Take Action!

Research design for a case study in Process Drama

for bullying prevention and intervention

Lindsay 'Jag' Jagodowski
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Instructor: Sam Smiley

Introduction

The topic of my research is the applicability of drama/theater practices for the prevention and intervention in bullying within groups of students in grades 4-6. The purpose of this study is to explore the social benefits of Process Drama with students in grades 4-6. It is believed by the researcher that through dramatic exercises and expression students will develop greater self esteem. This study aims to explore this growth in relation to the social issue of bullying in schools. Bullying is a pervasive issue especially for those least equipped to navigate these types of social issues, our children. Although there are certainly theater classes and groups for children to be involved in, many of these are focused on the production of a show. It is the belief of the researcher that through engagement in social drama and open dialogue as a means for reflection, exposure to terms and strategies students will gain the knowledge and autonomy to better navigate bullying issues when they occur or lessen the occurrences.

Bullying is becoming an ever growing issue among youth. With the access they have to digital communication the cruelty has become even more pervasive Even when I was a teen the use of email as a means to create social issues was prevalent. One girl in my class took an email I had written, deleted the body, created a new text cruelly putting down another girl and then 'forwarded my email'. Cyber bullying is only one small part of the distressing and pervasive issue of bullying among youth. I believe that through social drama exercises that expose students to the multiple perspectives (bully, victim, bystander/ally), open dialogue and expression of personal experience, participants will not only develop effective coping mechanisms, but also empathy that will lend to fewer instances of bullying among members of the group. I also believe

that these students will extend their learning and expression of empathy to their larger community and effect change there.

Research Design

For the purpose of this study I would like to develop and conduct a Process Drama workshop with a group of participants in middle school. It is at this point in adolescence that bullying becomes more prominent and the emotional injuries more detrimental. Due to the developmental phase that most children are in at this age (ego centric and socially focused) it is hard for them to cope with situations of exclusion, mockery, peer pressure and so on. This Workshop will act as an intensive case study, taking place over the course of five days with three hours onsite and nightly journaling. Participants will be asked to consider multiple view points through engagement in theatrical, visual and textual expression.

 For this initial case study participants will be chosen from a pool of volunteers at the researcher's school of employment. *Take Action!,* will be offered to parents as an option for students in grades 4-6 over the first week of Spring Break. A proposal of the research rationale and schedule will be made to parents via an internet brochure in February 2012 with a deadline of March 1st for enrollment. Any guardian questions about enrollment will be directed to the researcher via email listed on the brochure. Participant list will be finalized in the first week of March 2012 and confirmed with the guardians via waiver for participation. Interviews and/or surveys will be conducted at three points during the implementation of Take *Action!:* entrance, mid-point and conclusion. Entrance and exit surveys will also be distributed to the participants'

guardians who allowed for the involvement of the participants to gauge their expectations and satisfaction.

The main question for the focus of this study is; how will experiencing Process Drama offer social benefits to students in grades 4-6? Other questions to consider throughout development, implementation, and analysis are as follows:

1. How do we measure learning through drama?

2. What are the benefits of expression through drama?

3. How does drama deepen learning about a topic, namely bullying?

4. Does the inclusion of other art forms benefit the learning taking place?

5. How is artistic expression linked to empathy development?

6. Will small group learning extend to the larger community after completion of workshops?

Through the process of thorough review of applicable literature and related research projects, a series of surveys, interview questions and lesson plans will be developed by the researcher. Throughout the study, *Take Action!,* data will be collected through the means of field observation, interviews, video observation and the creation of visual, textual and theatrical art created by participants. Examples of the artistic methodologies may include the creation of found poems, monologues, participation in role play exercises and improvisational scenes where students take on the roles of bully, bystander or victim to enact their experiences and change the outcomes though active choices. Participants will employ the analytic methods of in-vivo coding and values coding to analyze themes in each other's written work to create collaborative poems

that will be woven into the final performance. Throughout *Take Action!* participants will be asked to keep a meta-cognitive journal about their experiences, feelings, learning and anything else that they are inspired to include. They will be given nightly questions to consider about the day's experiences and encouraged to journal not only with narrative text, but with poetry, drawing, collage, etc. (See Figure 3 for an example lesson).

