

University of Cape Town

Department of Education

Faculty of Humanities

*Do shifts in self-descriptions occur
when the concept of self-image is
mediated to teenage learners through
Creative Movement?*

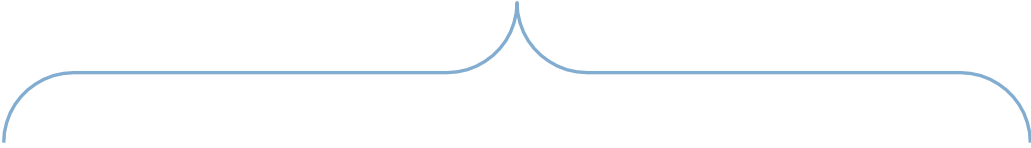
**A dissertation presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of PhD in Education**

by Alexa February LCHALE002

Supervisor: Dr J Hardman


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*“The individual becomes for himself what he
manifests for others”
(Vygotsky, 1931: 105).*

*“Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”
Translation: A person is a person through
other people
(Traditional Zulu idiom)*



Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Signed by candidate

9 February 2020

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Finally, I am very grateful to my ever supportive husband, parents and family who have always encouraged my educational pursuits without allowing financial obstacles and sacrifices to stop us.

Abstract

This thesis sought to explore whether an intervention using Creative Movement could improve the ways in which teenagers described themselves. The theoretical framework of L.S. Vygotsky (1978) was employed as a lens through which to understand the concepts of self-image, mediation, identity and adolescence.

An eight week programme was devised by the researcher in which eight volunteer participants at two local South African secondary schools used improvised Creative Movement in various activities facilitated by the researcher. These activities explored various aspects of the self in an attempt to mediate participants towards positive and stable self-description.

Data were collected by way of a pre- and post-test in which participants were required to self-describe in a series of written and verbal responses to open and closed questions. The pre- and post-tests were compared in order to track any shifts in self-description. These tests included a self-esteem inventory, open-ended written questions and a personal interview. Further data were collected during the intervention in the form of journals kept by participants and observation schedules. Qualitative and quantitative analysis was performed. Quantitative analysis included t-tests in order to ascertain statistical significance of any shifts observed.

The research conducted found that significant positive shifts in self-description did occur in all eight participants. Further findings involved the relationship between these shifts and the Zone of Proximal Development and the social structures in which participants found themselves. It was also noted that Creative Movement served as an excellent mediational tool for the concept of self-image.

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Chapter One - Introduction, Aims and Research Question

Introduction

Self-image is a difficult territory that each individual must navigate; however, it is especially difficult during the period known as adolescence. This is a period from the onset of puberty typically characterised by inner-conflict as the individual forges independence and a place in the world, developing from child to adult. It can be argued that the benefits of a positive self-image, which will be expounded upon in this dissertation, require of those who work with adolescents an exploration of ways in which to help them develop the necessary skills for defining and describing themselves. Such an ability to define one's self, the skill of self-description, assists the individual in developing a positive self-image and establishing an identity.

This dissertation makes use of the theories of L.S. Vygotsky to examine self-image and self-description as scientific concepts which can be mediated to adolescent learners. The mediational means used will be Creative Movement and dance composition which, it will later be argued, can be seen as a Vygotskian tool for mediation. Creative Movement is a form of dance pedagogy that, rather than giving participants a vocabulary of steps or teaching them a set 'routine', the teacher or facilitator will offer an instruction that the participants use to create their own unique movements. For example, the teacher may ask participants to devise their own movement to represent the emotion, sadness. One participant might sway gently, another fall to the floor and yet another reach outward with their arms. Each participant responds in a way that is personal and creative. These 'sad' movements may later be added to movements that represent other emotions or participants may combine their sad movement into a unit of dance. Creative Movement allows for physical word-less expression of emotions, ideas and identities.

Aims and motivation

This dissertation aims to offer a novel lens with which to view existing notions of education, psychology and the arts. It is hoped that a contribution can be made to the larger body of knowledge, addressing certain gaps, in a way that assists South African adolescents as they traverse an education system and economy which is far from ideal. Spaul (2015) notes an acute lack of accountability for a system which is entirely failing our children. He points to various studies which prove South African schools to be under performing by both local and international standards. Equal Education, a non-profit organisation committed to research and advocacy in South Africa, claimed that only 39.25% of South African students who started Grade 2 in 2007 wrote and passed their school-leaving examinations in 2017. This means that 47.75% of the original 2007 cohort dropped out or had to repeat a year or years of school (Equal Education, 2017). Similar statistics are available for 2018.

This study has been motivated, primarily, by a previous study conducted by, myself, the researcher (le Chat, 2015). The initial study followed three learners in an attempt to mediate, or provide structured guidance, to these learners to a more positive self-description. The findings of the initial study were such to suggest that there is scope to conduct a more longitudinal study using similar methodology with a larger sample over a greater period of time. This initial study saw all participants experiencing an improved ability to speak positively about themselves. The ability to express positive thoughts outwardly in a sincere manner can be seen as a marker of self-image because the outward verbal expression must first be an inwardly held belief. It also saw that each learner was better equipped to speak about self-image phenomenologically and, in turn, analyse their own views of the self. This meant that, not only could they speak more positively about themselves, but also that they understood self-image as a concept and could relate to it personally as well as objectively. This will be elaborated on in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

A greater number of subjects will allow for differing contexts, experiences and abilities to self-describe. In a Vygotskian sense, this means a more diverse

group, each with their own individual Zones of Proximal Development. The Zone of Proximal Development, according to Vygotsky, is the difference between what a learner is able to do with and without assistance. Varying Zones of Proximal Development or varying levels of ability will allow the researcher to analyse the benefits of the methodology for various learners. It is believed that a greater sample will prove the benefits of the proposed methodology to an even greater extent because of the diversity of the group. A more lengthy process of intervention will similarly allow for greater depth of study and, hopefully, yield more conclusive and interesting results.

Secondly, this study has been motivated by what the present researcher perceives as a need for a meaningful examination of the current educational and psychological climate, particularly in terms of the South African education system as well as how pedagogues and academics view both dance and self-image.

The South African education system spends much time focussing on literacy and numeracy with little success. According to the PIRLS (Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study), 78% of Grade 4 learners in South Africa cannot read for meaning (Jansen, 2017). More specifically, the study cited found that learners cannot read and understand what they are reading. In 2017, *News24* reported that international publication, *The Economist*, claimed the South African education system to be amongst the worst in the world (News24, 2017). Specifically, South Africa was ranked 75th out of 76 countries. It is estimated that only 1 in 29 Black African¹ Grade 12 learners are functionally literate when they exit the school system (Hoffman, 2008).

The South African schooling system, much like its American counterpart, is overly focussed on assessment rather than actual learning. An example of this can be seen in the assessment policy (known as CAPS) for languages in South Africa. A Grade 9 learner is expected to complete ten formal assessment tasks excluding the final examination (Department of Basic Education, 2011). A Grade 9 learner is expected to take two languages and seven other participants, each with their own

¹ While racial categories are false, they bare societal significance as a result of the legacy of apartheid.

stringent assessment criteria. Given that there are only roughly two hundred and six school days in a calendar year and many of these are lost to writing exams, sports days and school outings, this is a very high number of tasks to complete if any actual scaffolding and learning is expected to take place before assessment.

Moreover, these ten tasks only make up 40% of the final mark and 60% of the grade required to progress comes from a single year-end examination (ibid.) This creates a system in which teachers and students are overly concerned with assessment rather than actual learning. The state of South African education outlined by Spaul (2015), Jansen (2017) and others as discussed in the previous paragraphs would suggest that this system of 'the tail wagging the dog' is highly ineffective. Moreover, it is damaging to adolescents who rely greatly on scholastic performance for feedback to build their self-image. According to Marsh and O'Mara "academic self-concept had consistent reciprocal effects with both achievement and educational attainment"(Marsh and O'Mara, 2008) This means that not only can a child's perception of their academic ability affect their performance, but their performance – or perception thereof – can affect their self-image. Sheninger (2017) noted a similarly problematic level of assessment in the U.S.A. and posits that this over assessment is resulting in a lack of motivation and "authentic learning." If the education system purportedly designed to equip adolescents for adult life is actually hindering that process, the onus is on educationalists to review the system.

Added to these challenges is the fact that many South African children do not have the necessary access to food, housing, health care, funds, good parenting or educational resources. According to Stats SA; 68.9% of learners do not pay school fees, 12,1% of learners walk for more than 30 minutes to get to school each day and 9.8% of learners report receiving corporal punishment at school (Statssa.gov.za, 2017). This suggests that, in addition to a poor schooling system, South African school-goers are under considerable stress as a result of economic and physical constraints. This duress continues into adulthood. The 2017 unemployment figure was quoted at 27,7% (Yu, 2017). In reality, learners and youths are pushed through a fundamentally flawed education system and left to drown in murky economic waters. This dissertation was not motivated by any notion that these challenges could be solved but by the belief that new ways of skilling our

adolescents to meet these challenges must be considered. Perhaps, a more positive way of viewing and describing the self could lead to a greater resilience in this difficult world. According to Steele, Spencer and Lynch (Steele, Spencer and Lynch, 2018) self-image and resilience are closely linked, They found that an individual with a stronger self-image is more resilient to adverse events which may negatively affect one's view of the self. By extension then, one might conclude that an individual with a more positive self-image might also be better able to cope with changes and challenges generally.

Based on the various studies discussed above, the current education system does not appear to be sufficient for developing children. While there are many opinions around what would be sufficient, a new way of thinking is strongly suggested. It can be posited that a new thinking around developing learner self-description and the role of the arts in education may, in some way, contribute positively to the South African educational conundrum. Creative Arts (a composite of Music, Dance, Drama and Fine Art) is a compulsory learning area (or subject) throughout the General Education and Training Phase (Grades 4-9) and although the quality of teaching is not equal, access is fairly universal. All learners receive a government funded and approved textbook as part of the South African Curriculum policy which assists teachers and learners with little artistic background to explore the arts meaningfully. Teachers' Guides are also provided with clear lesson plans. Most textbooks are written with a view to equal access and activities do not usually require specialised equipment or knowledge. Dance or Creative Movement in particular, as it requires no additional resources, could assist many learners in ways that traditional learning cannot. This was found in my initial study as well as studies by other authors.

Further, an American Elementary school placed poor performing learners in a Dance Education programme and saw reading and maths scores increase as well as social skills, concentration and mental health improve. The reason cited for this was that dance provides a unique way of accessing knowledge (Aronica and Robinson, 2018). Moreover, a strong sense of self and the ability to think creatively could assist youths in the workplaces of the future. Nikolaou and Tsaousis (2002) suggest that a higher emotional intelligence – a broad term for skills such as resilience, conflict resolution and self-image – results in lower levels of stress and greater levels of organizational

commitment in the workplace. Similarly, according to Liz Ryan of Forbes Magazine (Ryan, 2016), employers are looking for prospective employees who are, amongst other things, 'self-directed' individuals who are aware of their strengths and past successes and who are ambitious, independent and goal-oriented. The simplicity and accessibility of Creative Movement thus provides a platform to explore the ability of art to transform teaching and learning as well as assist youths as they enter the workforce. All students, irrespective of which field they graduate into, can benefit from the skills attained from a creative education and from an improved sense of the self.

Furthermore, the difficulties of being a learner in the South African context are augmented by the difficulties of being an adolescent in the present age. While many aspects of growing up have remained the same – hormonal shifts, increased responsibility, access to substances and peer pressure -, many have changed. *The Guardian* claimed the present generation to be one "in crisis" as a result of societal shifts:

"The ubiquity of the internet and social media, with its dark underbelly of hard-core pornography, body shaming and cyber bullying, is encroaching on their wellbeing, while a relentless focus on academic high-achieving is turning up the pressure in the classroom. Youth, traditionally thought of as the most enviable time of life, can now look like a deeply challenging and sometimes unpleasant time of life." (McVeigh, 2017)

According to the University of Cape Town's Dr Joanne Hardman, children as young as 8 are using smartphones and as young as 18 months have access to the internet via tablets (Hardman, 2017). Adolescents are the group with the highest usage of internet, particularly social networking sites, and the group with the highest increase in usage over the last decade of all age groups (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickhur, 2010: 1). Technology has made the old evils of bullying, peer pressure and social ills inescapably pervasive. As a result, adolescents are reporting greater rates of mental illness and suicide and lower levels of self-esteem. *Time Magazine* recently claimed

that depression amongst North American teenagers had risen by 37% from 2005 to 2015 (Time, 2017). Similar increases have been noted globally. In South Africa, it is estimated that 17% of teenagers have made one or more suicide attempts (Nkosi, 2017). Contemporary South African adolescents exist in extremely difficult circumstances and these circumstances are negatively impacting on their ability to develop a positive view of themselves.

South African adolescents have a plethora of challenges facing them daily. One of the most useful tools to give present-day adolescents is a positive view of the self (Katz, 2000 in Emler, 2001:2). I believe that this will empower them to question the hegemonic assumptions of social acceptability, beauty and intelligence as espoused by the media and other sources. It will assist them in dealing with societal pressure, inadequate parenting and economic instability. De Guzman suggests that a positive view of the self enables adolescents to “deflect negative pressures” presented by peers and society (de Guzman, 2007).

Finally, this thesis aims to meet the following gap in the literature regarding the mediation of self-image and self-description; particularly using the dance form Creative Movement. Whilst the works of Lawrence (1985), as well as Aronica and Robinson (2018), Hanna (1999) and Oreck and Nicoll (2010) use drama and dance respectively to explore the self they do not invoke any specific psychological discourse nor do their findings explain why dance and drama have the powers espoused by the present study. Rather than analysing the psychological process, they infer that the arts are beneficial for identity because of their intrinsic nature and general observable changes in participants. Usually these changes are attributed to the physical nature of dance and the fact that participants are mastering a skill. Whilst these are certainly positive outcomes of Creative Movement, they are not unique to dance or artistic expression alone. This study sought to look more specifically at the effects of dance in a Vygotskian sense as a mediator of self-esteem and personality. These and other empirical studies, and the ways in which they are different to the present study, will be further discussed in the literature review which follows.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation uses a psychological discourse for the explanation of its findings. Self-image, the primary focus of the study, is an element of the psyche. Similarly, the apprehension of scientific concepts, a key concern of the educational project, is a psychological act. The strongest psychological influence to be applied in the theoretical framework of this dissertation is that of L.S. Vygotsky (1978).

Vygotsky offers a valuable discourse as he proffers ideas regarding how children acquire knowledge in his concept of mediation. He theorises that learning occurs through a reciprocal relationship between participant, object and mediational means in an inherently social manner. This conception of education allows us to analyse the process of knowledge acquisition in a meaningful way. Vygotsky's theory of mediation has informed this entire research project.

The theoretical framework for this dissertation traces a line of argument which applies Vygotsky's theories to the research question. Firstly, it will be argued in the upcoming chapters that self-image is a scientific concept, a higher cognitive function which must be taught, which can and should be mediated, in a Vygotskian sense, to adolescent learners. While the notion of 'teaching' self-image may seem contentious, later chapters will explain that, while an image of the self can be developed haphazardly through life's experiences, teaching or mediating it properly provides a golden opportunity to provide adolescents with a self-image which is stable, positive and ultimately more beneficial. Mediation is a term Vygotsky uses to describe the way in which learning occurs involving a dialectical relationship between participant, object and mediational means or tools. Secondly, Creative Movement will be explored as a mediational means. Based on these two premises, it can then be claimed that self-image can be mediated using Creative Movement.

Whilst this line of argument is largely the project of a later chapter, a brief explanation of the claim seems relevant at this point. I will now turn to the key concepts used for this logic, namely: mediation, mediational means and scientific

concepts and whether these Vygotskian notions relate to self-description and Creative Movement. Other areas of concern for this paper will extend to why a realistic and positive self-image is a vital part of adolescent development, how creative movement can be used to mediate this concept and what process occurs in learners as they acquire this concept. These will be discussed in the Literature Review.

Creative Movement

Creative Movement is a foreign concept to anyone outside of the world of arts education so I would like to define this concept at the outset. It is a form of movement and teaching movement which stems from the theories and traditions of Rudolph Laban and is part of a greater umbrella known as Dance Education. Dance Education uses Laban's vocabulary – an exploration of the terms 'space,' 'energy' and 'time' – as a means of self-expression (Koff, 2000). Dance Education – as opposed to Dance *training* – does not seek to groom students to become performers. Dance Education, at its core, asks participants to express themselves using natural and spontaneously derived movement.

Creative Movement (or Creative Dance – the two terms are used interchangeably) does not involve teaching participants a set of steps or dance moves. It is not related to a particular dance style, genre or technique. It is an “open-ended vehicle for expressing thoughts, feelings, ideas and imagination” (Kaufman, 2006: ix).

Participants are given a problem to solve through verbal prompts. For example; 'Freeze in a triangular shape' or 'Travel across the room as if you are sad.' The resulting movement or pose is open to the participant's interpretation. It is a response to a stimulus.

The response provided by the participants cannot be deemed 'right' or 'wrong.' Creative Movement is “expressive” and “non-prescriptive” (Friedman and Van Papendorp, 1997:1). Creative Movement relies on 'improvisation' and 'composition.' Improvisation is the act of creating movement experimentally and spontaneously. No time is spent re-working the creative product. Improvisation calls for a fairly immediate response to the problem or question. Composition is the creative product. A dance

composition may be a few movements or a full-length dance performance. In the case of this study, participants used both improvisation and more choreographed compositions to respond to the various verbal prompts provided by the researcher.

Creative Movement teaches problem solving, self-expression, empathy and collaboration (Gilbert, 2015: 3). It is a combination of “skill development and self-expression” (ibid:4). It cultivates individuality whilst allowing students to share ideas (Kaufman, 2006: ix).

Mediation

Mediation is described as the leading of a learner towards a scientific concept using mediational tools. Vygotsky explained that cognitive development must involve mediation. Mediation is an activity in which learners are engaged in a dialectical process as actors on an object. This object is manipulated by the learner in order to achieve development. Mediational tools allow learners to control their own behaviour “from the outside” (Vygotsky, 1978 quoted in Engestrom, 1999: 29). For instance, a child learning how to count may be mediated to do so using their fingers. The child is using the mediational tool of his fingers to act on the object of counting.

“The movement from knowledge to understanding is from the social to the individual” (MacDonald, 2006:52). A learner can only understand knowledge concepts if mediated to do so at the social level. Mediation involves “the act of making sense of the world for the child” (ibid.). According to Vygotsky, it involves a more competent other, like a teacher or peer, leading the learner toward an understanding of a new concept. The implications of such a notion on education are that learning must be seen as a social and culturally situated practice and be made socially meaningful in order for understanding to be achieved. Learners ultimately achieve self-regulation; which Vygotsky outlines as the process from development, to learning, to independent problem solving (Vygotsky, 1978). The ability to problem-solve independently is arguably the goal of every teacher for every learner. It is the skill which will allow them, ultimately to function in the workplace and thrive in society. This study is in line with these Vygotskian principles. An attempt was

made to mediate learners towards a better understanding of the scientific concept of self-description. Furthermore, it was hoped that learners would develop their ability to independently problem-solve and to express their solutions.

Mediational means

Vygotsky posits that mediation can only happen with the use of tools or signs. He offers examples such as language, counting systems, mnemonics, writing, diagrams and “works of art” (Vygotsky 1960/1981 in Daniels, 2001: 15). Daniels interprets these tools as “devices for mastering mental processes” (Daniels, 2001:15). He explains that while a technical tool helps the user to manipulate or change an object, a psychological tool allows a learner to change their mind (ibid.). The mediating artefact or tool - in the case of this dissertation, a creative product in the form of a dance composition - transfers the psychological operation to a higher and qualitatively new form that can be controlled by the learner. Vygotsky states that “by being included in the process of behaviour, the psychological tool alters the entire flow and the structure of mental functions” (Vygotsky, 1981 quoted in Penuel and Wertch, 1995:86). Mediating artefacts are tools that have accumulated the “cultural genes” of prior generations (Arievetch and Stetsenko, 1997: 161). As with Creative Movement, all mediational means offer the socio-cultural history from which they emanate to be used by the learner. The mediation facilitated learners’ use of these “devices for mastering mental processes” (Daniels, 2001:15) to change their perceptions about their individual selves. The mediational means of creative movement will become the tool which enables an exploration and expression of the self which may, it is hoped, result in more positive self-description as a marker of successful exploration.

Creative Movement as a Mediatlional Means

Creative Movement is a form of dance. It involves physical artistic expression. What makes Creative Movement unique as a form of dance is that it is entirely dancer-generated and does not belong to any specific genre. Dancers create their own unique movements, coloured by their own past and present, based on an instruction or suggestion from a teacher or facilitator. This is in line with Vygotsky and cultural historical work once more as it allows the learner to bring every day or spontaneous concepts into the classroom to be linked to the scientific. There is no codified technique and there are no physical requirements for participation. This study did not involve learners copying the prescribed movements of a dance teacher. Each activity required learners to create their own movement vocabulary in order to respond to a question or solve a problem. It is this process that will be analysed as mediation and Creative Movement which, itself, can be described as a mediational means.

What this dissertation contributes to the body of knowledge is, firstly, an examination of Creative Movement as a mediational means. Research has explored the benefits of language and number systems and various other teaching tools but not of any form of dance. This dissertation hopes to show dance in the form of Creative Movement not only to be a mediational means but a highly effective one at that. My own initial work in this field yielded particularly positive results with three learners (le Chat, 2012). All three participants showed a greater ability to self-describe and two of the three were able to self-describe more positively than before. The literature review will expound upon this.

In order to argue that Creative Movement has the power to mediate learners towards anything, it must first be shown that it is, indeed, a mediational means or tool. This can be achieved by looking more closely at Vygotsky's explanation of mediation and mediational means. Vygotsky provides us with two important premises on which to base a claim that Creative Movement is indeed a mediational tool. The first premise is that all "human learning presupposes a specific social nature" (Vygotsky, 1978:27).

For Creative Movement to be part of the meditational process, it must be social. This is true on three counts. Firstly, dance of any form performs an important social function. It aims to communicate ideas. Be it a theatrical dance designed for an audience or a cultural dance as part of a rite of passage, dancing always expresses a message in a social context. Creative Movement specifically aims to communicate the thoughts and feelings of the dancer to others. Secondly, dance is always about the other. We dance with, for or alongside someone else. Creative Movement is no exception. Thirdly, and more relevant to the particular dance to be employed for this study, dance can be collaboratively constructed. When more than one dancer works together to create a work there is a social dialectic that works organically to create art. This makes all dance forms - but particularly Creative Movement dance - a highly social activity.

Learning, according to Vygotsky's general genetic law (Vygotsky, 1987), is inherently social. He claims that we cannot learn without situating the new concept we seek to understand in a socially meaningful context. Creative Movement, by its very definition, is a social context. We dance for various social reasons; ritual, entertainment, communication and social engagement. Dance arose as an early communicative tool within primitive societies and has subsequently evolved to a highly stylized form of human interaction (Hanna, 1987). Dance is a deeply cultural practice that has evolved along with civilization. It manifests in social, informal and theatrical forms. Dance is used for communication, courting, religion, entertainment, discussion, ritual, recreation and the enrichment of society, all in an intrinsically symbolic way. Whenever human beings create art, of which dance is a form, it is with the intention of expressing something. Poet and dramatist, Vladimir Mayakovsky, offers that "art is not a mirror to reflect the world, but a hammer with which to shape it" (Hill, 1998:25). The arts, and in this case dance, represent rather than present, and in so doing, perform an important social role. Dance works are never created in a vacuum; they are always affected by the social order of the day in some manner. Creative Movement relies on this social order to colour the expressions of the given dancer or group.

Furthermore, according to Vygotsky the functions of development make two important appearances in the learning process. The first of which is on the social or "interpsychological" level (Vygotsky, 1978:57). This is a level at which learners engage with meaning together with social partners such as a teacher or other learners. Again, this is intrinsic to Creative Movement and dance classroom conventions. Learners create movement patterns with, for and alongside social partners. Dance works are seldom created alone, and even when they are, they are always created to be viewed by others. "The movement from knowledge to understanding is from the social to the individual" (MacDonald, 2006:52). This means that a learner can only understand knowledge concepts if mediated to do so at the social level. Maxine Greene

suggests the importance of a co-construction of knowledge in the arts that leads to “a participant kind of knowing and a participant sort of engagement” (Greene, 1995:113). This participant engagement is both social and symbolic. Therefore, Creative Movement performs at the “interpsychological level” (Vygotsky, 1978:57) of which Vygotsky speaks.

Mediation refers to the act of “making sense of the world for the child” (MacDonald, 2006:52). The implications of such a notion on education are that learning must be seen as a social and culturally situated practice and be made socially meaningful for the learner. Creative Movement provides just this. It is situated within the culture of every child. Particularly in South Africa, we see various dance genres connecting to various cultures. Within the Creative Movement classroom, these cultural dances are validated and reworked by the dancer. Based on this first premise, that mediation must involve social interaction and be situated in a social context, we can begin to see Creative Movement in a more Vygotskian sense.

The second premise is that learning occurs through the use of cultural tools that are symbolic in nature. These tools or mediational means allow learners to act on and subsequently make sense of their world. They provide the learner with agency in the quest for understanding. This premise is closer to the issue at hand.

Vygotsky offers language as the most important of these symbolic tools as it mediates almost every interaction humans have with one another. Other mediational means include counting systems and signs. We use these mediation means in a culturally situated way to come to an understanding. Therefore, “cognition is mediated by semiotic [or symbolic] mechanisms” (Rowe and Wertsch, 2004:538). I would suggest that Creative Movement is indeed the semiotic mediational tool proposed by Vygotsky because it allows the learner to manipulate physical movement in a symbolic and meaningful way and, in so doing, communicates with both the learner and those observing.

A mediational tool is something that the learner uses to act on the object of learning in order to make sense of it. The key here is that the learner controls the tool and is the actor in the learning process. Creative Movement allows learners to actively manipulate the object of learning in a number of ways. They are physically participating, using their body and mind. They are therefore empowered to use the tool of movement to the extent to which they choose. Secondly, in the act of composition, learners define their own creative parameters, solve

problems, develop their own movement vocabulary and explore the concept at hand. Dance is similar to language. In mediation, language is used to communicate ideas and express problems and possible solutions. Language is symbolic and steeped in social meaning. Creative Movement operates in the very same way. Let us look at a concrete example.

In a composition class, learners are working with the concept of space. This involves the use of different directions, heights and patterns. It is hoped that learners will be mediated towards an understanding of how to use space in different ways. The teacher offers learners simple guidelines and expectations and asks learners, in small groups, to compose a short dance exploring space. Learners use the meditational tool of Creative Movement to do just this. It is a problem solving exercise. Learners must look for different ways in which to use space by manipulating the tool of Creative Movement. They work in groups and later perform their dance for the rest of the class, making it a social activity. Learners use movement to act on the object of learning, in this case the concept of space, in order to make sense of it. This makes Creative Movement the mediation tool used by the learners.

Further substantiation of the notion of Creative Movement as a Vygotskian tool is present in some of his other key concepts. Vygotsky lays emphasis on a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between what he terms 'spontaneous' and 'scientific' concepts. Scientific concepts may be seen as the ends of teaching, the schooled knowledge that we expect learners to understand and apply to an examination. Returning to the earlier example, 'space' is the scientific concept. Spontaneous concepts are those everyday cognitive structures that children carry into the classroom. Spontaneous concepts are empirical, concrete and idiosyncratic of each particular cultural experience (Vygotsky, 1986). The arts employ a number of spontaneous concepts. Movement, imitation and rhythm are innate, as instinctive as survival. Children twirl and skip, often before they have the linguistic capacity to explain their activity. Expression through artistic imagination is part of our everyday lives. The spontaneous concept of human expression relates to the scientific concept of aesthetics, again pointing to the Vygotskian nature of Creative Movement.

Another Vygotskian model is "Double Stimulation" (Vygotsky, 1978:74). It is a method that involves an experimental context. Two stimuli are offered; the problem or task and the possible solution (Daniels, 2008: 46). The problem is the "object of the subject's activity" and the solution is made up of signs which "organise" the activity (Vygotsky, 1987: 127). The learner is presented with a problem which would otherwise be outside of their present ability and an open-ended

stimulus or tool is used as a sign or symbol to solve the problem. Rather than a traditional problem using simple stimuli for a direct response, this kind of problem offers a number of possible solutions. The sign helps to “objectify inner psychological processes” (Engestrom, 2007: 2). In other words, an observer may have a window into how the learner solves the problem because the stimulus is neutral and therefore requires the learner to actively manipulate it. This is a method, developed by Vygotsky in his attempts to study cognition. It is a method which makes the study of psychological processes, not just the result of these processes, possible (Daniels, 2008: 47). In this method, the learner is not given a mediational means in any “ready-made form” (Engestrom, 2007: 3) and is therefore afforded the opportunity to attribute his or her own meaning to the mediational means. This provides the learner with agency and creative freedom. Creative Movement can be used in this type of experimental method. Learners attribute their own symbolic meaning to the mediational means of movement when composing a dance sequence. They solve the problem of communicating with an audience in a creative and independent way. One can say that Creative Movement provides the perfect opportunity for this Vygotskian method of Double Stimulation.

Vygotsky determines higher cognitive functions, as opposed to lower cognitive functions, to be activities which must be learnt through mediation and which are abstract and generalisable. In order to suggest that Creative Movement is a mediational tool, it must be established that the acts of producing or viewing Creative Movement dance pieces are indeed higher cognitive functions. For this end, another theorist of the psychological realm, Howard Gardner, may be employed. Gardner points out that even “most artists have hesitated to acknowledge the cognitive dimensions and demands of their chosen field,” and yet Gardner argues for a distinctively “cognitive view of the arts” (Gardner, 2006:97). In other words, that all of the arts do employ a high level of intellectual activity. Echoing Vygotsky on semiotic mediational means, Gardner suggests that the use of symbols “may well constitute the *hallmark* of human cognition” (Gardner, 2006:98, italics mine). Moreover, dance “involve[s] the use of symbols” and dance education enables learners to practice the “encoding and decoding” of such symbols (ibid: 98). This means that through dance education, learners are introduced to a discourse that requires them to carefully analyse and interpret works of art and their own lives. Based on both Gardner (2006) and Vygotsky (1978, 1986 and 1987), Creative Movement, in psychological terms, is most certainly social, cultural and symbolic. Therefore, Creative Movement is a mediational tool.

Anthropologist Judith Hanna defines dance as “human behaviour composed of purposeful... culturally influenced sequences of nonverbal body movements... [and which] has an inherent

and aesthetic value and symbolic potential” (Hanna, 1999:11). She is suggesting, like Gardner, that dance is social, cultural and symbolic. By Hanna’s definition, in order to dance one must possess intent, be influenced by culture and be aware of the semiotic nature of the activity. Clearly, in order to do any form of dance, including Creative Movement, one must participate in a higher cognitive function. Hanna goes on to say that cognition is integral to dance because of its language-like qualities (Hanna, 1999:17). Creative Movement is undoubtedly a cultural device. Based on these links between Vygotskian theory and the nature of Creative Movement and dance generally, one can view Creative Movement as a meditational tool and a vital part of the learning process.

Creative Movement may be well suited to such a process because of its language-like qualities. Vygotsky explains that communication is central to learning. Mediation has been characterized as “an idea that breaks down the Cartesian walls that isolate the individual mind from culture and the society” (Engestrom, 1999: 29). This concept of creating community through learning is particularly pertinent in the case of dance. The way this breaking down of walls occurs is through communicating ideas. Creative Movement offers a platform for communication. By definition, participants are asked to offer their own ideas based on an instruction, question or problem. According to Vygotsky, communication is a vital component of learning. Vygotsky cites Piaget in his discussion of the sharing of ideas stating that “communication produces the need for checking and confirming thoughts ...these interactions provide the source of development of a child’s voluntary behaviour” (Vygotsky, 1978: 90). Essentially what this means for education is that by allowing learners to communicate their own ideas, teachers encourage development. Vygotsky himself has highlighted the role of the arts in such a process. “It always teaches a child to master the aggregate of his own experiences; to conquer and transcend them... teaches the psyche how to ascend” (Vygotsky, 1997: 257).

Can we mediate self-image?

Having argued that Creative Movement is a suitable mediational tool, I shall now posit that self-image is a scientific concept that can and should be mediated. This is perhaps the most contentious aspect of the theoretical framework because many perceive self-image to be a natural process. Yet, countless academics, psychologists and educators have attempted to find ways to improve self-image in children and adults. Ekeland, Heian and Hagen (2005) studied the role of exercise in improving self-image. McVey, Davis, Tweed and Shaw (2004) used a life-skills promotion programme to improve self-image in adolescents with eating disorders. Haney and

Durlak (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of 116 different studies which all attempted to improve self-image in some way. There are also several self-help books and articles which suggest ways to improve your self-image or that of your children. It is therefore fair to say that there is a widely held belief that we can, indeed have a positive impact on self-image. Whilst the methodologies vary, all these writers believe that intervention is possible and would be beneficial. What they do not tend to articulate is why it might be possible to do so.

It would seem that, without mediation, an image of the self is naturally created based on various influences. However, this image is tenuous at best. Furthermore, this is still mediation. An individual receives feedback from others; an “I love you” from a parent, a poor grade on a report card – these act as mediational means which lead to the development of a conception of the self. Whether one likes it or not, the self-image is developed through various external moments of mediation or learning. I would argue that although the semblance of a self-image can be formed without deliberate intervention, it is only through meaningful mediation that a positive self-image is formed. Without such intervention, the resultant development may well be a negative or under developed ability to self-describe.

Self-image should be mediated because it speaks to an important aspect of adolescent development. Macmillan notes that adolescence is characterised by a “self-image disturbance” (Macmillan, 1975: 202). A drop in the view an adolescent holds of him or herself is here ascribed to a natural part of growing up. Erik Erikson, a member of the psychological canon, suggested in his psychosocial theory that identity and self-concept arise naturally as part of human development (Woolfolk, 2010). Common understandings of the teenage years often echo this view that part of being an adolescent is suffering a crisis of identity and self-image which results in the natural development of the self as a solo activity. Vygotsky, however, would argue that this is false. Contrary to Erikson, Vygotsky (1986; 1978) proposed that identity is formed not naturally by the individual but through social interaction and that we can, indeed, mediate learners to a positive view of the self.

Vygotsky, in looking at the shift from child to adult in *Child Psychology*, noted a huge change particularly in adolescence (Vygotsky, 1998: 167). This change concerns higher mental functions which are, according to this theorist, the “basic nucleus” of personality (ibid.) As already discussed, adolescence brings a new way of thinking, a way of thinking which Vygotsky feels is the basis for human personality. Personality involves social interaction, self-perception and the ego. Vygotsky claims that children are not conscious of their ego and it is only in

adolescence that the self is realised (ibid: 173).

Furthermore, self-image can be mediated because it is a scientific concept; that is, it is a concept that can be explicitly taught. In this same publication Vygotsky discusses “self-consciousness” or the ability to reflect on one’s own qualities as a facet of personality. Self-consciousness is said here to include “self-image” and “judging oneself” (ibid: 174). ‘Self-consciousness’ can be read as Vygotsky’s term for self-reflection, -concept or –description. Self-description is the particular scientific concept which this study attempts to show can be mediated. In simple terms, the act of explaining and describing aspects of the self to a listener or viewer is the reflective act in question. Reflection or description of the self is only possible once the qualitative cognitive shifts which Vygotsky attributes to adolescence begin to take effect. Vygotsky argues that self-consciousness or self-awareness is not “original” or biological as many have posited. Lower organisms, explains Vygotsky, relate themselves to their environment, they cannot reflect on the self as a phenomenological entity. Developing the ability to reflect on the self within the self takes time and a long process. A process which *Child Psychology* offers as one which requires “objective culture” or, more to our ends, mediation (ibid: 174). For Vygotsky, self-image is a higher mental function. These are forms of thinking which are not purely biological or developmental. They are “self-regulated not stimulus bound,” conscious and deliberate rather than “automatic,” and mediated not haphazardly or naturally acquired without intervention (Diaz, Neal and Amaya-Williams, 1990: 128). Vygotsky (1998) speaks here in the exact terms necessary for this study – the ability to describe and perceive the self is acquired through mediation during adolescence.

In *Child Psychology* the reader is told that self-consciousness is affected by culture and society more than any other aspect of the personality (Vygotsky, 1998: 179). Vygotsky goes as far as to suggest that self-consciousness *enables* the qualitatively higher form of general thinking which occurs at adolescence (ibid: 181). In other words, teenagers need to be mediated to an understanding of their own self so that the required intellectual development can take place. I would argue from this that for teachers to successfully teach knowledge and skills as required by schools and curricula, learners must first be mediated to ‘self-consciousness.’

Vygotsky speaks of personality development as part of development. He suggests that the Zone of Proximal Development is a space in which learners are able to qualitatively improve their developmental capacity, not merely perform more tasks (Chaiklin, 2003). One could therefore posit that the development of self-description, an aspect of the personality as a higher mental

function, can be mediated as the individual will have a Zone of Proximal Development within which to work.

Luria, who worked closely with Vygotsky, tells us that no development occurs without the social influence of mediation:

“No development... can be reduced merely to the development of natural inborn processes and the morphological changes conditioned by the same; it includes, moreover, that social change of civilized modern forms and methods which help the child in adapting itself to the conditions of the surrounding community” (Luria, 1994: 46).

Luria goes on to say that all of a child’s psychological development is mediated by the people around the child (ibid: 116). While this may not be mediation in the school sense, it is a deliberate and evolving process. Between Vygotsky and Luria, it can be gleaned that how learners perceive and describe themselves is socio-genetic and in need of careful mediation. Arieivitch and Stetsenko (1997) add that human development and growth cannot be viewed as static; it is a fluid process using higher cognitive function. “Any human development, particularly that involving the self, involves mediation” (Arieivitch and Stetsenko, 1997: 161).

Powell (1971) appears to agree with this idea. He claims that adolescent self-image is based largely on “cultural norms and particularly on the interpretation of these norms that is accepted as the standard of the peer group” (Powell, 1971: 51). He explains that individuals develop a perception on what is ideal through social interaction and then begin to appraise the self, based on this ideal (ibid: 150). Writers such as Raja, McGee and Stanton (1992) and Greenberg Siegel and Leitch (1983) suggest that attachment to peers has a significant impact on mental well-being. Adolescent peer relationships play a vital role in development. In the context of the present study, peers are play a pivotal role in the methodology and efficacy of the study. Participants danced with and for one another in the present study. They expressed their identities and self-perceptions both individually and as a group. They experienced positive feedback and social acceptance and tested boundaries to solve problems. This process allowed participants to improve their abilities to self-describe in the context of positive cultural norms.

Erikson, although usually not in accord with Vygotsky on this subject, makes analogous assertions about the formation of identity and self-concept during adolescence. Kroger explains

these assertions by saying that others “interact with and regulate the ego of an individual to provide a context in which the self can find meaning and cohere” (Kroger, 1989: 11). Erikson, although he held that identity formation was ultimately biological, suggests that identity is formed by the individual’s experiences, the judgements of those they perceive as significant, as well as cultural and historical influences (ibid:13-15). ‘Significant’ individuals may be parents or other care-givers, teachers or peers. Even in this theory, the importance of the social is made clear.

In order to mediate, one must have a scientific concept that is to be mediated. A ‘scientific concept’, as opposed to a ‘spontaneous concept,’ possesses four defining characteristics. Vygotsky outlines that these defining characteristics are “generality, systemic organization, conscious awareness and voluntary control” (Wells, 1994: 1). “Generality” and “systemic organization” refer to the fact that scientific concepts exist within an established discourse (ibid.). They are part of a systemized whole. “Conscious awareness” and “voluntary control” denote the mode of acquisition. While a spontaneous concept is acquired through experience, a scientific concept is ‘learnt’ in the more traditional sense and therefore requires mediation.

Kaprov claims that: “According to Vygotsky (1978, 1981,1986), all specifically human mental processes (so-called higher mental processes) are mediated by psychological tools such as language, signs, and symbols“(Kaprov, 2003). Yet again, it can be noted that *all* forms of thinking, including reflective thinking about the self, is a higher cognitive function and involves mediation. Kaprov (2003) goes on to say that these tools are acquired by interpersonal communication with older and more skilled individuals until the child themselves uses these tools to perform the higher cognitive function. This research made use of the tool of Creative Movement to perform the higher cognitive function of self-description and to mediate learners to acquire this skill through collaboration with peers and the guidance of the researcher.

Self-image can be defined as a scientific concept based on these characteristics. As discussed earlier, Vygotsky asserts that adolescents change the parameters by which they evaluate themselves to the system present in “objective culture” (Vygotsky, 1998: 174).This means that self-image is formed as part of a general, systemically organized discourse. He also puts forward that a “boundary” is created between the adolescent self and the rest of the world (ibid.), making the acquisition of this development a conscious and controlled act. So, based on the four defining characteristics, self- image is a scientific concept.

This is in contrast to spontaneous concepts which are “the result of generalisation of everyday personal experience in the absence of systematic instruction. Therefore, such concepts are unsystematic, not conscious, and often wrong” (Kaprov, 2003). Whilst an individual will, in this unsystematic and unconscious way, develop a view of the self, it will not have benefitted from the careful and systematic formation provided by mediation. The result, almost certainly, will be a self-description based only on flawed understandings of what the individual perceives others to believe about him or herself. If we allow self-description and self-image to be developed spontaneously, the resultant image may well, as Kaprov puts it, be “wrong.”

Self-image can also be said to require mediation as it is genetic of the social. Stetsenko looks closely at the self as an “activity” which is socially embedded (Arievitch and Stetsenko, 1997: 160- 161). This means that the self, and the images we conceive of it, is created through a process of interaction within a social context. Individuals formulate images of themselves “...in and through (not in addition to) the process of collaboratively transforming the world...” (Stetsenko, 2008: abstract). This is the same process Vygotsky calls mediation. In order to create an image of the self, a learner must use semiotic tools in a social context to create meaning. In this case, the meaning learners create is of themselves. This image of the self is then expressed in the form of self-descriptions. If self-image is genetic of the social, self-description must be mediated.

This means that we can mediate learners towards expressing a more positive self-image through positive self-descriptions. The next logical question is how do we engage in such a process? Again turning to Vygotsky, this question can be answered by looking at his concept of ‘active internalization.’ This is a process of self-authoring which is genetic of the social. Our social interactions develop in us a concept of who we are (Daniels, 2007: 73). The “key” to active internalization is the feedback we receive from others on our behaviour, much like Briggs’s analogy which suggests those around us act as mirrors from which we create an image of the self (Briggs, 1965:9). This allows revelation of social judgements and creates a “self- other split” (Daniels, 2007: 106). In other words, by interacting with others and perceiving their reactions of ourselves, our own reaction to or image of the self is forged. We then, suggests Daniels, adapt according to the social rules of behaviour and our perception of what the “generalized other” thinks. This allows us to create a way of evaluating ourselves (ibid: 107) and, one could add, describing ourselves based on that evaluation.

Daniels quotes Vygotsky to elaborate this point:

“We are conscious of ourselves because we cognize... others, and in the same way which we use to cognize others – since we are the same in relation to us that others are in relation to us. We are aware of our self only to the extent that we are the other for our self. i.e. In so far as we can perceive our own reflexes again as stimuli” (Vygotsky, 1982: 52 in Daniels, 2007: 108).

This would suggest that we can only have a sense and image of self if we have a sense of others. Self- image comes from our interactions with others, from the social. In mediation, this social interaction can be steered in particular ways.

Lensen Botter (n.d.), conducting a study on the effects of teachers on student self-image, advocates that in the same way that Vygotsky shows that language, as a mediational tool, is used to shape thinking, language can shape self-image (Lensen Botter : 387). For the purposes of the present argument, I would like to extend that to any mediational tool, including Creative Movement.

Page and Page (2003) suggest that teachers are indeed able to assist students in “evaluating themselves more realistically by first helping them develop an awareness of their self-image” (Page and Page, 2003: 40). They suggest that teachers can help learners to evaluate the accuracy of they own self- image and thus develop a more accurate perception and description of their selves.

Based on this existing literature it is possible to say that a healthy self-image is a scientific concept that teachers should concern themselves with. It has been shown that self-image fits what Vygotsky and his followers define as a scientific concept and that mediation would be possible. Although there is no existing literature that suggests so, I would propose that Creative Movement offers us a mediational tool that is well suited to this process Creative movement, it has already been shown, is language-like, culturally-based and inherently social. It can be manipulated by the user to become a mediational tool. Creative movement could be specifically beneficial in mediating self-description because of these qualities.

How can we measure self-image?

There are a great many ways to test self-image and as many arguments around which method is best. All of the literature consulted thus far has described self-image, or self-consciousness as Vygotsky calls it, as something which involves reflection on or appraisal of the self in relation to social norms. Based on this, the researcher asserts that self-image can be measured by looking at this appraisal of the self as it is expressed by the individual in artistic, written and verbal descriptions of the self.

A Vygotskian theory which allows us to measure and analyse psychological processes is that of Double Stimulation (Vygotsky, 1978). This concept is aimed at “eliciting new, expansive forms of agency in subjects” (Engestrom, 2007: 363) which lends itself to the kind of creativity used in dance. Double Stimulation requires a structured situation in which participants are given a problem to solve which is beyond their existing ability. They receive guidance and are assisted by a ‘neutral’ stimulus which is used as a sign to solve the problem (ibid.: 364). Vygotsky used this method primarily in memory tests, another higher cognitive function. An often cited example is the use of a string, a neutral stimulus, to tie a knot to remember something. The knot then becomes a sign.

The two stimuli offered are a ‘stimulus-object’ and a ‘stimulus-means’ (Meshcheryakov, 2007: 173). The stimulus-object is the object of activity or the problem to be solved (ibid.). In the case of this study, it is the activity of conceptualizing and communicating an aspect of self-image; that is to say, the act of self-description. The stimulus-means is the sign used to organise the behaviour (ibid.). It is organised by the participant and has no limits or rules. It allows the participant to organize their own behaviour and act on the activity. Engestrom suggests that this second stimulus need not be a ready-made construction as the stimulus is used by the participant to act on the environment and the problem in their own, organic way (Engestrom, 2007: 365). For the purposes of this study, the stimulus-means is Creative Movement. It can be manipulated in any way by the individual in order to solve the problem posed by the stimulus-object. The participant expresses a description of the self (the stimulus-object) through the medium of Creative Movement (stimulus-means). Because Creative Movement is a neutral stimulus, every participant used it differently in spite of being given the same stimulus-object in the form of identical instructions.

Double Stimulation is useful because it allows for the process to be studied. The researcher may objectify the higher psychological process. One is then able to phenomenalise the steps taken to attribute meaning to the stimulus-means. This process shows concept development and higher cognitive functioning. If only one direct response is facilitated, the participant is limited and the creativity of a higher cognitive function is stifled (Engestrom, 2007: 364). Double Stimulation allows for the analysis of “concrete embodiments” of psychological tools (Miller, 2011: 50). In the context of this study, the way each individual chooses to complete the task of self-description (stimulus-object) using Creative Movement (stimulus-means) tells the researcher something about their view of the self and the level of their ability to self-describe.

Vygotsky offers another useful measurement device in his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development. The Zone of Proximal Development is what Vygotsky deems as the hypothetical space between independent and assisted performance; essentially, learner potential (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). This area of potential acts as the “...diagnostics of mental development to educational problems” (Vygotsky, 1992: 26). It allows teachers to discern what an individual learner is truly able to do. For the purposes of this study, one can say that asking learners to describe themselves allows for the assessment of the learner’s ZPD. The initial description is the base from which learners can be mediated to a more positive perception and description of the self.

Research Question

This study explores the ability of Creative Movement, a form of dance, to improve self-description. For the purposes of this study, self-description is an individual’s ability to describe aspects of the self in written or spoken words or in pictures or movements. For example, “I have brown eyes,” “I am creative,” “I am empathetic.” This relates to self-image as it is a verbal or physical representation of how the individual perceives themselves. Self-image, or how an individual sees themselves, in turn, is a part of a greater whole – that of self-esteem: the sum of how I see myself, how I perceive others to see me and what I desire to be. It can thus be said that self-description is a distilled marker which may point to a more global self-appraisal. The data discussed in this dissertation will focus on self-description specifically but much of the literature reviewed will consider self-image. Self-esteem, a far more complex concept, is relevant in so much as self-image is one aspect of this three part

structure. It would follow that an improvement in self-description would lead to an improvement in self-image and, in some ways, an improvement in the overall self-esteem of an individual.

Empirical research took place amongst a sample of high school learners over the course of one school term (8 weeks) as part of a weekly extra-curricular activity.

The research question is;

Do shifts in self-descriptions occur when the concept of self-image is mediated to learners through Creative Movement?

This dissertation also endeavours to deal with a number of subsidiary questions.

1. What is the link between self-description and self-image?
2. Is positive self-image something which can be mediated in the Vygotskian sense?
3. Can Creative Movement be used as a meditational tool?
4. What changes, if any, in self-description will be visible in learners who are mediated in this way?
5. Can we improve the way a child sees him or her self by helping them find a voice through movement?

It will be argued that Creative Movement is a mediational tool and that positive self-description is a scientific concept.

Research Design

The research took the form of multiple case-studies across two cases or research sites. The two research sites have been recruited on a volunteer basis. The study can be described as an

embedded design as multiple participants of analysis or participants were involved at each case or school. Eight learners across the two schools, recruited on a volunteer basis, participated in weekly intervention in the form of mediation during an extra-curricular activity for eight weeks each. Parental and participant consent was sought in writing before commencing mediation. All participants were between 14 and 16 years of age at the time of the study. The data were collected before and after the period of mediation as well as during each session. A multi-method approach of data collection and analysis has been used so that shifts in self-description may be tracked and compared at different stages and in different ways.

Research Methodology

This is a study at two research sites using the case study method to provide qualitative data. An interventionist approach saw an 8 week programme with four Grade 9 and 10 learners of diverse backgrounds at each site. Data were collected by means of questionnaires, personal interviews, and classroom observations for each learner in order to track changes in their self-description.

Research sites and participants were recruited on a volunteer basis and each individual participated in a programme designed by myself, the researcher, for 8 weeks. The programme used Creative Movement improvised by participants in response to various verbal queues and instructions. Creative Movement was employed in a Double Stimulation method (Vygotsky, 1978) whereby participants were provided with various tasks (stimulus-object) which asked them to describe aspects of the self using Creative Movement (stimulus-means) as a neutral but highly malleable mediational means. Pre- and post-tests were administered in order to glean participants' ability to positively self-describe and to track any changes which might occur after intervention.

Context

This study is situated within the context of various challenges to adolescents. Poor educational results and systems, pervasive social ills and economic challenges face adolescents daily and complicate the tasks of teaching and learning. This study also finds itself in a specific academic context which sees vast research being done on the importance of self-image, the failure of existing systems, the psychology of development and the usefulness of arts education however, there are few attempts to synthesis these ideas. There is a gap in the knowledge regarding this synthesis. Many have studied either the need for or benefits of self-image with little concrete evidence that it can be improved in specific ways. Many have spoken about the benefits of

creative education and the arts but have failed to show why the arts are so imperative. Psychologists believe that self-image should be improved and artists believe that art can do this yet they do not talk to one another in an attempt to truly theorise this opportunity. It is within these academic and environmental contexts that I have situated this study. It is hoped that by synthesising the psychological and the artistic, questions presented by the challenging environmental milieu can begin, if only in part, to be answered.

Conclusion

In the context of present-day South Africa and taking cognisance of the challenges of forging a positive self-image in adolescence this study hopes to uncover new ways of mediating learners to a more positive description of the self. This study will endeavour to discuss the research questions posed in this first chapter in the forthcoming sections as follows:

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

Chapter 4 - Data and Analysis

Chapter 5 - Findings and Conclusion

Chapter Two – Literature Review

A preliminary review of the existing literature will now be conducted in order to contextualise the data and findings which will be presented in subsequent chapters of this dissertation, and to show where gaps exist in the knowledge. While the relevant theories posited by Vygotsky were explored in the Theoretical Framework in Chapter 1, I would like to begin with a discussion of mediating cognitive development and the Zone of Proximal Development. I shall then turn to self-description, its improvement and the life stage of adolescence and finally, an overview of previous studies. These previous studies are the result of a vast internet search using Google Scholar to find empirical work which might show both what academics currently do and do not know about improving adolescent self-image and self-description as well as highlight the value of the arts in this project. The knowledge gap which will be shown by these previous studies is a lack of the synthesis of a psychological and arts education discourses.

Development, mediation and the ZPD

Vygotsky's model of development is important to this dissertation as it frames the way we view the acquisition of a concept of the self and an ability to self-describe. As explained in the previous chapter in more detail, according to Vygotsky, mediation involves a mediational means or tool (like language) and a more competent other (a peer or a teacher) drawing on the learner's cultural-historical background (Vygotsky, 1978). All development is mediated and all learning is preceded by development.

Fleer offers a conceptualisation of development that requires active intervention or mediation:

“In this conceptualisation, biology is not discounted, but rather the perspective put forward is that the child is shaped by, and shapes, the social and material world in which it exists. The child has agency in his/her own development. Child development is not biologically determined, or framed as an unfolding of a natural developmental trajectory (ages and stages), as has been shown in other theories of child development (such as that proposed by Piaget). Rather, child development is framed as a cultural process determined by the society in which the child lives and the child's active engagement in that society” (Fleer, 2017; 115.)

She is suggesting that children do not happen upon learning and development, but rather, that it occurs, as Vygotsky would suggest, through mediation using cultural signs and tools.

All of this development happens within what Vygotsky calls the Zone of Proximal Development. This is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

Chaiklin (2003) notes important features of the ZPD. The feature most pertinent to this discussion is that the ZPD relates to development not skills or tasks. It is therefore fitting that one applies this concept to the *development* of an aspect of the psyche such as self-description.

Based on this conception of development as something which must involve mediation, I would like to suggest that self-description, an aspect of cognitive development, falls into Vygotsky’s theory of mediation. What follows is an argument for the notion of self-description as a psychological tool and an aspect of cognitive development.

Vygotsky and his successors also highlight ways in which to mediate development. These methods are important because they informed the kind of intervention which took place in this study. Neo-Vygotskian scholars elaborate on mediation by including methods such as scaffolding, the use of leading questions, and providing feedback (Anghileri, 2006). Scaffolding works within the Zone of Proximal Development by providing increased support to perform smaller tasks and then building up independent skill by decreasing support and increasing the difficulty of the task over time. Scaffolding makes a task possible for a learner through guidance (Gibbons, 2002). Scaffolding was used in this study by creating simpler tasks in a social setting which mediated learners towards a greater skill. This skill was then employed in subsequent more difficult tasks. Leading questions are noted by Vygotsky (1987) as a way to introduce or hint at a solution to the learner. He likens leading questions to demonstration; in both cases, the learner is shown a glimpse of the solution in the mediation. Leading questions were applied when giving instructions for tasks. Rather than saying “make a dance about yourself” participants were carefully guided through various structured activities in which the instructions became leading questions. “Show me one static pose that represents one of your strengths” is an example of this technique. Leading questions were also used in the journaling portion of each session in order to focus participants’ writing. An example of this can be seen in the first journal entry when learners were asked “What are your expectations for this programme?” Anghileri (2006) also cites providing feedback as part

of effective mediation. Feedback was mainly provided in the form of verbal queues whilst participants worked on the tasks but was limited so as to ensure that participants worked as creatively as possible. Feedback focused on re-iterating guidelines already given, making participants aware of any time limits or ensuring the physical safety of learners. In these ways, Vygotsky's conception of mediation within the Zone of Proximal Development and relevant Neo-Vygotskian elaborations of effective teaching methods informed the research design.

Self- Description and Self-Image

This study focusses on each learner's ability to self-describe; that is, their ability to explain in words, pictures or movements, how they see themselves. Moreover, this study proposes to develop a more positive self-image in its participants through Creative Movement. Self-description is a marker of how individuals internally perceive themselves, commonly known as 'self-image'. Self-image may be seen as the overall view held by an individual of his or her own value, capability, worth, success and significance. Most literature uses the term self-image but it is important to remember that the unit of study for this dissertation – self-description – is a marker of self-image and therefore most of the statements made about self-image are relevant to self-description as well.

Self-image can be increased or decreased by social constructs, the behaviour and feedback of others, and individual and public perceptions of what counts as success. These increases and decreases are not sudden reactions to single events; they arise over time from consistent messages that are positive or negative in nature. Self-image acts as a precursor to its more tenuous counter-part, self-esteem. Self-image may be viewed as a unit of analysis of self-esteem. We see the perception a person has of themselves manifested in their behaviours, life choices and words. Self-esteem is the body of perceptions that affects the child's overall or "global" view of their own worth (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1991: 116). Therefore, self-description is a reflection of self-image and self-image is an aspect of self-esteem.

According to Page and Page, self-esteem is made up of the 'ideal-self'; what we want to be, the 'Pygmalion-self'; what we perceive others expect of us, and the 'self-image'; what we perceive ourselves to be (Page and Page, 2003: 34). Self-esteem as a whole can be analysed as a system which informs our interactions with the world. What we aspire to be and how we assess our ability to meet those aspirations create a general impression or esteem of the self. As a component of self-esteem, self-image is the evaluation we make of our selves. This evaluation is verbalised in self-description; how we verbally and non-verbally describe qualities we possess. It is "dynamic and ever-changing" (ibid.) because our perceptions and expectations are in constant

flux.

A positive self-image cannot be “injected” into individuals by constant praise and affirmation as this is merely a temporary upliftment (Page and Page, 2003: 34). In fact, Winch (2013) suggests that praise which does not fit with the individual’s conception of the self will not have a positive result as it will not be accepted as truth. Unfortunately, much of the plethora of parenting advice which litters bookshops and cyberspace suggests that parents may improve their child’s feelings of worth through focussing on their strengths and praising their efforts. Self-image is, in reality, affected by a number of more complex variables in the life of the individual. For instance, Amoateng and Kulule-Sabiti (1994) found a strong link between adolescent self-image and the family unit. They suggested that divorce, separation, unemployment and low levels of education of parents have a negative impact on the self-image of the children (Amoateng and Kulule-Sabiti in Van Zyl Slabbert, Malan, Marais, Olivier and Riordan, 1994). Other factors may include the skills and talents possessed by the individual, messages received from friends, family, teachers, media and society, and specific events in that individual’s life.

Dawes and Donald write that adversity has an impact on the psyche (Dawes and Donald, 1994). They define adversity as life without elements which would be deemed normal or necessary for development (ibid. p21). This may include basic necessities such as housing and nutrition or less tangible aspects like a stable home or cohesive family unit. Adversity, suggest Dawes and Donald is “...powerful in shaping children’s psycho-social, emotional and cognitive functioning...” (ibid.) Essentially Dawes and Donald are suggesting that a life without all the necessary building blocks of a functioning childhood can negatively impact on, among other things, the self-image of the child. As explained in the first chapter of this dissertation, the lack of some of these building blocks is a reality for the majority of adolescents in South Africa and across the globe, thus making a study in improving adolescent self-description through mediation all the more pertinent.

Furthermore, self-description may be viewed as a scientific concept and a psychological tool. It is an aspect of the personality or psyche which develops in the same way problem solving skills do: over time, through mediation and within a cultural context. This means that self-description can be developed in such a way as to enhance the overall cognitive functioning and experience of the individual.

Self-description and self-image are best nurtured when individuals are helped to “acquire emotional skills” (Page and Page, 2003: 35). How these skills can be acquired is illuminated by Vygotsky’s theory of mediation and will be discussed later in this literature review.

Without a positive picture of who one is, one cannot hold the self in high regard or describe the

self positively. Quite simply, self-image is the representation someone holds of themselves in their mind and self-description is the articulation of this. Self-image may or may not be what the individual is perceived to be by others or indeed is in reality.

Many individuals, particularly adolescents, have a self-image which is far less flattering than the real picture. We see this manifested in the way they describe themselves. While it is difficult to quantify the number of adolescents with a poorer self-image and no real data exist, there is extensive research in which the participants display negative self-descriptions and behaviours. One such study also situated in Cape Town, South Africa, surveyed 939 high school students and found a strong correlation between low self-esteem (which was prevalent in this particular sample) and risk behaviours such as substance use, suicide and early sex (Wild, Fisher, Bhana and Lombard, 2004). Trzesniewski, Donnellan, Moffitt, Robins, Poulton, and Caspi, (2006) found that, within their sample, poor adolescent self-image was a predictor of higher levels of criminal behaviour, poorer economic status and negative mental health outcomes in adulthood. These and other studies show us that poor self-image within groups of adolescents certainly exists and results in negative outcomes. Adolescence has also been earmarked as a time when individuals are particularly susceptible to a drop in their self-image. Simmons, Rosenberg and Rosenberg (1973) studied 1 917 children from Grade 3 to 12 and found significantly greater negative shifts in self-image during adolescence. Particularly individuals in early adolescence displayed a heightened self-awareness and a greater instability of self-image.

Self-image may be realistic or unrealistic, particularly in adolescents. Individuals with a negative self-image usually have unrealistically high expectations or unattainable goals (Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliwer and Kilmartin, 2001). A good example of this is body-image. In many cases, persons do not see their physical selves as others do. Rather, the representation in their mind is a warped one. Kevin, Thompson and Smolak (2001) provide vast data which suggest that many children and adolescents present with a 'body image disturbance' or an incorrectly negative notion of what they look like. Other adolescents may present with a different kind of disturbance. They may not see their own strengths and abilities. They may feel that they are unattractive, unintelligent or useless when they are not. A realistic image of the self is a healthy image of the self. If we are able to see ourselves for what we are, we can better identify our own strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, a positive self-image strengthens adolescents to commit actions of their own accord rather than merely because they feel it is expected.

It is important not to confuse a good self-image with conceit. Self-image is a sincerely and

internally held belief in one's value and will foster positive social relationships (Tracy, Cheng, Robins and Trzesniewski, 2009). Conceit is outward only and in fact, it has been associated with aggression and anti-social behaviour (ibid). When an individual presents as 'confident' it is important not to assume a positive self-image but rather to look more holistically. An individual who presents outwardly as 'confident' may or may not hold a positive self-image.

The existing literature about self-image would suggest that it is a complex and continually developing element of the psyche which is affected by many things. This literature also shows us that positive self-description is not developed simply through maturity or by speaking positively to a child. To return to the conception of development elaborated on earlier, these examples of literature about self-image (and therefore self-description) show us that it is an aspect of higher cognitive development which needs to be mediated.

How does self-description fit into adolescent development?

Adolescence is commonly viewed as a difficult time in the lives of most individuals. Bosma (1992) suggests that this is due to not one but several periods of "crisis" in which individuals must make commitments or choices relating to their identities (Bosma, 1992: 91). Bosma and Jackson (1990) also claim that the formation of identity is complex and ambiguous. They suggest that the formation of self-concept in adolescence is as "any other process of concept formation" (Bosma and Jackson, 1990: 17). The way to complete this task, they propose, is to obtain a well-defined understanding of the "object of knowledge" (ibid: 17). This is to say that one needs first to clearly perceive the self in order to develop a concept of the self and an identity. The task of creating a positive self-image in adolescence is arduous and open to many obstacles which can result in a less desirable self-description.

Vygotsky describes adolescence as a particularly important stage in the development of the independent self. He labels this time the "age of transition", during which, "new deep layers" of the personality are uncovered (Vygotsky, 1994: 186). This is combined with thinking which is more lateral and abstract (ibid: 187). Vygotsky claims that the emotional changes are less significant in this stage of development than the increased nuances in an adolescent's mode of thinking. He posits that, in fact, the adolescent "...obtains completely new material... [which] infiltrates entirely new cultural spheres" (ibid: 191). Adolescence, for Vygotsky, is the first time a child thinks in concepts rather than smaller, more concrete participants. Prior to this time, children cannot think in concepts which involve moving away from the visual and towards the abstract (ibid: 198 – 203). For Vygotsky, this is the most important occurrence of the adolescent years.

A more biological view of development in many ways echoes Vygotsky's notion that adolescence involves the development of independent and abstract thought and that significant development is still taking place. Executive Functioning skills like time management, problem solving or impulse control remain immature at this phase of development as myelination (the process of myelin coating neurons to allow nerve impulses to move more swiftly) is in the process of being completed (Luciana and Collins, 2012). Myelination, in fact, becomes the primary goal of the brain in adolescence (Steinhart, 2018) Geller (2013) states that "social-emotional development during adolescence is critically determined by the unfolding of important brain functions, the experiences occurring at this time, and the interaction effect between the two." She goes on to suggest that crucial changes occur during adolescence in executive functioning, emotional intelligence and social interaction (ibid.). Fuhrman, Knoll and Blakemore (2015) suggest that adolescence is a particularly sensitive time for neuroplasticity (the ability of the brain to form new neural pathways after early childhood development has occurred) and that adolescence is in fact *characterised* by significant changes in brain structure and function (Fuhrman et al., 2015). Thus, neuroscience would suggest that Vygotsky's description of adolescence as an "age of transition" (Vygotsky, 1994: 186) is quite apt. Furthermore, all of the abovementioned studies suggest that intervention can improve executive functioning and lead to enhanced development in adolescence.

This notion that intellectual and not emotional development is of greatest developmental significance for adolescents was not in line with the traditional thinking in psychology during Vygotsky's time. Yet it is of great use when working with persons in a school setting as it is their minds, not their hormones, which we desire to shape for adulthood.

Vygotsky (1998) also points to how vulnerable adolescents are for this very reason. He proffers that adolescence is the point at which a child begins to look inward in order to develop a self-image which is independent of the rest of the world. A "boundary" is created between the individual and the world. It is at this point, claims Vygotsky, that the adolescent forsakes biological self-evaluation and starts to assess their own personality based on "objective culture" (Vygotsky, 1998: 174). In other words, it is the point at which individuals begin to develop self-description.

This means that adolescents are in a vital stage in the development of their identity and self-appraisal of that identity. This is the first time that they begin to truly see themselves as individual personalities. This is thus a rather precarious time if we wish to mediate persons towards a positive self-image.

Vygotsky also notes that it is typical of adolescents to struggle in their development of healthy self-description. He suggests that “symptoms of discontent” (Vygotsky, 1998: 19) with the self, what may be interpreted as poor self-esteem, present themselves typically at age 13 in girls and age 16 in boys. Vygotsky’s acknowledgment that adolescence is a period in which self-image is developed and that this development is frequently accompanied by negative emotions, should encourage us to seek a way to aid persons in this period of self-discovery by equipping them with the psychological tools (scientific concepts) with which to do this.

Other scholars have suggested that self-image is closely linked to learning during adolescence as this is a time in which identity and self-image are re-shaped for adulthood. “The major task of adolescence is the re-evaluation of the self” (Briggs, 1965: 154). This offers teachers of high school learners an exciting opportunity in the form of a second chance for self-image building; a rather vital opportunity in light of the importance of self-image.

One aspect of self-image and self-esteem on which all academics and experts agree is its unquestionable importance. “If there were ever a magic bullet that could transform a young person’s life it would be a pill coated with self-esteem. This powerful yet fragile quality is the key to the future ...” (Katz, 2000 in Emler, 2001:2).

