CHAPTER 11

"I Decided to Teach… Despite the Anger": Using Forum Theatre to Connect Queer Activists, Teachers and School Leaders to Address Heterosexism in Schools

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Introduction

Schools, specifically classrooms, can be important sites for addressing heterosexism (Clark & Blackburn, 2009; DePalma & Atkinson, 2006; Thein, 2013). Although there is an expectation that teachers would interrupt homophobic-related bullying and heterosexism, studies reveal how

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inadequate and unsure teachers are about interrupting oppressive language and behavior (Ellis & High, 2004; Guasp, Ellison, & Satara, 2014; Schneider & Dimito, 2008). Even when many teachers hold positive, sympathetic views toward queer youth and issues, few are willing to take action to interrupt heterosexism, either in terms of advocating for changes in school policy or in terms of making authentic changes to what and how they teach (Thein, 2013). In fact, the international research shows that heterosexism remains an area of exclusion still largely unaddressed in schools (Carrara, Nascimento, Duque, & Tramontano, 2016; DePalma & Atkinson, 2006; Elia & Eliason, 2010; Jones & Hillier, 2012; Kjaran & Kristinsdóttir, 2015; Smith, 2018; UNESCO, 2016). In South Africa, due to the lack of training and capacitation for teachers around issues of sexual and gender diversity, teachers may shut down discussion on this diversity and in some instances, have reinforced the marginalization of sexually nonnormative young people (Bhana, 2012; DePalma & Francis, 2014; Francis, 2012; Msibi, 2012).

This chapter is concerned with exploring the ways in which school administrators and teachers connect with queer activists to address heterosexism in schools. It aims to explore how the democratic dialogic process of Freire alongside Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre may be used to bring different stakeholders together to address heterosexism in schools. We ask the following question: what potential do art-based methods offer in facilitating discussions and partnerships which address heterosexism in schools? The chapter, therefore, adds to the limited knowledge base on heterosexism, heteronormativity, and schooling and is significant to scholars, teachers, researchers, and activists who are interested in art for activism and critical performative pedagogy. We use the terms heterosexism and heteronormativity to describe the systemic scale of oppression and the privileging of heterosexuality as normative. Heterosexism maintains the dominance of heteronormativity which assumes that all "human experience is unquestionably and automatically heterosexual" (Yep, 2002, p. 167). Implicit in this norm, is a binaried form of sex and gender which delineates rigid physical, identity, and social norms in the form of male/female, man/woman, and masculine/feminine binaries. Through this "heterosexual matrix" a stable sex, expressed through a stable gender, is defined through the compulsory practices of heterosexuality. To be normal one needs to be part of the strict dichotomy of male/female with a gender performed to match the sexed body (masculine male, feminine female); with individuals desiring the opposite sex in particular ways.

According to this approach, heteronormativity needs to align with cisnormativity in order for each to function. Both terms are related in theory and practice, and because our chapter focuses both on the form of discrimination (heterosexism) and the value-laden norm (heteronormativity), we use the terms together or even interchangeably.

Queer Context in South Africa

While South Africa is the only country on the African continent that recognizes same-sex relationships and prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity—discrimination against those perceived to be LGBTI is widespread (see HSRC, 2016; Judge, Manion, & De Waal, 2008; Matebeni, Monro, & Reddy, 2018 for example). There are high rates of prejudice-motivated violence against lesbian and gender nonconforming women; same-sex couples are often turned away from home affairs when they attempt to register their same-sex marriages, and LGBTI refugees and migrants face double discrimination both as foreign nationals and due to their sexual orientation and gender identity (Mdluli, 2019). In simple terms, the laws protecting LGBTI communities have little meaning when they do not protect LGBTI individuals in their home, communities, or to access services.

In South Africa, the experience of LGBTI people cannot be understood outside broader struggles against racism, patriarchy, and class-based injustices which have been inherited by the apartheid system. This is apparent in the way violence is manifest with black lesbian women who are often gender nonconforming from township areas experiencing physical and sexual violence while gay white men enjoy the fruit of legal change in South Africa (Hengeveld & Tallie, 2012; Matebeni et al., 2018; Swarr, 2004). Matebeni (2013) explains that violence against queer women fits into systems of racial and gendered injustice in South Africa—violence becomes a way to publicly punish gender-nonconforming woman, a way to “cure” or “correct” a same-sex attracted woman. While the Department of Justice in partnership with LGBTI nongovernmental organizations (NGO) has set up a task team to deal with hate crimes, Matebeni argues that hate crimes legislation doesn’t mean the criminal justice system would work any better for already marginalized groups (like LGBTI groups or black women for that matter). In simple terms adapting an already unfair system to include marginalized groups (LGBTI people for

that matter) will not change the way that system already marginalizes women, black people, or working-class people.