At the conclusion of the five day intensive workshop, *Take Action!* participant art work will be displayed and performed for their guardians. A gallery of visual and textual art will be created by the students in the hallway outside of the performance space so the audience may be introduced slowly and artistically to the subject matter they are about to experience. This gallery viewing will be followed by a participant performance of poetry, song, dance and drama both devised by participants and improvisational in nature. At the conclusion of the performance participants will engage the audience in a dialogue about what they learned in the program, thoughts they wish to share about their experience, questions they would like to ask the audience, audience questions and a Q&A with the researcher. This performance and dialogue will be recorded for analysis by the researcher and studied for implications on future research.

Participants will be offered closure through this exhibition as well as an exit interview. This interview will be conducted for the researcher to gain any missing data from individual participants as well as offer a platform to the participants to voice any suggestions they have for further research, their favorite and least favorite parts of *Take Action!,* and concluding thoughts.

It also will allow the researcher to ensure that the benefit of this program outweighed any stressors and that further research is ethical and required.

After the conclusion of *Take Action!* and the accompanying exit interviews*,* the researcher will apply different coding heuristics to the data in accordance with the format of the data and the best means for meaning comprehension. Transcriptions will be taken of the interviews and video footage to allow for textual coding. The researcher will apply heuristics such as values coding to the interviews to look for thematic shifts in participant point of view throughout the process and in-vivo coding as a means to produce a script of thematic dramatic material for the performative presentation of the data to the academic and theatrical communities. Throughout the coding and analysis process it will be fundamental that the researcher look at the impact the case study had on their personal view point as well as how this new data will inform further research questions, ethical dilemmas that could have been avoided, stronger methods for data collection and participant observation. A journal of analytic memos will be kept during the coding and analysis of the data to track the researcher's application of methodologies as well as reasoning behind how these methodologies are applied.

The intention of the researcher is to present *Take Action!* in a threefold design to multiple communities. The purpose of presenting this project in this manner is to reach as broad an audience as possible. By the students presenting their work to their parents it opens up the discussion about the necessity of this type of education around a topic like bullying as well as the conversation about their role as parents in the school and their children's lives. Through the

presentation of a formal paper the findings of this study will reach the academic sphere where it may be questioned by peers, valued as inspiration for further studies and refined through the peer review process for the researcher's future projects. Through the presentation of scenes created by the researcher the data can also be disseminated to the theatrical community and theatrical educators for the purpose of discussion and application in settings where youth participate in theatrical pursuits. This third presentation will be constructed through the coding of the visual art and written pieces developed by participants, as well as the data from the direct interviews with participants.

The anticipated impact for this research project is that it will act as the first steps to the development of a Process Drama based curriculum for the prevention and intervention of bullying in schools. Data reliability is taken into consideration and this is why information will be collected through the means of literature review, implementation of the *Take Action!* case study, and analysis of the data gathered during the study. As a small scale project *Take Action!* will not be able to deduce concrete conclusions; however it will act to aid the researcher in refining the workshop curriculum and development of further research questions and methods for further clarification of the outcomes.

Please find below Figures 1-3:

Fig. 1 – Overview timeline of research project development

Fig. 2 – Case Study basic calendar for workshop

Fig. 3 – Example lesson plan that will be included in the study -
        Developed Spring 2011 by Lindsay 'Jag' Jagodowski

Take Action!

Overview Timeline January 16- May 3, 2012

Gather, read and take notes on literature.

Begin literature review.

March 1: deadline for case study enrollment.

Finalize daily lessons and gather needed materials

5 day case study working with students in grades 4-6. Series of lesson plans daily as well as entrance, mid-point and closing interviews about participant experience.

Analysis of data gathered through case study.

A Presentation of the researcher's thesis to the community of Lesley University.

| Jan. 16- Feb. 16 | Feb. 16- March 1 | March 2- 8 | March 9-11 | March 12- 16 | March 17- April 15 | April 16- May 3 | ? Thesis Presentation ? |

Recruit participants for *Take Action!* To take place March 12-16, 2012

Literature review and development of daily lesson plans for case study

Distribute on-line pre-survey to participants to be completed by March 11.