Self-image has also been noted to form “the mainspring that slates every child for success or failure as a human being” (Briggs, 1965:3). The link between learning, and indeed general success in life, and one’s perception of oneself has been extensively discussed in literature such as Briggs (1965) and Sher (1998). It has been proven a vital part of one’s ability to perform. A positive self-image is a foundation for better and more efficient learning and offers individuals the confidence that is needed to take the risks necessary for problem solving (Sher, 1998).

There is a reciprocal link between creativity and self-image. Kemple and Wang (1996) found high self-esteem to result in individuals who were more likely to be creative, active members of social groups and freely expressive of their own views (Kemple and Wang, 1996). A belief in one’s own ideas and creative abilities is a necessary pre-existing condition for creative thought. In order to be creative, one must have a healthy self-image. Croft claims that if teachers encourage the use of creativity in the classroom, self-image and confidence will improve, “leading children to hunger for more success” (Croft, 2001: 22). This is pertinent to the project at hand which seeks to mediate learners towards a positive self-image through creativity. Briggs proffers that this link is “extremely strong” and that creativity involves a belief in one’s own ideas and a willingness to “put those ideas on show” (Briggs, 1965: 280). The present study deals directly with this relationship

between creative expression and self-belief.

It has been suggested that teachers are obliged to address this aspect of their students' development as "intellectual growth does not occur apart from emotional growth; the two are intertwined" (Briggs, 1965: 271). It has also often been brought to light that adolescents are all too quick to label themselves, negatively affecting their ability to learn. Covington points out that as early as age eight, "kids have situated themselves on the 'smart or dumb' continuum" (Covington, 1998: 111). Briggs offers a useful analogy regarding the shaping and re-shaping of self-image. He suggests that those around the child act as mirrors. The closer the relationship between the child and a particular mirror, the stronger the reflection will be. Mirrors offer feedback through the reflection of the child to the child. Children use their reflected selves to build an identity, to sketch a representation of them that becomes their self-image. Parents and teachers are among the mirrors who most strongly affect how the child sees him or herself (Briggs, 1965:9). Other mirrors include peers, the media and society. Unfortunately, many mirrors offer conflicting views. While a mother may tell her daughter she is beautiful, the child's self-image is affected by her own comparison to the figures in a glossy magazine. The Dove global report on beauty found that seventy-six percent of the three thousand, two hundred women interviewed wished that the media portrayed beauty as more than a mere physical attribute (Etcoff, Orbach, Scott and Agostino, 2004). This would imply that the images put forward in the media are superficial. While this survey's respondents (all over the age of eighteen) were capable of seeing that, the average adolescent may not be. Furthermore, what the mirror intends to reflect is not necessarily what is perceived by the child. An example of this may be seen in the guilt many children often feel for their parents' divorce or marital difficulties.

The value of a positive and realistic self-image has been a frequent point of investigation in the latter half of the 20th century whereas contemporary literature seems to accept the value of a good self-image as a truism and therefore concerns itself rather with how to go about improving the self-image in individuals. In 1965, Briggs suggested that positive self-image is a marker of one's ability to fully realise his or her own potential. "His feelings of self-worth form the core of his personality and determine the use he makes of his aptitudes and abilities" (Briggs, 1965: 3). This author has also discussed learning and academic performance. He suggests that building self-image in children "actively nurtures intellectual development" (Briggs, 1965: 281).

It is clear from Vygotsky's emphasis on the importance of adolescent development and the focus

of Briggs and others on the usefulness of a positive self-image that this is indeed a vital part of any teenage child's learning and ability to succeed in the future.

Previous studies

An overview of the existing literature must include a discussion of more relevant empirical work done to date. It should be noted that a significant gap exists in that empirical research, on the whole, is either psychological or within the discourse of arts pedagogy. It is the researcher's intention to show how these two discourses can speak to each other

Beginning with a psychological discourse, Lawrence (2006) cites two separate studies he conducted in 1970 and 1985 respectively. In 1970 in Somerset, England, Lawrence explored the effect of self-image on reading progress using four groups of 8-9 year olds. The first group received only remedial reading instruction, the second group received remedial instruction and counselling, the third group received counselling only and the fourth group received no intervention. All the children attended the same core language lessons. After twenty weeks, Lawrence found that the group who received counselling as their only intervention not only displayed a marked improvement in their self-image but also produced the greatest improvement in reading ability. Lawrence posits that self-image, and for our purposes self-description, significantly impacts academic progress. In 1985 Lawrence extended the study to include a drama intervention. He found that drama benefitted both the self-image and reading ability of his participants. Lawrence begins to explore the benefits of art creation in improving self- image, however, unlike the proposed study, he does not specifically mediate self-image but rather observes it as a by-product of creative education.

Contemporary psychological literature has explored the impact of positive or negative self-image on particular aspects of the self. Solomon-Krakus, Sabiston, Brunet, Castonguay, Maximova, and Henderson (2017) found that early adolescents with a disparity between their perceived and ideal body shape were more likely to experience symptoms of depression. Yacoob, Juhari, Talib, and Uba (2009) found a link between low self-esteem and depression in Malaysian adolescents. This discourse has also, albeit in fairly limited ways, explored the possibility of using intervention to improve self-image. Tirlea, Truby, and Haines (2016) conducted research in which a 10 week intervention of girls between 10 and 16 years of age were found to have significantly improved self-image. Whilst the language of mediation was not expressly used by these researchers, they were, indeed, mediating scientific concepts like "body image and self-esteem, safety and assertiveness, a healthy mind, physical activity, healthy eating, trust and confidence, and

connections” using language as their mediational means (2016). Over a similar period to the study conducted for this dissertation, these researchers were able to effect significant and quantifiable improvements reflected by a pre- and post-test using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. This is a scale widely used since its inception by Morris Rosenberg (Rosenberg, 1965) and similar (although with a smaller number range) to that used in the questionnaire designed for the present study. Furthermore, they found that the improvements were maintained over a period of six months. Whilst the method of intervention and mediation was different with this study, it can be used as evidence for the possible success of mediating the concept of self-image.

Within an artistic discourse one notes similar results spoken about in different ways. Hanna (1999) observed an improvement in the academic performance and feelings of agency amongst American adolescents who received an arts education. Her findings were quite significant but, as in Lawrence (2006), the improved psychological state was a by-product rather than a directly mediated skill.

Oreck and Nicoll (Connery, John-Steiner and Marjanovic-Shane, 2010) propose a method of mediating the art of choreography which allows for more creative development to take place. They claim that individuals should be allowed to find and solve choreographic problems themselves rather than being given rigid guidelines. They found that participants spoke of their work with a greater sense of ownership and agency and produced far more creative and mature dance works. They also used journaling quite successfully for self-reflection and evaluating creative work. Oreck and Nicoll’s work is relevant to the present study because it begins to analyse successful ways of promoting self-expression in dance.

All of these studies suggest that dance can improve self-description yet none of them truly analyse ways to do this more directly nor do they collect data which suggest how it is possible for Creative Movement to make such a change in a participant. I shall endeavour to broaden the existing knowledge in such a way.

One body of knowledge which does synthesise the artistic and the psychological is that of Dance Therapy. This is a relatively new discipline and most studies look at the benefits of Dance Therapy for individuals with Autism, Eating Disorders and Schizophrenia or those who have experienced trauma. It is not a technique which deals expressly with self-image and the methodology is vastly different from that used by myself in this study. A fundamental difference is that Dance Therapy typically supplies a patient with movements from a dance genre like Ballroom or Contemporary which he or she infuses with their own emotional expression (Gleissner,

2017). My study holds that the specific benefits of Creative Movement are reached because the movements are of the participants' own invention. Participants were expected to invent their own movements in an inherently social and, therefore, Vygotskian manner. This is done as an improvised response to a stimulus provided by the researcher. These differences notwithstanding, Dance Therapy does suggest that movement has the ability to manipulate the psyche. Cited benefits of Dance Therapy include "learning how to develop and trust your ability to be present empathetically... Being able to respond authentically and truthfully... [and] Learning how to translate the nonverbal movements into insights that can be used in recovery" (Gleissner, 2017). What Dance Therapy offers is a defined therapeutic method with thirty years of research concluding that dance is a powerful psychological tool.

Tawell, Thompson, Daniels, Elliott, Dingwall and Munk (2015) provide convincing data from the use of drama in assisting disengaged students in British high schools. It was found that drama offered a safe space for young people to trial real-life situations as a character other than themselves. As a result, students felt safe to experiment and problem solve. Similarly, Creative Movement provides safety as it is non-verbal. Participants in my study were able to express their ideas in a less threatening environment because of the culture of a creative space. Tawell et al. also cited some positive outcomes. These included increased confidence, resilience, problem solving and social skills. Some of these developmental outcomes were achieved through explicit mediation similar to the way better self-description was hoped to be mediated in this dissertation. Ultimately, Tawell et al. found that "Arts based projects, led by skilled practitioners in arts and pedagogy, enable these young people to acquire tools for self-transformation" (Tawell et al., 2015: 38).

Perhaps most relevant to the current project, is my own work which acted as a springboard for new research. A study conducted for my Masters (le Chat, 2012) followed a similar design and methodology to the present study. It was different in that it consisted of fewer participants with significantly less intervention but it bore some positive results which should be discussed. Particularly, the limitations of the previous study can be seen as a motivator for the present study. Three participants from a Grade 11 Dance Studies class at a single co-ed metropolitan school participated in the study. Data were collected by means of questionnaires, journals, personal interviews, background research and classroom observations for each participant before and after mediation in order to track changes in their self-description. The mediation involved a series of lessons in which participants were guided to use Creative Movement to express and develop their own conceptions of identity and self-description. The programme was shorter and less developed than that employed for this dissertation but did adhere to Vygotskian principles in

many of the same ways.

The study found that dance can effectively mediate self-esteem in adolescents by assisting them to better understand the scientific concept of self-image which enables them to more positively self-describe. This was evidenced across all three participants. Each participant began with a limited understanding of self-image as a scientific concept and thus a limited ability to positively self-describe. In the final round of data collection the participants presented a more detailed understanding of self-image and, as a result, a better ability to self-describe. One can therefore assert, based on this study, that by mediating participants to a better understanding of self-image as a concept, they were mediated to a more positive self-image. This assertion led me to seek a more longitudinal study and better developed form of intervention to address some of the limitations and shortcomings in my Masters work.

Whilst it is not the task of this chapter to redescribe this study in full, two key findings should be noted as they directly motivated the present study. One finding of this initial study was that self-description is not merely a part of behavioural human development. Vygotsky held that 'self-consciousness' is learnt through mediation. Moreover, the data showed that a positive 'self-consciousness' or self-description is achieved through an active manipulation of one's thoughts. Participants described how they filtered the feedback from those around them and critiqued their own self-descriptions. They also described how this process ultimately resulted in more positive self-description. In other words, we are once again pointed to self-description's ability to be mediated. Therefore, if self-description can be mediated, it is worth researching how best to mediate it.

Another, unexpected finding related to body-image. It was found that body-image was a critical aspect of the self-descriptions of the participants. The participants themselves attributed this to the nature of dance as a discipline but this was not conclusively found to be so. As this was not specifically investigated in this study, claims regarding the impact of body-image cannot be made. However, Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliewer and Kilmartin (2001) do point to the impact that a negative body-image has on the developing self-image of adolescents. The findings in this project suggested further research in this area will be of significance and it is hoped that the present study might make a contribution in this way. However, the data suggest that a positive description of the body was more difficult to achieve for these participants than positive descriptions of other parts of their identities.

Based on the limitations of this initial study it was recommended that a more longitudinal study

involving more participants and cases and a greater level of intervention could address some of questions raised by this initial study and further the knowledge generated by le Chat (2012). This work took steps towards making a case for the importance of dance in the lives of all adolescents in order to improve their self-image. It suggests the possibility of successful mediation towards positive self-description and allows one to be hopeful that the research presented in this dissertation will have similarly beneficial outcomes.

Conclusion

The existing literature suggests that development occurs as a process of mediation by one or more of various mediational tools. I have attempted to apply these principles to show that Creative Movement is a mediational means and self-image is a psychological tool which can be mediated. This final step has not yet been explored in any other research. Existing literature argues the importance of self-image for adolescents. This research agrees with such an emphasis and will attempt to address the problem of negative self-description amongst adolescents. The possible findings could provide an extension of Vygotsky's theory of mediation and thus contribute to his body of work. They will also synthesise two bodies of existing knowledge from two different discourses, namely; psychology and the arts, and they provide a means with which to change the way young people view themselves. The remainder of this dissertation will be devoted to the specific data and findings resulting from the researcher's own empirical work.

Chapter Three – Research Methodology

Research Design

The research took the form of multiple case-studies across two cases or research sites in the form of two fairly dissimilar schools. The two research sites were recruited on a volunteer basis. Multiple sites were contacted via email and given an explanation of the study. Many schools were unable to accommodate any research on site for various reasons. Four government high schools consented to participate, two of which were then selected based on practicality in terms of maximum contact time and support from the school. One of the remaining schools withdrew consent whilst the other was only available at the same time as a site with which arrangements had already been made and was therefore not used. By government high schools, it is implied that both schools fall under the jurisdiction of the Western Cape Education Department and South African Department of Basic Education and, as such, receive some financial support from government. This financial support is largely in the form of textbooks and teacher salaries. A school will be allocated a certain number of teacher posts based on the number of students at the school. The average ratio is currently at 37 students to each teacher (UNICEF, 2018). In order to reduce the number of students in each class and hire more teachers, as well as cover general running costs such as stationary, schools charge fees. Additional financial support from the government is calculated based on the existing infrastructure of the school. Both schools are classified amongst the wealthier two fifths of schools (known as fourth and fifth quintile schools) in the country and therefore receive very little additional government assistance. The reliance on income generated by school fees is therefore high. One school in this study is particularly privileged whilst the other is less so. In 2018 the annual school fees were approximately R30 000 (approximately 2 150 USD) and R8 000 (approximately 570 USD) at School A and B respectively, making the difference in annual school fees between the two schools approximately R22 000 (around 1580 USD) in 2018. This discrepancy in available funds brings along with it a discrepancy in the overall resources of the school which is often reflected in a discrepancy in resources in the individual homes of each school's population. Whilst most learners at School A live in affluent suburban areas close to the school, the majority of learners at School B live in informal settlements (an urban shack settlement, not officially proclaimed as a residential area) or working class areas outside of the suburbs and commute to school by bus or train. All sites are based in the affluent Southern Suburbs of Cape Town² although they service a greater part of the metropolitan area including the Cape Flats (an impoverished area home to

²An area previously earmarked only for 'White' residents during apartheid which currently boasts some of the most exorbitant property prices in South Africa.

groups previously disadvantaged by the apartheid system). Both schools contain a multi-racial population although there are more Caucasian learners at School A and more Black and Coloured (a South African term for an ethnic group with Malay or Khoi San heritage) learners at School B. A detailed explanation of the demographics, policies and culture of each school follows in the analysis chapters (Chapter 4 and 5) of this dissertation.

The study can be described as an intervention as well as an embedded case study design as multiple participants – seen as participants of analysis - were involved at each school; seen as cases. Eight learners across the two schools, recruited on a volunteer basis, participated in a weekly intervention programme in the form of mediation of an extra-curricular activity for one school term each. In South Africa, a term is one quarter of the school year typically comprising of 10 to 12 weeks. The intervention was run over 8 weeks at each school to allow time to conduct the pre- and post-tests directly before and after intervention. The programme was presented to all Grade 9 and 10 learners at each site by myself; the researcher, followed by a call for volunteers. Parental and participant consent was sought in writing before commencing the intervention. All participants were between 14 and 16 years of age at the time of the study. The aim of using multiple case-studies and multiple participants of study, or participants, was to provide a wide variety of individual experiences and backgrounds which could provide richer data. The programme was presented as part of each school's extra-curricular offering rather than during the school day for two reasons. Firstly, the Western Cape Education Department allows little room within the school day for research to be conducted and finding time in each school's existing timetable would have proved extremely difficult. Secondly, and more importantly, extra-curricular involvement ensured that participants were there entirely of their own accord and fully invested in the process.

It is important to note that this intervention was carried out by myself as a facilitator. It needs to be recognised that the researcher as intervener is therefore fully entailed in the process. As such, I bring my own set of motivations and biases. I believe in the power of Creative Movement to act as a mediational means and I value the opinions of the participants. I am passionate about dance and education. Whilst these biases are not negative and unlikely to significantly impact the findings, it remains a factor to consider. Data collection and analysis was done in such a way as to limit these biases for instance, with the use of Observation Schedules and video data. During sessions, verbal feedback was limited and I asked participants to appraise one another's work rather than offering my own opinions.

The study involved exploratory research in that I have endeavoured to unpack the ways in which

self-description occurs and can be manipulated by participants. This study is also exploratory as the specific focus is fairly unique. While the existing theories of Vygotsky are being tested, the specific way in which this testing is happening is new. This study looks at how Creative Movement can be used as a mediational tool to develop positive self-description. The possibility of shifts in self-description occurring is the main focus of this exploration. I also took on the role of facilitator by conducting all mediation. However, I did not participate actively in the generation of ideas or the problem solving process. My role was simply to present problems or activities which participants worked together to construct over a series of sessions. In Vygotskian terms, this employed Double Stimulation (Vygotsky, 1978). The activities served as the stimulus object – a problem which needed to be solved by the participant. Creative Movement served as the stimulus-means, allowing participants to solve the problem in an open-ended manner using the mediational tool provided. These sessions were documented on camera and I was later able to take on the role of an observer in order to collect and analyse data from these recordings.

The process of obtaining a sample began with an email invitation to various schools across the Western Cape. Schools who responded were then met with in order to ascertain whether the school and I would be able to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. Once a school had been identified as a feasible site, participants were recruited at a public assembly. Thus, all participants were volunteers. Whilst volunteer sampling does tend to limit the generalizability and representative nature of the sample, this limitation is diminished by using two different schools. Further, the aim of this research is not to generalise to a larger population but, rather, to describe a process as it unfolds. Moreover, volunteer sampling is necessary due to the style of intervention which requires for all participants to be invested in the process and willing to be involved.

Careful ethical consideration has been made regarding the school, parents and participants. Ethics clearance was obtained from the University of Cape Town and great care was taken to ensure that all parties were informed. Parents and participants provided signed consent. A blank sample of the consent form can be seen in Appendix 1. The nature and purpose of the study was made known to all participants and their parents. They were aware that all interactions would be captured on camera and that the study would analyse their self-description and self-image. The relevant contact information was provided should a participant wish to receive more information or ask specific questions regarding the research. It was made clear that participation in the research was voluntary and that any participant may have chosen to withdraw from parts or the whole study at any point in time without any prejudice or consequence. The written communication with parents and participants was in the form of an application form by which participants expressed their desire to be part of the programme including a brief motivation

written by the participants. Whilst all applicants were accepted, the application form ensured that learners were participating on a fully voluntary basis. Schools and participants have been given a pseudonym for the purposes of this dissertation. Pseudonyms have no relation to participants' real names and were selected by myself at random. The process of mediation was created to be a safe space in which learners were encouraged to communicate with one another and myself. Trust and communication was built upon each week using the various mediation activities.

Mediation sessions

The mediation period spanned over eight sessions at each research site in a single school term. Each session ran for approximately forty five minutes and followed a similar structure. The structure was comparable to that used by Lawrence (1985) when he used drama to improve learner self-image. The motivation for using Lawrence as a framework was firstly, because the goals he achieved were similar to those desired for this study and, secondly, because the structure of a typical Drama class is similar to that of a typical Creative Movement class. As such, Lawrence's work provided the most appropriate tool on which to draw. Lawrence's structure included trust activities, an activity used to express feelings, some sort of positive feedback and an activity which tested or applied new skills by requiring the taking of some kind of risk. This study employed a structure which included a trust building activity, a skills building activity and a risk taking activity. Each session closed with time to journal. Trust building activities were vital as they emphasised that each learner was safe and free to express themselves whilst providing a scaffold for group activities involving risk. True self-reflection and analysis is only possible in such an environment. Skills were built in the next activity as scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) for the final activity. While 'scaffolding' is not a Vygotskian concept, the work of Wood et al. (1976) builds an operational dimension to Vygotsky's notion of mediation. Scaffolding is a teaching methodology in which smaller tasks build up incrementally to a single skill. An example of this might be first teaching a child to fill in missing words from a list as scaffolding for writing full sentences and paragraphs. These smaller steps help the student to master parts of the skill before attempting the whole. The final aim of scaffolding is independent execution of a particular skill. In this study, skills building activities involved smaller tasks or concepts which would be needed for the end of the session. For example, in the first session, participants played a game called 'Blind and Guide' in which one participant closed their eyes to be led around the space by a partner. This built trust in a fairly rudimentary and safe way. Participants became more comfortable with one another and the idea of allowing another person to be responsible for their body. This activity

acted as scaffolding for a later activity called 'Giving and Receiving Weight.' In this activity, participants were required to relax their full body-weight into a partner's arms. This is incredibly difficult without first building the trust required. Participants were then asked to find ways in which to give and receive body-weight other than simply falling into a partner's arms. This final independent skill was made possible by the learning which had taken place during a process of scaffolding. The skill of relaxing one's body-weight into the control of another was itself scaffolding for contact improvisation which would be used in later sessions (fuller details of various activities follow below).

'Giving and Receiving Weight' is an example of a risk taking activity. Risk taking activities were an opportunity for learners to apply the skills acquired in the previous activities. The risk involved was a psychological one as these activities required learners to reveal something of themselves through movement. These activities were always in groups. Both the skills building and risk taking portions of the sessions acted similarly to Lawrence's expression of feelings activities as they required learners to physically express how they felt about themselves or others. Lawrence's positive feedback portion was omitted as I wished to focus on self-description and reflection rather than descriptions from others. It was important for participants to develop ways of appraising themselves without external feedback in order to develop their own ability to positively and securely self-describe. Journaling allowed learners to consolidate and reflect upon their lessons. They would also later be used as a form of data.

The programme of activities was devised by me from my experience as a dance teacher. Many of the activities form part of the cannon of Creative Movement exercises or are derived from the practice of Contact Improvisation; a technique devised by Steve Paxton in the 1970s. This is a technique that requires participants to improvise movements whilst making physical contact. There is often a sharing of body weight and an experimentation with balance, gravity, momentum and inertia (Tafferner-Gulyas, 2015). Some activities, such as 'body part prominence' in session 2 or 'photo of myself' in session 3, were specially created by myself for the purposes of mediating self-description. All activities involved improvisation. This means that learners had little time to plan their movements and were required to express thoughts and ideas fairly immediately. This skill was scaffolded throughout the mediation process. Table 1.1 below shows the activities used in each of the eight sessions.

Table 1.1

<i>Session 1 – Trust/ introductions/ setting boundaries</i>	
Introductory activity	Name and movement
Trust building	Mirror image
Skill building	Blind and guide
Risk taking	Giving and receiving weight
Journaling	Expectations
<i>Session 2 – physical self-concept/ body-image</i>	
Trust building	Tracing
Skill building	Body part prominence
Risk taking	'Physical me' movement phrases
Journaling	Body-image
<i>Session 3 – character self-concept</i>	
Trust building	'Pop'
Skill building	Photo of myself
Risk taking	'Inner me' movement phrases
Journaling	My strengths and weaknesses
<i>Session 4 – what is self-image?</i>	
Trust building	Follow the body part
Skill building	Memory bank
Risk taking	What is self-image composition
Journaling	What I understand by self-image
<i>Session 5 – good and bad self-image</i>	
Trust building	Contact improvisation from the floor
Skill building	Negative/ positive improvisation
Risk taking	Negative/ positive group phrase
Journaling	What do I need to work on improving?
<i>Session 6 – self-image influencers</i>	
Trust building	Contact improvisation from standing
Skill building	Movement brainstorm/ snowball
Risk taking	Group composition of self-image influencers
Journaling	What influences my self-image?
<i>Session 7 – my values</i>	
Trust building	Throwing the energy ball
Skill building	Who I want to be
Risk taking	Values phrase
Journaling	What are my values?
<i>Session 8 – de-briefing session/ affirmations</i>	
Trust building	Giving and receiving weight
Skill building	Moving compliments
Risk taking	Empowerment phrase
De-briefing	Anonymous Affirmations
Journaling	What I have learnt

Each activity has been outlined below.

Name and Movement

Learners begin by standing in a circle. Learners take turns to introduce themselves to the group by saying their name whilst performing a movement which represents them in some way. After each learner performed their movement, the group repeated it. (van Paependorp and Friedman, 1997: 42)

Mirror Images

Learners took turns acting as the mirror images of another learner. One learner, 'A,' began to move slowly while the other two 'B' copied these movements as precisely as possible. The idea is that 'B' acts as 'A's' mirror. When this was complete, the learners changed roles so that each learner had a turn to be the 'mirror.'

This is a well-known trust exercise amongst teachers of the arts (van Paependorp and Friedman, 1997: 109). In this study it served not only to focus learners and encourage trust and relaxation, but also as a metaphor to mediate learners' understanding of self-image. To this end, learners were told that they were acting as mirrors and that mirrors reflect what we see. Mirrors are not always an exact or perfect reflection, as in this exercise when partners struggled to follow one another. Self-image, learners were then told, is like a mirror. It is what we see of ourselves. It is a reflection of what and who we think we are and a reflection of what others tell us (Briggs, 1965:9). This reflection is often inaccurate. This introductory metaphor stood as the basis for future understandings of self-image.

Blind and guide

Learners took turns leading a blindfolded partner around the room by the arm. Various pairings were used to allow learners to practice this skill with as many of their peers as possible. This activity was intended to further instill trust and to test physical boundaries between learners (van Paependorp and Friedman, 1997: 108).

Giving and receiving weight

Learners worked in pairs to find different ways to lift or support each other's bodyweight. This involved the trust facilitated by earlier activities and tested learners' abilities to be physically close to one another. Again, various pairings were employed (van Paependorp and Friedman, 1997: 51).

Tracing

Learners took turns 'tracing' the outline of a partner with their hands. The hands were guided very slowly around the entire shape of the partner without making contact. This activity is usually quite

uncomfortable at first because it is performed so slowly. This activity built trust and allowed learners to grow more comfortable with physical closeness.

Body part prominence

Learners began by walking around the room at a brisk pace without touching or communicating with others. They continued walking but were given a series of instructions which would alter the way in which they moved:

“Lead with your favourite body part,” “lead with your worst body part,” “lead with your most painful body part”, “lead with the body part that holds your tension’, and “lead with body part with a secret.”

Learners had to exaggerate their movements so that the body part they chose for each instruction was made prominent. This activity forced learners to think quickly about the answers to the questions without stopping thus providing a scaffold for more complex improvisation in the future. This activity focused more on body-image than general self-image but this is an important aspect of the self-image.

Body-image movement phrase

In small groups, learners developed a movement phrase which expressed how they felt about their own bodies. This activity called on learners to conceptualise their own body-image – in essence, they were self-describing their physical appearance through movement. Learners presented their compositions to each other.

Pop

Learners stood opposite a partner and elected an ‘A’ and a ‘B.’ ‘A’ started by touching a body part belonging to ‘B.’ ‘B’ responded by moving the body part touched. A light touch required a light movement whilst a more forceful touch required an equivalent response. This was a trust exercise but also required learners to focus on the task at hand. After some time, ‘A’ and ‘B’ reversed roles.

Photo of myself. Repetitive movement

Each learner had a turn to create a metaphorical ‘photograph’ of themselves by positioning themselves and their peers in a static image. They could choose how they wanted to represent themselves and what aspects were important. They placed each of the other group members into a pose to form part of the “photograph.” After taking time to view each composition with a brief discussion, learners were then instructed to give each member of the ‘photograph’ a single repeatable movement so that the image was no longer static. This allowed learners to make their composition ideas clearer. Each composition was then viewed a second time.

This activity allowed learners to manipulate their peers and movement in order to express themselves. The making of this composition caused learners to conceptualise themselves in a

social setting. It also reinforced their contributions as valuable as their peers were expected to follow their instructions.

The 'Inner Me' movement phrase

Learners were instructed to create four frozen images. One instruction was provided at a time until learners had created a static pose showing a strength, a weakness, a like and a dislike. These were then developed individually into movements and finally combined into a phrase. Learners presented their movement phrases to the group for peer feedback. After this, learners combined their personal phrases in groups to create a composition to music. Learners presented their compositions to each other.

This activity was designed to consolidate the awareness of self-concept established in previous activities and to extend that understanding.

Follow the body part

This activity focused on trust and concentration but also acted in scaffolding the contact improvisation which would be employed in coming sessions. Learners each chose a body part to lead their movements and took turns leading and following another learner with their chosen body part. In this activity physical contact was made between the body parts. This was a 'riskier' activity than previous trust activities because it required closer physical contact.

Memory bank

Learners were asked to highlight three memories of moments when they felt strongly in some way about themselves (perhaps a proud moment or a time they discovered a flaw). Each memory was expressed as a single movement or gesture and combined to form a phrase. Learners then came together in small groups to combine their individual phrases by teaching one another the various movements. Learners presented their compositions to each other.

What is self-image composition

In one larger group, learners were asked to create a composition which communicated their understanding of self-image. They were instructed to raise any issues they felt relevant be they personal or general. Learners presented their composition.

Contact improvisation from the floor

Contact improvisation is a choreographic methodology developed by American choreographer Steve Paxton. It requires dancers to make physical contact and allow their breathe, movements and the continual transference of weight from one person to the other, to create an improvised movement piece. This methodology was deemed suitable at this point of the mediation process

because it enhanced the trust already built between learners and gave learners a new tool to develop original movements.

This activity began with learners seated in pairs on the floor with their backs touching. Learners were instructed to start simply by swaying as the breath lead them. Movements slowly grew larger and more abstracted until each pair was moving in a contact improvisation. Learners continued to move in this way for about a minute before changing partners.

Negative/ positive improvisation

Learners were asked to identify one negative message within their self-image. This could be any feeling or idea which contributed to a negative concept of the self. Learners were asked to communicate this in a short improvised dance phrase. Learners were then asked to think of one positive message which could replace the negative message and communicate this into an improvised movement phrase.

Negative/ positive group phrase

Building on the previous activity, learners then joined in small groups to combine their negative and positive messages into a short composition. This was then shown to the class for feedback. This activity was designed to encourage learners to begin to identify negative feelings they had about themselves. By asking learners to communicate their messages in movement rather than explicit speech, the activity provided a less direct and therefore safer means of communicating very personal feelings. The implicit message of 'replacing' negative thoughts with positive ones is also believed to be beneficial.

Contact improvisation from standing

This activity built on the contact improvisation scaffolded in the previous session. Learners this time began standing, making contact at the side of the head. Learners were again asked to move without breaking contact, although the point of contact was allowed to change. Learners continued to move in this way, to music, for about a minute before changing partners.

Movement brainstorm/ snowball

Learners stood in a circle and were asked to think about what things might influence an individual's self-image. Learners took turns offering suggestions. Each suggestion was spoken and accompanied by a symbolic movement. This allowed learners to think about the question posed and express it physically and verbally.

Group composition of self-image influencers

Once they felt they had an exhaustive list, learners were to create a group composition reflecting this list. This activity involved the least amount of educator support thus far and allowed learners to structure their composition in any way they chose.

This activity was designed to elicit a critical analysis of factors influencing self-image. The composition was performed and feedback was provided.

Throwing the energy ball

Learners stood in a circle. One learner possessed an imaginary 'energy ball' which was then passed across the circle from one learner to another. Once learners were comfortable with this, they were instructed to include movements with each pass. The pace was also increased and decreased. This activity encouraged focus and eye-contact. (Adapted from van Paependorp and Friedman, 1997: 88)

Who I want to be

Learners were asked to consider their ideal self or identity and choose four characteristics. These characteristics may be ones they do not possess or qualities they value in themselves. Each characteristic was developed into a movement. Learners then worked in groups to combine their movements however they chose. Each group performed their piece for the class. This activity highlighted differences between learners' real and ideal selves and allowed them to assess what qualities they value.

Values phrase

Learners worked in small groups to develop a phrase which identified values such as honesty, education or friendship. This activity links to the previous one as these values will affect our behaviours and ideal selves. Learners were able to reflect on values in a general and personal sense.

Giving and receiving weight

This is an activity which learners performed in session one. They were again be asked to look for ways to give and receive ways but encouraged to take more risks than they did in the first session. The repetition allowed both learners and the researcher to glean if any improvements had occurred in learners' ability to perform this activity (van Paependorp and Friedman, 1997: 51).

Moving compliments

Learners walked around the room, at first only making eye contact with each learner they passed. They were then instructed to provide those they passed with a compliment represented in symbolic movement. Whilst the movements were largely abstract and the exact meaning of the movement often not clear, the positive intent was portrayed through the eyes and energy of the individual. This activity served to affirm members of the group.

Empowerment phrase

Learners worked in groups of three to four to create a dance piece which conveyed a message of encouragement or a positive mantra. They were instructed to come up with a mantra they could say to themselves or others when they felt less than satisfied with themselves. This activity consolidated the work done over the past sessions and allowed learners to develop a coping strategy for the future.

Anonymous Affirmations

This was not a dance activity but acted as a positive way to close the final session. Each learner's journal was opened to a blank page and placed somewhere around the room. Learners walked around the room and took turns writing anonymous affirmations and encouragements in each other's journals. At the end of the session learners were able to read the affirmations in their journals.

Most importantly, the activities and programme as a whole have been designed from a Vygotskian perspective. In order to argue that the research design sits within a Vygotskian discourse, the programme created must follow the tenets of Vygotskian mediation. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) outline three fundamental principles which render research sociocultural and Vygotskian:

“(a) social sources of individual development, (b) semiotic (signs and symbols, including language) mediation in human development, and (c) genetic (developmental) analysis.” (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996: 191)

This research offers all three principles.

“Social sources of individual development” refers mainly to Vygotsky's general genetic law i.e. that all development is genetic of the social. As discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, Creative Movement is inherently social. Creative Movement has been defined in this dissertation as a meditational means because of its social nature and ability to be manipulated by the learner to enhance understanding. Moreover, the use of group activities which required participants to

create together, allowed development to happen in a social setting first, before developing within the individual. Mediation must be social. For this reason, the mediation process took place in a group setting. Group-work to generate ideas and solve problems remained a central feature throughout the process. Each activity required participants to develop movements and movement phrases through collaborative improvisation. This meant that participants 'made up' their movements based on their socio-cultural backgrounds and within a social setting. The improvisatory nature of activities called upon participants' personal cultural backgrounds and spontaneous concepts and also allowed them each to work within their own Zone of Proximal Development. This is because, by exploring the concept of self-description as a group and using the mediational tool of Creative Movement, participants were exploring self-description with assistance. This assistance opened up the space known as the Zone of Proximal Development, the space or difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help.

Essentially mediation sessions allowed for the concept of self-description to be explored on what Vygotsky calls the interpsychological level (Vygotsky, 1978) – in a social or group setting and using the mediational tool of Creative Movement. This is the first step towards development whereby self-description could be understood and practiced on the intrapsychological level (*ibid.*); without assistance. This intra-psychological level was later tested in the post-mediation questionnaires and interviews. Thus, the design allowed for individual development from social sources.

Semiotic mediation implies that the mediational means employed is a sign or symbol. The most typically used example of a semiotic tool is that of language. In the case of this study, Creative Movement is a semiotic tool. Participants used movements to represent or symbolise their ideas and to communicate concepts. Each movement was created by the participants and a specific symbolic meaning was invested in that movement by the participant. I would therefore like to posit that semiotic mediation did occur. This is made more important by the role of such symbols in internalization. According to Vygotsky, semiotic mediation has the ability to link the external with the internal and the interpsychological with the intrapsychological (Wertsch and Stone, 1985). By using the semiotic mediational tool of Creative Movement to explore the concept of self-description in a group, participants were also developing an internal understanding of self-description and an ability to communicate about that concept - what Leontiev calls "appropriation" (Leontiev, 1981 in John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996).

The third tenet suggested by John-Steiner and Mahn is genetic analysis. Genetic analysis, as explained by John-Steiner and Mahn, is a research methodology that strives to understand the complete process through a dialectical logic rather than simply the product. It is the notion that, in order to understand the product, one must first seek to understand the full history and development of that product. In more concrete terms, to understand a child's ability to self-describe, it is important to trace the history of that understanding. This study pursues this very form of understanding. By administering a pre-test, the baseline of self-description was assessed. Data collected during intervention then sought to find smaller shifts in self-description as the process happened and, finally, a post-test allowed us to see the end result of intervention. Collecting data at multiple intervals and comparing them to the baseline assessment allowed for genetic analysis by looking at the history, development and final product of the individual's self-descriptions. For this reason, participants were given a pre- and a post-test which allowed for a comparative investigation of their self-descriptions. The intervention was also carefully analysed using various forms of data. Data included personal interviews, written questionnaires and a self-esteem inventory both before and after intervention as well as journal entries and observation schedules for each intervention session. This multi-method approach allowed for genetic analysis to take place.

Another aspect of the research which allowed for genetic analysis was the use of Double Stimulation. As explained previously, the stimulus-object is the problem to be solved - the act of self-description. The stimulus-means is the sign used to organise the behaviour – the semiotic tool of Creative Movement. Having two stimuli allows participants to manipulate the semiotic tool in any way they choose and thus provides data not simply about whether or not they have solved the problem of self-description but also how they are thinking about self-description. Qualitative analysis is therefore possible at each stage in the process.

An example is illustrative here: In session 3, learners participated in an activity called 'Photo of myself.' Each learner had a turn to create a metaphorical 'photograph' of themselves using other participants. They placed each of the other group members into a pose to form part of the "photograph." After taking time to view each composition with a brief discussion, learners were then instructed to give each member of the 'photograph' a single repeatable movement so that the image was no longer static. This allowed learners to make their composition ideas clearer. Each composition was then viewed a second time.

This is an example of double stimulation because the stimulus-means was ambiguous. They could choose how they wanted to represent themselves and what aspects of the stimulus-object were

important. This activity allowed learners to manipulate their peers and movement in order to express themselves. The making of this composition caused learners to conceptualise themselves in a social setting. The way in which each participant manipulated the stimulus-means provided qualitative data for analysis. If, hypothetically, a participant chose to create a symbolic photograph that represented themselves with a group of friends, one could begin to make inferences about how they see themselves in this social group. This could possibly be viewed alongside data from the pre-test about similar themes and this begins to shape a fuller genetic analysis.

Additional Neo-Vygotskian principles such as scaffolding, the use of leading questions, marking critical features, providing feedback (Anghileri, 2006) and the use of double stimulation (Vygotsky, 1978) were employed in the mediation sessions and guided how facilitation took place. Activities were facilitated using simple instructions which lead participants to formulate a response. Rather than simply being told to “make up a dance about your feelings” an activity might start with participants being instructed to make a static pose which represents a single idea or emotion. This provided the scaffolding to later be developed into a fuller movement phrase or dance piece. Critical features were marked in instructions provided by giving clear expectations. An example of this might be to make a static image which communicates the idea clearly to the audience. Feedback was provided by peers rather than the researcher but guided to be positive at all times. Double stimulation, as discussed previously, was intrinsic to the nature of using a stimulus-means in the form of Creative Movement which could be freely manipulated by participants.

Data collection and analysis

The data were collected before and after the period of intervention as well as during each session. School A was visited in February and March while School B was visited in September and October of the same year. This was so that the researcher was able to devote the necessary time to each research site and the timetabling requirements of each school were met. However, data were collected at the same relative intervals, i.e. directly before and after commencing the 8 week programme at each school so that all participants experienced the same intervention and testing. A multi-method approach of data collection and analysis has been used so that shifts in self-description may be tracked and compared at different stages and in different ways. Wylie suggests that there are a great many ways in which to test self-image (Wylie, 1974). The researcher selected four methods deemed to be appropriate and reliable so as to gather qualitatively valuable data – questionnaires, personal interviews,

observation schedules and journaling by the participants. These methods were used as a pre- and post-test. Identical testing occurred before and after intervention to allow for comparison. The same questions, in the same order were used for the questionnaires and personal interviews conducted with each participant both before and after intervention.

Each pre- and post-test included a questionnaire (see Appendix 3) based on the work of Lawrence (1981, 1985 and 2006) and a structured personal interview (see Appendix 2) with open-ended questions before and after mediation. The questionnaires were used to provide quantifiable data showing how participants described and felt about their selves. The use of a written questionnaire also provided data which could easily be referred to at any stage. The personal interviews facilitated a deeper probing of learner thoughts and feelings. During intervention data were collected through observation schedules and learner journals. Participants answered leading questions in their journals at the end of each intervention session. These questions required participants to explain in words what they had done in the session through movement. The schedules allowed a more nuanced judgement to be made and offered data to show the success of the actual mediation process. Journals were used to further analyse the mediation process and gain insight into how learners perceived the mediation process. All of these methods provided information about a participant's self-description. This allowed for the tracking of possible shifts in these descriptions.

Lawrence's (1981) questionnaire was successfully used in his research pertaining to self-image in children and adolescents; it allows for responses to be collected in written form and provides a slightly less open-ended style of questioning. The first section was a self-image inventory consisting of twenty five questions employing a likert-style scale. Learners answered using a rating scale of 1-10 to indicate to what extent they believed each of the statements to be true of themselves. Each statement referred to some form of self-description. A likert scale provides an orderly way for participants to agree or disagree to a greater or lesser extent with a particular statement. This is a useful tool in assessing opinions and was particularly useful in this study because it contrasted greatly to the more open-ended style of the written questionnaire and interview. This contrast in many ways made the trends found more powerful. If a participant is providing the same kinds of answers to three different styles of questioning, it would suggest that their responses are more valid. It allows for judgement of the self or one's opinions. A likert scale is typically within a range of 1-5 but this study allowed for a range from 1-10. This scale allowed learners to more accurately express their thoughts than a narrower number range. Moreover, the broader range allowed the researcher to note even slight changes from one questionnaire to the next. The answers to each question provided the researcher with an understanding of how

participants felt about particular aspects of the self and, ultimately, the self as a whole. A learner with a positive description of the self, such as one who feels they are relatively intelligent, attractive and well-liked, is one with a positive self-description and image. Conversely, a learner who voices feelings of a shortfall in any of these spheres is providing a negative self-description and may have a negative self-image. A total score is not given for this section as some questions are phrased positively, for instance, "I am loved," whereas some are phrased negatively, such as, "I often feel lonely." Rather, changes across the pre- and post-test questionnaires were tracked to note if responses became more or less positive or remained the same after mediation.

Feelings of value are noted by statements such as "I am important," "I am a valuable member of my family," "I am loved," "I am loveable," "Teachers do not like me," "I don't think people listen to me" and "I always have something to contribute in class discussion." A child who feels they are valued will strongly associate with the first four questions. Only in severe cases of negative self-image would a learner score these questions poorly. If the following two questions receive a high score one can posit that they do not feel as if those around them value them.

Body-image was measured by relatively direct questions such as "I am more attractive than most of my friends," "I have a good body," "I would like to lose weight," "I am attractive," and "I am happy with the way I look". The first question is comparative. This is useful because it reflects the learner's view of themselves within their peer group. This can then be analysed together with the remaining three questions to gauge their feelings about their physical appearance. For example, a learner may describe themselves as having a good body and being attractive yet feel they are far less attractive than their peers. Comparison is also part of how humans develop an image of themselves. We compare ourselves to examples of the ideal in order to evaluate ourselves. Page and Page (2003) suggest that global self-esteem is made up of various aspects including what we believe others think of us and what we believe to be other's expectations of us. They go on to point out that a disparity in these parts is what causes a negative view of the self. If, in comparing what he or she believes to be true of the self with society's conception of the ideal, there is a shortfall, a negative self-description will result. Thompson, Coovert, and Stormer (1999) found that how we believe we compare in appearance to others has a direct correlation to body-image, resilience to teasing and eating disturbances.

How learners describe their own intellect is concluded from "I am intelligent," "I am less intelligent than others in my class/ year group," "I am satisfied with my school work," and "I am satisfied with my school performance." Again a comparison was used as well as three more direct questions. It

is essential to make a division between school “work”; the product created by the learner; and school “performance”; the result or reward the learner receives for work done. Learners may feel that they create good school work yet be dissatisfied with their overall academic performance as related in a report card.

Social interaction is considered by questioning learners about their confidence, ability to follow and lead and ability to connect to others. “I often feel lonely” and “I have lots of friends” shows satisfaction with social standing or status. “I think I am quite confident” is a direct appraisal. An individual with a negative self-image will usually describe themselves as shy or not confident.

The inventory also looks at an individual’s decision making ability. A positive self-concept enables people to make decisions without mistrusting themselves. “I make my mind up easily” and “once I have made a decision I stick to it” suggest how easily a learner is or is not able to make decisions and remain committed to them.

It is hoped that the inventory can provide an accurate view of each participant’s self-description and therefore a view of each participant’s self-image.

The second section of the questionnaire was more open ended as questions allowed participants to describe any aspect or aspects of themselves in response to a question. Participants were asked to write down their strengths, their weaknesses, a general description of themselves and to list anything they would like to change about themselves. These questions allowed participants to highlight parts of themselves they were satisfied or dissatisfied with, be they physical or personality related. It was thus made clear what aspects of the self were of most pertinent concern to each participant.

Participants then completed a ranking activity in which they ranked seven personal attributes in order of importance to them. The attributes were: looks, body shape and size, intelligence, integrity, sense of humour, popularity and talents. Whilst this does not indicate a participant’s self-description, it does provide a view of what is important to them. When looked at in conjunction with other forms of data, these priorities can provide further insight into the individual’s self-descriptions.

The interviews were structured in order to compare responses across participants and across an individual participant’s two interviews. Questions were, however, open-ended so that participants were encouraged to use a wide array of self-descriptors and not lead by the interviewer.

Participants had the freedom to answer in as much depth and over whatever length of time they felt

comfortable. The researcher spent some time in informal conversation before the initial interview in order to establish a rapport and allow participants to open up in the interview. Interviews were video recorded and transcribed by the researcher for reference. Interviews took place in a private space at the research site to assist learners in feeling comfortable. If learners asked for clarification of what a word or question meant, it was provided and questions were composed with the simplest language use possible in order to accommodate any learners who are not fully proficient in English.

The personal interview included the following questions:

- *Imagine you could have a perfect day – at home and at school. What would that day look like?*
- *How is that perfect day different to a normal day?*
- *How would you describe your physical appearance?*
- *How would you describe your intellect?*
- *How would you describe your social life?*
- *What is your best attribute?*
- *How do you respond to compliments?*
- *Are you comfortable with who you are? Why/ why not?*
- *Do you think you have a positive self-image? Explain?*

The first two questions were designed by Rae specifically for high school learners with self-esteem problems (Rae, 2000:26-27). The difference between a learner's perfect day and their real life provided an opportunity to look at a number of issues. If the learner's perfect and normal days were particularly disparate, one could infer that the learner felt a lack of agency in his or her own life or that there was dissatisfaction with the lived reality. These questions also showed the desires and dreams of the learner. The activities contained in a perfect day would be activities which a learner sincerely wanted to participate in. The remaining questions were designed by the researcher. Questions 3 to 7 looked directly at learners' descriptions of aspects of themselves. Learners were guided to assess different aspects of the self so that the researcher could analyse what specifically was viewed negatively or positively by the learners. Learners' response to compliments (Question 7) showed the researcher if they were comfortable being spoken about positively. A learner with a negative view of the self would struggle to accept another person saying something positive about them as they may not believe it to be true. "...Compliments can make people with low self-esteem feel uncomfortable because they contradict their own self-views. People actively seek to verify their own perceptions of themselves, whether those are positive or negative" (Winch, 2013). The final questions asked the learners to make an initial

assessment of their own self-image. The intention was to have a response that could later be contrasted to what was hoped would be a more nuanced understanding of self-image.

These methods looked both at the learner's understanding of the phenomenological self, the self as object, and the non-phenomenological self, how the individual unconsciously understands the self (Wylie, 1974) in order to create a full and accurate representation of each learner's self-description. The questions asked the learners to describe the self in a number of different ways. In so doing, the learners created an image of the self as he or she sees it for the researcher.

This multi-method approach was intended to provide participants with more and less structured ways to answer, essentially, the same question; "who are you?" It was hoped that similar responses would be seen across each form of data within a given testing period (before or after mediation) in order to make inferences about each participant's self-descriptions and that noted shifts would be visible when comparing the results of each testing period.

Data were also collected during intervention. This was facilitated by the filming of each mediation session. Data were collected in the form of observation schedules (see below) which looked for expressions of self-description and displays of a positive self-image through various markers. These observation schedules looked for markers both in the process of creating movement in order to fulfil the task (Observation Schedule 1) as well as the final product (Observation Schedule 2). Observing the product allowed for analysis of the Double Stimulation employed. How participants used the stimulus-means of Creative Movement was equally as important as the final response to the stimulus-object of the task at hand. Markers in Observation Schedule 1 related to each participant's ability and willingness to get involved in the process, to take risks and to engage socially. These markers suggested the extent to which each participant was able to manipulate the stimulus-means (Creative Movement) and act on the stimulus-object (the task of self-describing). A strong ability to do so, in turn could suggest an ability to positively self-describe. The markers used in Observation Schedule 2 assessed the overall quality of the final response to the stimulus object, that is to say, it assessed their ability to fully and confidently self-describe in movement.

Observation Schedule 1: Process of creating learner generated movement

Marker	Score /10	Comments
Learner is able to give suggestions/own opinions		
Learner is able to listen to the suggestions/ opinions of others		
Learner stays on task without getting distracted		
Learner speaks positively about the task set and their own ability to achieve the task		
Learner is willing to participate		
Learner is neither dominant nor submissive in the group		
Learner suggests movements which are original		
Learner's body language is open and relaxed		
Learner is able to resolve conflict in a calm and mature manner		
Learner is willing to take calculated risks and use trial and error		
Total	/100	

Observation Schedule 2: Performance of learner generated movement

Marker	Score /10	Comments
Learner uses own original movements rather than the existing class movement vocabulary		
Learner looks at audience during performance of choreography		
Learner uses the full extent of their own range of movement		
Learner executes movement sequence accurately		
Learner shows clear beginning and ending		
Learner uses space generously and deliberately		
Learner's movements show confident awareness of the body		
Learner is able to interpret or communicate a personal emotion		
Learner takes calculated risks in creating and performing movement		
Learner does not copy or wait for cues from other learners		
Total	/100	

Further data were collected from weekly journal entries to be written by each learner. A structured journal-writing period was included at the end of each lesson. Leading questions (Anghileri, 2006) assisted learners to explain what, if anything they learnt and how they experienced each session. These questions required participants to explain what had happened in the intervention session by answering a question such as “what are your expectations for

these sessions?” or “What influences the way you see yourself?” These questions were based on the specific content of the day’s intervention and allowed participants to verbalise concepts they had just danced about. Participants were made aware that the researcher would be reading each journal.

All interactions with learners were documented as video footage using a wide angle with a camera on a tripod to allow all participants to be seen and heard throughout the sessions. This allowed the researcher to be fully engaged in the session for its duration without having to invite a third party into the room. There is a danger that participants might have felt intimidated by or play to the camera but its purpose was carefully explained and participants, and, as was predicted, they soon forget about the camera’s existence. This was also the case in a previous study conducted by the researcher (le Chat, 2012).

Such triangulation of data allowed for the researcher to track changes in self-description in diverse ways, providing rich data for analysis. Each participant’s self-descriptions were collected before and after the mediation in order to look for shifts in self-description. These data came from different methods of questioning which increased the validity of any findings. Each participant’s individual learning process was also analysed through journals and observation schedules with the hope of exploring the cause and course of any shifts observed.

The intervention was in the form of composition lessons in which learners worked in groups to co-create their own Creative Movement dance pieces. There were also journaling activities during the session. All dance activity was of a social nature in that the dance pieces were created by groups of learners and performed to and by groups of learners. Early sessions involved building trust and assisting learners to feel comfortable in the class. As the period progressed, learners were mediated to an understanding of scientific concepts such as identity, self-image and self-description using Creative Movement. An example of this can be seen in session 2. The focus of this session was learner body image. The session used leading questions as a form of scaffolding in the “Body Part Prominence” activity. In this activity, participants needed to identify body parts they liked, disliked, or held tension in, amongst other things. This built towards a more independent understanding of body image in the final activity of the session: “Body Image Movement Phrase.” This activity required a small group composition which expressed participants’ feelings about their own bodies. Another example of how learners were mediated to an understanding of scientific concepts can be seen in the

activity “Group Composition of Self-Image Influencers.” This activity called for a group composition which presented various external and internal factors which have the ability to influence one’s self-image.

In each of these activities, Double stimulation (Vygotsky, 1978) was employed. In Double Stimulation, psychological processes are made visible by offering learners two stimuli; the stimulus- object or task and the stimulus-means or tool. The stimulus-object is the problem or task (the object of the participant’s activity) which is beyond the learner’s capabilities at the time and the stimulus-means is the possible solution which is made up of neutral signs, in this case in the form of Creative Movement, to organise the activity(Daniels, 2008: 46). Therefore a number of possible solutions exist. Unlike a task in which a direct response is offered, with Double Stimulation the researcher is able to study or “objectify” the psychological process used to devise the solution (Engestrom, 2007: 2) in observation. Every time participants used Creative Movement to respond to the task offered, both these types of stimuli were present.

The following markers were used in an observation schedule to indicate positive or negative images of the self during intervention:

During the composition process:

- 1. Learner is able to give suggestions/own opinions*
- 2. Learner is able to listen to the suggestions/ opinions of others*
- 3. Learner stays on task without getting distracted*
- 4. Learner speaks positively about the task set and their own ability to achieve the task*
- 5. Learner is willing to participate*
- 6. Learner is neither dominant nor submissive in the group*
- 7. Learner suggests movements which are original*
- 8. Learner’s body language is open and relaxed*
- 9. Learner is able to resolve conflict in a calm and mature manner*
- 10. Learner is willing to take calculated risks and use trial anderror*

In the composition itself:

1. *Learner uses own original movements rather than the existing class movement vocabulary*
2. *Learner looks at audience during performance of choreography*
3. *Learner uses the full extent of their own range of movement*
4. *Learner executes movement sequence accurately*
5. *Learner shows clear beginning and ending*
6. *Learner uses space generously and deliberately*
7. *Learner's movements show confident awareness of the body*
8. *Learner is able to interpret or communicate a personal emotion*
9. *Learner takes calculated risks in creating and performing movement*
10. *Learner does not copy or wait for queues from other learners*

This analysis took place with the use of observation schedules which required the observer to rate each marker out of a possible ten and, if necessary, to make a comment.

The following two chapters of this dissertation contain the analysis of all data collected. In these chapters, data have been analysed quantitatively, by tracking the number of positive and negative self- descriptions in interviews and questionnaires. Data sets are presented graphically in order to show any shifts in self-description. All of the data observed for each participant and each group have also been used to create t-tests to explore the statistical significance of any shifts noticed. These t-tests have been presented in the various individual and group data summaries.

Data have also been analysed qualitatively, using a psychological discourse, more specifically, the discourse of L.S. Vygotsky, to analyse the self-descriptions offered. Data analysis and the presentation of findings occur both for individuals as well as the sample group as a whole and by research site in this chapter.

Together, the pre- and post-test data as well as information collected from the mediation sessions and journal activities have been analysed to create a holistic picture of each participant's self- descriptions before and after mediation in order to make a case for the evidence of positive shifts in these descriptions. Such a shift can then be seen as a marker for an improved image of the self.

Data have been presented by qualitative written analysis as well as in bar graphs and t-tests. The written analysis attempted to discuss the qualitative ways in which learner self-descriptions shifted

from the pre- to the post-test by assessing the responses given at each juncture to the Self-Esteem Inventory, Questionnaire Written Responses, and Personal Interviews and in the Mediation Observations. The bar graphs provide a visual representation of quantitative shifts, be they positive or negative, from pre-test to post-test. Pre- and post-test data were also used to run a t-test comparing the results of the four tests (inventory, written responses, interview and observations) before and after intervention. T-tests have been used in order to evaluate whether any quantitative shifts can be viewed as statistically significant.

It was deemed important to present the case studies of all eight participants in order to offer a thick description to the reader. Thick description is described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a means to achieve a measure of external validity. By describing these case studies in detail the reader can evaluate the data and findings presented. Because there were only eight participants I believe that full use of the case study method provides a more thorough description of the process.

Limitations of methodology

The methodology has been designed in such a way that data were collected, analysed and presented as objectively as possible. However, certain limitations always exist. The possible influence of the researcher as intervener has already been discussed. My own passion for the project obviously coloured my delivery and the same experience may not be had by participants with a different facilitator. Moreover, this study does not seek to make generalizations. The sample is too small and the context too specific. What the study does attempt to do is explore the effects of this researcher and this intervention on eight particular participants in the hopes that we can glean knowledge for further application.

Conclusion

This dissertation discusses a multiple case-study intervention which produced multi-method data from eight racially diverse participants. This study made use of questionnaires, personal interviews, mediation schedules and journaling in a bid to track any shifts in self-description experienced by participants. The various forms of data collected and analysed will be presented in the forthcoming chapters in order to investigate the ability of Creative Movement to mediate learners' positive self-description. The research design and methodology outlined in this chapter was engaged to this end.

Chapter Four – Analysis of School A

Structure and presentation of analysis

Data have been collected in order to make claims regarding the research question: *Do shifts in self-descriptions occur when the concept of self-image is mediated to learners through dance?*

In this and the following chapter the data collected have been organized first by learner so as to display the effects of the study on the individuals involved. Specific themes that were pertinent to each learner are discussed in order to see shifts which may have occurred. The overall results of each are summarised at the end of the relevant chapter in a group finding. In each case a brief background of the learner has been provided and the results for each stage of the study presented. Each learner has been presented under a pseudonym.

The data collected have been analysed by comparing the changes in each participant through each stage of the data collection process. Each similar mode of data collection was compared before and after intervention. For each learner, shifts were tracked across the questionnaires and interviews of the pre- and post-tests by mode and across data sets. The analysis of the written questionnaire has been divided into self-esteem inventory (numerical responses to the first section of the questionnaire), written questionnaire responses (those questions which were open ended and required full written responses), and the questionnaire ranking activity (in which individuals ranked various personality traits in order of importance). There is also a discussion of the actual intervention process based on observation schedules and learner journals. The study was conducted across two schools with four learners participating at each school. The data analysis by participant is presented by grouping the learners from School A first in this chapter, followed by the individual learners from School B in Chapter 5. An introduction to and summary of each school has also been provided. Below I report findings from these data sources.

Summary of methodology

Two questionnaires were completed by each learner, one as a pre-test and one as a post-test. The first was administered as a before intervention while the second was administered as a post-test after completing intervention in the form of the intervention programme. The questionnaires have been divided into three sections; a self-image inventory, open-ended questions with a longer textual response, and a ranking activity. The self-image inventory comprised of twenty five statements which covered five key themes; intelligence, physical appearance, value, social skills

and decision making. The inventory responses have been presented according to these themes rather than in the order they were asked. Each unit's responses have been analysed looking at changes in the scores given to each theme. The textual responses across the questionnaires have been analysed according to the number of positive and negative statements provided by the participant and the changes in these numbers which occurred throughout the process. Specific textual responses have also been analysed in a qualitative manner to provide further insight into the changes which occurred. This was done by taking the individual's context and other data into account and analysing aspects such as depth of description or diction. The ranking activity has been analysed in conjunction with other data. This has allowed the researcher to better understand changes in each child's perceptions of what characteristics are important and how they compare to this ideal.

An interview was conducted before and after intervention with each child. The interviews consisted of the same questions for the pre- and post-tests. The interview was a series of open-ended verbal questions. These have been compared and contrasted in order to investigate changes. All questions have been organised thematically for analysis. The data have been analysed by recording the number of positive and negative statements provided by the participant as well as by looking at individual responses.

Details of the intervention process have also been provided in the previous chapter. Analysis has been done of learner questionnaires, interviews and journals. A discussion of School A and its respective learners follows.

Case 1: School A

School A is a former model C school (a well-resourced school which was reserved for Caucasians only during apartheid and has subsequently been opened to all race groups) and has been ranked as one of the top ten schools in the Western Cape based on resources and academic performance. The annual school fees in 2017 were approximately \$2 480 (USD). It was founded in 1884 and has a number of traditions which are upheld by staff and students with pride.

School A is a single sex school and offers an education to approximately eight hundred female learners from varied backgrounds. The student body is fairly cosmopolitan and comprises of relatively equal amounts of the main ethnic or racial groups which exist in South Africa, namely Black African, Caucasian and so-called Coloured³ people. The school services students from areas as different as Cape Town's leafy suburbs, home to an upwardly mobile middle class, and

³These are apartheid terms which remain in common usage in South Africa today.

the more humble Cape Flats region, an area ear-marked by the apartheid government to separate and marginalise so-called Coloured people and which remains a largely impoverished area. It is positioned on a number of public transport routes and many learners travel by bus or minibus to and from school. The school also offers a small boarding house equipped to host approximately seventy students.

The school population consists of mostly middle-class but also some working-class home environments. A number of students attend on government rebates or school-sponsored partial scholarships. The resultant group of learners is culturally diverse. However, the group is surprisingly homogenous in values and culture; a clearly Middle-class and overtly Eurocentric one.

The Middle-class Eurocentric norm is visible in every aspect of school life. There is a strong focus on neat appearance. Charity is a strong value at the school. The students are frequently expected to bring money and goods to be donated to less fortunate schools. Participant choices include Italian and Classical Ballet.

The school has a system of five 'Pillars;' service, sport, culture, academics and leadership. Learners are recognized for involvement in any of these five spheres. This means that even learners who are not academically strong or particularly talented at a sport, may find value in activities such as first aid, the school newspaper or even helping in the library. Each of the pillars is given equal weight and recognition. This system has been very successful since its inception in enticing all learners to take part in extra-curricular activities, even those who would consider themselves outcasts. Another structure which helps all students to be part of the school is the tutor system. Each day begins and ends with a meeting of tutor groups. Tutor groups are made up of four to five learners from each grade. These cells allow teachers to engage on a pastoral level with a small group of learners. It also allows junior learners to interact with more senior students. Tutor teachers are expected to check up on the general well-being of the learners in their tutor group. Many groups also use the time to report on successes the girls may have had during the week including doing well on a test, birthdays, sports matches or simply a good weekend. The tutor system offers a safe environment for learners to express themselves in front of peers and educators. Every learner's identity is actively valued and learners are encouraged to interact with their peers across grades, races and cultures.

As a result, this case provided a diverse population yet an environment which espoused a single set of values. Learners generally agreed with this set of values and in most cases the systems in place provided a sense of belonging and safety.

The participants of study from Case 1 were also fairly diverse. The demographic make-up was three Coloured and one White learner. Parent occupations varied from a church-supported

missionary to corporate employees. All four participants lived with both parents and reported having stable home lives. Three of the students would identify as Christian and one as Muslim. Various academic abilities were also represented. One participant presented with significant barriers to learning whilst the other three achieved above average scholastic results. All four described different scholastic skill sets ranging from a propensity for Mathematics to Artistic or Linguistic skills.

Participant 1: Karen (School A)

Karen was in Grade 10 at the time of the study. She attends School A and does not have a background of dance training. She lives with her younger sister, both parents and her maternal grandparents.

She was born in March 2000 with hearing and sight problems but, due to late diagnosis, did not receive adequate treatment in her formative years. It was assumed that she was merely developmentally delayed and she therefore lacked stimulation or intervention. She continues to struggle with her hearing. Part of her early childhood was spent in New Zealand but she moved to South Africa, the place of her parents' birth, at a young age.

By Karen's own admission, she was a shy child and has only recently opened herself up to a greater network of friends. Her body language and soft spoken nature suggest that she is still fairly introverted.

Self-Esteem Inventory

Graph 1.1 below shows the numerical responses assigned to each question in Karen's pre-test Self-Esteem Inventory. A Likert scale was employed for individuals to rate their feelings. Karen was asked to assign a numerical response from 1 to 10 for each statement; 1 indicating she strongly disagreed, 10 indicating she felt the statement was very true of her. These data were analysed by looking at the extent to which her responses changed on the scale post intervention. The first grouping (questions 1, 10, 11 and 5) are related to intelligence. Karen presented a positive view of her overall intelligence, agreeing strongly with the positive statements and disagreeing strongly with the negative statement, 'I am less intelligent than most of my friends' (question 5).

The second grouping (questions 6,7,8,9 and 15) depicts Karen's responses to questions relating to the theme of physical appearance. Her appraisal of her own physical appearance, although

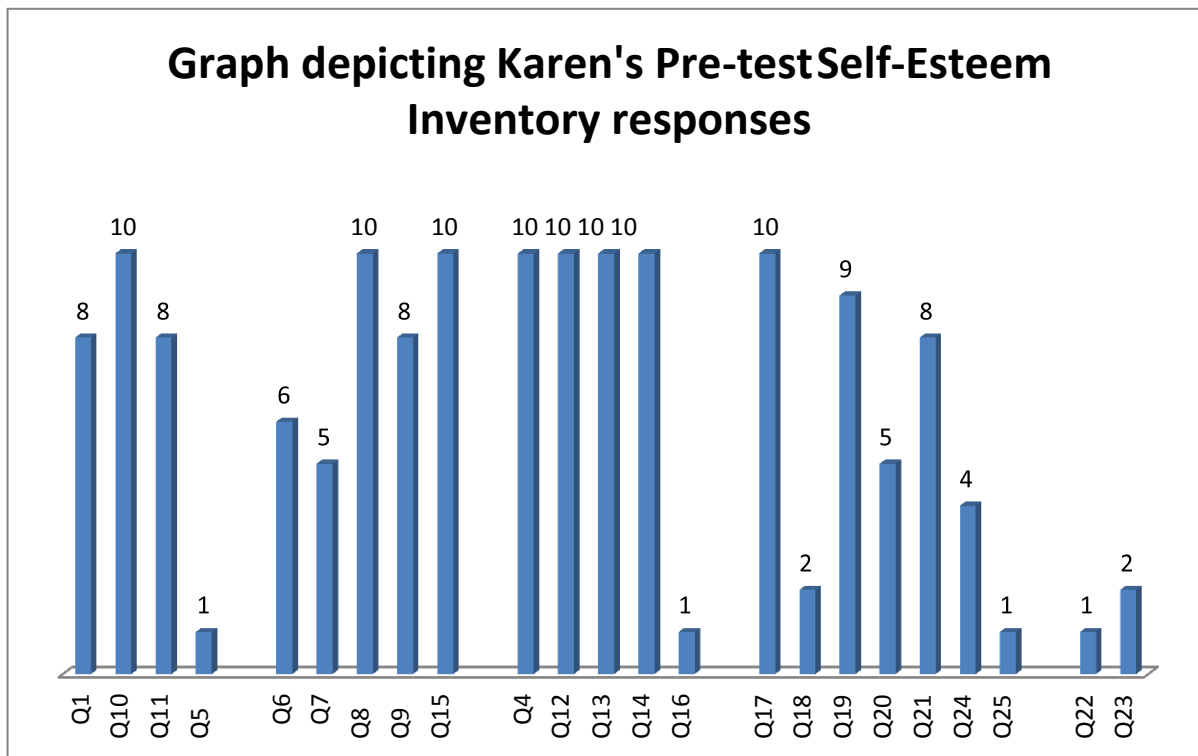
relatively positive on first inspection, showed some anomalies. Whilst she felt somewhat more attractive than her peers (question 6) and 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'I am attractive' (question 15), she responded with a 10 for 'I would like to lose weight' (question 8). Based on these responses it may be surmised that she is not entirely comfortable with her body image. The closed posture presented in her pre-test interview and her responses in this interview support this.