Queer social movements, such as the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE), have been working in South Africa to deal with discrimination and violence against LGBT communities. Historically these organizations have been instrumental in creating change at a policy and legislative level due to donor interest in this area. While Queer social movements have been successful in establishing a progressive constitutional and legislative framework which promises protections for LGBTI people, the legal framework has not ensured that LGBTI people are any safer (Hoad, Martin, & Reid, 2005; Isaack & Judge, 2006).

The challenges facing LGBTI people broadly in South Africa are replicated within education. South African schools are often hostile and exclusionary toward queer youth. Although there is an abundance of research that documents heterosexism and schooling in South Africa, contemporary scholarship has not paid attention to instances where teachers have addressed heterosexism via curricular, policy, or in everyday teaching. In fact, teacher uncertainty and a list of reasons why they do not intervene and interrupt homophobia are well-documented (Bhana, 2012, 2014; Francis & Reygan, 2016a). While South Africa's transformation agenda has encouraged educational institutions to respond to race and gender-based inequality (with mixed success), other forms of inequality, for example, sexual and gender diversity, have been left largely untouched. Bhana (2012) argues that while there is space within existing education policy statements to include conversations about sexual and gender diversity—these provisions are broad and at times ambiguous, leaving teachers and schools to interpret them in different ways.

The subject Life Orientation, for example, covers topics that focus on comprehensive sexuality, relationships, sexual diseases and there is an assumption (based on the literature see DePalma & Francis, 2014; Francis, 2019a; Francis & DePalma, 2015; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Wilmot & Naidoo, 2014 for example) it is an appropriate subject area that will also focus on gender and sexuality diversity. Although other subject areas, might include LGBTQ content, the most obvious place for inclusion would be within the sexuality education section of the Life Orientation curriculum. This ambiguity is not helped by Life Orientation textbook and teacher resources which do not have positive representations of gender and sexual diversity (Francis, 2019b; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Wilmot & Naidoo, 2014, 2018), and teachers who view same-sex desire

as deviant and immoral (Francis, 2017, 2019b). This produces an environment in which LGBTI learners report experiencing high levels of verbal, sexual, and physical abuse—from other learners, school teachers, and school management (OUT LGBT Well-being, 2016; UNESCO, 2016). This context has associated LGBTI youth with high dropout rates from schools, an increase in drug and alcohol abuse and risky sexual behaviors (Butler, Alpaslan, Allen, & Astbury, 2003; Kowen & Davis, 2006). Queer youth are located in a system that reinforces heteronormativity; through the embedded nature of their experiences at home, school, and within their friendship circles. This leaves queer youth feeling silenced, isolated, and harassed (Butler et al., 2003; Kowen & Davis, 2006; McArthur, 2015; Msibi, 2012). While queer young youth have the potential to be agents of change (Francis & Reygan, 2016b), their lives are often entangled within the wider political, social, and economic struggles in South Africa.

Queer Social Movements, Art for Activism and Schooling

We argue that not all solutions to challenging heterosexism will be found in school-based education. Challenging heterosexism and homophobia have to focus broader than teachers and teaching. It has to explore how queer social movements, whose intervention and outreach can play a significant role in addressing heterosexism in schools. One challenge is the figurative rift between schools which focuses predominantly on the formal curriculum and social movements which engage in community activism and responding to social justice issues (Francis & Hemson, 2010; Gardner, 2007). This means that while heterosexism remains pervasive within education responses to bring about social change—within schools (through committed teachers and school leaders) and outside education (through the interventions of social movements)—often occur separately of each other.

