

Exploring Digital Storytelling: Towards HIV and AIDS Knowledge Production in an Affluent Girls' School

Maureen Inge St John-Ward

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In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg

December 2014

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this whole dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary, is my original work.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "M. Inge St John-Ward", is written over a horizontal line.

Maureen Inge St John-Ward

1 December, 2014

ABSTRACT

This research project is a qualitative study that explores the use of the participatory visual arts-based method of digital storytelling in the context of addressing HIV and AIDS in a secondary school classroom in an independent school in South Africa. The study is located within the research area of how HIV and AIDS are understood in an affluent school in South Africa in the context of youth-as-knowledge-producers. It is concerned with Elite Studies since affluent schools are an understudied research site in South Africa. In this media-making project I build on the key concept of convergence within a participatory cultures framework, and multimodality as conceptualised by the New London Group (Kress, 2003; 2010). My participants, 70 Grade 10 girls from an independent girl's school in KwaZulu-Natal, produced a digital story about their understanding of HIV and AIDS. Of the 70 stories, 15 form the core study group and are analysed in depth.

Analysis of the content of the digital stories takes into account the responses of the producers, the texts themselves, and the responses of the audiences who viewed them. This analytical approach draws on the conceptual work of Fiske (1987), Stuart (2006) and Fairclough (1995) in recognising the interrelatedness of the story texts, and discourse and sociocultural practices, and invites an analysis of the multimodal nature of the girls' digital stories.

The project provides insight into how adolescent girls in an affluent school understand HIV and AIDS, and offers a deeper understanding of this work in the context of Elite Studies as a sociological phenomenon. This work contributes to expanding the idea of youth-as-knowledge-producers in the context of sexuality and HIV and AIDS in South African schools. The outcomes of the project contribute to addressing the application of a multimodal analysis to work with digital stories to help fill the research gap identified by Jewitt (2014b)

and others. I conclude that it is critical that more work be carried out in South African independent schools, particularly given the misinformation that is currently circulating about HIV and AIDS, but also in recognition of the keen interest of the participants in this study to learn more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following for their support and contribution to the writing of this research report.

- To my supervisors Professor Claudia Mitchell and Dr. Jean Stuart for their expertise, constructive advice and guidance and tireless dedication to assisting me throughout this thesis.
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- To my sponsors who assisted me financially with my studies.
- To the administration staff at the University of KwaZulu-Natal both at Edgewood and in Pietermaritzburg, for all their assistance in the administrative matters.
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- To my colleagues and friends Fiona Hedderwick for proof-reading this document, to Heather Ashton and Patrick Harty for helping me when I needed advice, to Jean Clarke, Jeremiah Padayachee and Neveshree Balvadoo for the technical assistance given to the girls and myself in all aspects of the digital story process.
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- To Arthur my husband, Brian my son, Belinda my daughter-in-law for their tolerance, patience, support encouragement and love.
- To my son Hayden, whose untimely passing from this world was very difficult for me to endure. As a result of this I needed something to keep my mind occupied and so the idea furthering my studies was born.

- To my grandson Quinn and granddaughter Paetyn, for your patience whilst I was working on my “pieces”.
- To God who gave me the strength to continue especially when the going was tough.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE



24 June 2012

Mrs Maureen I St John-Ward (203401491)
School of Education

Dear Mrs St John-Ward

Protocol reference number: HSS/0420/012D
Project title: Exploring the use of Digital storytelling in the classroom: Towards HIV & AIDS knowledge production

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
/ms

cc Supervisor Professor Claudia Mitchell and Dr Jean Stuart
cc Academic Leader Dr MN Davids
cc School Admin. Mr N Memela/Mrs S Naicker

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION If you believe in something and even if you just do a little thing towards it, you will feel better about yourself.... And instead of just sitting around and talking about it, go out and do something about it. I think one thing you can do is learn more about it and if you learn more about it, you can inform others about it and share your opinions with others and maybe they'll feel the same way.... (Mia, cited in Goldman-Segall, 1998, p. 205)1 HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome) remains one of the greatest public health challenges the world is presently facing (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2014). South Africa has the most widespread HIV epidemic in the world (UNFPA South Africa, 2013) According to statistics one in every ten South Africans is living with HIV – about 5, 26 million people, as opposed to 4 million in 2002 so, as we can see, the total number of people who are HIV positive has risen by over 1 million people over little longer than a decade (Health24, 2013). In the age group of 15-49 years, an estimated 15, 9% of the population is HIV positive (Health24, 2013; Statistics South Africa, 2013). Knowledge about HIV and AIDS, however, remains a serious concern. Only 43.5% of male youth and 40.6% of female youth aged 15-24 can properly identify means to prevent sexual transmission of HIV, and are familiar with the misconceptions about the transmission of the disease (UNFRP South Africa, 2013). Because of this, the issue of HIV and AIDS cannot be ignored by schools – public or affluent independent ones. I agree with Kelly (2002) that education has an important role to play in remedying combating this lack of knowledge. I also concur with Goldman-Segall (1998) who maintains that, as teachers, “[w]e provide the tools, expertise and ideas about how to get the pieces (procedures) to work well in wholes (programs). And we (teachers and researchers as a community) provide the context, an environment in which these projects [such as HIV and AIDS projects] could develop” (p. 75). 1 Throughout the thesis, and especially at the beginning of each chapter I use a quotation from Goldman Seagall's book, Points of Viewing Children's Thinking. I

have found her idea of 'point of view' a critical one in the work I do, and particularly in relation to young people producing knowledge. A much quoted slogan in South Africa, "everyone is affected or infected" is applied in schools to speak about the need to raise awareness for all teachers and all children as well as all other communities. Peltzer et al., (2012) observe, "In South Africa social and behavioural communication interventions are a critical component of HIV and AIDS prevention, and various campaigns have been implemented ... over the past decade" (p. 1).

However, something often ignored is that learners in affluent independent schools are also infected and affected; social responsibility should be acknowledged as part of being affected by HIV and AIDS. **EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY: TEACHING IN AN AFFLUENT SCHOOL** In the light of the high rate of HIV infection in South Africa, and from an all-inclusive view of the issues, I take seriously the idea that everyone is affected. As a teacher at an independent school

for girls in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, it is my responsibility to be pro-active given my awareness that, on the surface, my school, along with others like it, is seen to be catering more than adequately to the needs of its learners. Affluence brings with it responsibilities in relation to

HIV and AIDS but before these can be defined and carried out, our learners must be made conversant with the facts behind, and implications of, this slogan. In South Africa race and class are, for the vast majority of the population, inextricably intertwined. As a white teacher of IsiZulu I was, I felt, in an excellent position to model crossing this racialised class divide between those more likely to be infected and those more likely to be affected. Independent schools in South

Africa The independent school in which I teach is one of 1584 independent schools in South Africa, as of 2013. In the same year a total of 513 804 learners attended these schools of which 261740 were girls and 252 064 were boys (DOB, 2013). In total there were 33 194 educators teaching in independent schools in 2013. Of the schools in South Africa the province of KwaZulu-

Natal in which this school is situated, has the second highest number of independent schools, totalling 219. It should be borne in mind that not all these independent schools fit into the category of what is known as a high fee paying school. Some independent schools are low fee paying but they are still too expensive for low income people in South 2 Africa. Fees of less than R7500 (approximately \$750) per annum are considered low fee. Of the 706 independent schools belonging to The Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA), 64 schools charge R10500 (approximately \$1050) per annum. 254 schools charge R46 700 (approximately \$4670) or more per annum and about 180 schools charge between R30 500 and R46 700

(approximately \$3050 and \$4670) per annum (Holmes, 2013). Since the fees for the senior school in which I teach are in the high range, this school falls into the elite category of independent schools in South Africa.² The origins of independent schools, previously known as private schools, such as this one, lie in the establishment of the earliest mission or church schools in South Africa. The oldest two surviving independent schools were established between 1848 and 1849 in Cape Town. By the end of the 19th Century other schools had been established in Johannesburg and in Natal (Malherbe, 1977). In 1990 a merger between two of these schools, one of which was founded in 1878 and the other in 1905 merged to become the school at which I teach. Many of the traditional independent schools in South Africa were predominantly white and church-affiliated, promoting

