such as eating disorders, depression, and anxiety. Life skills are defined as psychosocial abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (Tartakovsky, 2011). They are loosely grouped into three broad categories of skills: cognitive skills for analysing and using information, personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others (UNICEF, 2003). One of the strategies used for managing low self esteem is psycho-educational drama. The use of psycho-educational drama involves theatrical techniques that are combined with factual information to create dynamism, enhance audience awareness and provide information on sensitive subjects (Caso & Finkelberg, 1999).

When working with students, psycho-educational drama combined with cooperative learning is a process meant to facilitate the accomplishment of a specific end product or goal through people working together in groups (Dooly, 2008). The researcher believes that students become excited when something different is introduced into their normal routine of learning. Learning can become more powerful when it is connected to the world that exists outside the classroom or to our experiences or prior knowledge. For example, when a child agrees with statements such as, “I feel uncomfortable when I am with people I don’t know,” he or she may be sharing a history of feeling uneasy in new social situations. In new social situations, it is likely that the child may feel awkward and so may tend to avoid people and environments that are unfamiliar. On the other hand, when a child agrees with a statement such as, “I am a good friend,” he or she may be reflecting a history of positive peer relationships and a high probability of success in new social situations which will lead to self- esteem as a psychological response focuses on how a person

views him or herself. These views are feelings-based and can be either positive or negative, or accepting versus rejecting (Mruck, 2006).

Literature Review

The constructs self-esteem and self-awareness are important in the field of education, particularly through their effects on student development and learning (Patterson, 2007). According to Zeigler-Hill (2013) the construct of self-esteem was first described by William James in 1890. His description of self-esteem was that it captured the sense of positive self-regard that develops when individuals consistently meet or exceed the important goals in their lives. Thomson (2012) further adds that James suggested “self-esteem is the tendency to strive to feel good about one’s self and that people seek to maintain their self-esteem because they possess an inherent need to feel good about themselves” (p.3).

Since then, self-esteem has been explored by numerous branches of psychology which have led to multiple interpretations. Specifically, Mruck (2006) focused on defining self-esteem in four ways while Thomson (2012) focused on the definitions of self-esteem based on the branches of psychology. The four ways Mruck (2006) defined self-esteem are as: (1) an attitude, which refers to the cognitive, emotional and behavioural reactions; (2) a discrepancy, referring to the notion that self-esteem is a result of a discrepancy between the self that one wishes to be (the ideal self) and the self that one currently sees oneself as being (the real self); (3) a psychological response, which is how a person views him or herself; these views are feelings-based and can be either positive or negative, or accepting versus rejecting; (4) a function of personality, this view maintains that self-esteem is a part of the self-system, usually one that is concerned with motivation and self-regulation, or both. These four ways of defining self-esteem will form the basis for categorizing the plethora of existing interpretations of the construct.

Self-esteem as an attitude refers to the cognitive, emotional and behavioural reactions that one exhibits based on a positive or negative view towards a given object or person (Mruck, 2006).

This definition provides a rather broad view of self-esteem in the sense that the focus on ‘a given object or person’ which makes the definition highly generalizable. Colman’s (2009) definition of self-esteem as an attitude was more strongly associated with the perceived attitudes of others towards oneself. This definition is also shared by an ethological perspective of self-esteem which suggests that self-esteem is an adaptation that evolved from the need to maintain dominance in a social relationship. Since social dominance is typically associated with attention and favourable reactions, one’s self esteem therefore emanates from social approval and deference (Thomson, 2012).

From reviewing the varying ways of defining self-esteem there are two emerging commonalities. Firstly, they all involve some form of evaluation or perception of self-worth, whether it is in relation to oneself or to others. Secondly, they all allude to an affective element that involves a positive or negative feeling based on one’s evaluation or perception of self-worth. This feeling is commonly referred to as low or high self-esteem.