In this chapter, we explore the utility of Art for Activism as a strategic intervention to connect LGBTI activists (with skills and knowledge about LGBTI experience), educational teachers, and school leaders through the use of creative methods to build safer and more affirming school environments. Art for Activism as facilitation practice emerged from the Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) work with LGBTI youth. GALA developed and tested the use of creative methods to empower, enable,

and engage LGBTI youth, queer, and other organizations in southern Africa and these resources are currently available in the form of the Creative Resistance facilitation guide. Art for Activism can be understood as a pedagogical response to bring queer activist, teachers, and school leaders to make meaning of their everyday social realities and to cocreate a creative response to inequality. This section will explore how creative and other methods have been used to support LGBTI youth, foster discussions on sexual and gender diversity within education, and challenge discriminatory practices.

Globally there are organizations who draw specifically on creative methods within the context of sexual and gender diversity in education. Gendered Intelligence, for example, uses art-based methods to engage queer youth about their struggles about gender and sexuality and to explore safe and supportive spaces (Gendered Intelligence, 2019). *Belong To* is another example of a queer social movement using various visual campaigns (posters and YouTube) to create social awareness and safe spaces for LGBT youth (Belong To.org, 2014). Working closely with schools, Belong To develops useful resources and services (around safe-sex, drug abuse, and coming out) and reviews education policy regarding gender and sexuality diversity to create social awareness and change. Also in the UK, *The Sharing Tongues Project* (Ajamu & Campbell, 2012), part of a wider vision of representation and artistic practice, is both "an expression of defiance against queer invisibility and a celebration of personal history and triumph." Capturing stories and experiences of Black LGBT individuals over the age of 45 in major British cities, the archive is aimed at queer youth. The Project uses a multimedia format—both a zine and DVD (which allows access for people with different levels of education and different modes of learning) (Ajamu & Campbell, 2012). Unlike other prominent global organizations, *Gendered Intelligence, Belong To*, and *The Sharing Tongues Project* do not work exclusively within existing curricular frames but propose and adopts alternate pedagogies such as art-based methods to connect social movements, communities, and schools to confront heterosexism. The approaches of *Belong To* and *The Sharing Tongues Project* influenced the development of the Art for Activism practice employed in the intervention of interest to this process.

In Africa, there are notable examples of Art for Activism that address heterosexism and heteronormativity too. *Invisible Stories from Kenya's Queer Community* is a collection of stories by journalist Kevin Mwachiro (2013). While not aimed at youth—the short stories and poems about

love, desire, and loss—lends itself to a youthful audience. Another example is *Out in Zimbabwe: Narratives of LGBTI Youth* (Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe [GALZ], 2013) a collection of stories and poems written by youth about their experience and aimed at other young people. Both these examples allow for increased visibility of queer African narratives and work outside formal education. This is because LGBTI identities are criminalized in much of Africa, thereby limiting the possibility of work within the formal education curriculum. Musangi (2014) has shown that even with the criminalization of LGBTI identities, it is possible to provoke conversations about LGBTI identity. Musangi (2014) initiated a performance on a busy street in Nairobi to explore the link between struggles for liberation in Africa and struggles for queer liberation. Using invisible theatre, which included dressing and undressing in a gendered manner, Musangi (2014) dislocated the heteronormativity of public space and sparked discussion about gender and sexual diversity. Musangi's pedagogical performance troubles the teaching and learning of gender and sexuality diversity through inciting conversation and dialogue.

In South Africa there are many queer activists using visual art and drama as tools to increase visibility or spark discussion including the works of Gabrielle le Roux (Feder, 2015), Jabulani Chen Pereira (BET.com, 2015), Dean Hutton (Elizabeth, 2015), and Zanele Muholi (Stevenson, 2015) among many others. While this chapter does not allow space to explore all of their work here—their creative interventions work with queer individuals and communities to reflect on their experience using photography, music, and performance. It is in this context that the Art for Activism intervention emerged in its current form. From a creative thrust in South Africa, which uses creative practices to engage, represent, and propose change within marginalized communities. While many of the contemporaries we cite, use these creative practices within the realm of formal artistic production—these practices still offer pedagogical opportunities to incite change in schools.

