

# **Chapter 7**

## **How does learning happen?:**

### **Evidence in the lived experiences of educators and learners**

The highest form of human excellence  
is to question oneself and others  
*Socrates*

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I provide the evidence for the three concerns mentioned in Chapter 6 and the action taken by myself and the teachers to address the concerns. I share my story and the stories of lecturers who do not believe in themselves and how emotional issues get in the way of their *whole-being-learning*. I also provide evidence of my and the teachers influence in engaging students in *whole-being-learning*.

The concerns are :

- Students do not believe in themselves and emotional issues that they experience are getting in the way of their learning.
- Students are not actively engaging with the teachers and with the subject matter hence *whole-being-learning* is not happening in the classrooms.
- Teachers are in a state of despair in their classes and need support and encouragement

#### **What is the evidence for my concern that students do not believe in themselves and how their emotional issues get in the way of their *whole-being-learning*?**

I have evidence for my concern that students do not believe in themselves and how emotional issues that they are experiencing are getting in the way of their *whole-being-learning* in two ways. The first way is described in the form of a story of my own life-journey, the Life of JNGE-Ginger. The second way is through the lives of two of my own students who are actually teachers in Higher Education.

## **How do my emotional issues get in the way of my whole-being-learning?**

JNGE's - *Ginger* story came to light in July 2011 when I attended a workshop for Supervision and Examination for Masters and Doctoral students and their supervisors as part of the Transformative Education/al Studies project. I attended as a Doctoral student in the project. The workshop on 21 July 2011 was facilitated by Professor Jack Whitehead. He shared aspects of the experiences of one of his doctoral students, Anat Geller, in the workshop. The most striking thing for me at the workshop was when he shared about how Anat felt 'just not good enough'. As I sat there and reflected, I could identify with that feeling of being 'just not good enough' throughout my life.

It was a strange day since I had woken that morning with laryngitis which was rather difficult for me. I am usually very talkative and have a strong voice that had never let me down like this before. The effect of the laryngitis was no voice to express my thoughts, which meant that I did not do much talking that day. I was uncharacteristically silent. In retrospect, I ask myself "Why was I rendered voiceless?" Well, the answer is that I was required to listen and not to speak, with the result that I heard the phrase 'just not good enough' very clearly. It resonated throughout my being.

On the drive home, I reflected upon this resonance with 'just not good enough'. The words sounded like bells ringing through my being. Was this about something deep within me that had been awoken? Was this 'just not good enough' something deep within me waiting to be expressed? I could not wait to get home that evening and write my story.

Immediately I arrived home I took out my book and pen and wrote my story about being 'just not good enough'. The story flowed out the tip of my pen with ease. I could not type the story on the computer as the thoughts were coming through too fast, faster than I was able to type. I was excited about getting this story out onto the page. The words 'just not good enough' continued ringing through my ears. The first letters of each word of the phrase were JNGE - which became *Ginger* as I said them out loud.

I felt a strong sense of association with being ‘Just Not Good Enough’. I could not understand where it was coming from since earlier that week I had felt ‘Absolutely Good Enough’ AGE- Aggy.

I will share the story of JNGE – *Ginger* just as I wrote it, unexpurgated. I am treating the story as feedback. I have included the original handwritten story as recorded in my journal on 21 July 2011 see Appendix H.

### **So Delysia, are you really Just Not Good Enough- JNGE?**

JNGE - *Ginger* was just an ordinary little girl from the dusty roads and rolling hills of Umzimkulwana. She believed she was Just Not Good Enough, JNGE. Just not good enough to be born of a married couple. She was only good enough for her grandfather to love her and believe in her until the age of 8 years. Well that is what she believed until that Sunday morning when all she could do was cry. Cry because it was four days before Christmas. Who would buy her a Christmas present? Would she get a Christmas present? She thought, as they carried her grandfather's body away, all wrapped in a bag, from the homestead. Everyone else around her was crying. She was not sure if they were sad because of no present or because his voice was no longer to be heard! His Friday nite sweet treats would be missed! Well maybe he was no more because she was just not good enough! She should have listened more and asked less questions. She should have sat still more and not been so fidgety! She was Just Not Good Enough, JNGE, Just Not Good enough!

So she had to go and stay with her Mom and stepdad!. She was Just Not Good Enough to stay with her grandmother and all the other lovely kids in the homestead!. So JNGE set out on a path to be good enough! She worked hard at school. No time to play too much. JNGE had to be Good enough! She would not disappoint anyone again!. She really was as one of her school teachers said “a diligent, hardworking little girl who gave of her best at all times”. She was happy. She was excited about being good enough! She would be Good enough one day to become a Doctor. Her mother and family said she would become a doctor cos she was good enough. After all she was Good enough in school. She was no longer Just Not Good enough!.

Alas, soon her mother realised that she may Just Not Be Good Enough to become a doctor! She was sad! She did not have the required subjects at school to become a doctor. Oh my the family dream was not going to be! JNGE, JNGE, JNGE!

The Big Little school in the dusty roads of the rolling hills of Umzimkulwana could not offer the right subjects. The Big Little school could not help JNGE to become a doctor! It was Just Not Good Enough for JNGE. So soon her bags were packed. She was off to the Big, Big, school in the Queen's City.

At that Big, Big school, she could do the required subjects. At that Big, Big school in the Queen's City, there were so many children. So many strange faces. A different language was heard at school. JNGE was not good enough for this Big, Big School was she? JNGE could just about speak and understand the language that was spoken. JNGE had a strange accent when she spoke at school. It was going to be hard for JNGE. JNGE was yet again just not good enough at the Big, Big school. But JNGE soon realised that she had to be Good enough! Many sacrifices were made for her to be there. She had to become a doctor someday. JNGE missed her family. JNGE missed her friends. She missed all the wonderful birthday celebrations at home. She missed all the fun family outings. She was determined to be good enough so that her family would be proud of her. She would be good enough to be able to move back closer to home. The Queens City was more than nine hours drive from the dusty roads and rolling hills of Umzimkulwana.

JNGE worked hard. She was serious about her schooling. She would be good enough. JNGE was going to be good enough. She would get the right pass to become a doctor. She became the family pride and joy. Alas, JNGE soon realised that she could not become a medical doctor. She could not bear to work with blood. She could not be a medical doctor, she could not see such hurt and physically broken people. She was just not good enough. JNGE, Just Not Good Enough!

She worked hard at the Big, Big School. She was rewarded with an excellent pass in Mathematics in her Matric year. She received an A symbol. She was good enough to get a good pass. She even passed the subject that she had missed all the foundation years of study. It was not offered at the Big, little school so she had to come to the Big, Big school to start it and complete within two years. She was good enough, JNGE was good enough to achieve.

JNGE applied to study Pharmacy instead of medicine. JNGE was just not good enough to study Pharmacy at the selected University – she was not the right skin colour they said- JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH! When will she ever be Just Good Enough, well actually Absolutely Good Enough, AGE - Aggy. Maybe that is who she should have been then her life may have been better. Would it?

After I had written the JNGE – *Ginger* story in my journal, I felt calm and focussed. My thoughts were clear and I was able to complete my Keynote address entitled ***What am I to Transform?*** for the next day’s Extended Curriculum programme showcase with consummate ease. After weeks of just not been able to gather all my thoughts into a coherent presentation. I felt that a blockage had been cleared and I was able to engage with the material in preparing the address after weeks of anxiety and tension. I included the JNGE - *Ginger* story in the address as I explored the need for each lecturer to transform who they are and what they do as a teacher of students in the Extended Curriculum Programmes.

The poem "*Now I Become Myself*" by Sarton (1974) reflected what I felt like after I had written the JNGE - *Ginger* story.

*"Now I Become Myself"*

Now I become myself. It's taken  
Time, many years and places;  
I have been dissolved and shaken,  
Worn other people's faces,  
Run madly, as if Time were there,  
Terribly old, crying a warning,  
"Hurry, you will be dead before—"  
(What? Before you reach the morning?  
Or the end of the poem is clear?  
Or love safe in the walled city?)