Low Self -Esteem versus High Self-Esteem

While there are numerous definitions and interpretations of the construct self-esteem, there is more consensus on the qualities of high and low self esteem. This can be seen from the review of Zeigler-Hill (2013), Plummer (2007) and Schweiger’s (2008) explanations of high and low self-esteem. Zeigler-Hill (2013) describes low self-esteem as an evaluation of the self that is uncertain or negative. According to him these negative and uncertain feelings are characterized by a likeliness to employ self-protective strategies resulting in reluctance to call attention to oneself, attempts to prevent bad qualities from being noticed, and an aversion to risk.

Similarly, though primarily focusing on children, Schweiger (2008) indicated that a person with low self-esteem does not like himself/herself and feels inferior and inadequate. She further explained that a child with low self-esteem tends to make statements such as: “no one likes me,

I'm in the low group, I don't want to go to school, I don't want to play with anyone, I can't do that" (p.5). Plummer (2007) also shared statements that a child with low self-esteem may make such as, "I'm rubbish; I can't do anything as well as the rest of the class, nobody wants to be friends with me, everyone thinks I'm stupid" (p.15).

Self – Awareness

DuBrin (2007) defined self- awareness as, "insightfully processing feedback about one self to improve one's effectiveness" (p. 453). Patterson (2007) wrote that individuals who have a high level of self- awareness are better able to recognize and articulate their mood and to use the information to guide their behaviour. Patterson (2007) postulated that self-awareness is a special type of schema that consists of all the knowledge we possess about ourselves. They maintain that this information is processed more deeply and is better organized than other information; thus it is remembered more readily than other forms of information.

According to Goleman (1995), in his book, "Emotional Intelligence," "self-awareness – recognizing a feeling as it happens- is the keystone of emotional intelligence" (pg. 43). He described it as being aware of both our mood and our thoughts about that mood. Hughes (1995) postulated that developing self- awareness is the first step to becoming a leader.

Weisinger (1998) wrote that high self-awareness enables individuals to observe and monitor their behaviour. Conversely, individuals with low self-awareness lack the information about themselves necessary to make sound decisions regarding their response to people and situations. Patterson (2007) stated that individuals are constantly challenged to redefine themselves based on societal and environmental pressures. While levels of self-awareness vary by individual, those with higher levels of self-identify rely less on the feedback of others than do those who are striving to define themselves.

Methods that Can Improve Self-Esteem and Build Self-Awareness

According to Slavin (1994), pioneers of education for younger children such as Rosseau, Frobel and Dewey initiated the child-centred perspective where emphasis is placed on qualities of “expression”, feelings and involvement so that children can enjoy, explore and discover strength in their own character which in turn aid development of themselves and the wider society. Swanwick (1990) argues that schools have a unique contribution to make and this contribution can therefore be explored inter-culturally in any curriculum. Psycho-educational drama and cooperative learning can be used to encourage leadership, team work, compromise, authentic listening skills and practice with real life savoir-faire. It teaches cooperation, empathy, develops decision making skills, promotes the exchange of knowledge, builds confidence and self-esteem, refines presentation skills, encourages self-acceptance and acceptance of others, features of empowerment, pride in work, responsibility, problem solving, management and organizational skills, which begets creativity and imagination. These aspects alone make role-playing beneficial because the students are able to learn from each other.

According to Duffy (1998) psycho-educational drama is a term used to describe the forms of expression in the visual and performing arts. Positive supportive relationships are essential for healthy emotional and social development (Patterson 2007). Article 31 of the United Nation Rights of the Child (2002) recognizes the right of young children to maintain and develop creative potential. It states that every child has the right “to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in the arts”. It is therefore dependent on educators and carers to provide creative experiences to improve children’s self esteem and build their awareness.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning can be defined as a concept that has five critical attributes or characteristics (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). Those critical attributes are (a) positive interdependence, (b) individual accountability, (c) group processing, (d) social skills, and face-to-face interaction. As with other concepts, if one or more of the critical attributes is missing, it is not cooperative learning.