Examples of participatory art-based methods, in the form of Boalian Forum Theatre and photovoice, addressing social injustices have also made their way into schools (see De Lange, Mitchell, & Stuart, 2007; Francis, 2010, 2013; Hoosain Khan, 2013a, 2013b; Mitchell, Delange, Moletsane, Stuart, & Buthelezi, 2005). Francis (2013), for instance, explored whether Boal's Forum Theatre is a sufficient enough construct to challenge heterosexism and heteronormativity among school learners. There are two useful Freirean (1970) concepts from Francis's (2013)

intervention which have been adapted for the South African context. The first is that of codification, which refers to a process of creating a (newer) understanding of reality. This process allows individuals to grow their insights through reflecting on previous understandings of reality (Francis, 2013). The difference—between what the participant currently knows and what they previously knew—allows for awareness of change, and potentially active engagement in the process of change. This would be useful in tracking how the ideas of participants may change through a workshop process.

The second concept, naturalized discourse, highlights a potential obstacle in a learning space. It is a discourse which asserts how things should be or rather—*this is the way the world works*—and implies the *status quo* cannot change (see Francis, 2010). This concept is useful as it allows the researcher to reflect on what participants view as a norm. Relatedly, Khan (2013a, 2014) used interactive drama and visual art, respectively, to explore the potential of creative approaches to challenge discrimination and prejudice. The key concept in Khans work is dislocation—the potential for individuals through a process of building critical consciousness, to dislodge from their position within a system of injustice through disrupting some of the relational norms. While dislocation might be momentary, a short disruption of unjust system—movement, in the form of multiple and strategic dislocations, can lead to sustained change. For example, an art workshop might dislocate an attendee—during the workshop, they're able to reflect critically on their realities and even think of ways to respond. However, this is short-lived, once the attendee leaves the workshop. The everyday unjust social, material, and cultural realities return as the norm. However, if there are multiple dislocations (a series of workshops) and these are strategic (are likely to lead to impactful change) these may sustain new relation norms which are more fair and just. Collaborative art-based processes, therefore, allow for school communities to come together to reflect on their experiences, represent their stories and explore social action. Beyond these Freirean (1970) and Boalian (1979) concepts, which the authors have used and developed in their work, participatory art-based processes can be useful in linking the experiences of a community and activism.

Freirean and Boalian Frameworks

Freire (1970) maintains that education is a means to overcoming oppression, such as heterosexism by allowing people to analyze their circumstances in their own terms and propose solutions. Education that dismantles oppression is a collaborative creative process because it invites people to evade the circle of certainty or *naturalized discourse*, and in so doing to reinterpret their realities and to find new ways to resist oppression. Anti-oppressive education, therefore, is uncertain and uncomfortable, and even daunting, especially when generations of people have been excluded from democratic, participatory processes (Freire, 1970, p. 36). Freire's (1970) *conscientization*—a process of developing a critical awareness of how oppression is manifested structurally, learnt and intersects with other forms of oppression through reflection and action—is particularly useful for teachers, school leaders, and queer activists who seek social change in schools. *Conscientization* through the troubling and interrogating of structures and practices of power through art-based approaches such as Forum Theatre fits in perfectly with it means to teach queerly.

Boal, a Brazilian theatre director, writer, activist, and contemporary of Freire envisioned theatre as a space to promote social and political change through representing power and inequality. Boal's theatre techniques build on and allow for Freirean ideas to be realized in the workshop space. Boal envisaged theatre as a liberatory space where individuals can explore, dramatize, analyze, and change reality (Boal, 1979). For Boal, theatre is a space for participants to enact and resist injustice through representing their experience, responding to the experience of others, and imagining solutions. Within this practice, the facilitator becomes a neutral inciter or animator, one who leads the space but does not impose comment or an intercession. The audience or spect-actor is no longer a passive recipient of information, or drama but rather is an active player in the process. This allows the participant to actively create meaning within the workshop space and allows for the participant to control the sway and direction of the play (Boal, 1979).

Boal's theatre of the oppressed compliments Freire's theoretical positions on oppression and pedagogy. The practice encourages participants in this process to participate democratically and puts them on equal terms with the facilitator. Like Freire, Boal's practice aims to deconstruct the unequal balance of power between the teacher and student, or actor and

audience. Boal envisions a dynamic space where a facilitator incites dialogue providing structure and logistical support and participants are active players controlling the direction and the shape the outcomes of the process. Participants no longer delegate power to the facilitator but can think and act independently within the rules decided by the group (Boal, 1979).