Sarton- 1974

I began to realise that I had ‘become myself’ after 50 years of wearing “other peoples faces” and realised that I was ‘absolutely good enough’. When I said the letters AGE out aloud, I heard another name for myself- AGE - Aggy. I had identified my two personal facets of my life- JNGE - *Ginger* and AGE - Aggy. I could be JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH or I was ABSOLUTELY GOOD ENOUGH! When I was JNGE -

*Ginger*, then I did not believe in myself and felt paralysed with fear and anxiety. When I was AGE - Aggy, then I believed in myself and was able to achieve success and engage with the subject matter easily and successfully. I discovered that each of these personal facets played a driving force in my life at different times, sending me on a rollercoaster ride of emotional and productive highs and lows.

I had discovered a pattern in my life. I am reminded of Claude Bernard who said- “it is what we think we know already that often prevents us from learning”. I had convinced myself that I was Just Not Good Enough! Each time I felt just not good enough, I would work hard and persist. At the end of that I would be Absolutely Good Enough. Something in me knew I had to be resilient, to be AGE-Aggy.

There was also a game at play in my life here. I realise now that there are emotions that are constantly being triggered that in turn triggered the molecular change in my bodymind (Pert 1999). So part of my life and learning was to always find a way to become Absolutely Good Enough. It came from within me and from my interaction with the environment around me. Each time I managed to excel at what I was doing. I was able to learn a new way to be successful in my life. I was able to balance out the negativity with a positive energy. I found that there was a rhythm to my life. As the universe acted upon me, I was able to interact with it and thereby improve myself (Jousse 2000).

Thus through discovery of my own JNGE - *Ginger* and AGE - *Aggy*, I had an opportunity to step back and look for connections with others – students and staff with whom I interacted. I asked myself- Do they also have JNGE’s - *Ginger* and AGE’s - *Aggy* that prevent them from believing in themselves and doing the best they can to learn successfully?

### **What evidence do I have of my students who do not believe in themselves? What did I do to influence their belief in themselves?**

I identified two academic staff who did not believe in themselves as good teachers and displayed evidence of JNGE’s- *Gingers* and AGE’s – *Aggy*’s. I consider these staff as students whom I taught as an Academic Developer.

## **How did Sherlien's JNGE influence her whole-being-learning?**

Sherlien was one of my students who I believe had JNGE's - *Ginger's* and AGE's - *Aggy's* in her life. I will share some of Sherlien's story through which I discovered her JNGE – *Ginger* and her AGE - *Aggy*.

I met Sherlien when she attended a workshop on *Using Information Technology to Promote Active Learning* that I facilitated in the Effective Learning Centre during March 2001. I invited academic staff to attend the workshop as part of the broader curriculum transformation at the university to "capacitate staff and students in order to facilitate the change from didactic teaching and learning methods to more innovative and effective strategies" (Cooke and Timm 2004). The workshop was part of a series of workshops I offered in the Effective Learning Centre as part of a USAID funded project (Naidoo and Cooke 2000; Cooke and Timm 2004). The series of workshops were contributing towards achieving two objectives within the project, namely, the development of effective learning materials that embedded the SAQA Critical Crossfield (SAQA May 2000) outcomes of communication and the application of Information Technology. I believe that learning materials are effective when they engage the learners through whole-being learning.

Sherlien was a Microbiology lecturer who had formerly been a Technician in the laboratory at the university. She had a Medical Technology National Higher Diploma and was registered for a Masters in Education on a part time basis. She had chosen to do an Post-graduate degree in Education because of her keen interest in understanding more about teaching and learning. I believe that she was a teacher with a sense of vocation (Palmer 2000).

In the workshop on March 2001, Sherlien sat very comfortably towards the back of the room, with a warm smile on her face. She was very softly spoken and had gentleness about her as she interacted with the other lecturers and me.

At the beginning of the workshop, I posed the following question to the lecturers: "Can you please share experiences of whether you believe your learners to be active

or passive learners?" I believed that they each had rich experiences and knowledge of active learning to share. Each lecturer's knowledge was important and significant to share in the workshop as I was going to use their knowledge as a foundation for further discussions in the workshop.

All the lecturers, except Sherlien, complained about how their students were 'passive learners' who did not engage. Sherlien very quietly, slowly, with long pauses as she measured her words carefully before using them, shared her experience with the class. She was hesitant. I recall how she had identified that the learners showed

no eagerness to learn [the subject], no eagerness to come to lectures, no interest whatsoever (SOP 27, Sherlien, July 2009, 1:30 mins)

Her students felt "hopeless" and did not believe in their own knowledge. Then she introduced playing with cards in her class. These cards were no ordinary cards. When her students worked with and played with the cards Sherlien had observed and experienced a change in them. They became eager to engage with her and the subject as a result of the playing of Sherlien's card games. Suddenly the students had fun in her class. They were interested in learning and the questions they asked her were

"Why can't we have this in all sections?" "Why can't we have this in all subjects?"

(SOP 27, Sherlien, July 2009, 5:40 – 5:47mins).

From the questions that her students asked, I believe they were experiencing pleasure in their learning, pleasure in their realisation that they were learning more successfully because of the cards. I believe that their learning was successful because they were integrating the knowledge and experiences they had in other classes (Dewey 1938; Boyer 1990). Sherlien had experienced that developing and planning to use the games was time consuming and she did not have the time to do it for her whole course and she also believed that her fellow lecturers were able to commit the time to the development of such learning material.

Sherlien was very hesitant to share what she was doing in her class as she believed that she was ‘Just Not Good Enough’ as a university lecturer because she was using games in her class. She had been told by her colleagues that to be good enough your students had to engage in ‘serious learning’ and playing card games consequently was considered not serious. When her students engaged in card game playing, they were noisy. She was told that it was not good to have a noisy class as she needed to be able to control her class – she was ‘Just Not Good Enough’. She did not believe that she was doing anything good in her class as she did not believe that she was good enough to be a teacher until she had a quiet, controlled group of students in her class.

Sherlien was very shy to share what she was doing with her learners in playing games and she did not feel valued for what she was doing in her class. She felt she was ‘Just Not Good Enough’ as she was making cards out of chart paper and coloured pens for her students to use in playing the game. She felt that she was not professional or sophisticated enough in her production of her games. Sherlien attended the workshop to learn how to design and develop a ‘professional set of cards’ using the computer. I was amazed when I saw the handwritten card that Sherlien had already developed and used.

Sherlien invited me to observe her class playing the games. I have no audio or video recording of the visit. However my memory is still very clear about what I observed that day. I observed a class where there was engaged *whole-being-learning*. The students were clearly interested in learning. I observed their faces and the shine in their eyes (Zander 2009).

They were keen to talk to each other and to listen attentively to each other. They were noisy as they made their voices heard. They did not want to leave at the end of the session as they were so engrossed in ‘proving’ to each other that they understood and knew the content of the course which enabled them to win the game. I overheard serious debates and discussions about their answers and

witnessed the ‘cheating’ that Sherlien had identified. I was excited to see what was happening in the class!

I encouraged Sherlien to use the ELC to develop the card games further using the computer facilities available. I also encouraged her to share her experiences at one of my other workshops I was going to facilitate. I had recognised the talents and gifts she had to offer. Furthermore, I invited her to present her work at an Institutional symposium in September 2001 – her video of her presentation is available on Youtube<sup>TM</sup>: <http://youtu.be/qi1W2cKTMpE> (SOP 28, Sherlien, July 2009). Initially, she was astonished which was evident in her facial gesture and her voice. She gazed directly at me with raised eyebrows. She had a raised tone of voice that had an upward inflection as she posed the question in her response,

“Oh no, not me, I am not good enough to present to all the lecturers! Are you sure that I will not be rejected by them as this is not really serious Higher Education learning?”

She felt “Just Not Good Enough”! She did not believe in herself!

This response from her of not being good enough had a deep-seated paralysing history. During conversation with Sherlien, I learnt that she was previously employed as a Laboratory Technician and as such was made to feel Just Not Good Enough by her colleagues. These colleagues had not been Technicians at all in their lives. They believed that Technicians were not good enough to be lecturers or academics. Sherlien had shown that Technicians are Absolutely Good Enough to be lecturers when she was appointed as a lecturer and had experienced success with her students.

She could not believe that I was actually recognising her talents and gifts that she brought to the class. She could not believe that someone cared about her and her work that she was doing with her students. I provided a safe space for her to grow and fully realise her potential.

After a week, Sherlien agreed to develop her materials using the computer software in the ELC to make them “Absolutely Good Enough”.