Kagan (1995) stated that cooperative learning structures and strategies promote personal, social, as well as academic growth. Ellis and Fouts (1997) look at cooperative learning compared to other teaching methods and conclude that it has a very strong research base. Cooperative learning consists of any array of structures (some of which are simple and others more complex) and strategies: for example, jigsaws (Aronson, 1997), team games tournament (Slavin, 1994), and group investigation (Thelen, 1996).

Transformational Leadership Theory

In a simple sense, transformational leadership is a leadership theory that elevates the interest of followers and motivates them to maximize their efforts and achievements by overcoming self-interest and striving towards a common goal or vision (Eisenbeiß & Boerner, 2013; Hetland & Sandal, 2003; Schuh, Zhang & Tian, 2012). Essentially, in this form of leadership, followers are inspirationally influenced (Judge *et al.*, 2006). The four main elements of transformational leadership outlined by Avolio & Bass (1995) (as cited in Hetland and Sandal 2003) are: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation.

As outlined by Judge *et al.* (2006), there have been numerous and varied research that have attempted to explore the effects of transformational leadership. The general notion is that transformational leadership elicits positive behaviours in followers such as: raising levels of

morality and motivation, organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Hetland & Sandal, 2003).

Other perceived benefits include: empowered followers that possess strong social and personal identification, promotion of creativity through cognitive and motivational methods, increased performance and development of self-reliance. It is also suggested that transformational leadership contributes to self-efficacy and collective self-esteem (Gebert 2002 as cited in Eisenbeiß & Boerner, 2013 and Knippenberg *et al.*, 2007).

The point raised from the research of Eisenbeiß and Boerner (2013) was that the effectiveness of transformational leadership is partially dependent on the leader's intent, that is, followers will react positively if they perceive the transformative leaders as altruistic, but will react negatively if they perceive the leader as egoistic. Continuing on this point, Judge *et al.* (2006) expressed that one of the troubling aspects of transformational leadership theory is that it is presumed to be inherently positive. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) (as cited in Schuh, Zhang & Tian, 2012) attempted to categorize the types of transformational leaders into (1) authentic leaders who focus on the common good and (2) pseudo-transformational leaders who seek to enhance their status and foster employees' dependence. They attributed authentic leaders with moral leadership behaviours and pseudo-transformational leaders with authoritarian leadership behaviours. With this in mind, the authors expressed that within the field of transformational leadership theory it is important to implement practices targeted at enhancing moral leadership behaviours while reducing authoritarian conduct.

Methodology

Research Design

This study took the form of an action research which utilized both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The quantitative research technique involved the use of pre- and post test questionnaires while the qualitative techniques used were observation and a focus group

interview. Action Research is important in our educational system as it provides a framework for qualitative and quantitative investigations by teachers as researchers.

According to Brennan and Noffke (1997) action research is particularly concerned with exploring reflexively how research can contribute to the empowerment of teachers. Action research can help to alter what occurs in schools and teacher education programmes. Action research not only seeks ways to improve learning in the classroom; but also, benefits teachers and other stakeholders that are interested in the educational system.

The Sample

The sample for the research consisted of 22 males (53%) and 20 females (47%). The age range of the students in the training programme was from nine to eleven years of age, with 67% of the students at age ten, 24 % at age nine, and 9% of the students were at age eleven. The method of sampling used was convenience sampling, meaning that the researcher selected the sample based on availability and ease of access. The study was conducted in an inner-city public primary school. The school and class used were chosen because the researcher had previously done an intervention there with a group of grade five students and had seen how psycho-educational drama and cooperative learning had influenced them.

Data Collection

The data collection methods used were a pre and post questionnaire, classroom observations and a focus group interview. At the outset of the research it was envisaged that the most appropriate means of eliciting the perspectives of students would be through observation. However, following initial contact it was decided to design a pre and post- test questionnaire, which would be used to complement the observation. The pre-test was administered to obtain students' knowledge of the content area prior to the implementation of the intervention programme. The post test was administered to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme as it relates to the

content area. Classroom observations were used to collect data of students' interactions in groups and to monitor changes in their attitudes and behaviour.