Boal's Forum Theatre offers teachers and school leaders opportunity to improvise everyday examples of heterosexism and other forms of oppression they have seen in their classrooms and the school fields, to review these and to imagine change scenarios. Moreover, because teachers and school leaders bring their own experiences of heterosexism, whether privileged or disadvantage, is precisely what renders Boalian theatre so appealing in terms of the valuable insights it promises. Teachers, school leaders, and activists using various impromptu scenes and theatre games are enabled through the democratic forum space to discover and rehearse the multiple ways they might address a heterosexist episode at school.

Process

Listening to and acknowledging what teachers and school managers do and say is crucial for understanding how heterosexism manifests in schools. We designed the two-day workshop to allow educational personnel to show and teach us about their own learning about gender and sexuality diversity, local everyday examples of heterosexism in schools and where the opportunities and levers of change might lie. Dennis[1] and Gabriel,[2] both have an arts background and have also used art-based methods to lead social change processes, facilitated the workshop. For the workshop design, we used a range of art-based methods including Boal's Forum Theatre and visual arts methods to enable participants not only to express and process personal feelings, thoughts, and beliefs about same-sex sexualities and heterosexism but also to envisage and perform what social change solutions might look like. Needless to say, the two days generated large amounts of data in terms of visual arts, Forum Theatre scripts, and discussions. For this chapter, we explore specifically the utility of art-based methods in bringing together educational staff and queer activists to address heterosexism in schools.

In total, 12 participants—Life Orientation (LO) teachers, school administrators, teachers, and representatives from teacher unions and queer activists—attended. We included teachers who are broadly connected to the subject area LO because it is the only subject that includes

content related to sexuality diversity (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Wilmot & Naidoo, 2018). To access participants, we made contact with our personal networks, such as graduate students, teachers, school leaders, queer activists, and friends. Once participants were identified, we asked them to identify others. Our sample snowballed, enabling us to gain access to our participants, including those who could not participate. With the purpose of exploring the potential for educational staff and queer activists to work together in responding to homophobia and transphobia in schools, our two-day workshop was aimed at promoting the voices, perspectives, and active participation of these key stakeholders. Over the two days, participants worked individually and collectively to reflect on their own understanding of gender and sexuality, their own stories as teachers and educational leaders and the change scenarios they envisioned. The process was recorded by a note-taker, and photographs were taken. The analysis for this chapter draws on the scribed notes, photographs, and notes of the facilitators (Dennis and Gabriel). Thematic analysis, useful for revealing everyday discourse and practices and exploring the multiple relationships between the understanding of an issue, was used to interpret the participant's stories, explanations, and Boalian theatre sketches. Moving beyond merely describing the sketches and accounts, thematic analysis offers a perspective to identifying potential areas of action which is necessary for participatory action research. Using Marshal and Rossman's (1989) understanding of a theme as a category that relates to the research focus and which provides the basis for a theoretical understanding of the data, the transcribed data was read multiple times by the authors, and recurring motifs and themes were tracked, coded, collapsed where necessary and cross-referenced. Once this was complete, the emergent themes were interpreted against the Freirean and Boalian frameworks, concepts such as heteronormativity and heterosexism, and the literature that has guided this research.

The workshop process was structured as follows:

> **Segment one**: Participant journeys, a visual art exercise which invited participants to share their journeys as teachers, school leaders, and activists.
>
> **Segment two**: Understanding gender and sexual diversity, this exercise started with a brainstorm on the different words used to describe LGBTI people and myths associated with LGBTI people. This was

followed by a visual art exercise which unpacked sex, gender, and sexuality.

Segment three: Mapping needs, this exercise unpacked who the different stakeholders are, what roles they play and the ask we have of each of the stakeholders.

Segment four: Acting change in schools, this Forum Theatre exercise unpacked three examples of discrimination or prejudice in schools.

Segment five: Strategies for teaching gender and sexual diversity, this exercise explored the policies, forms of support, curriculum/text, and combatting isolation in building a more enabling and safe school environment for queer youth.

Overarching Themes Emerging from the Process

The section will include a description of the two themes which emerged as part of the overall process and a section on the themes which emerged specifically from the Forum Theatre exercise. The former highlights how teachers make sense of their own experiences related to sexuality and gender diversity and their journeys as teachers. While the latter explores how Forum Theatre fostered new conversations on sexuality and gender diversity.