During this time in the ELC, Sherlien engaged with other lecturers who were using the centre and they showed an interest in her work. Within the month, Sherlien agreed to share her work during a workshop session, she then felt "Absolutely Good Enough"! See Appendix I for a copy of Sherlien's powerpoint presentation. Sherlien made the video-clip of her presentation available for viewing on Youtube<sup>TM</sup> at the following address: <http://youtu.be/qi1W2cKTMpE>. Sherlien became excited when a group of Chemistry lecturers- Penny, Shubnam and Nalini joined in the development of a board game for chemistry and one of her colleagues in her department, Derrick, designed a board game. Both Sherlien and Derrick presented their innovative teaching methods at the Mini-Congress of Society of Medical Laboratory Technology of SA (SMLTSA) held in February 2002. See copy of the programme in Appendix J. (Govender 2002; Prithepaul 2002)

When I shared with her that I was excited about 'walking the road with her', she replied

You have given me the courage. We have walked the road together  
(Sherlien, 19:07 mins, personal conversation)

In our walk, Sherlien believes that I have given her the 'courage' to be who she truly is – a good teacher. I have chosen not to colonise her into my way of being but rather to co-fraternise with her as my student (Jousse 2006). What is the difference then between colonising and co-fraternising? To colonise is to "...conquer whole groups of other humans physically and physiologically by capturing and crushing them" (Jousse 2006:144).

On the other hand to co-fraternise is to

...conquer a single human being by captivating and empowering him (sic), appealing only to [her] anthropological capacities for growth and change (Jousse 2006:144).

I had not "captured and crushed" her but rather "captivated and empowered her" to enable her to grow and change through a triphasic interaction. When I asked her about the changes that happened to her and her learning in this process, she thought deeply and reflectively for a few seconds before answering in a very slow and carefully worded response

Ummm, it made me more aware of different learning strategies and it made me a bit restless as well because (pause) I am not satisfied anymore with quite a few things.

I am not satisfied anymore with, like I said with students sitting there and I am standing here. That doesn't work for me anymore. I am not satisfied with students sitting quietly in class. I want noise. I feel if students are sitting quietly then there is something wrong – they either don't know what is going on or they scared of me or they not part of the process. (pause) errrr it has made me more open to the students point of view- (Sherlien, 9:15-10mins: personal conversation)

Sherlien became 'restless' in that she was continuously seeking for something new and different to do with her learners in the class. She became an ardent reader and seeker of different ways of teaching. She was eager to learn, eager to do something different with her learners. She wanted them to question and engage her and the subject (Xenophon 1897). She definitely wanted a different relationship with the learners in her class in which both her and her learners are equal partners in the learning who appreciate each other as people (Xenophon 1897; Palmer 1993). She confirmed this when she emphatically and confidently reflected that:

You know you operate on a totally different level (pause) and that is absolutely amazing. (pause) Like I said you start seeing your students as more than just students. It makes them more willing to come and tell you personal things. You know whereas previously they wouldn't relate to you, they wouldn't talk to you and then suddenly you get this outpouring of emotions and feelings, things that you didn't bargain for. It just changes. ...you become like a facilitator you become a confidante, a friend, more than a lecturer you no longer seen as just a lecturer, you seen as somebody that can do things for them and who is willing to do things for them. I think that is the thing. You willing to do things for them (Sherlien, 10:40 – 11:24mins personal conversation).

Sherlien no longer saw her students as objects, but rather as humans with emotions and feelings. She had an attitude of service to her students (Greenleaf, R 1977). She was in a caring and nurturing relationship with her students as they regarded her as a 'confidante...do things for them'. So her restlessness was about searching for ways to be of service to her students. She believed in them and expected them to get actively involved in the class to the extent of creating their own posters and learning material. She always managed to get the 'most amazing stuff' from the students that other lecturers were unable to get from the same students. She was

deeply concerned that lecturers who taught the same students saw the students in a negative light as being demotivated and not bothered to do anything for them whilst they produced the most amazing work for her. Sherlien was able to interact with her students through co-fraternisation rather than through colonisation. I noticed that Sherlien used “you” in this conversation when she was meaning “I.”

Sherlien had similar experience as a Masters student where she felt frustrated about her own studies. She was half-way through her Masters in Education and for the past few years, had not engaged with completing her studies. She did not enjoy sitting in that “normal lecture mode” with the lecturer seen as the imparter of knowledge and her the passive receiver – it just did not work for her not being an active participant in her own learning, she was not interested, and it did not make sense. Sherlien’s concept of learning is

Doing, more than seeing, errr, doing by yourself, you involved in it, not watching someone else doing it, errr, and I suppose it is all your senses, not just looking you could physically do something, but your mind is elsewhere you using your mind, touch feel you using your emotions cos you involved and you playing with somebody and you talking and you trying to justify what you doing err rationalising thinking, forward thinking because you not just stuck in that mode you thinking about well what's next what am I looking for, what do I need to complete this set, errm and also the relationship between the students , its you setting the groundwork for forming a relationship with them that you wouldn't otherwise have had. Playing a game with somebody, you realise, well he is a good partner- he knows something, but she I can hoodwink... so the next time around am I going to be sitting in the same group because I am going to win or do I work with someone who knows what is going on so that I can improve what I know (Sherlien,16:09- 17:20mins, personal conversation).

Sherlien has an understanding of learning as *whole-being-learning* involving “all your senses,...physically...mind...emotions...talking”. She felt “I am not an active participant, nothing made sense, why should I bother” (SOP 27, Sherlien, July 2009, 18:06mins). She said this with a sad voice as was evident by the very low, drawn out, slow, ‘Just Not Good Enough’, tone of voice. Unfortunately, Sherlien never did feel ‘Absolutely Good Enough’ about her studies no matter how much I encouraged her. I observed that Sherlien spoke with no enthusiasm or energy or joy about her own studies. She was not interested or excited in her own studies, there was no emotional connection. She did not see any relevance to what she was doing in her

studies to her teaching in the classroom. She felt ‘Just Not Good Enough,’ and ‘dropped out’. I believe that Sherlien’s teachers failed – they were indeed ‘Just Not Good Enough’ JNGE- *Ginger*.

Through Sherlien’s story, I believe that the academy in the form of her work colleagues and teachers had convinced her that she was ‘Just Not Good Enough’. My belief in her ability to engage her learners in active *whole-being-learning* helped her to believe that she was ‘Absolutely Good Enough’. She was able to be in her *Element* - recognising and using her talents (Robinson and Aronica 2009). She felt nurtured in the ‘safe space’ that I was able to provide for her through the community of practice. She was able to experience active *whole-being-learning* in herself when she participated by sharing her expertise in the community of practice. Her relationship and connection with her learners had also improved positively as they experienced her nurturing in the ‘safe space’ she created in her classroom.

I considered Sherlien to be an excellent teacher who cared for her students and thus approached her to apply for the HELTASA National Teaching Excellence award in 2007. I believed that Sherlien viewed her teaching as a vocation – “an act of dedication to her students” (Boyer 1990:4). However, she declined my nomination because she felt that she was ‘Just Not Good Enough’ even though she had all the evidence of excellent teaching practice. It was only in 2011 when her Head of Department and Executive Dean nominated her for the award that she submitted an application. I submitted a testimonial on her request as I truly believe that she is an innovative and caring lecturer. See Appendix K – a copy of the testimonial that I wrote for Sherlien.

Sherlien’s application was successful and she became the second recipient at our university of this National Teaching Excellence Award. At her acceptance speech, Sherlien spoke for twenty minutes sharing her heartfelt thanks without any notes or memory-aides. It was very sad for me yet joyous as well. I was sad because she stood there looking very thin. She was weak and her face was filled with pain. She had been diagnosed with abdominal cancer three years earlier and had been through numerous chemotherapy treatments, and she was not winning the battle against the cancer. HELTASA had made a special arrangement to honour her before

the official award at a small ceremony at our university due to her deteriorated health. I heard and saw how Sherlien had at last believed in herself. She was “Absolutely Good Enough”! Sadly, Sherlien passed away three months after she received the award.

### **How did Ingrid’s JNGE influence her whole-being-learning?**

From my personal experience I found that JNGE’s - *Ginger* can also be as a result of stress in my family situation. Ingrid, an academic staff member and one of my students, experienced how stresses in her family life and the University can create a JNGE - *Ginger* within a person.