Karen's feelings of value and worth are represented by the third grouping (questions 4, 12, 13, 14, 16) in the graph. Karen's pre-test Self-Esteem Inventory showed a fairly positive appraisal in this area. She answered 10 or 'strongly agree' for questions like 'I am loved' (question 13), 'I am loveable' (question 14) and 'I am important' (question 4). She has a strong sense of her self worth. She has indicated a close relationship with her parents and maternal grandparents so it is possible there is positive adult input that has contributed in this regard.

The penultimate grouping (questions 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24 and 25) pertains to social skills. This appeared to be a particular area of concern for Karen; she responded most negatively regarding this theme and therefore can develop here. Although she felt that she had many friends (question 17) she stated strongly that she did not enjoy leading (question 18) and preferred to follow (question 20). Responses in her personal interview suggest that her feeling of having many friends is relative as it was only in the last year before the study that she began to forge more and deeper friendships. For example, she stated that "I have more friends now than I had at primary school." She also felt like she seldom has something to contribute in class discussion (question 24) and that people do not listen to her (question 21). She responded with a '9' for the statement 'I feel intimidated easily' (question 19). These responses suggest that Karen is not comfortable voicing her opinion to others and feels socially inferior.

The fifth grouping shows questions relating to Karen's decision-making ability. She provided very low scores for both questions (question 22 and 23) suggesting that she feels indecisive. Gul and Caglayan (2017) found that individuals with a poorer self-image tend to be more apathetic and less confident when it comes to making decisions while individuals with a more positive self-image make decisions with more ease and confidence. Similarly, McElroy, Seta, and Waring (2007) suggest that individuals with a negative view of the self are more risk-averse when making decisions and tend to view decision making negatively. It can therefore be inferred that Karen's indecision is a marker of a negative self-description.

Graph 1.1



In comparison to the pre-test, Karen's post-test Self-Esteem Inventory showed a stronger level of agreement with the positive statements and a weaker level of agreement with the negative statements implying a positive shift. In order to make comparison possible, I employed a likert-type scale to quantify the changes in the numerical responses provided. The total number of responses given for positive statements were added together and the total responses for negative statements were then subtracted from these. The result was a single numerical reflection or summary of the Inventory for both the pre- and post-tests. For example, Karen's response to question 1, "I am intelligent" was 8 in the pre-test. 8 was therefore added to her total. Karen's response to the negative statement, "I am less intelligent than others in my class" was 1, thus 1 was subtracted from her total. The pre-test score total was then compared to that of the post-test. The rationale for this method was that it allowed for tracking of small changes as well as greater trends in an objective and quantifiable manner. It also gave individuals the opportunity to respond to a statement in a non-threatening and fairly simple manner.

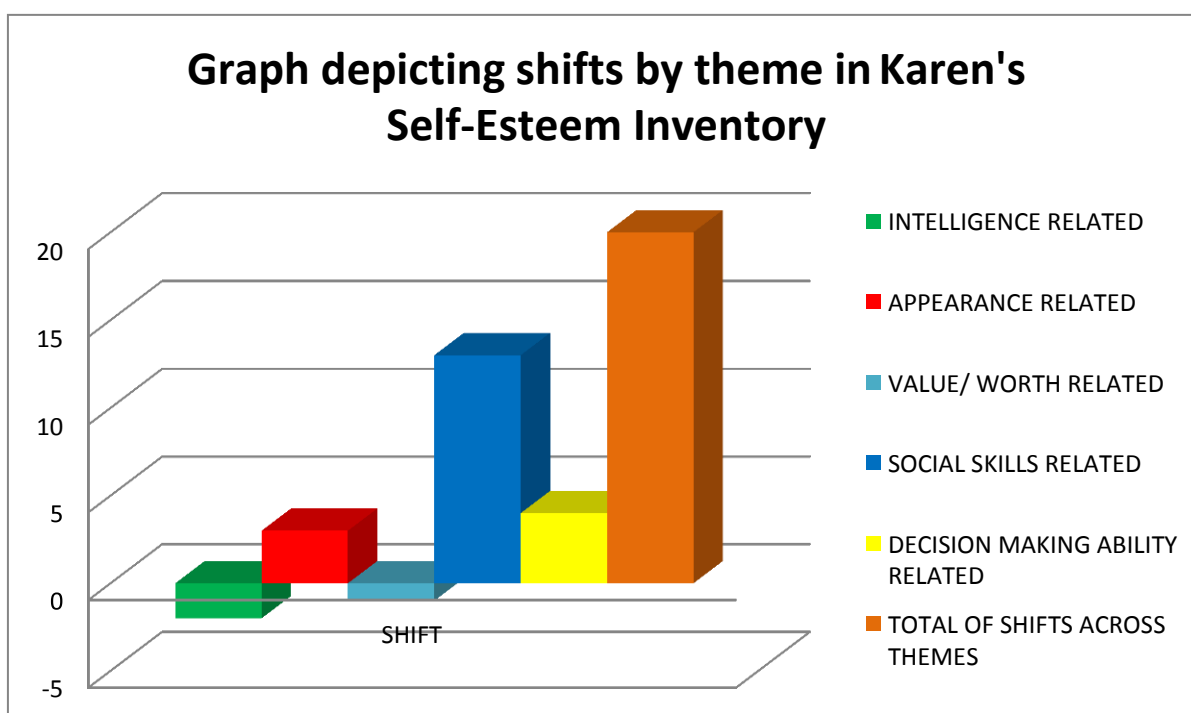
In order for any changes to be seen as statistically significant, a t-test was run to compare pre- and post-test responses across all data. A t-test allows us to determine whether any shifts are of any consequence or merely the result of tests being run at different times. It also makes

discussions of other comparisons more meaningful. This test can be seen at the end of the discussion of Karen's data.

Comparison was also made by question. For example, Karen assigned a 10 to question 1 in the post-test. This means that there was an increase of 2 points. It can therefore be said that Karen's response was more positive by 2 self-descriptions. Had she in fact responded more negatively in the post-test, there may have been a negative numerical shift. Based on this system, Karen's total Self-Esteem Inventory score shifted positively by 20. In other words, the responses that she provided on the Likert scale after intervention showed a greater agreement with positive statements and a weaker agreement with negative statements by a total of 20.

Comparison was also made by themes such as physical appearance and social skills. This means that all the questions relating to a particular topic or theme were analysed together to note changes in the level of agreement or disagreement. Whilst some themes showed a slight negative shift (such as intelligence), the overall total was more positive and significant positive shifts were seen in certain themes (especially that of social skills). Themes which showed the greatest change in the level of agreement and disagreement will be presented as individual graphs to follow. What is interesting to note is that the themes most positively affected were those that she perceived to be the biggest problem initially. An example of this is the theme of social skills. Karen spoke negatively of her ability to interact with and be accepted by her peers before intervention but showed significant improvement in this regard.

Graph 1.2



The total shift and shifts by theme in Karen's two Self-Esteem Inventories can be seen in graph 1.2 above. Intelligence and value-related questions received a slightly more negative appraisal in the post test. However, Karen rated her appearance, social skills and decision-making ability more positively after intervention.

Graphs 1.3 and 1.4 below show the shifts specifically in questions relating to social skills and decision-making respectively.

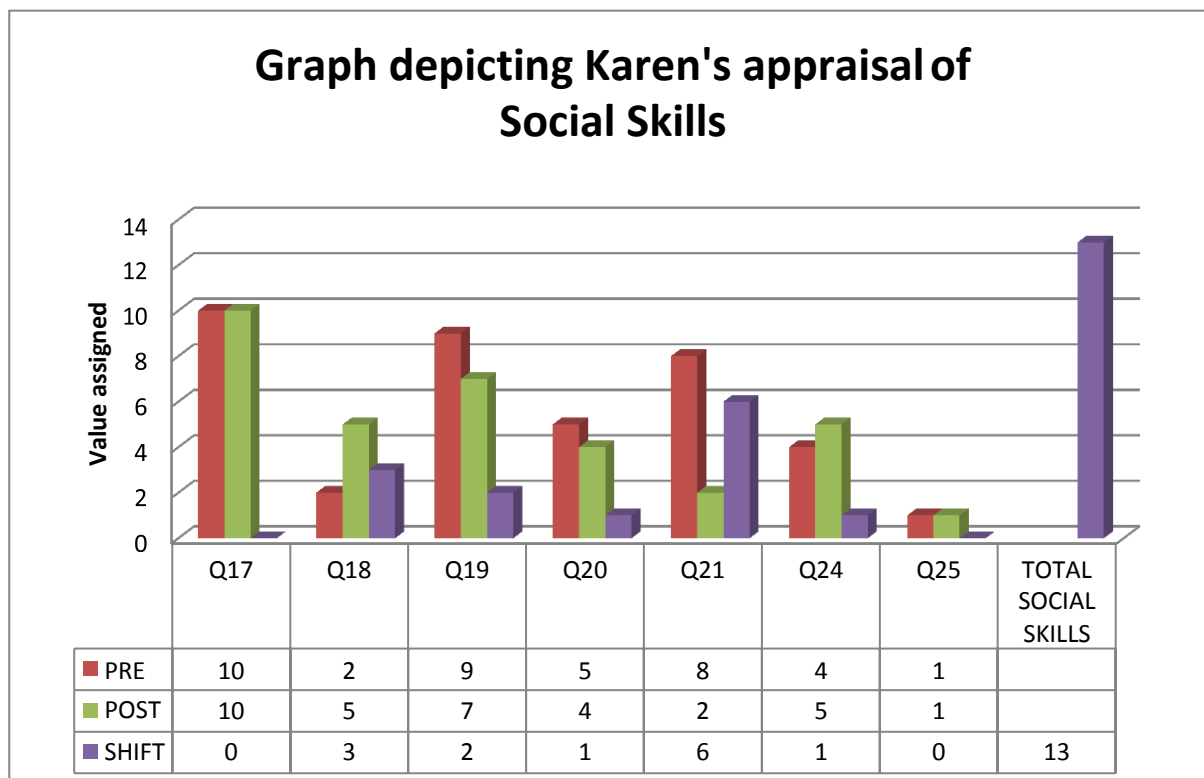
The theme of social skills was rated poorly in Karen's pre-test inventory and she expressed concern about it in other aspects, both written and verbal, of the pre-test. An example of this concern can be seen in her pre-test interview:

"Like when I was younger a lot of people judged me so that kind of brought down my self-confidence and my self-confidence was low like last year and the year before. But now since I've got more friends and my social life is better and I'm just happier; my self-confidence has come up."

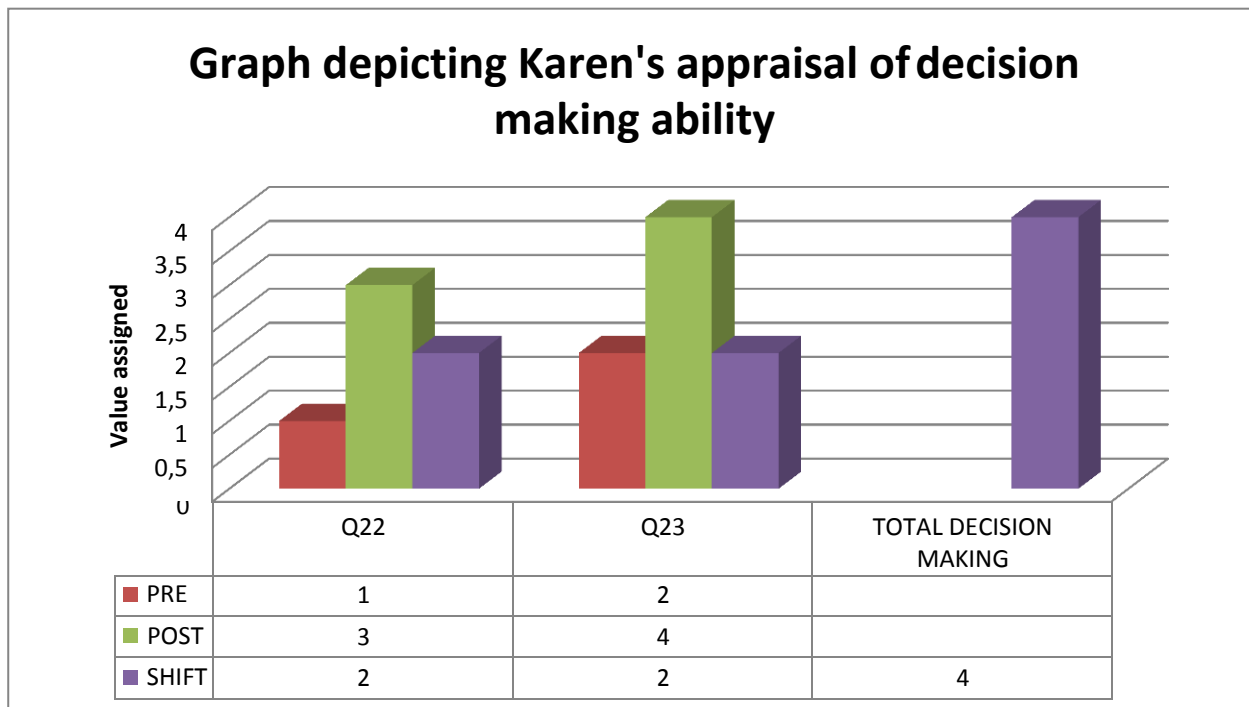
Her perception became more positive after intervention. Her desire to lead and express her own opinion seems to have increased and her perception that others listen to and value that opinion improved dramatically. Overall, this theme increased by a numerical value of 13.

Similarly, over only two questions, Karen displayed a positive shift of 4 for the theme of decision-making. This may suggest that she felt more confident in her decisions. Further evidence to this end was seen during the intervention process in which she slowly began to display a greater propensity to offer ideas and make suggestions. As will be discussed later, there was a sharp improvement in how Karen was able to interact with others and perform her movement ideas by the end of the intervention period.

Graph 1.3



Graph 1.4



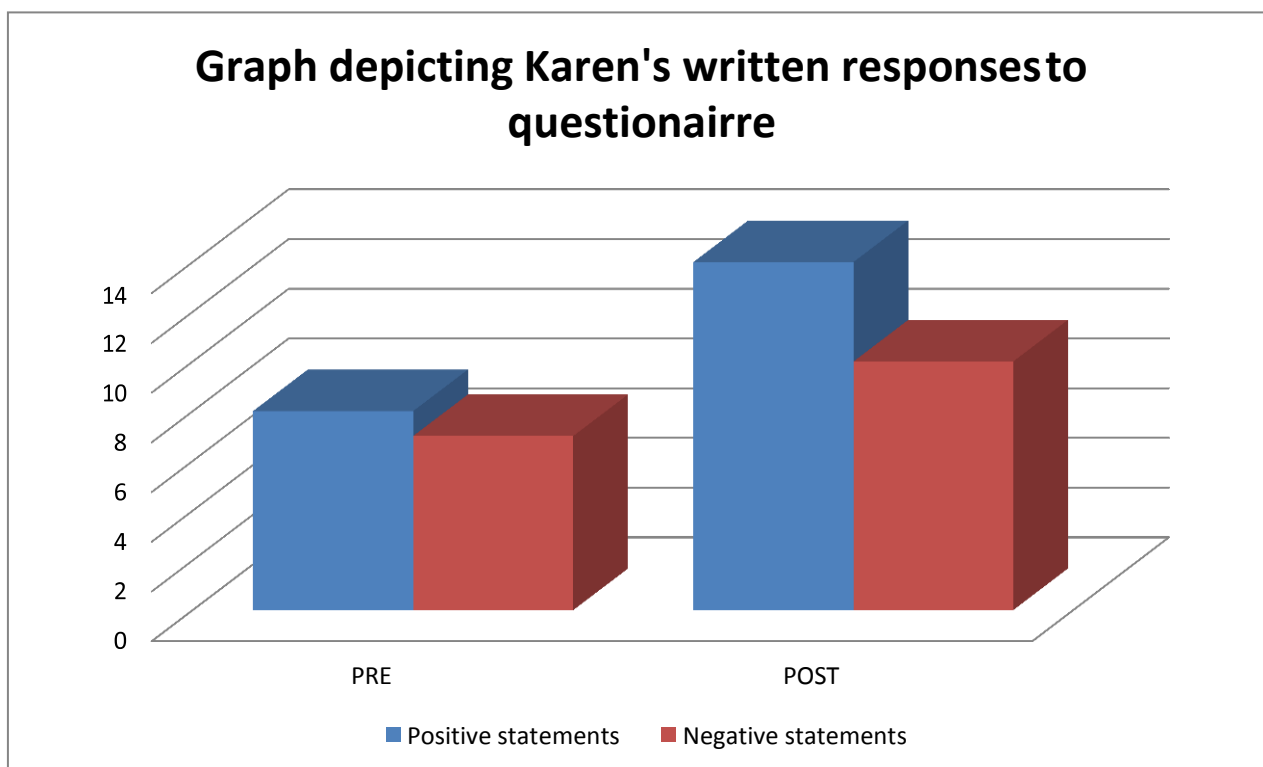
Therefore, Karen's appraisal of herself in the form of a Self-Esteem Inventory presented a more positive self-description after intervention, particularly in the areas of social skills and decision-making.

Questionnaire Written Responses

The following activity on the questionnaire required prose responses to open-ended questions. These questions were; 'What are your strengths?', 'What are your weaknesses?', 'How would you describe yourself?' and 'What, if anything, would you like to change about yourself?' Each response may be analysed quantitatively, by counting the number of positive and negative responses and qualitatively, by looking at the specific answers given by the individual. The statistical difference in written responses will also be reflected later in a t-test.

Graph 1.5 below offers a quantitative representation of Karen's written responses. The pre-test questionnaire consisted of 7 positive and 6 negative statements whilst the post-test questionnaire consisted of 13 positive and 7 negative statements.

Graph 1.5



Whilst the total number of negative statements increased by 1, the difference between the number of negative and positive statements improved. Karen had only one more positive statement than negative statement in the pre-test questionnaire but found six more positive than negative self-descriptors after intervention. In other words, Karen was, of her own accord, able to generate a greater number of good things to say about herself after intervention. This suggests a positive shift because she came to more positive statements more easily. Karen also presented a greater total

number of descriptions, whether positive or negative, in the post-test. These increases might suggest not only a higher number of positive self-descriptions but also a more nuanced level of self-description brought about by a greater ability to self-reflect and describe. Specific differences between pre- and post-test responses will now be discussed in the form of qualitative analysis.

This difference is evidenced in qualitative analysis of Karen's responses too. In her pre-test, Karen simply claimed to be "good at making friends" but in her post-test she stated that she is "good at making friends and making people laugh." She was able to expand on the initial thought slightly which may suggest an improved ability to self-describe. A similar difference can be seen elsewhere. For example, her description of herself in the pre-test included only her humour, positivity and care for others. The post-test answer to the same question extended her description to other aspects of her character as well including her strength of character and artistic ability. Her self-descriptions had become richer and more diverse after intervention.

Some aspects of this section of the test remained unchanged. She highlighted her artistic and creative abilities in both tests as well as pointed to her kind nature. Karen's body image remained an issue both before and after intervention. She expressed a desire to lose weight in both tests. Another recurring concern was poor time management. However, Karen's responses can be seen as more positive both qualitatively and quantitatively overall.

Perhaps the most positive change in this section of the post-test was Karen's response to the question, "How would you describe yourself?" In the pre-test Karen mentioned four positive attributes: being "caring", "loving", "funny" and "positive". In the post-test Karen's response was "I think I am a pretty kind person. I like to laugh and be happy. I believe I am strong and can achieve many things. I'm quite lovable and artistic." Not only has her second response provided additional positive details, it also highlights a positivity and sureness of self which appeared to be absent before. The concept of inner strength was a new one for Karen and one which could have the ability to empower her in the future.

She also showed awareness that her social skills had improved by writing, "I have recently become good at standing up for myself" and "I am pretty shy but my confidence has risen." However, she also highlighted the need for some improvement by stating that she would like to learn to be more confident and to take more risks. Once again, social skills are an area of concern for Karen and that she herself felt an improvement in this area after intervention. These responses show that Karen was beginning to understand herself better through self-reflection and, as a result, better able to self-describe.

Questionnaire Ranking Activity

In both the pre- and post-test, Karen was asked to rank a list of qualities from most to least important. The aim of this activity was to discern what her priorities were and how they may align with or differ from her self-appraisal. When looked at in conjunction with other forms of data, these priorities can provide further insight into the individual's self-descriptions. Figure 1.1 below shows the order provided by Karen in each test side by side.

Figure 1.1

	PRE	POST
1	Humour	Intelligence
2	Looks	Humour
3	Talents	Looks
4	Intelligence	Talents
5	Popularity	Body shape
6	Body shape	Popularity
7	Integrity	Integrity

This significance of this test is that it provides greater insight into shifts seen elsewhere in the data. Alone, this test tells us little other than what the individual's core values are. Coupled with other aspects of the pre- and post-tests however, possible trends in how the individual views herself and these various traits become noticeable.

The orders are fairly similar except that 'intelligence' was moved from 4th to 1st after intervention and 'body shape' and 'popularity' changed places. It is interesting that intelligence became more important to Karen in light of the fact that this is the area in which a negative shift occurred in the Self-Esteem Inventory. Although one can only conjecture about why this may be, it appears that the concept of intelligence and Karen's perception of her own mind have changed. One cannot say whether the increased importance caused a lower self-appraisal or if a lower self-appraisal highlighted the shortfall and therefore made intelligence more important to Karen. However, it can be said that these shifts are in some way linked and therefore support one another. Whilst this is a negative shift, it does suggest a relationship between the individual's priorities and self-description. Perhaps this is something that further intervention may improve upon or perhaps it was simply at the forefront of her concerns as the academic year progressed and school examinations became imminent.

Personal Interview

The personal interview consisted of ten questions which were repeated in the post-test. These questions allowed for more detailed responses and more open-ended questions than the questionnaire. These questions were:

1. Imagine you could have a perfect day at home and at school. Walk me through that day. What would happen?
2. How is your perfect day different to a normal day?
3. Describe your physical appearance.
4. Describe your intellect.
5. Describe your personality.
6. Describe your social life.
7. What is your best attribute?
8. How do you respond to compliments?
9. Do you think you have a positive self-image? Explain?
10. What is self-image?

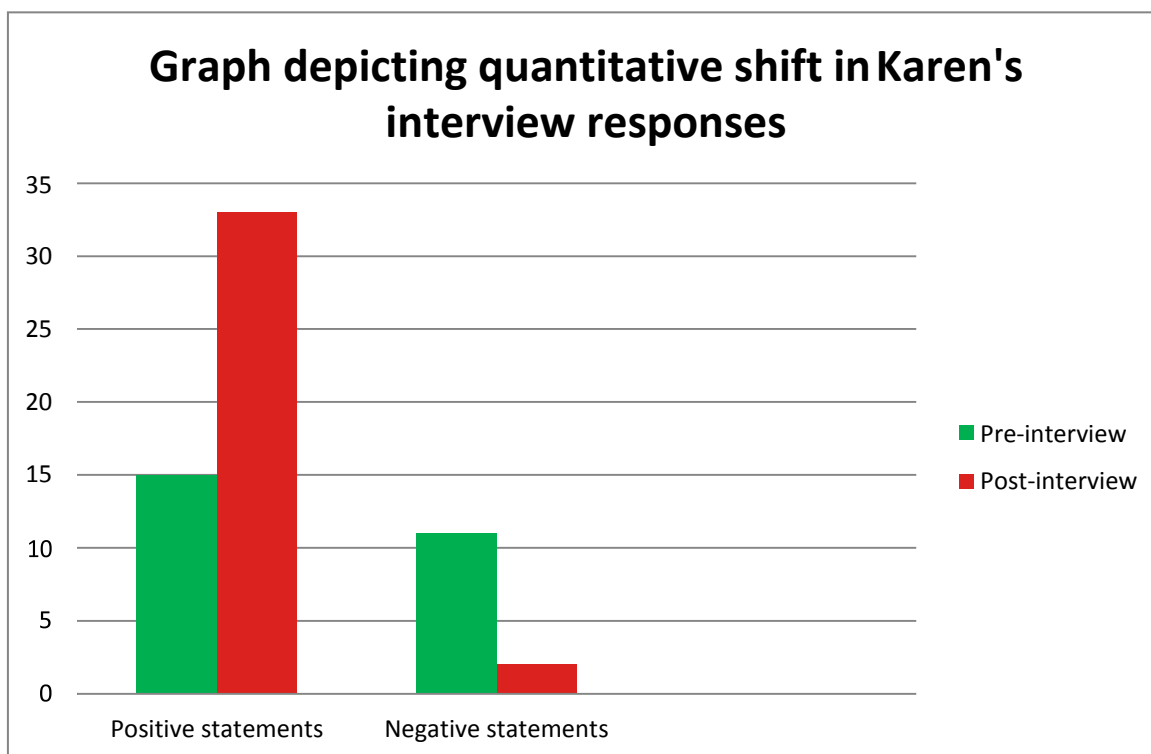
Karen's pre-test interview was provided much information. She opened up quickly and gave detailed and honest responses. Much information was provided regarding her background and what she believed to be her shortcomings. Similarly, her post-interview involved detailed responses and serves for interesting comparison to the pre-interview.

Both interviews were first analysed quantitatively. Each positive or negative statement was highlighted and counted for each interview. Each concept was counted only once. An elaboration on a concept was not counted as an additional statement. For example, Karen stated in the post interview: "I like my smile. I like my eyes. I think my smile's big and bright. People say my smile's contagious which makes me happy." Karen elaborates on the concept of her smile over a few sentences but it is counted once as a positive statement. Statements were only counted as positive or negative if they were overtly so, for example, "I am attractive," would be considered overtly positive. Statements which were objective or ambivalent, such as, "I have brown hair," were not counted. These numbers were also included in the final t-test.

Based on this analysis, Karen's interviews can be quantified as seen in graph 1.6 below. Karen expressed 11 negative and 15 positive statements in her pre-interview. This is a good baseline assessment with more positive than negative statements and a high number of statements in total. This suggests that Karen did engage in self-description before intervention and held a fairly

balanced view of herself. In the post-interview, Karen expressed only 2 negative statements and 33 positive statements. This is a stark increase in positive self-description even though the questions asked were exactly the same in both interviews.

Graph 1.6



Analysis also shows a qualitative shift in Karen’s responses. The first two questions involved Karen’s conception of a “perfect day” and how that might differ from reality. These questions served to highlight what Karen might have seen as shortcomings or challenges in her daily life. In both interviews, Karen highlighted academic pressure to be an issue but she was able to do so in a more detailed and reflexive manner in the post test. Before intervention the difference between her perfect day and reality was that “Some days just drag. I don’t get...my marks are ok. And, um...my friends are still fun but um, ja...” After intervention Karen was able to articulate that she felt stressed and was sometimes in a bad mood. She used fuller sentences and expanded on her ideas:

“On a normal day I’m pretty stressed about work...um...my marks aren’t always what I want them to be...sometimes I’m in a bad mood. And sometimes I have a lot of homework! And I stay up really late to do the homework.”

This response, although still highlighting the challenge of academic pressure, may display a clearer understanding of the challenge after intervention.

The third question related to an area that all aspects of the test already discussed have shown to be a concern for Karen; her physical appearance. Before intervention, when asked to “describe” her physical appearance, Karen extensively listed the things she would like to change about herself, not limited to her physical appearance. This list included losing weight, expressing herself more, becoming fitter and being less shy. Rather than ‘describing,’ Karen was making a wish list. She expressed attributes about the self she wished to change or was dissatisfied when asked to describe herself. Her response focussed on the things she did not like about herself. When asked, as a means of clarification, to pretend that the interviewer was blind and describe what she looked like, Karen quipped, “I am actually blind, I wear contacts. And my hearing isn’t that great either.” The statement that she was “blind” was an exaggeration and a fairly negative view to hold. A long explanation about her eye and ear problems and the associated social problems followed and still no description of physical appearance was provided. Either Karen was so concerned about the issues she raised (weight, fitness, social abilities) that it was more important for her to express these issues than to answer the question or one can conclude that at the time she found it difficult to self-describe.

After intervention, Karen appeared to be far more able to respond to this question. She provided a list of the things she liked about her body without prompting.

“I quite like my appearance. I like my smile. I like my eyes. I think my smile’s big and bright. People say my smile’s contagious which makes me happy. I like the shape of my nose. And I like my body...I just wish I was a bit thinner, a bit skinnier; but I’m working on that. And...I like my legs...and I like my hair.”

One can conclude that her view of her physical appearance improved as well as her ability to describe it. In the pre-test she highlighted what she disliked or wished she possessed but in the post-test she was able to list attributes she liked about her physical self and had fewer qualities she wanted to change.

Similar shifts are evidenced in the questions that followed. Before intervention, Karen’s descriptions had little detail. After intervention these questions received more detailed and positive responses. Her personality description related only to her social skills and ability to relate to others whereas after intervention she claimed to be determined, different, kind and happy. This description covers a wider range of traits rather than only the relational and shows a feeling of strength of character.

In the pre-test Karen remarked that she had a good social life based on what she perceived to be a large number of friends and social activities. This description persisted in the second interview but was extended:

“My social life...I have a lot of friends. I think. I’m happy with the amount of friends I have. I feel in a group and I feel “wanted” [in air quotes]. I have a lot of friends with me at school and outside of school. I have one or two friends in different countries from me even. I’ve met a lot of people in the three years that I’ve been here [High School]. A lot more than I met in primary school.”

Karen’s expression of feeling wanted and part of a group could be seen as a more mature and reflexive view than she previously held because she is able to identify that she perceives a sense of belonging. She provided a detailed description of her friendship group and how it had grown. She also pointed to the validation she felt as a result of her friendships. In this way, Karen notes a specific cause and emotional consequence that she has experienced – indicative of emotional intelligence and self-reflection.

Karen’s description of her intellect before intervention also included an expression of her shortcomings when she contrasted her artistic ability with her lack of mathematical aptitude. In the post-test Karen described her intellect with words like smart, sensible, jolly, hard-working and giving.

When asked to describe her best attribute before intervention, Karen was unsure; “My ability to make people smile, kindness...I don’t really know what to say.” She spoke hesitantly and looked to me for reassurance that her answer was ‘correct.’ She struggled to determine what her best attribute might be. This difficulty is an indication that she did not as yet have a clear picture of her personal strengths or that she was not confident enough to express positive thoughts about herself. After intervention, Karen provided a confident, single word answer; “My humour.” She spoke with a decisive tone and smiled when she answered. She appeared to have a firmer and surer grasp of her positive attributes after intervention because she arrived at a response more easily and spoke with more surety

Karen was next asked how she responds to compliments. This question was included because individuals with negative self-views may struggle to accept compliments. Karen seemed to understand this intuitively before intervention as she stated that “some people feel awkward” in such a situation. Karen also said that she always thanked a person who offered her a compliment. After intervention, rather than mentioning awkwardness, Karen explained that compliments had a positive effect on her. “[I feel] happy. I feel proud of who I am.” Karen was indicating that she was now able to appreciate compliments and that it had a positive effect on her self-worth. Not only is this a more mature and nuanced response but it may also indicate that her overall self-view had improved.

The final set of questions were specific to Karen's understanding of self-image both as a concept and particular to her. Before intervention Karen's understanding of self-image as a concept was incorrect. She provided an uncertain definition which involved others and their actions more than the self. Her description of her own self-image focussed once more on her social misgivings:

“Um...sometimes, sometimes not. Like when I was younger a lot of people judged me so that kind of brought down my self-confidence and my self-confidence was low like last year and the year before. But now since I've got more friends and my social life is better and I'm just happier; my self-confidence has come up...

I just struggled with...I was just really ,really shy. I've gotten better but I was really, really shy a few years ago so that kind of made life difficult for me to make friends and stuff. But I do have tons of friends now so...”

Together, Karen's understanding of the concept of self-image and the description of her self-image may suggest that how she interacted with and was regarded by her peers had a significant impact on her feelings of self worth.

After intervention, Karen had a far better explanation of what self-image actually is.

“How you see yourself and how others see you. [Thinks] Like if you look in a mirror, how you see yourself. And how you see your personality. And how people see you and your personality and who you are.”

In this description, Karen focused more on her own conceptions of the self. She has also explained two of the three aspects of self-esteem; the 'pygmalion- self' and 'self-image' omitting only the 'ideal-self.' (Page and Page, 2003: 34). This was a more accurate understanding of the concept.

Her description of her own self-image reflected these two aspects as well and acknowledged that the 'pygmalion-self' may differ from the 'self-image:' “I do think I see myself differently from how other people see me. But it's like that with everyone I think.” She did not relate her self-worth to how others perceived her. She stated that she was proud of herself and “who I am.” This indicates that Karen had begun to judge herself more independently and no longer relied completely on her peers to feel valued.

Karen's responses in the second interview may thus been interpreted as qualitatively more positive. Her body language supports this. As opposed to the folded arms and stooped posture of the pre-test interview, Karen spoke whilst seated upright with her hands in her lap and frequently using gesture to enhance her words.

Journal entries

Journal writing was part of each intervention session and served to clarify compositions for the researcher as well as provide participants with an opportunity to reflect.

At an early session, Karen was asked to write down her expectations for the programme. Besides an expectation of lots of movement, Karen wrote that part of her expectations included a fear of feeling judged. “I worry about how people see me. I do kind of care what people think of me.” As evidenced in the pre-test, Karen came into the intervention process with a great concern for her peer’s opinions and what one could label a relatively negative view of the self. This “expectation” or concern authenticates such a claim. Karen started the process with deep feelings of social inadequacy as seen in her negative self-esteem inventory responses to questions around social skills and her statements in the interview and questionnaire written responses. For example, she said that she wanted to improve her “confidence” in the pre-test written questionnaire.

By 1 March 2016, Karen’s journal showed a more positive appraisal. She wrote; “I discovered that I am more outgoing than I thought I was.” In this same entry, Karen provided a sound definition for self-image not unlike the one offered in her final interview: “Self-image is how you see yourself and how you think others see you. I could see [myself] differently compared to how others see you.”

This positive trend continued and by 14 March 2016 Karen believed that “I have learnt that I am more creative than I thought I was and that I am more capable of things than I thought I was.”

As these journal entries were part of actual intervention sessions, one may claim that these words are directly linked to experiences Karen had during the intervention process. This would suggest that Karen’s self-description was becoming more positive in and as a result of intervention.

Mediation Observations

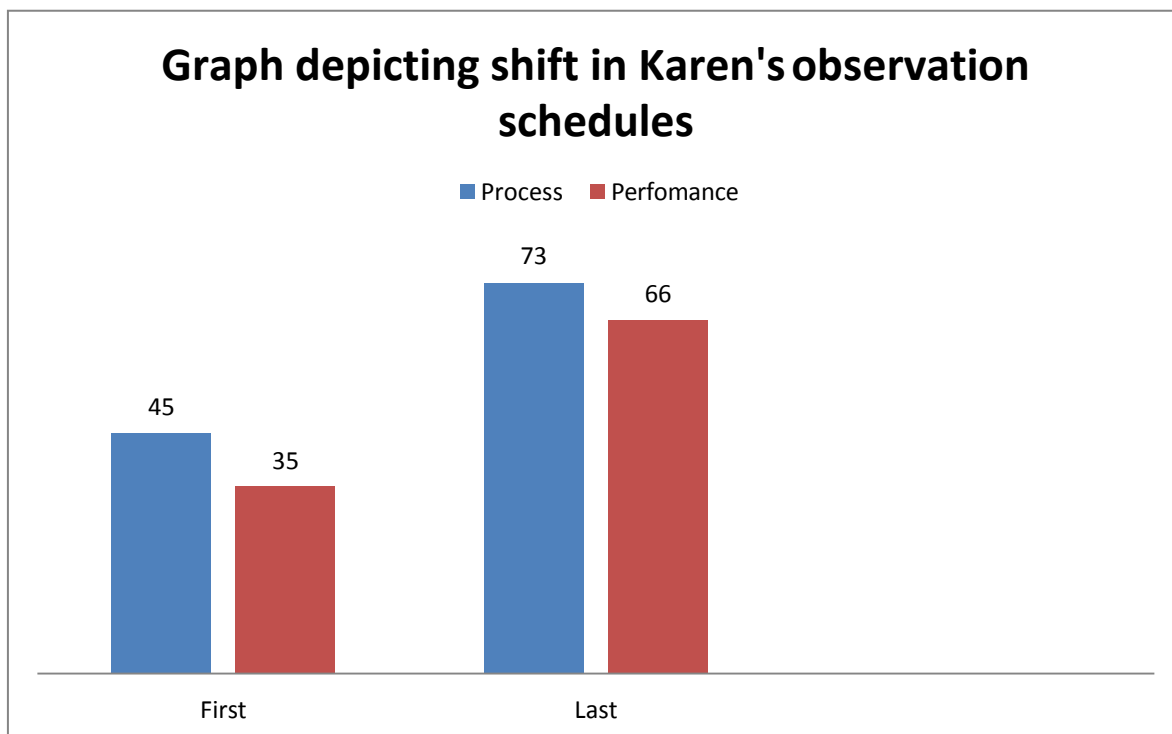
The entire intervention process was recorded on camera to allow for observation schedules to be completed at a later date. The observation schedules of Karen’s behaviour and performance in earlier and later sessions can be compared and contrasted in order to analyse if any shift occurred during the intervention process itself.

The schedules, devised by myself, were divided into ‘process’ and ‘performance.’ The process was judged using markers which would signify that the participant was positive and confident about the process and their own abilities whilst working to create a piece of movement. These

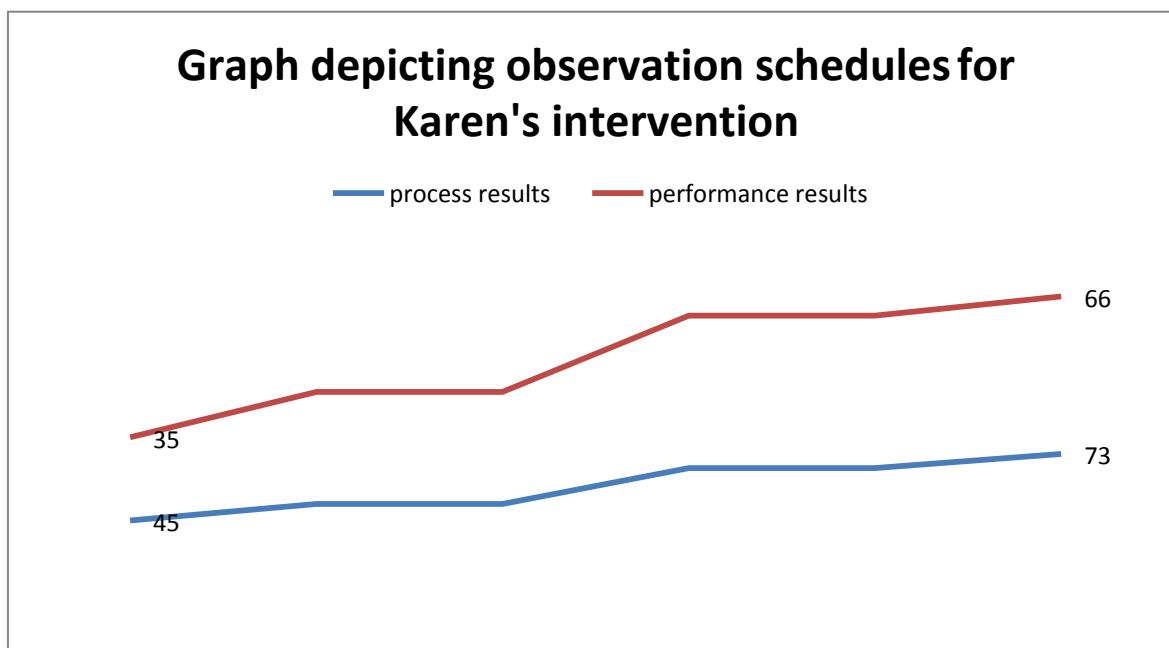
markers included their ability to give and listen to suggestions, manage conflict and use their body in creative, risk-taking ways. The performance was analysed in a similar manner, looking for the extent to which participants were able to openly express themselves through movement. Each schedule consisted of ten criteria which would be marked out of a maximum of ten marks. Each schedule therefore totalled a mark out of 100. These totals will also later be included in the final t-test of all Karen's data.

Graph 1.7 below indicates the numerical results of observation schedules for Karen's process and performance for the first and last sessions conducted whilst Graph 1.8 shows the results for each of the intervention sessions. Karen showed a great improvement in her ability to offer suggestions, interact with other students and express herself physically and creatively. Her process total shifted from 45/100 to 73/100 whilst her performance total shifted from 35/100 to 66/100.

Graph 1.7



Graph 1.8



The significance of this shift is better grasped by looking closely at Karen's behaviour in these lessons. Karen's first intervention session involved much giggling and fidgeting. Her posture was closed and she was submissive throughout. The first activity required each participant to provide a movement to go with their name. Karen hesitated, taking longer to choose a movement than her peers and then provided a movement very similar to previous students'. In other activities, she looked to other groups in pair work. It appeared as if Karen struggled to come up with her own ideas. The movements that she did perform were small and limited. She used little space, standing largely on one spot and barely extended her limbs. She moved very little, appearing scared or shy. Another example of this timidity was seen when she was lead as part of the 'blind and guide' activity. Karen and her partner, Anne, struggled to perform their final composition of the day with any fluency and seemed unsure, even on the second attempt.

This behaviour persisted for some time. It was observed in the second lesson that she copied other students' movements both when improvising and when performing a practiced composition. She often stood still until another learner provided her with a movement to copy.

This was in contrast to the behaviours exhibited in Karen's final lesson. Once the parameters of the task had been set, Karen was the first to offer suggestions in the group. She remained the most introverted of her group but became an integral part of the class. Rather than simply absorbing the suggestions of others, Karen was able to synthesise her own ideas with those of other group members. She remained focussed on the tasks provided and was visibly having fun. She was able to take greater risks in the types of movements she performed and her movements were larger and more confidently performed. In her final performance, rather than looking to others for queues, Karen was leading the others.

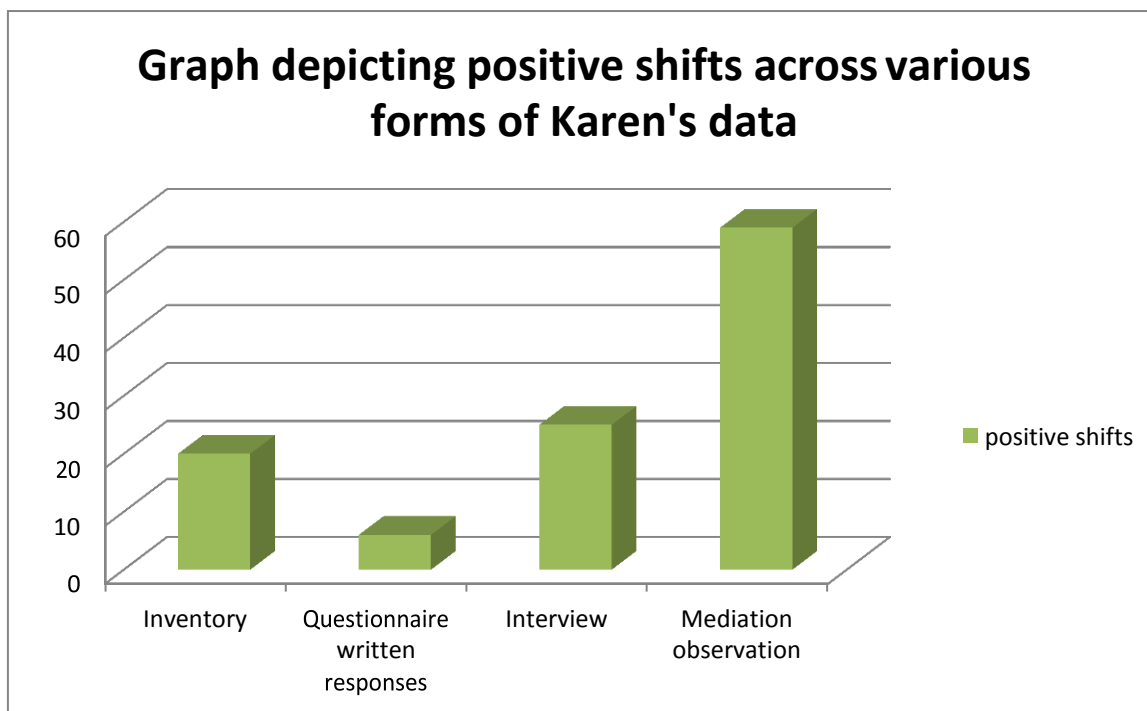
Summary of Karen's data

The sum of data related to Karen would suggest some positive shifts in self-description. The most noticeable shift was observed in her social skills. Not only did she describe this aspect of herself more positively in the inventory, interview and journal entries, but she also exhibited a greater ease of interaction during intervention sessions towards the end of the process. This is made more positive because it is an area that Karen herself identified as one which needed growth.

Another area that Karen identified as problematic was that of her body-image. Although this theme did not improve as significantly as the previous one, she did show an improved view of her physical self in both the inventory and interview. She was also able to use her body more freely in later intervention sessions.

Graph 1.9 below shows the positive shifts evidenced across a range of data. In each case the negative responses were subtracted from the positive responses in both pre- and post-tests to find the difference in the number of positive responses before and after intervention. The graph shows the extent to which those positive responses were greater than negative responses at the end of the study.

Graph 1.9



All of Karen's pre- and post-test data were used to run a t-test comparing the results of these four tests (inventory, written responses, interview and observations) before and after intervention. The null hypothesis for this test was 0 as any change would be significant. The results of this test are pictured in Figure 1.2 below. Alpha was set at 0,05 and P was found to be 0,23 in the two-tailed test. From this t-test it can be concluded that a statistically significant shift did take place after intervention.

Figure 1.2

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	17,2	38,8
Variance	447,2	883,7
Observations	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	7	
	-	
t Stat	1,323933102	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,113559764	
t Critical one-tail	1,894578605	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,227119529	
t Critical two-tail	2,364624252	

By the end of intervention, Karen was able to interact confidently and more fully in lessons. Her data depicted more detailed and positive responses. In her final journal entry Karen alluded to an awareness of her own more positive outlook:

"I have learnt that I am more creative than I thought I was and that I am more capable of things than I thought I was."

Participant 2: Betty (School A)

Betty is a friendly child who lives with both of her parents, her two elder sisters and a twin sister. She was born in April 2001, making her 14 and in Grade 9 at the time of the study. She attended a slightly under-resourced but high performing government primary school and lives in an area known to consist of mostly lower-middle and working class individuals.

She is goal-orientated to a fault in the sense that she often made decisions of no real consequence based on extremely long-term goals. An example of this is her claim to do Soduko (a maths-based puzzle) regularly because it has been proven to reduce Alzheimer's risk. A teacher at the school described her as "very intense." She is polite and has a particular respect for authority and notions of doing what is right or expected. She presents a sense of self-assurance when speaking with adults but is less secure with peers.

She, unlike her peers in this group, identifies herself as a dancer and spends many hours training each week both at school and at a local junior dance company. Much of her focus is related to achieving specific dance goals. Her pre-existing movement vocabulary assisted her in many of the tasks and afforded her a confidence in the sessions which the other members of the group did not have. Betty's motivation for participating in the study was dance-based rather than for any emotional development.

Self-Esteem Inventory

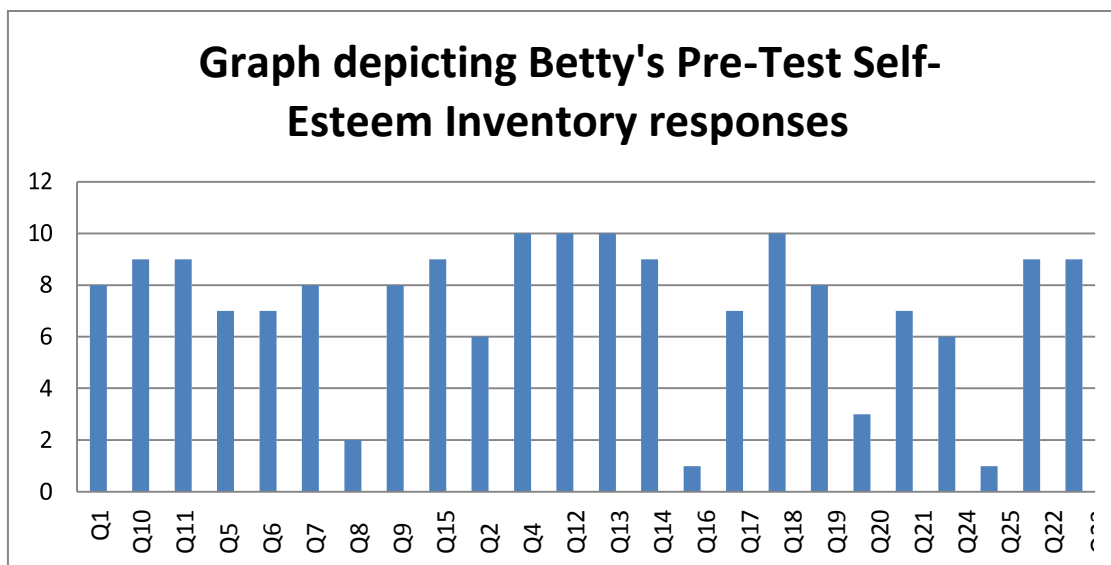
Graph 2.1 below depicts Betty's Self-Esteem Inventory responses prior to intervention. She presented a generally very positive view of herself in this section of the pre-test, generally agreeing strongly with positive statements and disagreeing strongly with negative statements.

Relating to the theme of intelligence, Betty assigned a numerical response of between 8 and 9 for most questions. The only negative response in this theme was for question 5; 'I am less intelligent than most of my friends,' for which she responded with a 7. This would suggest that whilst she generally feels intelligent and is able to achieve her academic goals at school, she believes herself to be less intelligent than her peer group.

Similarly, Betty's appraisal of her physical appearance, value and decision-making abilities were all very positive with responses to all positive questions within these three themes ranging upwards from 7.

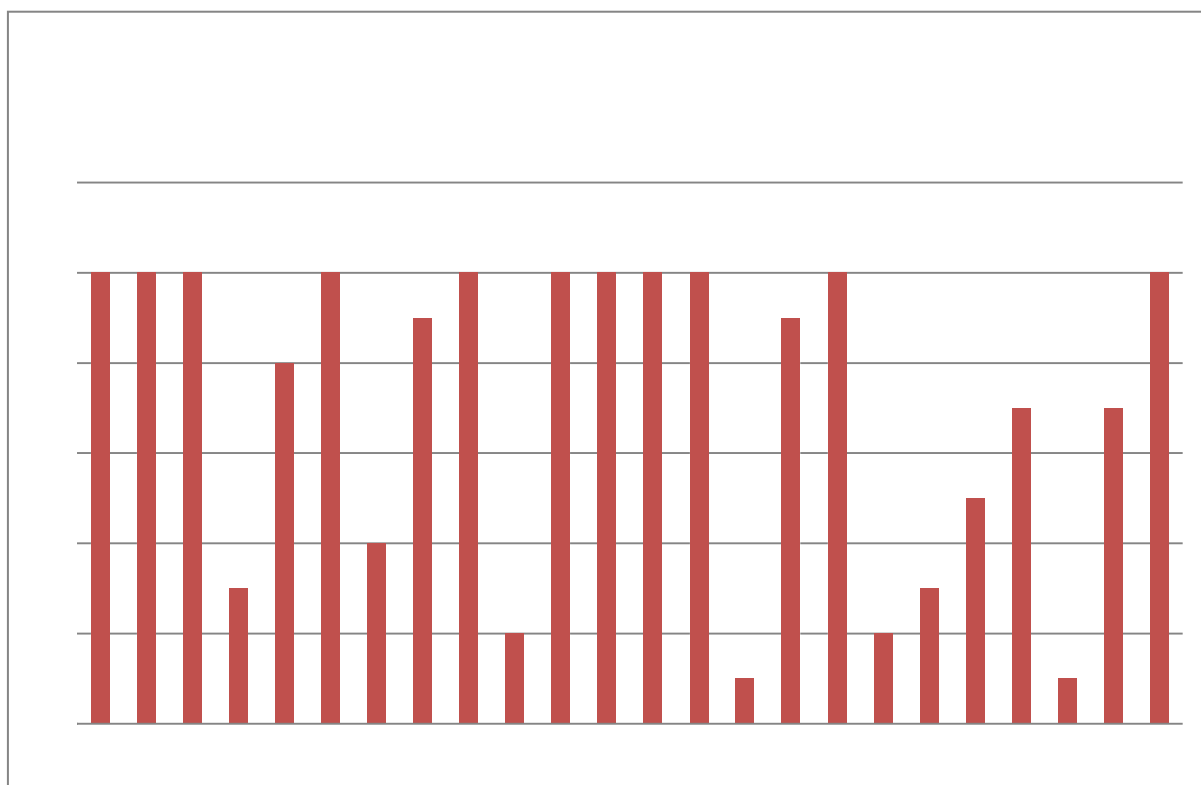
The area which appeared to be of greatest concern for Betty, as with Karen, was that of social skills. Although some responses were positive, two questions in particular received a negative appraisal from Betty. 'I feel intimidated easily' (question 19) received an 8, suggesting that Betty strongly agrees that she tends to be intimidated in social settings. This was reinforced by her own claims to be 'shy' elsewhere in the pre-test. Whilst comfortable performing on stage, Betty felt less comfortable when speaking to others. She also agreed that people do not really listen to her (question 21). Based on these two responses, one may postulate that Betty is not confident in a social setting. Interestingly, Betty did not agree that she liked to follow (question 20), assigning only a 3 in response to this question. Whilst she feels intimidated and unheard, she is also more comfortable leading. This was manifested in the intervention sessions. Betty frequently took the lead in tasks but did not interact as 'part of the group' in the same way as the other participants during the unstructured parts of a session. Whilst the other participants would chat informally before a session commenced or giggle at a joke between activities, Betty was not really part of these interactions at first. Her confidence in her skills pushed her into a leadership role which was readily accepted by the other group members but her dislike for social interaction forced her to keep her distance when not actively working on a task.

Graph 2.1



Graph 2.2 to follow shows Betty's responses after intervention. Whilst Betty did hold a fairly favourable and accurate view of herself before intervention, it is interesting to note that her view was even more favourable after intervention. The only theme which did not show a significant shift towards the positive was that of decision-making which shifted negatively by 1. However, this did not detract from a holistically more positive response. The specific movements will now be examined in raw numbers and will later be shown as part of a t-test for Betty's data.

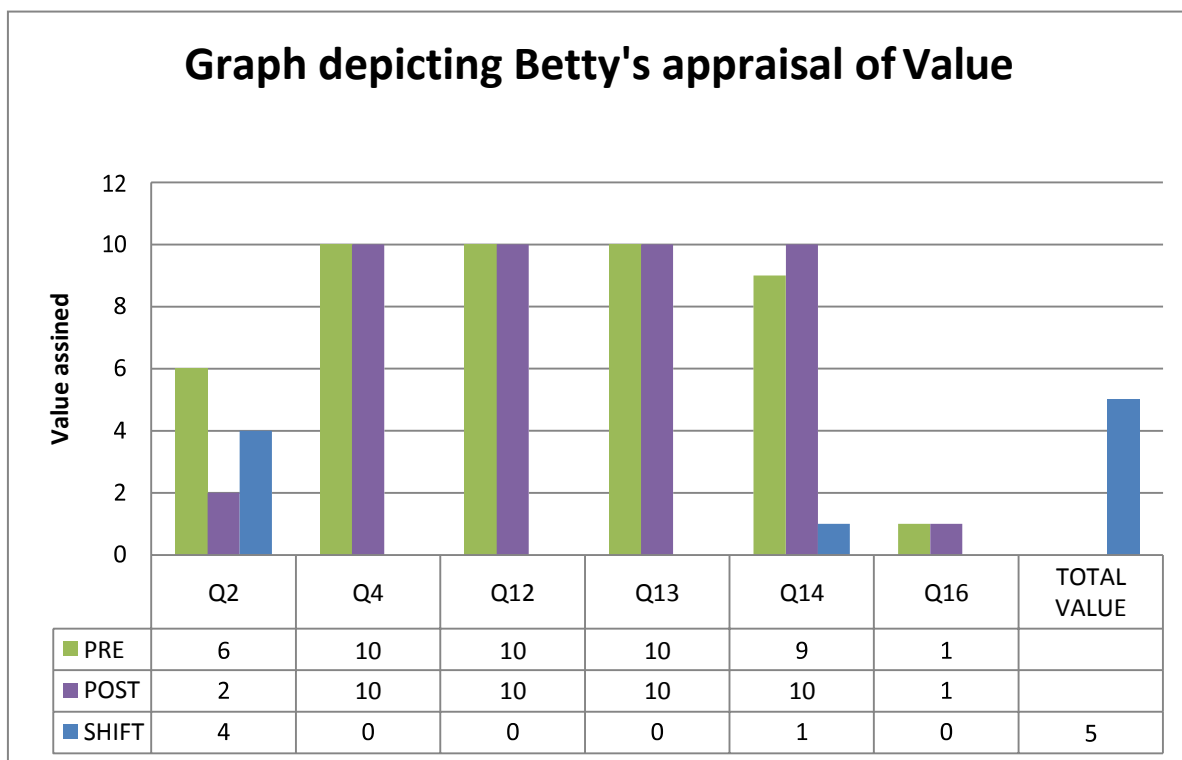
Graph 2.2



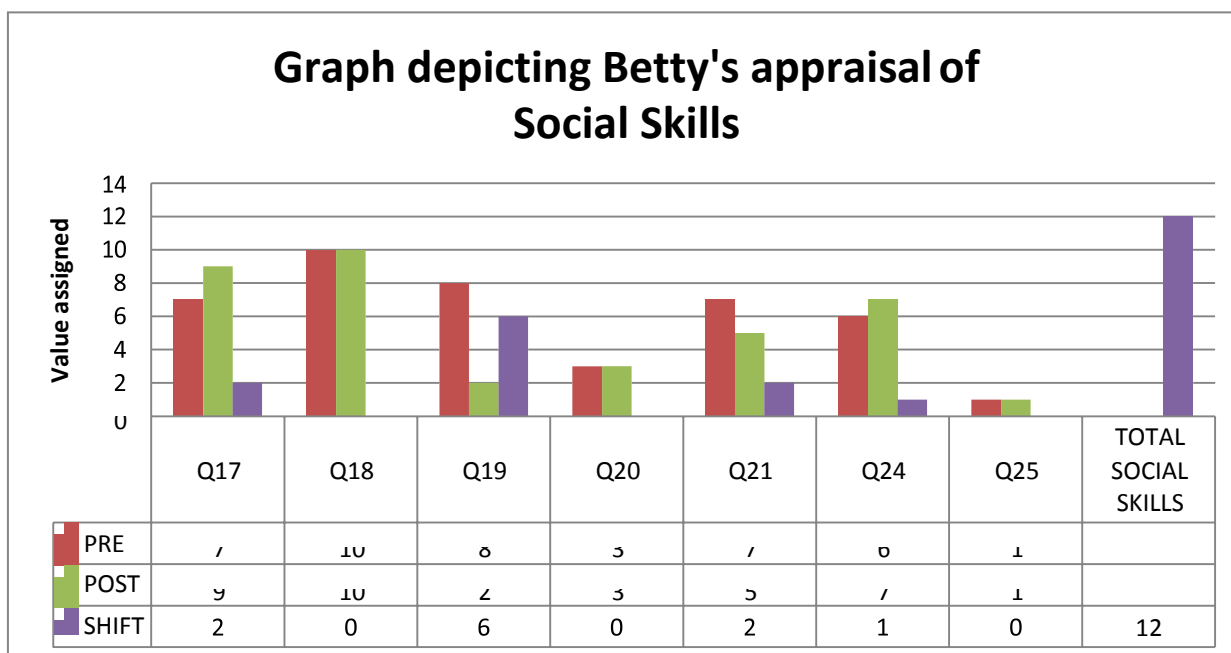
Graphs 2.3 and 2.4 below show the specific shifts in Betty’s responses for the themes of value and social skills respectively. Although Betty did view her value positively before intervention, her responses to two questions in particular, showed an even more positive self-appraisal. After intervention she believed with greater certainty that she was ‘loveable,’ increasing her response from 9 to 10 out of a possible 10. More notable, was her response to the statement ‘I often feel lonely’ (question 2). Betty’s numerical response moved from 6 to 2 after intervention. This is a significant shift and an important statement for a teenager, whose identity is heavily affected by their peers. Furthermore, whilst this question was grouped as part of the value theme, it does also relate to Betty’s social skills – a previous area of concern and the greatest area of growth for Betty. By stating that she felt less lonely, it appears that Betty was more content with her social interactions.

Echoing Karen’s results once more, the greatest improvement can be seen in the area which the individual highlighted as the greatest concern – social skills. Whilst questions 19 and 21 had elicited a negative response from Betty in the Pre-Test, they were given a far more positive response after intervention. Betty reduced her response from 8 to 2 for the statement ‘I feel intimidated easily’ and from 7 to 5 for the statement ‘I don’t think people listen to me.’ This is indeed a positive shift and could reflect a greater confidence in social settings. Betty was also more positive about the number of friends she had (question 17) and her contribution to class discussions (question 24). Overall, Betty’s appraisal of her social skills was more positive by a total of 12 subsequent to intervention.

Graph 2.3

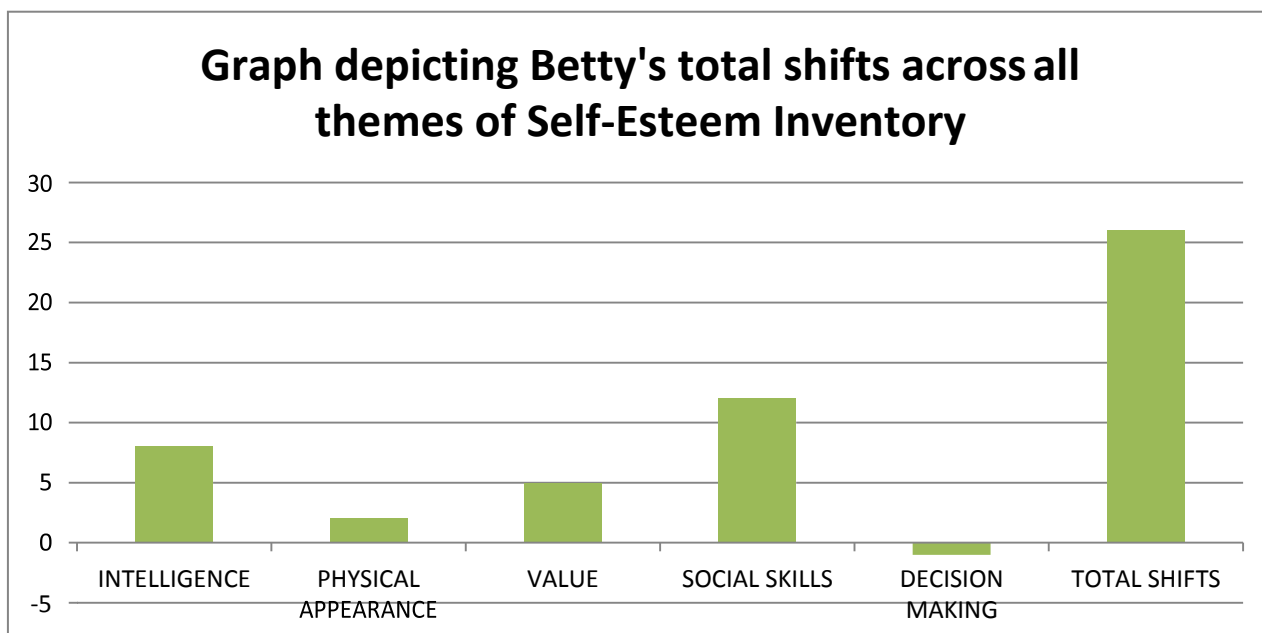


Graph 2.4



Betty's total shifts across all themes of the Self-Esteem Inventory can be seen in Graph 2.5. Once again, the total number of positive responses was added together, and negative responses subtracted from the total. Taking the slight negative shift in decision-making into account, Betty's responses shifted towards the positive by 26. This shift was the average for School A and above the average for the entire sample. Therefore, Betty presented a more positive self-description in this aspect of the data after intervention.

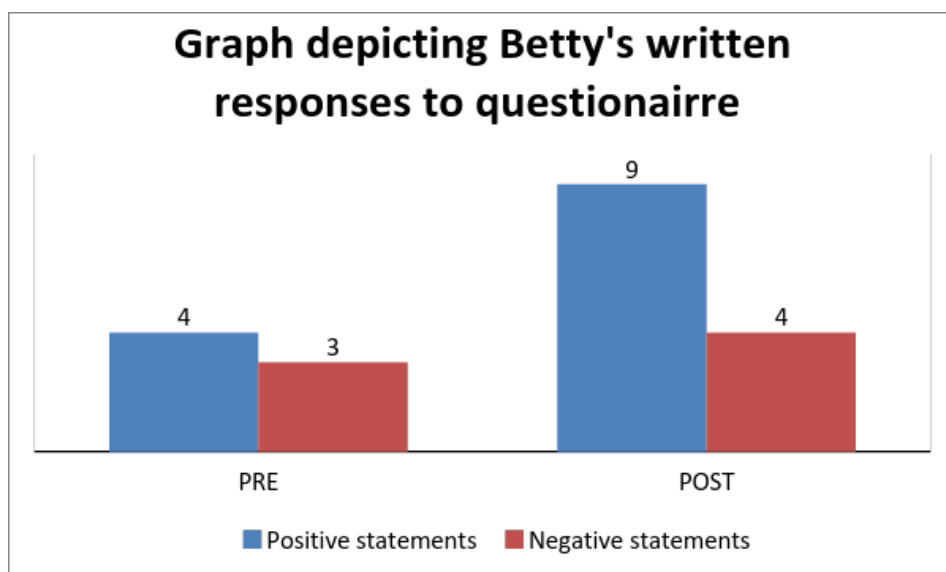
Graph 2.5



Questionnaire Written Responses

Betty's written responses in the questionnaire shifted both quantitatively and qualitatively. After intervention, she made three more positive and one more negative statement about herself. This is visible in Graph 2.6 below. This suggests a more detailed self-description but also one in which the balance favours positive self-descriptions rather than negative self-description.

Graph 2.6



Prior to intervention, Betty described herself as “shy when stationary” but “confident when dancing.” This was, as previously mentioned, certainly my experience of her. She also claimed that she felt good at “leading people.” These statements are in line with the analysis of the Self-Esteem Inventory which suggested that Betty felt confident in her skills as a dancer but not confident in her overall social skills. Betty appears to have a strong reliance on her dancing abilities and is well outside of her comfort zone in a simple social setting. This will be further reflected in the discussion of the intervention sessions.