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ETHICAL CLEARANCE	vi
TURNITIN REPORT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
DIGITAL STORYTELLING INSERTS	xiii
CHARTS, DIAGRAMS AND TABLES INSERTS	xv
TABLE OF APPENDICES	xvi
ACRONYMS.....	xvii
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY: TEACHING IN AN AFFLUENT SCHOOL.....	2
Independent schools in South Africa.....	2
Why conduct research in an affluent school in South Africa?	5
KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	9
FRAMING THE STUDY	9
Addressing HIV and AIDS in school contexts in South Africa	10
<i>Youth as knowledge producers: On the use of the arts in addressing HIV and AIDS in South Africa</i>	12
<i>Studying HIV and AIDS in the context of Elite Studies</i>	16
<i>Background to elite studies</i>	17
<i>Reasons for Studying up</i>	20
<i>Reflecting on privilege</i>	21
THE STUDY	23
OVERVIEW OF THESIS	23
CHAPTER 2	25
OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL CONCEPTS AND SURVEY OF LITERATURE.....	25
A FRAMEWORK FOR MEDIA MAKING.....	25
<i>Convergence</i>	26
<i>Multimodality</i>	30

PARTICIPATORY VISUAL AND OTHER ARTS-BASED RESEARCH AND MEDIA MAKING	31
The significance of visual and other arts-based research	34
The significance of arts-based educational research	37
DIGITAL STORYTELLING.....	38
The beginnings of digital storytelling.....	38
The ‘inside story’ of digital storytelling.....	39
The digital storytelling process.....	42
Using digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool.....	44
Some challenges	50
Digital storytelling as a research tool	52
DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROJECTS	57
Digital storytelling projects in an international context	57
Digital storytelling projects in South Africa.....	59
GAPS AND NEW DIRECTIONS	61
SUMMARY	62
CHAPTER 3	63
METHODOLOGY AND METHODS	63
INTRODUCTION.....	63
RESEARCH DESIGN	64
Interpretivist Paradigm	64
Qualitative research	65
Participatory digital and visual studies and qualitative research	67
Putting the research project into practice	69
RESEARCH SETTING	71
Positioning myself in the research.....	71
Participants	73
The data collecting process - engaging the girls.....	73
Phase 1: Getting Started	74
Introduction to Digital Storytelling	74
Phase 2: The actual process of creating digital storytelling	75
Phase 3: Wrapping up the project.....	77
The Data Sources.....	77
ETHICS AND PARTICIPATORY VISUAL AND DIGITAL RESEARCH	79

Ethical issues in my research project.....	85
WORKING WITH THE DIGITAL STORIES	88
ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION OF DIGITAL STORIES FOR TERM MARKS	92
Addressing trustworthiness.....	95
SUMMARY	97
CHAPTER 4	98
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: PART 1 THE DIGITAL STORIES.....	98
WORKING WITH THE DATA	98
15 CASES	99
PRIMARY TEXTS	105
Section One: Looking into the digital stories	105
Section 2: Multimodality and convergence culture	151
Section 3: An overall reading of the themes in the digital stories	157
Reflecting on the themes	165
SUMMARY	167
CHAPTER 5	168
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS PART 2: THE PRODUCERS' AND AUDIENCE TEXTS	168
A READING OF THE PRODUCERS' TEXTS.....	169
Challenges in producing digital stories	169
The girls speculate on the future of the digital storytelling project.....	175
The core group reflects on the process	176
AN OVERALL READING OF THE AUDIENCE'S TEXTS	178
The reading of the audience's texts	180
Showcase productions to audiences from other schools	183
SUMMARY	186
CHAPTER 6	188
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	188
SUMMARY	188
Wrapping up the findings of the research project.....	188
The primary texts.....	188
The production texts	191
The audience texts	194
The questionnaires	196

CONCLUSION	198
CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEW KNOWLEDGE.....	203
Theoretical contribution	204
Methodological contribution	205
Pedagogical contribution	205
LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT	206
IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR EDUCATION	208
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	209
CONCLUDING WORDS	212
REFERENCES.....	214
APPENDICES.....	233

DIGITAL STORYTELLING INSERTS

Figure 1: From Jane's digital story - Break the Silence.....	106
Figure 2: From Jane's digital story - Break the Silence.....	107
Figure 3: From Jane's digital story - Break the Silence.....	107
Figure 4: From Jane's digital story - Break the silence.....	108
Figure 5: From Charlotte's digital story - One Mistake.....	110
Figure 6: From Charlotte's digital story - One Mistake.....	110
Figure 7: From Charlotte's digital story - One Mistake.....	111
Figure 8: From Charlotte's digital story - One Mistake.....	111
Figure 9: From Thembekile's digital story - What is HIV?	113
Figure 10: From Thembekile's digital story - What is HIV?	113
Figure 11: From Thembekile's digital story - What is HIV?	114
Figure 12: From Thembekile's digital story - What is HIV?	114
Figure 13: From Sasha's digital story - Some thoughts on HIV and AIDS myths	116
Figure 14: From Sasha's digital story - Some thoughts on HIV and AIDS myths.....	116
Figure 15: From Sasha's digital story - Some thoughts on HIV and AIDS myths.....	117
Figure 16: From Sasha's digital story - Some thoughts on HIV and AIDS myths.....	117
Figure 17: From Catherine's digital story - HIV and AIDS does not discriminate.....	119
Figure 18: From Catherine's digital story - HIV and AIDS does not discriminate.....	120
Figure 19: From Catherine's digital story - HIV and AIDS does not discriminate.....	120
Figure 20: From Catherine's digital story - HIV and AIDS does not discriminate.....	121
Figure 21: From Molly's digital story - Odd One Out.....	122
Figure 22: From Molly's digital story - Odd One Out.....	123
Figure 23: From Molly's digital story - Odd One Out.....	123
Figure 24: From Isabel May's digital story - What's your story?	125
Figure 25: From Isabel May's digital story - What's your story?	126
Figure 26: From Sally's digital story - HIV and AIDS	128
Figure 27: From Sally's digital story - HIV and AIDS.....	129
Figure 28: From Summer's digital story - Sometimes.....	130
Figure 29: From Summer's digital story - Sometimes.....	130
Figure 30: From Summer's digital story - Sometimes.....	131
Figure 31: From Summer's digital story - Sometimes.....	131

Figure 32: From Bonnie's digital story - He said he loved you, didn't he?	133
Figure 33: From Bonnie's digital story - He said he loved you, didn't he?	134
Figure 34: From Hollow's digital story -The fight against Aids.....	135
Figure 35: From Hollow's digital story -The fight against Aids.....	136
Figure 36: From Annabelle's digital story - My Shadow.....	139
Figure 37: From Annabelle's digital story - My Shadow.....	139
Figure 38: From Annabelle's digital story - My Shadow.....	140
Figure 39: From Annabelle's digital story - My Shadow.....	141
Figure 40: From Zanele's digital story - HIV&AIDS.....	142
Figure 41: From Zanele's digital story - HIV&AIDS	142
Figure 42: From Zanele's digital story - HIV&AIDS	143
Figure 43: From Zanele's digital story - HIV&AIDS.....	143
Figure 44: From Nandi's digital story - Heaven Sent.....	145
Figure 45: From Nandi's digital story - Heaven Sent	146
Figure 46: From Nandi's digital story - Heaven Sent.....	147
Figure 47: From Nandi's digital story - Heaven Sent	148
Figure 48: From Grace's digital story - HIV and AIDS	149
Figure 49: From Grace's digital story - HIV and AIDS.....	150
Figure 50: From Grace's digital story - HIV and AIDS.....	150