Data collection for study will include video of process, interview, visual art, theatrical participation and meta-cognitive journaling by participants and researcher.

Formal write up of data analysis and case study conclusions. Development of performance aspect of thesis presentation and/or video of the process and concluding performance of *Take Action!*
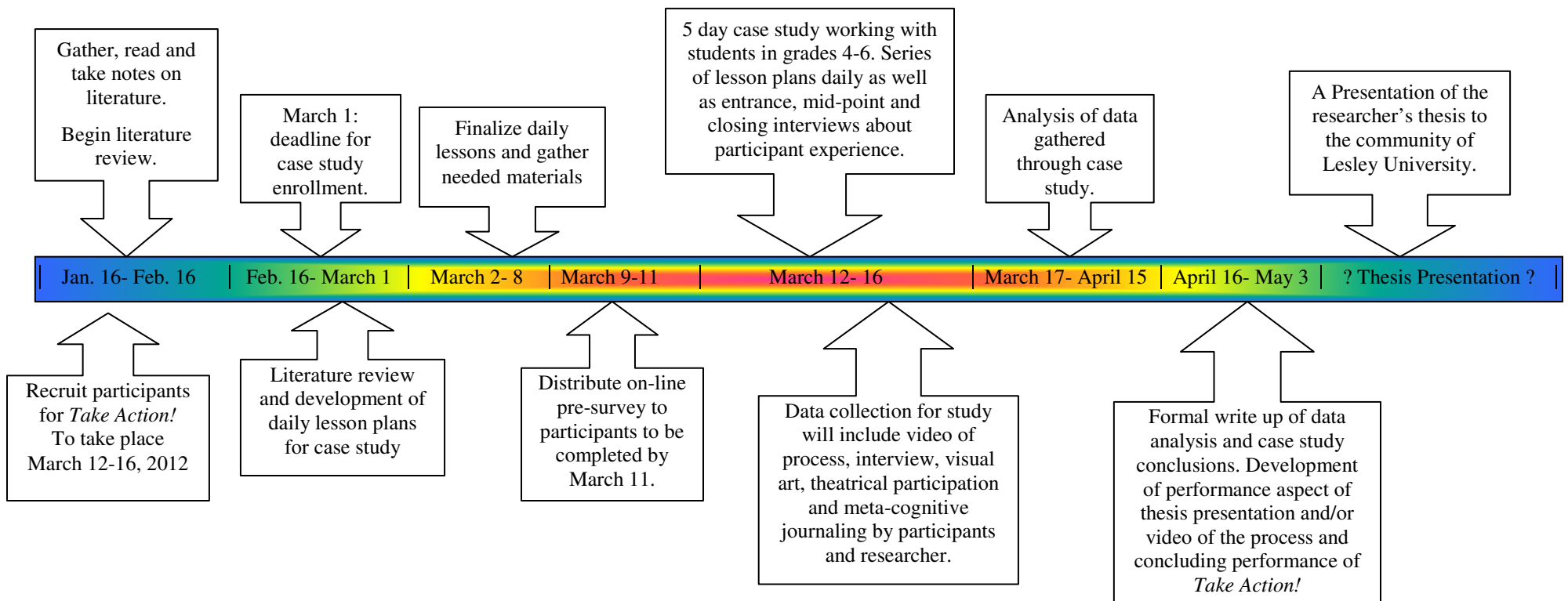
Figure 2:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Case Study: 5 Day intensive, 3 hours daily, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