The focus group interview was conducted at the end of the intervention programme and was used to gather data on students' leadership attributes and their perception of themselves and peers.

In carrying out an action research ethical guidelines such as consent, anonymity and confidentiality are very important. Time was spent with the intended class to get acquainted, build friendship, gain their trust and establish rapport. This was hoped to make the students feel comfortable and relaxed during the data collection phase. Conversations were held with the class teacher to ensure parents were informed through the use of consent forms.

Intervention

Susman's (1983) (as cited in Yasmeen (2008) model for action research was used to guide the implementation process of the Life skills training programme for the grade five students. The five stages of the model are: (1) Diagnosing, (2) Action Planning, (3) Taking Action, (4) Evaluating and (5) Specifying Learning. In the first stage of the research a problem was identified through observation and by administering a pre-test questionnaire. It was revealed that student's had low levels of self-esteem and self-awareness. In the second stage, alternative courses of action were considered to solve the problem. It was decided that psycho-educational drama and cooperative learning strategies such as: role play, drawing, games, storytelling, numbered heads together and group discussions would be effective in enhancing students' self-esteem and self-awareness.

The topics taught were: What is self -esteem? What is low self-esteem? What is high self -esteem? Gambling and Anger Management. In the third stage the programme was implemented in the school. The programme lasted for six weeks with one session per week. Each session was for

one hour. In the fourth stage, formative and summative assessments were used to evaluate the programme.

The information gathered from in class assignments and observations were used to continuously revise the teaching methodology and the overall effectiveness of the programme was evaluated by administering a post-test questionnaire. In the fifth stage, the researcher identified and interpreted the general findings from the evaluation of the programme, making recommendations where appropriate.

Research Questions

The research was guided by the following questions

- (1) What are the self-esteem issues that grade five students at an inner-city primary school face?
- (2) How does the use of psycho-educational drama enhance students' self-esteem?
- (3) In what way can cooperative learning build students' self-awareness?
- (4) How can transformational leadership be used to develop positive qualities in students?

Findings

The findings are presented under the related research questions.

Question 1. What are the self-esteem issues that grade five students at an inner-city primary school face?

Data for this research question was collected by administering a pre and post-test questionnaire. Microsoft excel was used to analyse the results by collating the frequency and percentages of students' responses and a graph used to present the data.