CHARTS, DIAGRAMS AND TABLES INSERTS

DIAGRAM 2-1: The digital storytelling process.....	45
CHART 3-1 Digital Storytelling: Matching the methods to the project.....	70
CHART 3-2 An extract of the consolidation sheet.....	89
CHART 3-3 Fairclough's framework for critical analysis.....	90
CHART 3-4 Types of data in the participatory visual/digital research.....	92
CHART 3-5 Evaluation and assessment framework.....	95
TABLE 4 -1 Themes that emerged from the digital stories.....	158

TABLE OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1A	Letter to principal of school	234
Appendix 1B	Letter of consent from the principal	236
Appendix 1C	Letter to the parents	237
Appendix 1D	Letter to the girls	239
Appendix 2	Questionnaire filled in by girls	241
Appendix 3A	Synopsis of Grade 10 A girls digital stories	243
Appendix 3B	Synopsis of Grade 10 B girls digital stories	246
Appendix 3C	Synopsis of Grade 10 C girls digital stories	249
Appendix 4A	A copy of Isabel May's (case Study 7) storyboard	253
Appendix 4B	A copy of Zanele's (case Study 13) storyboard	254

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
DOBE	Department of Basic Education
FATT	Facing The Truth project
GAAP	Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention
HEAIDS	Higher Education HIV and AIDS programme
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of South Africa
ISC	Independent Schools' Council
MAP	Men as Partners
NCS	National Curriculum Statements
NED	Natal Education Department
SAECMEQ	Southern and Eastern Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
TIGXpress	Taking it Global Xpress
UNAIDS	United Nations HIV and AIDS programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

If you believe in something and even if you just do a little thing towards it, you will feel better about yourself.... And instead of just sitting around and talking about it, go out and do something about it. I think one thing you can do is learn more about it and if you learn more about it, you can inform others about it and share your opinions with others and maybe they'll feel the same way.... (Mia, cited in Goldman-Segall, 1998, p.205)¹

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome) remains one of the greatest public health challenges the world is presently facing (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2014). South Africa has the most widespread HIV epidemic in the world (UNFPA South Africa, 2013) According to statistics one in every ten South Africans is living with HIV – about 5, 26 million people, as opposed to 4 million in 2002 so, as we can see, the total number of people who are HIV positive has risen by over 1 million in less than a decade (Health24, 2013). In the age group of 15-49, an estimated 15, 9% of the population is HIV positive (Health24, 2013; Statistics South Africa, 2013). Knowledge about HIV and AIDS, however, remains a serious concern. Only 43.5% of male youth and 40.6% of female youth aged 15-24 can properly identify ways to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV, and are familiar with misconceptions about the transmission of the disease (UNFRP South Africa, 2013). Because of this, the issue of HIV and AIDS cannot be ignored by schools – public or affluent independent ones. I agree with Kelly (2002) that education has an important role to play in remediating this lack of knowledge. I also concur with Goldman-Segall (1998) who maintains that, as teachers, “[w]e provide the tools, expertise and ideas about how to get the pieces (procedures) to work well in wholes (programs). And we (teachers and researchers as a community) provide the context, an environment in which these projects [such as HIV and AIDS projects] could develop” (p.75).

¹ Throughout the thesis, and especially at the beginning of each chapter I use a quotation from Goldman Seagall's book, *Points of Viewing Children's Thinking*. I have found her idea of 'point of view' a critical one in the work I do, and particularly in relation to young people producing knowledge.

A much quoted slogan in South Africa, “everyone is affected or infected” is used in schools to raise an awareness for all teachers, children and communities. Peltzer et al. (2012) observe, *“In South Africa social and behavioural communication interventions are a critical component of HIV and AIDS prevention, and various campaigns have been implemented ... over the past decade”* (p.1). However, something often ignored is that learners in affluent independent schools are also infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, and that social responsibility regarding this issue should be acknowledged.

EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY: TEACHING IN AN AFFLUENT SCHOOL

In light of the high rate of HIV infection in South Africa, and from an all-inclusive view, I take seriously the idea that everyone is affected. As a teacher at an independent school for girls in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, it is my responsibility to be pro-active given my awareness that, on the surface, my school, along with others like it, is seen to be catering more than adequately to the needs of its learners. Affluence brings with it responsibilities in relation to HIV and AIDS but before these can be defined and carried out, our learners must be made conversant with the facts behind, and implications of, this slogan. In South Africa, race and class are for the vast majority of the population inextricably intertwined. As a white woman teaching IsiZulu to second language learners, I was, I felt, in an excellent position to model crossing this racialised class divide between those more likely to be infected and those more likely to be affected.

Independent schools in South Africa

The independent school in which I teach is one of 1584 independent schools in South Africa, as of 2013. In the same year a total of 513 804 learners attended these schools of which 261 740 were girls and 252 064 were boys (DOBE, 2013). In total there were 33 194 educators teaching in independent schools in 2013. Of the schools in South Africa the province of KwaZulu-Natal in which this school is situated, has the second highest number of independent schools, totalling 219. It should be borne in mind that not all these independent schools fit into the category of a high fee paying school. Some independent schools are low fee paying but they are still too expensive for low income people in South Africa. Fees of less than R7500 (approximately \$750) per annum are considered low fee. Of the 706 independent

schools belonging to The Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA), 64 schools charge R10500 (approximately \$1050) per annum. 254 schools charge R46 700 (approximately \$4670) or more per annum and about 180 schools charge between R30 500 and R46 700 (approximately \$3050 and \$4670) per annum (Holmes, 2013). Since the fees for the senior school in which I teach are in the high range, this school falls into the elite category of independent schools in South Africa.²

The origins of independent schools, previously known as private schools, such as this one, lie in the establishment of the earliest mission or church schools in South Africa. The oldest two surviving independent schools were established between 1848 and 1849 in Cape Town. By the end of the 19th Century other schools had been established in Johannesburg and in Natal (Malherbe, 1977). In 1990 a merger between two of these schools, one of which was founded in 1878 and the other in 1905 merged to become the school at which I teach.

Many of the traditional independent schools in South Africa were predominantly white and church-affiliated, promoting an “*Anglocentric ethos*” (Muller, 1992, p.340). In other words, they were modelled on the British public education system and were influenced by the English Church and by a large and very successful business sector. This resulted in the formation of a white, elitist, conservative, capitalist system within these schools (Randall, 1982). Accordingly, Epstein, Fahey and Kenway (2013) write that these independent schools “*inherited these [British public education] models’ practices of classed, gendered and racialised privileged benefaction*” (p.7).

When the National Party came into power and established apartheid those opposed to its principles expressed a great deal of interest in establishing further independent schools to escape government control of education (Hofmeyr and Lee, 2004).

These traditional independent schools (Muller, 1992) are affiliated to the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) which was formed in 1999 (ISASA, <http://>

² Day scholar fees for the Senior School range from R75980 (approximately \$7598 US) per annum for Grade 8, and increase to R81000 (approximately \$8100 US) for Grade 12. Boarding fees are from R147300 (approximately \$14730 US) for Grade 8 and increase to R152430 (approximately \$15243 US) per annum for Grade 12.

www.isasa.org/what-is-isasa). Its predecessor was the Independent Schools' Council (ISC) (Muller, 1992). Their mission is

to articulate the value of independent education, to promote the common interests of its members, and to provide professional services that will enhance their contribution to education in Southern Africa (ISASA, [http:// www.isasa.org/what-is-isasa](http://www.isasa.org/what-is-isasa)).

Unlike some other independent schools, the one in which I teach follows the same curriculum as that used in the public or government schools today – the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). The school follows the principles of the Anglican Church. This affluent, elite, well-resourced school stands in a picturesque setting; subjects such as languages, music, arts, mathematics and science, social sciences, technology and life orientation are taught to the girls. Each class consists of no more than 25 girls whose teachers are all qualified in their own subject field and who are able, because of the high teacher-learner ratio, to give more attention to the individual learner.

The school has a large, secure campus with two swimming pools, several tennis and netball courts, and hockey fields. Material resources such as the library, science laboratories and information technology facilities are available not only to the teachers but also to each girl. The school is not subsidised by the Government. Many of the girls who attend this school are the daughters of professional people who live in affluent areas in and around Pietermaritzburg as well as further afield.