March 12, 2012 -March 16, 2012

Example of possible structure for days 1-3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monday</td><td>Entrance interviews, Introductions, Ice breakers, Magnet Lesson pt. 1</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(8-9am) The first day of the case study will begin with 10 minute scheduled entrance interviews of each participant.
9am start with introductions and ice breakers which will allow participants to become comfortable within the group.
10am Snack
10:15 Magnet Lesson pt.1
11:15 Discussion of what we know about bullying already – Introduce some basic improvisational theater games and discuss journal topics for the evening.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Tuesday</td><td>Magnet Lesson 2, Improvisational Scenarios</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">9am Improvisational theater warm-ups to re-acclimate participants, checking in about journals and questions.
9:45am Magnet Lesson pt.2
10:45 Snack
11am Improvisational bullying scenarios – each child participates as a bully, bystander, and victim in different scenarios. Each scenario is re-enacted with participants volunteering to show how the bystander or victim could react differently and change the outcome of the situation for the better.
11:45 Quick game and discussion of journal topics for the evening.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Wednesday</td><td>Mid-point interviews, Visual Art, Improvisational Scenarios</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(8-9am) 10 minute scheduled mid-point interviews of each participant.
9am Discussion about what has been learned so far, new ideas participants may have about bullying and thoughts that may have occurred to them in their journals.
9:45 Visual art project – collage of knowledge
10:30 Snack
10:45 In small groups, participants construct scenarios of bullying interventions for presentation to the group using their knowledge from the previous exercises about improvisation and the issue of bullying.</td></tr>
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Magnet Lesson Plan

Grade Level & Classroom Description: Grade 4-6 students who have signed up for Take Action! –
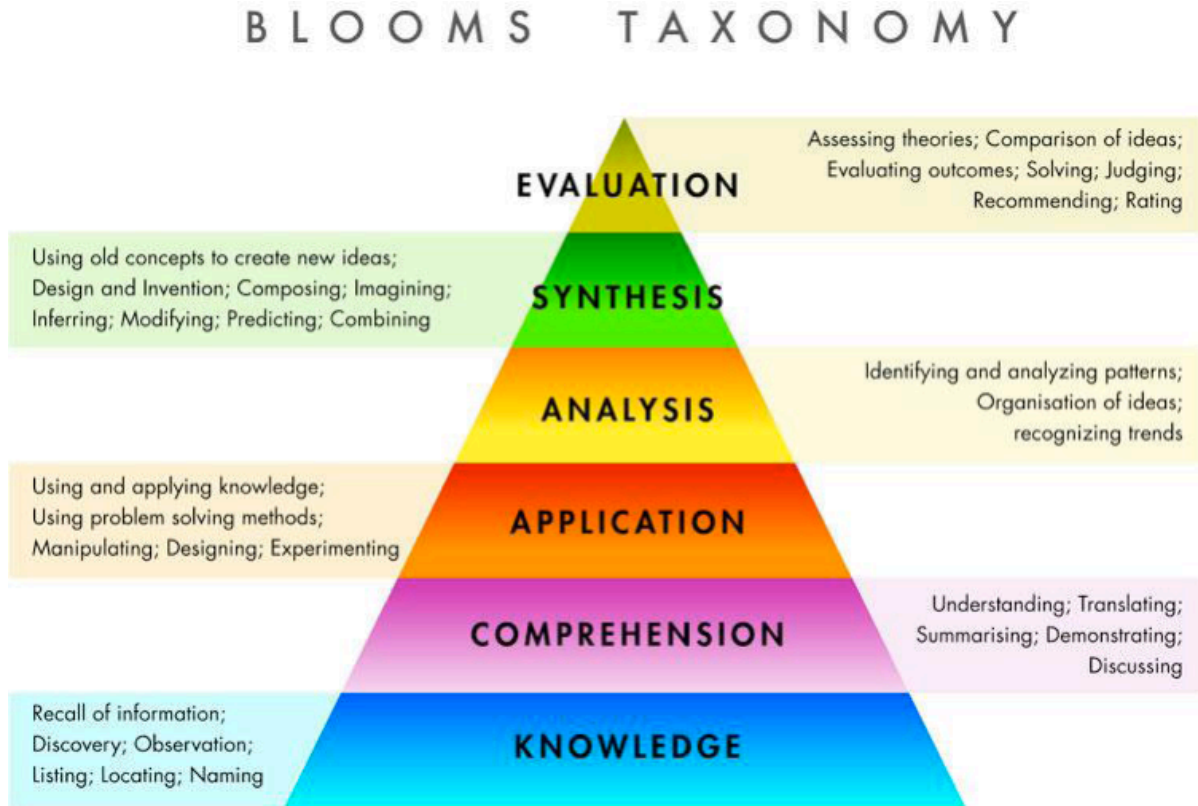 a 5 day intensive study on bullying prevention and intervention through Process Theater.