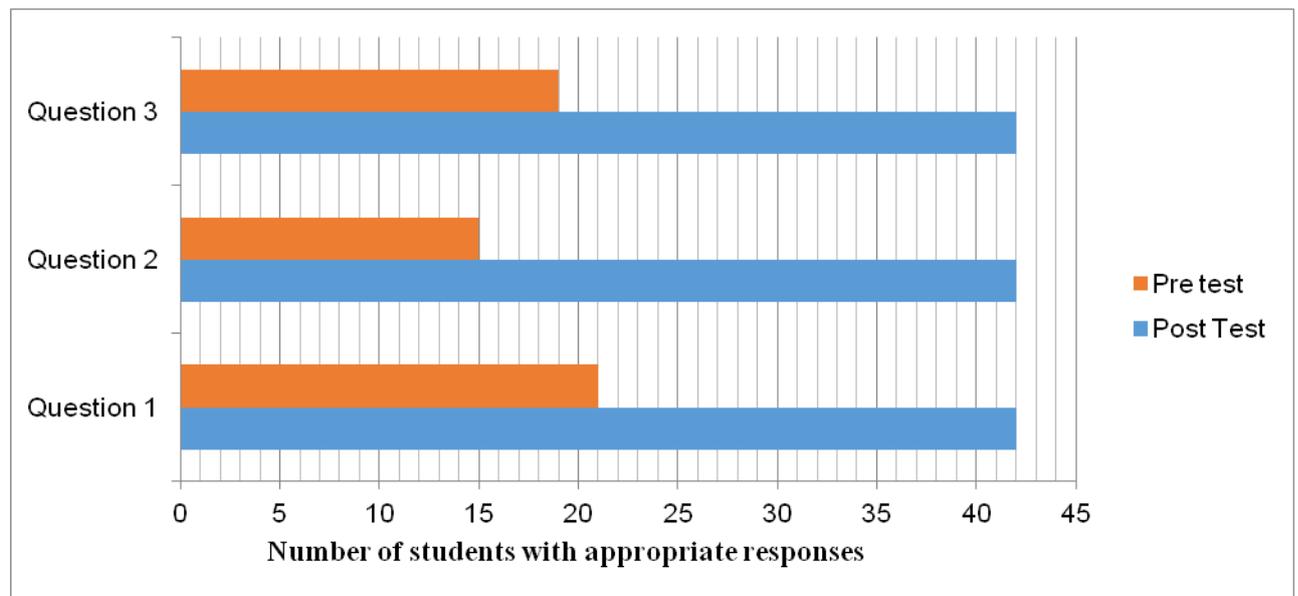


Figure 1. Graph Comparing Pre-test and Post-test Results for questions 1 to 3.

A comparison of the pre-test and the post-test results revealed that the students who received the content of the training programme learned and acquired new life skills and an understanding of themselves. To question one that asked students to define self-esteem, the pre-test revealed that 21 (or 50%) of the students were able to provide a proper definition. In the post-test all students (100%) were able to properly define self-esteem. To question two that asked students to define low self-esteem, the pre-test revealed that only 15 students (or 36%) were able to provide a proper definition. In the post-test all students (100%) provided a proper definition of the term low self-esteem.

To question three that asked students to define high self-esteem, the pre-test revealed that only 19 (or 45%) of the students were able to provide appropriate definition. In the post-test all students (100%) provided a proper definition for high self-esteem.

Question 2. How does the use of psycho-educational drama enhance students' self-esteem?

Psycho-educational drama was the main mode of delivery for the intervention programme. The specific instructional methods used were: role play activities, songs, discussions, random call

card, rally tables, and group jig-saw. The instructional materials used were pencils, paper, charts and markers. The goal of the programme was to, inspire, empower and enhance students' self-esteem.

The researcher was able to assess the effectiveness of the programme by collecting data through observation and focus group interviews. The data from the observation notes was summarized. Coding was used to analyse students' responses from the focus group interview and the data presented using narratives.

From observation of the role playing activities it was noted that it allowed students to express their feelings and encouraged them to take risks by performing for an audience. With their successful performance it was noted that students were more willing to share their thoughts in the classes. With the personalizing of the classroom activity, it was observed that students were involved in the decision making process by sharing their ideas with others and making numerous suggestions.

Data gathered from the focus group interview consisting of 12 students showed that all students gave positive comments about themselves but their views on how their peers treated them were mixed. In terms of students' perception of self, when asked how they viewed themselves as an individual at school all students gave favourable responses:

Intelligent and hardworking (George)

confident and caring (Kate)

smart and intelligent (Mary),

proud and confident (Jane)

as a good person (Mike)

respectful and confident (Fiona)

hardworking and always sharing information with classmates (Kerry)

a peacemaker and hardworking (Michelle),
confident and hardworking (James).

As it relates to students' perception of how they were treated by their peers, eight students stated that they believed that they were treated well, two students believed that they were only sometimes treated well and two students believed that they were treated poorly.

All students enjoyed participating in group activities. The range of expressions used to describe their feelings are: "happy," "proud," "great," "relaxed" and "excited." All students also enjoyed participating in drama activities; they said that they felt "great" and "happy." The activities that students said they enjoyed the most were drama and role play. Eight students said they enjoyed drama the most and four students enjoyed role play the most.

Question 3. In what way can cooperative learning build students self-awareness?

The cooperative learning strategies that were used throughout the programme were: role play activities, songs, random call card, rally tables, and group jig-saw group work in the form of games and plays. Data for this research question was collected through observation and students responses on a pre and post-test. Data collected from observation notes were summarized. Coding was used to analyse students' responses from the focus group interview and the data presented using narratives. Microsoft excel was used to analyse the data gathered from the pre and post-test questionnaire by collating the frequency and percentages of students responses and graphs were used to present the data.