Her strengths and weaknesses focussed primarily on her abilities as a dancer and a student. She noted that she was good at dancing and maths but weak at English creative writing. She also expressed a desire to improve her dance technique. Betty made no mention of her body image. At this point Betty’s self-description was based entirely on outward and visible skills rather than any innate or personal quality. Betty responded to what she could objectively see. Her self-descriptions appear to have arisen from judgements made from teachers, school reports and eisteddfod results. Betty was not, at this stage, adept at making judgements about herself entirely independently and relied heavily on formal external feedback. Her self-appraisals before mediation lacked any personal reflection on her own character or personality.

It is in this aspect of Betty’s self-description that these data present the greatest qualitative shift. After intervention Betty’s focus included less outward and objectively visible traits and more personal characteristics of an abstract and unquantifiable nature. Betty still made mention of strengths in dance and academics (although her descriptions were now more detailed) but also included phrases such as “disciplined,” “strong” and “great.” Betty noted an ability to “strive towards [her] best” and to “always push [herself] harder to achieve success.” Betty had not previously mentioned any mental toughness and the shifts in the Self-Esteem Inventory relating to intelligence and social skills may corroborate a suggestion that this was a new self-discovery for Betty.

A second theme which was only mentioned after intervention was that of body image. After intervention Betty offered that her body was “toned” and “in proportion.” She credited her ability to “accomplish hard obstacles” to her body’s strength and claimed that she “wouldn’t change anything physical.” The Self-Esteem Inventory also showed a positive shift regarding physical appearance. One may therefore consider that this is an area which enjoyed more positive self-description after intervention.

It could therefore be posited that Betty’s written responses to the questionnaire showed similar positive shifts to the Self-Esteem Inventory.

Ranking Activity

Betty's ranking activity choices are shown in Figure 2.1 below. The first and last place remained unchanged with movement in all other positions. If this movement is discussed in conjunction with the other data some patterns are visible.

Figure 2.1

	PRE	POST
1	Integrity	Integrity
2	Intelligence	Talents
3	Talents	Body shape and size
4	Looks	Sense of humour
5	Sense of humour	Intelligence
6	Body shape and size	Looks
7	Popularity	Popularity

Intelligence was ranked second before intervention and fifth after intervention. This theme also shifted positively in both the inventory and written responses of the post-test questionnaire. Perhaps, as Betty felt more confident with her own academic ability, the notion of intelligence became less important to her. It has also already been noted that Betty's use of formal and external feedback to measure performance diminished after intervention. The shift to more intrinsic and reflexive self-appraisal may also have coloured how she viewed traits such as intelligence. Together, these three aspects of the post-test may suggest that Betty felt more positive about her own intelligence. Before intervention it was an aspect that she considered important and weak. After intervention she considered it less important and stronger.

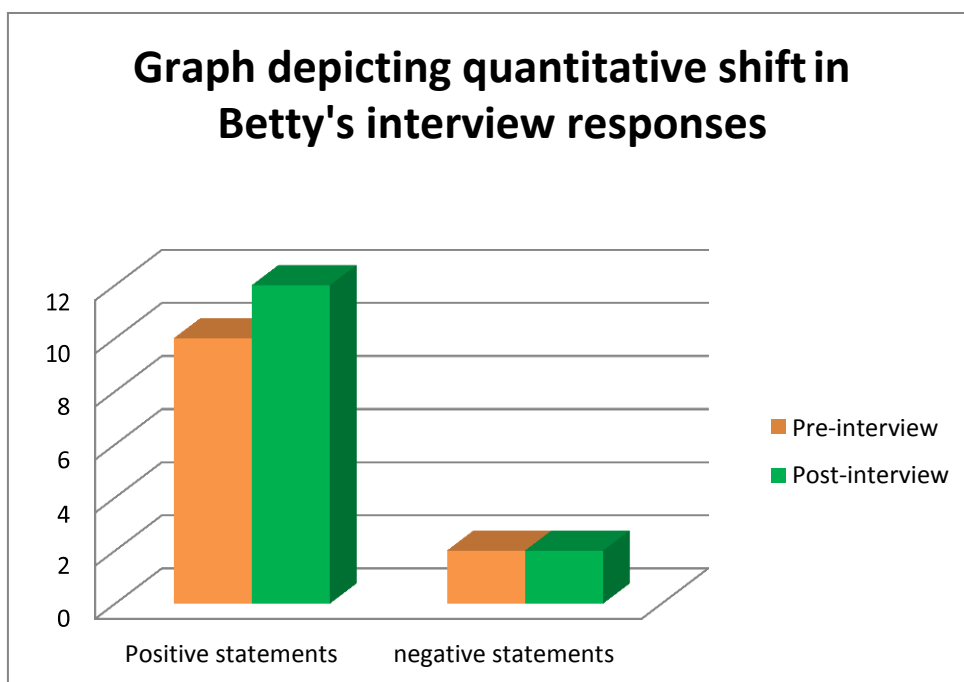
The concept of body shape and size was not part of Betty's pre-test discussion yet was more important in the written responses and ranking activity. After intervention Betty was aware of this

aspect of the self and was able to appraise it favourably. Unlike intelligence, this aspect was not deemed a weakness before intervention so one may surmise that the increased importance arose from a discovery of the strength.

Personal Interview

Betty spoke freely throughout both interviews. Her responses were fairly similar in both interviews except that they were broader and more detailed after intervention. Betty's responses have been plotted in Graph 2.7 below. She provided three more positive statements and the same number of negative statements in her post-intervention interview.

Graph 2.7



These positive statements were often similar to those made in the pre-interview but included a deeper explanation than before. For example, when describing her intellect before intervention Betty stated:

[I am] quite smart. I do quite a lot of mind activities just to keep it going. I do crosswords and sudoku and stuff like that. Just so I keep it going. Cos I heard that if you don't keep it going you have more of a chance of getting Alzheimer's later.

This is a positive statement regarding her intellect but it is tempered with a concern for the future. After intervention she stated:

I'm quite clever. But I do think there's room for improvement for my intellect, I don't think I'm like the brightest spark.

Although Betty's statement was the same, it was accompanied by an introspective expansion. Betty reaffirmed that she felt intelligent but pointed out that she has the ability to grow. The statement that there is "room for improvement" was counted as negative in the quantitative sense but it is richer than that. She understood her identity and abilities as fluid and claimed to have power over the improvement of such abilities. Betty was able to describe herself as "clever" and to point out that she is able to become more so. This can be interpreted as a deeper understanding of the self as she espouses a sense of agency.

This is further evidenced in Betty's description of her personality. Before intervention she was brief:

At home I'm quite humourous but at school I'm like very focussed.

After intervention she offered more information:

I think at times I'm humorous but then at the points where I'm disciplined I try and strive to do my best so then I'm very serious at that point because I try and be disciplined.

After intervention, Betty did not simply explain the differences in her approach (either humorous or serious) based on space but asserted that she chose an approach based on the necessity of the situation. This is a better quality of self-description than presented before because it offers a reason for the behaviour. Betty is showing that she understands herself better.

The two negative statements supplied after intervention were each qualified in a way which made them less overtly negative. Betty stated that her intellect left "room for improvement" but she did so nodding her head and smiling. This might imply that it was not a defeatist statement but rather a suggestion that she will strive to improve. Similarly, when Betty claimed to lack a social life she qualified this by stating that her family was very close and she did not need an active social life because of the quality time she was able to spend with them. In the pre-interview Betty blamed her lack of a social life on her participation in a local junior dance company and did not suggest that she was comfortable with this as she did after intervention.

Betty's perfect day before intervention comprised a later start to the school day and longer breaks. She explained that her real days left her tired. After intervention Betty's perfect day did not involve school at all, simply dancing in her own 'private space' free from other distractions. Betty's identification as a dancer remained strong throughout the process and both scenarios indicate that she sees school as a means to an end whilst dancing is something about which she is passionate.

This identification as a dancer led Betty to answer questions in that context before intervention. Her physical appearance was described as "fit" because of her physical activity.

I actually describe my physical appearance as quite good 'cause I like working out so I have this fitness thing going on, that I just keep fit so I can keep up with the standards of being a dancer.

She stated that her best characteristics were her “abs” and her freckles. On prompting, she was able to look past the physical to include what she described as her “old soul” wisdom.

After intervention, whilst maintaining dance as her first priority, Betty was able to examine other aspects of the self as well. Her physical description included but was not solely reliant on her fitness:

I would describe my figure, at least, as toned. And...ja...I have freckles on the side which I really love... and then my eyes I like...ja...

Her best attributes were not physical at all:

I think it's the fact that I'm very old fashioned so like I'll go for old fashioned music... I don't believe that I must have the best stuff in the world...I mean that's where peer pressure comes in. I don't think I need to fit in just to be part of something.

The later response is more mature and indicates a self-assuredness that was not present before intervention. This can be said because she points to the fact that she is “old fashioned” or atypical and yet happy with that. Further evidence of this is the fact that on two occasions Betty referenced something her mother thought about her as if to lend credence to what she was saying. After intervention no such reference was made and all statements were presented as her own beliefs.

An interesting shift occurred in Betty’s self-described response to compliments. Before intervention Betty claimed to put little stock in compliments because they were usually “just another comment.” However, after intervention Betty asserted that the opposite was true. She said that “the message” of the compliment made her feel good about herself. Betty’s new ability to trust that compliments are sincere and to be positively affected by them may be indicative of a positive view of the self.

In both interviews Betty had a fairly clear understanding of self-image as a concept. However, her understanding was better after intervention. Prior to intervention Betty seemed to conflate self-image and outward confidence. Of her own self-image she said:

I feel good in my body. I don't think I would want to be someone else just because of circumstances. I have my problems but I'm not uncomfortable.

I'm always this confident, well-spoken person. And my mom agrees, I'm always able to communicate well with people. Even if I introduce myself or them to me.

Her reliance on her mother's opinion and 'proof' in the form of inter-personal skills show that she did not have a perfect understanding of self-image.

Her response after intervention was simpler but showed a more accurate knowledge of self-image:

I think I have a positive self-image because I always feel confident and good about myself. I don't step somewhere and think 'I want to be like her.'

Before intervention she believed self-image as a general concept to only include "the way you see yourself" whilst after intervention she extended her definition to include "how others see" the individual as well. This suggests a better understanding of self-image as an abstract concept. Therefore, Betty demonstrated a better understanding of self-image in general as well as her own. The responses throughout the post-interview were more positive as well as reflected a stronger understanding of her own strengths.

Journal Entries

Similarly to Karen, Betty exhibits a clear positive trend within her journal. Betty was initially concerned that her expectations of the programme and herself would not be met. In her first entry she wrote:

*"I am worried about whether or not I'll grow as a person from week to week.
I am worried if the outcome won't be as positive as I would hope it would be."*

She highlighted that she wanted to feel more positive as a result of her participation and was worried that this expectation may not be met. In the same entry, Betty also said that she would like to "improve" various aspects of her body image and, a few weeks later, expressed that she sometimes felt isolated.

Betty's concerns, it would appear, were addressed during intervention:

- *I have learnt to be more confident in myself. In the beginning, I was someone that liked to be around others to assure myself but now I feel like I would be amazing even on my own.*
- *The mantras and affirmations from others and myself have reassured me of my strengths that I should maintain and my weaknesses that I should build upon.*
- *The 'giving and receiving weight' exercise really taught me how to trust others.*

- *I thoroughly enjoyed the programme because I learnt new things about myself and others and met amazing new people. I am glad to have met them as communication between us has improved.*

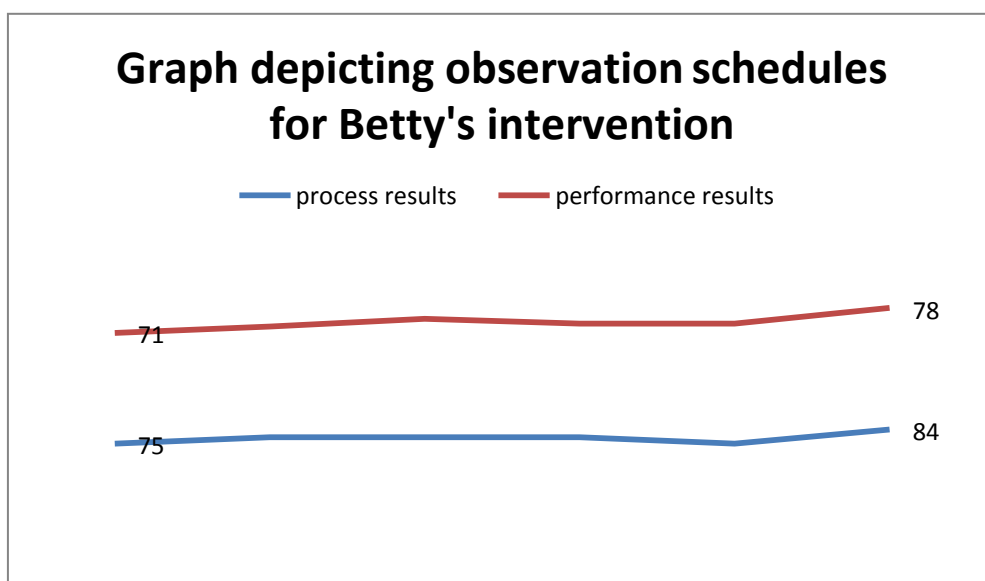
In four bullets, Betty has succinctly expressed how she felt the intervention process contributed to her personal development. She felt more positive about herself and her abilities. She also seems to have had social benefits; gaining greater trust in and ability to communicate with others. As discussed earlier, social skills were both an area of concern and significant positive shift for Betty in other aspects of the data. Here, she has expressed exactly how she feels that her social skills have been enhanced.

Mediation observations

Betty began intervention with an existing vocabulary of movement and an established confidence in using her body to move. As such, Betty was highly capable of performing tasks from the very first session. That being said, she did need to develop her ability to express abstract thoughts and feelings in movement.

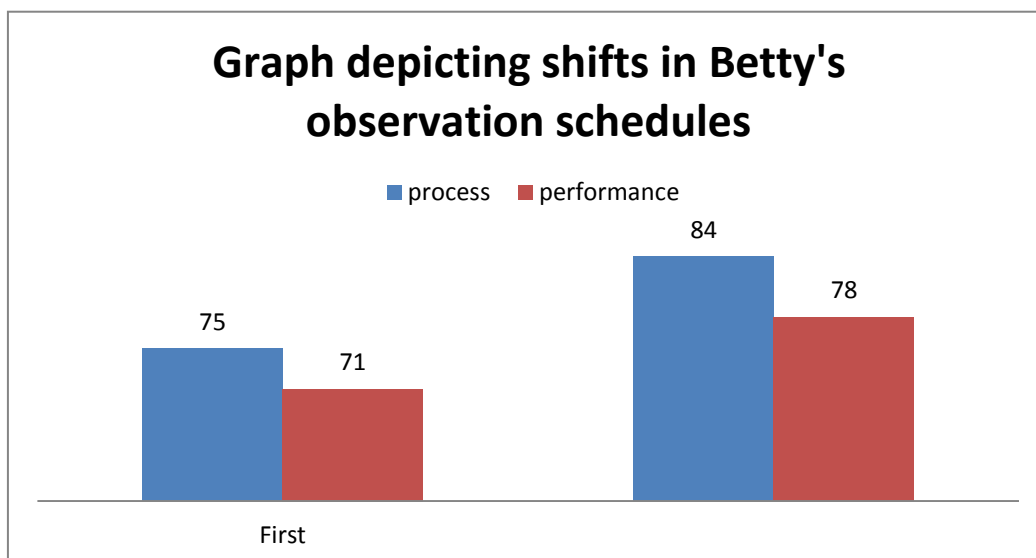
Graph 2.8 below shows the improvement in Betty’s observation schedule results across each session. Her improvement is not as significant as Karen’s because her baseline was higher and her Zone of Proximal development therefore smaller.

Graph 2.8



Betty’s trajectory is not a perfect upward line as with Karen but the shift seen from the first to last session was certainly an improvement as seen in Graph 2.9 below.

Graph 2.9



Betty's comfort with her own body and the idea of moving with others made the first session, in which trust was tested, very easy for her. She gave and received weight without hesitation and was happy to be lead around the room with her eyes closed. She displayed an ability to express ideas quickly and seldom hesitated in improvisation. Betty was also incredibly focused on each task, immersing herself in whatever was asked of her. These abilities continued to develop throughout the intervention process. In the second session, Betty's 'leading body parts' were clearly pronounced and creatively used. As sessions progressed Betty began to use the full extent of her physical range, using horizontal and vertical space and different dynamics. Betty's ability to clearly express abstract thoughts as movements improved significantly as well.

Similarly, her background as a dancer gave her a greater awareness of performance aesthetics when showing pieces to the group. She was able to perform sequences more accurately than her peers, while looking at the audience. Whilst these are skills learned elsewhere, they helped Betty to express herself during performances. They also helped the other participants because they modelled these behaviours later.

I am therefore able to claim that this participant was indeed positive and confident about the process and her own abilities whilst working to create a piece of dance. She was also able to openly express herself through movement. In both cases, these pre-existing abilities improved over the intervention process.

The element of the process work which Betty was less comfortable with was the social interaction. Betty initially tried to control group discussions and struggled to synthesise ideas offered by others with her own. Whilst not overly domineering, Betty was not always able to listen and compromise. This improved vastly by the last session when the entire group was able to share ideas equally. Betty herself acknowledged that her ability to collaborate improved when she wrote in her journal

that “*communication between us has improved.*” Social skills were a concern and a significant area of development according to Betty’s pre- and post-tests. It can thus be surmised that Betty’s improved collaboration in sessions was related to this development.

Summary of Betty’s data

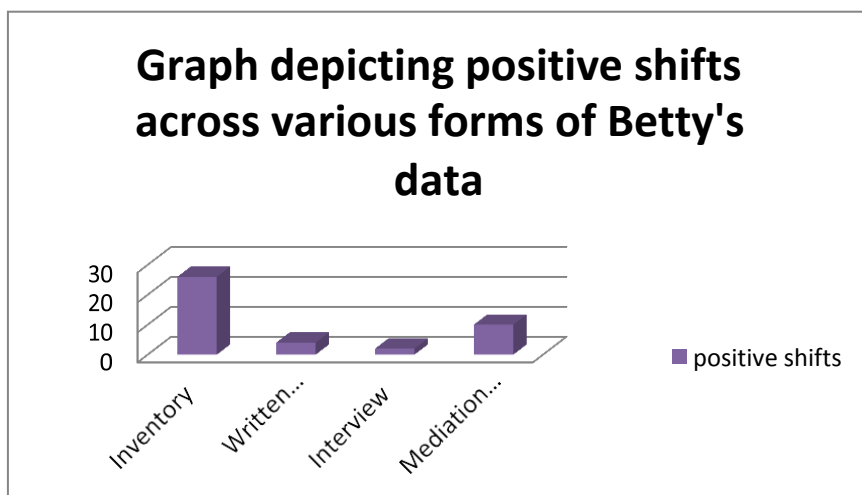
The sum of data related to Betty would suggest some positive shifts in self-description. Betty entered intervention as an individual with a generally positive self-description and many skills which aided her ability to move creatively and expressively. Even though Betty’s pre-test was already positive, the post-test showed that there was some improvement in her self-description.

The most significant shift, as with Karen, was observed in her social skills. Not only did she describe this aspect of herself more positively in the inventory, interview and journal entries, but she also exhibited a greater ability to compromise and listen to others during intervention sessions towards the end of the process. This is made more positive because it is an area that Betty herself identified as one which needed growth.

Another qualitative improvement in Betty’s ability to self-describe was what she used as the source of her inferences. Before intervention Betty relied on what others, like her mother, thought about her. She stated in her journal that she felt safer as part of a group. She also relied heavily on abilities which were quantifiable and visible especially those relating to school and dance. After intervention Betty described herself without searching for external sources and wrote in her journal that she had more confidence in her own abilities to work as an individual. She was able to extend her self-description to include abstract traits like her “always push [herself] harder to achieve success.”

Graph 2.10 below shows the positive shifts evidenced across a range of data. Again, positive shifts in all forms of data collected after intervention can be seen.

Graph 2.10



As with Karen, Betty's data were compared in a t-test shown below. The variance is even greater in Betty's data than Karen as both P and T are greater. P in a two-tail test for Betty is 0,71, therefore this is statistically significant.

Figure 2.2

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	31	40,2
Variance	1478	1461,2
Observations	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	8	
t Stat	-0,37945	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,357113	
t Critical one-tail	1,859548	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,714226	
t Critical two-tail	2,306004	

By the end of intervention, Betty felt more comfortable in her own abilities and was more able to work with others. This is evidenced in her journal:

"I have learnt to be more confident in myself. In the beginning, I was someone that liked to be around others to assure myself but now I feel like I would be amazing even on my own"

Participant 3: Carly (School A)

Carly is the eldest member of this group, being born in November 1999. She was notably the most mature and presented a genial personality. Carly was in Grade 10 and 16 years old at the time of this study. She lives with her parents and younger brother who was 9 years old at the time of the study.

Born in Germany, Carly has been living in South Africa for approximately two years and spent time in various parts of Mozambique before that. Her parents are involved in Christian mission work which accounts for her frequent relocations. This has also taught Carly to be adaptable and to get on easily with others. She speaks of both past and present events and relationships positively. At the time of the study, Carly's father was studying at a small theological college and the family was staying in the residence of the college approximately thirty minutes away from School A towards the coast.

She is a natural extrovert with a quirky sense of humour. However, she is also naturally self-reflexive and sometimes quick to point out her own flaws. She enjoys team sports and is generally willing to attempt anything.

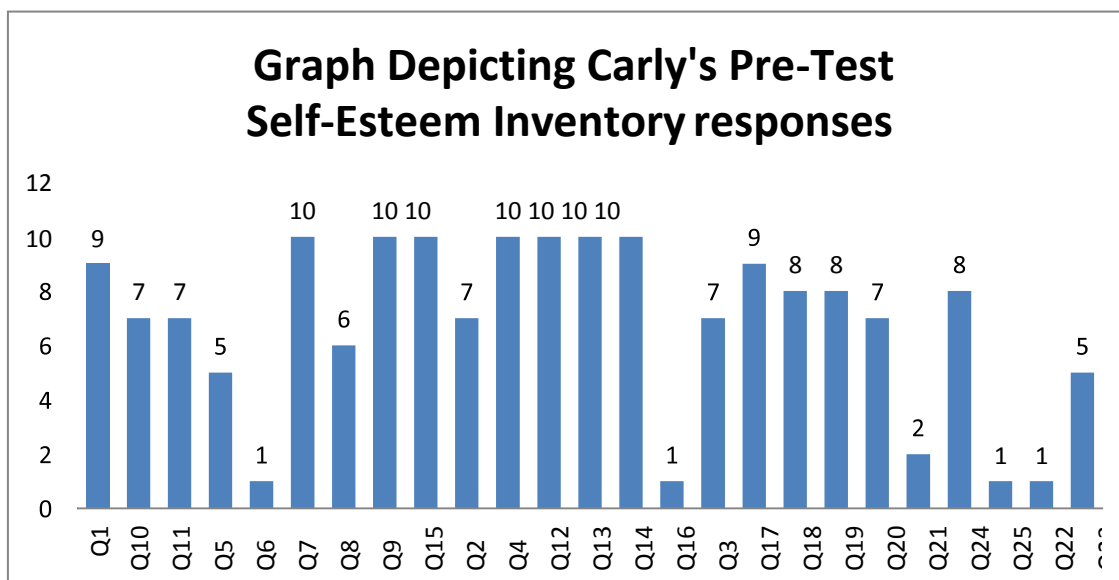
Self-Esteem Inventory

Carly presented with a fairly positive pre-test in the Self-Esteem Inventory. Many of her responses were exceptionally positive and she often awarded a numerical response of 9 or more. This was most evident in questions relating to Carly's feelings of value; she assigned a 10 to statements 'I am important,' 'I am a valuable member of my family,' 'I am loved' and 'I am loveable.' She was clearly very secure in her belief that she is valuable and valued.

The themes of intelligence and physical appearance were similarly positive. Carly awarded a 10 to statements relating to her physical appearance such as 'I am happy with the way I look' and 'I am attractive.' Although she did not feel very strongly that she was more attractive than any of her peers.

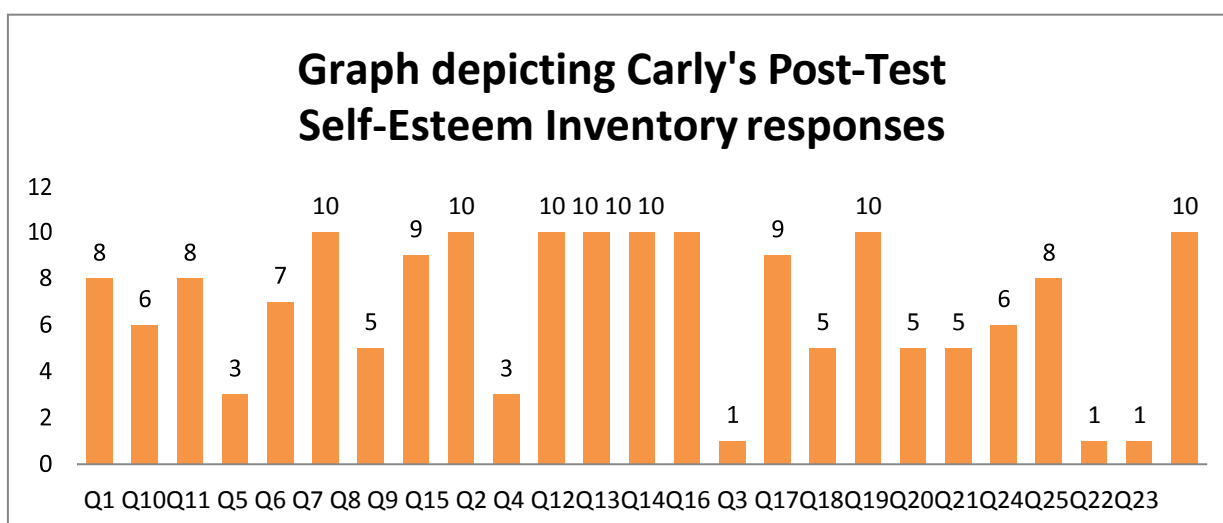
Less positive, was her view of her social skills and ability to make decisions. The latter being the most negative with 1 and 5 being awarded to the two questions respectively. Carly seemed to believe that she was fairly indecisive. Responses were generally positive relating to social skills. Carly provided a response above 7 for questions 3, 17 and 18. However, she claimed to feel easily intimidated and to dislike following. These responses are an indication that Carly was not confident socially prior to intervention.

Graph 3.1

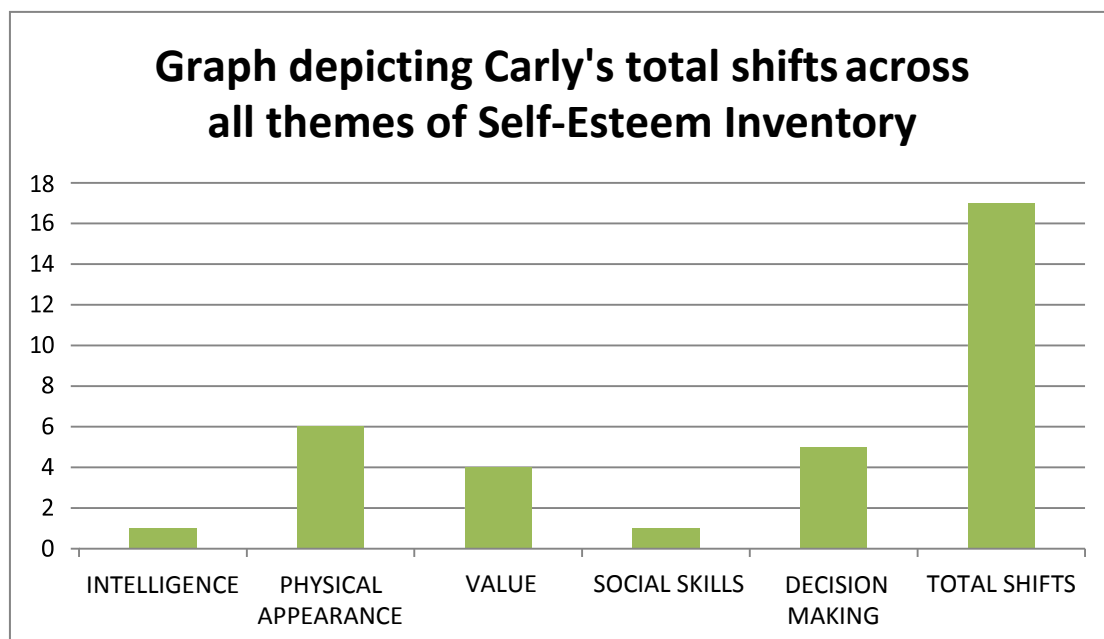


After intervention, Carly's Self-Esteem Inventory provided a slightly more positive response in all areas. The positive shift in intelligence and social skills-related questions was fairly minimal but Carly still showed an overall shift of 17 in the Self-Esteem Inventory. Carly's post-test responses and the overall shifts in each theme can be seen in graphs 3.2 and 3.3 respectively.

Graph 3.2



Graph 3.3



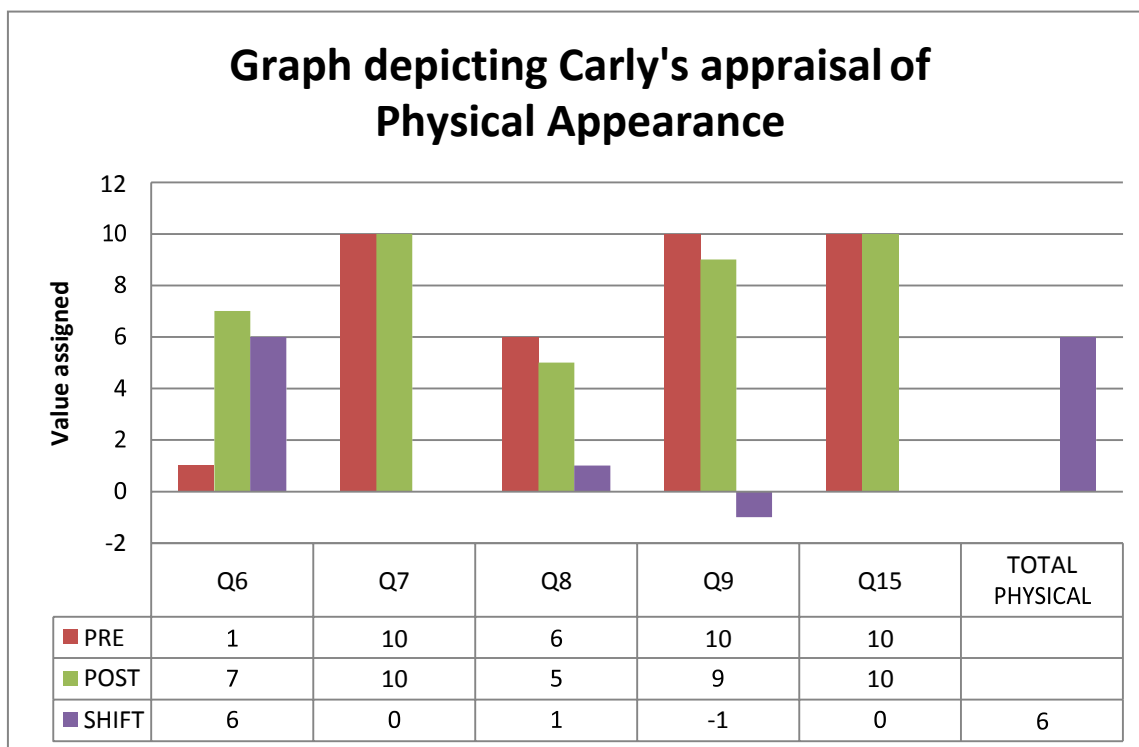
Although the positive shift within both the themes of intelligence and social skills were smaller, the specific statements which received a more positive response are important. Carly stated that she was more satisfied with her school performance and more in line with the academic performance of her peers after intervention. She also claimed to feel significantly less easily intimidated in the post-test. These shifts suggest a greater improvement – that Carly was more content with her academic performance and more comfortable voicing her opinions in front of others. In the personal interview, Carly showed a greater improvement in how she described her intelligence.

Carly had a particularly positive view of her value to others before intervention but was even more positive after intervention. She claimed to feel significantly less lonely than before.

Carly's decision-making abilities, an area of concern according to in the pre-test, improved by 5. This is even more significant if considered that this theme consists of only two statements. Her feeling of decisiveness had essentially doubled after intervention.

Whilst many of Carly's shifts were slight, her view of her physical appearance received the greatest adjustment as seen in graph 3.4 to below. After intervention, Carly's desire to lose weight decreased and she felt more attractive in comparison to her peers.

Graph 3.4



Whilst Carly had a strong sense of self and a generally good self-image before intervention, her post-test did show some improvements in her overall view of herself.

Questionnaire Written Responses

Graph 3.5 indicates the overall shift in Carly's written responses. As in the inventory, Carly showed a positive self-appraisal before intervention and an even more positive self-appraisal after intervention. Although in this case quantitatively more slight (only one more positive statement), there are significant qualitative differences.

In the pre-test Carly focussed on her social skills. Her self-descriptions examined both positive and negative traits within her ability to relate to others. She claimed to "care about people" on more than one occasion and described herself as "not super shy," "overbearing...at times" and "dramatic." Carly expressed a love for relating to others on a meaningful level:

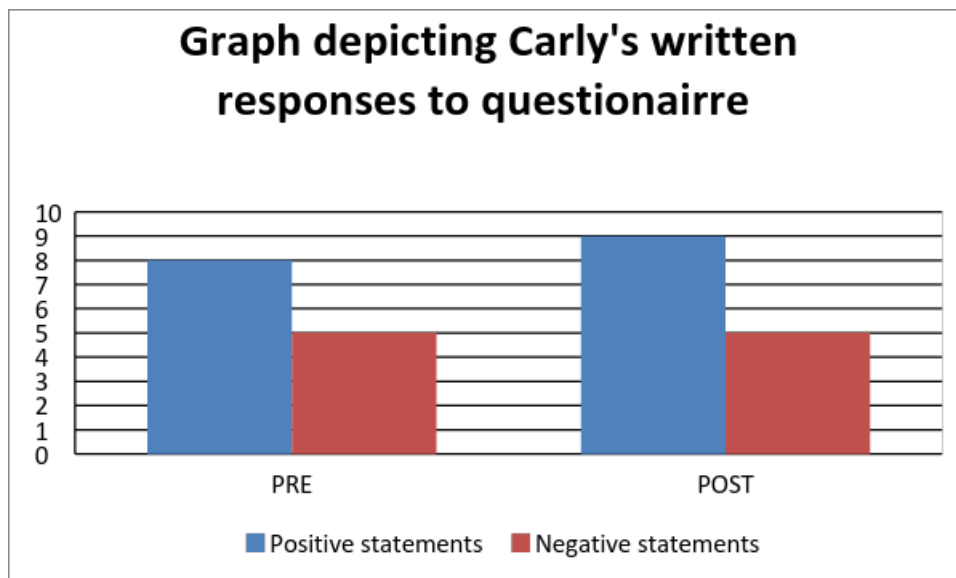
"I love to have fun and share stories and laughter with other people. I also love deep discussions and pouring my heart out and letting other people do the same."

She also expressed a desire to have more control over her own emotions and a better understanding of the emotions of others. Despite the general nature of the open-ended questions posed in this section of the questionnaire; Carly had a clear focus on relationships and emotions.

After intervention, this focus shifted to an extent. Carly maintained that she was “caring” and a “good listener” but extended her concerns to other aspects of the self. Carly also discussed her “willing[ness] to learn” and her enjoyment of “debat[ing]” and “thinking deeply.” Carly’s weaknesses were broadened to include a propensity to be “lazy” and “fearful.” She expressed a desire to be a “better speaker” and to find an activity which might make her “come alive”.

Although Carly’s self-description is only marginally more positive in a quantitative sense, the post-test revealed a self-description which examined more aspects of the self in greater detail such as her “willing[ness] to learn” and her enjoyment of “debat[ing]” and “thinking deeply.” One may suggest that the self-description after intervention was deeper and more nuanced because of this. In light of the fact that Carly’s self-description was already quite positive before intervention, this could be the best possible outcome as her self-descriptions improved in breadth and depth.

Graph 3.5



Ranking Activity

Figure 3.1

	PRE	POST
1	Integrity	Integrity
2	Intelligence	Sense of humour
3	Sense of Humour	Intelligence
4	Talents	Talents
5	Popularity	Looks
6	Looks	Body shape and size
7	Body shape and size	Popularity

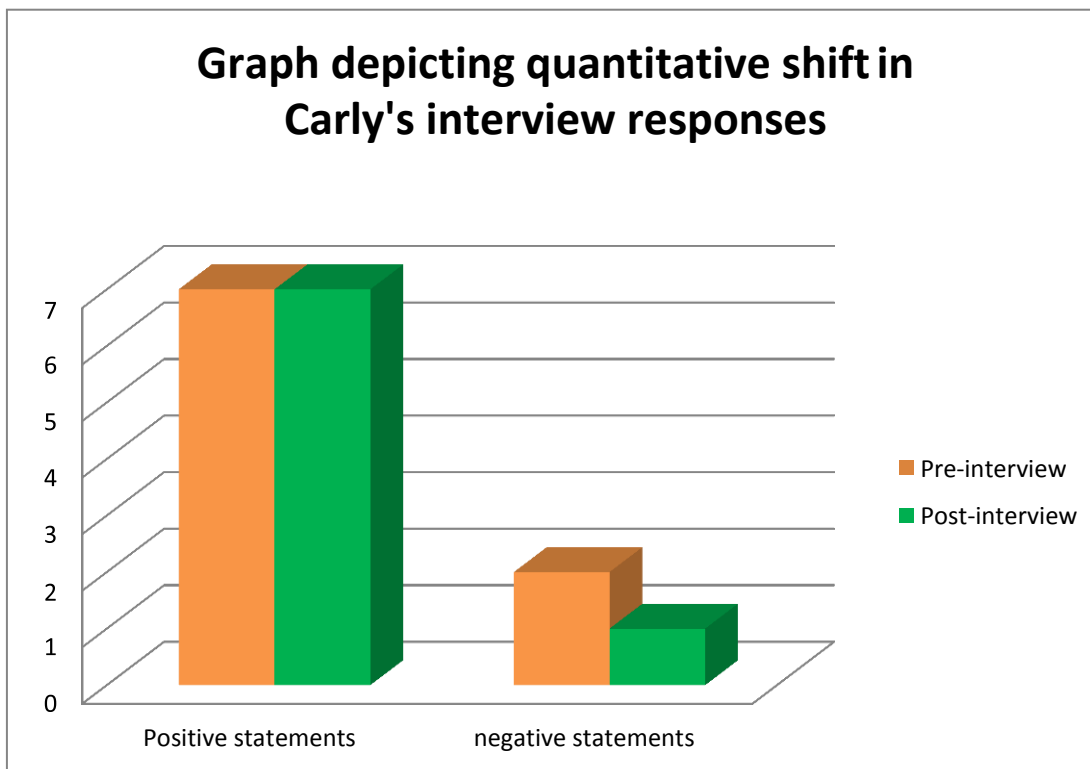
As seen in Figure 3.1 above, Carly showed very little change in the upper half of her ranking activity. As her self-descriptions showed an improvement in breadth and depth rather than a significant change, this makes sense in the context of the data. Carly did not think differently of herself after intervention, she thought more deeply and thus priorities did not change significantly.

The only real movement in this activity was that of popularity from fifth to last position. This may be explained by the written responses which before intervention focussed only on social skills but after intervention broadened to include other aspects of the self. Carly may have become more aware of other parts of her being and thus popularity and relationships became less important. Looks and Body shape and size moved up as a result of this shift. This correlates with the fact that physical appearance was the theme which showed the greatest positive shift in the Self-Esteem Inventory.

Personal Interview

Carly was incredibly talkative in both sets of interviews. She offered information quickly and freely. It was clear that she is an extravert and enjoyed the opportunity to speak about deeper issues with someone. Carly supplied precisely the same number of positive statements in both interviews and one more negative statement in the pre-test. This has been presented in Graph 3.6 below.

Graph 3.6



Carly presented a very mature view of the self and life in general, even in the first interview. The best example of this maturity can be seen in Carly's two responses to the question, "Do you think you have a good self-image?" Before intervention Carly said:

*"Yeah. Pretty...well not like **super** comfortable with myself. I think you can't...I don't think you can ever be 100% comfortable. But I think I'm getting used to the fact that I'm not perfect and that that's ok.*

I mean...We're on this earth and nobody's perfect and it's ok because that what makes you real to people and that's how you connect with other people. By talking about 'oh I messed up with this' or 'you're better at this than I am'. And that's ok.

I think I'm working on it. I have people I can come to like some friends that I'll see their confidence or I read books about confidence. Also I'm a Christian so also in the Bible there are verses of encouragement so basically it's just that...Just growing constantly because I'll never be perfect but I am the way I am."

Carly had a clear understanding that she was allowed to make mistakes and that her self-image may be flawed at times. She also understood it as something which is fluid and she felt empowered to 'work on' her own self-image. After intervention Carly provided a similar understanding:

“I think I’m getting towards it. I don’t think I’ll ever get to the point where I’m like, ‘Yes! This is my positive self-image. I am perfect. This is great.’ I feel like every day I’m learning that I make mistakes all the time and that I can’t really help that in a way because everyone is like that. So I kind of like learn to accept things about myself and learn to be willing to change. So I think I’m not 100% positive about everything going on with me. But I’m working on myself.”

The maturity of these responses provides insight into the rest of the pre and post-tests. In the inventory and written questions, Carly presented a positive self-description before intervention which was deepened after intervention. Carly had a good understanding of self-image in abstract terms both before and after intervention. This allowed her to self-describe positively without intervention. It also meant that Carly had a relatively small Zone of Proximal Development and therefore saw a small positive shift after intervention. I would like to suggest that this means that if a learner has a smaller ZPD in relation to self-image they possibly will not benefit as much from intervention.

In both interviews, Carly stated that compliments made her feel positive about herself, an indication of a secure self-image, and suggested little dissatisfaction with her life in the questions pertaining to a ‘perfect’ and ‘normal’ day. Carly merely indicated that she would like a little more leisure time.

When asked to describe her physical, intellectual or social self, Carly provided lists of attributes, often without qualifying these attributes as either negative or positive. She claimed to be “curvy,” “tall,” “positive” and to enjoy activities like talking, thinking and sports.

Some questions did display an overt positive shift, for instance, Carly’s description of her intellect. Before intervention Carly claimed that she was “not very bright” because she had a slower rate of concept acquisition, particularly in Maths and Science. In her journal entry she proved that this was an area of concern as she wrote that her weaknesses included that she was “not very clever” and “slow to understand things.” However, in the post-interview Carly said that she believed herself to be intelligent and had received positive feedback from adults but that her school results did not always evidence this fact. Carly was able to separate her school performance – the outward manifestation of one kind of intelligence – from her feelings of intelligence in other spheres. Carly appears to have learnt that school performance, and particularly mathematical performance, are not the sole markers of intelligence. As such, she was able to self-describe more positively.

A similar shift is seen in Carly’s description of her personality. Before intervention, Carly asserted that her lack of intelligence made it easier for her to be optimistic because she did not “think” too much. In the post-interview Carly contradicts herself by claiming that she loves to think deeply

about various issues yet is “naturally cheerful” with little effort. Carly’s more positive self-description of her intellect is thus visible in this question too.

Therefore, although quantitatively the same, Carly’s second interview did show some qualitative positive shifts, particularly regarding her self-description of her intellect.

Journal Entries

As with Carly’s interviews, the journal entries displayed a maturity and awareness above the other participants in this study. For example, of her body-image Carly said:

“I like my body. It’s a nice body. Of course sometimes I wish I had thin long legs that look great in skinny jeans or a stomach that is just naturally flat but I think I’m learning to come to terms with that fact. I just am trying to work on my body and to get it as fit and as healthy as I possibly can (even though honestly I do like a good burger or chocolate and stuff...)” [Emphasis added by Carly]

Her explanation of self-image as a concept was similarly mature and nuanced:

“Self-image is the way you see yourself – your purpose, your view on what you look like as well as your talents and the things that matter to you and what you have to offer people.”

She was also very positive. Her expectations were expressed as follows:

“I’m excited for this workshop. I hope that we will learn how to express ourselves through dance and also to grow more and more at home in our bodies.”

In later entries Carly expressed that certain activities were “cool” or “fun.”

Throughout her entries, Carly’s maturity allowed her to comment on the process in a phenomenological sense separate from the personal. As such, her final entry was not so much about how her own self-descriptions or beliefs had or had not changed but rather on what the process of intervention had allowed her to do:

“From these sessions I have learned how to express my thoughts into movements to make my thoughts more real, if you know what I mean. To bring my thoughts to life in a way and to help me process what I’ve got going on in my brain. Also it was great to get to work so closely with people in a different way than one does normally.” [Emphasis added by Carly]

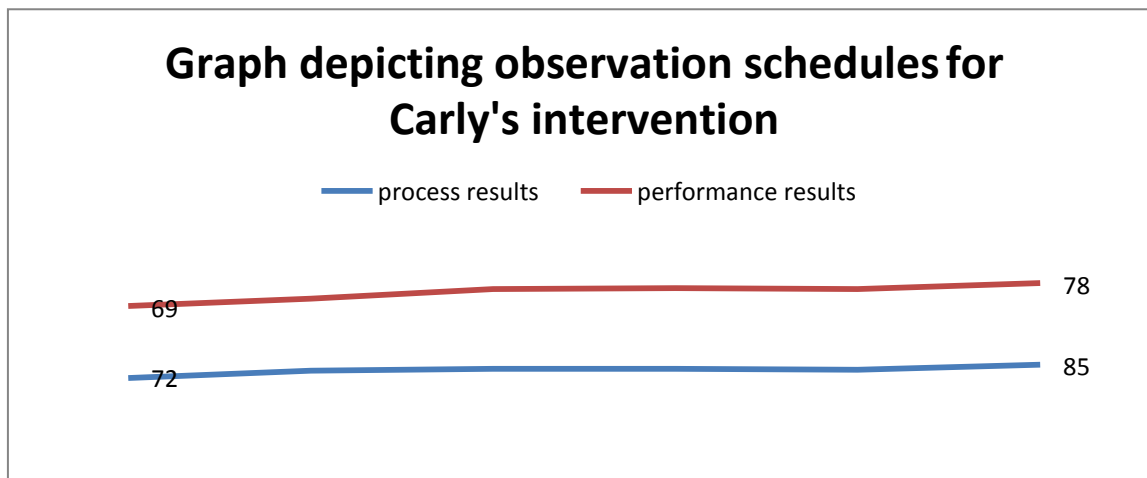
Carly, as the pre-test data suggest, had the least need for intervention and therefore the smallest Zone of Proximal Development at School A. It is therefore fitting that she felt that what she gained from the process was the process itself.

Mediation observations

The maturity Carly showed in the pre-test was very visible in the intervention process. She worked well with others, often making the effort to elicit ideas from her less-expressive peers. She was comfortable expressing herself in movement and improvisations came naturally to her in spite of a lack of dance experience. She spoke positively about tasks, frequently exclaiming that an idea or task was “cool” or “so fun” and even initiated a ‘high five’ after group performances.

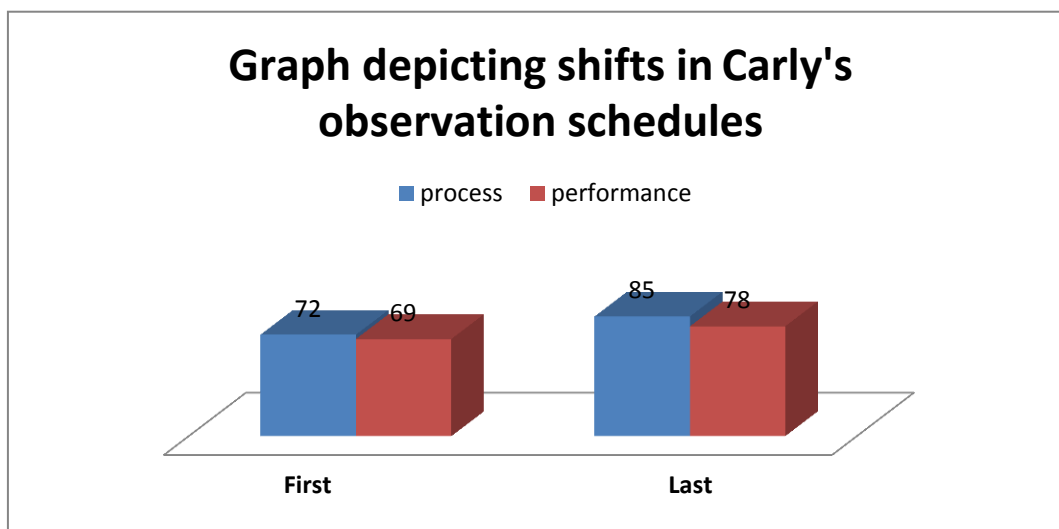
She was comfortable taking risks in most tasks, except in tasks relating to the giving and receiving of weight. She was very hesitant to fall backwards into a partner’s arms and in their own compositions, Carly did all of the receiving rather than relying on someone else to take her weight.

Graph 3.7



Graph 3.7 above shows the improvement in Carly’s intervention observation schedules. As she was able to participate and perform quite successfully from the outset, Carly’s Zone of Proximal Development was relatively small in this regard. Graph 3.8 below does, nevertheless, show that Carly’s social skills and ability to express herself in movement improved from the first to the last session.

Graph 3.8

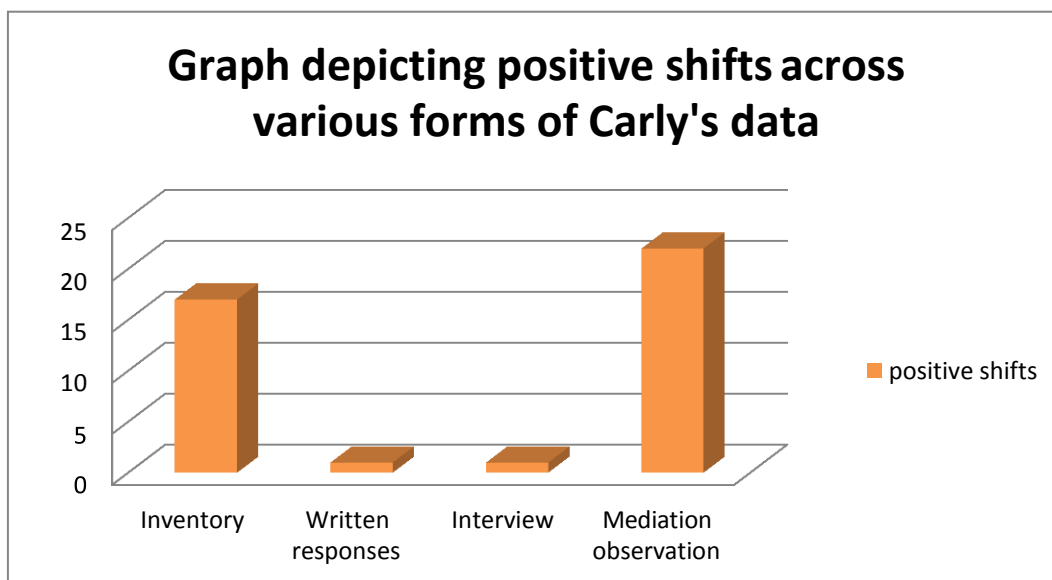


Summary of Carly's data

Carly was by far the least in need of intervention to assist in improving her self-description within the group at School A. She was positive, mature and self-aware according to her pre-test. Despite her small Zone of Proximal Development, Carly did display positive shifts as shown in Graph 3.9 below.

Like Betty and Karen, the area of social skills most concerned Carly, although her social skills themselves were not poor. She 'loved people' and as a result, was deeply concerned with how best to relate to others. The concern was not because she felt she was inadequate in relationships but rather that she desired greatly to be as adequate as she could be. This area therefore was not the site of the greatest development in Carly's data. The aspect of self-description which improved the most for Carly was her appraisal of her own intelligence. This was most evident in the Self-Esteem Inventory and the personal interview. Furthermore, Carly's self-descriptions improved by becoming more detailed and reflexive than they were before.

Graph 3.9



Carly's t-test was consistent with the rest of the group, showing a similar result to Betty and Karen. Carly's t-test provided a P of 0,74 for a two-tail t-test.

Figure 3.2

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	30	38,2
Variance	1370	1597,2
Observations	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	8	
t Stat	-0,336608784	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,37253583	
t Critical one-tail	1,859548038	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,74507166	
t Critical two-tail	2,306004135	

Participant 4: Anne (School A)

Anne, like Betty, is a twin and was in Grade 10 at the time of the study. She lives in a wealthy suburb with both parents who are regular attendees at their local church. Anne is quiet but not introverted. She interacts easily with others but prefers to complete activities alone or in smaller groups. Of all the individuals in this study, Anne was the most reserved in the initial interview, giving away fewer personal details and taking the longest to establish a rapport with the researcher.

Self-Esteem Inventory

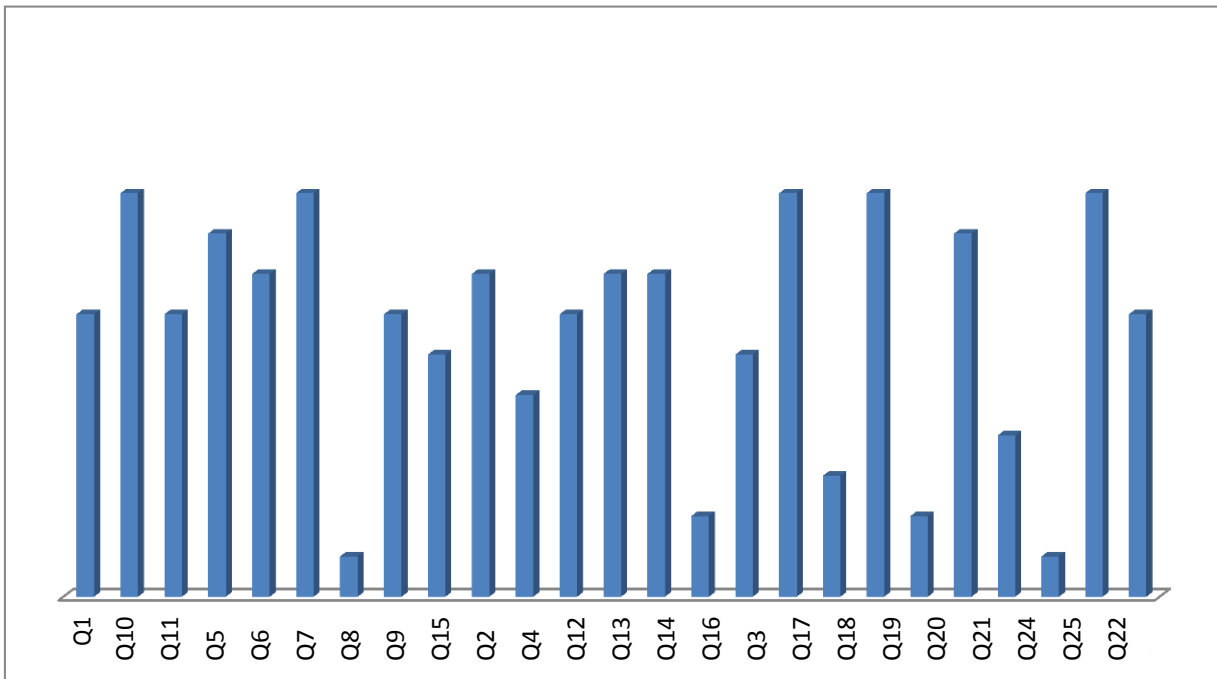
Anne presented a generally positive self-appraisal in the pre-test Self-Esteem Inventory. Whilst her scores were slightly more conservative than Betty or Carly in some instances, there was little to suggest that Anne had any particular concerns.

She claimed to be very satisfied with her school work and assigned a 7 to a statement about her intelligence. One statement which did raise a concern was 'I am less intelligent than others in my class' to which she responded 9. This would suggest that she feels of sufficient but below average intelligence.

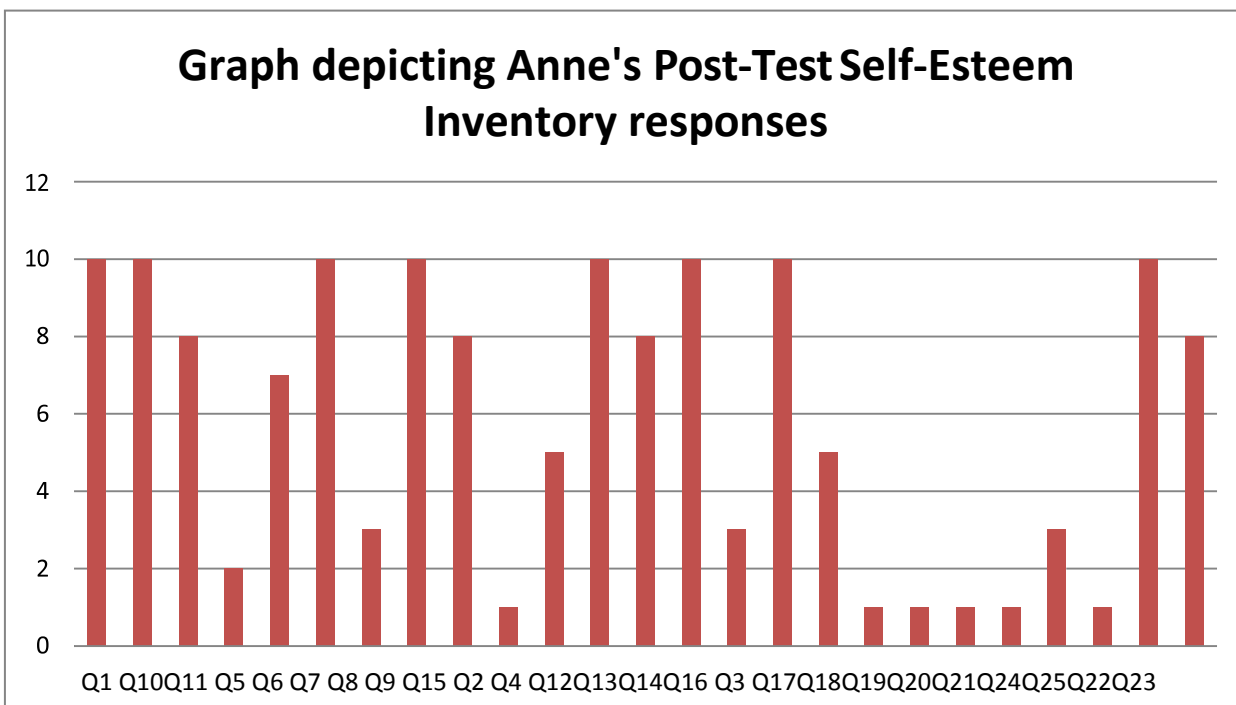
With regards to physical appearance, Anne's responses were once-again in a fairly positive range although she only assigned a 6 to the statement 'I am attractive.' Anne's appraisal of her value included a strong feeling of loneliness (question 2) and only modest assertions of feeling valued (5 and 7 for questions 4 and 12 respectively). Anne's decision-making was self-assessed positively with 10 and 7 being awarded for the two respective questions.

The theme of social skills presented a mixed set of results. Anne did not feel particularly confident and felt strongly that she was easily intimidated. She seemed unsure as to whether she preferred to lead or follow, assigning low scores to both. She also gave a numerical response of 9 to the statement 'I don't think people listen to me' (question 21). However, Anne felt strongly that she had lots of friends and enjoyed break times. These results may point to an introverted personality that prefers familiar company and smaller social settings. Anne's pre-test responses are represented in graph 4.1 below.

Graph 4.1



Graph 4.2

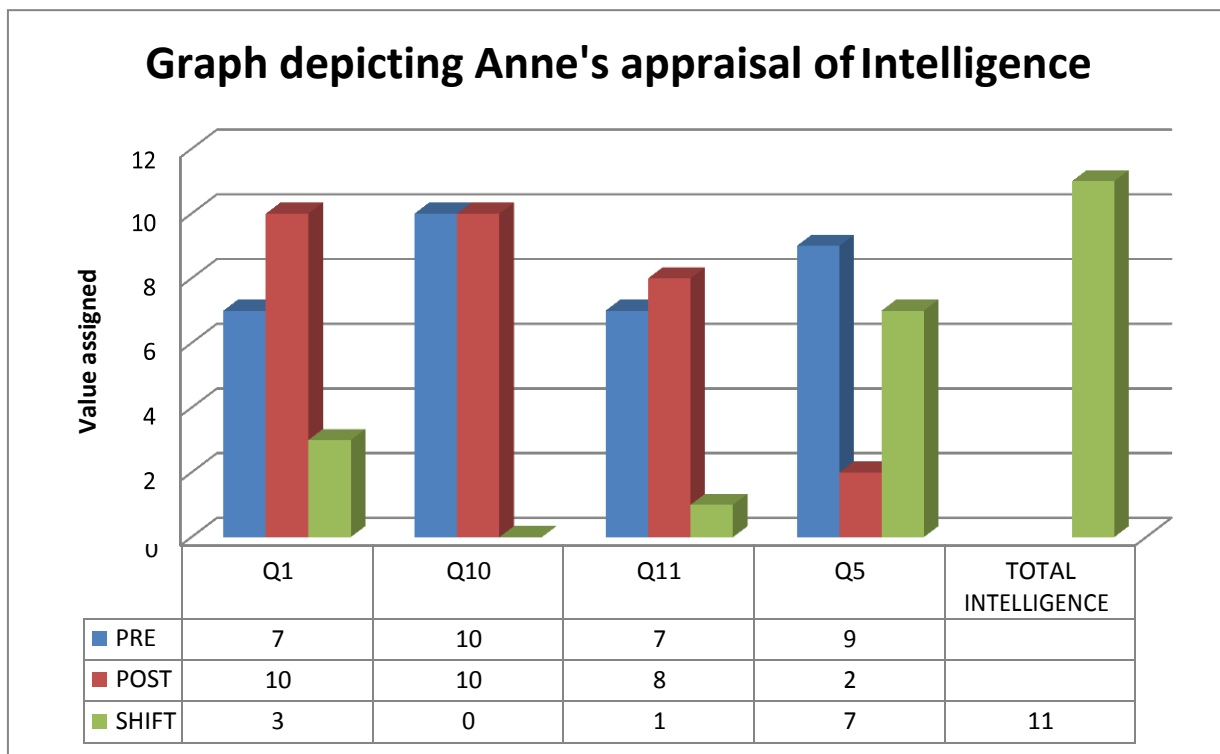


Graph 4.2 above illustrates Anne's post-test responses to the Self-Esteem Inventory. The theme of decision-making, which was the most positively held before intervention, had the smallest shift, moving positively by one. For physical appearance, Anne was 100% happy with her looks (assigning 10 for question 9) and more satisfied strongly agreed that she is attractive. Questions 6

and 8 and did receive a lower score by 1⁴ and 2 respectively, however, the theme as a whole still showed a positive shift.

Anne made more significant shifts in three areas; intelligence, value and social skills. These shifts are depicted in graphs 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 which follow.

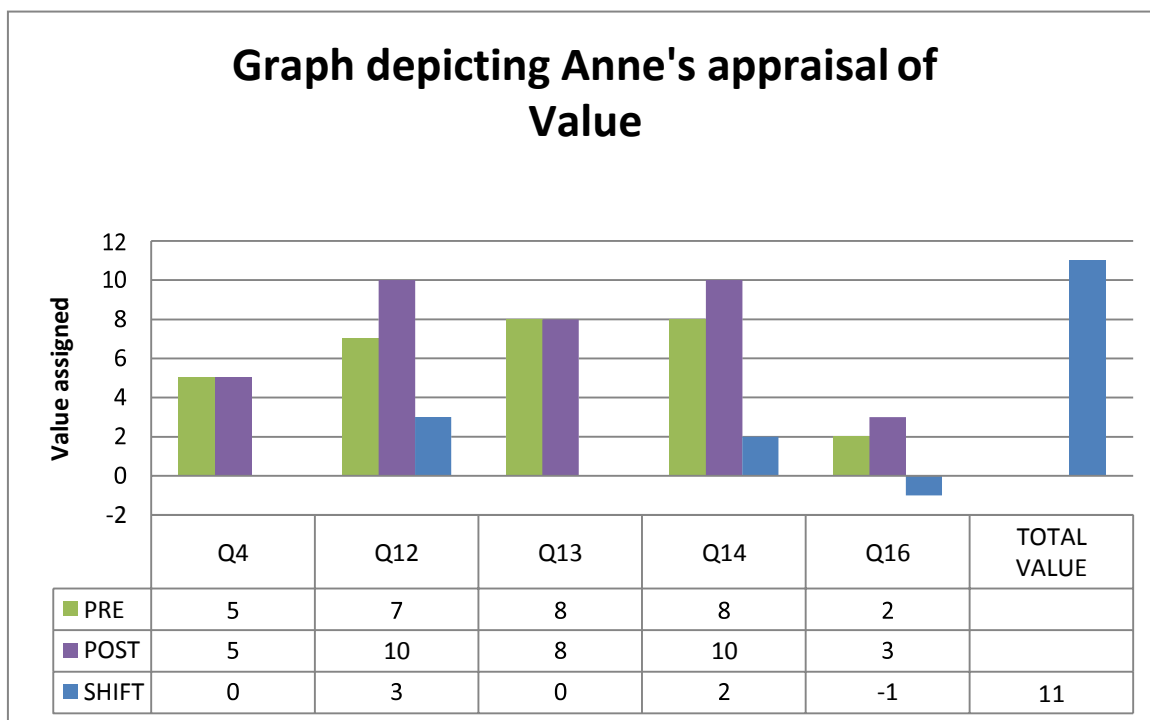
Graph 4.3



Anne's total appraisal of her intelligence shifted towards a more positive self-description by 11. After intervention she agreed more strongly that she was intelligent and satisfied with her school performance. Moreover, she believed to be far more on par with her peers as the statement 'I am less intelligent than others in my class' shifted by 7. This implies a far greater contentment with her scholastic performance.

⁴ Once again, all shifts will be represented more meaningfully in a t-test later in this chapter.