Ingrid is a lecturer in the Department of Homeopathy who has also had experience of being ‘Just Not Good Enough’. I first met Ingrid when she attended one of my workshops on *Using Games to Promote Active Learning* in October 2004. I recall Ingrid sitting quietly in the workshop. She was quiet and I noticed that her eyes were dull when she walked into the workshop. As the workshop unfolded, I noticed that she did not share much. Ingrid was deep in thought and at times appeared a bit distant in the workshop. At the end of the workshop she expressed gratitude for the workshop and said that she had some thoughts that she was going to explore. I did not persuade her to share her thoughts, but indicated that if people needed further assistance they could call me or contact me. I would now say that she did not believe that her ideas were good enough- or rather that she felt ‘Just Not Good Enough’.

About six months later, I received a call from Ingrid inviting me to come over to her department and see the game that she had developed. I was pleased that Ingrid was excited and had shining eyes (Zander 2009) as she showed me her game and proceeded to describe what Ingrid had done. I could see that she was at that stage feeling Absolutely Good Enough!

During our conversation on her reflections of using games for learning, she expressed with sadness and uncertainty in a low, slow, quiet voice, that she had “always battled with like confidence issues” (SOP 30, Ingrid, May 2009,11:52 mins). In 2004 her confidence had been further shattered by the loss of her baby daughter,

Amy, who died at birth. She had just returned to work in September 2004 and was looking for a new lease on life, a new sense of creativity and seeking for wholeness. She shared about feeling ‘Just Not Good Enough’ in a very painfilled tone of voice and with some nervous laughter in the conversation. She shared about feeling “broken” and the need for a sense of “accomplishment”:

I think all through my life I felt broken and this was like just like the last tragedy, was like see, I am not even worth it, I can’t even have a kid I think that feeling was was huge, like I lost my baby I am useless and then (pause) lucky I had a very very good husband – (*laughter*)- and slowly I began to sit and think, no wait. And probably that is why I developed the board games is to have this sense of accomplishment in something... umm you know maybe I can’t have a kid but I can do something completely unique in our department. (SOP 30, Ingrid, May 2009,14:20mins )

I noticed the droop in her mouth and her shoulders as she spoke to me. I heard a sadness in her voice before a nervous laughter when she spoke about her husband. Her husband supported her in the development of her boardgame by purchasing the materials that she used from a local hardware. He showed an interest in her work. He recognised her talents and nurtured her in the development of her boardgame through his support. He cared for her. She was thus able to shift from “I felt broken”, “I am not even worth it” and “I am useless” which I saw as being ‘Just Not Good Enough’ to a feeling of ‘Absolutely Good Enough’ when she was able to venture out and experience a “sense of accomplishment” by doing “something completely unique”.

Having fun was not easy for Ingrid as she believed that Homoeopathy profession and homoeopaths had a tendency to think that they were in a serious business where there should be no fun. I sensed that this serious approach to life made Ingrid tired of “wearing someone else’s face” (Sarton 1993) and not being herself, having fun. She used a very dramatic staccato, matter of fact type voice placing deliberate emphasis on each word as she shared about the serious nature of her course.

Our course is very (long pause) serious, you know it is all facts and figure you know, you gonna die or you gonna make a patient die (SOP 26, Academic staff - Ingrid, September 2009,20:08 mins)

No whistling is allowed down corridors cos you [I am] not suppose to be **happy** (SOP 26,Academic staff - Ingrid, September 2009, 49:51 mins)

This place is depressing and our department is **so serious** and nobody is allowed to laugh. (pause) I feel sad (SOP 30, Ingrid, May 2009, 10:08 mins).

She particularly emphasised the words “**happy**” and “**so serious**” as she spoke about her department with such deep feelings of unhappiness and sadness. She experienced a force of oppression from her colleagues to be serious and not happy at work and was emotionally stressed. She was unable to experience true spontaneity in her teaching.

Ingrid was subjected to an education system in which spontaneity has been killed and according to Jousse

For us, science has become gravely serious. It has become immobile. When one goes to introduce oneself to a savant, one always imagines a grave immobility, answering in monosyllables, with a fixed stare that searches the infinite. Which is why it is sometimes somewhat disconcerting to find oneself standing in front of someone who is, to the contrary, vital and alive (Jousse 2005:52).

When I encouraged Ingrid to have fun in her teaching using board games, she began to believe in herself as being vital and alive. She discovered her creativity and was excited as evidenced in the upward lilt and quick, light tone of voice as she said

I have never been a creative person in my life, but hey, I created something quite useful.(long pause) and that does not need to stop at work...I have become more positive and played games with my child who is now three and a half...I can not feel stupid cos its ok to be a kid, cos it keeps you young and ...energetic (SOP 26, Academic staff - Ingrid, September 2009, 48:53 mins – 49:52,)

Ingrid also recognised that being ‘Absolutely Good Enough’ was not restricted to her work only, but was applicable to her life in general. She wanted to “enjoy what [she did] and give [her] best to what [she was] doing at the moment” (SOP 30, Ingrid, May 2009, 16:52 mins,) through the board games for learning and having fun in life.

Ingrid further went on to share about how she has now continued whistling in the passages and brought the laughter and fun into her classroom through the use of games as she has increasingly found that she is ‘Absolutely Good Enough’. Feedback from Ingrid’s students indicate that they have engaged in active *whole-*

*being-learning* through the games. They have experienced joy and pleasure in their learning using the games which they have expressed as

"[games] adds interest and excitement to education" (SOP 31, Ingrid's 4<sup>th</sup> year homoeopathy student 4-3, June 2009)

"teaching with games also helps the mind to achieve its full capacity to recall and make knowledge as much part of the entire being as the heart the blood it pumps" (SOP 31, Ingrid's 4<sup>th</sup> year homoeopathy student 4-1, June 2009)

"easily remembered anything without being feeling forced" (SOP 31, Ingrid's 4<sup>th</sup> year homoeopathy student 4-2, June 2009)

"you never feel pressurised to know (...) I enjoy playing games because it is fun – this makes you feel like yur(sic) not actually expected to perform, and yet you do!" (SOP 31, Ingrid's 4<sup>th</sup> year homoeopathy student 4-4, June 2009)

I believe that Ingrid's students consciously ex-press what they know in their viscera spontaneously which was clearly shared by her students. The students' experience is explained by Jousse

As soon as you allow yourself to think, the mimeme mechanism automatically and spontaneously comes into play. And this happens even when you would rather not think... so much are we lead, so much are we played by our intussuscepted mimemes (Jousse 2005:38).

Ingrid had experienced whole-being learning and changed from her JNGE - *Ginger* to her AGE - *Aggy* through the safe space that was created for her to believe in herself. The safe space is a community of practice where her deep-seated paralysing effect of the loss of her daughter was changed to a vital, dynamic life through the unleashing of her creative potential. Through providing the space and nurturing for Ingrid I was able to help her recognise her talent and gifts. Through this she was able to use the games to encourage whole-being learning in her students.

After writing this story, I sent an email to Ingrid on 18 September 2012 for comments: "Please tell me what you think about what I have written about you, and me." I received a response from Ingrid on 18 September 2012:

*Dear Delysia*

*Wow you made me cry. What a long way I have come from that time! Yes it does sound like me.*

*I am so glad I have kept the spirit of having fun alive as the students really respond to it. I thank you for this time of reflection.*

*Ingrid*

**What evidence do I have of students not actively engaging with the teachers and with the subject matter? What did the teachers do? What evidence do I have of my influence? What evidence do I have of the teachers influence?**

I will share the stories of four lecturers who were concerned that their students were not actively engaging with them nor with the subject matter in the class. The four lecturers, were Ivan, Derrick, Dorinda and Anisa.

**How did Ivan use games in his classroom to influence his students whole-being-learning?**

In 2001 I met Ivan who was a lecturer on the CHELTA (Centre for Higher Education Learning, Teaching and Assessment) programme for new lecturers at the university. I was his mentor and we had numerous conversations about his teaching strategies especially as he had never taught before and had no educational qualifications. I found Ivan to be an innovative, dedicated and committed teacher.

Ivan values teamwork as he readily worked together with either myself as in the case of games development or with the Audio-Visual unit to produce the DVD's of his students work. The students in his class worked in teams for these various projects.

Ivan teaches Occupational Health and Safety students who are registered for a Diploma in Environmental Heath at the University. In 2004/5 he used games for the section that dealt with students gaining an understanding of legislation that dealt with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Ivan was concerned that the students experienced difficulty in understanding this section of the course.