In South Africa education at elite independent schools and education in government schools is associated with a great deal of controversy because of the contrasts and obvious inequalities. Education in independent schools such as the one in which I teach, has become a service, paid for by those who can afford it (Davie, 2013). This has resulted in education in South Africa being based on social class. Accordingly, good quality education is associated with proper resources in contrast to those offered in many public or government funded schools that often lack even essential resources such as desks, teaching materials, electricity, adequate water and toilet facilities, libraries and laboratories. In poor communities classrooms are overcrowded. Only some school governing bodies can afford to pay for extra teachers to allow for smaller classes. In many instances the parents are too poor to pay the school fees, thus placing a financial burden on the school (Baatjies & Vally, 2007). Statistics

reveal that in South Africa there are 24 136 public schools (DOBE, 2013). As of 2013, 3 544 of these schools still do not have electricity, 401 do not have a water supply, 913 do not have toilets, and over 21 000 have a lack of libraries and science laboratories. Most schools –19 037 – do not have computer rooms (Davis, 2014). It is difficult to establish the racial composition of the learners attending public schools. However, in the light of the fact that the black population makes up 79% (52 982 000) of the total population, it can be assumed that the majority of learners attending public school would be black children (Statistics, South Africa, 2013). Only 40%³ of the girls in the school where I teach are termed or classified “previously disadvantaged” so the school is seen to be an elite one.

Why conduct research in an affluent school in South Africa?

The Higher Education HIV and AIDS programme recommendations (HEAIDS, 2010) draw attention to the fact that there is a gap in research involving certain population groups in South Africa, and in particular those who may have had no actual experience of HIV and AIDS. As the report states:

Hence while it is crucial that curricula address issues relevant to the ecologies of those most affected by the epidemic (for example, poor black women), it is also important to balance the above with issues that affect the rest of the population, such as, for example, middle class individuals and groups. (p.93)

Since there appears to be a gap addressing the topic of HIV and AIDS with middle class individuals and groups in South Africa, I considered it important to carry out research in the affluent school where I teach. It is difficult to find literature about the ways in which affluent schools are addressing the issue. In my own school the issue of HIV and AIDS is rarely openly discussed or even mentioned. No posters are visible on the walls to make the teachers and learners aware of the seriousness of HIV and AIDS. Outside speakers with sound knowledge on the topic of HIV and AIDS are not invited to address the learners. The issue is ignored and the rationale is that HIV, never mind AIDS, has no place in schools such as this, so why even discuss it. I know a woman who puts on puppet shows on HIV and AIDS in

³ Race and colour in South Africa continue to (be used to) indicate wealth and advantage.

schools. Recently a principal of an independent school declined to have this woman present her puppet show at her school because she believed it was of no relevance to the learners at her school.

However, I believe that there are important reasons for carrying out my research in this affluent school for girls. Firstly, my concern is that girls who lose a loved one to AIDS need to be able to cope with their loss. This motivation came from my own experience of great personal loss, the loss of a parent, a sibling and a child. Although they did not die of AIDS, this experience made me empathetic to people dealing with loss. The first loss I suffered was when I was two-and-a-half years of age; my mother died of peritonitis. The second loss was my sister, to cancer. I watched her suffer the most excruciating pain. I watched her fade away until she was merely a skeleton. I watched as she lay there, waiting to die. The third loss was in August, 2005 and was what one could call a mother's worst nightmare. My young son of 17, Hayden, was killed while racing his motorbike on a short circuit tar racing track. The anguish of losing a child is almost unbearable and it is for this reason that I weep silently in my heart when I hear of mothers who have lost their children to AIDS. In my view we need humaneness, empathy and understanding in our school system. It was out of this personal experience of loss and pain that my thesis topic developed. As a teacher in this affluent school, I believe it is critical to understand how girls, with their limited life experience, understand and deal with the issue of HIV and AIDS because I am concerned for their wellbeing. I believed that a research project such as this would draw attention to the pain and suffering that is related to HIV and AIDS, and that it could make a difference to their lives.

My second reason is that there is a need for an accurate knowledge and understanding of HIV and AIDS. While working in this affluent environment, I got the impression that the school itself appeared to be unaffected by HIV and AIDS although South Africa is in the grip of an HIV pandemic. There have been no campaigns conducted at the school and it appeared that accurate knowledge about HIV and AIDS was lacking and the girls were blasé about this topic. Additionally, the girls gave me the impression that they believed that since they were products of an affluent society they were not vulnerable to the disease. They also felt that HIV and AIDS is only associated with poor and uneducated people. Accordingly, I believed that if the girls at my school were to be asked the same question that was posed to the boys in an independent school in Rondebosch, Cape Town, during their participation in the FATT (Facing the Truth) project, the answers would be similar. In Walsh's (2007) study, the

following questions were posed: “*Do you think AIDS is affecting black people more than white people? Why or why not?*” The majority of answers read as follows: “*I think it is affecting more of the black community because uh ...*” (p.241). I did not want to be responsible for girls from my school saying “because uh”.

A third reason relates to the fact that our school is a girls’ school and it is a fact that there is a higher rate of HIV infection among girls and young women. South Africa continues to have the largest percentage of people living with HIV (UNAIDS, 2012) in the world. With an antenatal prevalence of approximately 30% and as high as 35.9% in KwaZulu-Natal, the virus is spread primarily through unprotected heterosexual sex. Youth (age 15-25), and young women in particular have the highest risk of new infections (Republic of South Africa, 2012). International policy highlights the role of education in containing the epidemic (UNAIDS, 2009).

Statistics indicate that in South Africa, amongst young people between the ages of 15 and 19 years, the rate of infection is higher for girls, at 5.2% than it is for boys, which is 1.2% (Van der Linde, 2013). Young girls are therefore more likely than boys to be infected and stigmatised. Because of this, I considered it important to find out how the issue of HIV and AIDS is understood by girls in Grade 10 in this affluent school. I think it imperative to raise awareness and discuss sensitive issues such as how to prevent the spread of HIV with girls in the classroom context, during Life Orientation⁴ lessons. I believe this to be critical issue for all young people growing up in South Africa. Given the seriousness of HIV and AIDS in South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, and given that the issue of HIV and AIDS forms part of the Life Orientation curriculum, I believed that, as an educator, it was my responsibility to find out how these adolescent girls understand HIV and AIDS.

A fourth reason relates to the issue of substance abuse and a lack of emotional closeness, affecting my learners’ understanding of HIV and AIDS. Studies in the United States by Luthar and Latendresse, (2005) have shown that growing up in a culture of affluence comes with psychological risks such as substance use and depression. One of the underlying reasons

⁴ Life Orientation is the holistic study of the “*self in relation to others in society*” (p.8). It addresses various life skills and values for decision making and problem solving in real-life situations, for meaningful and successful living in society. (Department of Basic Education, <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JH5XiM7T9cw%3D&tabid=420&mid=1216>)

for this, is that extreme pressure is often placed on children to achieve both in the classroom and on the sports field; the failure to achieve is often seen as a personal failure by these learners. Over-scheduled days are the norm for these young learners who participate in various activities which can then be itemised on college or university applications. Also, the isolation of children from adults in affluent families results in both literal and emotional anxiety. Parents often leave their children alone at home because they have professional demands which include working long hours. This results in their children lacking the emotional closeness they need. Moreover, many parents maintain that leaving their children alone encourages self-sufficiency. Luthar and Latendresse also reported a significantly higher use of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and hard drugs by suburban learners as opposed to inner-city learners. Symptoms of depression in older girls from affluent families were twice as high as the norm. This resulted in attempts to self-medicate in order to alleviate the problem. Furthermore, affluent adults tend to keep the less visible problems in their families private, because they fear embarrassment. According to the study, as many as one in five affluent youths up to the age of 18 years showed high substance use along with depression and anxiety. Many displayed behavioural and academic problems. In the light of this kind of scenario, I believe that it was imperative that affluent learners, who as Novotney (2009) puts it, “*lack the resources they need to find personal happiness*” (p.50) be made aware that by resorting to drug and alcohol abuse in an attempt to find emotional closeness, could result in HIV infection and, possibly, AIDS.