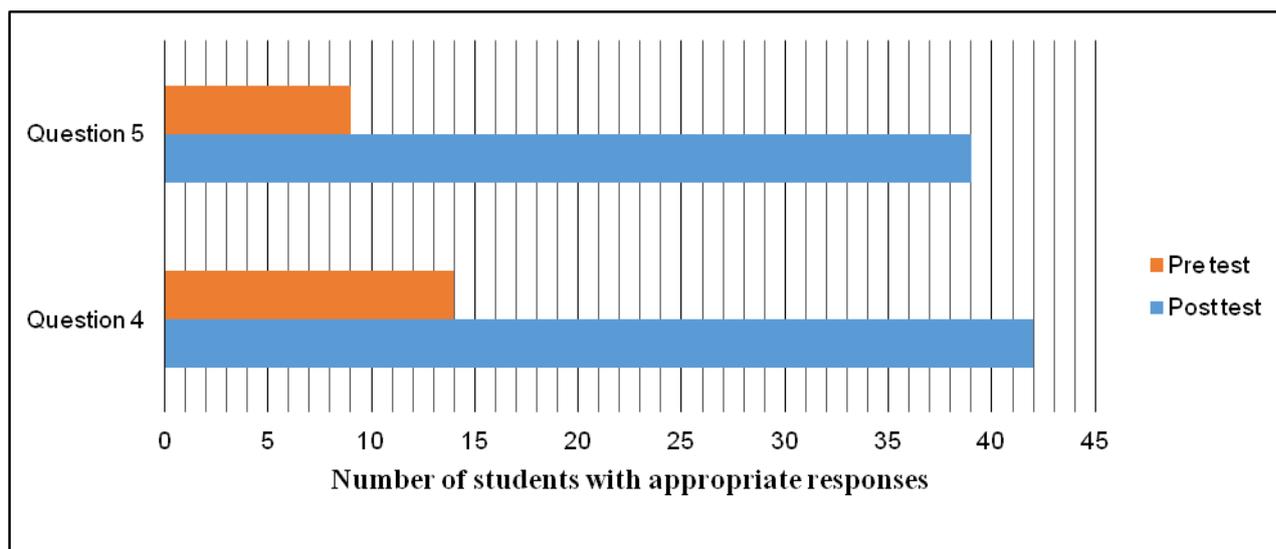


Figure 2. Graph Comparing Pre-test and Post-test Results for questions 4 and 5.

Data collected from the pre-test showed that some students were not able to identify, explain and manage emotions. Students' response to question four of the pre-test questionnaire that asked students to define anger, showed that only 14 students (or 33%) were able to provide an appropriate definition of anger. In the post-test all students (100%) were able to properly define anger. To question five that asked students if anger had to result in violent or harsh words, the pre-test revealed that only 9 students (or 21%) believed that anger did not have to result in violent or harsh words. In the post-test 39 students (or 93%) believed that anger did not have to result in violent or harsh words.

From observation it was noted that throughout the programme students were able to identify and explain their emotions and were able to devise methods to manage them. For example, when students were asked to share an experience that made them angry they were able to explain that when they were in class trying to focus on the lesson and other students were being disruptive this annoyed and angered them. They further explained that they tried to use the anger management techniques that they had learnt in these situations.

Another observation was that at times students displayed aggressive behaviours such as: hitting, shouting and throwing temper tantrums. It was noted that students exhibited less of these behaviours when they were involved in various activities such as role playing, games, plays and group work.

From the focus group interview, it was noted that most students (10 out of 12) indicated that they were nice or kind to their peers. One student said she was harsh to her peers and another student said that he sometimes treated his peers well and other times badly. In terms of how they felt when they did something that affected others, all students experienced feelings of remorse. They either felt “bad,” “sad,” or “terrible.”