Rationale:

Magnet poetry is something kids like to play with. This lesson takes that concept on step further to students adding their own words to 'fill in the blanks' and gauged towards helping them move from reiterating the ideas of others to expressing their own ideas, feelings and memories about bullying. Students will receive pre-printed magnet strips with quotes about social situations. These quotes have been pulled from ethnographic research on personal memories of being a bully, bystander or victim. They will be asked to create a poem by integrating their own writing in between the magnets. Their writing will then be printed onto magnet sheets so they can piece their poem together and present it on the classroom magnetic white board. This lesson is geared toward students making personal investments in the process of script material generation. The biggest fear to overcome in the theater is telling your own story, but by using pre-scripted pieces in conjunction with personal thought students will be able make the transition to expressing themselves freely.

Academic Objectives: Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Frameworks – Theater

1.7 Create and sustain a believable character throughout a scripted or improvised scene.

1.9 – Use physical acting skills such as body alignment, control of isolated body parts, and rhythms to develop characterizations that suggest artistic choices.

1.10 – Use vocal acting skills such as breath control, diction, projection, inflection, rhythm, and pace to develop characterizations that suggest artistic choices.

2.8 Improvise characters, dialogue, and actions that focus on the development and resolution of dramatic conflicts

2.9 Drawing on personal experience or research, write a monologue for an invented, literary, or historical character

5.8 – Identify and discuss artistic challenges and successful outcomes encountered during creative and rehearsal process.

Blooms Higher Order Thinking Skills Accessed During Lesson:

BLOOMS TAXONOMY

EVALUATION — Assessing theories; Comparison of ideas; Evaluating outcomes; Solving; Judging; Recommending; Rating

Using old concepts to create new ideas; Design and Invention; Composing; Imagining; Inferring; Modifying; Predicting; Combining — **SYNTHESIS**

ANALYSIS — Identifying and analyzing patterns; Organisation of ideas; recognizing trends

Using and applying knowledge; Using problem solving methods; Manipulating; Designing; Experimenting — **APPLICATION**

COMPREHENSION — Understanding; Translating; Summarising; Demonstrating; Discussing

Recall of information; Discovery; Observation; Listing; Locating; Naming — **KNOWLEDGE**

Synthesis

> Using their understanding of pre-scripted material students will compose an original poem combining the expression of their own thoughts and those of others.

Application

> Using their growing knowledge of self experimentation students will then move on to creating scenes and scripts that express their understanding and feelings about bullying.

Comprehension

> Students will interpret the meaning of each others' poems. They will also discuss their creative process and how this activity will be helpful to them as we apply this knowledge to further projects.

Knowledge

> During discussion students will be asked to recall their experiences, emotions and observations of personal challenges within this lesson.

Gardener's Multiple Intelligences in Relation to this Lesson:
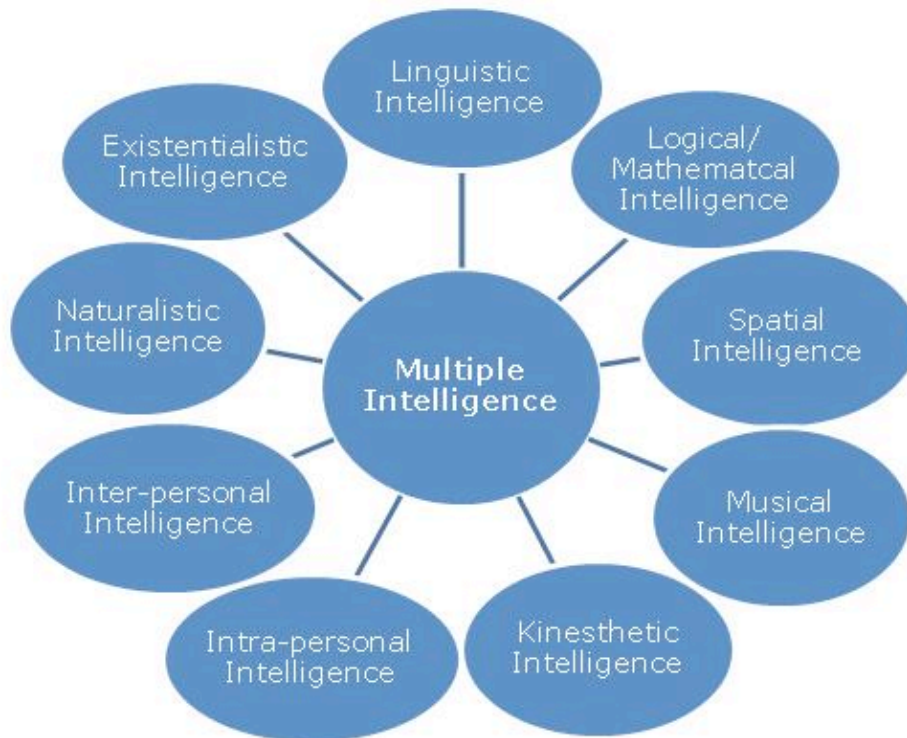
Intrapersonal Intelligence