Early Stories Related to Gender and Sexuality Diversity

In talking about their early experiences regarding gender and sexually diverse persons, many of the participants were swift to volunteer stories of fear, distrust, and repulsion. One of the participants teaching at a rural school tells of his first experience of a gender diverse person—"I grew up with a gay in the same street. I hated him so much. He liked wearing girls' clothes and playing with girl stuff." Similar stories loaded with derogatory images and metaphors were generated as teachers and school leaders talked openly about what they had seen, heard or learnt about gender and sexually diverse from people they had grown up with or knew. Disparaging words or phrases—"stabane",[3] "moffie",[4] "faggot", "trassie",[5] "tomboy", "koekstamper",[6] "mattie",[7] "gabedi", "shemale" among others—were readily dispensed in the discussions suggesting the familiarity and normalcy of their usage. Implicit in these references are the strikingly stereotypical notions of "butchness" associated with lesbian

women, "effeminate gay man" or "confused bisexual." These early experiences of prejudice and the absence of formal knowledge and resources (teaching, textbooks) are key to understanding how teachers and school leaders learnt about gender and sexuality diversity and in many instances, frame queer desire and expression as "abnormal." This early socialization highlights the normalizing of heterosexuality and Othering LGBTI individuals setting up an (apparently) stable boundary between heterosexuality and same-sex sexualities. These experiences precede formal knowledge of sexual and gender diversity and reinforce a heteronormative circle of certainty (Freire, 1970).

Journey Towards Becoming Teachers

In describing their journey toward becoming teachers, participants mentioned one of three reasons—(1) "teaching as an accident," (2) teaching as supporting a fragile other, and (3) teaching justice, as facing off resistance.

Many participants did not intend to be teachers as one of the teachers from a private all-girl school tells—"*My journey was my accident. I thought I was going to be something else.*" Others, due to their own economic inequalities, teaching was an unintended choice as a school administrator from a township school notes "*my parents could not afford to send me to…become a teacher.*" From the stories told, teaching as a profession, for many was "not the first choice." Teaching about sexuality and gender diversity for many of the participants, then, was not their intention or "choice." The participants learnt early experiences of prejudice and discrimination together with their limited opportunities of formal knowledge and their secondary choice to becoming teachers suggests unlikely motivation and commitment to address heterosexism or teach about gender and sexuality diversity.

While teaching was "an accident" entry point for some, other teachers and school leaders saw their role "to support, enable and encourage the fragile other" as a school administer from the city remarked "*I decided that if I become a teacher, then I can teach the learners that if you are different to others, you do not have to tease them.*" This supportive position was often related to participants' own experiences of discrimination, prejudice, and bullying in schools. The participants used words and phrases like "*grow,*" "*have a better experience,*" "*love and accept,*" "*motivate,*" "*focus on children that are different,*" "*develop pride,*" *and* "*touch their lives.*"

While these all strongly frame a supportive environment that recognizes difference—the participants do frame the learners as fragile "*children*" or a silent "*they*" who require protection. While the first theme identifies how the teachers and school educators navigate a heteronormative circle of certainty, this theme highlights how they might struggle to manage other practices of power in the classroom. In their attempts, "to support, enable and encourage the fragile other," teachers and school leaders position themselves as saviors, while also wielding power to reproduce other forms of dominance in the classroom. This theme highlights that gender and sexuality diversity, cannot be understood outside a broader analysis of power and therefore, inequality within schools.

One participant who played a more active role in struggles for equality within schools during apartheid shared examples of how leading change in schools will lead to resistance pushback. A teacher in a township school, he argued for the need for sexuality and gender diversity to be included in the curriculum regardless of anger and pushback. He recalls: "*I decided to teach about sexuality, despite the parent's anger… I was being accused of teaching children the wrong thing.*" For him, the backlash will come from parents, colleagues, other learners, school leadership and in some cases, other sites of power outside the school such as the church leaders but change has to start somewhere. This echoes Freire and Boal's own assertions—structures of power are reluctant to change and complex.