During a personal conversation with Ivan, he stated that the “students found that particular aspect of the course boring” (SOP 32, Ivan, July 2009, 13:58mins).

I recall how Ivan smiled with fond recollection of how he too, as a former student, of the same course had experienced difficulty with that section of the course. He shared with me about how his lecturer had just read through the section in class. He and the other students did not engage actively with the lecturer or the subject matter whilst in that lecturer’s class.

Ivan wanted his students to be actively involved and he “wanted to teach them the way I would have wanted to be taught (...) change and get them involved” (SOP 32, Ivan, July 2009, 14:39 mins). Ivan was concerned that the students were challenged due to the fact that in his class “90 – 95% of the students English is a second language” (SOP 32, Ivan, July 2009, 2:08 mins). The medium of instruction for them was English, their home language was isiZulu. The students were forced to read English and understand the legal jargon of health and safety legislation as there is no isiZulu translation of the legislation. The challenge of language issues related to student engagement and student success is not foreign in Southern Africa (Jansen 1998; Afonso 2007).

Ivan believes that learning “occurs from your experience and what you can see in reality what takes place then you can understand why you need to learn certain concepts.” (SOP 32, Ivan, July 2009, 26:28mins). I believe Ivan is referring to what Jousse describes as

Man instinctively and naturally embraces concrete experiences, and resists venturing into the algebraic mode of dislocated representation (Jousse 2004:23).

Jousse further describes the “algebraic mode” as being a

system of artificial signs that represent nothing in themselves but which we have nevertheless to assimilate, and out of which we must construct meaning (Jousse 2004:23).

The artificial signs of the algebraic mode are alphabetic scribal writing. To move from the “concrete experiences” to the “algebraic mode” the learner moves from a vitality to an inert act of reading. There is a vitality as the learner experiences their “surrounding reality holistically [in their whole being],...relives [the geste] and expresses [the geste]” (Jousse 2004:24) as a Mimodrama, which is full of energy and life. The Mimodrama – an ex-expression of concrete reality, is reduced to a fixed form, a Mimographic ex-expression such as a drawing which is abstract, and then further reduced to scribal alphabetic writing in the algebraic mode. When the vitality of the concrete experience is reduced to words on the page, disconnection and boredom set in which Ivan understood intuitively and set out to do something about.

I believe thus that Ivan’s students were not engaging as they could not ‘construct meaning’ from the words of the legislation on the page so I encouraged him to attend a ‘safe space’ Community of practice session that I had organised in the ELC during October 2001. During this session, Sherlien and two other lecturers, Shubnam and Penny shared their passion and knowledge of using games for engaging students in active *whole-being-learning*. They shared their process of how they had developed the games for the students to actively engage in *whole-being-learning*. Ivan listened carefully and attentively to what they had done. From the triphasic interaction (Jousse 2000) with the other lecturers, he went a step further than Mimism (Jousse 2000). Ivan intussuscepted and integrated the gestes within his whole being (Jousse 2000). He displayed true scholarship of teaching (Boyer 1990) by transforming and extending the knowledge he had received, and then entered a creative new direction in his teaching. Ivan “created a common ground of intellectual commitment” with his students (Boyer 1990:24). He did not follow the other lecturers and design games for the students. **Ivan asked the students to design the games themselves.** This was not laziness on Ivan’s part, but rather his understanding that the **design** of the games enabled learning of a different kind at a different level, than playing the games.

Ivan had engaged in the scholarship of integration as he displayed the “power of critical analysis and interpretation” in the use of game design for his particular students (Boyer 1990:20) Ivan’s students designed their own games for engaging active *whole-being-learning* of the legislation. The students read the legislation and

made their own notes in a language they understood. Then they developed the questions for the games, designed the board games and played the games in class.

Initially, the students did not believe in themselves. They said they were not creative and could not develop games. Ivan laughed as he reflected on the conversation he had with his students:

Student : "We are not Artistic, we are Science and Environmental Health students..."

Ivan : "Yes, you are Environmental Health students. If you don't have the special creativity or innovativeness, then you can go and find someone who has the creativity...*(laughing)* find a friend, make a friend, go to the Architecture department or go to the Fashion Graphic Design department and make a friend there..." (SOP 32, Ivan, July 2009, 16:56 mins).

He encouraged them to integrate with students that was outside of their discipline from across the campus. He encouraged them to go out and find others who were creative. Ivan had included me on the list of people with whom the students could interact. The students took up the challenge and were very creative in their designs. I interacted with the groups of students who contacted me and noticed how they changed from the first visit when they did not believe that they could develop games through to the time when they were designing their games and using the computers. For many of them it was the first time that they used computers. The games also afforded the students an opportunity to develop their organisational skills in working with other students and with people other than their lecturers. The groups were required to schedule appointments with me as a group. They had to align their available time with my availability to meet with them so they learnt about time management. They were also required to purchase their own materials for the games that they developed as these resources were not available from the University.

Whilst working with the students I was able to recognise the talents they had within them and affirm their creativity (Huxtable 2009; Robinson and Aronica 2009). The final game that each group of students produced was peer assessed and assessed by Ivan as well. Their emotions of fear changed to joy and love for what they were doing.

Both Ivan and I found that it was ‘fun and dynamic’ working with the students in that they always asked questions and took initiative in the design and development of their games. Ivan recalls how the students impressed him by taking the initiative to buy games off the shelf to see how games are made and then by getting others to support them in the construction of their games.

There was a group of students who did something differently. They had friends studying Information Technology (IT) who worked with them to develop a multi-media game on the computer. They went beyond the paper and board type of game that others had developed. The students had become the ‘questioning ones integrating with the known ones’ triphasically (Jousse 2000) as they interacted with the IT students to develop their games. This situation led Ivan to refine his criteria for the development of the games. His criteria were interpreted differently by the students. He found that the students engaged him regularly out of class to discuss the developments in their games. He was able to nurture them through the difficulties they experienced whilst developing and playing the games. He found that their level of interaction and debate in the class increased whilst playing the games. He was often called to mediate the differences of opinion in the answers or interpretation of the questions that the students experienced.

The students enjoyed developing the game to the extent that they made a choice to miss other lectures and rather spend time developing the game. Consequently Ivan was not popular amongst his colleagues. Ivan’s students valued the way in which he engaged them in their *whole-being-learning* as he recalls with great joy in his speech that they said “nice to see that you human” (SOP 26, Academic staff - Ivan, September 2009, 43:11 mins). His students were able to relate to him as a human being showing feelings and care for them in his relationships with them.

Furthermore, the Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA) reported that the students from the Durban University of Technology (DUT) were more employable than the students from other neighbouring institutions. Ivan believed that the understanding they gained through the development of the games contributed to their employability. From his interaction with the students in Industry, he has noticed they are able to quote and implement the legislation with secure confidence which is a requirement for their jobs.

Ivan offered his knowledge of using games for activating *whole-being-learning* as a gift to himself and others successfully by delivering a paper at a National Conference (Niranjan 2004) and completing a Masters research study (Niranjan 2005). The title of his dissertation was “*Evaluation of Training and Development technique amongst Environmental Health learners: An Alternative model using the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act 85 of 1993)*.”

Ivan does not use games every year in his class because he does not want the students “to second guess” …” (SOP 32, Ivan, July 2009, 3:05 mins) him and lose the excitement of the games. He has further encouraged the students to produce DVD’s and process models to enable and demonstrate their *whole-being-learning*.

### **How did Derrick use games in his classroom to influence his students whole-being-learning?**

Derrick and Sherlien taught in the same Department of Medical Sciences at the Durban University of Technology from 2001. Derrick was influenced by Sherlien to use games in his teaching of Chemical Pathology for Biomedical Technology students (SOP 26, Academic staff - Derrick, September 2009, 4:58 mins). Derrick valued the “fun and buzz” (SOP 26, Academic staff - Derrick, September 2009, 5:20mins) in the classroom when the students were engaged in activities such as game playing that promoted *whole-being-learning*. He valued collaboration amongst his students as they worked in groups. Derrick’s concerns with his students were that they do not:

- remember basic concepts
- calculate correctly
- integrate subjects
- use appropriate SI units
- know aspects that a Medical Technologist “ought to know” (Govender 2002)

Derrick used two approaches. Firstly, he developed games for them to play just as he had seen Sherlien doing in the department where they worked together. During a

Community of Practice sharing session in the ELC, Derrick interacted with Ivan. He learnt through interaction with Ivan that students could develop their own games. He was excited about this and approached me to assist him.