    Students will engage their self knowledge during their creative process; expressing their own feelings and experiences with bullying through poetry.

Interpersonal Intelligence

    Students will employ their interpersonal intelligence when making connections between pre-printed magnets and their own experiences as well as when discussing each others' poems.

Spatial Intelligence

    Students will use their spatial intelligence when choosing a display location and layout for their poem.

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

    Students will show their verbal/linguistic intelligence word choice and discussions.

Time Allotment:

· **Day 1**

30 minutes to write the poem

After the pieces have been printed allow enough time to each student to read their poem aloud then allow 20 minutes for students to share any reflections on the process. After sharing their poems students can put their poems on cookie sheets and save them.

Materials:
· Pre-printed magnets (3 per student)
· Paper and writing implements
· Computer
· Printer
· Sheets of printable magnets
· Metal cookie sheets

Space Requirements:

Larson Hall – Campus assembly hall and theater provides areas for students to feel they have privacy while writing or to sit in groups.

Procedure:
· Warm up! Have students do 2-3 different improvisation exercises that will get their brains and blood moving. Activities that ask them to consider the feelings of others as well as their own will also prove helpful.
· Hand out paper, pre-printed magnets and pens. Outline for the students the aim of this activity, which is to create a poem about bullying using a combination of the magnets and their own writing.
· Print student writing onto magnet sheets
· Using their original magnets and the new ones they have composed ask students to put the poem up on the white board or on their cookie sheet.
· Have students share their poems with the rest of the class
· Take time to have an open discussion with students about their experience throughout this process.
  Questions to consider:
  1) How did you feel while writing the poem?
  2) Did any specific memories come to mind?
  3) Was it easy or difficult to 'fill in the blanks'?
  4) What would you change if you did this again?
  5) How did you feel about using your own words?
  6) What makes it easier to share your own stories?

· **Day 2**

40 minutes

Now that students have had time to reflect on their pieces and think about sharing their own stories you can put words into action. Using their poems as a script guide students in creating living tableaus and improvised scenes on the themes. It is important that each student have the opportunity to experience the roles of bully, bystander and victim during these enactments.

10 minutes

After the exercises are completed allow time for students to share any reflections on the process. Address any feelings that may have been brought up when students stepped into the three different roles.

Materials:
· Students' completed magnet poems
· Metal cookie sheets
· Journal

Space Requirements:

Larson Hall – Campus assembly hall and theater provides areas for students to feel they have privacy while writing or to sit in groups.

Procedure:
· Warm up! Have students do 2-3 different improvisation exercises that will get their brains and blood moving. Activities that ask them to consider the feelings of others as well as their own will also prove helpful.
· Have students collect their magnet sheets with their poems and put them into groups of 3 (or a number that works for the number of students you have). At this point guide students to create living tableaus of their poems. They should take on characters, create different levels (i.e. low to the ground, middle and standing tall) and freeze.
· Have the groups look at each other and guess what is happening in the tableau they are viewing. Take notes of the explanations students give for what is happening in the tableau.
· When each group has represented their tableaus to the rest of the class have them sit in audience positions creating a 'stage' at one end of the classroom.
· Based on your notes from the previous exercise, have students in groups of three act out a scene based on the outlines created in the tableaus.
· After each scene ask the students to switch roles and show another way the scene could have progressed.
· Another level of this exercise would be to freeze the scene and allow students to volunteer to take one of the roles and redirect the situation. This is particularly applicable when talking about bystanders and whether they are active or inactive.
· Have a discussion about feelings or ideas that developed during the class. Have students take out a journal and write for a few minutes about the experience.