Question 4. How can transformational leadership be used to develop positive qualities in students?

Data for this research question was gathered from focus group interview with 12 students. Coding was used to analyse students’ responses from the focus group interview and the data presented using narratives. In terms of leadership attributes, all students believed that they were capable of being leaders, but their reasons for seeing themselves as leaders differed. They generally fell within three categories:

(1) Their ability to interact with others, this belief is evident in the following responses:

“I know how to lead a group (Michelle)

“The way I act and talk to persons makes me know I can be a good leader (Jane)

“I listen to my group members when they share opinions (Kate)

“Being able to work in groups and do something we believe in. (George)

(2) An innate belief in their abilities, this is shown in the following responses:

“I believe that I am a leader, (Mary)

“I perform well, (Kerry)

“I see myself as a leader because if anyone wants to do something and I don’t like it I stand up for myself, (Mike)

"I see it in me (James)

(3) Based on the influence of others, this can be seen in the following responses:

"You (the teacher) said that everyone is a leader (Fiona)

"When people believe in me. (Mark)

Discussion

The discussion is organized according to themes drawn from the research questions.

Self-esteem issues faced by students

From reviewing the pre-test data students had limited understanding of self-esteem with only 21 of 42 students able to accurately define the term, 15 of 42 students understood what was low – self-esteem and 19 of 42 students knew what high self-esteem meant. The post test results revealed that students' understanding of self-esteem increased significantly with all 42 students providing correct responses to the same questions. This significant increase was attributable to the use of psycho-educational drama and cooperative learning strategies.

Based on Mruck (2006) and Thomson (2012) there are numerous ways to define self-esteem. This makes it important that the discussion first clearly identifies which perspective self-esteem is being viewed from. In the context of the findings, self-esteem is looked at as an attitude and from an ethological perspective. Self-esteem as an attitude refers to the cognitive, emotional and behavioural reactions that one exhibits based on a positive or negative view towards a given object or person (Mruck, 2006).

The use of psycho-educational drama to enhance students' self-esteem

Article 31 of the United Nations Rights of the Child (2002) recognizes the right of young children to maintain and develop creative potentials. It states that every child has the right "to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to age of the child and to

participate freely in the arts". From the findings the suggested ways that psycho-educational drama enhanced students' self-esteem were through: (1) increasing their self-perception and (2) gaining approval from others.

Based on the interviews, after the intervention all students had a positive perception of themselves. Particularly, they believed that they possessed admirable qualities such as being confident, hardworking and a peacemaker. It was also observed that students were willing to take risks by performing for an audience; they were more confident in their abilities and were willing to share their ideas. From observation and interviews with students, it was evident that through collaboration they increasingly received social acceptance from their peers. The interviews revealed that most students (eight out of 12) believed that their peers treated them well and the observation of students' body language and increased interaction in class suggested that they were becoming more comfortable in their groups. This could be considered as them gaining social approval through the support and acknowledgement received from their group and classmates. From an ethological perspective self-esteem is an adaptation that evolved from the need to maintain dominance in a social relationship. Since social dominance is typically associated with attention and favourable reactions, one's self esteem therefore emanates from social approval and deference (Barkow, 1980 as cited in Thomson, 2012). Based on this perspective, students' gaining social approval is akin to increasing their self-esteem.

The attributes displayed by students of having a positive perception of themselves and interacting and engaging with their peers are consistent with the characteristics of persons with high self-esteem as outlined by Zeigler-Hill (2013), Plummer (2007) and Schweiger (2008). It is on this basis that the research asserts that the intervention programme through the use of psycho- educational drama was able to increase students' self esteem.