Forum Theatre as a Tool for Change

While teachers described their experience of becoming a teacher as an accident, as a support structure or as a point of resistance—the role plays enabled the teachers and school leaders to act out their own and everyday experience of heterosexism. Three role-plays were devised based on examples of heterosexism the participants shared. Table 11.1 summarizes the Forum Theatre: the role-play, the participant's attempts at problem-solving, analysis, and cocreated action responses. For the Forum Theatre exercise, participants were asked to write down a scene that depicts an everyday real-life example of heterosexism in schools and place in a bag. The participants are then placed in a group of five, choose a scenario from the hat and are given time to perform the scenario. At the end of the scene, the facilitator asks the audience spect-actors whether there were alternate ways to address the situation and a new audience spect-actor is invited to perform the scene with the onstage actors. Several audience

Table 11.1 Forum theatre

	Description of the role play	*Description of the Forum Theatre process*	*Analysis and reflection*
Role play 1	Miriam is an English teacher at Bloemhof primary school. Miriam notices that Thando and her friends keep wearing pants to school instead of a skirt. She keeps asking them to wear a skirt, but they refused—they say "but we are boys, Ma'am". Miriam calls a meeting with fellow staff members to talk about this issue	At first Miriam (the teacher) storms out of the room in anger, she is deeply upset with the students In the next scene, the principal asks to speak to the teacher. He asks why the teacher interacted with the student in an agitated manner. Miriam (the teacher) responds "all the other learners know that Thando is a girl and so all the other girls will copy Thando" (wear pants as well)	This vignette not only highlights schools as heteronormative spaces but also the complex and multi-layered change that needs to occur Not only do the teachers and school leaders need to understand concepts related to gender identity and expression (in this case transgender), they also need the skills to talk about these issues in a way that doesn't reinforce prejudice
Role play 2	A group of staff members from Bram Fischer high have created an innovative programme to teach sexual and gender diversity in their school. They call a meeting with parents and community members to share about the programme. The meeting gets heated when parents argue that teachers are recruiting their children into the gay lifestyle	Participants immediately inserted an ally into the role-play. They included a parent with a gay child as an attendee at the meeting In the next scene, parents get paranoid with the programme for sexual and gender diversity, assuming it would encourage sex Participants also cautioned each other about using language such as "normal parent" to refer to parents without gay children, as this is problematic	This vignette highlights the push back and resistance that progressive teachers face Participants expressed that choosing words carefully (even the name of the programme or the reason for the meeting), justifying the reason for the meeting and highlight how it may eradicate discrimination (in the form of bullying) could all work as strategies
Role play 3	John and Rahiem, two students at Bloemfontein high come to Meneer Jordaan. They would like to go to the Valentines dance together as a couple. Meneer Jordaan meets with Principal Coetzee to talk about allowing Rahiem and John to attend as a same-sex couple. Principal Coetzee is reluctant—she is unsure how other senior staff members would react	One participant asserted that conversations between teachers and school leaders should not include students. Others did not agree with this position Another participant highlighted that allowing a student to bring a same-sex partner would lead to discomfort It was agreed that using gender-blind rules—for example, a blanket no kissing rule for all students regardless of sexual orientation could be useful	This vignette highlights how teachers might not share consensus on how to deal with sexual and gender diversity in schools Further in adopting certain positions, for example, a gender-blind one, may not adequately unpack or resolve underlying inequalities related to gender that are implicated

spect-actors are invited to replay the scene and change the situation by expressing how they might support the targets of heterosexism and a discussion follows.

Forum Theatre provided participants with a space to disrupt their circle of certainty—through referencing stories of prejudice, discrimination, fear, and exclusion and problematizing, challenging, and envisaging change scenarios. The improvised sketches also enabled participants to acknowledge their own limitations in addressing gender and sexuality diversity in schools. For example, participants highlighted the normalizing practices of compulsory heterosexuality expressing fear of what their colleagues, school leaders, and parents will say if they did initiate change. Some of the teachers and school leaders were keen to point out that such regulation was also context-specific and as one participant remarked: "changes in small doses where possible." For the teachers and school administrators, recognizing allies and change-makers, in the form of queer individuals, activists, and organizations as a key resource and allies emerged as a pivotal starting point to envisage dialogue and strategies for disrupting heterosexism. The gender nonconforming student, the proposal to teach about gender and sexuality diversity, and the gay couple at the Valentine's dance were at first framed at the problem or challenges; but these queer tension points became opportunities for creating meaningful change. Even when not "invited" or "allowed" into a heterosexist space, queer individuals, activists, and organizations both disrupted heterosexism and become an ally in future or imagined strategies for transforming schools.