Questions to consider:

1) How did it feel to act out your poem in a tableau?
2) Did any specific memories come to mind?
3) Was it easy or difficult to improvise the scenes?
4) What would you change if you did this again?
5) How did you feel about acting as a bully, bystander or victim?
6) Did you feel anything in common with any of the characters you acted out?
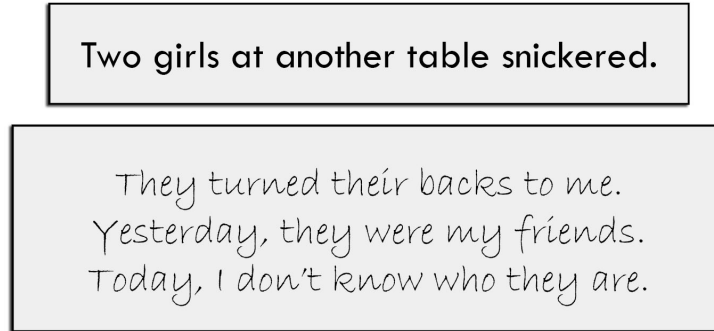
Figure 1

Two girls at another table snickered.

They turned their backs to me.
Yesterday, they were my friends.
Today, I don't know who they are.

Figure 2

I had to ... everyone was watching

OK, so maybe it wasn't *that* funny.
But it was only a joke. Alright?

Go back with the other losers.

I'm either a bully, a victim, a bystander or a snitch.
I'll take bully.

I mean, come on, this is seventh grade!
Who brings their lunch anymore?

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Annotated Bibliography

Baer, A. L., & Glasgow, J. N. (2008). Take the bullies to task: Using process drama to make a stand. *English Journal*, *97*(6), 79-86.

This article started off by exposing me to a brief historical context of school violence as it has been recorded and included references to such incidents as the shootings at Columbine. This historical context allowed me to see why, perhaps, there is not a bulk of literary material of drama and theater as a means to prevent or intervene in bullying and violence in our schools. Baer and Glasgow suggest that the best inroads are through literature and English class before moving on to process drama with students with the majority of their literary focus on the role of the bystander. They propose that after literary review and discussion – working with students through process drama, which consists of role-play, problem solving and improvisation, allows students to see the issue from multiple perspectives and will "empower students to think and act more effectively".

Beale, A. V. (2001). 'Bullybusters': Using drama to empower students to take a stand against bullying behavior. *Professional School Counseling*, *4*(4), 300-306. Retrieved December 6, 2011, from the Academic Search Premier database.

'Bullybusters' shares the account of a drama-based anti-bullying program. This allowed me to gain the perspective of another educational practitioner and see where strengths were in Beale's program and what aspects would aid me in the development of my own project. The definitions of terms for the issue of bullying laid out in this article are clearly worded and will aid in this aspect of student learning. The use of psycho-educational drama offers interesting perspectives on using real life situations for the basis of drama and dialogue. Note: Beale also puts emphasis on the importance of working with students across the bullying spectrum not just bullies, victims or bystanders – this allows for all to learn the terminology and become empowered toward ending the issue.

Chenail, R. J. (2010). Playbuilding as qualitative research: The play. *The Qualitative Report*, *15*(5), 1285-1289. Retrieved December 12, 2011, from www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR15-5/norris.pdf

This article is a book review of *Playbuilding as Qualitative Research* by Joe Norris (2010). It serves as an example of playbuilding as a form of information presentation. It is also an overview of the above mentioned book by J. Norris and shares insights on the overlaps between art and research and why theatrical plays are a good format for presenting and disseminating data.