Graph 4.4

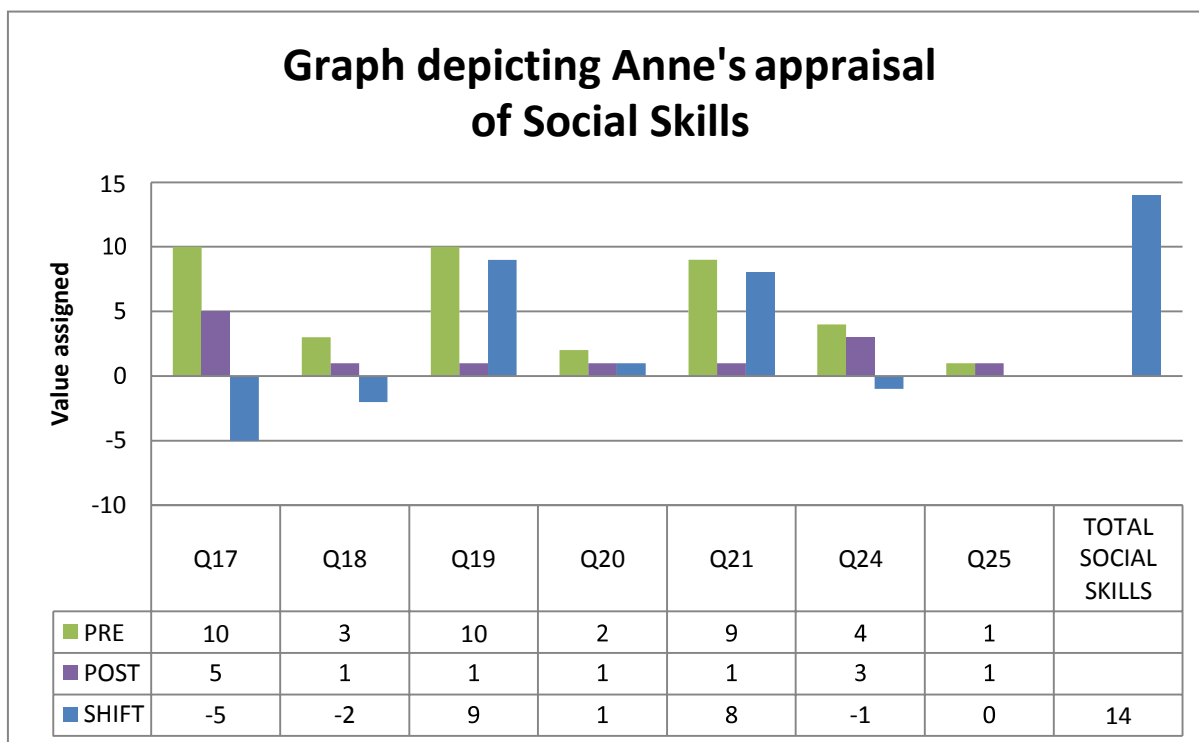


Also shifting positively by 11, was Anne’s feelings of value. Whilst question 4 and 13 remained unchanged and question 16 (‘Teachers do not like me’) moved negatively by 1, Anne felt more of value to her family and more loveable. These are important statements for any teenager to be able to make as a feeling of inadequacy within the family unit – what should be a safe space – can be detrimental to self-image. Allen et al. (1994) discuss the importance of what they term the “secure base of parental relationships” for healthy development of self-image in adolescents. They contend that it is important for teenagers to develop an ability to be independent and related within a positive family unit.

The most significant shift can be seen in the area of social skills. As with all participants at School A, the area of greatest concern before intervention proved to be the area of greatest development after intervention. In the case of Anne, like Betty and Karen, this area was that of social skills.

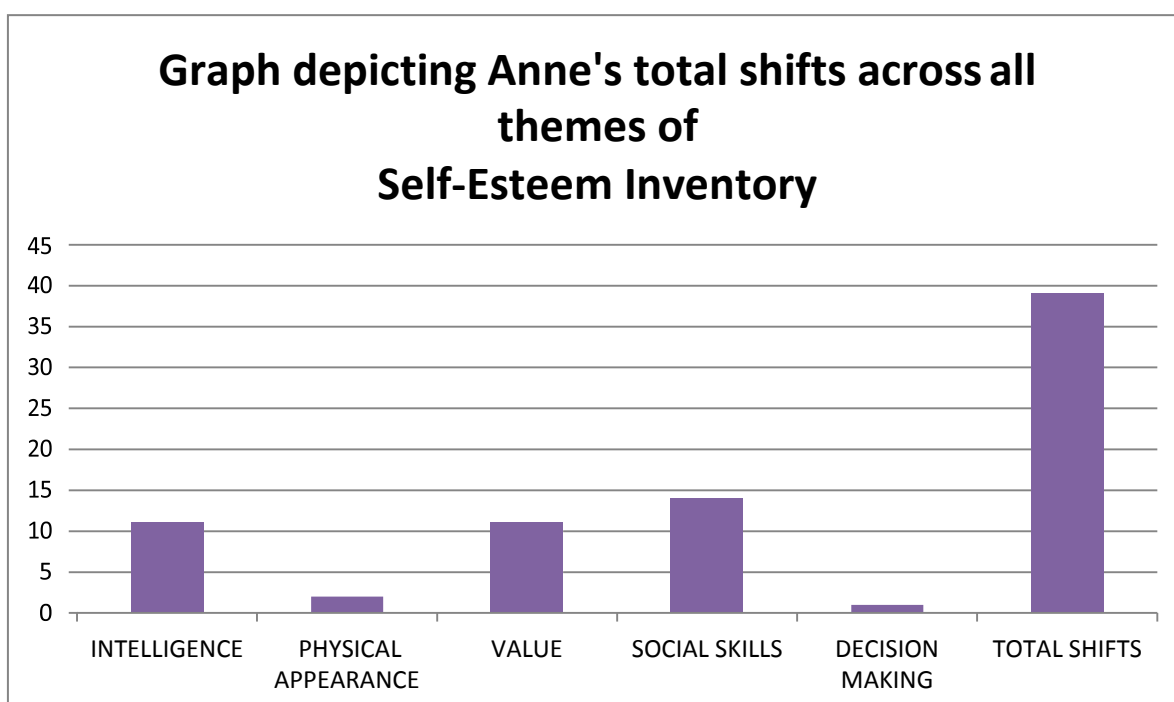
Anne claimed to feel a great deal less intimidated with question 19 shifting from a numerical response of 10 to 1. Similarly, she felt that people were more likely to listen to her and question 21 made a positive shift of 8. Statements pertaining to leading and following remained an indication of a generally introverted behaviour. This does not necessarily impact on self-image or self-description. Hills and Argyle (2001) suggest that self-image and feelings of happiness and contentment are not related to an individual’s tendency to be introverted or extroverted but rather their ability to adopt strategies that allow for social fulfilment. In which case, Anne’s claim to have fewer friends after intervention (question 17) may also be read as a development of the self. Even taking these negative shifts into account, this theme still moved positively by 14.

Graph 4.5



Graph 4.6 below represents the total shifts seen across all themes in Anne's Self-Esteem Inventory after intervention. All themes showed some positive shift, particularly the themes of intelligence, value and social skills. In total, Anne's Self-Esteem Inventory shifted positively by 39. Anne therefore showed the greatest positive shift in the Self-Esteem Inventory of all the individuals at School A.

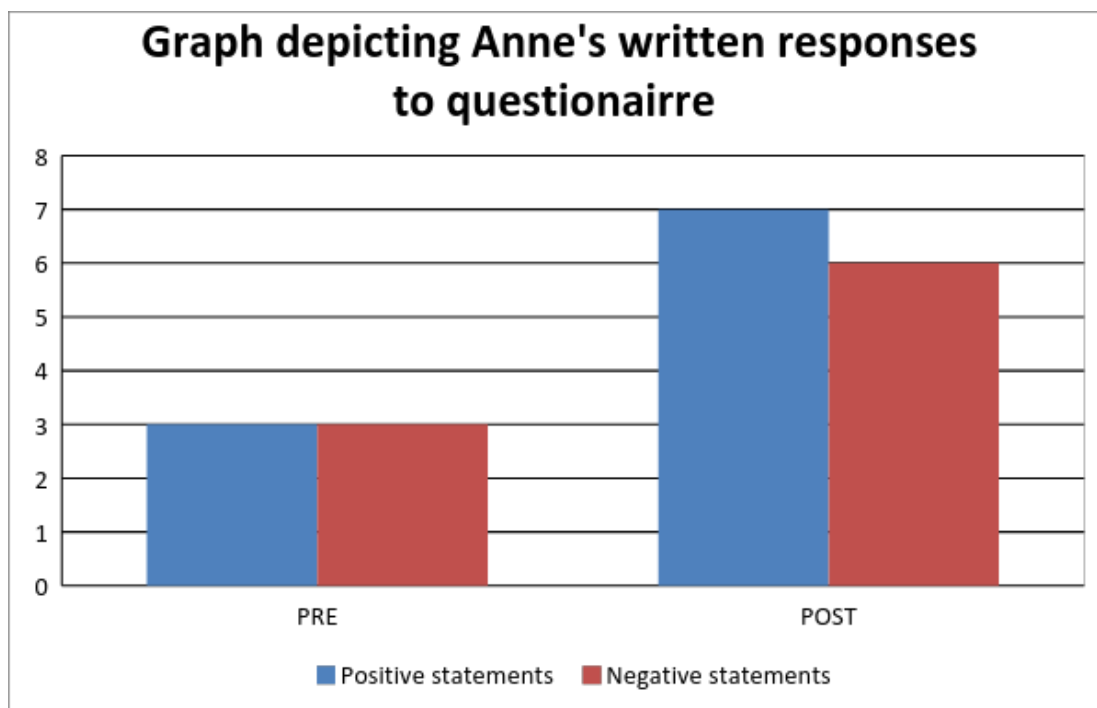
Graph 4.6



Questionnaire Written Responses

Similar to the Self-Esteem Inventory, Anne experienced the greatest quantitatively positive shift of all School A participants in the written response section of the questionnaire. Before intervention, Anne expressed three positive and three negative statements. After intervention, Anne expressed seven positive and six negative statements. The number of negative statements did, unfortunately increase. However, the ratio of positive to negative statements was more favourable after intervention. Moreover, the total number of statements significantly increased which may suggest a greater ability to self-describe. Graph 4.7 below depicts these shifts.

Graph 4.7



This increased ability to self-describe can be seen when comparing Anne’s responses to each question. Before intervention, her responses were brief. Her strengths were “problem solving, working hard, playing music.” Her description of herself was “medium height, dark brown hair, brown eye, thin, average.” After intervention these responses were more nuanced. Her strengths were “quiet confidence, intelligence, creativity, always helpful, lots of spirit.” Her description of herself was “average height, dark brown (almost black) hair, brown eyes, attractive, someone who is shy at first but is also a great friend to talk to, curly hair.”

Not only was the list for each question objectively longer, these lists included a more diverse array of traits. Before intervention Anne described only her physical appearance whereas after intervention she also included elements of her social skills. Like Betty, her strengths prior to intervention were based largely on outwardly visible achievements (scholastic and musical ability) but were extended to include more abstract and personal talents like creativity and spirit after intervention.

Another example of this shift can be seen in Anne's self-described weaknesses. What she labelled simply "confidence" before intervention was extrapolated to the ability to "keep a conversation going" and to talk to "authority." Anne seemed to have a greater understanding of how her "confidence" affected her social skills and could list specific skills which needed to be improved upon.

These changes suggest that Anne had begun to examine more of herself after intervention had taken place. Her ability to self-describe may be said, therefore, to have improved.

Room for improvement remained after intervention. Anne sighted aspects she would like to change as "dark circles under my eyes, my breasts, how I approach people." Perhaps a result of the more detailed self-description was a heightened awareness of certain flaws. Physical appearance was one of the least improved themes in the Self-Esteem Inventory and so it follows that Anne's body image might not be overtly positive in this part of the questionnaire either.

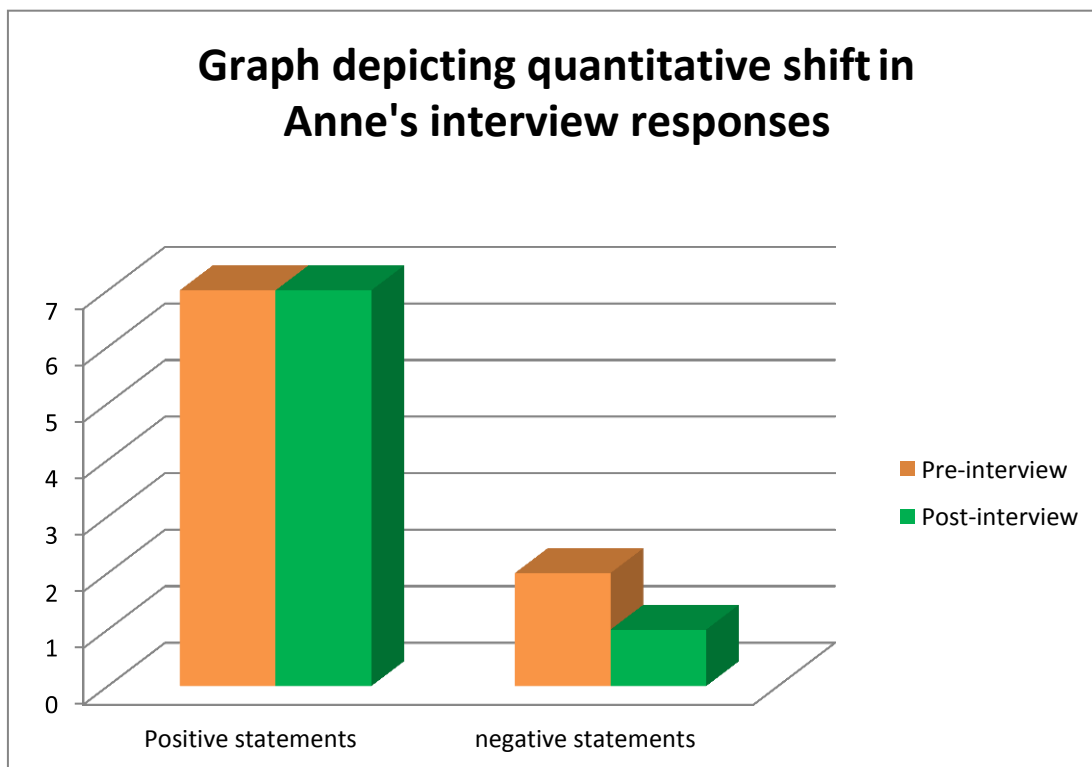
Ranking Activity

Anne's rankings remained precisely the same except that looks dropped from third to sixth place as seen in Figure 4.1 below. Whilst physical appearance appeared to be one of the less improved aspects in the inventory and open-ended textual responses, this may be due to more positive feelings in other themes.

Figure 4.1

Pre	Post
Sense of humour	Sense of humour
Intelligence	Intelligence
Looks	Talents
Talents	Integrity
Integrity	Body shape and size
Body shape and size	Looks
Popularity	Popularity

Graph 4.8



As seen in Graph 4.8 above, Anne’s quantitative shift in this aspect of the data were not as significant. She improved only in that she offered one less negative statement after intervention. However, closer analysis would suggest a qualitatively positive shift.

Anne found it difficult to answer questions in the pre-interview. She often asked for clarification or allowed her answers to trail off. This improved significantly after intervention. The most likely cause of this is a better relationship with the researcher and a greater familiarity with the testing process. It may also indicate a greater ease of self-appraisal.

Both before and after intervention, Anne stated that she had the ability to think both creatively and mathematically. In the pre-interview Anne went so far as to label this her best attribute. She self-described her physical appearance without any value judgments, simply stating facts like “average height” or “dark brown hair.” She also noted in both interviews that she preferred relating to small, familiar groups of people and that she was “louder” in social settings in which she felt more comfortable.

Before intervention, Anne was asked if she thought she had a positive self-image. She responded: “Yes. I don't think I would change anything about myself... I think I'm pretty... I'm not sure...”When

asked to define self-image Anne said: *“How I think I look or how I see myself.”* Anne clearly felt that appearance was an important part of one’s self-worth. In the ranking activity, ‘looks’ and ‘body shape and size’ moved from a place of prominence to amongst the least important elements after intervention. Together, these two aspects of the data suggest that Anne believed physical appearance to be less important and part of a broader package after intervention.

After intervention, Anne was a little more confident in claiming that she had a positive self-image:

“I think so. I think I like the way I am. And how other people see me doesn't really affect me and how I see myself.”

This response also indicates that Anne was aware of her own power and the power of others in shaping her self-descriptions. She also acknowledged these influences when defining self-image as, *“How you see yourself or life how the world influences how you see yourself.”* These responses, less focussed on the physical and incorporating a deeper understanding of various influences, are indicative of a positive shift.

An interesting shift occurred in response to the question regarding compliments. Before intervention Anne stated that she felt “shy and awkward” when someone complimented her. This is typical of an individual with less positive self-description. Pleasingly, Anne claimed to feel “really nice” when paid a compliment after intervention. This is an indication of a positive shift.

Journal Entries

Perhaps the most evident trait in Anne’s journal entries was her struggle with an introverted personality. She sighted her weaknesses as her propensity to be “quiet” and her “confidence (lack of).” On the 1st of March Anne was asked to identify memories which were ‘defining moments in which she learnt something about herself. One such memory was “...when I experienced and realised how shy I really was. I was doing an oral.” In the same entry she claimed that “being free” was “something I can’t be with strangers, only close people I know.” The pre-test strongly showed social skills to be Anne’s greatest area of concern, and therefore proximal development, and the post-test showed this area to have the greatest positive shift. These statements in Anne’s journal further suggest that social skills was an important area of development for this participant.

Anne claimed to have gleaned various things from the intervention process. On the 8th of March she wrote that “seeing goals [though physical movement] actually helps so at least I have a basic outline as to what I want for the future.” She also learnt that “compliments brighten up your day and really do make me smile.” In the context of the personal interview, which showed her ability to respond positively to compliments as a positive shift, this is a helpful statement.

Mediation observations

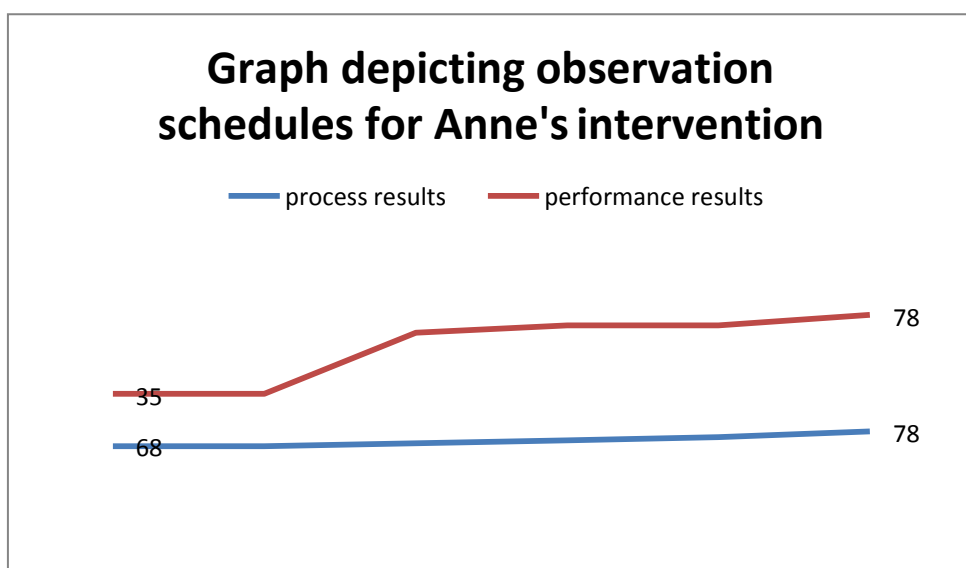
Anne, like Karen, struggled to participate fully in the early sessions. She was initially slow to offer suggestions in group work and copied her peers in performance. She worked better than Karen when improvising alone and had a good sense of focus but preferred to discuss a plan of action with her peers first when working in a group. She also struggled with trust activities, particularly the ‘blind and guide’ work. Her movements were timid and her use of space minimal.

Anne seemed to have benefitted greatly from working in a mixed ability group. She quickly learnt how to use her body more fluently. Despite missing the second session due to illness, by the fourth she was using various levels and using her body with greater energy and sense of purpose.

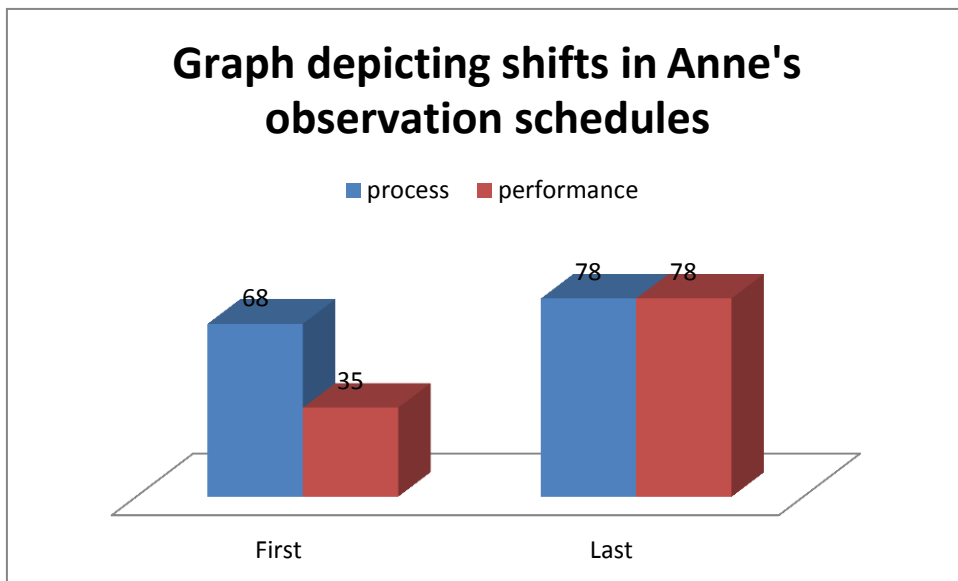
Most striking, was the shift in the way in which Anne interacted with others. Like Karen, by the final session, Anne was collaborating as an equal partner; providing ideas and solving the problem provided. She was even able to provide affirmations to others when they offered suggestions.

Graph 4.9 and 4.10 show Anne’s progress across the sessions and a comparison of the first and last session respectively.

Graph 4.9

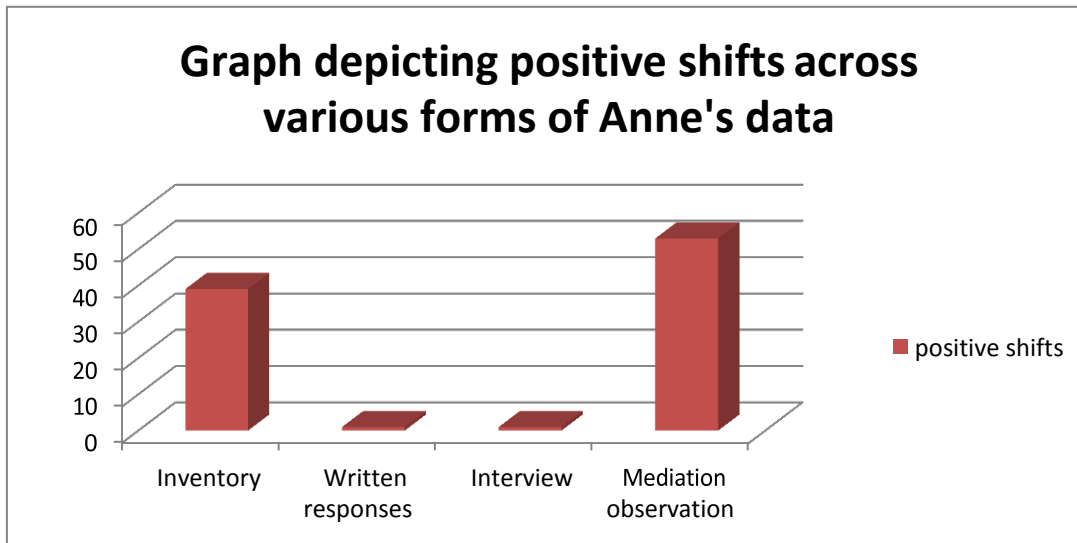


Graph 4.10



Summary of Anne's data

Graph 4.11



Anne's data show a shift from a positive self-description to an even more positive self-description as seen in Graph 4.11 above. Not only did this include a quantitatively positive shift, particularly in the Self-Esteem Inventory and the questionnaire written responses, but also a qualitative shift in which Anne learnt to self-describe in a broader and more independent manner. There was a shift from inferences made from external feedback to inwardly held beliefs about the self. She no longer required information from a test or a teacher to feel that she was intelligent. She also no longer focussed solely on her physical appearance and was able to self-describe positively about her character as well. The ease with which Anne was able to respond to verbal questions posed in the personal interview also improved significantly, suggesting a better ability to self-describe.

Once again, Anne's greatest concern rested in the aspect of social skills and, like Karen and Betty, this area proved to be the most positively impacted by intervention. By the end of the process Anne indeed proved to be what she described: a young lady with "quiet confidence, intelligence, creativity [...and] lots of spirit."

Anne's data can be finally summarised by the t-test below which has a P of 0,4 – the greatest of School A, indicating statistical significance.

Figure 4.2

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

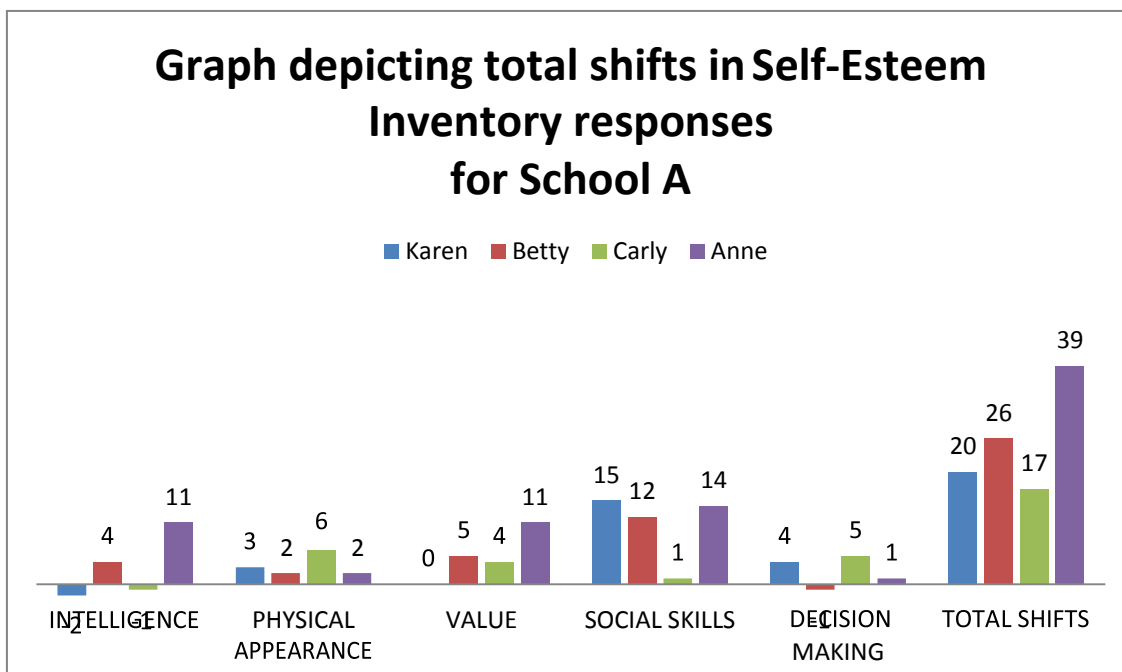
	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	22	40,8
Variance	864	1371,2
Observations	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	8	
t Stat	-0,889169704	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,199929092	
t Critical one-tail	1,859548038	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,399858185	
t Critical two-tail	2,306004135	

Summary of School A

All participants at School A showed a positive shift in self-description after intervention to a greater or lesser extent. The participant with the smallest Zone of Proximal Development because she had the smallest need for intervention, Carly, displayed the smallest positive shift across all data. The participant with the greatest need for intervention and therefore greatest Zone of Proximal Development, Karen, showed the largest positive shift in three of the four main areas of data. These four areas will now be discussed in terms of School A as a whole. The areas are; Self-Esteem Inventory, questionnaire written responses, the personal interview and the intervention Observation Schedules.

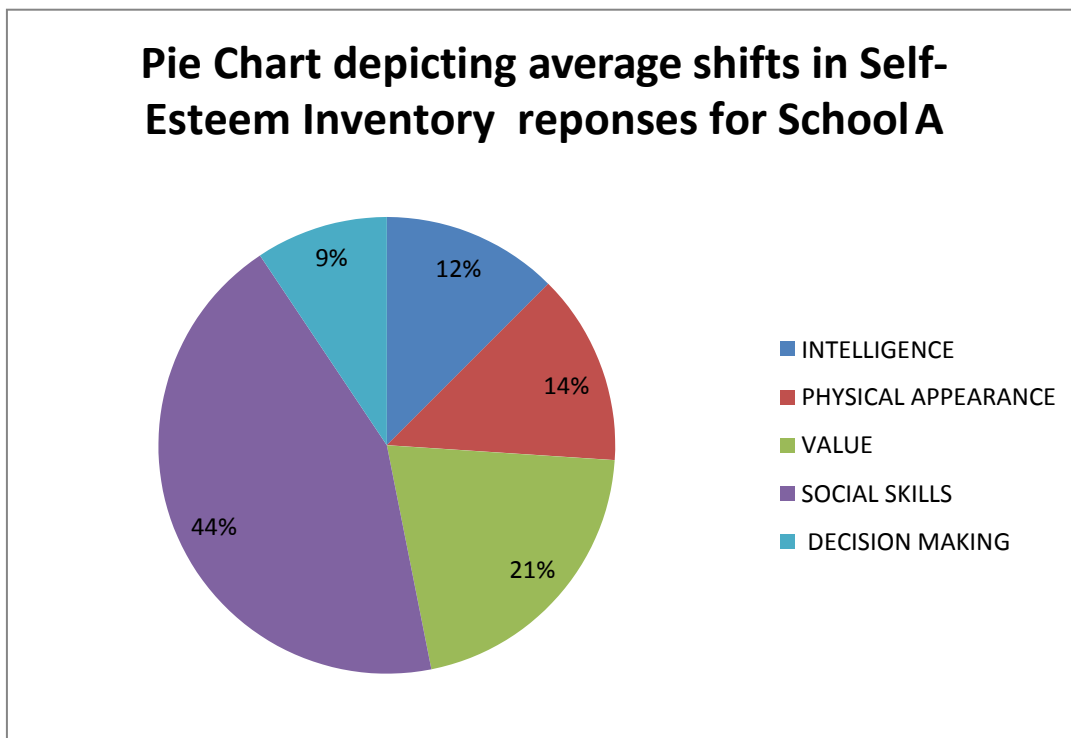
Graph A1 below shows the total and thematic shifts for each participant at School A. Anne, followed by Betty showed the greatest positive shift quantitatively. Social Skills, an area identified by all four participants as one of concern, was the area of greatest positive shift for all but Carly. The theme of Value was the second most improved after intervention.

Graph A1



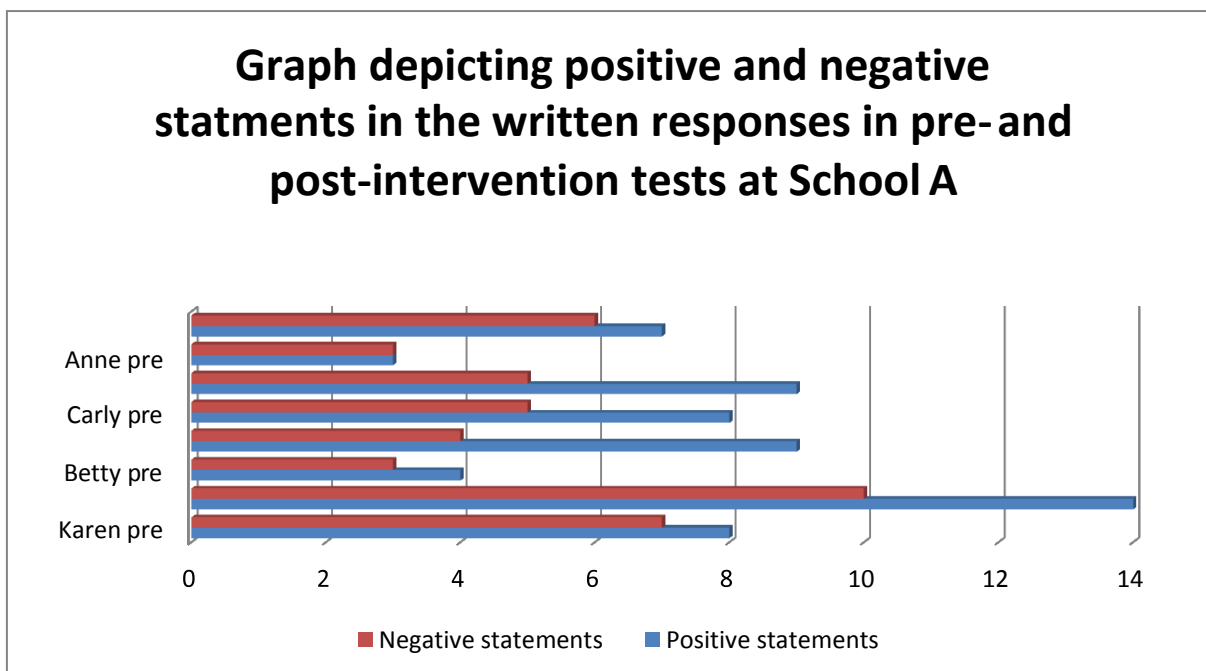
Graph A2 shows the average shifts per theme. Again, it is seen that social skills, followed by value and physical appearance showed the largest shift in this group.

Graph A2

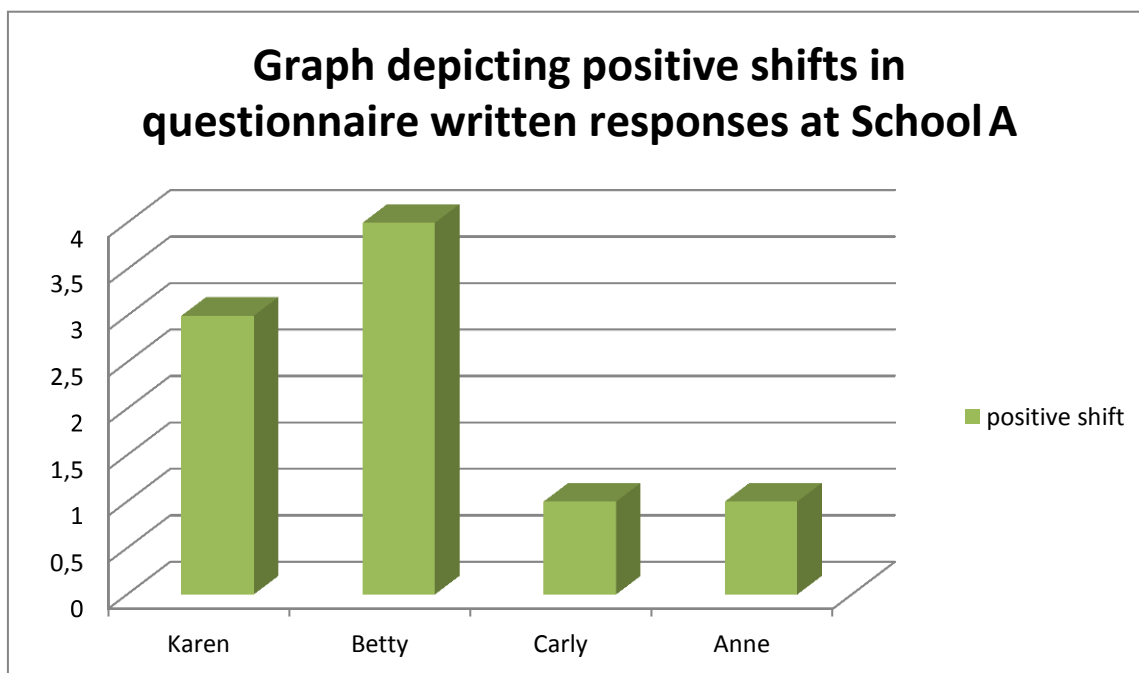


Graph A3 and A4 which follow depict School A's result for the textual responses given to the open-ended questions posed in the pre- and post-test. Graph A3 shows the actual number of positive and negative statements offered while Graph A4 shows the positive shift experienced. In this aspect of the data Betty, followed by Karen, displayed the most positive shift.

Graph A3



Graph A4



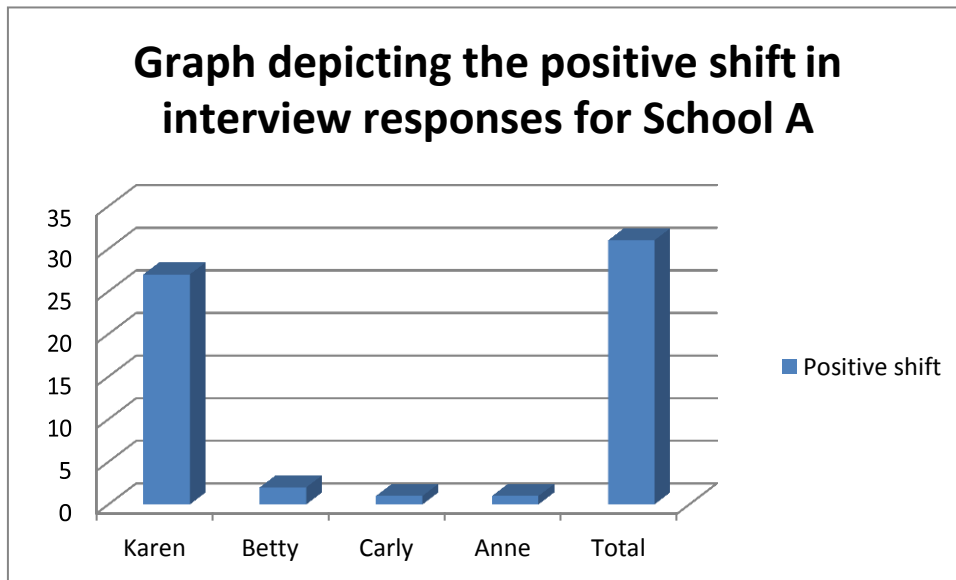
The group's shift in the number of positive written responses can be seen as statistically significant. A T-test was run comparing the number of positive statements of each participant in this case before and after intervention. Figure A1 below shows the results of the T-test. The null hypothesis was set at 1 as any increase in the number of positive statements can be seen as a positive shift.

Figure A1

	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
Mean	5,75	9,75
Variance	6,916667	8,916666667
Observations	4	4
Pearson Correlation	0,710958	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	1	
df	3	
t Stat	-4,6291	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,009493	
t Critical one-tail	2,353363	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,018986	
t Critical two-tail	3,182446	

Graph A5 depicts the positive shift in the number of positive self-descriptions offered verbally as part of the personal interviews conducted before and after intervention. Karen showed the most significant positive shift in terms of numbers in the personal interviews while Betty, Carly and Anne all evidenced a more qualitative shift.

Graph A5



Again, this shift can be shown to be statistically significant by a T-test shown in Figure A2 below in which the null hypothesis was 1.

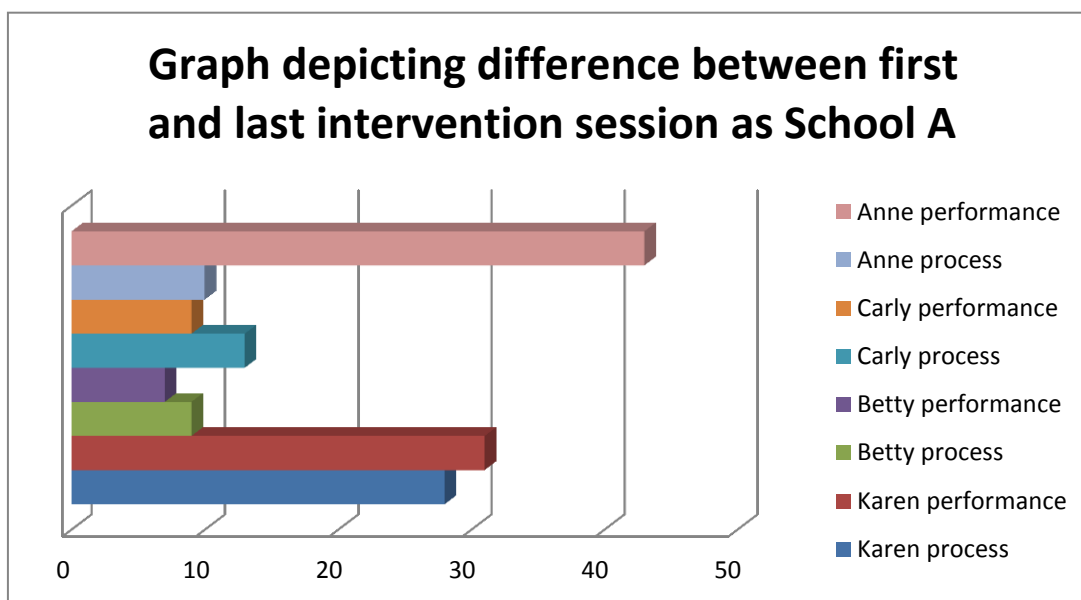
Figure A2

	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
Mean	1	8,75
Observations	4	4
Hypothesized Mean		
Difference	1	
df	3	
t Stat	-1,362717316	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,133123553	
t Critical one-tail	2,353363435	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,266247106	
t Critical two-tail	3,182446305	

The Observation Schedules completed whilst viewing the footage of intervention sessions fulfils two important roles. In the first case it is important to know that intervention did occur (whether successfully or not) and was fully participated in by all participants. If this did not take place any claims one might try to make about the correlation between positive shifts and the intervention process would be fallacious. In the second case, these data show us, directly, how the individual participants evolved and were better able to interact and self-describe through movement.

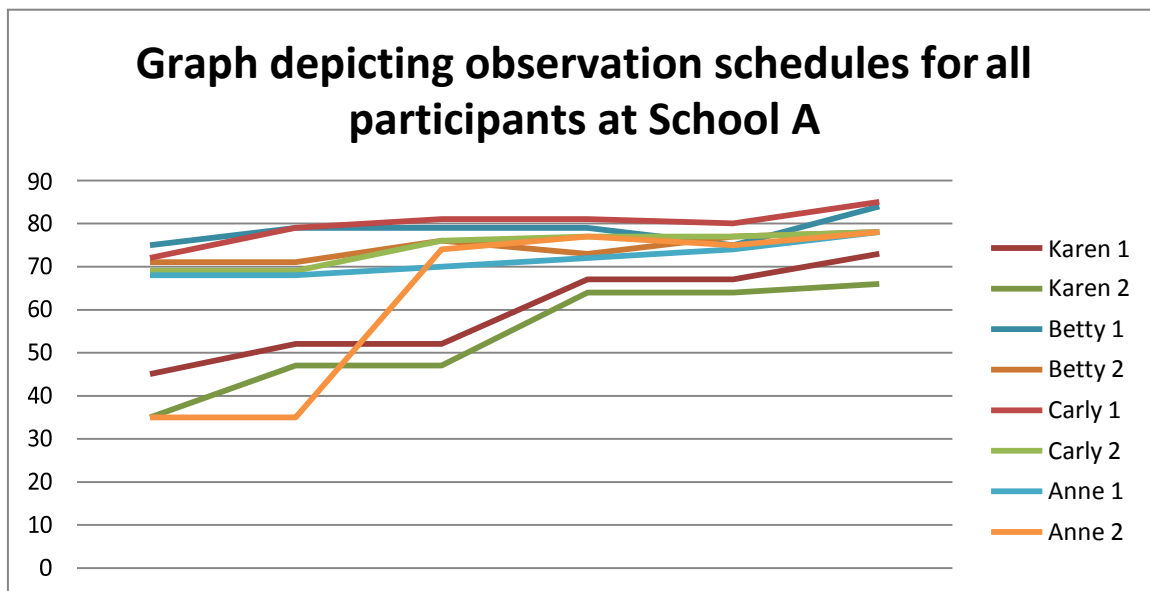
Graph A6 below shows the numerical difference between the scores awarded in each unit's first and last observation schedule for both process and performance. The score for the first session was subtracted from the score for the last session to show the extent to which each participant had improved.

A6



Graph A7 below depicts the scores for each session for each participant. This shows the improvement over a matter of weeks. In both graphs it is apparent that Anne and Karen experienced the most growth during this process. This is significant because they were the two participants with the poorest ability to positively self-describe before intervention as well as the two participants who showed the greatest positive shift, quantitatively and qualitatively, in the post-test data.

Graph A7



This chapter has shown the data collected across all four participants at School A. The data have, in all four participants, shown a positive shift in self-description after intervention. The following chapter will present the data collected from School B in the same way.

Chapter Five – Analysis of School B

This chapter presents the data gathered from School B.

Case 2: School B

The second case in this study is a co-educational school founded in 2011. Although geographically very similar to School A, the population and ethos of this case is very different. School B's fees are much lower than School A's; quoted as seven thousand rand per annum in 2017. The resultant population of approximately five hundred students is comprised of more working class families who live predominantly in areas such as the Cape Flats and urban slums such as Gugulethu.

School B was begun as a pilot project in which an established and high performing school mentored this new school. This partnership has been regarded as highly successful and the principal of School B has spoken at public engagements of the value of such a structure. The mentor school, a mere 3 kilometres away, is also a government school yet has been ranked as one of the top schools in South Africa by a local newspaper and has a record of consistently excellent results. The aim of the school is to provide learners from previously disadvantaged backgrounds access to affordable education close to the city centre and Southern Suburbs with facilities equivalent to that of a former model C school⁵. The school's facilities include a small swimming pool, library, computer lab and science labs. The school's website claims to offer opportunities for excellence to students "from backgrounds which do not typically allow access to the best quality education." It is also a Maths and Science focus school which means that all students must take Core Mathematics to Grade 12 and there are no arts subjects offered at the FET⁶ (Grades 10-12) level. At the senior level the school offers a basic curriculum, including Mathematics, Science, Geography, Accounting, Life Orientation, English and Afrikaans or isiXhosa. As such, admission requirements for the school include adequate Mathematics and Science skills.

For most of the students at School B, there are few opportunities for personal and skills development outside of the school itself. In recognition of this, the school places great emphasis on extra-curricular activities. Weekly compulsory extra-mural time slots are built into the school timetable and all students participate. Volunteers are sourced in conjunction with staff members in order to offer a diverse range of extra-curricular activities from Rugby to Zumba. Where

⁵Under the apartheid regime schools with better resources were restricted for Caucasian students only. After the first democratic election schools were opened to all races but significant differences in funding and resources remained. Formerly Caucasian or "Model C" schools are still a great deal better-resourced and run than schools formerly earmarked for learners of other races.

⁶FET stands for 'Further Education and Training.' This is the final three years of high school; grades 10 to 12.

necessary, the facilities of the mentor school and a neighbouring private pre-school are also employed for extra-curricular activities. There are several excursions which form part of the school calendar such as a Science festival in Grahamstown and a trip to the Sutherland Observatory.

The school's ethos is one which values hard work, holistic development and diversity. The population is not homogenous at all and this is lorded by the school community as a strength rather than a weakness. The students understand that they have an educational opportunity most in their home communities will never experience. The result is consistent hard work. However, matters of tradition and etiquette are not as important as they are at School A. This difference in school culture created a sample of young people who appeared to be more aware of their individuality than participants 1 to 4 from School A.

This case consisted of four participants; three of whom were Coloured and one Black⁷. All four were females in Grade 9 between the ages of 14 and 16 at the time of the study. All four individuals identified as Christians and often vocalised their faith overtly. Although strong in Mathematics, all four had some artistic inclination. There was a range of two and single parent households within this case but strong ties with extended family members such as grandparents with all participants.

As the study took place later in the same calendar year, this particular group of students had recently completed the study of 'Self Esteem' in Afrikaans. This meant that the subject matter of the sessions was more familiar to these participants than those in the previous group and, along with the increased cognitive development that comes with intervention being later in the year, often lead to a better quality of dance composition in the intervention sessions.

⁷ These are apartheid-era terms noting individuals of mixed and African descent respectively. They are used here because these are demographic groups which remain significantly marginalised in South Africa today, especially in terms of economic and educational rights.

Participant 5: Miriam (School B)

Miriam was in Grade 9 and 14 years of age at the time of the study. She possessed the greatest academic ability amongst the group based both on scholastic performance and the general ability she displayed in sessions. She is a gifted orator. She participated in the school debating team and often acted as the group 'spokesperson' in intervention sessions.

Miriam has a brother and an adult sister and spoke of a strong bond between them. Miriam's mother is a language teacher at a so-called 'Township'⁸ school near to where they live in an informal settlement. Perhaps as a result of this background, Miriam was the most politicised of the group. She proudly participated in an organised protest against the allegedly racist hair policies of a neighbouring school and enjoyed discussing issues of social justice.

Miriam was mercurial, ruled by her emotions. Few weeks passed without Miriam announcing to the researcher that she was "tired" or "angry" or "excited." She was open about her thoughts and feelings and displayed a strong will. Although her brashness was endearing, it raised suspicion early on that it may have been an external confidence intended to cover up some insecurity.

Miriam presents the anomaly of the group. Her results, by and large, showed a quantitatively negative shift in self-description. It is therefore important to attempt to discern the cause of this unusual result. It may be argued that Miriam's negative self-descriptions after intervention are, in fact, more authentic and the result of a heightened awareness of her own self-image possibly brought about by the intervention. Miriam had an undeveloped self-view before intervention, one could posit, but it was only through careful self-reflection that she discovered the flaws in her views about herself. This can be said because her self-descriptions were either extreme, unrealistic or contradicted one another. After intervention she provided self-descriptions which, whilst not always more explicitly positive, did not contradict one another or the reality of who Miriam actually was.

Self-Esteem Inventory

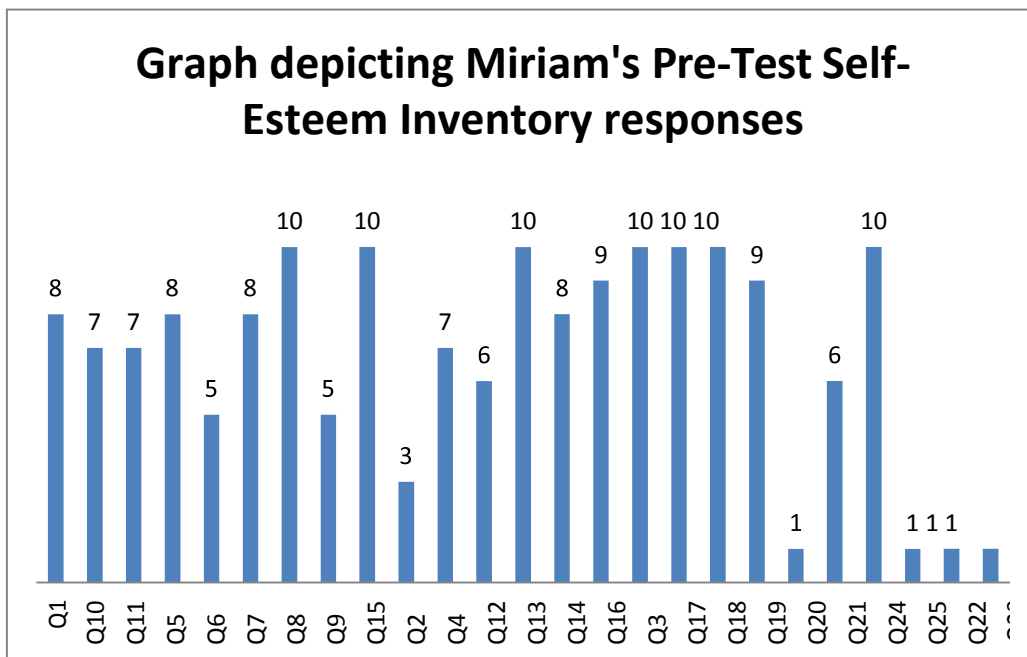
Miriam's results are atypical of the study in that she showed a quantitatively negative shift in the post-test Self-Esteem Inventory.

⁸ Schools within urban slum areas that were previously demarcated for (and largely remain) learners of African descent. These schools are typically poorly resourced with classes in excess of 40 learners and few learning materials.

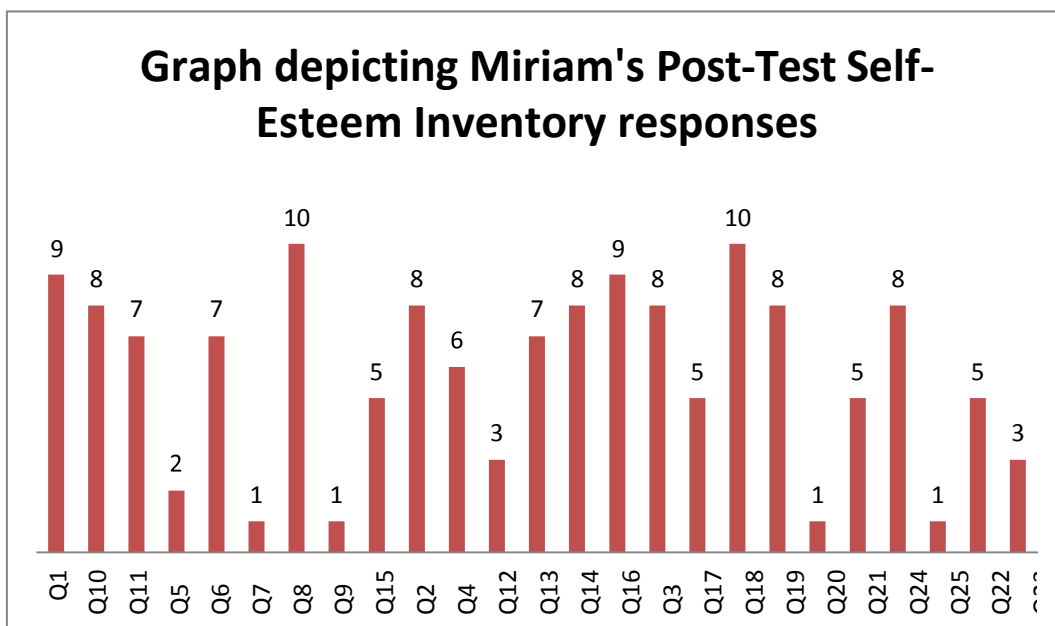
Miriam's responses prior to intervention were, in many cases extreme. 50% of the statements received a numerical response of 9 or 10 or 1. Very few statements were assigned a more temperate response between 4 and 7. Based on this one could not view Miriam's responses as overtly negative or positive. While she felt firmly that she wanted to lose weight, she felt just as firmly that she was attractive (questions 8 and 15). This may not be an express contradiction – one can certainly be attractive based on attributes other than weight – but they do express a simultaneously held satisfaction and dissatisfaction with physical appearance. A clearer contradiction can be seen in Miriam's claims to be simultaneously very confident but also easily intimidated (questions 3 and 19). Not only do such responses appear contradictory, but they also show little consideration of any moderate ground. Miriam's self-descriptions are too varied and erratic to suggest a developed ability to self-describe. Miriam was perhaps not sufficiently self-aware to give responses that indicated her true feelings. Kernis (2003) suggests that an 'optimal' view of the self is not necessarily the most flattering but rather the most stable, true and genuine. The incongruences and extremes in Miriam's pre-test self-descriptions would suggest that her self-descriptions were not at all optimal before intervention.

A general overview of these results would suggest that Miriam feels intelligent but less intelligent than her peers and believes herself to be confident and comfortable leading. This was in line with the responses given in the open-ended questions as well. Her views of her value and physical appearance are more ambivalent and show a fair number of contradictions. Baumeister, Tice, and Hutton (1989) claim that neutral or confused self-descriptions are a marker of a poor self-image. For example, Miriam assigned a 5 to 'I am happy with the way I look,' 8 to 'I have a good body' and 'I am less intelligent than others in my class,' and 10 to 'I would like to lose weight.' It is difficult to discern whether she is indeed satisfied with her body image based on these results. This ambivalence may itself suggest poor self-description. It can at least be gleaned that Miriam was not particularly positive about aspects of herself before intervention.

Graph 5.1

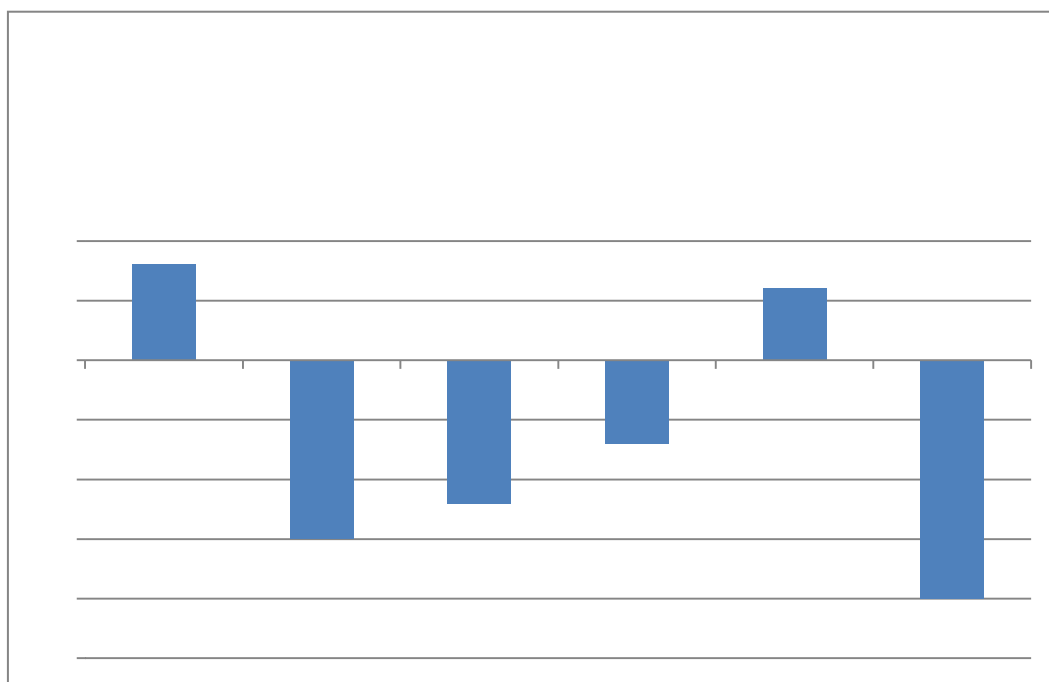


Graph 5.2



Miriam's pre and post-test responses are portrayed in Graph 5.1 and 5.2 above. After intervention, Miriam presented a less contradictory but certainly more negative view of the self. Graph 5.3 below shows the shifts across each theme in the inventory. Three out of the five themes showed a negative shift with positive movement only in the areas of intelligence and decision making. Her overall shift, however, was negative by 20.

Graph 5.3



Miriam's pre-test appraisal of her physical appearance was inconsistent. Whilst far more negative, the responses presented after intervention offered a more united voice. Miriam stated firmly that she did not have a good body, would like to lose weight, was not attractive and was unhappy with the way she looked. This theme supplied the largest negative shift; a total of 15. Body image is clearly an area in great need of development for Miriam but the increased consistency presented after intervention suggests development.

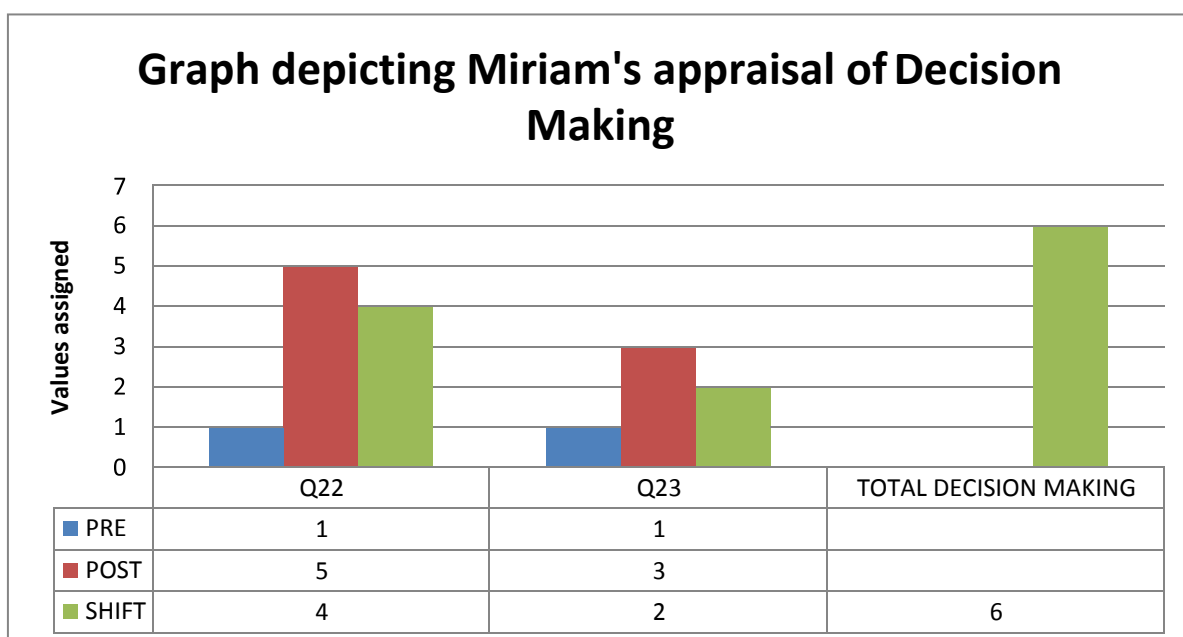
Miriam's view of her own value and social skills also shifted negatively. She expressed that she felt more lonely, less loved and less important within her family after intervention. She claimed to feel less confident, to have fewer friends and fewer contributions to make to class discussions. This is indeed a negative picture but one cannot look at these results in isolation. If it is concluded that Miriam's pre-test self-descriptions were insincere and incongruous as a result of an undeveloped ability to self-describe, these negative self-descriptions could be viewed as the first step towards a more stable and ultimately positive self-description.

Graph 5.4 and 5.5 below show the two areas in which Miriam's self-description did become more positive; decision making and intelligence. Before intervention Miriam felt very strongly that she found it difficult to make a decision but that once she made a decision she was likely not to change her mind. It is significant that decision making showed a positive shift as this is a marker of a more

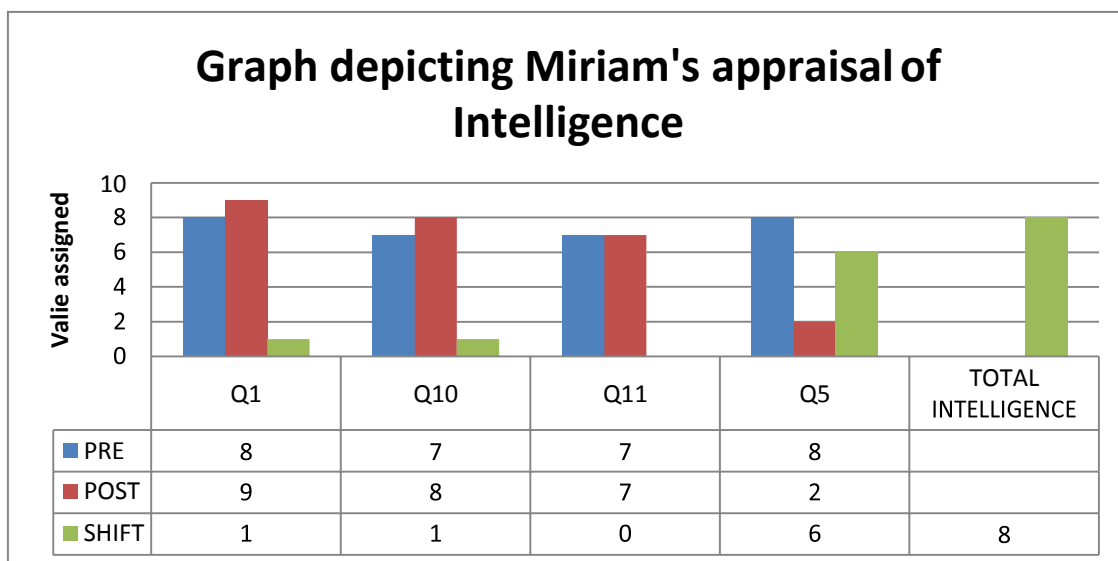
holistically positive view of the self because those with negative self-description are typically indecisive and risk averse (Gul and Caglayan, 2017 and McElroy et al., 2007). Assigning a numerical value of 1 to both these questions adds to the earlier point that Miriam’s pre-intervention responses were often quite extreme and perhaps not a true reflection of Miriam’s self-beliefs. After intervention Miriam assigned a 5 and 3 to these statements respectively. This response may be a more accurate one.

Miriam’s view of her own intelligence was fairly positive before intervention. It is significant that intelligence showed a positive shift because Miriam’s pre-test description of her own intelligence was significantly unrealistic. She is far more intelligent and academically capable than she suggested before intervention and it would make sense for a more authentic self-description to show particular improvement in this theme. She was one of the top performing students in the group and in fact in her entire grade (year group) at School B and so it is fair to say that Miriam’s appraisal after intervention was more accurate than that of the pre-test. In the pre-test she claimed to be intelligent and satisfied with both her school work and performance. However, she strongly agreed (8) that she was less intelligent than the rest of her class. This is not accurate and it contradicts the other three statements within this theme. After intervention, not only was her appraisal more positive, it was also less contradictory as Miriam responded more favourably by a total of 8 to three of the four questions while Question 11 remained unchanged. The theme of intelligence will be further discussed in connection with her written responses as an example of possible evidence pointing towards some form of self-discovery.

Graph 5.4



Graph 5.5

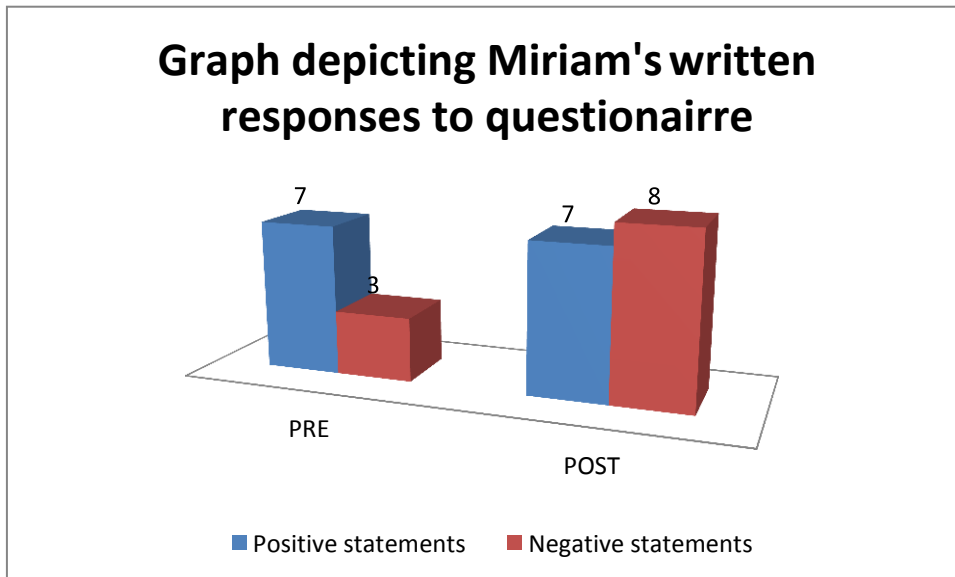


Despite positive shifts in two themes, depicted in Graph 5.4 and 5.5 above, Miriam’s Self-Esteem Inventory was largely more negative after intervention. This was certainly not the desired result but it appears that Miriam was experiencing development in her ability to self-describe and this led to some self-descriptions being more negative. Although more negative, they did also become more coherent, detailed and authentic. They showed a greater understanding of the self and a development towards a more optimal ability to self-describe. This will be further explored in the remaining data.