Discussion

Our chapter has inquired into how art-based methods might bring queer activists, teachers, and school managers together to address how heterosexism might be interrupted in schools. The democratic dialogic process of Freire together with the Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre highlighted the gaps in teacher's knowledge and imagined alternate ways to address gender and sexuality diversity. Using Forum Theatre in this way has benefits such as creating social awareness and exploring social change possibilities to interrupt heterosexism. The arts methods not only offered a structure for dealing with complex and challenging dialogue but a constructive platform to create forum sketches that show what anti-heterosexist and inclusive schools for LGBTI learners might look like.

There are some challenges and limitations related to using this approach. Firstly, Forum Theatre is practice with a particular language, politic, and ethos. In order to meaningfully utilize this approach, it's important to not only replicate the exercise—but the language and associated analytic tools, politic and associated analysis of inequality, and ethos or spirit. Secondly, while creative participatory workshops are useful in raisings awareness, they're difficult to sustain over long periods of time. If change is to be sustained, it needs to be iterative. That being said Forum Theatre provided our teachers and administrator participants with a stage to work together with activists, to try out different anti-heterosexist strategies in the form of images and short improvised scenes.

For the workshop, we were interested in how the participants were invested in a pedagogy of self-reflection, social awareness, the envisaging of social change in schools, and the potential they saw in building alliances with each other. As our findings indicate, teachers and school leaders are far from tackling heterosexism head-on, and change in schools will not happen overnight. From the Forum Theatre scenarios and discussions, teachers articulated the strong reaction from parents and school managers regarding the inclusion of LGBTI content in teaching and learning. What we learnt from the role plays, is the need for teachers to articulate a clear rationale, within and beyond the classroom, as to why issues related to gender and sexuality diversity need to be integrated into the curriculum. During the Forum Theatre performances, teachers drew on the Professional Code of Ethics of the South African Council of Educators, which stipulates that teachers "acknowledge, uphold and promote fundamental human rights, as embodied in the Constitution of South Africa" (South African Council for Educators, 2002). Moreover, teachers also cited their school codes or mission statements which in many instances included terms such as "human rights," "respect," and "diversity" as key values. During the role-play, teachers and school leaders used the school codes to strengthen their arguments for teaching about gender and sexuality diversity.

Finally, we also saw the utility of Forum Theatre to initiate coalitions in bringing together teachers, school administrators, and queer activists to create action agendas to address heterosexism. Strikingly, the Forum Theatre sessions revealed how isolated schools are from local community organizations. Community organizations such as clinics, recreational facilities, faith-based organizations and NGOs—are all valuable interlocutors to create safer and more affirming schools. The Forum Theatre also

revealed how ill-equipped teachers and school leaders are to deal with sexual and gender diversity and their yearning for support. The Forum Theatre discussions highlight the critical need for schools to establish connections with community organizations, specifically with queer NGOs and activists who have the knowledge and resources to address heterosexism in schools. For instance, queer activists have the necessary knowledge and skills to support school leaders and teachers to develop policy, create networks of support, think expansively about sexualities (beyond Life Orientation) and create educational institutions beyond isolation. We noticed how many of the participants shifted from singular voices to "we" suggesting that queer social movement and school personnel can coalesce and collaborate in anti-oppressive work. What seemed like an awkward gathering at the start, did end with participants changing contact details and committing to communicate more and work together. Boal's method, Forum Theatre does provide an exemplar of a democratic, participatory method that certainly has utility to deepen and strengthen any possible coalition between teachers, school leaders, and queer social movements.

Notes

1. At the time of the workshop, Dennis was a professor and dean of education at the University of the Free State.
2. Gabriel Hoosain Khan was the coordinator of the Youth and Education Project at Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA). GALA is a Johannesburg-based organization that studies, preserves, and promotes the history and contemporary experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in Africa.
3. Term to refer to same-sex attracted or gender nonconforming individuals.
4. Term used to refer to same-sex attracted or effeminate man.
5. Term used to refer to an effeminate or androgynous man.
6. Term used to refer to a same-sex attracted or masculine-presenting woman.
7. Term to refer to same-sex attracted or gender nonconforming individuals.

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