One of Derrick's main concerns was that he did not want the students to design a game for his subject only. Derrick required them to integrate all that they had learnt from other subjects into one game.

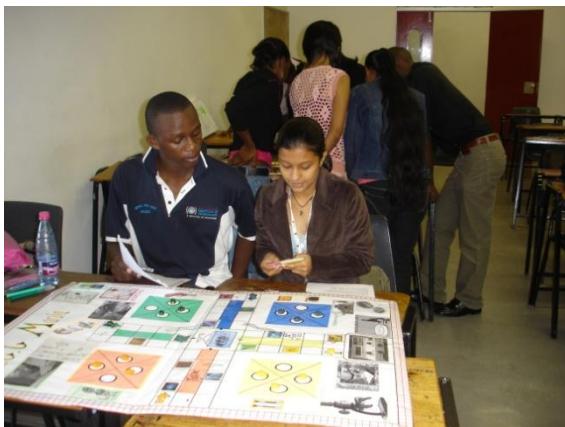
Derrick thus set an assignment for groups of students to develop their own games. They adopted the same process as Ivan in that the students had to first formulate their own questions for specific sections that Derrick allocated to each group. The student's design process moved from the "algebraic" mode of the written alphabetical scribal writing of the questions, to the "mimographic" drawings of the board games that had to be appropriate for their content, to the "mimodrama's" as they engaged in active *whole-being-learning* whilst playing the games (Jousse 2000).

Meanwhile I provided a 'safe space' in the ELC for the students to meet and develop their games. I engaged with the learners as they developed their games. I observed how they had been filled with fear and feelings of hopelessness when they first visited the ELC. They did not believe that they were creative. They did not believe that they could develop games as many of them had never played board games before. During my discussion with them, they expressed concerns that playing games was not actually learning. They did not believe in Derrick's ability to teach them. They felt game playing and design was only about having fun. However after they had developed their games and received their assessment on their design of the games, they were very excited at their achievement. They also enjoyed playing the games (SOP 32, Derrick (2), July 2009, 1:51:mins). They also found that they had learnt so much about the content through formulating the questions for the games. While they played the games amongst themselves, they soon realised that the questions had to be very carefully worded. Derrick found that the students "debated" (SOP 26, Academic staff - Derrick, September 2009, 46:49) about the questions and had deep discussions about the content as they played the games.

From the pictures of the games taken while the students were playing (see figures 41 - 47) it is evident that the students were artistic in their designs. The students

used different colours for each of the subjects they were required to integrate in the game as evident in figure 41, 44 and 45. Their creative potential had been realised as they were nurtured in the development of their games and they had used the “opportunity to get to know what they can do only by actually [doing] it” (SOP 26, Academic staff - Derrick, September 2009, 43:39mins). Derrick observed how while the students were playing the games, they were all engaged in searching for the answers to the questions posed. He observed the students “had become all-rounded persons, not just sitting there quietly in a box” (SOP 32, Derrick(2), July 2009, 2:56 – 3:13 mins) Figure 43 shows how the students were consulting their textbooks to gain clarity on a question and answer that was given by the students. Figure 46 shows how the student is using his hands as he engages with his physical body to explain what he is saying to his fellow students. Derrick recalls with a sense of achievement in his voice, how the students showed such eagerness to engage in the active *whole-being-learning* by actually asking for the games to play with them outside of class. (SOP 32, Derrick (1), July 2009, 10:57 mins).

I believe that Derrick’s students engaged in active *whole-being-learning* as they came to recognise their own talents in asking questions and designing games, connected with the content of the various subjects, used their whole bodies, minds and emotions while playing the games. Derrick had provided the students the opportunity to create, offer and accept gifts of knowledge to each other and to future students who would also use the games for learning (Huxtable 2009). Through interaction with Sherlien and myself, Derrick was also able to integrate his knowledge as his gifts and talents were recognised and offered to others when he presented his work to the public at the Mini Congress of Society of Medical Laboratory Technology of SA (SMLTSA) (Govender 2002).



**Figure 41** Derrick's students playing board games



**Figure 42** students engaged in question and answer session



**Figure 43** students reading the textbook to settle a dispute about an answer



**Figure 44 More board games**



**Figure 45 colourful boardgames integrating four subjects**



**Figure 46 engaging in more game playing**



**Figure 47 writing out an explanation during the playing of a game**

After writing this story, I sent an email to Derrick on 18 September 2012 for comments: "Please tell me what you think about what I have written about you, and me." I received a response from Derrick on 20 September 2012:

*Hi Delysia*

*I have read my aspect of your thesis and have made some corrections/changes, etc. Most were well captured.*

*Thanking you.*

*Warm regards*

*Derrick Govender*

I had incorrectly captured the name of the Mini Congress at which he presented his work.

### **How did Dorinda use games in her classroom to influence her students whole-being-learning?**

My first interactions with Dorinda as a lecturer in Somatology, were during curriculum development workshops that I facilitated for the Department of Somatology in 2005. Dorinda is a very vibrant teacher in the Department of Somatology in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Durban University of Technology. She is always eager to try out new teaching strategies and meeting her students' needs is her central concern. She values having fun while learning. She values students having a voice and actively participating in her class.

She completed her Masters in Education qualification in 2010 as a part-time student. As a student she was required to do assignments and attend lectures as well as

complete a mini-dissertation. She could identify with her own students as a student herself. Dorinda observed that her students were “bored”:

I realised how boring doing an assignment and just physical writing and that can kind of structured assessment... and for me... I also wanted something innovative, something exciting not only to stimulate the students but something to stimulate myself...at the same time it is a two way thing cos I am learning from the students as what maybe excites them, what makes them passionate, what makes them tick... (SOP 34, Dorinda, July 2009, 1:36 -2:06 mins).

At the end of 2008, my colleagues Shubnam and Nalini in the Academic Development Unit offered a workshop on *Using games to Promote Active Learning* for the academic staff. Their workshop was influenced by my workshops that they had attended in the early 2000's. Dorinda and some of her colleagues in her department attended the workshop and returned very excited and motivated to use games in their classrooms. Dorinda taught students in a third year course on Aromatherapy and Reflexology. Dorinda was concerned that the workload for the course was huge with many facts that the students had to memorise. She was averse to many theory tests as she believed that the students in her class needed to be hands-on and be able to apply the theory. The Aromatherapy and Reflexology course was very practical in nature with the students performing aromatherapy and reflexology treatments in the clinic. Dorinda observed that her students were very creative, and she believed that the students' creativity in the other courses such as Aesthetics could be better demonstrated.

Nalini and Shubnam, two of my Academic Development colleagues, facilitated a workshop for all Dorinda's students on designing games for learning. Dorinda designed her students' assignment with many 'building blocks' and included a written assignment, a game and a poster –see *Appendix*... Dorinda shared that the students were not getting along with each other very well in the class. There was not much interaction at all between the students. She had divided them into groups of 5 to 6 students each for the project. Each group designed their own games for learning which they actually had an opportunity to play in the class. Playing the games provided an opportunity for the students to connect with each other in the classroom as they engaged in *whole-being-learning*. The students said the games project:

Makes you interact with other people...make friends (SOP 35, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-7, July 2009).

Brings the class together...(SOP 35, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-3, July 2009).

Dorinda spoke passionately and in a very caring tone about her students having a voice in the class. She felt satisfied as she observed that through the games, the students became more involved in their own learning. She very thoughtfully reflected on how the students were able to make mistakes and not be ridiculed while playing games. The emotion of fear that students experienced in class was removed as the playing of games "gave them more confidence to speak what they would like to say or have a voice, whereas normally they feel too intimidated to answer the question" (SOP 34, Dorinda, July 2009, 7:54 mins).

I observed Dorinda's students playing games and noticed that they were actively engaging in *whole-being-learning* in the class. They were participating by responding to questions and engaging each other in debate and discussion. They were also listening attentively.

"All the students that shared their experiences in writing and in the focus group enjoyed playing the games and felt "happy and "excited" "like children"" (SOP 36, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology Focus group, July 2009, 2:37mins).