Questionnaire Written Responses

Graph 5.6 below shows that Miriam provided a greater total number of self-descriptions after intervention by five but all five additional descriptions were negative.

Graph 5.6



The post-test shows a deeply introspective individual. Before intervention Miriam simply described herself as “loud, fun and energetic.” After intervention Miriam wrote the following self-description:

“I am a confident person with others but sad on the inside. I like interacting with others and helping others, even though I don’t like being helped.”

Miriam’s second description is more honest and notes the nuances of her character. Such self-observation requires significant emotional maturity and a well-developed sense of self.

Similarly, before intervention all Miriam wanted to change was her “stressing” but after intervention the list included her body and the “way [she sees] herself.” Once again, Miriam’s post-test response was more detailed and reflexive. As the only individual in the study to produce quantitatively negative results, one may begin to conclude that these responses are the outworking of a more careful self-appraisal and a sign of development.

Miriam’s weaknesses before intervention are interesting as they included her lack of proficiency in speaking different languages. Miriam is, in fact, conversationally trilingual. She speaks isiXhosa at home, fluent English at school and takes Afrikaans as an additional language because, according to her, it would be more beneficial to study a new language than a language she is already fluent in. Based on this evidence and my own experience with Miriam’s above average linguistic capabilities the claim to not be proficient at language is false. Perhaps Miriam was being excessively self-critical because her mother is a language teacher or perhaps she had set very high standards for herself. This response is remarkable because it was the only thing to suggest a negative view of the self in the written responses provided before intervention. The area of

intelligence experienced a positive shift in the inventory. The inventory also showed a somewhat contradictory self-description before intervention. In light of the critical view expressed in the written response it may be fair to claim that Miriam was not positive about her intelligence before intervention. After intervention, she did not mention this aspect in the written responses again but she did point out that a negative self-image was both a weakness and something she wished to change about herself. Miriam seemed to have been alerted to her negative thoughts, perhaps through the process of intervention.

Ranking Activity

Figure 5.1

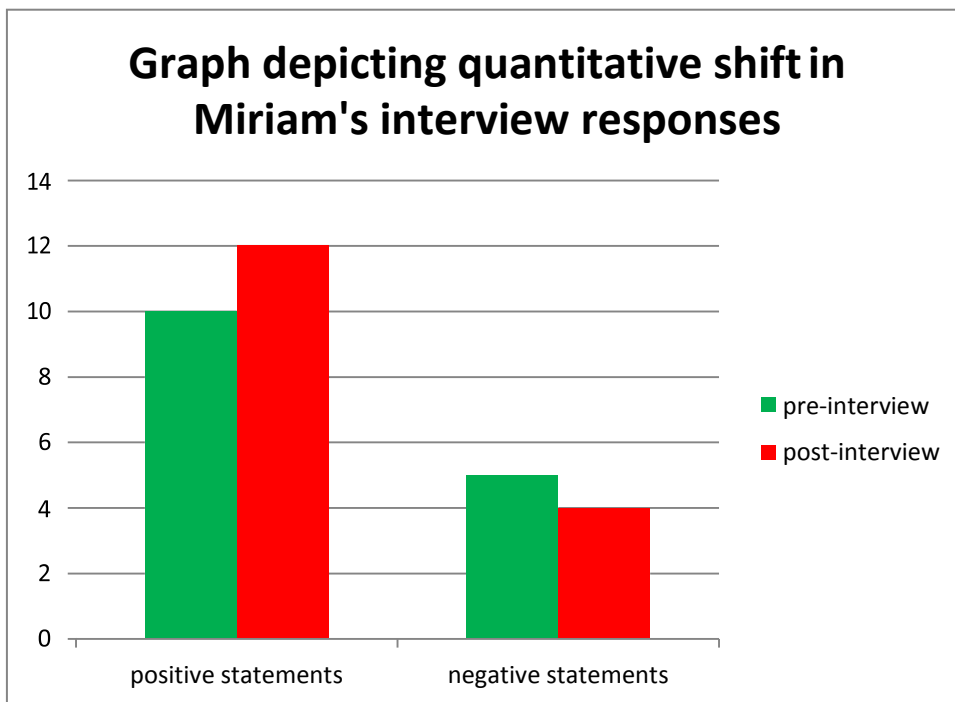
PRE	POST
Intelligence	Intelligence
Integrity	Integrity
Talents	Talents
Looks	Popularity
Sense of humour	Looks
Body shape and size	Sense of humour
Popularity	Body shape and size

As seen in Figure 5.1 above, the only aspect which moved within the ranking activity was that of 'popularity.' This item moved from last to fourth place while all others remained in sequence in the post-test. In the inventory, social skills was one of three themes which showed a negative shift. Little in the written responses works to explain this change other than Miriam's expression that "loneliness" was one of her weaknesses. As a result of the supposed development in her ability to self-describe, Miriam may be noticing aspects of her place amongst her peers and, as a result, viewed popularity as more important after intervention.

Personal Interview

The personal interview is the only form of data to exhibit an overtly positive shift both quantitatively and qualitatively after intervention. Miriam expressed 2 more positive and 1 less negative statements and a total of 1 more total statements after intervention. Graph 5.6 below depicts this quantitatively positive shift.

Graph 5.6



Miriam provided relatively similar responses in the pre- and post-tests to all questions which were not a direct request for a self-description. Her perfect day, response to compliments and description of self-image as a phenomenon all remained fairly similar in content and depth. However, those questions which did call for self-appraisal showed a greater number of positive responses and, as with other forms of data, a more mature and balanced response.

Miriam's pre-test interview gave great insight into her daily life as well as her concerns. She spoke of the struggles of living a great distance from school and having to travel by public transport. She spoke of the difficulty of balancing chores and leisure time. She also alluded to some attributes with which she was displeased – particularly a propensity to “stress” unnecessarily. On the whole, her statements were largely of a neutral and descriptive nature. She provided few value judgments or true self-descriptions. An example of this is Miriam's pre-test description of her physical appearance:

“I am a darkish caramel. I have freckles from my hands up until my elbows on both sides. I have freckles on my feet too. I have freckles on my face, my lips, my nose. I have, at the moment, shortish hair with three shades – three shades of brown. I have brown eyes. Small eyes though. Bigish nose. Soft lips. Not that tall, I'm just average height. I'm not big and I'm not small. I'm just in between.”

There is nothing in this response to suggest how she feels about her physical appearance without becoming speculative. Interestingly, Miriam's appraisal of her self-image in a later question offered more insight into her body image:

“... at some point in my life I was a big girl so now I’m very conscious about my body. Then, there’s a part of me thinking; God made me like this and I should be who I am and I like who I am on the inside. I really do.”

The unstable self-descriptions noted in all other pre-test data are once again present. Miriam seemed uncertain and in conflict.

Another example of this is her self-description of her intellect:

“I’m more practical than the writing kind. I think I am smart. I’m not necessarily smarter than everyone else but for me I am smart. I’m good in my favourite subjects.”

This statement seems unsure. She *thinks* she is intelligent but only in certain instances and not in comparison to her peers.

After intervention, Miriam provided responses which were more positive, more detailed and more definite. The best example of this was her description of her intellect:

“I’m smart but I don’t like working so I only concentrate on those subjects that I like. So my intelligence only shows in the subjects that I put work into.”

Miriam was able to be self-critical and acknowledge that she does not always work to the best of her abilities but was also able to acknowledge that she is indeed intelligent. This was a more certain and reflexive response than that provided before intervention.

When asked to provide her best attribute, Miriam claimed to be both good at “expressing her feelings” and at “speaking.” Before intervention, Miriam simply claimed to be “fun” in response to this question. Whilst both responses are positive, the post-test response does suggest a deeper thought process.

Miriam’s body-image remained a concern for her. As with the pre-test, she offered a largely factual description to the initial request to self-describe with the addition of some positive statements such as “I think I am [pretty]” and claiming to have an “almost flat tummy.” Once again, Miriam chose to bring up her negative body-image when asked to weigh in on her self-image as a whole:

“I don’t like my body. I like the person I am on the inside but I don’t like the outside.”

As with her intellect, Miriam’s response was more sure and mature in the post-test. Whilst not overwhelmingly positive, Miriam seemed to be moving to a more stable view of herself.

In both the pre- and post-tests, Miriam's appraisal of her social skill was the most positive. However, after intervention this question received a response which was both more detailed and more positive. Before intervention Miriam offered 4 positive and 1 negative statements and after intervention she provided 7 positive and 2 negative statements. This is a positive shift both in terms of the number positive statements but also because Miriam was able to offer a greater depth of self-description after intervention. This same increased depth was seen in other forms of data and continues to build the case for the assertion that Miriam's ability to self-describe was developing.

Journal Entries

Miriam's data thus far have illustrated a young lady who, prior to intervention, presented an unstable and uncertain view of the self. This was a view that Baumeister, Tice, and Hutton (1989) suggest shows a negative perception of the self. Despite statements which, in isolation, appear to be positive self-description, a more holistic picture suggests that Miriam had not learnt to give an authentically positive self-description prior to intervention.

Without prompting, she seemed to echo this analysis in her own journal. When writing about her expectations for the intervention she wrote:

"I expect to express my feelings through dance, and most importantly feel relieved after I am done. I want to see how my body reacts to my feelings and how I actually think of myself."

Here she admitted to not yet knowing her own feelings and thoughts about herself. She appears to be looking forward to an improved perception and understanding of herself. She also seems to expect a catharsis, what she terms feeling "relieved," from learning more about herself. She seems to be acutely aware that her self-descriptions are unstable and superficial. Miriam's earliest journal entry may be an expression of her own lack of ability to self-describe.

Another concern highlighted by Miriam in her journal was the effect of society and peers on her self-descriptions. She frequently referenced these external influences as having a negative impact on how she viewed herself. She noted "being pulled down due to circumstances" and a need to "[break] free of society's view of me."

This concern continued when she later wrote that self-image is how you see yourself "on the inside no matter what society's ideas say." By the last intervention session she claimed to have learnt:

“...not to let society’s ideas mould my sense of thought and the way that I see things. I am a wonderful person and should not change myself to suit other’s expectations. I am who I am, and if they can’t deal with it, they can hit the road.”

Perhaps Miriam found the “relief” she was seeking. Combined with the other data, I would posit that Miriam’s pre-test self-descriptions were that of an individual with a negative self-image weighed down by what she perceived to be society’s expectations.

Mediation Observations

Miriam was initially quite reluctant to participate or to offer ideas. Instead, she created distractions for herself and the other participants with playful behavior such as running around the room or play fighting with another participant. It took her some time to feel safe in the first session but she warmed up sufficiently to discuss her fear of dying and her career aspirations by the end of the session. By the second session was more willing to participate and almost dominant at times but she still lacked focus in each activity. Over the coming weeks Miriam became more invested in the process which saw her becoming more focused and more vocal in each session. She struggled to do this without silencing her peers initially and was slightly dictatorial at times. By midway through the period of intervention, however, Miriam had learnt to work in a more synergistic fashion. She also learnt to create original movements rather than borrowing steps from existing dance routines she had learnt outside of the sessions.

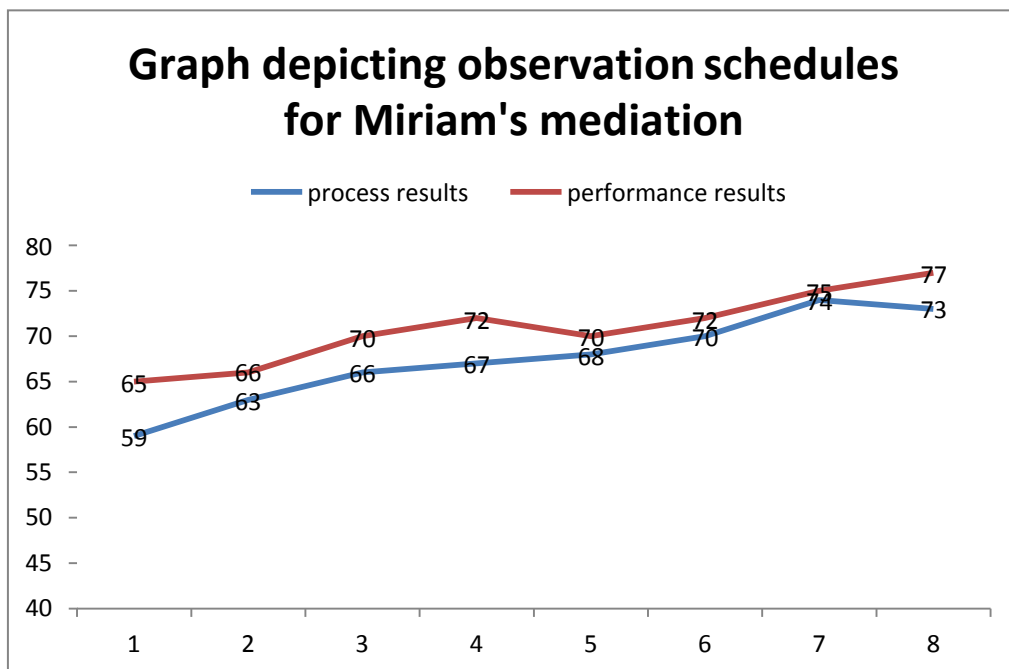
I tracked these changes by looking at the scores received for two markers in the Observation Schedule for process: “Learner is willing to participate” and “Learner is neither dominant nor submissive in the group.” In the first session, Miriam received 3 for willingness to participate. By session 4 this marker moved up to a 6 and by session 5, Miriam achieved a 7. Similarly, Miriam received a 5 for the marker relating to her ability to be neither submissive or dominant for the majority of the earlier sessions but by session 6 was earning a 7 for this marker.

By the final session Miriam was an enthusiastic and focussed participant. She was first to get onto task with most activities and able to collaborate with her peers. Her movements were also more original than they had previously been.

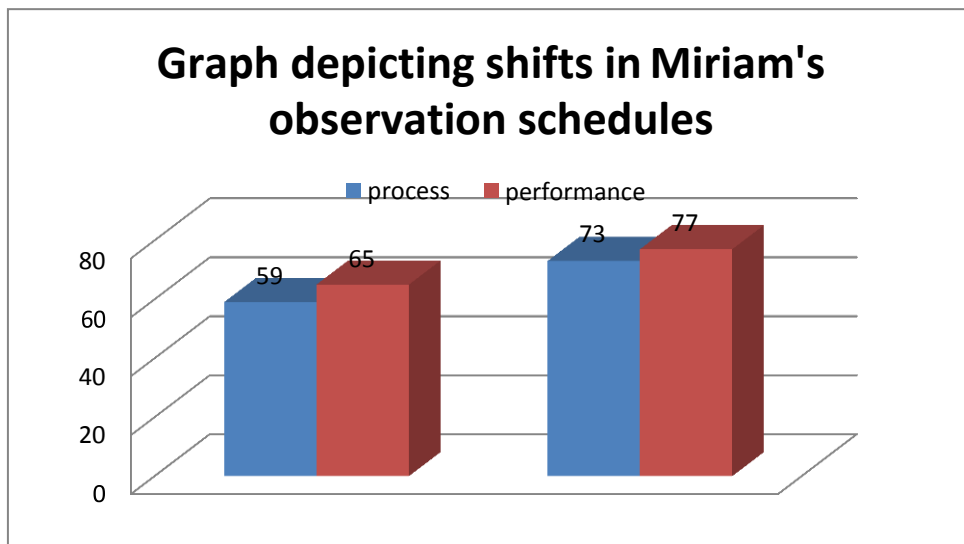
Such changes suggest an overall improvement in Miriam’s ability to use Creative Movement to express her feelings and her ability to do so in a social setting. Graph 5.7 below shows the steady improvement in Miriam’s results for both process and performance over the eight sessions. Graph 5.8 following compares the first and last session results for both process and performance.

Miriam's results for process and performance improved by 14 and 12 points respectively. In both graphs it can be seen that Miriam did show an improved ability to self-describe through movement in a social setting.

Graph 5.7

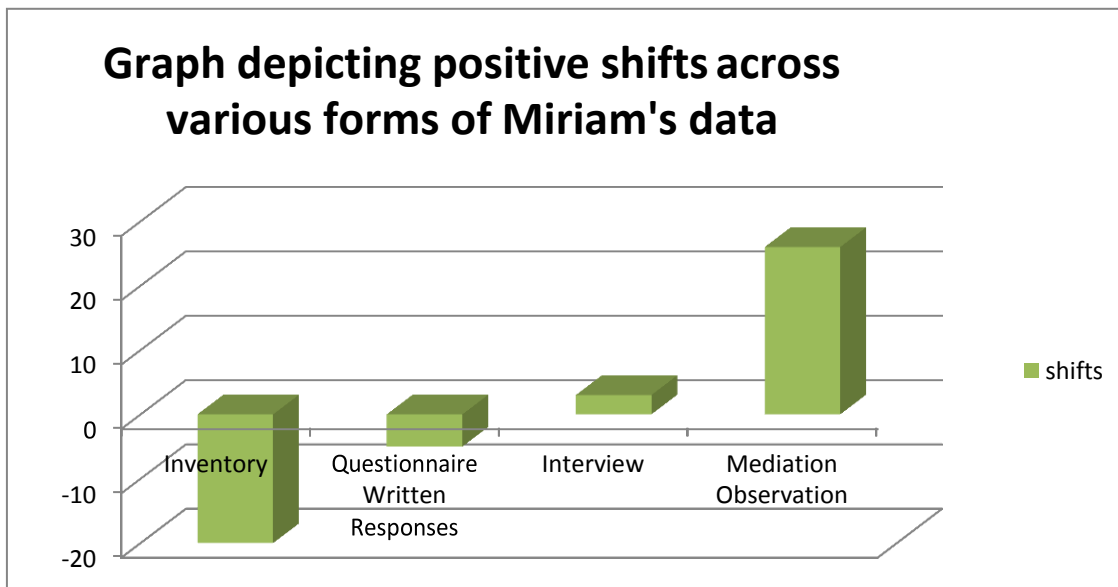


Graph 5.8



Summary of Miriam's data

Graph 5.9



Graph 5.9 above depicts the shifts which took place over four forms of data. Miriam experienced a negative shift in two of these forms – the Inventory and the Questionnaire Written Response. Miriam did show a slightly positive quantitative shift in the Personal Interview and her Mediation Observation evidenced development in the intervention process.

Miriam's data have also been used to run the t-test that follows as Figure 5.2. In spite of her negative shifts in some areas, Miriam's t-test does show a statistically significant shift with P at 0,97 for a two-tail test.

Figure 5.2

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	31,2	32
Variance	835,2	1551
Observations	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	7	
t Stat	-0,036620272	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,485905109	
t Critical one-tail	1,894578605	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,971810217	
t Critical two-tail	2,364624252	

Miriam's quantitatively negative results should not, however, be viewed as unsuccessful intervention. The pre-test suggested an underdeveloped ability to self-describe. Her self-descriptions were sparse and often conflicting one another or reality. She was unaware of her academic ability and presented an incongruous body image. Miriam was not able to present a stable and authentic description of herself before intervention. She was also not able to participate in the first intervention session in a way that demonstrated an ability to self-describe confidently using Creative Movement. This did improve during the intervention period. The data collected in the post-test presented a set of self-descriptions which, although not necessarily more positive, presented a view of the self more in line with Kernis's "optimal" view of the self (2003).

Before intervention responses were extreme (she offered numerical responses such as '1' or '9' to many questions), contradicted one another or were not in line with reality (such as her failure to recognise her own academic ability). It has been argued that Miriam was not able to self-describe and held an unstable and inauthentic view of herself.

After intervention many of her self-descriptions were more negative than those provided in the pre-test but, given her inability to accurately and coherently self-describe before intervention, this is not necessarily a regression. Miriam moved from an inability to self-describe to a moderate, albeit at times negative, ability to self-describe.

The Inventory provided the most obviously negative shift after intervention. Whilst the themes of intelligence and decision-making did show positive shifts, all other themes, and the total shift were negative. Physical Appearance showed the greatest negative shift after intervention but it also showed the most incongruences before intervention. Miriam's view of her intellect was unrealistic before intervention and the more positive view presented in the post-test was a more truthful one.

Miriam's Questionnaire Written Response descriptions grew in number after intervention and showed a greater level of self-reflection. Her post-test responses in this form of data too were a closer reflection of her character.

The Personal Interview provided a positive shift. Her self-descriptions were more consistent, more detailed and more positive after intervention.

Miriam would need to develop her ability to self-describe further in order to show an overtly positive shift but it has been argued that development did occur.

Participant 6: Sarah (School B)

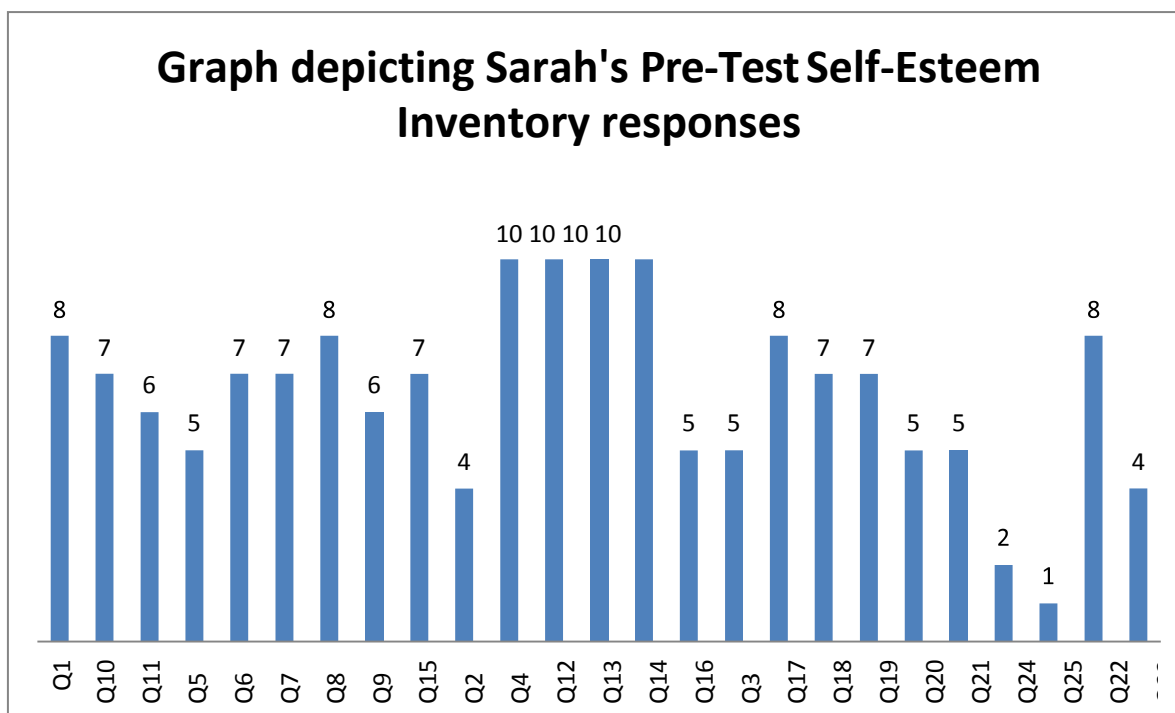
Sarah presented as a timid young lady but displayed openness towards her peers and myself. She lives a fair distance from the school in an area known as the Cape Flats, along with both her parents and two siblings, and relies on public transport daily. At the time of the study Sarah was in Grade 9 and fourteen years old.

Despite her timidity, she appeared to enjoy social interaction and actively sought out opportunities to engage with her peers. She was exceptionally polite and demonstrated a clear set of values.

Self-Esteem Inventory

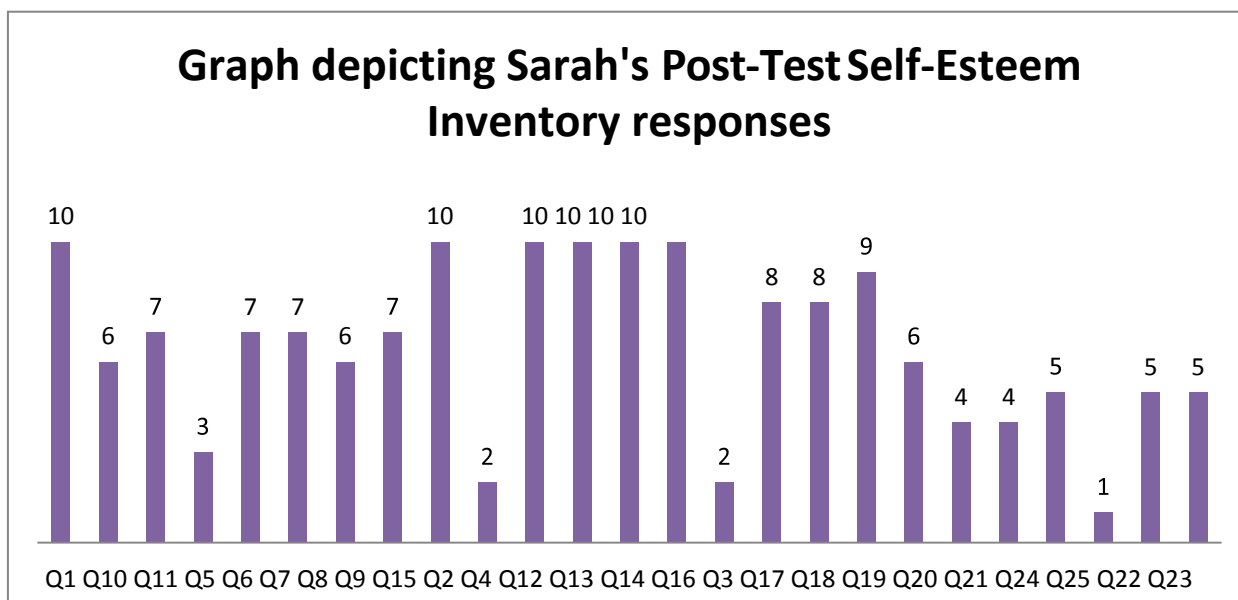
Sarah's pre-test responses to the Self-Esteem Inventory may be viewed in Graph 6.1 below. Sarah showed a fairly positive self-appraisal, particularly with regards to her value. One theme which Sarah highlighted as less favourable, however, was that of social skills. Sarah felt neither confident (question 3) nor as if she was able to contribute to class discussions (question 24). She also asserted that she was relatively easily intimidated (question 19).

Graph 6.1



After intervention, Sarah showed a positive shift in all areas except decision making. The most notable shift was seen within the theme of social skills which Sarah had initially appraised least favourably. Sarah's post-test responses are represented in Graph 6.2 following.

Graph 6.2



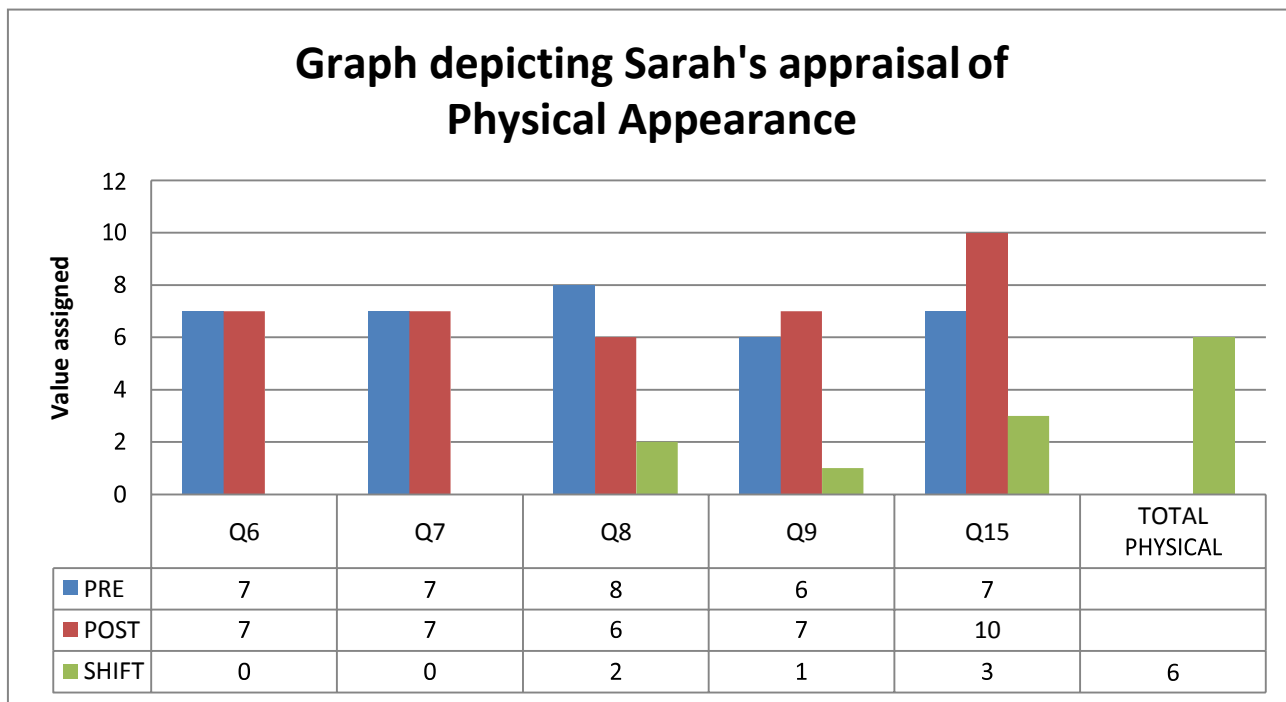
After intervention Sarah felt more intelligent and more satisfied with her school performance. She also ranked herself higher amongst her peers by assigning a lower numerical response to the statement 'I am less intelligent than my peers' (question 5). Overall, Sarah's view of her own intelligence shifted by 4.

Similarly, Sarah's self-descriptions pertaining to her value shifted by 5. Many of these questions had received a numerical response of 10 in the pre-test and remained unchanged after intervention. It was clear that Sarah had a strong sense of her own worth both before and after intervention. However, two statements were not treated as positively before intervention and these two statements account for the positive shift seen in this theme. 'I often feel lonely' shifted from 4 to 2 and 'Teachers do not like me' shifted from 5 to 2. This suggests that Sarah not only still felt sure of her own value but now felt more satisfied with how others valued her.

Greater progress is observed in the themes of physical appearance and social skills depicted in Graphs 6.3 and 6.4 respectively.

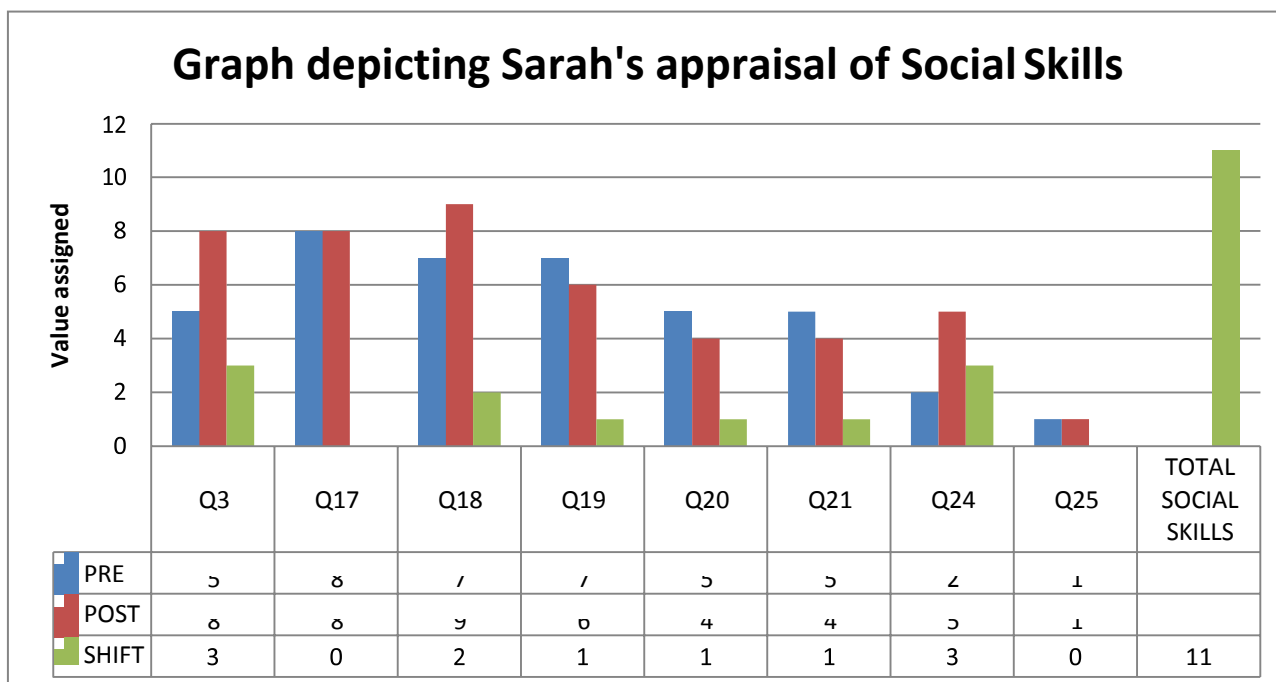
Sarah's self-description of her physical appearance shifted by a total of 6 in the post-test Self-Esteem inventory. The responses to 'I am more attractive than most of my friends' and 'I have a good body' remained unchanged at 7. Sarah's desire to lose weight (question 8) decreased by 2 and her satisfaction with the way she looks (question 9) increased by 1. Most notably, her response to the statement 'I am attractive' (question 15) shifted from 7 to 10. It can therefore be noted that Sarah's already positive self-description of her physical appearance shifted into an even more positive one.

Graph 6.3



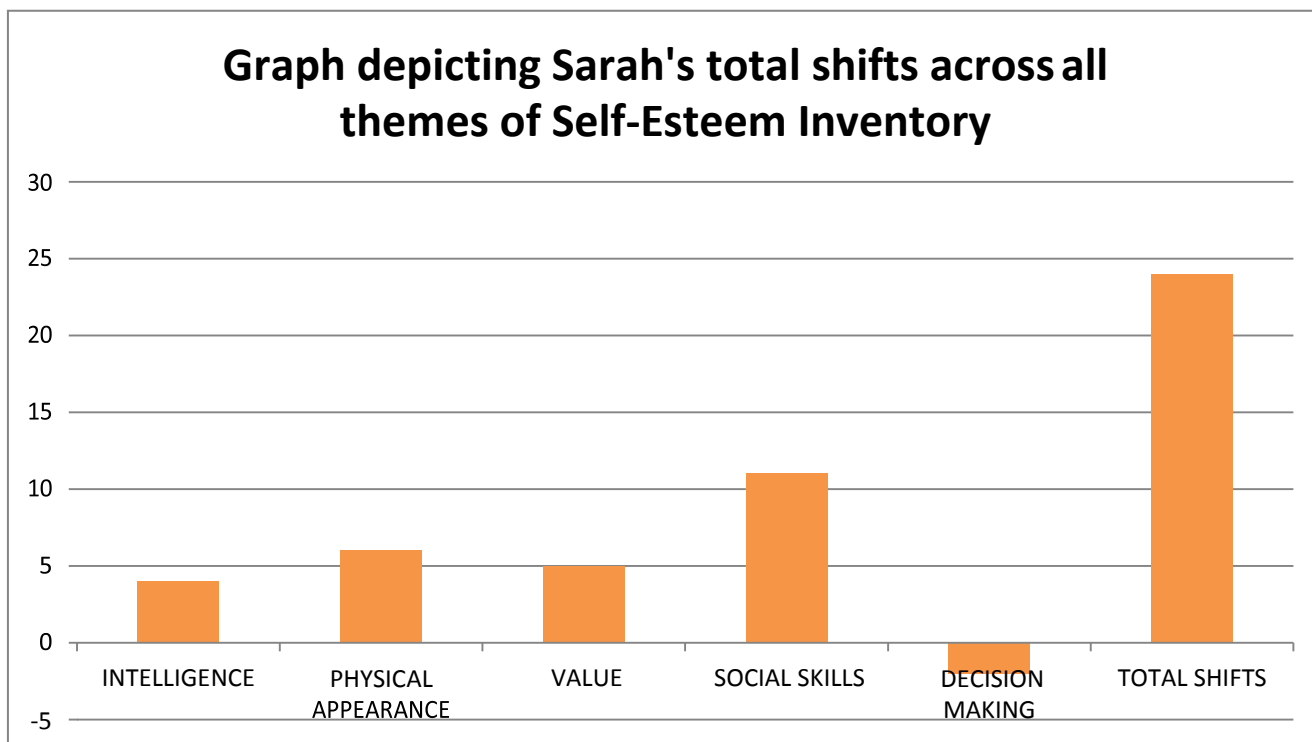
The theme in which Sarah demonstrated the most concern presented the greatest improvement after intervention; the theme of social skills. In the post-test Sarah contended that she was more confident (question 3) and enjoyed leading more (question 18). She also showed slight improvements in her responses to statements 19,20 and 21 showing that she felt more comfortable in social settings. Sarah also changed her response to the statement 'I always have something to contribute in class discussion' from 2 to 5. Thus, it is once again observed that the theme of social skills and the theme which the individual highlighted as of greatest concern before intervention, showed the greatest positive shift in the Self-Esteem Inventory.

Graph 6.4



Sarah's Self-Esteem Inventory shifted by 24 towards the positive overall. This places her well above both the case and study average and would suggest a more positive self-description after intervention.

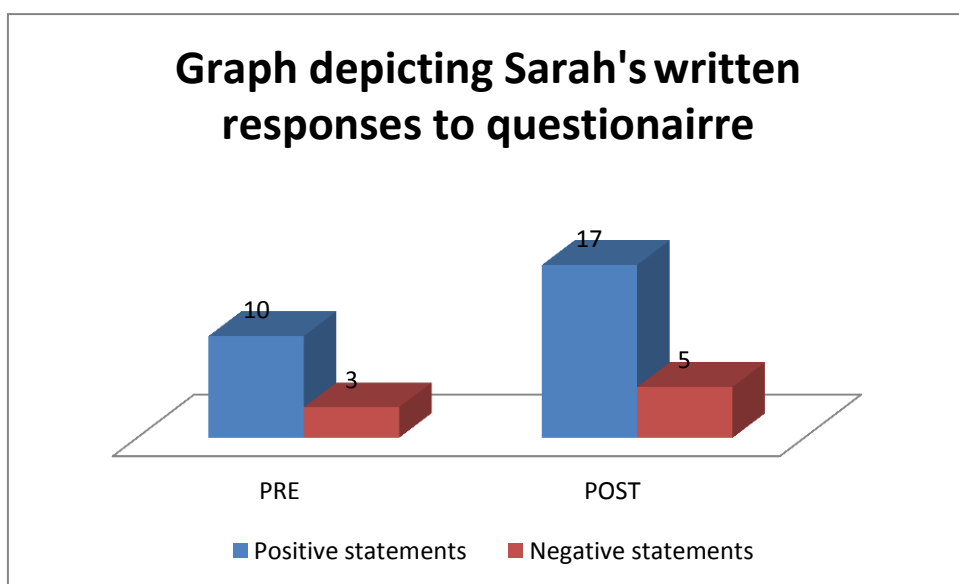
Graph 6.5



Questionnaire Written Responses

Sarah showed a positive shift in this element of the test as well. She provided more total descriptions, implying a greater ability to self-describe and proportionally more positive than negative statements. Before intervention Sarah offered 10 positive and 3 negative statements. After intervention Sarah provided 17 positive and 5 negative statements. This is the highest number of positive statements provided by any participant in the study. Sarah's shift can be seen in Graph 6.6.

Graph 6.6



Like her peers, Sarah showed a better ability to self-describe by providing more detailed and reflective answers after intervention. Sarah's strengths before intervention included being a "good listener and advisor" and being "observant and caring." After intervention Sarah's list of strengths was longer, covered a more varied assessment of the self and suggested some careful self-reflection:

"I'm hardworking and willing to put in more than I can take. I'm emotionally strong. I am very open to new ideas and challenges and when in doubt I always find a way to ground myself. Oh and I have style."

There is a sense of pride in this response. Sarah is stating what she has learnt about herself and her ability to overcome adversity. This suggests resilience.

Similarly, Sarah's description of herself evolved to include "motivated, mature, pretty, wise, humble, confident, warm, likable, supportive, open-minded." When asked what she would like to change about herself, Sarah was at first focussed on the physical, sighting a "flatter tummy." After

intervention Sarah was able to provide tangible inter- and intra-personal goals to “become more social” and “more daring.”

Sarah’s written responses presented a more holistic and positive view of the self after intervention.

Ranking Activity

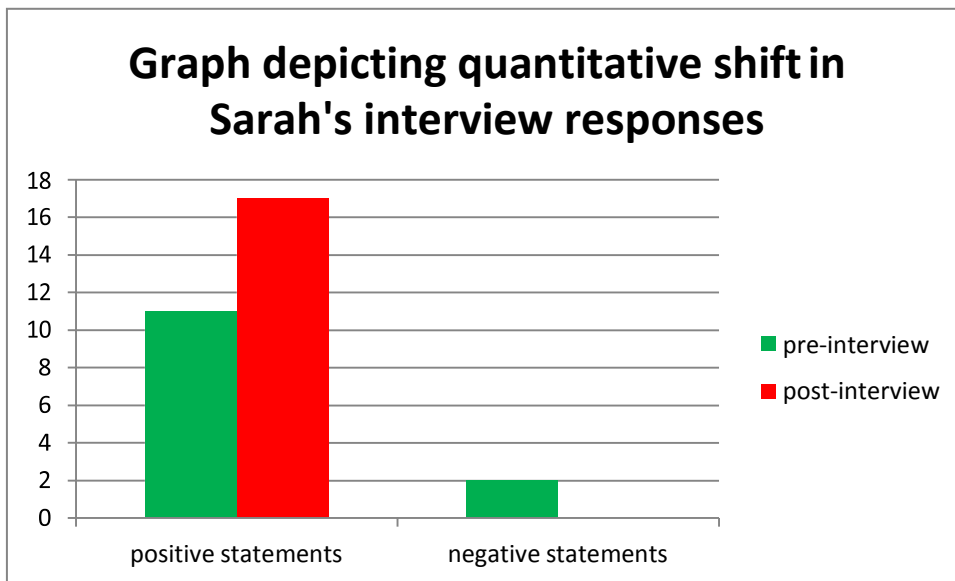
Sarah did not quite understand the ranking activity in the pre-test and rather than awarding a rank she assigned a score out of ten for each item. This has been converted by the researcher so that items are ranked from highest to lowest score out of ten. In the post-test, Sarah completed the activity correctly. These responses have been depicted in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1

PRE	POST
Integrity	Integrity
Sense of humour	Intelligence
Intelligence	Sense of humour
Talents	Body shape and size
Popularity	Talents
Body shape and size	Looks
Looks	Popularity

The only real shift in order is in the aspects ‘body shape and size’ and ‘looks.’ Both of these items moved up from 6th and 7th to 4th and 6th places respectively. The theme of physical appearance did display the second greatest positive shift in the Self-Esteem Inventory so it is possible that this accounts for the increased importance placed on ‘looks’ and ‘body shape and size.’

Graph 6.7



As shown in Graph 6.7 above, Sarah showed a significant quantitative positive shift in her personal interview responses after intervention. Sarah provided 6 more positive statements and 2 fewer negative statements in the post-test as compared to the pre-test interview. Notably, in the post-test she provided no negative statements whatsoever. She also provided 4 total statements more in the post-test interview.

Sarah very accurately summed herself up when offering her best attribute in the pre-test to be optimism. She is an insatiably positive individual. She was a warm and open interviewee both before and after intervention and had many positive things to say not simply about herself but about her life in general. She painted a picture of a close family unit and seemed to prioritise relationships both with friends and family. In both interviews, Sarah acknowledged that her real life and her imagined 'perfect day' were quite similar. It seems as if she was generally content with her life both before and after intervention. What did change was the number and depth of positive statements Sarah was able to make about herself in the personal interview. Her post-test responses were much longer and offered a greater insight into her character.

Before intervention, Sarah described her intellect as follows:

"I think I'm quite clever. On a general scale. I know a lot of general knowledge. At school as well. I consider myself an above average student."

This is a positive self-description. After intervention, however, Sarah's self-description became more detailed. She remained positive but extended her initial belief that she was clever to reflect

not only an academic intelligence but also a social and emotional intelligence and an ability to problem-solve:

“I would say I’m quite smart. Smart not just academically but socially as well. I’m observant. I can pick up on things quite easily. I have a way of like working my way around things so if it’s hard I’ll try all the possible ways just to find that answer so I’m willing to put in a lot of effort into something. I’m also very attentive when it comes to things that really interest me so I pay close attention to that as well as going to research properly just so that the next day I can answer and have some more information about that topic.”

Based on this response, I posit that Sarah’s post-test response was longer, quantitatively more positive and offered a greater depth than the pre-test response.

Similar characteristics can be noted of her self-description of her personality. In the pre-test, Sarah described her personality as “loveable,” “caring” and “observant.” Once again, her post-test response retained and built on this positivity and offered greater insight:

“Happy. Very, very happy. Very optimistic. Not a person to be sad. I like to have fun and have new confidence to talk to people, especially to people of the opposite sex or different sorts of people. I’m also very quirky and I also like to do things differently and also positively. I just want everybody to be [full of] goodwill and happy.”

Sarah’s post-test interview was markedly more detailed, reflexive and positive than her pre-test interview. Her final comment in the post-test interview was in response to the question, “What is self-image.” Sarah offered a response that suggests a stable self-description which does not hinge on the opinions of others and fore-grounds the role of the individual in cultivating positive self-descriptions:

“The way you see yourself. Underline ‘you.’ Yes people’s going to say things but ultimately it’s how you see yourself and how you put yourself out there that’s important.”

Perhaps it was this understanding that allowed Sarah to be so positive about the various aspects of herself.

Journal Entries

After the very first session, Sarah wrote that the intervention was not what she had expected: “It is different than what I thought but in a good, lesson-learning way.” While she had envisaged a different programme, this statement would indicate that Sarah was already developing in some

way.

An example of this development can be seen in her explanation of an activity in session 2. She chose the image of a swan that, she explained, although beautiful was sometimes aware of this beauty and sometimes chose to hide its face with its wing because it did not feel beautiful by society's standards. Sarah extended this image to herself claiming that "personally, some days I'm less aware of my body image and I'm just like that beautiful swan but then some days, I feel like the swan that wants to hide its beautiful face and that cares more [about] what others think." Here Sarah used Creative Movement to explore ideas of body image and society's beauty standards and found that her own body image was hampered by what she believed other people thought. This is an understanding which would later lead to further development. Sarah began to learn that she had control of her own self-descriptions and perceptions.

In a later session she explained the composition created by the group as follows:

"I think what we tried to convey is that there is not a day that goes by you don't look in the mirror and every day you see a different 'you' every time you look but all-in-all you look at many mirrors until you realise that in all those mirrors, it's the same old you that's being reflected. Yes some days you see yourself differently (often negatively) but you as a strong person have to accept yourself and the flaws (that you think you have) and just shake off any negative energy. Be positive and optimistic whatever you do."

Here Sarah identified several important nuances of the human psyche. Her tone is optimistic and she seems to have made an empowering discovery. She had come to understand that self-image is fluid and shaped by various things. She also noted that inner strength and self-acceptance are necessary. In yet another journal entry Sarah went on to elaborate on one such influence, social media: *"Thigh gaps, flat stomachs, healthy eating is all the rage on social media. And being a teen in this techno era makes you feel insecure about your body; personally I try to look past that negativity as it is poison..."*

In her final journal entry Sarah claimed to have learnt that:

"All the things in which I wanted myself to be more like, I already have. I really learnt to see myself in a different way and to make and achieve more physical and emotional goals."

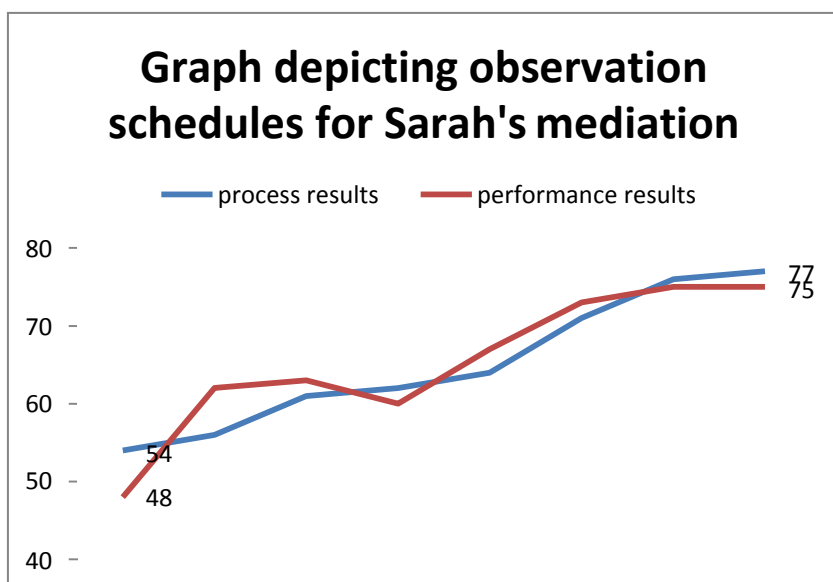
This final statement intimates that Sarah felt that she had achieved an improved view of herself. This is substantiated by the rest of the data which have already showed a more positive post-test self-description.

Mediation Observations

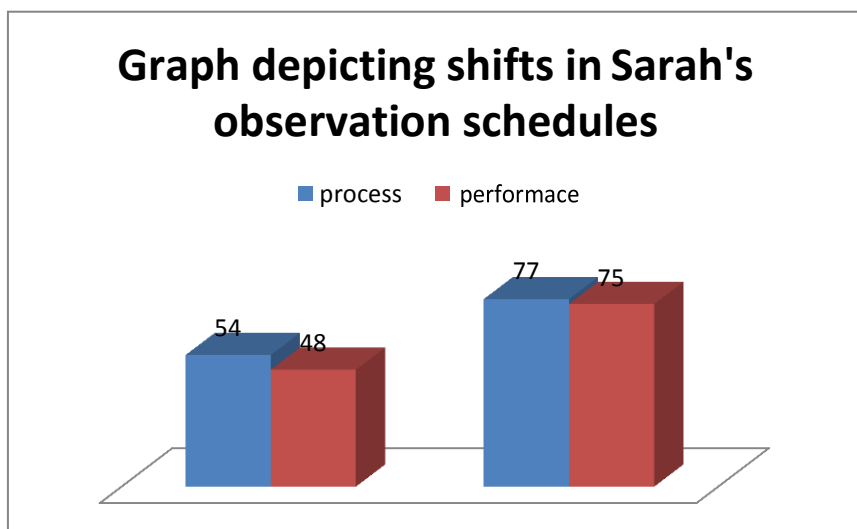
Sarah experienced great improvement during the 8 intervention sessions. Sarah was, true to her positive nature, very willing to participate and amongst the most focused and enthusiastic of her group in every session. However, she began intervention somewhat submissive to her peers so this positivity did not always result in her voicing her opinions or exploring her creativity. She chose to copy others and seemed withdrawn in some of the activities. It was noted that she took longer to formulate ideas than the rest of the group. Fortunately, the intervention process saw great personal growth for Sarah. Markers such as “Learner is able to give suggestions/own opinions” and “Learner is neither dominant nor submissive in the group” steadily improved, receiving as much as 8 out of 10 by the final few weeks. This accounts for the great difference in results between Sarah’s first and last sessions.

Graph 6.8 below shows the changes each week in her process and performance results. The improvement was not, as depicted in this graph, in a smooth upward trajectory and she did regress at times, particularly in performance. This is typical of any learning process and does not detract from the stark difference between Sarah’s first and last session. Graph 6.9 shows this difference. Sarah’s results increased by 23 and 27 points for process and performance respectively.

Graph 6.8

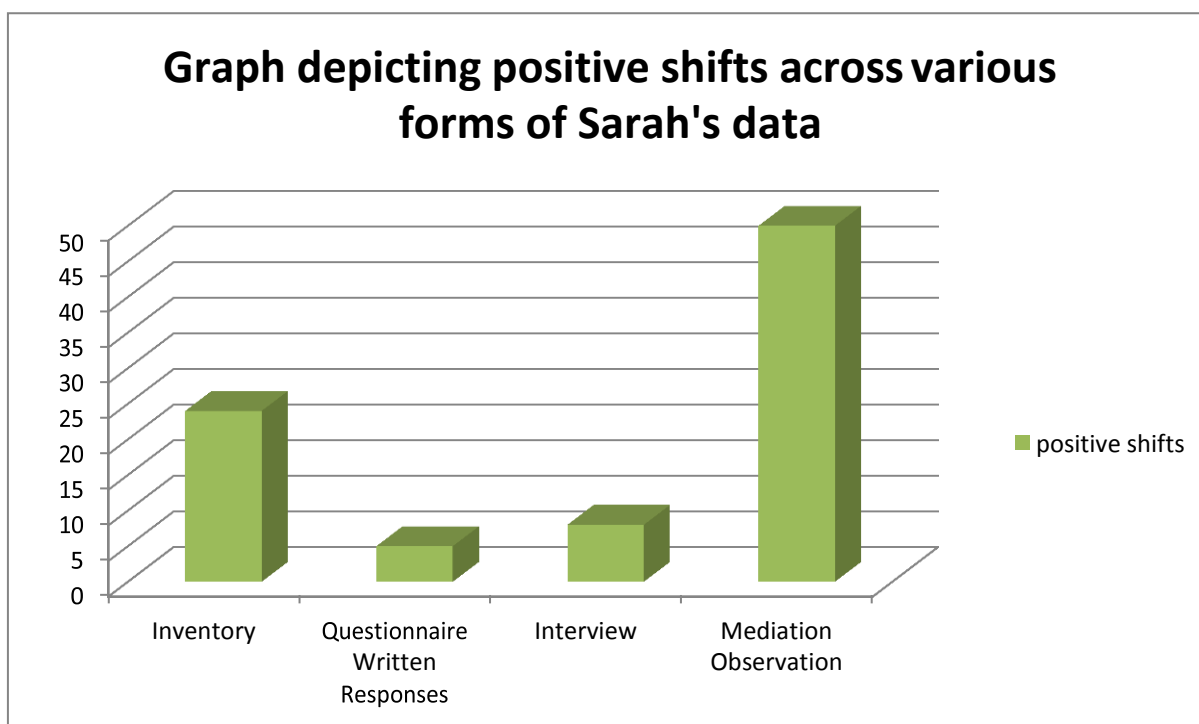


Graph 6.9



Summary of Sarah's data

Graph 6.10



Sarah consistently provided the highest or second highest positive shift in each form of data at School B. Graph 6.10 above shows a clear quantitative improvement across all forms of data collected. These shifts have once again been reflected in a t-test shown in Figure 6.2. In this test P was found to be 0,37 for a two-tail test.

Figure 6.2

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	23,8	41,2
Variance	629,7	1031,2
Observations	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	8	
t Stat	-0,954690295	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,183843928	
t Critical one-tail	1,859548038	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,367687856	
t Critical two-tail	2,306004135	

Sarah's pre-test Self-Esteem Inventory showed a positive self-description, particularly concerning the theme of value. Sarah's least favourable self-appraisal was concerning her social skills. This area experienced the greatest positive shift after intervention. The post-test Self-Esteem Inventory showed a significant positive shift across all themes. The Questionnaire Written Responses were qualitatively and quantitatively more positive. Sarah offered more statements overall (indicating more detail and reflection) and more positive statements in total (indicating a more positive self-description) after intervention. In the Personal Interview Sarah offered 6 more positive statements after intervention than she had before and gave no negative self-descriptions whatsoever in the post-test interview. There was also a stark difference between Sarah' first and last Observation Schedule results suggesting a definitive improvement during intervention.

Sarah was a cheerful girl with generally positive self-descriptions before intervention. After intervention these positive self-descriptions were more even plentiful. Based on the data presented, it can be observed that Sarah experienced a qualitative and quantitative positive shift in her self-descriptions.

Participant 7: Maria (School B)

Maria was in Grade 9 at School B and turned 15 during the course of the intervention process. She lives with her mother and maternal grandmother approximately 25 kilometres from School B in a working class section of Cape Town's Northern Suburbs⁹.

Maria was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome in primary school and much of her daily life was coloured by social anxiety as a result. This social barrier also affects her ability to socialise. Maria did not always understand non-verbal cues of others but this did not appear to encumber her ability to make and maintain friendships.

She is a genial young lady and appeared to value her relationships with her peers. She frequently asked questions of others in order to gauge their feelings.

Maria's English grammar and vocabulary as well as her understanding of social cues appeared to be below average. This was seen in her failure to understand some basic instructions and incorrect expression of some English idioms such as her claims to be "strong hearted" and "multi-potentialite" (her own term) in the post-test survey. It was gleaned that she spoke a hybrid of English and Afrikaans at home.

Self-Esteem Inventory

Graph 7.1 below represents Maria's Self-Esteem Inventory responses before intervention. This data set showed Maria to have a contradictory self-appraisal. There were a number of responses within each theme which appeared to contradict one another or showed an unrealistic view of the self.

She presented a fairly positive view of her own intelligence. She felt confident that she was satisfied with her school work and performance, assigning an 8 to both questions. She also disagreed that she was less intelligent than her peers by responding with a 3 to question 5. In reality, her English and comprehension was weaker than that of her peers and her scholastic performance below average.

Her appraisal of her physical appearance was a little less favourable. An example of this is her response of 1 to the statement 'I have a good body' and her agreement with a 6 that she would like to lose weight. Maria was tall and slender with few curves. Whilst this may account for her

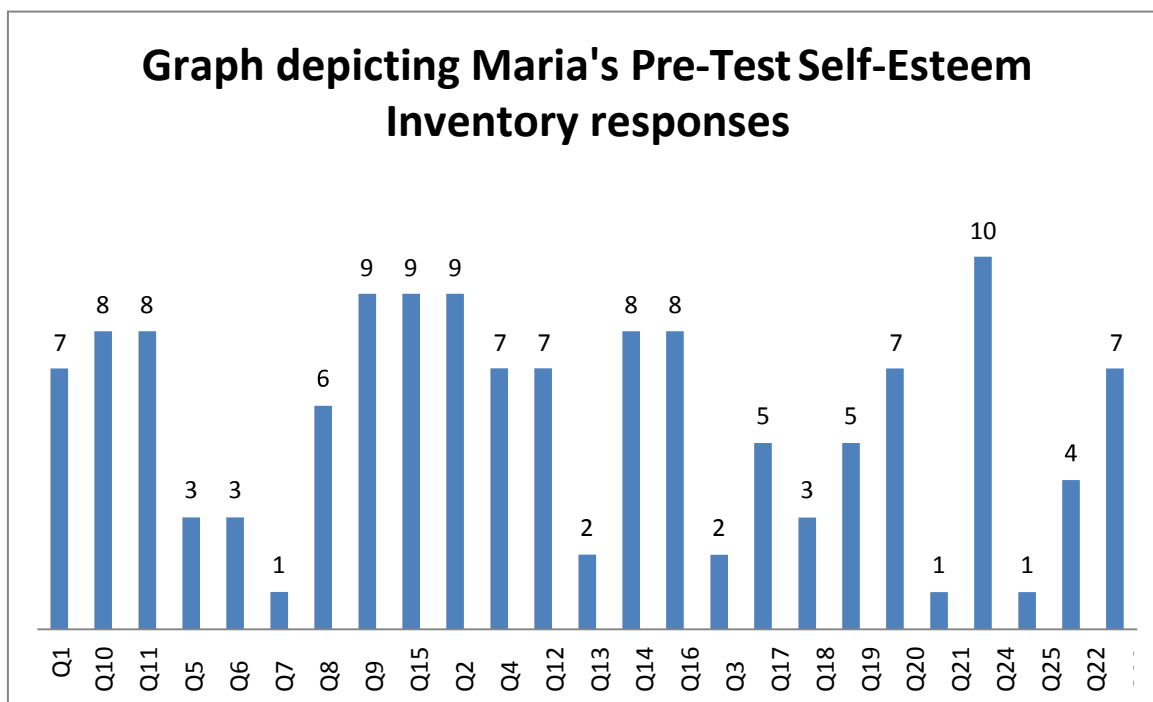
⁹ An area north of the city centre which includes both wealthy and impoverished areas.

dissatisfaction it contradicts her desire to lose weight. However, she responded positively to the statements 'I am happy with the way I look' and 'I am attractive.' Whilst weight is not a determinant of attractiveness or body-image it seems to be a contradiction for Maria to claim to be unhappy with her body but simultaneously happy with her physical appearance as these are, in most cases, the same thing.

Value was one of the themes which Maria regarded most negatively. She agreed strongly that she often felt lonely, unloved and disliked by teachers. Maria did not seem to feel valued by others. Interestingly, statements which pertained more to her actual value than whether or not others valued her, were met with more positivity. Maria agreed that she was 'important,' 'loveable' and a 'valuable member' of her family. This might suggest that Maria was aware of her own value but felt undervalued by those around her.

The theme of social skills also offered some contradictory responses. Maria asserted that she often felt lonely and was not very confident. Maria offered that she preferred to follow than to lead. She assigned a 5 to 'I have lots of friends' and 'I feel intimidated easily,' suggesting a more average level of social comfort. However, she claimed to always have something to contribute in class discussions (question 24) and felt that people listened to her contributions (question 21). Perhaps a structured classroom environment was a safer setting for Maria but in general, it did not appear as if Maria was convinced of either a strength or a weakness in terms of her social skills. With regards to decision-making, Maria felt that she was slow to make a decision but once made, she was firm in maintaining that decision.

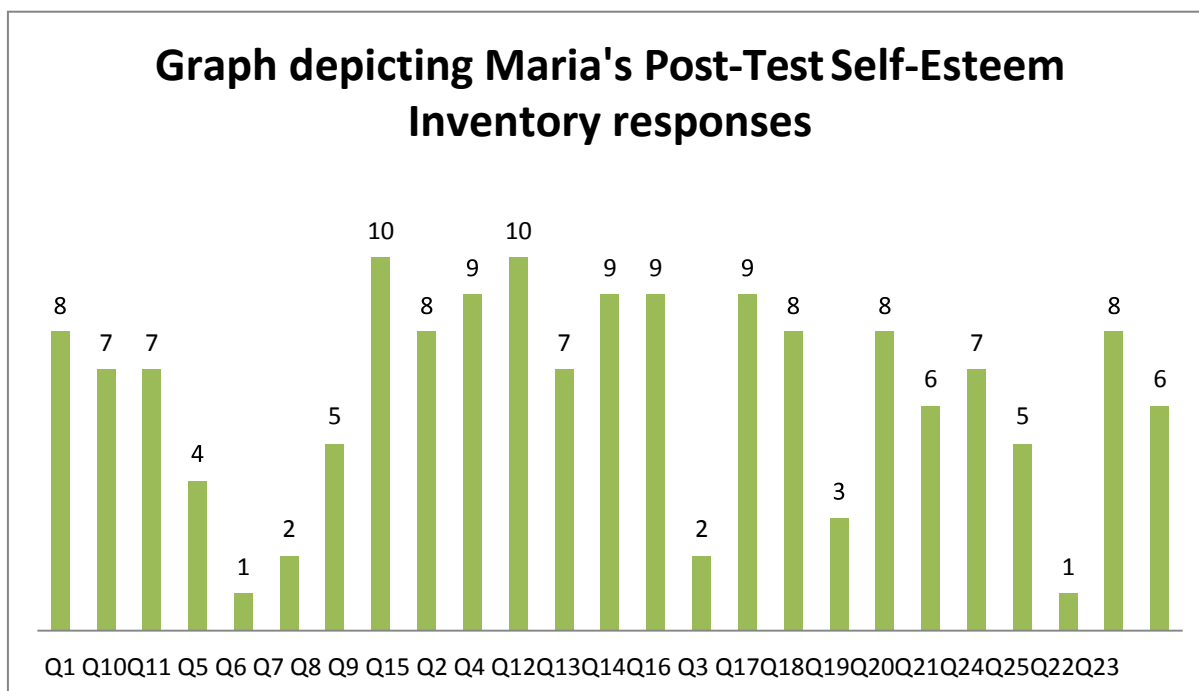
Graph 7.1



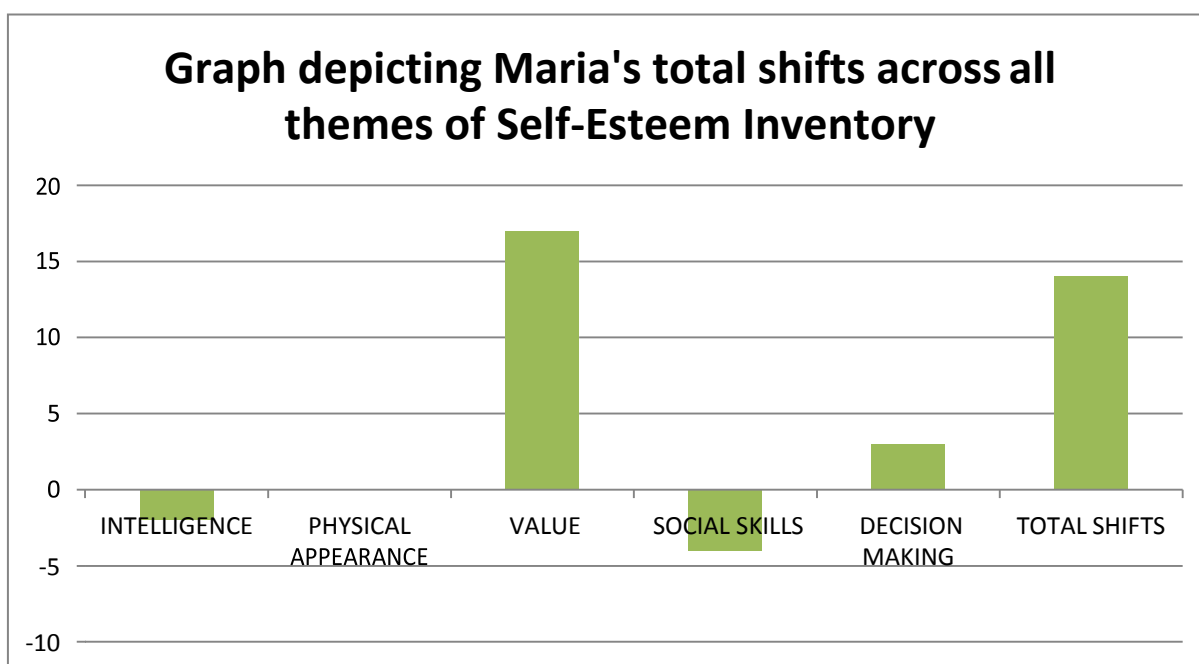
The inconsistencies evident in Maria's responses are suggestive of an under-developed self-description. Essentially, Maria's ability to self-describe was insufficient to reflect on herself enough in order to respond coherently to the questionnaire posed. The pre-test data suggest that Maria had a weaker ability to self-describe than her peers. It could therefore be argued that Maria began the process unable to properly self-describe.

Maria's responses after intervention, although showing more positive than negative shifts in total, did not shift positively in every theme. Graphs 7.2 and 7.3 following show Maria's post-test responses and total shifts respectively.