I realised that this awareness gap needed research and appropriate interventions directed at this target group of young girls, and so I set myself the task of trying to do so. Addressing this gap reflects the growing interest in studying various elite groups, particularly in the context of methodology and the idea of “*studying up*”, a term coined by Laura Nader (1972, p.285). Walsh (2007) maintains that the elite have not been studied in depth because, to some extent, it is more difficult to research this group (as I will explain later) than to research those groups which are further down the social ladder. The context of HIV and AIDS provided an important entry point for re-thinking who is and who is not studied, and re-examining the foundations of this discrepancy.

There are both programmatic reasons and ones that pertain to the project of research itself that I need to discuss. The starting-with-ourselves approach that Van Manen (1992) and others write about, is key. It is critical that we study the environments that we know from the

inside. This does not negate the need for an outsider researcher, but highlights the need for research that has validity because of the entry point of the researcher. This has both practical and methodological advantages in terms of already knowing our participants. In this case, I thought it would be more valid to involve the girls in my school rather than carrying out my research involving learners from other schools. I know the school environment from the inside. Also, as a teacher it would have been very difficult to leave the school premises during a school day because of my teaching responsibilities, as well as extra mural activities beyond school hours. It should also be borne in mind that school is held on at least four Saturdays a term resulting in less weekend free time I knew that my task as a researcher would be easier as I would be working with small classes, a characteristic, as I mentioned earlier, of affluent independent schools, but also more meaningful.

There have been some studies using digital technology, such as digital storytelling that have focused on the insider point of view. Reed and Hill (2010) for example, look at youth in rural areas in relation to the connections between HIV and AIDS and gender-based violence. But, as I mentioned above, there has been very little research, if any, carried out using predominantly white, middle-class learners in an independent school. My focusing specifically on the girls in one affluent school helps to fill this research gap. Further, the new knowledge produced by the adolescent girls in this elite school will contribute to and expand existing knowledge about how young girls understand HIV and AIDS.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sets out to explore two research questions:

1. What knowledge and understanding of HIV and AIDS is revealed when adolescent girls in an elite school engage in digital storytelling?
2. What is it about digital storytelling that in and of itself is critical to knowledge production, particularly in the context of HIV and AIDS?

FRAMING THE STUDY

My study is framed by two areas of research:

1. Addressing HIV and AIDS in schools in South Africa, particularly in the context of youth-as-knowledge-producers using participatory approaches; and
2. Studying the ways in which girls in an affluent school experience HIV and AIDS in the context of elite studies.

Addressing HIV and AIDS in school contexts in South Africa

The place of HIV and AIDS in Life Orientation classes in South African schools dates back to at least the early 1990s. A draft HIV and AIDS educational programme was issued by The Natal Education Department (NED) in 1993 for learners from 11 years to 15 years of age. The content of this programme outlined both the teachers' and the learners' activities. The prescribed format was that the teacher had to hand out a questionnaire on the topic which the learners completed at the beginning of the first lesson. This was to gauge how much the learners knew about the topic. Thereafter, a simple video on the topic was to be shown, followed by a formal lesson on HIV and AIDS. During this lesson, factual information was passed on by the teacher to the children and the learners were allowed to ask the teacher questions. Thereafter, the learners had to complete a worksheet, after which the learners were told to discuss the HIV and AIDS topic in small groups. As an aid in the lesson, an overhead transparency was used. Following the formal lesson, the teacher read a story to the learners. Finally a card game to consolidate the facts of HIV and AIDS was played by the learners, but the teacher was to control the game (NED, 1993).

The above outline is typical of how knowledge is often transferred during Life Orientation lessons even today, although there have been several curriculum reforms related to Life Orientation since 1993. The DOBE (2013) stipulates that Life Orientation is one of four fundamental and compulsory Matric subjects in South Africa. (This has been the case since 2011.) The teaching of its topics aims to ensure the development of balanced and confident learners who are able to contribute to a just and democratic society and to an "*improved quality of life for all*" (p.6). To achieve this, three of the six topics include: the development of self in society; social and environmental responsibility; democracy and human rights. In South Africa the subject of Life Orientation requires learners to develop knowledge, skills and values to address the personal and social ramifications of the high incidence of HIV, as

well integrate empathetically and responsibly into society, able to deal with its issues. Therefore, this subject claims to focus on the “*holistic approach to the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical growth and development of learners*” (p.8). Specific aims are set out for this subject. However, the following are pertinent to teaching about HIV and AIDS:

- 1. guide and prepare learners to respond appropriately to life’s responsibilities and opportunities;*
- 2. equip learners to interact optimally on a personal, psychological, cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural and socio-economic level;*
- 3. guide learners to make informed and responsible decisions about their own health and well-being and the health and well-being of others;*
- 4. expose learners to their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to the rights of others and to issues of diversity. (p.9)*

Only 2 hours a week are set aside to teach Life Orientation as opposed to 5 hours for Home Languages and 4.5 hours for Mathematics. Recommended resources for the teaching of this subject include textbooks and resources such as newspaper articles.

Prior to the adoption of CAPS, a key area of the curriculum which arose out of the HEAIDS Teacher Pilot study (2010), was for teachers to use participatory methodologies, both in relation to creating pedagogical spaces in teacher education programs and ensure that all teachers, new and current have the tools to implement this in their classrooms. By using participatory approaches, particularly visual media, the teacher would help learners to share their personal experiences. This could be a powerful approach to knowledge construction. Using this approach is in line with two relevant aims of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2011, p.5); to produce learners who are able “*to identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking and use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others*” (www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket...tabid=390&mid). Critically, as Wood (2011) states, besides the stress and challenges that HIV poses for education, the topic is an opportunity to rethink the approach to learning and teaching, and it could be used to humanise teaching. Taken as a whole then, the recent directions in Life Orientation

classrooms in South Africa highlight the possibilities for engaging young people and for testing out the idea of youth as knowledge producers on the subject of HIV and AIDS.

Youth as knowledge producers: On the use of the arts in addressing HIV and AIDS in South Africa

The term youth-as-knowledge-producers as framed by Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel's (2003) discussion on "*knowledge producing schools*" (pp.105-108) draws attention to the significance of young people directly contributing to knowledge production through their engagement with creating and making through visual media. Speaking explicitly about digital media making, Markham (2005) maintains that "*studying computer-mediated interactions allows and encourages exploration of what is happening in the hyphen that both separates and merges personal identities with our inventions of others*". She also points out "*the importance of text to a person's construction and negotiation of identity in online text-based environments*", and states that "*text is perceived as a powerful means of controlling, through editing and backspacing, the way self is perceived to others*" (pp.795–796). Similarly Goldman-Segall (1998) suggests that

teachers may want to learn how to juggle diverse roles rather than function as gatekeepers of knowledge. A new generation of teachers is emerging; a generation with teachers who are able to be both navigators and artists, and who look forward to the process of enabling the next generation of learners to work with them as knowledge partners. (p. xi)

While Lankshear, Knobel and others are speaking about young people as knowledge producers on a wide range of social issues, their formulation is particularly relevant to addressing HIV and AIDS in South Africa. It is necessary to portray young people as the most vulnerable at the centre of knowledge production (Mitchell, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2010; De Lange and Stuart, 2008; Stuart and Mitchell, 2013). As Alex Mc Clelland, the co-ordinator of Young Persons living with HIV and AIDS and Youth Programme Co-ordinator, XV1 International AIDS conference comments:

Young people are assets in the fight against HIV & AIDS, and their voices must be heard. When young people are able to identify the main issues of concern to them and are

empowered to develop, implement and manage youth-owned strategies to address those issues, real change will take place. (Cited in Takingitglobal, 2006, p.5)

McClelland's comment represents an important shift in the positioning of youth in addressing HIV and AIDS in their own lives, and also suggests a change in the role of teachers and other adults.