Haner, D., Pepler, D., Cummings, J., & Rubin-Vaughan, A. (2010). The role of arts-based curricula in bullying prevention: Elijah's Kite - a children's opera. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, *25*(1), 55-69.

This article serves as a view of another arts-based bullying prevention program and the way the researchers constructed their study. The use of surveys to collect pre and post data about the level of understanding students held about the issue as well as reports of incidents allowed for the development qualitative data that accompanied the program description. Development of these types of surveys gives another level of reliability to the data proposed in a paper. Note: the authors' acknowledgment of the limitations of a small scale study for drawing full conclusions about the benefits both short and long-term. The assessments would need to be taken over a longer term and with a larger body of participants to determine life-long benefits to participants.

Lea, G. W., Belliveau, G., Wager, A., & Beck, J. L. (2011). A loud science: Working with research-based theater and A/R/Tography. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *12*(16), 1-18. Retrieved November 17, 2011, from www.ijea.org/v12n16/

A Loud Science shared many insights on theater as a means to collect, analyze and disseminate data. The distinction that research based theater may or may not include the participants in the actual production rang with my work. I feel that it deepens the learning and self knowledge for participants to perform their own drama and share it with an audience, however, this article taught me applications for drama as a means for me to deepen my personal comprehension of the data collected throughout the process. Lea, et al. included guidance through their formatting for presentation which introduced me to the concept of intermingling dramatic presentation with that of a formal paper.

Norris, J. (2008). A quest for a theory and practice of authentic assessment: An arts-based approach. *Learning LANDscapes*, *2*(1), 211-233. Retrieved November 16, 2011, from http://www.learninglandscapes.ca/archives/59-education-and-the-arts-blurring-boundaries-and-creating-spaces

This article related multiple intelligences theory and arts-based assessment for student comprehension. Norris offered many examples of arts projects that could be applied by students to share their learning as well as deepen their understanding by translating the information from one medium to another, for example the translation of assigned readings into collage. Norris proposes that by requiring a meta-cognitive journal to accompany the art students also assess their own learning and artistic process which contextualizes their learning and can be used as an assessment tool by the teacher. These journals show not only knowledge of the presented material, but also of reflective creation of new knowledge about the self and the topic at hand. The multiple intelligences are adeptly engaged through allowing students to explore an art form they find comfortable to work in as a means of sharing with the teacher and classmates their learning and new understandings about a topic which lends to open discussion between students and further reflexivity. An adaptation of this method will make a strong contribution to my work.

O'Neill, C. (1985). Imagined worlds in theater and drama. *Theory Into Practice*, *24*(3), 158-165.
Retrieved December 7, 2011, from the ERIC database.

This article serves as another concrete example of theater process used with students to deepen and assess learning about a specific topic. O'Neill establishes that there needs to be a connection between theater and classroom drama, as the two have often been seen as separate entities, one for education and assessment and one purely for entertainment. She proposes that theater and drama must be seen as a social experience, not a solitary one, and through the engagement of audience and blurring of the lines of who is author, actor or audience greater learning can take place.

Salas, J. (2005). Using theater to address bullying. *Educational Leadership*, *63*(1), 78-82.
Retrieved December 6, 2011, from the ERIC database.

Salas' article is an example of a drama based program developed to combat bullying through acting out personal experiences and dramatizing interventions. Play-back Theater allows actors to embody the experience of another person, dramatize it and offer catharsis through this experience. It also promotes dialogue about the scenarios presented and can be used to present alternative actions that would have changed the situation. This example raised the question in my own work, whether dramatizing student experiences would be more potentially beneficial or detrimental. Through the development of the project I will look at appropriate times for personal accounts verses fictionalizations of personal knowledge, memory and other materials.

Saldana, J. (2003). Dramatizing data: A primer. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *9*(2), 218-236.

The 'how to' format of Saldana's article informed the process of developing my research design through his questions about the most appropriate forms of presenting information as well as through deepening my understanding of Ethno-Drama as a practice. Reading the work of someone who was a theater practitioner and became an ethnographer and researcher allowed me to connect more deeply to his work. His guidelines for monologue and dialogue construction as well as collaboration between researchers and artists help to further define my understanding of the connection between my research and the art that is produced.