The students were giggling as they recalled the excitement they experienced. Through the playing of the games, they definitely experienced a loss of the feeling of boredom and students felt an emotion of joy that influenced their learning positively (Pert 1999) :

"Using games makes learning more exciting and if used in lectures it would hold the interest of the class and lectures wouldn't seem so long and boring" (SOP 35, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-4, July 2009).

"You do not get tired or bored" (SOP 35, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-8, July 2009).

I observed the students playing the games and indeed there was an air of excitement and joy when they played the games. Dorinda was excited to see that one of the students who was always half-asleep in class was listening more carefully and taking notes to ensure that she had the answers for the questions that would be

posed during the playing of the game. The students confirmed that they did pay more attention in class and listen more:

"you remember the voices you heard" (SOP 35, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-12, July 2009).

"I wanted to listen to the presentation" (SOP 35, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-19, July 2009).

"encouraged [me] to be attentive" (SOP 35, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-9, July 2009).

When the game was played, the students were physically active and participated fully in the game in a very spontaneous manner. This spontaneity was experienced by the students who said that whilst playing games they

"were more relaxed...felt no pressure and no stress" (SOP 36, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology Focus group, July 2009, 3:40 – 3:53mins).

"made me think on my toes, feelings of edginess" (SOP 35, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-1, July 2009)

Dorinda shared that the game playing is "more stimulating" (SOP 34, Dorinda, July 2009, 4:13 mins) as the students were creative and as they involved the physical body in playing the game. The students shared with very confident voices how listening to songs or watching movies helped them to remember more than when reading a book or sitting and studying

"If you watch a movie you can go and easily tell the next person what happens in a movie whereas if you have to read a book or like sit and study it doesn't always sink in as fast as with a game cause there is no visual it's just a lot of words that make you confused it's not just words on a piece of paper it's the fact that you actually getting involved and you become part of it" (SOP 36, Dorinda's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology Focus group, July 2009, 4:45- 5:28 mins).

When the students use the words "its just a lot of words that make you confused" , they are ex-pressing unhappiness about what Jousse calls verbigeration.

If we are to build up the capacity of the learner, we need to let the learner be by letting the learner handle the Real as much as possible: to build up mimemes, which mimemes, when act-ivated, become gestes. The danger is that gestes, actions, mimemes, can be verbalised: the replay then is expressed in propositions, in propositional gestes or, after the introduction of writing, in words. If these words no longer have rapport with a prior intussusception of the Real, then we have verbigeration. One should never

speak of things that have not been personally intussuscepted. And all too often the child is educated in words, through words, by words (Jousse 2005:17).

Furthermore, Jousse reminds us that

The human is a natural born mimer: the human being intussuscepts – takes in and – making it his own – integrates it, and then expresses those personalized and individual impressions(Jousse 2005:45) (...) and it is through mimism that s/he acquires all her/his knowledge (Jousse 2005:52).

The students went on further to explain in fast excited voices, all speaking at one time, how games helped them to connect their knowledge and see things as a whole and

“not just different numbered pages (...) not just scattered words (...) mumbled words (...) and easier words like us to use on a everyday basis (...) some words we learn (...) putting into laymans terms (...) talking to each other (...) we both know what that word means” (SOP 36, Dorinda’s 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology Focus group, July 2009, 5:44 -6:09 mins).

They stated how games helped them to be able to explain to others what they have read and understood (Boyer 1990). This led students to be able to

“remember the information in the future” (SOP 35, Dorinda’s 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-21, July 2009)

“makes understanding easier” (SOP 35, Dorinda’s 3<sup>rd</sup> year Somatology student 3-2, July 2009)

Dorinda’ students engaged in *whole-being-learning* as they designed and played the games in the class. Dorinda connected with them as they all became learners and teachers in the class. The students were able to connect with their subject material as they developed questions for the games and as they interacted with other students in answering the questions. The students as the questioning ones integrate their knowledge and become the knowing ones able to recognise the gifts and talents in themselves and in each other as they engage in *whole-being-learning*. the students and Dorinda experienced a love-filled joy and a joy-filled love in the design and playing of the games.

## **How did Anisa use games in her classroom to influence her students whole-being-learning?**

Anisa and I first met at one of my workshops in 2003 on *Using Games for promoting Active learning*. Anisa was teaching a subject Tooth Morphology in the National Diploma:Dental Technology at the Durban University of Technology. During the workshop, I provided an opportunity for Sherlien to share how she had developed and used games in her classroom. Anisa listened attentively and after the workshop, she expressed a desire to work with me in the ELC to design a board game for her students. Anisa was excited about using games for *whole-being-learning* as she recalls with excitement in her tone of voice how she played games to learn her Islamic faith as a child. During a conversation with Anisa, she shared with passion in her voice that she “always wanted to teach differently...to **challenge** myself” (SOP 34, Anisa, June 2009, 1:00 mins). Anisa spoke very passionately with shining eyes (Zander 2009), and lots of movement of her hands about her students and her work and she wanted to develop the same passion for Tooth Morphology in her students.

She believed that to get them to feel the passion

“she had to learn to talk the students language (...) learn about her students (...) their personality, their enjoyment, a very social learning (...) tap into their thinking” (SOP 34, Anisa, June 2009, 13:01- 13:31mins (SOP 34, Anisa, June 2009,)).

Anisa had observed over the years of teaching that her way of conducting tutorials for her students needed to be refined as her students were not engaging in *whole-being-learning*. Her students were “passive observers of facts for only a short time period until the tests are written” (Vahed 2008:467) and they preferred “visualisation rather than abstract theory (...) they couldn’t retain the knowledge or apply it TMpractically” (SOP 34, Anisa, June 2009,1:35 – 1:46mins). The students were required to memorise certain terms which would inform the practical component of their course. Students studying Dental Technology qualify as Dental Technicians. Their job is very practically oriented as they design and make dentures and dental prostheses. Their reality as technicians is very concrete thus they find it difficult to engage with “voluminous content (...) and abstract theory” (Vahed 2008:467-468).

Anisa and I worked together in the ELC to develop a plan of action for her to design, develop and implement the game with her learners. I assisted her with the development of the cards she used in her Trivial Pursuit™ type of game. She used the computers in the ELC to type the multiple choice questions and answers for each category that she chose onto cards and to find appropriate pictures for the cards. A key aspect of the game was to include a full mouth maxillary model made of dental stone. The model, a familiar object to the students, consists of two parts, that is removable 'tooth-like' dyes and a solid base. The purpose of the model is for the students, if they answered correctly, to return the numbered dye correctly to the base. The team that returned all the dyes to the base is the winner. Apart from the model introducing a 'fun' element to the game, the academic purpose of the model was to link the theory to the practice.

As the students played the game they would build the model with the correct teeth in the correct place which was a key competency for the Tooth Morphology course. During my interaction with Anisa, we questioned each other about the various components of the game and purpose of the game. We nurtured each other and recognised the gifts and talents that each had to contribute. I provided a safe space and community of practice for her in the ELC and through our interaction.

I recall how we had many moments of great laughter and excitement when everything was on track and progressing according to plan. There were also moments of distress when the cards and board game 'was not looking right' as the game needed to be "visually stimulating" with the relevant and appropriate morphological content. (Vahed 2008:468). We had frustrating moments too when we could not get the computer to do what we wanted or thought it should do. Finally, everything was completed within a six month period. We had both engaged in *whole-being-learning* as we had integrated our knowledge, nurtured our relationship and recognised each other's gifts and talents.

Anisa had discovered her creativity which she believed was dormant until she started getting involved in game design. She understands her creativity as being "your own idea developing" (SOP 34, Anisa, June 2009,15:33 mins). I observed Anisa sharing with energy-filled voice and movements of her hands and whole body as she shared how her ideas

"poured in and that was the best part, it wasn't that I was standing there and waiting for ideas (pause) my mind felt like an explosion! (hands moving back and forth and touching her head and all around her body as she was seated) Ideas coming out from all over and my years of experiences are coming to light you know what were the difficulties? and how can I help? How can I make Anatomy another interesting subject?" (SOP 34, Anisa, June 2009, 18:36 mins)

I believe that Anisa was integrating her knowledge of games based learning by exploring how she could draw on her past experiences to, in the words of Dewey, "live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" (Dewey 1938). I believe Anisa became aware of what Jousse refers to as "anthropological potentialities" (Jousse 2004:19). I believe that Anisa showing how deeply embodied and embedded her knowledge was in her viscera and was then able to spontaneously express the gestes that were intussuscepted deep in her viscera and re-play them using both corporeal-manual and laryngo-buccal forms of expression (Jousse 2000). Anisa found her '*Element*' in designing and using games for *whole-being-learning* (Robinson and Aronica 2009).