As a way of addressing this shift, a number of researchers in South Africa have embarked upon various participatory and other arts-based projects. They have drawn on visual approaches and digital technology, and, in so doing, have developed a youth-as-knowledge-producers approach to working with young people in the context of HIV and AIDS. Much of this work in the province of KwaZulu-Natal has been located within the Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change⁵ through a number of funded studies such as "Youth as Knowledge Producers: Arts-based approaches to HIV and AIDS prevention and education in rural KwaZulu-Natal."⁷ (Stuart et al, 2007-2008)⁶ and "What difference does this make? Studying youth as knowledge producers".⁷ These studies, carried out through the Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change and its affiliates, have focused primarily on the youth in rural schools, with the aim of creating a more youth-centred method of generating knowledge and change in behaviour in relation to HIV and AIDS. The aim of the "Youth as Knowledge Project", was to try innovative participatory and arts-based methodologies with pre-service teachers working in rural schools. This was to equip them with the skills to tackle HIV- related challenges in schools with learners, and with in-service teachers. One of the outcomes of this programme was the development of a media toolkit for pre-service teachers to take into schools for further work with in-service teachers.

Project objectives included:

⁵ www.cvm.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/Annual_Reports/Annual_Report_2009-2010

⁶ *Youth as Knowledge Producers: Arts-based approaches to HIV and AIDS prevention and education in rural KwaZulu-Natal.* (NRF 2007-2008) J. Stuart, (PI) De Lange, N., Moletsane, R. Buthelezi, T., Pattman, R. and Mitchell. C. (co-researchers).

⁷ *What Difference Does This Make?* (SSHRC 2008-2011). C. Mitchell (PI), Larkin, J., Flicker, S., De Lange, N. and Stuart, J (co-researchers and collaborators).

1. exploring how arts-based methodologies can be used with young people in rural schools; and
2. studying ways that the university can effectively set up a partnership to work with a cohort of young people who are new teachers and a cohort of practising rural teachers and principals and community health workers to contribute to the support of learner-centred arts based approaches to addressing HIV and AIDS.

Publications linked to this work show how young people using visual and other arts-based approaches can play a role in producing knowledge and contributing to solutions related to issues affecting themselves and their society. For example, Stuart, Rathe and Smith, (2011) looking at extra-curricular arts-based after school programmes, found that participatory video making, drama, and poetry in after-school programmes with which learners were experimenting, were able to open up discussion and reflection for these learners, their peers and teachers on sensitive and taboo issues such as those related to sexuality. In their chapter “Media, Participation, and Social Change: Working within a ‘Youth as Knowledge Producers’ framework”, Stuart and Mitchell (2013) describe how young people in South Africa and around the world are using photos, videos, drawings, participatory video and digital storytelling as tools of research and engagement with issues that affect their world. Mitchell (2014), in her chapter, “Digital media and the knowledge-producing practices of young people in the age of AIDS” explores the specific (and often contrasting) ways in which terms such as knowledge and knowledge producing are taken up in curriculum documents in the area of Life Orientation, and by those working in participatory ways with young people.

Some of the earlier projects under the umbrella of youth-as-knowledge producers investigated young people’s perspectives on stigma and HIV and AIDS (Moletsane, De Lange, Mitchell, Stuart, Buthelezi and Taylor, 2007). In another project linked to the Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change, the “Taking it Global Xpress (TIGXpress)” (<https://www.tigweb.org/>) project, a team of researchers, educators and student activists in Canada and South Africa used photo-voice, video and Internet to bring about a virtual classroom environment. The photographs that were taken during this project drew on the youth-media approach through which the young people had the opportunity to develop messages for HIV prevention. They were also able to express their views regarding the impact of HIV on their own lives. The photographs were compared by the participants in order to get an understanding of how much their points of view compared or overlapped with

those of young people in other countries and cultures. The project was intended to create a tool for global awareness and education on the topic of HIV. By giving the members of the community cameras, their strengths and difficulties, as portrayed in their photos, could be noted and reflected upon. In this way the youth became producers rather than consumers of knowledge (Larkin, et al., 2007).

A study carried out by Mitchell, Pascarella, De Lange and Stuart, (2010) that took place in a rural school in Vulindlela and hosted by the Centre for Visual Methodologies and Social Change, focused on blogging. The use of blogs highlighted the ways in which young people were engaged in producing knowledge about HIV and AIDS. One of the girls in the study commented about the significance of her blog, “*We wanted other people to learn from us*” (p.161).

In the Western Cape an arts-based project, the *Soft Cover Project*⁸ was carried out in Atlantis and in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, draws attention to the significance of the visual arts in addressing HIV and AIDS with township youth (Walsh et al., 2004; Mitchell, 2015). This project concentrated on both males and females aged between 16 and 19, and focused on how they could use a hands-on project to devise a youth-to-youth instrument to address the prevention of HIV. In a related project, the “Facing the Truth (FATT)” video workshops facilitated by Shannon Walsh, black youth from the township of Khayelitsha and young, white, English speaking youth from the elite suburb of Rondebosch, Cape Town, were involved in the production of a collaborative video exploring the truth about HIV and AIDS (Walsh, 2007). The project explored how visual methodologies would allow for representation and meaning-making that accepts “*difference, agency and power*” (p.242). Not only did the youth from Khayelitsha use the collaborative video to research what they called the invisible and the visible issues of AIDS in South Africa, they used it as a tool to empower and to shift power. Thus, besides being knowledge producers or knowers, these young people were now in the position to carry out research with learners in affluent schools.

In 2006, an arts-based HIV and AIDS project was carried out in Gauteng using Photo Voice (<http://www.photovoice.org/projects/.../youth-photo-reflect-south-africa>). It involved young people and took place at Orange Farm, a large informal settlement consisting of about a

⁸ The Soft Cover Project (HIV/AIDS Small Grants Fund Phase II: CIDA CHIS ICAD) PI: C. Mitchell.

million people, situated approximately 60 kilometres south of Johannesburg, South Africa. In this settlement there is a high percentage of unemployment and the employed inhabitants fall into the low income bracket. There are very few recreational activities available and crime (including rape) and substance abuse levels are high, thus providing a perfect environment for the spread of HIV. This project provided an opportunity for young people to challenge themselves on the issues of HIV and learn how it is spread. Despite young people being educated about HIV and how best to protect themselves, they still continued to jeopardize their health through engaging in risky sexual practices. In presenting a unique opportunity for these young people to challenge this trend, the project looked beyond what the conventional educational programmes do. Their key objectives were to provide a therapeutic space for young people affected by HIV and AIDS in South Africa to express their feelings in a positive and creative way. Moreover, it provided a voice to those who had been orphaned by AIDS, and was a powerful method of raising awareness and an understanding of their needs and experiences. Lastly, it provided education to counteract the negative stereotypical thinking about HIV and AIDS and it also equipped them with digital media and computer skills.

These arts-based, participatory visual methods all contribute to attempting to see the world through the eyes of young people as producers. What is critical, is to try to deepen an understanding of knowledge and knowledge production from and through the perspectives of different groups or populations of learners, including those from affluent schools in relation to HIV and AIDS.

Studying HIV and AIDS in the context of Elite Studies

When I started working on this doctoral project, I had many ideas about how I should locate the work. I asked myself, “Is this a girlhood studies project?” or “Is this a teacher education project?” However, an interesting discussion took place when I defended my proposal before the Higher Degrees committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Some of the debates amongst the committee members were indeed very revealing. One member asked, “Why are you working with privileged girls and not a township or deeply rural school?” Another member of the panel even went so far as to ask, “Why work with elites?” These questions assisted me in thinking through why I wanted to work with this elite group. It was only when I began to read in the area of elite studies and that of studying up that I realised that there is a

gap in research in both these areas, and that a study such as this is important because it could make a contribution to South African education by uncovering how a group of learners in this elite environment understand the issue of HIV and AIDS.