Graph 7.2



Graph 7.3



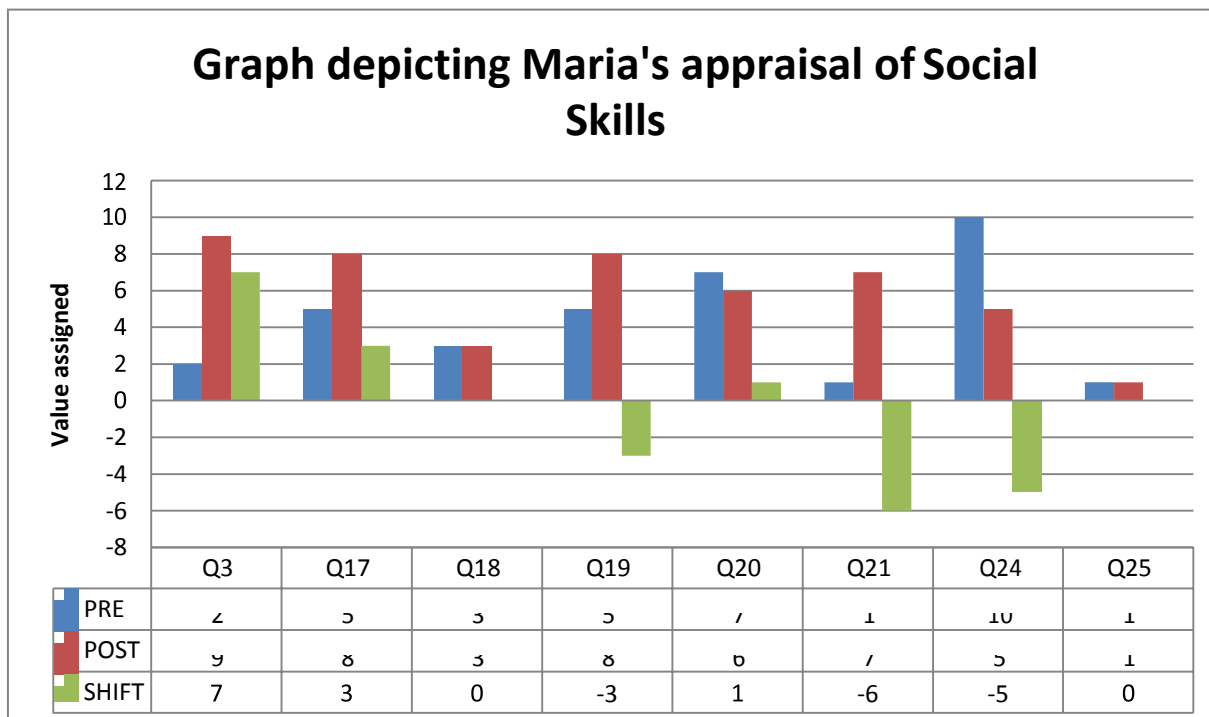
The themes of intelligence and social skills made a negative shift in the post-test. Both of these themes offered self-appraisals which were either not fully self-reflexive or contradictory before intervention such as the claim to want to lose weight when she had very little weight to lose or the claims to be more intelligent than her peers when she clearly was struggling academically. The theme of physical appearance showed no shift. Maria's responses were more positive in the two other themes, most notably in questions pertaining to value which showed a positive shift of 17.

As discussed earlier, Maria's self-appraisal of her intelligence did not match her actual academic

capabilities. As with Miriam, this show of a superficially positive view is rather a reflection of an unstable and unrealistic self-description (Baumeister, Tice and Hutton , 1989). The fact that her satisfaction with her school work and performance and her confidence in her abilities as compared to her peers were each less favourable by 1 after intervention, is perhaps a more realistic self-appraisal. It is therefore possible to say that this slight negative shift was a movement to a qualitatively better self-description as it could show that Maria was coming to a better understanding of herself. This change did not negatively affect her view that she is, fundamentally intelligent, as seen in her more positive response in the post-test to the statement 'I am intelligent'(question 1).

Maria’s social skills, shown in Graph 7.4 below, remained an area with a mixed set of responses. After intervention, Maria claimed to be far more confident as the statement 'I think I am quite confident' shifted positively from 2 to 9. She also believed that she had more friends and was less inclined to follow. However, Maria felt with more certainty that she was intimidated easily, felt as if her peers did not listen to her and did not have anything to contribute in class. These three statements had previously received positive responses and were now viewed quite negatively. As a theme, social skills presented three statements which shifted positively, three which shifted negatively, and two which remained unchanged. In light of Maria’s Asperger’s it is understandable that this theme should carry with it some complexity.

Graph 7.4

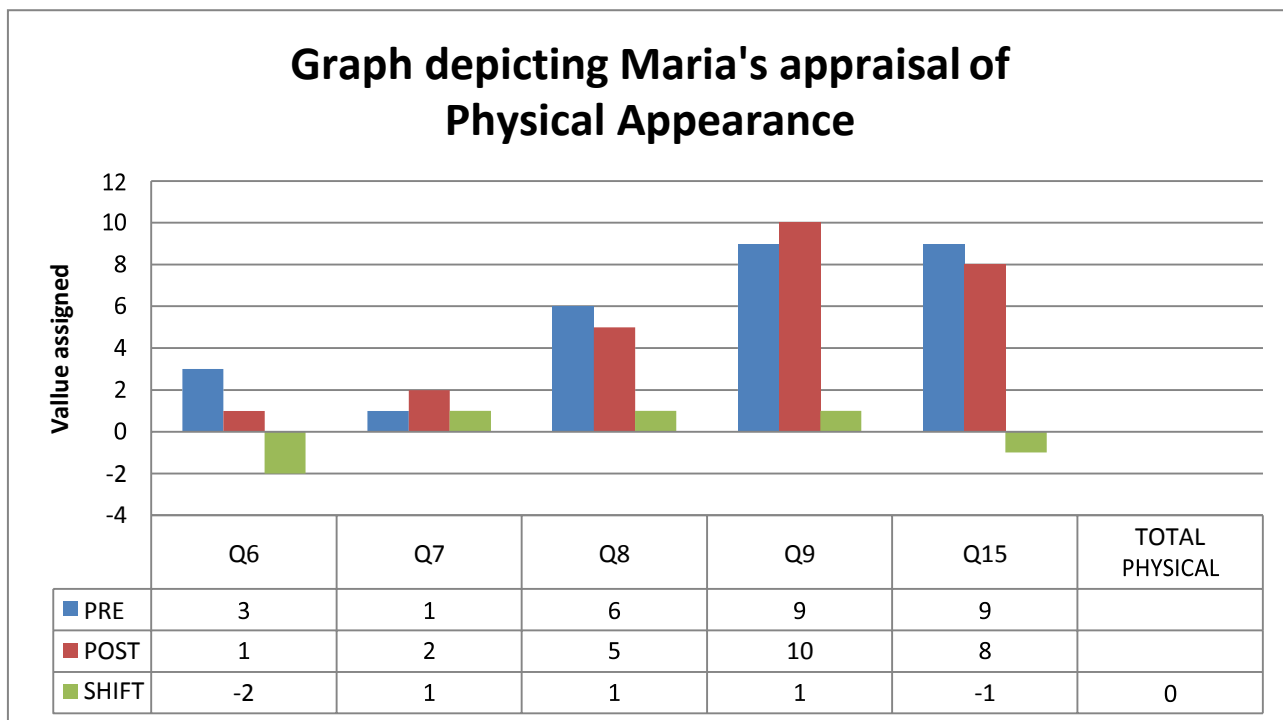


Maria’s post-test responses to the theme of intelligence, although slightly more negative, were more closely aligned with her actual abilities. Maria’s understanding of her social skills, although

now more negative in places, was now more moderate and slightly less contradictory. Based on this analysis, one may posit that Maria had begun to look at these aspects of herself more carefully and to reflect on how she actually felt as opposed to providing superficial responses.

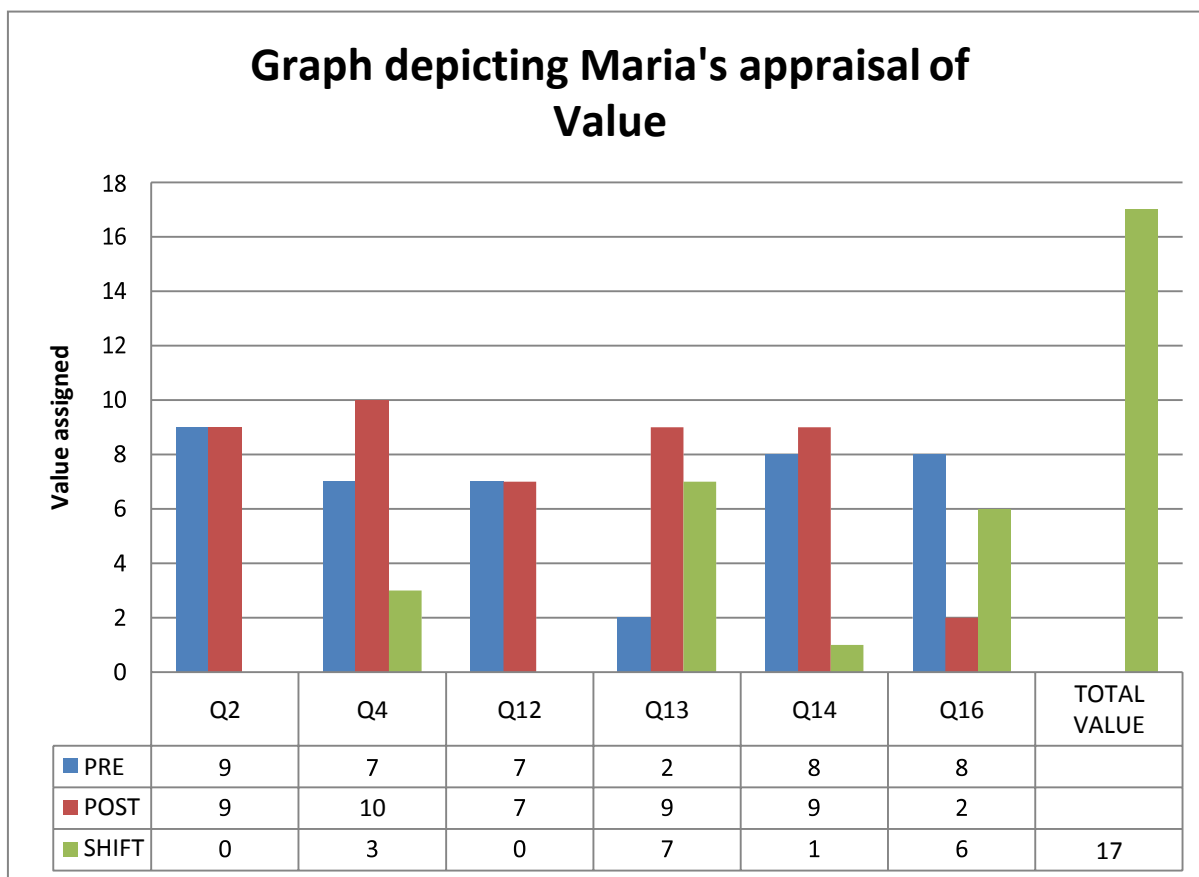
Graph 7.5 below shows Maria’s appraisal of her physical appearance both before and after intervention. The pre-test responses highlighted a contradiction; Maria claimed to be unhappy with her body shape and size yet content with her overall physical appearance. After intervention, this anomaly was less present. Statements pertaining to Maria’s body shape and her satisfaction thereof like her desire to lose weight were responded to slightly more positively while statements regarding her overall satisfaction with her physical appearance were responded to slightly more negatively. This led to a more moderate and therefore less contradictory response.

Graph 7.5



Graph 7.6 below shows Maria’s most positive shift - that of her appraisal of her own value. Before intervention, Maria appeared sure of her own value but dissatisfied with how others valued her. After intervention Maria stated even more firmly that she was ‘loveable’ and an important member of her family. Moreover, she was a great deal more positive about how her teachers felt about her and that she felt ‘loved.’ Unfortunately her feelings of loneliness did not improve which suggests an area for further development.

Graph 7.6



Maria's Self-Esteem Inventory responses shifted positively by a total of 14. This was a relatively small shift and most of her quantitative improvement was situated in the theme of value. However, Maria's superficial, contradictory and sometimes unrealistic responses in the pre-test may suggest that the shift was far greater qualitatively than quantitatively. Maria's post-test showed a far more reflexive understanding of the self. She appeared to have moved closer to an ability to self-describe after intervention.

Interestingly, themes within this form of data which evidenced a conflicting or incongruent self-description in the pre-test (such as intelligence) shifted negatively after intervention. Themes which were congruous and more stable before intervention showed a positive shift in the post-test (such as value). In the same way as Miriam had offered self-descriptions which contradicted one another or were not realistic, Maria did so in some aspects of her Self-Esteem Inventory. However, she was better able to self-describe in other aspects. The aspects which showed more optimal ability shifted positively while the themes in which Maria's ability was limited shifted negatively. She may have had a more developed ability in some aspects of her self-descriptions and therefore a different Zone of Proximal Development in each case.

Questionnaire Written Responses

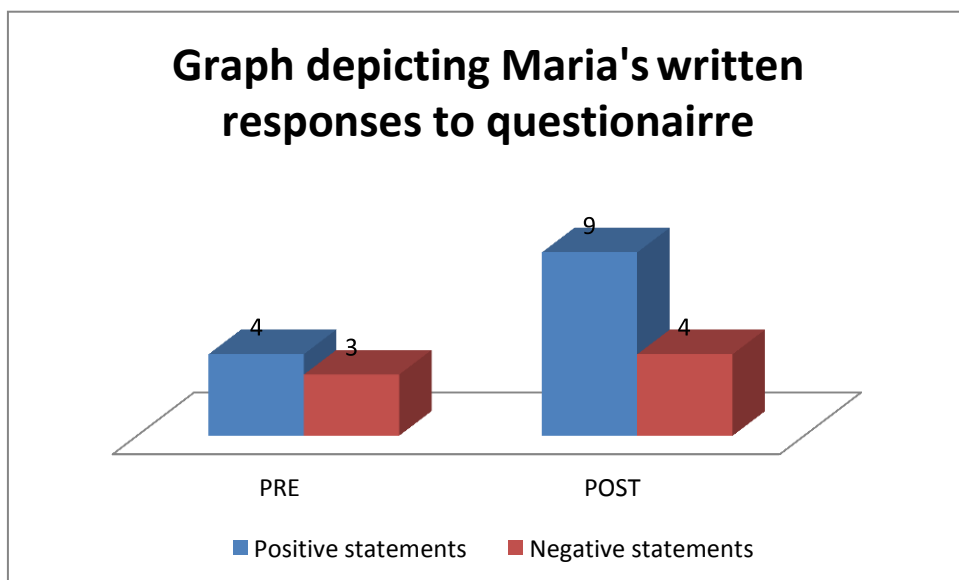
The written responses provided by Maria in the pre-test were, like the inventory, fairly shallow and generic. For instance, Maria's response to the question 'How would you describe yourself?' was "A pessimist but true believer." The meaning of this description is unclear and perhaps it was merely a platitude. She expressed only two strengths; "listening" and a knowledge of Marine Biology, and two weaknesses; "public speaking" and "social problems." The "social problems" may have been an allusion to her Asperger's diagnosis. She stated that there was nothing she wished to change about herself.

Following the trend set in the inventory responses – from inability to coherently self-describe to a more detailed and accurate self-description – Maria's post-test written responses were more detailed. As seen in Graph 7.7, Maria was able to express six more ideas about herself after intervention. These ideas were mostly positive. Her new self-description included terms like "strong hearted, loving, caring, open minded[...] respectful[...] brutally honest as well as multi-potentialite." Whilst Maria's use of English is not always accurate, this response suggests a young lady who believes herself to be an asset to others. This is quantitatively and qualitatively a clearer and more positive self-description than that provided before intervention.

Unfortunately, Maria's newly acquired ability to self-describe allowed her to discern characteristics she would like to change; "negative thoughts, negative reactions, doubts that I have of my self-image." Whilst this is an overtly negative statement, Maria has learnt a new skill. She is now able to see that there are aspects she would like to change and she has essentially set a personal goal to do so. She recognises her agency in creating more positive self-descriptions and feelings.

Both the inventory and written responses therefore, show Maria to have moved from an inability to self-describe to an ability to self-describe, albeit not in a consistently positive manner.

Graph 7.7



Ranking Activity

Figure 7.1

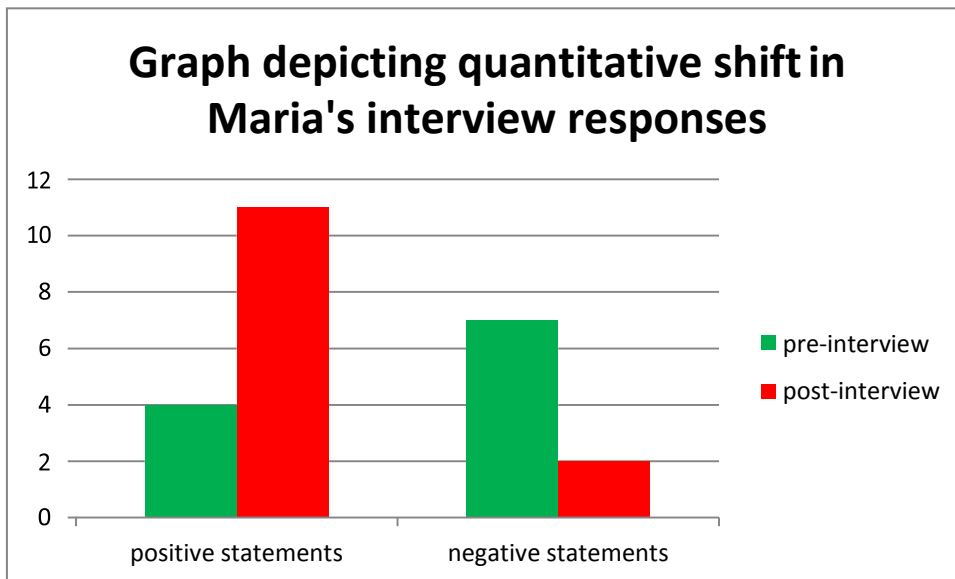
PRE	POST
Integrity	Integrity
Intelligence	Intelligence
Sense of Humour	Sense of Humour
Body shape and size	Body shape and size
Looks	Popularity
Talents	Looks
Popularity	Talents

As seen in Figure 7.1 above, the only item to shift in the ranking activity was 'popularity' which became more important after intervention. Whilst one cannot assert the reason for this there may be a correlation with both the fact that the theme of social skills shifted negatively in the inventory and that many of the words used in the written response section pertained to relationships. It is possible that, as Maria's ability to reflect on and describe herself improved, she noticed the importance of relationships more.

Personal Interview

Graph 7.8 below shows the quantitative shift in Maria's pre- and post-intervention interviews. Maria offered 7 more positive and 5 fewer negative self-descriptions after intervention. This is a quantitatively positive shift. She also offered 2 more total self-descriptions after intervention.

Graph 7.8



In many ways, Maria rendered herself as an average adolescent in both interviews. Her pre- and post-test perfect day included walks in nature, easy social interaction, few chores and a taste of popular culture. But in many ways, the interview showed Maria to have struggles not typical of the average adolescent. It was during the pre-test interview that Maria opened up about her Asperger's and social anxiety. She responded to the request to describe her personality as follows:

"I'm very outgoing. I talk a lot at home but not really when I'm socialising. I sometimes get social anxiety. When it's like, a social problem, like someone gossips about me like...do you know about Asperger's Syndrome? I was diagnosed with that. So a problem like, when someone gossips about me or looks at me I like, control it inside. But the doctors said I shouldn't do that because apparently it's like basically bottling it up. So I have social anxiety sometimes and I'm friendly, at least I like to think so. According to my friends I don't like anyone. It's not that I don't like anyone it's just that I notice certain characteristics that are not, you know, very pleasing...like, there's a lot of people that makes fun of a lot of other people and I just find that sometimes hard to bare. You should talk last about other people. Confidence is not me. I'm not very confident."

Here Maria explained how difficult it was for her to interact with her peers and how her social anxiety tended to influence these interactions. As she spoke her body language was closed and she fidgeted often.

It is noticeable that the only actual self-descriptions regarding personality that were offered amidst this lengthy response were her claims to be “outgoing,” “friendly” and “not very confident.” Maria’s other data thus far have shown that prior to intervention she had difficulty self-describing which may be the cause of such a response. Throughout the interview, she was only able to offer 4 positive self-descriptions. Besides being friendly and outgoing, Maria felt that her eyes and legs were attractive.

Maria’s sparse self-descriptions can be seen clearly in her description of her intellect:

“Knowledge wise I, um, ...I like Biology ...there I think I’m quite...80 or 90% so I’m quite high. With maths and physics I’m like 70s. Reading and language is not my strong suit so there I’m at like a low 60% or so.”

Rather than making a judgement, Maria quoted her academic results. She started the sentence (“Knowledge wise I, um...”) and cut herself off. She could not self-describe. The only appraisal she does make is that her language results are lower than that of other subjects. Maria appeared to find self-description very difficult in this first interview.

However, she was sufficiently self-aware to notice that there was a problem. When asked to describe her own self-image she stated:

“Sometimes I don’t like...well I’m not comfortable with who I am. I’m very pessimistic. I don’t know what people think about me...sometimes I don’t care but sometimes I do. As a child I was optimistic but now...my self-image has sort of gone down”

Maria was aware of the ‘crisis’ of self-awareness she was experiencing in her adolescence and the fact that her view of herself was largely negative.

After intervention, Maria offered significantly more positive self-descriptions and a greater number of total self-descriptions. She also used stronger language, for example, she claimed to have “awesome curves” and legs which other people “love.” Maria offered that, academically, she “really did well.”

Maria’s negative self-descriptions were not only 50% fewer but also given with more insight. Of her inferior English performance she wrote:

“English no matter how hard I study no matter how much stories I write my English is still terrible. People say I should read more but I don’t like reading.”

Whilst this is a negative statement (one of only two in this interview) Maria has identified the problem and a possible solution.

The area of self-description which showed the greatest improvement in Maria's post-test interview was the question regarding her personality:

"I think I'm a good listener. I feel like I am. I am quite pessimistic but lately I've been more optimistic. I've been very open-minded to things lately so like, I haven't been so just within my comfort zone. I have expanded my boundaries and expectations. I'm socialising more with other people out of my group of friends. I'm well spoken. I am different to other people, I think everyone is."

Maria says several positive things in this response. She claims to be a good listener, an optimist and to be well spoken. She suggests that she has a wide social circle and that her 'difference' is a shared human trait rather than something to be ashamed of. Perhaps more importantly, Maria also points to some personal growth. She says that she used to be a pessimist but has made an effort to socialise and act outside of her "comfort zone." It is commendable that Maria is seeking personal growth in this way and that she is sufficiently self-reflexive to notice the change which has come about. She later added to this when describing her social life by saying that she was "try[ing] to be as social as possible."

As with the other forms of data, it appears as if Maria was not able to offer adequate self-description prior to intervention but, after intervention, had begun to develop the ability to self-describe.

Journal Entries

As a result of Maria's poor linguistic and comprehension skills, many of the journal entries are difficult to understand and did not relate to the leading questions posed. However, as with Sarah and Miriam, there is a profound concern with the standards imposed by others. Maria frequently referenced "negative thoughts" which came both from within and from the comments of others. She admitted, as a result, to posting on social media platforms in order to get 'likes' and to considering the ideals brought forward by television as valid and important.

Another theme which ran through Maria's journal entries was the notion of "breaking free" of negative self-descriptions and circumstances. She first mentioned it after session 2 and continued to reference this idea. Her final entry read as follows:

“I’ve learnt that I’m strong enough to overcome the challenges in life and [if] I believe it, I can succeed at it.

Things I will not do anymore:

- *Negative thoughts*
- *Try not to be judgemental*
- *I won’t let other people negative opinions get to me especially if they don’t know me.”*

While Maria’s final thoughts lacked the nuances displayed by her peers, she did express that she felt she was able to work towards a more positive self-description.

It was suggested in the discussion of Maria’s Self-Esteem Inventory that she began the process largely unable to self-describe and presented with contradictory self-descriptions. This is further substantiated by the journal entries. An example of this was an entry after session 3 in which she listed her strengths and weaknesses:

“Strengths:

- *Good listener*
- *Caring*
- *Well-spoken*
- *Fast runner*
- *Excellent working attitude in class*
- *Good volleyball and fighting*

Weakneses:

- *I run fast I get tired quickly*
- *Bad in most sports including hiking*
- *Public speaking*
- *Interaction*
- *Anti social*
- *Communication skills*

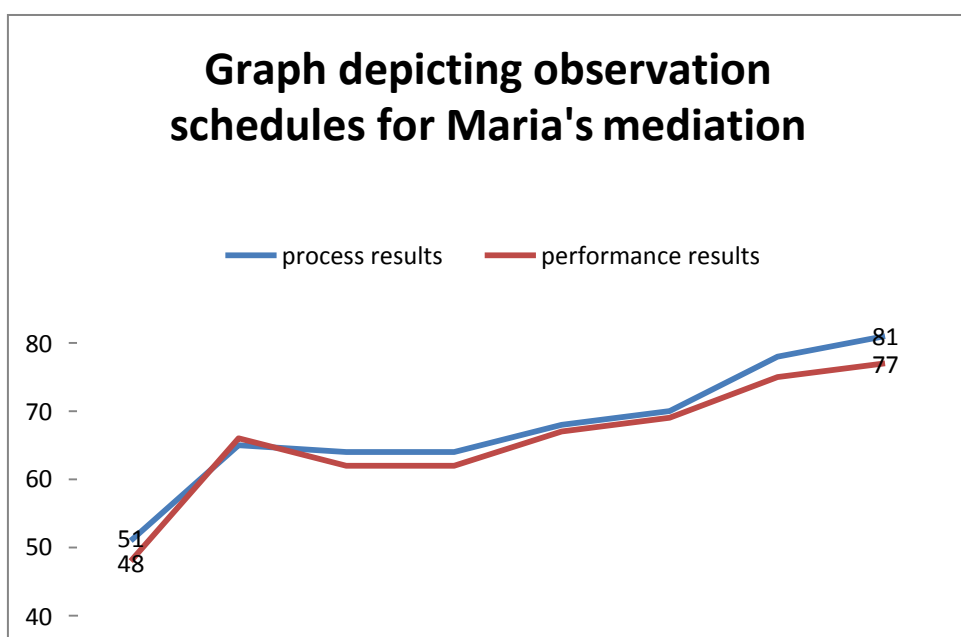
It seems to be contradictory to claim to be “good at volleyball and fighting” as well as a “fast runner” but also “bad at most sports.” It also appears incongruous that Maria be a “good listener” and “well spoken” yet feel that she is weak at “interaction” and “communication” and claims to be “anti social” yet “caring.” These contradictions as well as the fairly superficial responses provided across the journal entries substantiate the claims made regarding other data such as the Self-

Esteem Inventory. It may be fair to claim that Maria had a very limited ability to self-describe before intervention and experienced some development during intervention.

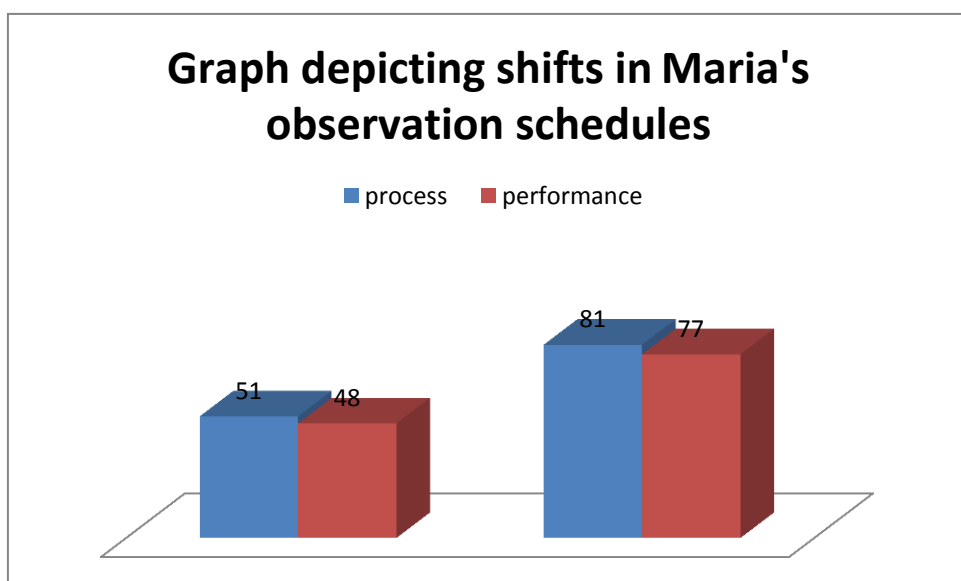
Mediation Observations

Maria showed the greatest improvement across 8 weeks of intervention in terms of process and performance results of all the participants in this study. This is consistent with the fact that she was consistently above the School B average in all data measuring positive shifts after intervention. Graphs 7.9 and 7.10 below depict this improvement. Maria's results for process and performance increased by 30 and 29 points respectively. This is a total of 59 out of 200 points.

Graph 7.9



Graph 7.10



Maria did quite poorly in her first Observation Schedule; receiving 4 out of 10 for a number of the markers for both process and performance. Maria had already explained that she suffered from social anxiety and it has been noted that her Asperger's Syndrome prevented her from picking up on social queues at times. These barriers may have been what caused the initially low results. She also struggled to think creatively and offered movements which were little more than overtly literal mime in many cases.

This slow start was thankfully short-lived. Subsequent sessions saw a gradual improvement in Maria's ability to voice her opinion and to formulate ideas both for herself and within the group. Her movements became more abstract and bigger. She began to experiment with the full range of her physical abilities and even went into the splits in one of the last activities.

In the final week of intervention Maria and Miriam elected to work together in the 'giving and receiving weight' activity. Miriam had historically been quite domineering and Maria had, for many sessions, been reserved and allowed others like Miriam to over shadow her. But in the final session this was far from the case. Both participants worked synergistically and produced a creative piece of work. They were able to share ideas freely and were equally invested in the process. This showed personal growth on both of their parts.

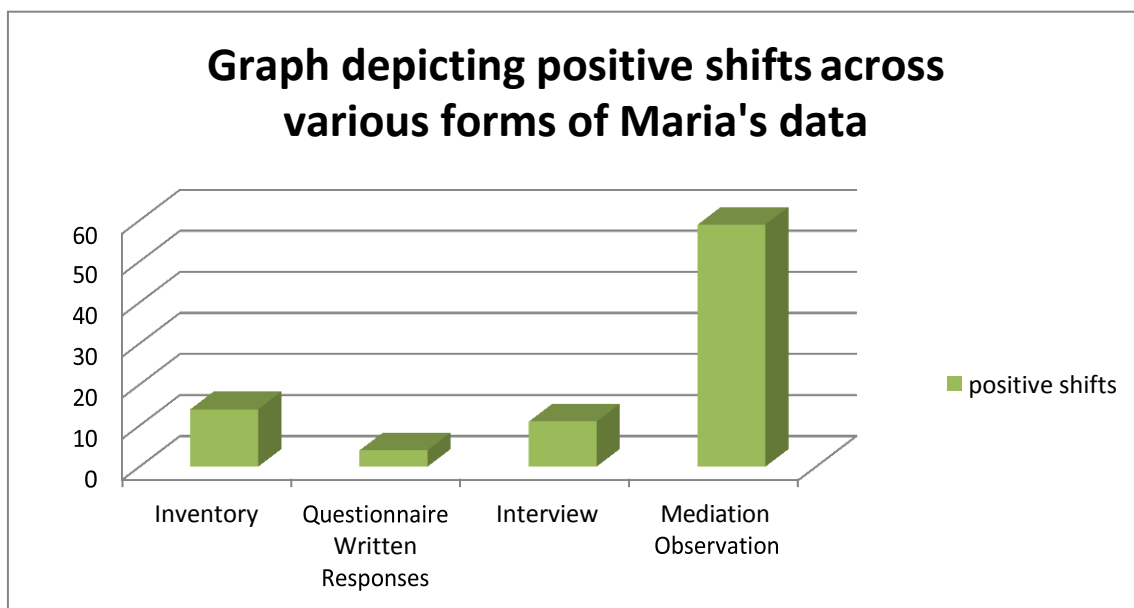
Summary of Maria's data

Maria's pre-test results showed a poor ability to self-describe. Her responses often conflicted with one another and she presented a fairly negative view of herself.

Her Self-Esteem Inventory showed a particular concern with her physical appearance and her value. These data also showed that some themes provided more developed self-descriptions than others and it was argued that the more developed themes shifted positively while the more poorly developed themes shifted negatively but towards a more optimal understanding of the self. Both Maria's Written Responses and Personal Interview in the post-test showed an improvement in the number and quality of positive statements.

Maria's Observation Schedule results showed the greatest improvement across the intervention process of all 8 participants.

Graph 7.11



Maria's shifts seen in summary in Graph 7.11 above were notably positive. Maria showed a poor ability to self-describe before intervention with a largely negative view of herself and, in some cases, an inability to provide an accurate self-description which did not conflict with other self-descriptions or reality. After intervention her self-descriptions were largely more positive as well as generally more plentiful. This suggests significant development in her ability to self-describe.

Maria's results are also reflected in the t-test below. P was found to be 0,42 in the two-tailed t-test.

Figure 7.2

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	19,6	37,4
Variance	748,8	1456,8
Observations	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	7	
t Stat	-0,847503749	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,212370126	
t Critical one-tail	1,894578605	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,424740252	
t Critical two-tail	2,364624252	

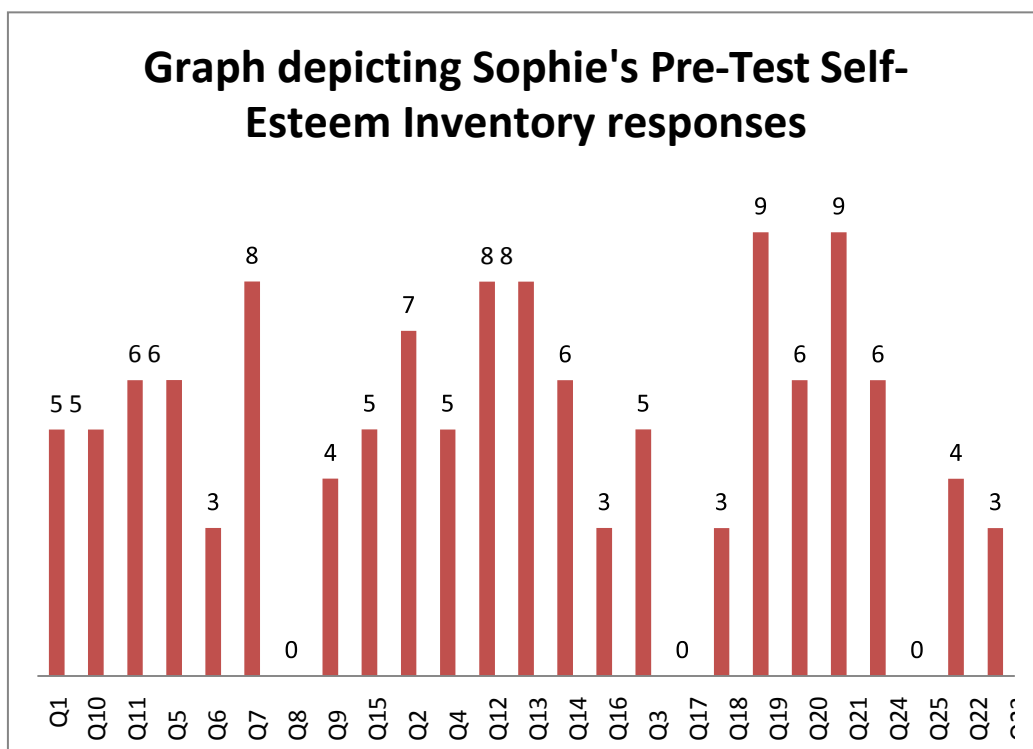
Participant 8: Sophie (School B)

Sophie was in Grade 9 and turning 16 during the period of the study. Sophie lives in a slightly more affluent suburb than her peers with her mother. Unlike her peers at School B, Sophie also participated in dance classes outside of school and was the most proficient at movement in the group. She is also a notable sports-woman amongst her peers and appeared to be fairly popular. Her opinion seemed to carry more weight than others in the group and all the members related well to her. She identified firmly as a Christian and spoke often of her involvement in her community's youth group.

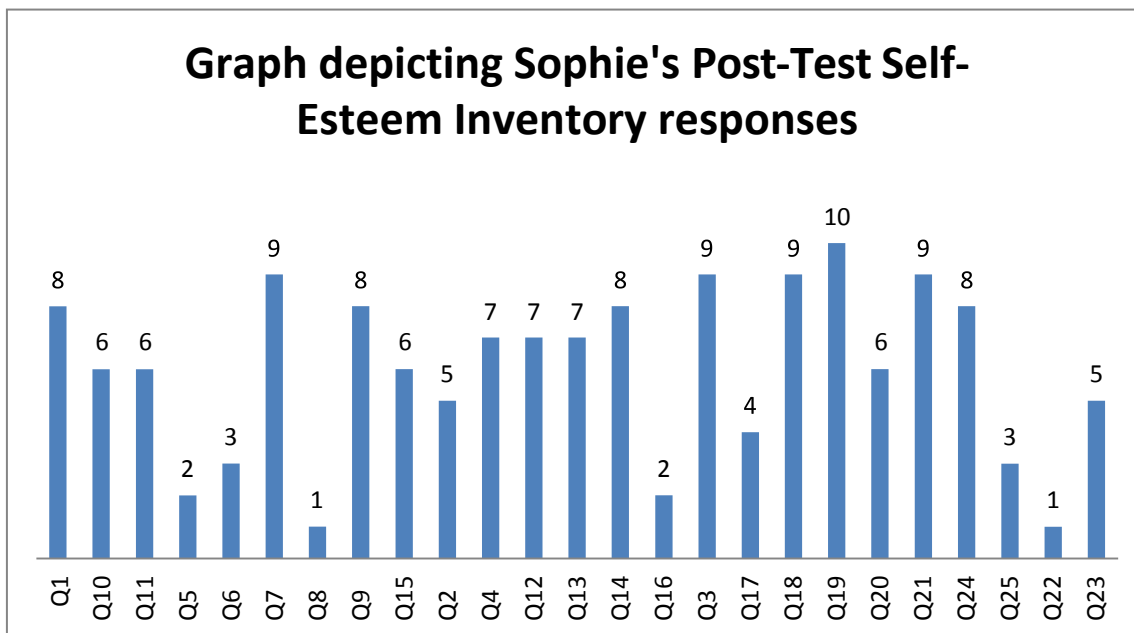
Self-Esteem Inventory

Sophie presented the lowest overall pre-test Self-Esteem Inventory prior to intervention at School B. This was surprising based on my experience of her as she conducted herself with confidence amongst her peers. Sophie's pre-test inventory is represented in Graph 8.1. In the entire inventory, there were only three statements to which she assigned a positive value; 'I have a good body,' 'I am a valuable member of my family' and 'I am loved.' All other statements were met with a below-average response. This suggests that Sophie's self-description was not positive at all before intervention

Graph 8.1



Graph 8.2



Graph 8.2 above shows Sophie's responses to the Self-Esteem inventory after intervention. Sophie's results were decidedly more positive. She showed a total of 29 positive shifts; the highest number at School B and the second highest of all participants studied. Graph 8.3 below shows that Sophie experienced a positive shift in every theme except that of decision making.

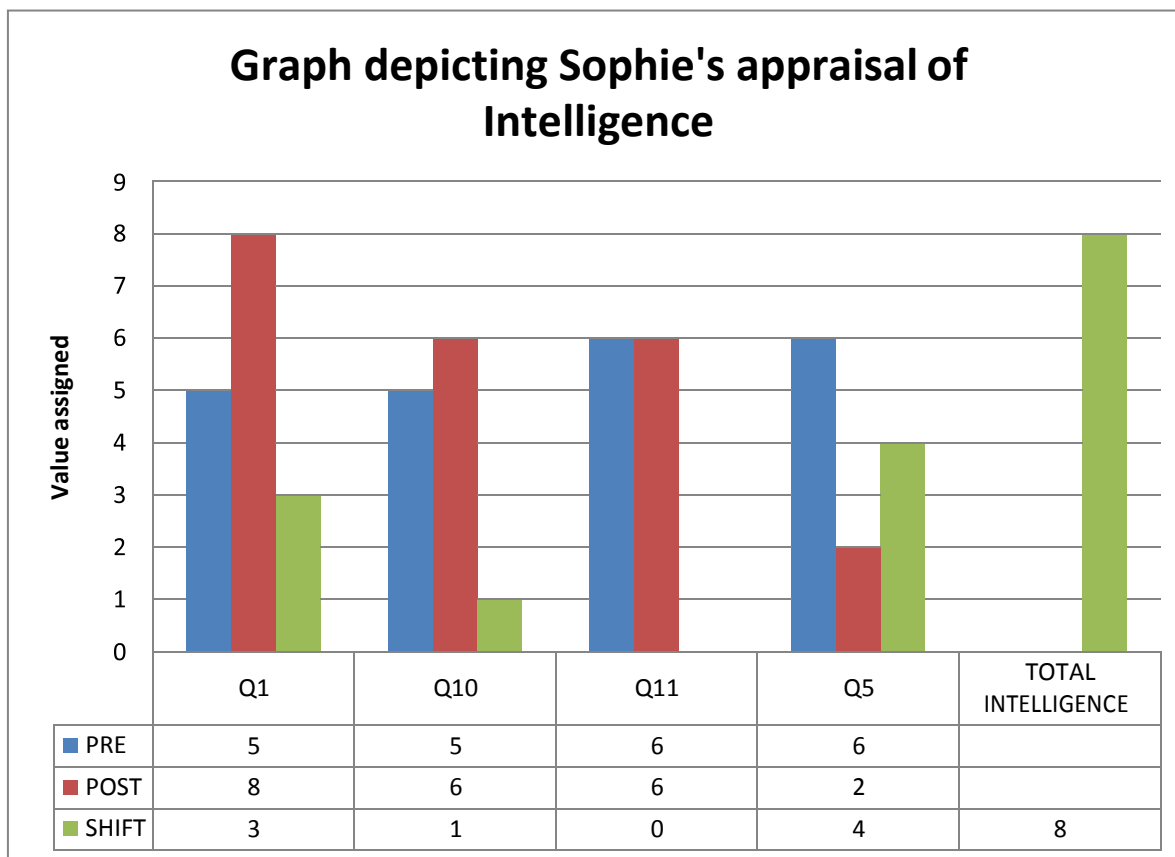
Graph 8.3



Sophie did not view her own intelligence positively before intervention. She provided numerical responses of 5 and 6 for statements like 'I am intelligent' and 'I am satisfied with my school performance.' She also seemed dissatisfied with her intelligence as compared to her peers as she

provided a 6 for the statement 'I am less intelligent than my peers' (question 5). In the post-test, this theme shifted positively by 8. After intervention Sophie felt that she was more intelligent, more satisfied with her school work and as satisfied with her school performance. She also rated herself more highly relative to her peers. These responses have been represented in Graph 8.4 below.

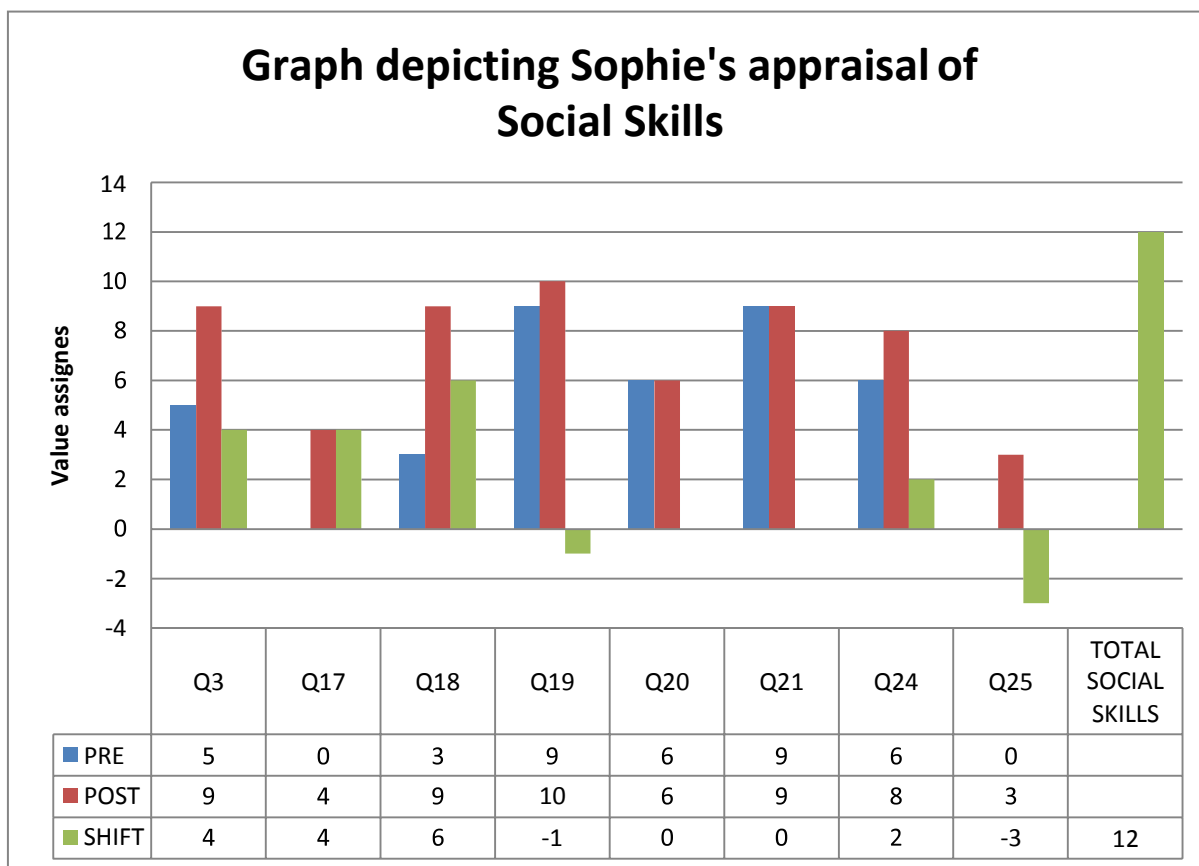
Graph 8.4



The areas of physical appearance and value each improved by 5. Sophie stated clearly that she felt more content with her body and appearance. Most notably, the response to the statement 'I am happy with the way I look' (question 9) doubled from 4 to 8. The only response regarding appearance which was quantitatively more negative was to the statement 'I would like to lose weight.' In the pre-test Sophie had responded with a 0 and in the post-test, 1. This is a minor shift and, given that Sophie was particularly slender at the time of the study, it is unlikely that a desire to lose weight is a qualitatively negative statement.

Similarly, after intervention Sophie felt less lonely, more important, more loveable and more liked by teachers.

Graph 8.5



Graph 8.5 above shows the shifts in Sophie’s appraisal of her own social skills. This was the area of most significant improvement for Sophie. Sophie felt significantly more confident (question 3) and asserted that she had more friends (question 17). She was more comfortable with leading (question 18) but still felt that her peers did not listen to her (question 21). Sophie also responded more positively by 2 to the statement ‘I always have something to contribute in class discussion’ (question 24). One anomaly was that Sophie claimed to enjoy break time less after intervention (question 25). The reason for this is unknown but the theme as a whole showed a quantitative and qualitative shift towards more positive self-description.

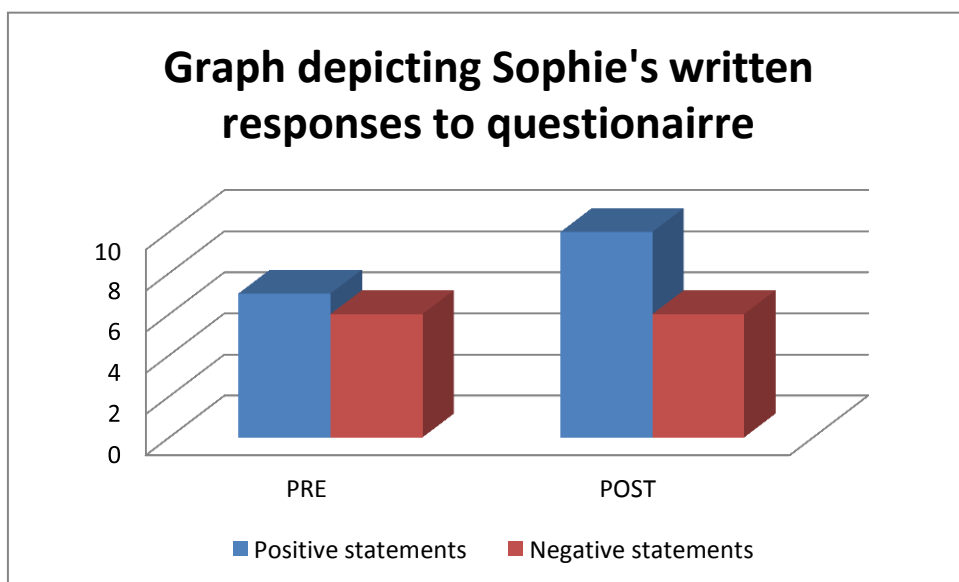
Decision making ability was the only aspect of Sophie’s Self-Esteem inventory to shift negatively, albeit slightly. Sophie felt that she took longer to make up her mind yet more likely not to change her mind after intervention had taken place.

Therefore Sophie’s Self-Esteem Inventory showed a strongly positive shift. Sophie had the most negative self-appraisal at School B and experienced the greatest movement towards positive self-description. It could be said that Sophie had a large zone of proximal development which allowed her to shift from a negative self-description in the Self-Esteem Inventory pre-test to a more positive self-description in the post-test.

Questionnaire Written Responses

As in the inventory, Sophie showed a positive shift in this test. Before intervention Sophie expressed six positive and five negative ideas about herself. After intervention the number of negative statements did not change but the number of positive statements increased by four to a total of ten. These shifts are shown in Graph 8.6 below.

Graph 8.6



A further similarity to the inventory was that Sophie focussed on social skills when discussing herself. Her strengths included “helpfulness” and “humility” while her weaknesses were “[a lack of] patience [...and] perseverance” as well as “anger.” She identified as someone who is “friendly”, encouraging and has the best interests of others at heart but wanted to change her “short temper[...attitude [...and] mindset.” Sophie expressed nothing regarding scholastic capability or physical appearance. The only deviation from interpersonal relationships was a mention of dance and poetry as strengths.

After intervention Sophie largely retained this focus on the relational but provided a far more detailed self-assessment. This is visible if one compares the two responses to the question, ‘What are your weaknesses?’ Prior to intervention Sophie gave three words: patience, anger, perseverance. Subsequent to intervention it was as if she was able to express the root cause of her impatience and anger. Sophie said that she became “agitated easily,” felt “sensitive” and “moody” and had a tendency to take everything personally. The answer provided after intervention in many ways clarifies the answer given before. It is as if Sophie had grown to understand that her impatience and anger stemmed from a proclivity for heightened emotion or ‘sensitivity.’ Even if it is

not assumed that these two answers are in some way linked, the second is at least more detailed than the first. Sophie used fuller phrases and more emotive diction.

This increase in detail was seen throughout Sophie's questionnaire written responses. She sighted a propensity to be "mature, friendly, loving, caring, open about [her]self and [her] past [and] confident" as strengths. She described herself as "confident, mature, [likely to] get irritated, good body, fun to be with." This description includes social, intellectual and physical traits which are mostly very positive. The list of things she would like to change about herself showed a more mature and self-reflective voice. She noted that she can be quite negative about her "weakness" and that she was not "hard-working" enough. She also expressed a desire to be more trustworthy.

Sophie's post-test responses were far more detailed and showed a greater insight into the self. They were also quantitatively more positive. This would suggest a positive shift in self-description.

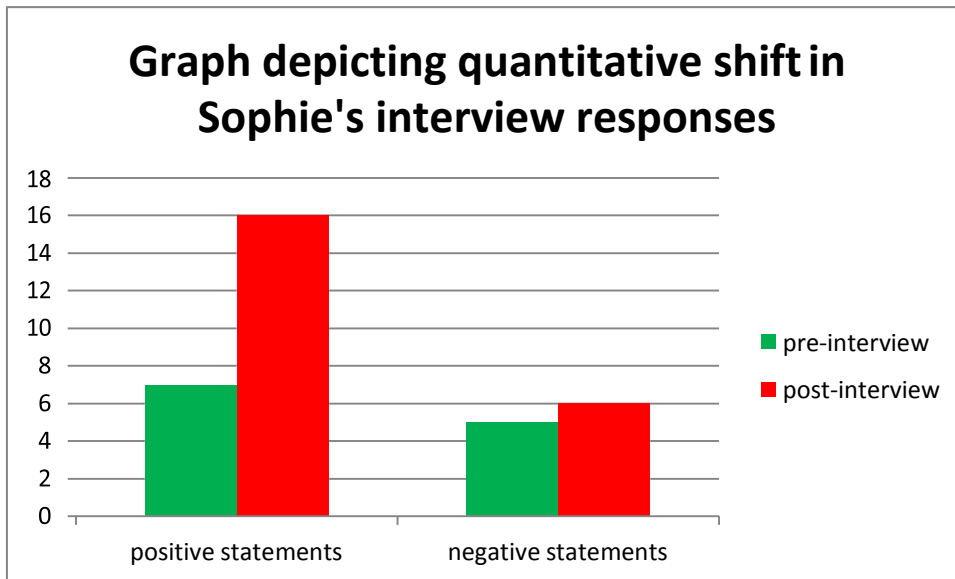
Ranking Activity

Figure 8.1

	PRE	POST
1	Talents	Talents
2	Intelligence	Integrity
3	Integrity	Intelligence
4	Looks	Looks
5	Body shape and size	Sense of humour
6	Sense of humour	Body shape and size
7	Popularity	Popularity

Figure 8.1 above shows Sophie's ranking activity. It is important to note that she misunderstood the activity somewhat and instead of placing items in numerical order, Sophie assigned a score out of ten for each. Her responses have subsequently been ranked based on these scores so that the highest score was placed as most important and so on. There is very little change in the order provided before and after intervention. The consistency in Sophie's focus across both tests in the written responses would suggest that this makes sense. Sophie's opinion of what is important did not change, but her ability to speak positively about herself in relation to these important aspects did. Sophie's self-descriptions changed within the framework of a consistent world-view.

Graph 8.7



Sophie showed significant quantitative shifts in the interview responses as shown in Graph 8.7 above. Her positive statements moved from 7 to 16 (a positive shift of 9) and her total statements increased by 10 after intervention. After intervention Sophie had more positive things to say about herself as well as a more detailed response to each question. Sophie did offer one more negative statement after intervention but this seems minor in light of the overall positive shift. This is consistent with the other data in which she also showed a substantial positive shift relative to the other participants.

Sophie's 'perfect day' offered great insight into her concerns in the pre-test interview. She noted that on a perfect day she would not experience the various negative emotions which usually plagued her:

“At the end of the day I wouldn't feel drained with work and I'd be motivated or excited for certain subjects that I really like. Not feeling certain times excluded out of conversations. Not getting sad or emotional over small stuff. Not seeing things negative; like as the day goes by. Not overthinking things. And then when I go home, not feeling bad of something that happened during the day. And Mommy wouldn't be yelling about me being late because usually I come home past eight o'clock. And also, ya, just not remembering things that I lost at school, like my jacket and stuff and also not worrying about things.”

In this response, Sophie noted several negative emotions including feeling sad, pessimistic and excluded by her peers. Sophie did not seem to be content at this point, particularly with her social life. She pointed to this in her appraisal of her own self-image:

“That’s a 50/50. I’m not 100% comfortable, like with my body I’m comfortable. Because I dance with a dance company and we usually wear leotards or stuff that shows... so at first I was very shy but now I’m just confident. I don’t mind walking however, like I don’t care. But like inside, personality wise, I’m not very comfortable. Like certain times I find more flaws than actual good characteristics.”

Sophie’s responses to the questions relating to physical appearance and social skills echoed her own thesis. She offered a generally positive description of her appearance including claims to be “slim” and to have “strong legs.” However, her self-description regarding her social life was less flattering. She claimed not to be very popular or active on social media. She also claimed that she struggled to initiate friendships and even conversations:

“I don’t really make friends. Like, I’m not good at making friends or starting the conversation. But if someone starts talking to me then I engage better, if they take the first step. I’m friendly; well... even though I won’t step out...if I know you I’m friendly.”

In both the Self-Esteem Inventory and the Questionnaire Written Responses, social skills were the area of most concern and most positive development for Sophie. This was once again the case in the Personal Interview.

After intervention Sophie asserted that she was “friendly,” “open,” “mature,” “jolly,” “bubbly,” “straight forward” and “curious.” These are significantly more positive self-descriptions and many of them pertain to Sophie’s ability to interact with others.

Her physical self-description, although already positive before intervention, also showed an improvement. She spoke confidently about her body’s strength and pleasing shape as well as about her “nice” feet and eyes.

When Sophie was asked to describe her own self-image after intervention she replied:

“...lately I’ve been not thinking bad of myself like before. So I think [if I am] self-reflective, [my self-image is] good actually compared to other times... reflecting on myself, my self-image on myself is good.”

In this response, Sophie states that her self-image has improved. She was articulating what was also clear in the data; a positive shift in self-description had occurred.

Journal Entries

Sophie's journal entries were uniquely detailed and honest. She wrote freely and extensively about her concerns, particularly her negative body image and the complexities of teenage social dynamics. Her honesty extended to a discussion of her sexuality and her various physical insecurities. Her primary physical insecurity was her small frame. On several occasions she referenced the fact that society appears to value larger breasts and buttocks and that she felt "flawed" for not possessing these attributes. She also hinted at feeling guilty and "dirty" for certain behaviours. There was little in Sophie's journal entries which echoed the development seen in her pre- and post-tests but a view into her specific insecurities was provided. Sophie did, however claim to have benefited from intervention:

"I've learnt to be open with people's ideas and not stick to the box society and my past has put on me. I can take away the fact that I shouldn't always live to the expectation I've gotten used to because that could be what other people adore."

This closing statement suggests that Sophie had discovered that her beliefs and actions could change and that some of her previously held beliefs may have been flawed.

Mediation Observations

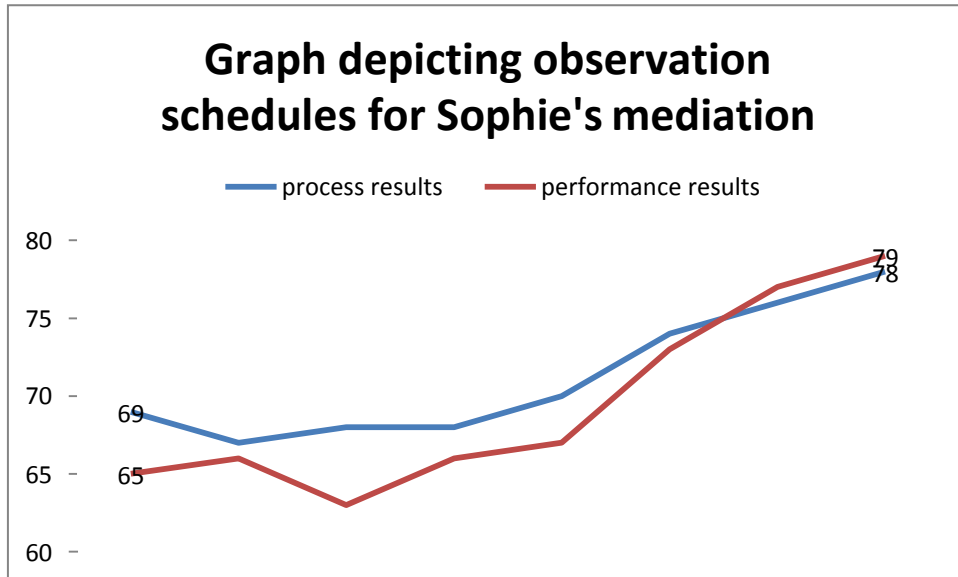
From the very first session Sophie exhibited an above average ability to use Creative Movement for personal expression. She found it easy to concentrate and to trust others. She took fairly big risks early on and used her body to its fullest extent. Sophie contributed to group activities fairly freely. In spite of her already developed ability, Sophie continued to improve and was even more capable by the end of intervention. Her movements became more abstract and original rather than using literal mime or gesture and she was more able to work with the rest of the group. A particular improvement was noted in her body language which was closed with excessive fidgeting in earlier sessions but became more open and still as intervention progressed.

Sophie was already an accomplished dancer before intervention unlike her peers. As a result her earlier Observation Schedules yielded much higher results and the improvement during the period of intervention is less steep. It can be said that Sophie's Zone of Proximal Development in terms of Creative Movement was much smaller than the rest of her group and much smaller than her ZPD for self-description. The ability to use the body to express thoughts and ideas was already developed in Sophie. Intervention allowed her to exercise this existing ability in a new way – to

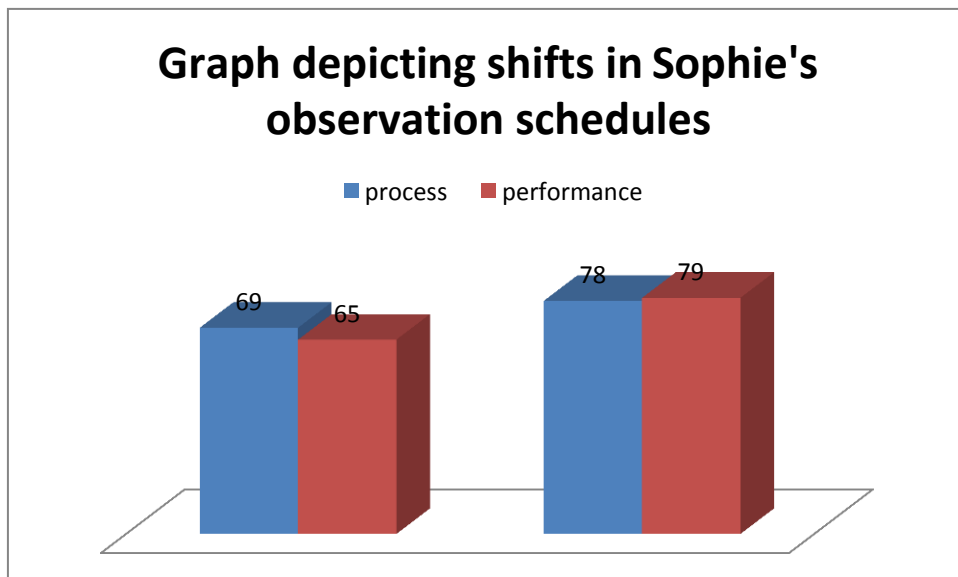
self-describe. Sophie's shifts in intervention may have been less obvious than the rest of School B but her positive shifts in the post-test data were amongst the most significant.

Graphs 8.8. and 8.9 below show Sophie's progress. Sophie's results for process and performance improved by 9 and 14 respectively.

Graph 8.8



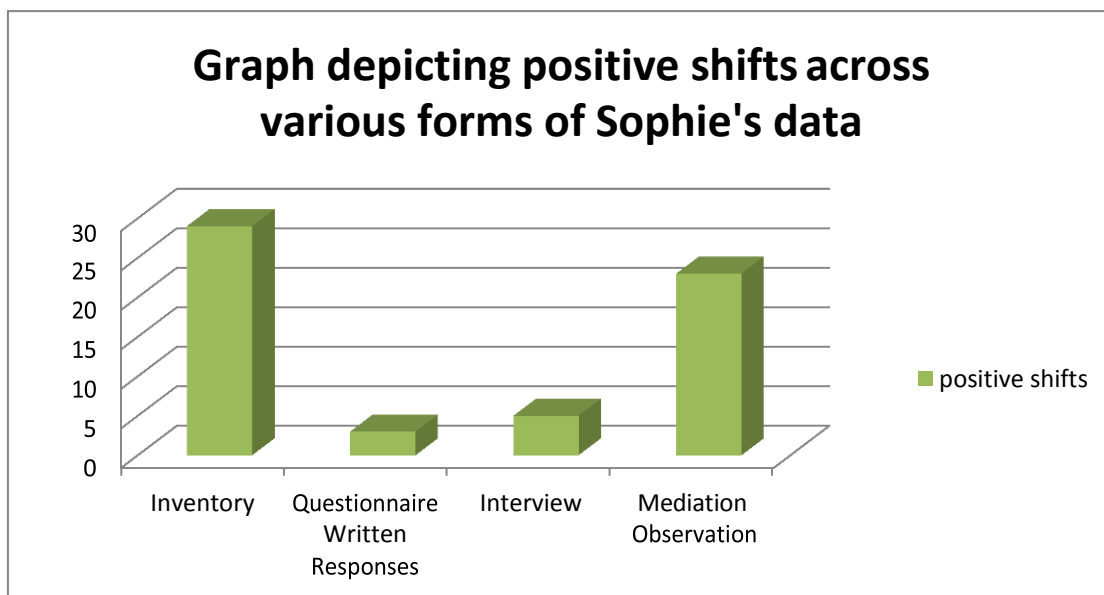
Graph 8.9



Summary of Sophie's data

Sophie presented with the most negative self-descriptions before intervention took place. Graph 8.10 below shows her positive shifts in self-description after intervention.

Graph 8.10



Sophie showed the greatest quantitative shift in her school for the Inventory and this is the form of data in which she experienced the most significantly positive quantitative shift.

Sophie presented a negative self-description prior to intervention with her greatest concern being her social skills. After intervention, Sophie showed a positive shift in all forms of data. She also showed the greatest positive shift in the area of social skills in all of these forms. Sophie experienced the greatest positive shift in School B in the Self-Esteem Inventory. Her previously negative appraisals became strongly positive, most notably in the themes of social skills and intelligence, both areas of concern before intervention. Sophie's Questionnaire Written Responses shifted positively by 10. In the post-test Personal Interview Sophie also offered 10 more positive statements. The Observation Schedules showed an improvement in Sophie's abilities during intervention, although her shift was smaller than her peers. Sophie was a more experienced dancer than the rest of School B and so her Zone of Proximal Development in this regard would have been smaller. This notwithstanding, Sophie's self-descriptions certainly shifted positively as evidenced in the t-test below with a P of 0,6 for a two-tailed test.