Ways cooperative learning can build students' self-awareness

For the purpose of this discussion self-awareness is defined as having knowledge or an understanding of one's self. It includes the ability to effectively identify, articulate and manage one's emotions (Goleman, 2005; DuBrin, 2007). Responses to the pre-test questionnaire indicated that before the intervention programme students had low levels of self-awareness as they did not fully understand their emotions nor were they able to manage them. The pre-test showed that only 14 of 42 students were able to properly define the term anger and only 9 of 42 students were aware of anger management techniques. Through the use of cooperative learning strategies such as 'pretend play' and group activities on anger management, students became able to identify, articulate and manage their emotions. The cooperative learning strategies aided in enhancing students' self-awareness by allowing them to freely express their feelings and gain better understanding of themselves. The use of cooperative learning to increase self-awareness is supported by Swanwick (1990) and Kagan (1995) in which they explain that cooperative learning encourages self-acceptance, part of which is the ability to understand one's self and it promotes personal as well as social growth.

The students' increase in self-awareness after the intervention programme is evident in the post test results which showed that all 42 students had a better understanding of the term anger and 39 of 42 students were now aware of anger management techniques. Additionally, during the intervention programme students were able to explain what made them upset and used anger management techniques when they sensed they were getting upset. The interview responses also indicated that the students were able to identify their emotions in terms of how they felt when they did something that affected others. All students said that they had feelings of remorse. The fact that students felt remorseful about their actions towards others appeared to govern their behaviour as most students (10 out of 12) were nice or kind to their peers.

The ability of students to identify and explain their emotions as well as utilize techniques to manage their behaviour are consistent with the characteristics of persons with high self-awareness as outlined by Weisinger (1998). They explain that individuals who have a high level of self-awareness are better able to recognize and articulate their mood and use the information to monitor their behaviour. It is on this basis that the research asserts that the intervention programme through the use of cooperative learning was able to increase students' self-awareness.

Effect of transformational leadership on students

The responses from the focus group interview suggest that the use of transformational leadership empowered students and allowed them to gain social and personal identification. All students showed signs of empowerment by virtue of them believing they could be leaders. The reasons for students seeing themselves as leaders fell within three general categories: (1) their ability to interact with others (2) an innate belief in their abilities and (3) based on the influence of others. These categories also highlight the positive effects that transformational leadership had on students. Firstly, students that believed they were leaders because of their ability to interact with others showed that they garnered confidence in themselves through collective self-esteem. Secondly, students that believed they were leaders because of an innate belief in their abilities speaks to a high level of self-efficacy. Thirdly, students that believed they were leaders based on the influence of others showed that they possessed a strong sense of social identification. These attributes correlate with the perceived benefits of transformational leadership as outlined by Sahgal and Pathak, (2007), Knippenberg *et al.* (2004), Shamir *et al.* (1993) (as cited in Zhu *et al.* 2012) and Gebert (2002) (as cited in Eisenbeiß & Boerner, 2013). The authors suggest that transformational leadership contributes to: self-efficacy and collective self-esteem, empowered followers that possess strong social and personal identification, increased performance and development of self-reliance.

Conclusion

The research findings suggest that student's self-esteem can be enhanced through the use of psycho-educational drama by creating positive attitudes and allowing students to gain social approval from peers. The elements of the intervention programme that contributed to enhanced self esteem were: allowing students to personalize their classroom and collaborative activities such as; plays and games. Students' personalization of their environment had a positive effect on their attitudes which made them more receptive and accommodating. According to Mruck (2006) improving students' attitude is one way in which self-esteem is enhanced because it results in more positive cognitive, emotional and behavioural reactions towards an object or person. The collaborative aspect of the programme allowed students to receive social acceptance from their peers which from an ethological perspective is where one's self esteem emanates (Thomson, 2012).

The use of cooperative learning strategies allowed students to gain a better understanding of their emotions in terms of how it affected others and techniques to manage them. The reflective and cooperative element of the programme such as group activities and discussions encouraged students to share their emotions and reflect on what caused them. Based on Patterson (2007), Goleman (2005) and DuBrin (2007), the students were exhibiting high self awareness through their ability to effectively diagnose their moods/emotions, explain their causes and use techniques to manage their emotions. According to the authors, high self awareness relates to the ability to recognize one's mood, articulate one's thoughts about that mood and use this information to improve one's effectiveness.

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