Background to elite studies

Laura Nader, in her essay *Up the Anthropologist* (1972) encourages anthropologists to study up. She indicates that “*anthropologists value studying what they like and liking what they study and, in general we prefer the underdog*” (p.303). However, she maintains that anthropologists have much to contribute to the understanding of how power and responsibility are carried out in the United States of America. Moreover, she points out that “*studying up*” is an “*important and complementary perspective*” to “*studying down*” or “*studying sideways*”. Nader asserts that “*never before have so few, by their actions and interactions, had the power of life and death over so many members of the species*” (p.284). She advises us to “*study the colonizers rather than the colonized, the culture of power rather than the culture of the powerless, the culture of affluence rather than the culture of poverty*” (p.289).

Williams (2012) agrees with Nader that studying up is important. He states that “*the familiar focus for studying social problems is down-system – people who are poor, vulnerable, oppressed or powerless*” but that there are many reasons for doing “*up-system*” research, as he calls it (p.1). He asserts that the oldest reason for up-system research is to prove legitimacy. On these lines, powerful people have attempted to proclaim their status on the basis of “*borrowed power*” (p.1) by researching and uplifting their ancestors and superiors. This is done by using the king lists of the Egyptian Pharaohs which were researched by court historians, for example.

Studying the elite was particularly popular with social scientists in the 20th century. Leading scientists such as Pareto (1935) and Mosca (1939) through to Wright Mills (1956) and Bottomore (1964) as well as Stanworth and Giddens (1974) paid particular attention to studying the elite. Sociologists have analysed social stratification and the effect it has on society for years. The original studies of the elite revolved around elite theories. Although there seems to have been a wane in interest in the last three decades, there has been a revival in recent years (Froud, Savage, Tampubolon and Williams, 2006).

The word *elite* or the concept of *the elect* stems from the Latin word *eligere* (Salverda and Abbink, 2013). The word *élite* was used in the 1700s to describe excellent products but in the 1900s it referred to high-class social groups such as militia or high ranking nobility. Cohen (1981) writes that

[a]n elite is a collectivity of persons who occupy commanding positions in some important sphere of social life, and who share a variety of interests arising from similarities of training, experience, public duties, and way of life. (p.xvi)

Dronkers and Schijf (2013) state that in modern studies, elites are defined as “*the incumbents of top positions in both the public and private sector, like members of parliament or boards of executives*” (p.1362).

Salverda and Abbink (2013) maintain that

an elite is a relatively small group within a societal hierarchy that claims and/or is accorded power, prestige, or command over others on the basis of a number publicly recognized criteria, and aims to preserve and entrench its status thus acquired. (p.1)

These authors point out that the above definition does not include “moral qualification” which is how they obtain their status or power (for example, through violence, force or goodwill). They also point out that elites are influential because of “*(im)material characteristics, skills and achievements*” and in spite of them being in the minority as far as numbers are concerned, their size can have much power (p.1).

Elite studies usually involve an exclusive group who are at the top of a hierarchical ladder but who have a relationship with the general, non-specific population. Thus, there is a distinction between political and non-political elites. Historically, elitism has often been given at birth (Williams, 2012). It is interesting to note that in the 19th century, Cardinal John Henry Newman, cited in Cohen (1981) wrote this:

All that goes to constitute a gentleman - the carriage, gait, address, gestures, voice, the ease, the self-possession, the courtesy, the power of conversing, the talent of not offending, the lofty principle, the delicacy of thought, the happiness of expression, the taste of propriety, the

generosity and forbearance, the candour and consideration, the openness of hand; these qualities, some of them come by nature, some of them may be found in any rank, some of them are a direct precept of Christianity; but the full assemblage of them, bound up in unity of an individual character, do we expect they can be learned from books? Are they not necessarily acquired, where they are to be found, in high society. (p.2)

It is clear from the above extract that Newman believed that the “qualities of excellence” are learnt informally in high society.

Leadership studies form a part of elite studies and these involve persons from a certain “*up-system*” being involved with certain “down-system followers” in order for certain aims to be achieved. Often personal endeavour results in this status being gained (Williams, 2012, p.11). Countries such as China, for example, practise hegemonic leadership. This type of leadership compels other countries to position themselves in relation to its power. Accordingly, trans-national types of hegemony become apparent. However, a well-defined field is that of political studies. It takes cognisance of the systems of political parties and their voters (Williams, 2012).

Cohen (1981, p.1) asserts that in stratified societies, groups of powerful people try to substantiate and uphold their elite status by stating that they possess “*rare and exclusive qualities*” that are important to society as a whole. Sometimes these are rejected by society, but in some cases they are accepted to a certain degree, while in other cases they are taken up by society. In formally institutionalised organisations of stratification, the qualities are clearly indicated whereas in a more liberal, democratic system the qualities are vaguely set out and often ambiguous.

More recently Dronkers and Schijf (2013) maintain that the word *elites* is now used in a broad sense and the elites are generally classified as those who hold top positions in society. The authors assert that the focus is turned to the characteristics of these people to the “*extent they are interconnected with each*” other and how certain people with particular characteristics are able to attain elite positions (p.1362).

Other recent elite studies have been carried out by Pina-Cabral and De Lima (2000) and by Shore and Nugent (2002). Pina-Cabral and De Lima (2000) are editors of a volume on elites

that focuses amongst other things, on the importance of dynasties and succession of a family business in Lisbon, Portugal, based on tradition and family values. But Shore and Nugent's (2002) work on Elite Cultures questions how anthropology can contribute to the understanding of how elites function and what they do to circumscribe and maintain their identity and status.

Reasons for Studying up

Nader (1972, p.284) gives three reasons for “*studying up*”. She maintains that it is “*energizing and integrating*” for many students to study top institutions and organizations that have an impact on everyday lives. The examples given are the California Insurance Commission and the Better Business Bureau and Air Pollution Agencies. There is a great deal of literature on studying the poor or disadvantaged, but there has been very little research done on the middle and upper classes. Many common-sense questions could be asked in reverse/converse when studying up as well as studying down. However, there could be serious consequences as far as developing sufficient explanation and theory if one were not to study up and down. It should be borne in mind that the questions will change by studying the powerful and those who have responsibility.

According to Nader (1972) a difficulty to consider when studying the powerful, is access. The powerful are busy, not in reach, do not want to be studied and are not all in one place. Thomas (1995) illuminates this when he writes in his article *Interviewing Important People in Big Companies* that

[l]arge corporations... have gates, guards, and security devices.... Even welcome visitors encounter inner lines of defense: public relations departments, 'official spokespeople,' and whole levels of management trained in how to represent the company to the outside world In one case it took nearly two years of phone calls, screening meetings with executive assistants and networking to interview two executives in a major manufacturing company. (pp.5-6)

Nugent (2002) asserts that distinct groups of elites are less obligated to consent than those elite who previously had no objection to being studied using conventional methods. The most

common method being ethnographic fieldwork based on intensive participant observation or a new direction by studying-up which may or may not be technically possible.

Shore (2002), maintains that elites have been studied by sociologists, historians, and political scientists but seldom by anthropologists (whose studies revolve around studying them from within). Moreover, he asserts that elites do not identify themselves as elites. They see elitism as a term of reference and not as a self-reference.

Reflecting on privilege

It is impossible to study elites and privilege in South Africa without making some reference to race and the long history of white privilege as addressed by researchers such as Steyn (2001). She investigates how the white population's social and political structure is changing in South Africa since the 1994 election. As Bacon (2010) writes: "*The word 'privilege' is used to describe receiving unjust advantages at the expense of others. These advantages are often largely invisible – especially to those who enjoy them*" (p.1). Similarly, Bailey (1998) defines privilege as "*systematically conferred advantages individuals enjoy by virtue of their membership in dominant groups with access to resources and institutional power that are beyond the common advantages of marginalized citizens*" (p.1).

MacIntosh (1988) points out that hierarchies in society are "interlocking" with regard to male privilege and white privilege. Privilege has always been that which has been protected and yet denied by those who are in that position (MacIntosh, 1988; Pease, 2006). Men have always been unwilling to admit that they are privileged although they may accept that women are disadvantaged. The privileged whites have been taught about racism which places others, who are not of the same colour at a disadvantage. At the same time they have been taught not to recognise it as a privilege. McIntosh (1988) compares white privilege to "*an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks*" or "*as an invisible package of unearned assets which [he] can count on cashing in each day, but about which [he] was 'meant' to remain oblivious*" (p.1). An individual's privilege comes from being part of privileged group rather than because of her or his individual capabilities. Besides privilege being something that one enjoys, it is also something that is "*done*" because, to a certain extent, people live their lives attempting to

reach certain goals. It is through such processes of “*accomplishing...that social dominance is reproduced*” (Pease, 2006, p.17).