Figure 8.2

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	27,6	40,2
Variance	1295,8	1315,2
Observations	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	8	
t Stat	-0,5513814	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,298216008	
t Critical one-tail	1,859548038	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,596432016	
t Critical two-tail	2,306004135	

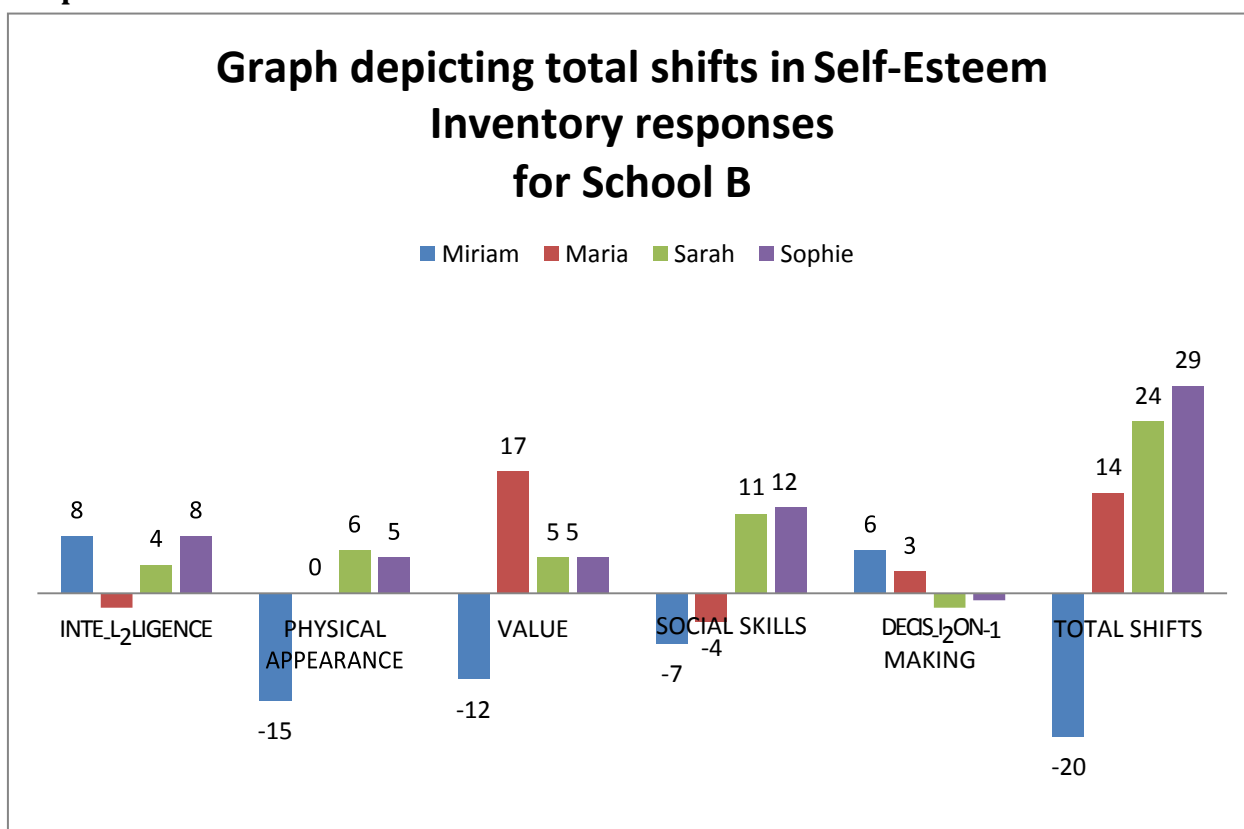
Summary of School B

Not all participants at School B showed an outright positive shift in self-description after intervention but all participants showed greater detail and fewer incongruences in their self-descriptions. The participant who showed a negative shift in some respects, Miriam, showed a significantly more detailed, consistent and authentic self-description and a strong awareness that her views of the self needed to be worked on. The remaining three participants showed fairly significant positive shifts across the data.

Once again, these four areas will now be discussed in terms of School B as a whole. The areas are; Self-Esteem Inventory, Questionnaire Written Responses, the Personal Interview and the Mediation Observation Schedules.

Graph B1 below shows the total and thematic shifts for each participant at School B.

Graph B1

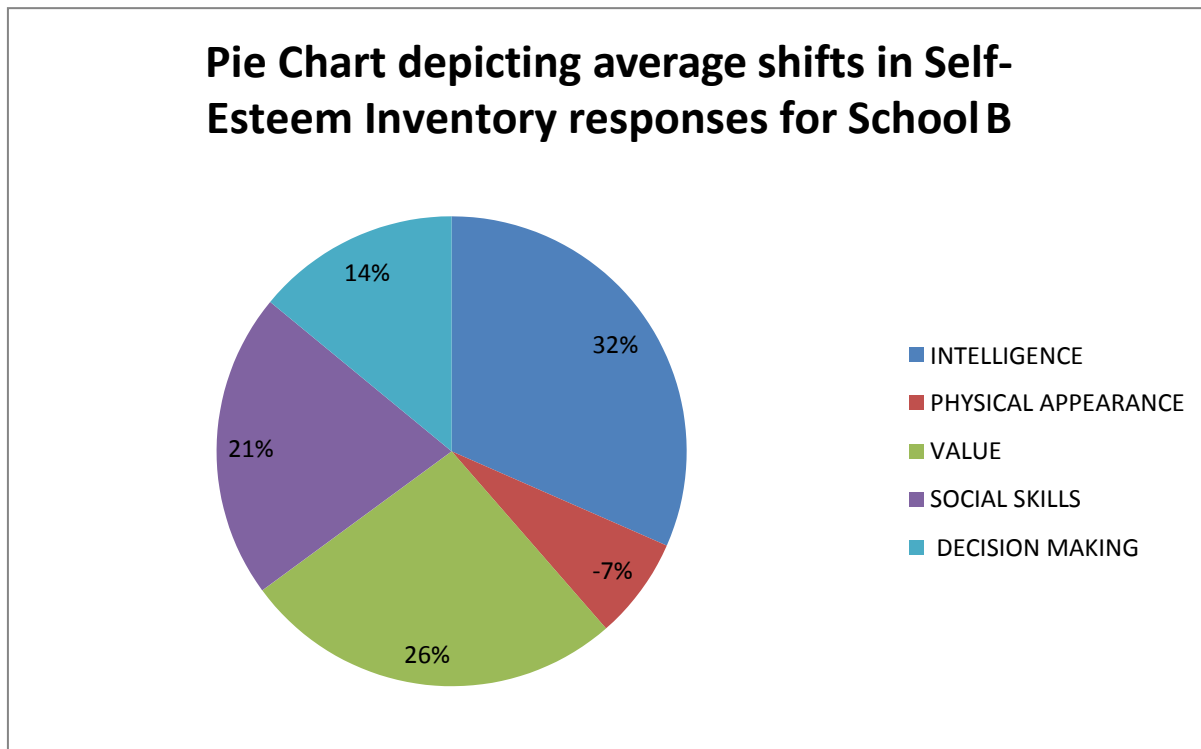


Miriam, depicted in blue, shows a negative shift in four of the themes and overall whilst all other participants experienced a positive overall shift in inventory responses. The greatest positive shift was seen in Sophie, followed by Sarah.

Graph B2 shows the average shifts per theme. Intelligence showed the greatest improvement and was the only area in which Miriam experienced a positive shift. Value and Social Skills showed the

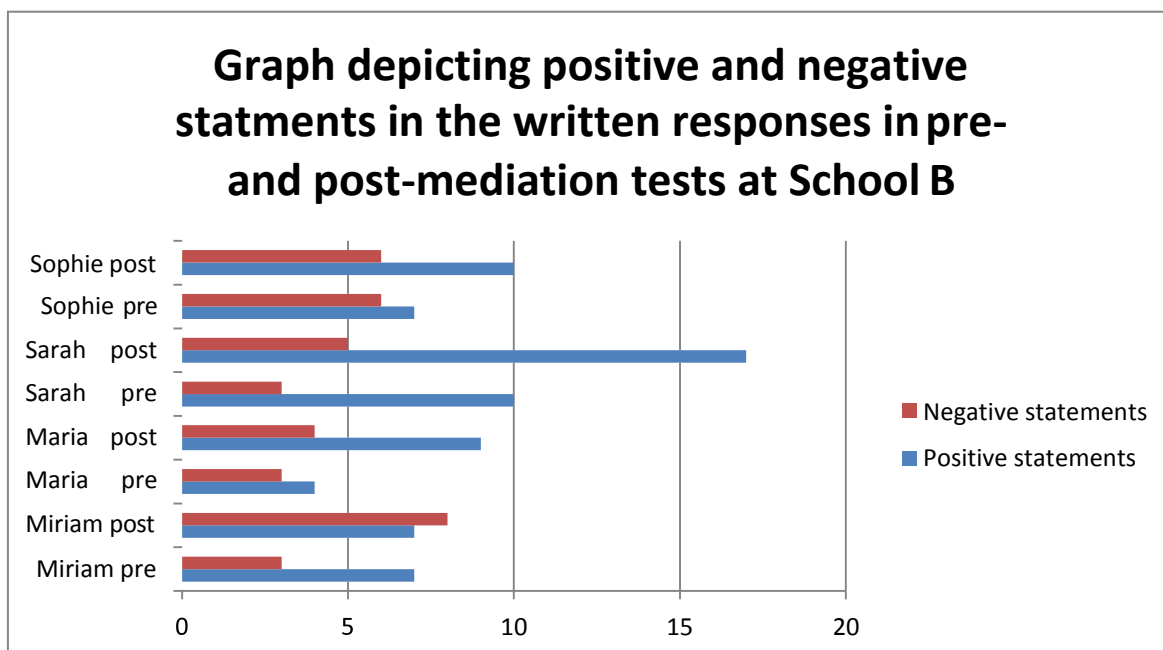
next most significant improvement. These themes also showed significant improvement at School A.

Graph B2

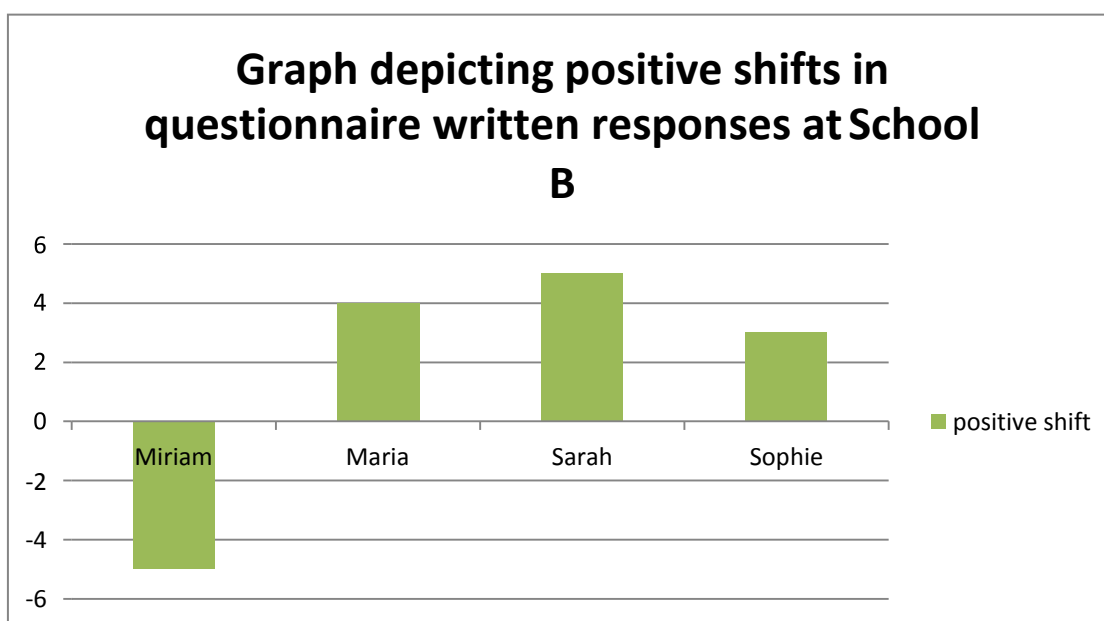


Graph B3 and B4 which follow depict School B's result for the textual responses given to the open-ended questions posed in the pre- and post-test. Graph B3 shows the actual number of positive and negative statements offered while Graph B4 shows the positive shift experienced. In this aspect of the data Sarah, followed by Maria, displayed the most positive shift. Once again, Miriam is an anomaly, being the only participant across both cases to show a negative shift in the number of positive self-descriptions she offered after intervention.

Graph B3



Graph B4



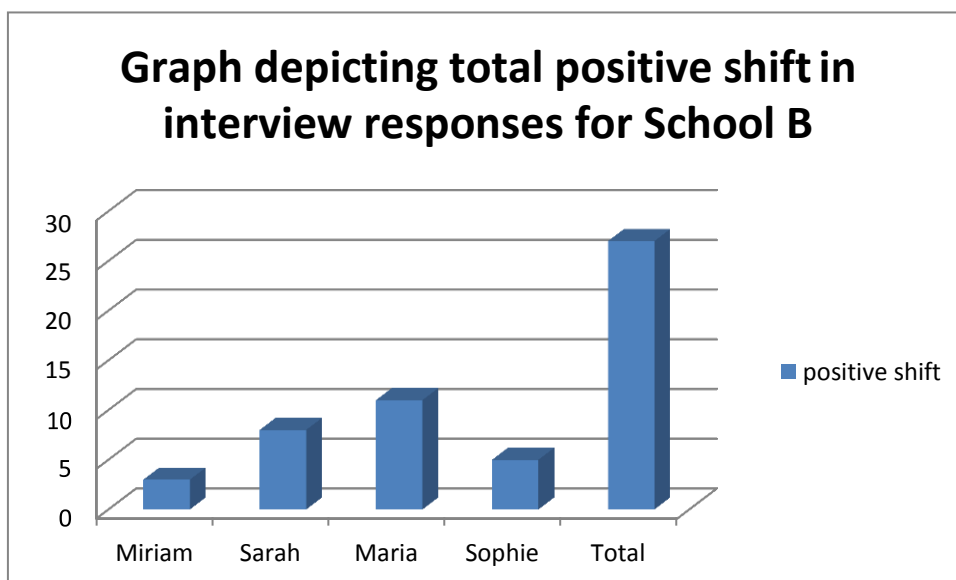
The group's shift in the number of positive written responses can, as with School A, be seen as statistically significant. A T-test was run comparing the number of positive statements of each participant in this case before and after intervention. Figure B1 below shows the results of the T-test. The null hypothesis was set at 1 as any increase in the number of positive statements can be seen as a positive shift. This t-test is evidence of statistically significant shifts for this group.

Figure B1

	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
Mean	7	10,75
Variance	6	18,91666667
Observations	4	4
Pearson Correlation	0,750917207	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	1	
df	3	
t Stat	3,181429761	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,025019521	
t Critical one-tail	2,353363435	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,050039042	
t Critical two-tail	3,182446305	

Graph B5 depicts the shift in the number of positive self-descriptions offered verbally as part of the personal interviews conducted before and after intervention. All participants showed a positive shift in this form of data. Maria, followed by Sarah, showed the greatest positive shift.

Graph B5



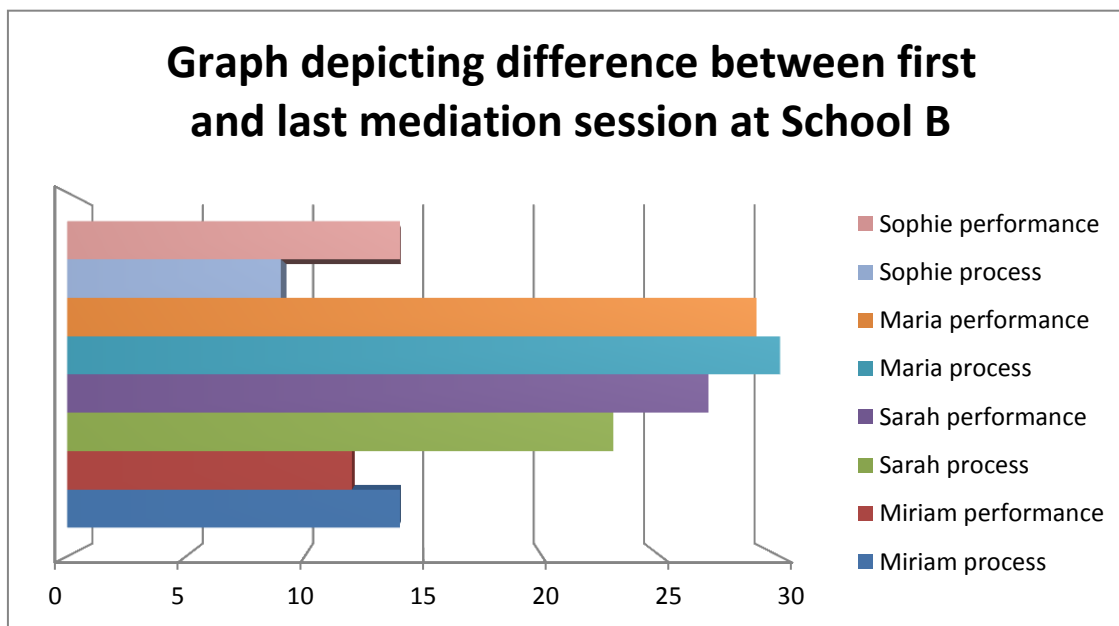
Again, this shift can be shown to be statistically significant by a T-test shown in Figure A2 below in which the null hypothesis was 1.

Figure B2

	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
Mean	3,5	11
Variance	21,66667	16,66667
Observations	4	4
Hypothesized Mean Difference	1	
df	3	
t Stat	-5,12569	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,007189	
t Critical one-tail	2,353363	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,014378	
t Critical two-tail	3,182446	

Graph B6 below shows the numerical difference between the scores awarded in each unit's first and last observation schedule for both process and performance. The score for the first session was subtracted from the score for the last session to show the extent to which each participant had improved.

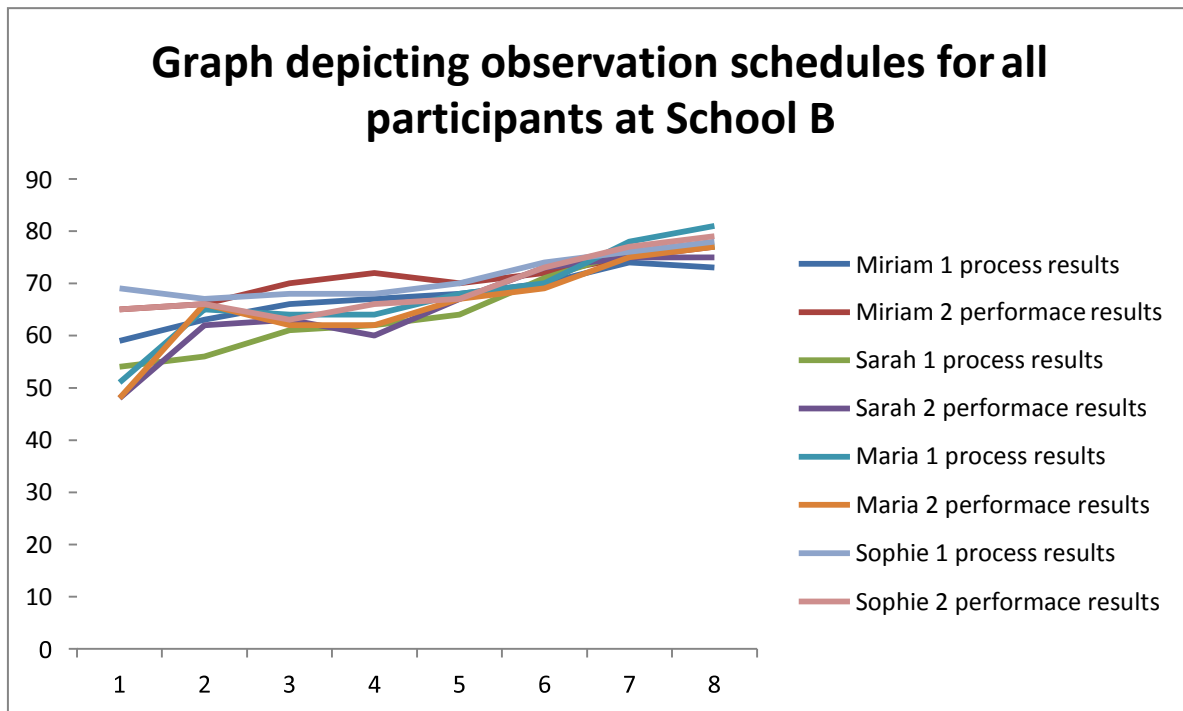
Graph B6



Graph B7 below depicts the scores for each session for each participant. This shows the improvement over a matter of weeks. Maria showed the greatest improvement in both process and performance, followed by Sarah. Maria had a particularly poorly developed ability to self-describe

before intervention making it significant that she should show the most progress in the intervention process itself.

Graph B7



This chapter has presented the data collected across all four participants at School B. The data have, in three of the four participants, shown a positive shift in self-description after intervention and attempted to explore the possibility of a more developed ability to self-describe in spite of quantitatively negative shifts seen in one unit; Miriam. The following chapter will discuss the data from both schools in an attempt to demonstrate significant findings in relation to the research question posed.

Chapter Six – Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This dissertation undertook to investigate whether Creative Movement can be used to mediate positive self-description in adolescents. An inter-disciplinary approach has been employed in which an arts and psychological discourse have been called upon.

In earlier chapters it was explained that self-description is a marker of self-image. Individuals describe themselves in ways which are positive or negative and this is a reflection of how they view themselves. The project of this study was therefore to examine whether or not self-description could be improved in eight adolescent participants using an eight week intervention process of Creative Movement lessons. The need for such a project was also outlined. The context of present-day South Africa and adolescent experiences motivated much of this research.

The literature provided an explanation of the relevant Vygotskian theory as well as existing literature discussing self-description and possible ways to improve it. The literature also provided a view of what self-image and mediation are which showed that self-image is an important concept for adolescents to grasp. It also began to show that self-description and self-image can be mediated and that Creative Movement can be a mediational means. What remained was to explore the potential of Creative Movement to mediate learners to a more positive self-description.

The task, then, of this final chapter is to discuss the specific findings of the research conducted. Chapters Four and Five preceding have already shown the ways in which participants did indeed experience a positive shift in self-description both qualitatively and quantitatively. These chapters also provided evidence to suggest that the intervention process itself was a successful one in which participants enhanced their abilities to work collaboratively and to express their feelings, ideas and beliefs about their selves and self-image as a phenomenon through Creative Movement.

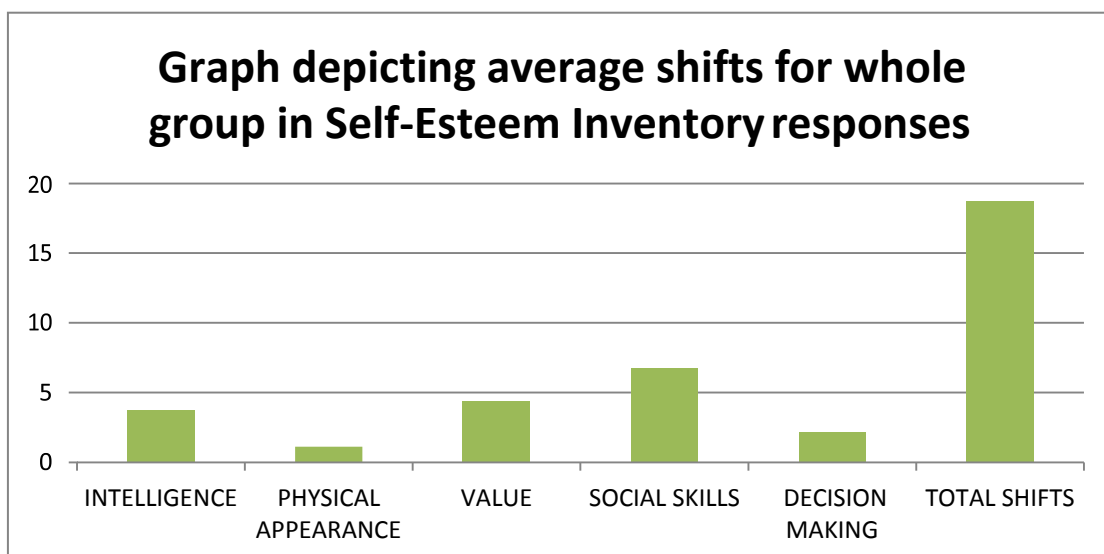
More specific ramifications will now become the focus of this final chapter. I will begin with a summary of the data.

Summary of data across both schools

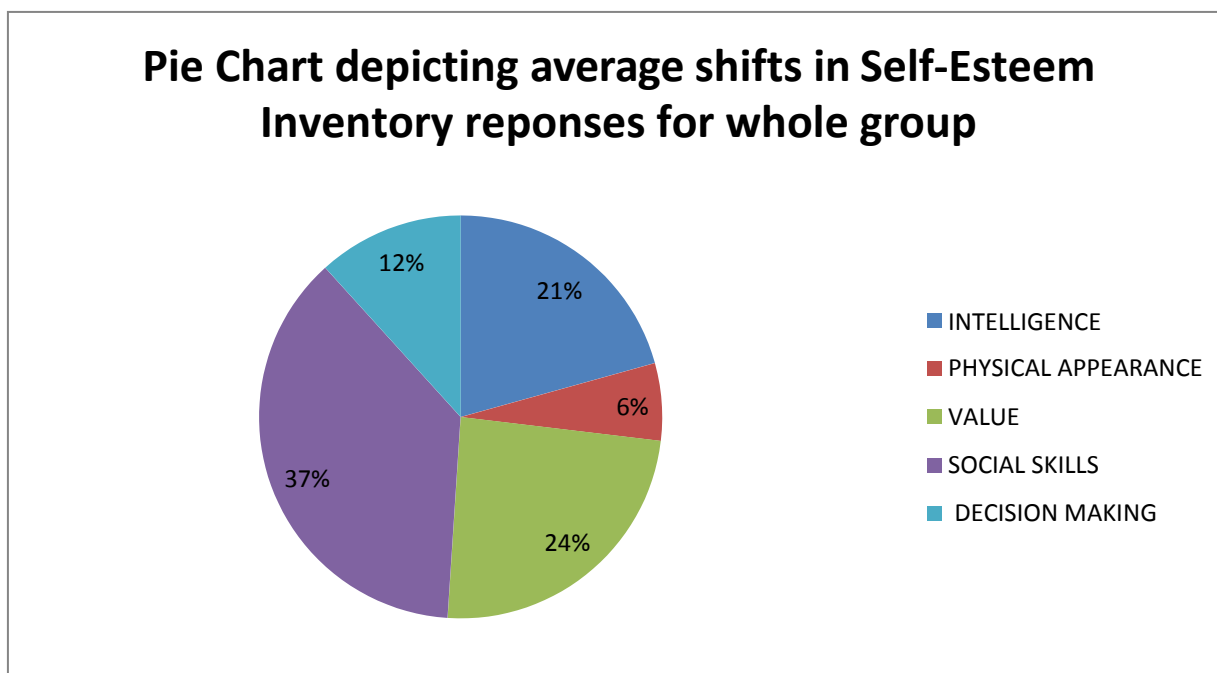
As a group, all eight participants across the two cases can be analysed in order to look for trends. As with the summary of each school, I will now attempt to summarise the data for the group as a whole by looking at the Inventory, Questionnaire and Interview responses as well as the Observation Schedules.

Graph G1 below provides the average shifts for the self-esteem inventory across the whole group. The shifts by theme of all eight participants were added together and then divided by 8 in order to ascertain the average shift per theme. Graph G2 shows the percentage of the total shifts occupied by each theme. It can be noted that the theme of Social Skills displayed the highest average shift, followed by value and intelligence. Physical Appearance showed the smallest average shift across all participants. The average total shift was 19. This means that, on average, participants provided 19 more positive responses after intervention than before.

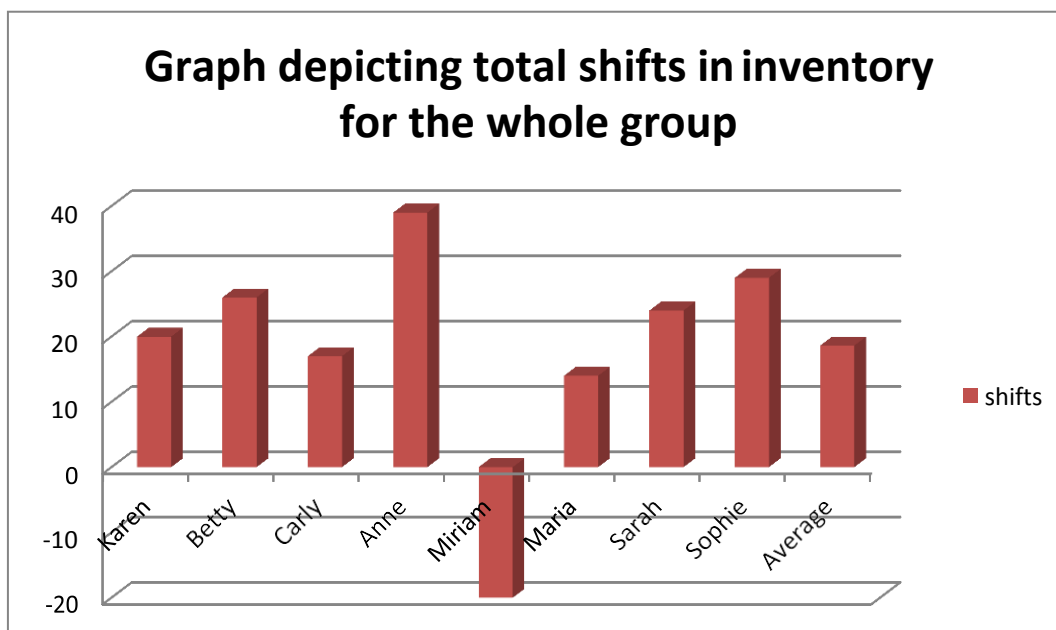
Graph G1



Graph G2



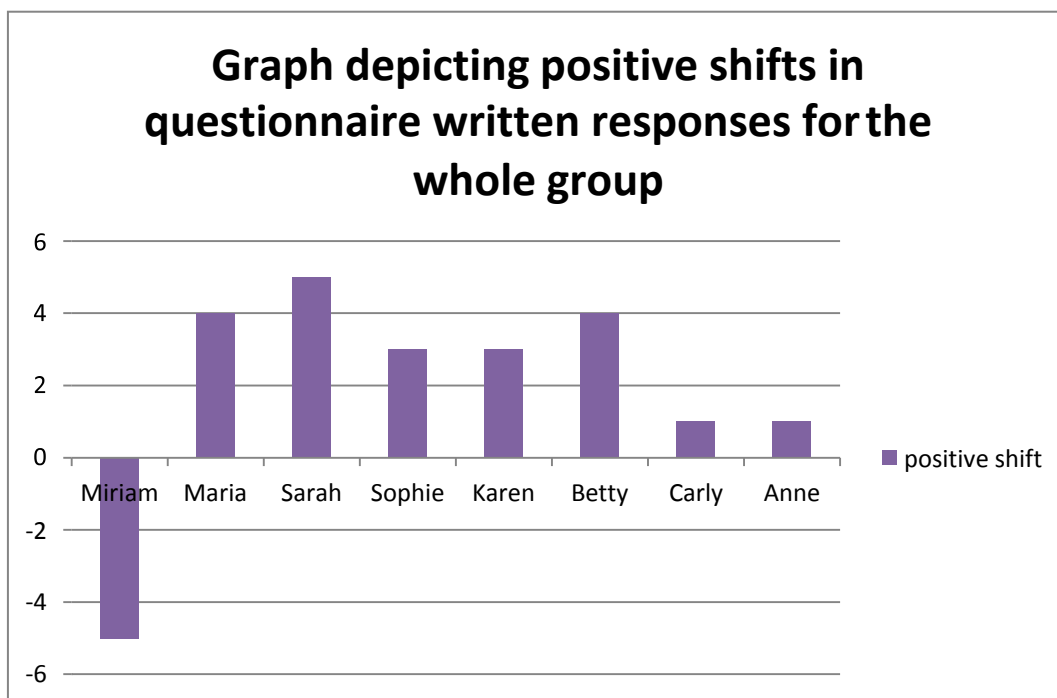
Graph G3



Graph G3 above shows the total shifts for each participant for the Self-Esteem Inventory. It shows that significant positive shifts were experienced by all participants except Miriam after intervention. The average shift for the study is 18,6 for the Inventory.

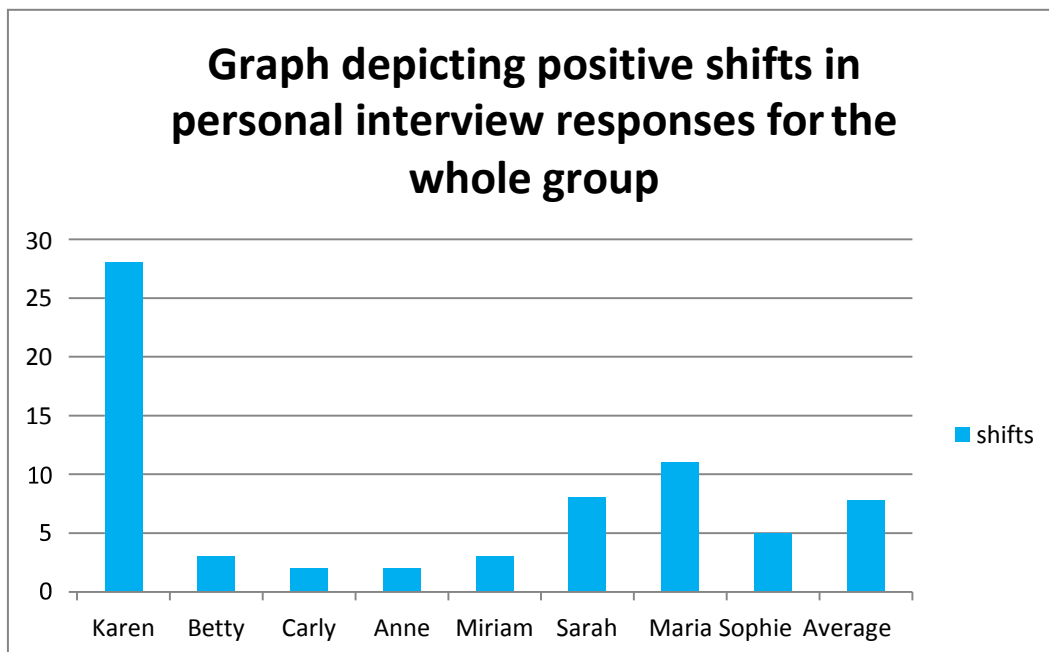
Graph G4 below shows the shifts for each participant for the Questionnaire Written Responses. Once again, all participants showed a positive shift with the exception of Miriam. The average positive shift for the study as a whole is 2.

Graph G4

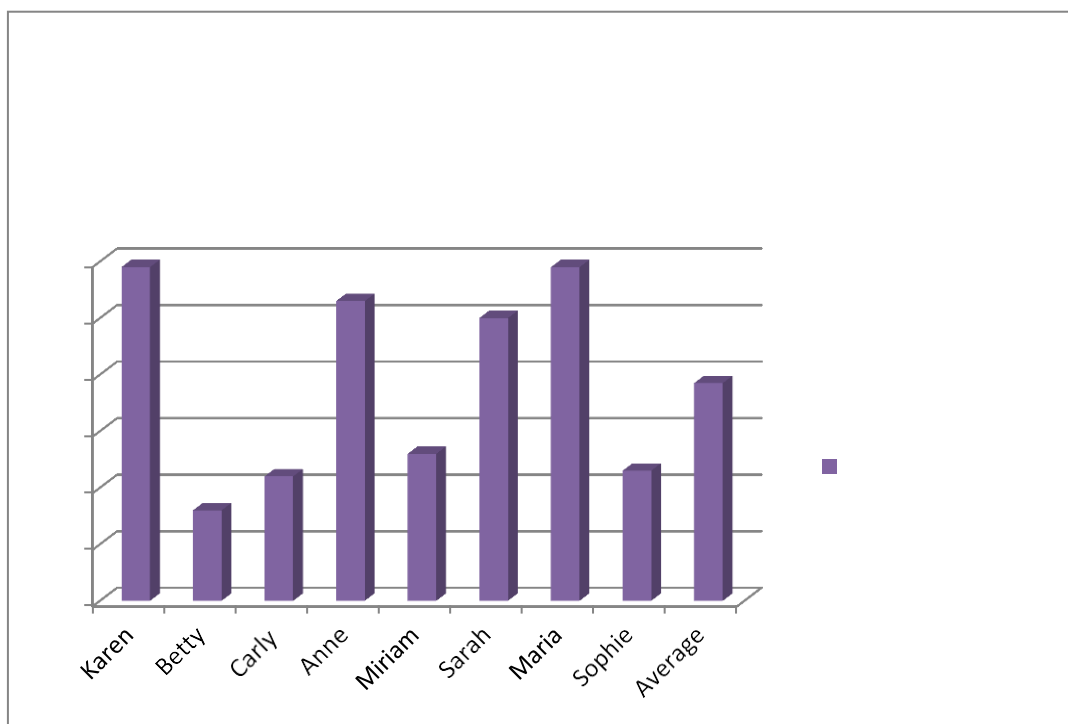


Graph G5 represents the shifts in self-description offered as part of the Personal Interview after intervention. In this form of data, all participants shifted positively after intervention. The average shift experienced was 7,75 positive statements.

Graph G5



Graph G6



The final summary graph, G6 above, shows the total improvement in Observation Schedule results during intervention. Each participant was marked out of a possible 100 for process and for performance for each intervention session. This gave each participant a total mark out of 200 for each of the 8 sessions. The numbers above were derived by subtracting the mark out of 200 achieved for the first session from that achieved for the last. The graph therefore represents the total improvement in each participant's abilities in process and performance by the end of the intervention. All participants showed an improvement by the end of the 8 weeks. The average improvement was 38,5. In her journal, Carly pointed out the growth she had experienced from the intervention sessions: *"From these sessions I have learned how to express my thoughts into movements to make my thoughts more real, if you know what I mean. To bring my thoughts to life in a way and to help me process what I've got going on in my brain."*

The graphs above are a helpful representation of the quantitative shifts documented in the study. It is evidence that, in almost all cases, the number of positive self-descriptions increased from the pre- to the post-intervention test. The significance of this is further seen when observed in conjunction with the relevant t-tests.

What is more difficult to visually represent is the qualitative shift which also occurred. Chapters Four and Five endeavoured to show how each participant's self-descriptions improved in quality after intervention. This qualitative shift was seen in an increased detail and depth and a greater ability to reflect on the self in a manner that was reflective of reality. If I am to make claims about participants' self-description and, in turn, inferences about their development, it is important to

outline what an ideal self-description might look like. Intuitively one might assume that if an individual positively self-describes, they hold positive feelings about the self. This may well be true. An example of this is Karen who offered consistently negative self-descriptions prior to intervention but whose self-descriptions were more positive in the post-test indicating a positive shift after intervention. However, in some participants it was found that a quantitatively positive self-description in the pre-test also contained a number of incongruences (i.e. different self-descriptions would contradict one another) or were not realistic in terms of the participant's actual abilities and talents.

In his article for *Psychological Inquiry*, Kernis (2003) discussed the need to distinguish between a positive and an optimal view of the self. He claims that for many years the psychological canon held that a low self-image was indicated by dissatisfaction with the self or, to put it in terms relevant to this study, a negative self-description. However, what Kernis terms 'optimal' self-description is in fact description which is "authentic" and "stable" (Kernis, 2003, p1). It is therefore important to test a participant's self-descriptions not only in terms of whether or not they are positive but also whether they are authentic, stable, congruent and truthful. It was found in participants such as Miriam and Maria that their pre-test self-descriptions, although more positive than some of their post-test responses, were not authentic or stable. They were filled with contradictions or statements which were inaccurate. Their post-test self-descriptions were quantitatively less positive in some instances, yet, they did not contain the contradictions or inaccuracies presented before intervention. It may therefore be argued that the post-test self-descriptions were qualitatively more positive and do represent a favourable shift.

This is echoed by Sarah in her journal:

"All the things in which I wanted myself to be more like, I already have. I really learnt to see myself in a different way and to make and achieve more physical and emotional goals."

Based on the quantitative and qualitative shifts summarised here and outlined in more detail in Chapters Four and Five, I would argue that the post-test results were favourable and do show a positive shift in self-description. The next logical argument to explore is whether or not these shifts can be attributed to the intervention rather than simply time or some other experience.

There are four reasons I am able to prove that intervention was responsible for the shifts displayed. Firstly, the participants themselves claimed to have improved their self-appraisals as a result of intervention. Below are statements by four of the participant written in their journals after the final intervention session. Each statement sees a participant claiming that the programme specifically taught them something positive about themselves:

“I have learnt not to let society’s ideas mould my sense of thought and the way that I see things. I am a wonderful person and should not change myself to suit other’s expectations.”

– Miriam

“I really learnt to see myself in a different way and to make and achieve more physical and emotional goals.” – Sarah

“I’ve learnt that I’m strong enough to overcome the challenges in life...” - Maria

“I have learnt that I am more creative than I thought I was and that I am more capable of things than I thought I was.” – Karen

Secondly, I can make such a claim because none of the participants received any other intervention which could potentially have impacted on their self-descriptions. None of the participants were receiving psychological counselling or experienced any significant changes in their daily lives. While there may obviously have been events and experiences forming part of their daily lives to improve an individual’s self-description, the fact that all participants across two separate cases experienced similar shifts suggests that intervention, as the common denominator, would be the most likely influence on any shifts that occurred.

Thirdly, the Observation Schedules showed the intervention to be successful. It was observed that participants progressively became more adept at self-describing and communicating those self-descriptions. The overall quality of self-description through movement improved during the intervention process, suggesting that the quality of self-description would improve in the post-test as a result.

Finally, I can apply what is known from existing literature about self-description and self-image. Self-image, as discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, is not easily or quickly changed but rather shaped over time as a product of our experiences and perceptions (Campbell and Lavalley, 1993). Were any extraneous event to have occurred, it is unlikely that it would have any significant effect on self-description. Rather, it can be surmised that systematic and careful mediation over an intensive eight week period caused positive shifts in self-description to occur.

As a result of these data, the subsequent findings will now be discussed.

Findings

This discussion shall report seven findings asserted by the research performed followed by an exploration of the research questions posed in the first chapter. The findings can be summarised as follows:

1. The Zone of Proximal Development plays a role in how an individual benefits from mediation.
2. Areas which most greatly concerned an individual before intervention saw the greatest improvement after intervention.
3. The adolescents studied showed a shared concern for their own social skills and their ability to fit in with their peers.
4. There is a link between an understanding of self-image and the ability to self-describe.
5. Creative Movement in particular serves as a useful mediational means for this project and the social nature of the mediation performed was advantageous.
6. Experience in dance or Creative Movement does not change the effectiveness of intervention
7. Self-description is an activity.

1. *The Zone of Proximal Development plays a role in how an individual benefits from mediation.*

It was found that, as with any development, the Zone of Proximal Development played an important role and defined a distinct chronological process. Individual participants began with a particular ability (or inability) to self-describe before intervention. This ability may have been fairly well developed (as with Carly), moderately developed (as with Karen or Sophie) or not developed at all (like Miriam).

Those with a well-developed ability to self-describe presented positive self-descriptions and an authentic, stable understanding of the self in the pre-test. These participants had a relatively small Zone of Proximal Development because they already had a well-developed ability to self-describe. They therefore experienced development to a lesser extent than their peers in the study. Participants such as Carly and Betty showed a shift from a relatively positive self-description to an even more positive self-description.

Participants such as Karen and Sophie began the study with fairly negative self-descriptions. It can be said that they were able to self-describe before intervention but that their Zone of Proximal Development was larger than Carly or Betty's because they were less adept at positive self-description. These participants experienced significant shifts in self-description and moved from a negative view of the self to a definitively positive view of the self.

However, participants such as Miriam and, to a lesser extent, Maria, had a particularly poorly developed ability to self-describe prior to intervention. Their self-descriptions were

incongruous, in-authentic and unstable. They therefore needed the greatest development of the group. After intervention, these participants were better able to offer a stable and consistent self-description. They were not yet at the point of a truly positive self-description as their peers in the study but had experienced significant movement within their respective Zones of Proximal Development.

The ability to self-describe can be analysed in different stages which present a hierarchy or chain, up which learners can move. The lowest level is the ability to self-describe at all. As discussed in the literature review 'self-consciousness,' as Vygotsky terms it, is the ability to view and analyse the self as a phenomenon. Before positive self-description can be achieved, the learner must be able to describe. Only once 'self-consciousness' is mastered can the individual learn to filter and shape their descriptions in a quest for positive self-description. Positive self-description is therefore the more developed form.

Miriam proved unable to self-describe initially while Carly and Betty had already developed their abilities quite substantially. For this reason, the end of the study saw most participants achieve positive self-description while Miriam had only begun to practise self-description. Miriam was not able to execute the same independent performance as her peers before mediation and thus can be said to have had a different Zone of Proximal Development. Miriam's ZPD was more expansive as she had more to learn. She therefore had more potential to benefit from guided assistance.

The ramifications of such a finding can shape the way we as teachers, parents or psychologists view our ability to improve adolescent self-description. By understanding where an individual is in their development, we can then assist them in their movement through the ZPD towards optimal and positive self-description. This finding also suggests that a single outwardly positive self-description is not necessarily the marker of a fully developed ability to self-describe which needs to be consistent and stable as well as positive.

2. Areas which most greatly concerned an individual before intervention saw the greatest improvement after intervention.

It was noted that aspects of the self which participants self-described most negatively before intervention were the very aspects which showed the greatest positive shift after intervention. Karen, Betty, Anne, Sarah and Sophie all evidenced this finding. All five of these participants expressed the most negative self-descriptions about their own social skills and sense of belonging within their peer group prior to intervention. All five of these participants also expressed the most positive self-descriptions about this same aspect of the self after intervention.

If I am to apply Vygotsky's theory to this finding it can be said that the Zone of Proximal development was larger for these participants in this particular theme and, as such, they were able to experience more development.

3. *The adolescents studied showed a shared concern for their own social skills and their ability to fit in with their peers.*

As discussed in the previous finding, many of the participants self-described their ability to be accepted and to relate to their peers the most negatively before intervention. Karen, Betty, Carly, Anne, Sarah and Sophie all provided self-descriptions in the pre-test that showed that they were dissatisfied with this aspect of the self and, in comparison to other themes, social skills received the most negative self-descriptions and fewest positive self-descriptions from 6 out of the 8 participants. Maria and Miriam were the only participants not to highlight social skills as their greatest concern. It has been noted already that both Maria and Miriam had a more poorly developed ability to self-describe than the rest of the study participants in the pre-test and that their self-descriptions were unstable. It therefore follows that they may not abide by the same pattern.

This suggests that social dynamics and the desire to 'fit in' were a significant group concern and perhaps provides us with a generalizable finding about adolescents globally. Psychological research has long suggested that adolescence sees a shift in focus from parent to peer acceptance. Collins and Steinberg (2006) go as far as to suggest that developing peer relations and interdependence is a task of adolescence. It can thus be posited that these participants expressed their concerns about peer acceptance and relations through negative self-descriptions and that this is a natural aspect of adolescent development.

This finding should encourage all those who work with adolescents to focus on social development as a critical aspect of the self. Most of the study participants felt that they were not relating optimally to their peers yet much of the existing literature suggests that peer relationships and acceptance are vitally important to adolescents. It would therefore follow that how adolescents interact with, relate to, and feel about their peers is a significant area of concern for those working with this age group. This intervention had particular success with improving how participants felt about social skills and peer relationships as discussed in the previous finding. This is partly because it was identified as a significant concern and thus had a greater Zone of Proximal Development. This is also partly because of the nature of the intervention. All activities required participants to work in groups. This inherent social nature of the intervention therefore fostered better peer relations and, in turn, how participants felt about their abilities to relate to others. However, these abilities were not limited to the group and

many participants voiced a greater confidence in their social skills outside of intervention and in life in general.

4. *There is a link between an understanding of self-image and the ability to self-describe.*

The content of each intervention session required participants to explore various aspects not only of their own personal self-descriptions but also of self-image as a phenomenon. They were asked to interrogate issues such as what influences self-esteem and what is body-image. These tasks not only built their specific ability to self-describe but also their global understanding of the self and self-image as a concept.

Participants were also asked to explain what self-image is in the post- and pre-test Personal Interviews. The responses generally showed an improvement after intervention. An example of this improvement can be seen in Anne's pre- and post-test responses to the same question: "What is self-image?" in the Personal Interview. Before intervention she said it is "How I think I look or how I see myself." After intervention she said it is "How you see yourself or life, how the world influences how you see yourself." The first response suggests that self-image is purely how an individual appraises the physical self, whereas the second response includes the whole self and suggests that there are aspects outside of the self that can influence our appraisals. Similarly, Maria claimed before intervention that self-image had more to do with how others saw the individual but after intervention claimed it is "How the person sees themselves. How other people see them and how the person perceives that." In the second response she has shifted her focus to what the individual believes and acknowledges the role of others in shaping those beliefs. She is describing two aspects of self-image, the 'Pygmalion self' and the 'self-image' but omitting the 'ideal-self' (Page and Page, 2003: 34).

Miriam began the study unable to self-describe. Interestingly, she also began the study with a very poor understanding of self-image. She expressed in her pre-test Interview that:

"Self-image is the way you see yourself in comparison to others. Cos if you see someone as pretty, and you see yourself as ugly, you have a very low, negative self-image. Because you are making yourself feel low because you not "as good" as someone else. So I think it's how you see yourself compared to other people."

This understanding is flawed. An optimal self-image is one where the individual does not make comparisons with others but finds fulfilment in the self. Miriam was essentially providing an example of poor self-image rather than a definition of the concept. Miriam began the study with both a poor ability to self-describe and a poor understanding of self-image.

These examples show that a) there is a link between objective understanding of self-image and the ability to self-describe and b) post-test data showed an improvement in the understanding of

self-image as a concept in many participants. I can therefore assert that there is, indeed, a strong link between a sound understanding of self-image as a concept and positive self-description. Educationalists should therefore endeavour to mediate an understanding of self-image as a concept to adolescents in order to improve their self-descriptions.

5. Creative Movement in particular serves as a useful mediational means for this project and the social nature of the mediation performed was advantageous

Creative Movement as a mediational means was found to be effective in mediating learners' positive self-description. Observation of the intervention process and journal entries written by participants showed that Creative Movement had been helpful in allowing learners to make sense of self-image as a concept and their individual self-descriptions. It was explained that Creative Movement, and dance in general, possesses a social and cultural value that allowed it to be an effective mediational means as suggested by Vygotsky (1978). The results from the inventories, questionnaires and interviews further support this finding. Seven out of eight participants evidenced a shift in positive self-description while Miriam's self-descriptions grew more stable. These shifts were shown to be statistically significant.

The effectiveness of Creative Movement as a mediational means can be attributed to its social nature. Vygotsky (1978), as seen in the literature, insisted that all learning should be social. The data collected showed that the use of group work enabled participants to create an understanding of self-image together and to express their views freely to one another.

The social nature of the intervention provided the participants with an opportunity to first construct self-descriptions with their peers. This provided assistance within the Zone of Proximal Development. Once their self-descriptions had been co-constructed and communicated externally, participants were able to internalize these self-descriptions. This is what Vygotsky believes to be the nature of development. An individual learns first on the social, interpsychological level and then the development moves to the intrapsychological level (Vygotsky, 1978).

Less-able participants such as Karen and Maria benefited greatly from their more-able peers such as Carly and Sophie. This was most evident when comparing the first and last Observation Schedules of these less-able individuals. Participants like Maria and Karen showed the greatest improvement during the course of intervention yet were the least skilled at the beginning of the intervention process. Such participants benefitted from the mixed-ability group and were able to draw on the skills of their peers. These same individuals also had significant positive shifts in their post-test. Therefore it has been found that engagement with the subject of self-image is best done in a group setting.

6. *Experience in dance or Creative Movement does not change the effectiveness of intervention.*

The various participants had diverse levels of dance and Creative Movement experience upon joining the study. Betty and Sophie were very proficient and performed and practised regularly as part of their extra-mural activities. Miriam and Maria had some background in dance as a hobby but no particular skill and the rest of the participants had little to no experience with dance of any kind.

It was found that this had no effect on the success of the intervention. While Betty and Sophie did tend to follow instructions more easily and understood some of the more implicit conventions such as audience awareness, the shifts which occurred in them after intervention were not a result of this. Sophie saw more significant shifts than Betty despite having similar dance abilities. Anne, who had no dance experience whatsoever, saw more significant shifts than Betty based on her own development rather than on a lack of any pre-existing dance skill.

While Creative Movement is a form of dance, it is very different to most typical dance forms in which a set vocabulary of steps and technique are imparted upon the student. Instead, Creative Movement values the contributions of each participant and requires them to form their own movements from a stimulus such as a verbal instruction. The focus is on process rather than performance and ideas rather than technique. As such, grounding in another dance form may assist a participant in limited ways but not enough to disadvantage those with no dance experience.

All participants showed an improvement in their Observation Schedule results as well as their post-tests irrespective of their previous dance experience. The intervention used can therefore be said to be beneficial to adolescents irrespective of their prior experience with dance or Creative Movement.

7. *Self-description is an activity.*

The final finding is that self-description is not merely a natural part of growing up which will form by itself. It is developed over time, through mediation and within a cultural context. Vygotsky held that 'self-consciousness' is learnt through mediation. Moreover, the data have shown that a positive 'self-consciousness' or self-description can be achieved through intervention.

Answering the Research Questions

The opening chapter of this dissertation set out to answer a series of questions. These questions can now be answered with reference to the above findings.

1. What is the link between self-description and self-image?
2. Is positive self-image something which can be mediated in the Vygotskian sense?
3. Can Creative Movement be used as a meditational tool?
4. What changes, if any, in self-description will be visible in learners who are mediated in this way?
5. Can we improve the way a child sees him or herself by helping them find a voice through movement?

1. What is the link between self-description and self-image?

It has been suggested that self-description serves as a marker of self-image. An individual describes themselves in a number of ways. These self-descriptions are derived from their inwardly held beliefs about who they are and what they are worth, that is, their self-image. If mediation is able to improve self-description, therefore, through mediation one would be able to improve self-image. Furthermore, the quality of these self-descriptions reflects the quality of the individual's self-image. The most desirable self-descriptions are positive, consistent and truthful. Self-descriptions which contradict one another or are not in line with reality are not a reflection of optimal self-image.

Secondly, there is a link in an individual's understanding of self-image as a phenomenon and their ability to positively self-describe. The data have shown that participants who possessed or developed a good understanding of what self-image is objectively, also possessed or developed a better ability to self-describe.

2. Is positive self-image something which can be mediated in the Vygotskian sense?

Vygotsky (1978) requires that mediation involve a social setting and a mediational means. In the case of this study, group sessions provided a social setting using the mediational means of Creative Movement. Self-image has been shown in previous chapters to be something which can be developed through mediation in a meaningful way resulting in statistically significant shifts. The data have shown that the participants were indeed mediated to a positive self-image because they showed an improved ability to positively self-describe. It can therefore be inferred that Vygotskian mediation of self-image did take place.

3. *Can Creative Movement be used as a mediational tool?*

It has already been argued that Creative Movement fills Vygotsky's (1978) criteria for mediational means as it is social, a higher cognitive function, of cultural and symbolic significance, and allows learners to act on the world. The data have shown Creative Movement to be a mediational means because learners moved from one level of understanding of their self-image to a greater, more nuanced ability to self-describe. That is, Creative Movement served as a tool with which to move learners within their respective Zones of Proximal Development in the development of their ability to self-describe.

Moreover, it was found that Creative Movement proved to be a particularly useful mediational means because of its inherently social nature and the fact that it allowed for non-verbal and creative communication of ideas.

4. *What changes, if any, in self-description will be visible in learners who are mediated in this way?*

The data have reflected both quantitative and qualitative improvements in the self-descriptions of the participants studied. After intervention, participants were able to provide self-descriptions which were more detailed, plentiful, consistent and stable. Individuals who initially self-described in a negative or only moderately positive manner were mediated to self-describe in a more positive way. Individuals who were unable to authentically self-describe were mediated towards a more stable self-description.

5. *Can we improve the way a child sees him or herself by helping them find a voice through movement?*

This would certainly appear to be the case. This is a very significant question as it speaks to the ultimate aim of this study. It was desired that learners who were disenfranchised by a negative view of the self be provided with a way to communicate and finally appreciate their selves. The data for all 8 participants showed an improvement within each individual's Zone of Proximal Development, whether this improvement was a shift from negative self-description to positive or simply the first steps towards developing an ability to self-describe. Creative Movement was used as a tool to provide participants with a voice to discuss and shape their

self-appraisals and beliefs and, it was found, this tool allowed them to move towards a greater appreciation of who they are.

Significance

The findings of this dissertation are significant for three reasons. The findings provide an extension of Vygotsky's theory of mediation and thus contribute to his body of work. They synthesise two bodies of existing knowledge from two different discourses and they provide a means with which to change the way young people view themselves.

Firstly, by using Vygotsky's theory of mediation, this study has extended the way scholars can think about mediation and mediational means. As already discussed, Creative Movement can be viewed as a tool for mediation. Dance is usually considered an end rather than a means yet this study has suggested otherwise. Mediation as a concept has been applied to a context, one of Creative Movement and self-image, which Vygotsky did not explicitly discuss. However, it has been shown that Creative Movement can be used to mediate a more positive self-description. Thus, a significant contribution of this study is that Creative Movement and dance in general have been shown to be an important mediational means that can be used in the acquisition of the scientific concept of self-image.

The second way in which this study is significant is that it has integrated the discourses of arts education and psychology. These are quite separate fields and it is very difficult to find literature which speaks to both disciplines. Yet these disciplines are complimentary in many ways as they both speak to the human experience. It is hoped that this will encourage further inter-disciplinary research.

Finally, this study has the potential to affect how teachers look at self-image in the classroom. Many educators believe their responsibility is to improve the knowledge and skills of learners in a purely intellectual sense. A contribution of this study is that it offers a method to help learners. Quite simply, if we improve a learner's self-description in the classroom, we are assisting them in a very real way by providing them with the foundational concept of self-image necessary for negotiating the adolescent years. It is hoped that participant's newly mediated awareness of the self spills over to everyday life in the form of a more positive self-image. This is noteworthy because, as already expressed, poor self-image is a wide-spread problem amongst adolescents which needs to be addressed. If we are to believe, as this study shows, that self-image is indeed something which can be mediated in a classroom setting, educators should reassess their responsibilities. If we can mediate positive self-image in the classroom then surely we should. Educators are thus empowered to make a significant and lasting change in the psyche of their

learners. If we are able to improve the self-description of learners, they will benefit in a number of ways. As has been elaborated in Chapter Two, a positive view of the self has been found to have a number of effects. Adolescents have been proven to perform better academically and in other spheres such as sport. Adolescents with a positive view of the self have also been shown to have better inter-personal relationships, take positive risks and contribute more positively to society. On the whole, if we are able to improve an individual's mode of describing him or herself, we are able to improve the individual's contributions to their community. While these are lofty aspirations not achieved in any small ways as yet, it can be said that this study is significant because it teaches us that mediating learners to a more positive view of themselves is possible.

Recommendations

The limitations of this study are largely related to the size and range of the sample. As a case study, the aim was not to make any generalizable statements but to research the shifts in the specific participants, and if possible, to extract findings which may be relevant in other contexts as well. The sample used for this study was all female, predominantly lower-middle class and consisted of eight participants. The group was also situated in South Africa and, as such, subject to geographically localized cultural ideas. If these findings were to be extended to a larger, more diverse group, one may be able to discern whether the findings presented in this dissertation are more generalizable. It would be particularly interesting to study how male adolescents benefit from this intervention given the stereotypes around male dancers and the differences in how male and female adolescents interact and formulate an identity.

A further extension of the research may be to ascertain whether the shifts noted had any long-standing effects on the study participants. Did the improvements experienced by the participants hold and did they have any effect on their overall self-image in the long term? While the improvements over an 8 week intervention were visible, the scope of this study does not allow for an answer to these questions. Literature tells us that self-image is fluid but does not change quickly at the slightest provocation (Page and Page, 2003). Self-image and self-description does not easily change. It can therefore be said that to have been able to see shifts in self-description after intervention is significant. The implication being that any shifts brought about by intervention are not transient but may be counter-acted by other experiences in the future. In light of the significant improvements in an 8 week period, it may also be beneficial to consider more regular intervention. Positive self-description and a good self-image is certainly not a static entity and it cannot be said that it is "fixed forever." This study has shown that intervention can have a positive impact on adolescent self-description. Therefore, we should aim for various interventions over a

that will have a positive impact and work towards building adults with developed and healthy self-description.

Apart from recommending how to further research the content of this dissertation, I would like to recommend a change in paradigm. It has already been discussed that self-image can and should be a part of the educational project and that dance ought to be considered as a more serious teaching tool to achieve this end. However, it should be emphasised that these are not merely academic activities. In arguing for an approach that better develops identity and self-awareness in South African children more than twenty years ago, Bloom suggested that significant educational change was necessary.

“Teachers will have to change their orientation to learning and to children so that a child-centered, skill-centered, growth-enhancing education replaces a curriculum and examination-centered education (Bloom in Van Zyl Slabbert et al., 1994: 226.)

It seems that little has subsequently changed. The South African education system continues to pour all of its efforts into assessment policies and Grade 12 examination results with little consideration of meaningfully promoting aspects such as self-image. The latest move by the Department of Education in this direction is a recommendation that Life Orientation (the South African equivalent of Guidance or Life Skills in which issues like self-image are discussed) be removed from the national high school curriculum. Thus the final recommendation to be made from this dissertation is that its findings be used to shape the way educationalists go about setting and achieving goals for their students. If we are able to change the way a child sees him or herself which can potentially change a number of aspects of their life, is it not imperative that we begin to look into practical ways of doing so within schools? Those who work with adolescents should therefore heed the call Bloom made in 1994, to consider their role in shaping not only the minds but the psyches of the learners in their charge.

Conclusion

The results of this study have shown that Creative Movement does possess the ability to positively impact how adolescents describe themselves. These eight young ladies embarked on a journey together to build a corporate understanding of self-image and individual views of their specific selves. On this journey they discovered that they had far more to offer the world than they originally thought.

The difficulties and insecurities of the adolescents followed in this dissertation are not peculiar to them. Countless young people experience self-doubt, negative self-description and even self-

loathing. This is not a new problem nor is it characteristic to the developing world. Our reality is an imperfect one.

Vygotsky claimed that “the individual becomes for himself what he is in himself through what he manifests for others” (Vygotsky, 1931: 105). It is often paraphrased as ‘it is through others that we become ourselves.’ Together, Vygotsky and the findings of this study have shown this to be true – people develop into their authentic selves not in a vacuum but as part of a community. Through intervention the participants of this study, in small ways, became themselves.

It is hoped that these findings will contribute to extending the work of L. S. Vygotsky to include an understanding of Creative Movement as a mediational tool in the development of positive self-description. It is hoped that these findings prove, in some small way, that teachers have the ability to meaningfully impact how their students see themselves and that the intervention used provides a framework for teachers to begin to do that through movement. Above all, it is this researcher’s most deep and fervent hope that the findings contained in this dissertation will motivate a very real desire to build positive self-description amongst adolescents and a focus beyond the academic in order to help all adolescents become their true selves.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Blank consent form

application for *expressions* workshop series



Please complete all the information below and return by placing in the box at reception by **thursday 28 january**.

personal details

Name:

Grade:

Cell phone or email:

Parent cell phone or email:

availability

Please tick all appropriate boxes.

I am available for weekly sessions on:

- Monday @ 15:00
- Tuesday @ 14:00
- Tuesday @ 15:00
- Friday @ 14:00
- Friday @ 15:00

I am available for a once-off interview on:

- Monday @ 15:00
- Monday @ 16:00
- Tuesday @ 14:00
- Tuesday @ 15:00
- Tuesday @ 16:00
- Friday @ 7:00
- Friday @ 14:00
- Friday @ 15:00
- Friday @ 16:00
- Saturday @ 9:00
- Saturday @ 10:00
- Saturday @ 11:00

Motivation: why would you like to be part of the programme?

I _____ (name) consent to participate in the extra-curricular classes offered by Alexa le Chat as part of her PhD study. I also consent to an interview and written questionnaire at three intervals during the term.

I understand that I will be given a pseudonym in any research documents and that all interactions will be video documented but only viewed by the researcher and her supervisor. I understand that the researcher's aim is to observe changes in how learners describe themselves.

Signed: _____

Parent information and consent

Dear parents,

The 'xpressions' workshop series is an after school programme focussed on creative movement and personal expression. It will take place on a weekly basis, to which full commitment is required. It is part of my PhD study which looks at ways to improve self-image using dance. Your daughter will be required to participate in interviews during the process. Please email me with any queries; alexalechatmail@gmail.com. Should you wish your daughter to participate, kindly complete the information below.

I/ we the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of _____ (name) consent to her participation in the extra-curricular classes offered by Alexa le Chat as part of her PhD study. We also consent to an interview and written questionnaire at three intervals during the term.

We understand that our child and her school will be given a pseudonym in any research documents and that all interactions will be video documented but only viewed by the researcher and her supervisor. We understand that the researcher's aim is to observe changes in teenage self-image.

Signed: _____

Appendix 2 – Pre- and Post-test Interview Questions

1. Imagine you could have a perfect day at home and at school. Walk me through that day. What would happen?
2. How is your perfect day different to a normal day?
3. Describe your physical appearance.
4. Describe your intellect.
5. Describe your personality.
6. Describe your social life.
7. What is your best attribute?
8. How do you respond to compliments?
9. Do you think you have a positive self-image? Explain?
10. What is self-image?

Appendix 3 – Pre- and Post-test Questionnaire

Please answer all the questions truthfully and carefully. Your name will not be shared with anyone else.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Rate the following statements from 1-10. (1=not me, 10=I strongly agree)

- | | |
|---|-------|
| I am intelligent | _____ |
| I often feel lonely | _____ |
| I think I am quite confident | _____ |
| I am important | _____ |
| I am less intelligent than others in my class/ year group | _____ |
| I am more attractive than most of my friends | _____ |
| I have a good body | _____ |
| I would like to lose weight | _____ |
| I am happy with the way I look | _____ |
| I am satisfied with my school work | _____ |
| I am satisfied with my school performance | _____ |
| I am a valuable member of my family | _____ |
| I am loved | _____ |
| I am loveable | _____ |
| I am attractive | _____ |
| Teachers do not like me | _____ |
| I have lots of friends | _____ |
| I enjoy leading | _____ |
| I feel intimidated easily | _____ |
| I prefer to follow | _____ |
| I don't think people listen to me | _____ |
| I make my mind up easily | _____ |
| Once I have made a decision I stick to it | _____ |
| I always have something to contribute in class discussion | _____ |
| I don't like break time | _____ |

Answer the following questions with 'yes', 'no' or 'I don't know'

Yes/ No/

I don't know

Do you think that your parents usually like to hear your ideas?

Do you often feel lonely at school?

Do you think that other students often dislike you?

Do you feel shy speaking in front of teachers?

Do you like writing stories?

Do you often feel sad because you have no one to talk to at school?

Are you good at maths?

Are there lots of things about yourself you would like to change?

Do other people often think you tell lies?

Answer the following questions:

What are your strengths?

What are your weaknesses?

How would you describe yourself?

What, if anything, would you like to change about yourself?

Rank the following in order of importance to you:

- Looks _____
- Body shape and size _____
- Intelligence _____
- Integrity _____
- Sense of Humour _____
- Popularity _____
- Talents _____

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