Anisa developed a computer-based game called *Muscle Mania* in 2007 for her Oral Anatomy students and is currently exploring an online game for her students.

Did the students see themselves in the same way as Anisa experienced them in the class- engaged in *whole-being-learning*? Anisa observed her students enjoying playing games and engaging in learning in a spontaneous manner. She shared that this gave her "...most exhilarating feeling (...) there are no words (...) the most exciting beautiful feeling ever". (SOP 26, Academic staff - Anisa, September 2009, 4:21 – 4:45mins). Anisa had experienced the activation of her "molecules of emotion" and was "feeling good" (Pert 1999; Pert 2006).

Anisa's students questioned her about her games " Miss Vahed, why don't I do this in the game?" and she realised that she was an expert in Dental, but they were experts in Gaming. She acknowledged the role reversal in that the learners became the teachers, and vice versa. She emphatically and deliberately repeated the comment when she truly realised "that was good, that was good" (SOP 34, Anisa, June 2009, 13:57 mins). She felt good about her students having a voice in her class and for them integrating their own knowledge into the course. She felt good as the community of practice in her class was characterised by "involvement, mutuality and

accountability” (Palmer 1993:9). The students became curious about the game and contributed their knowledge to the improvement of the game – they were engaged in *whole-being-learning*.

I asked three groups of Anisa’s students- 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students who had played the game – “*What would you like to tell me about your experience – your feelings and emotions- of using games for learning, teaching and assessment?*”

The students share the change in emotions they experienced in their lives through the games that they played in Anisa’s class:

“In my first year of study the work was a lot and very confusing...difficult to study and understand... the game made us interested in the work...helped me understand... makes learning interesting and fun.. helped me pass the subject” (SOP 38, Anisa’s 2<sup>nd</sup> year Dental Tech student 2-14, June 2009).

“In my first year of study I found myself hating campus as I tryed(sic) to adjust to something I didn’t know. I began to find myself having high stress levels...after playing the game...helped me a lot with understanding and enjoying two subjects that are so hard” (SOP 39, Anisa’s 3rd year Dental Tech student 3-14, June 2009).

“It was hard to adapt to the learning and teaching styles presented by the lecturers...very comforting, understanding and precise when the games were used for different subjects and a marked improvement in results were noted” (SOP 40, Anisa’s 4<sup>th</sup> year Dental Tech student 4-2, June 2009).

They were “confused”, “stressed”, “hated campus” and did not feel very comfortable as first year students. I found it interesting that these students were in their second, third and fourth years, yet they could recall the feelings they had in their first year at University which was traumatic. The impact of the games must have been very positive for them to be able to recall the change in their emotional lives.

All the students experienced “fun” whilst playing the games which means they enjoyed playing the games (Pert 1999). They no longer felt passive in their learning as they

“could hear someone else explain the topics in a way s/he understood” (SOP 40, Anisa’s 4<sup>th</sup> year Dental Tech student 4-4, June 2009).

“not bored and improve spirit of studying” (SOP 39, Anisa’s 3rd year Dental Tech student 3-7, June 2009).

"have fun rather than to stare at a lecturer for hours" (SOP 38, Anisa's 2<sup>nd</sup> year Dental Tech student 2-14, June 2009).

The students were engaging in active *whole-being-learning* as they interacted with the subject and each other and found it pleasurable. Through the games, Anisa had helped the learners develop a relationship with the subject as well as with other students as one of them shared

"[games] made it easier to understand work because we were interacting with our class mates (...) gain insight on their thoughts (...) their understanding of different sections" (SOP 38, Anisa's 2<sup>nd</sup> year Dental Tech student 2-04, June 2009). The students were able to understand the content and experienced an increase in ability to

"recall what they had studied (SOP 38, Anisa's 2<sup>nd</sup> year Dental Tech student 2-20, June 2009).

"never forget the answers to the questions in the game" (SOP 39, Anisa's 3rd year Dental Tech student 3-6, June 2009).

"absorb and retain and later recall knowledge" (SOP 40, Anisa's 4<sup>th</sup> year Dental Tech student 4-6, June 2009).

Anisa had been able to address her concern about them not being able to retain their knowledge. The students had engaged in *whole-being-learning* as they played the games for learning.

I accompanied Anisa to the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Conference on Games-based Learning hosted in Barcelona during October 2008 where her presentation entitled *The Tooth Morphology Board Game: An Innovative Strategy in Tutoring Dental Technology Learners in Combating Rote Learning* (Vahed 2008) was well received.

Anisa has also registered for a doctoral study based on her use of games for learning. Anisa has thus offered her knowledge as a gift to herself and others (Huxtable 2009). I believe that the 'safe space' within the community of practice of games based learning practitioners that I had created was influential in the increased creativity and transformation that Anisa experienced as she engaged in *whole-being-*

*learning.* When she applied for the National HELTASA Teaching Excellence Award in 2009, I was able to write a testimonial for Anisa, highlighting her enthusiasm and commitment to innovative teaching. Anisa was the first teacher from the Durban University of Technology to receive the National HELTASA Teaching Excellence Award in 2009.

After writing this story, I sent an email to Anisa on 18 September 2012 for comments: “Please tell me what you think about what I have written about you, and me.” I received a response from Anisa on 18 September 2012:

*Hi Delysia,*

*I thought I would just take a brief look, but when you described the sparkle in my eye I just could not stop myself. I have read my section and made some minor corrections. Let me know if you can access my brief comments.*

*All of the best.*

*Cheers,*

*Anisa*

Anisa’s minor corrections were about the terminology I had used for her course. I have included her corrections.

## **Conclusion**

Sherlien and Ingrid have provided evidence as well for teachers that are in a state of despair as they did not believe in themselves as good teachers. However as a result of the ‘safe space’ and community of practice that was provided for them, they were no longer in a state of despair and their students were engaging in *whole-being-learning*.

Ivan and Dorinda's students were not actively engaging as they found the course to be boring. Ivan and Dorinda changed the way in which they were teaching the course by setting assignments for the students to work in groups to design, develop and play games. Derrick's students were not integrating the knowledge of their subjects and like Anisa's students, they were unable to retain knowledge or apply it in their courses. Derrick started by designing his own board game for the students to use and then later set assignments for the students to design, develop and play board games. Anisa designed board games and later developed a computer game for her students to play as part of their tutorial program. Sherlien, Ingrid, Ivan, Dorinda, Derrick and Anisa's students engaged in *whole-being-learning*.

All four of the lecturers were influenced to use games after they attended workshops or interacted with staff who had attended workshops on using games to promote active learning. I had supported the staff, and in Ivan's and Derrick's case, their students by providing a safe space for them to engage in a community of practice.

The lecturers were influenced to care about their students' needs and serve them by accepting them for who they are, empathising with them and allowing them to grow taller than they would otherwise be (Greenleaf, R 1977). They were able to engage in a different mode of delivering the course and their classes were transformed.

The students engaged in *whole-being-learning* in their classes as their emotions of fear, boredom, and lack of excitement were changed to joy and fun (Pert 1999; Pert 2006). The students were able to remember, recall and engage in discussions and debates as they integrated their knowledge and were able to pose questions to the lecturers and to their fellow classmates (Dewey 1938; Boyer 1990; Nosich 2005). Both the lecturers and the students that designed and developed games had come to know the person they are and want to be; recognised and developed their talents to create and offer valued knowledge as gifts to improve their own lives and the lives of others (Huxtable 2009).

The 'real pain' that was experienced by the teachers and students has been changed to a 'real joy'

We all have a 'real joy'-

Finding answers to questions of things unknown

We have a 'real joy'-

Using our talents and offering our gifts of knowledge

We have a 'real joy'-

Caring deeply for each other and our knowledge

We have a 'real joy'-

Living as a valued one in community

We have a 'real joy'-

An energised spirit, mind and body

We have a 'real joy'-

Felt deep within our whole beings

We have a 'real joy'-

Felt through our molecules of emotion

As we live, we learn and we love.

*Delysia Timm (2012)*