According to Baker Miller (2004) these privileged groups become the model for “*normal human relationships*” and it becomes “*normal*” (p.113) to treat others differently. To a degree, this is why the privileged do not want to know about the experiences of those who are oppressed. Pease (2006) points out that measuring success and failure are therefore measured according to the “*normativity*” of privilege. Those who do not measure up to this standard are seen to be deviant. It is in this light that the privileged are less likely to be studied or researched because it is not necessary to “*mark*” the norm (p.19).

To increase privilege awareness amongst social workers and human service practitioners, Pease (2006) spends time examining the experiences of being oppressed, excluded or discriminated against. In this way the author challenges his students to reflect upon their privileged status. Moreover, he asks the students to position themselves in relation to class, race, gender, ethnicity, age, ability, sexuality, religion etc. Pease claims that giving the students the opportunity to position themselves from these stand points enables them to “*shape*” (p.22) how they make sense of the world. The students are also asked to reflect on the construction of their own identity, status and values in order to see more clearly the privileges and disadvantages that are experienced by individuals. Those who are members of one or more privileged groups are asked to list the privileges they think they possess as a result of being a part of this group. Additionally they are asked to list the times they have consciously used their privilege and what it felt like to do so. Pease anticipates that by writing about their personal narratives of privilege and oppression and by being given space to engage in dialogue with others about their experiences, they will become more aware of ways which the privileged and the oppressed intersect in their lives.

Nader (1972) points out that it seems easier to study down rather than to study up and therefore there is more literature available on the poor or disadvantaged. This is particularly so regarding the issue of HIV and AIDS. Thus I believe that the result of researching how this group of elite girls understand HIV and AIDS could contribute to the thinly spread layer of literature which is available on the elite, as well as to the knowledge of HIV and AIDS from their viewpoint.

THE STUDY

While I cannot remedy the situation of social injustice on my own, I can at least make sure that the learners with whom I work see social responsibility as a key part of learning. Thus, my research focuses on fieldwork with a group of seventy Grade 10 girls in the school where I teach. They were involved in creating digital stories about HIV and AIDS during a series of Life Orientation lessons that took place over one term. As a researcher, I had hoped that by making use of the participatory visual approach, a space would be provided for the girls to think critically and express their own ideas on the issue of HIV and AIDS. I had also anticipated that this approach would be helpful in deepening an understanding of this affluent population by placing the girls in the position of producing knowledge on how they understand HIV and AIDS. The new understanding gleaned from the girls could then contribute to the already existing knowledge about youth and HIV and AIDS in South Africa. This is not a curriculum studies project per se. Fundamentally, this study fits within what Touraine (1981) refers to as interventionist research, and it was my hope that this project would contribute to creating an awareness in the girls regarding HIV and AIDS. I also hoped that this research could contribute to the area of Elite Studies which, as Epstein, Fahey and Kenway (2013) highlight, is an emerging body of work in relation to the study of independent schools.

OVERVIEW OF THESIS

This introductory chapter has sought to provide an overview of where the issue of HIV and AIDS fits into my study, as well as one of arts-based projects that have been carried out within and outside of South African classrooms regarding this topic. The study is framed within two key areas: a youth-as-knowledge-producers approach to addressing HIV and AIDS in the classroom; and Elite studies. Therefore, the chapter has provided an overview of a youth-as-knowledge-producers approach, as well as a discussion on Elite studies. This begins with anthropologist Nader's (1972) belief that studying up has as much to contribute as studying down or studying sideways that was followed by one on leading social scientists' reflections on privilege and increasing privilege awareness. The key research questions of this study were noted and the objectives and the significance thereof were explained.

In Chapter 2, I map out a framework/literature review to bring together the theoretical concepts that frame the study in the context of meaning making, convergence culture and multimodality. Following from this chapter, a review of participatory arts-based methodologies and, more specifically, digital storytelling is offered. This research project focusses on the use of digital storytelling as a visual tool from which to obtain visual data. Although each area has its own set of studies, I attempt to position them in relation to each other for the purposes of mapping out and supporting the analysis of my work with the Grade 10 girls using digital storytelling in the classroom as part of their knowledge production on the subject of HIV and AIDS.

In Chapter 3 the methodology and the methods of the research project will be taken into account. The research setting will be described and the ethics regarding such a project will be considered. In particular, I talk about the digital storytelling intervention, data collection, and working with data, as well as the limitations and challenges of the research project. The assessment and evaluation of the girls' digital stories for their term report mark will be discussed. These discussions are critical to Chapters 4 and 5 in which my findings will be discussed, and to Chapter 6 in which I offer some concluding ideas as well as new knowledge.

In Chapters 4 and 5 the data from the girls' digital stories and their journals, as well as the data obtained from the informal interviews of the 15 case studies, will be analysed and the findings discussed. The information that I, as the researcher, gathered during the research process, as well as the information gleaned from the producers' texts and from the texts obtained from two audience groups, will also be discussed. The data obtained from some of the girls will be shown, and some of their reflections will be noted. Therefore these two chapters seek to take into account the objectives of this research project and answer the research questions.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I summarise my research project and offer some conclusions. I also discuss some constraints and obstacles to this study, as well as attempting to offer new knowledge with particular reference to HIV and AIDS and adolescent girls in an elite environment.

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL CONCEPTS AND SURVEY OF LITERATURE

As times change, we change and our genres change. We move with and against the styles of our times, quoting the quotations of those who have come before in the hope of finding some new key to unlock the secrets of the people and the stories we study.
(Goldman-Segall, 1998, p.99)

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework for my use of digital storytelling as a participatory visual tool in media making, and a literature review. Because the work on digital storytelling is located within the broader areas of both media studies and participatory visual and arts-based research, I begin the chapter with a section on key conceptualisations of media making, convergence culture and multimodality. I then provide an overview of participatory visual and other arts-based approaches to meaning making. Then I go on to offer a review of the literature on digital storytelling. This includes reference to the beginnings and process of digital storytelling, and to the use of digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool, and in educational research. The chapter ends with a consideration of international digital storytelling projects and South African ones.

A FRAMEWORK FOR MEDIA MAKING

The New London Group (2000) maintain that if one could define in general terms, the mission of education, the basic purpose would be to make sure that all learners were given the opportunity to participate fully in public, community, and economic life. Accordingly, the educational research focus has shifted from one in which some produce and many consume, to a culture of widespread participation in the production and distribution of media (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison and Weigel, 2009). Therefore, in this section I describe two broad and complementary areas of conceptualisation that help to frame digital storytelling and media making: convergence culture and multimodality. As Lambert (2002) and others have highlighted, digital storytelling is a powerful, multiple-media, multiple-modality literacy tool in which semiotic modes such as signs, symbols and materiality connect to specific senses. This results in many possibilities of human expression which, in the context of this

study of HIV and AIDS, is particularly relevant. As a theoretical approach, I draw here on two key and interrelated concepts in media making: the idea of convergence and convergence culture; and multimodality.

Convergence

Henry Jenkins (2006) writes that the term “convergence culture” refers to

the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. Convergence is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes depending on who’s speaking and what they think they are talking about. (pp. 2-3)

Jenkins goes on to write about the significance of a participatory culture within the idea of convergence. As he writes:

The term, participatory culture, contrasts with older notions of passive media spectatorship. Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understand. (p. 3)

The work on digital storytelling can be located within media making in the context of convergence culture, where, as Green and Walters (2010) observe, the learners’ writings and ideas are changed from private to public because they are able to create and publish their stories as authors of media beyond their personal boundaries.

Solomon and Schrum (2007) state that the idea of interactivity has gone from “*linking and clicking to creating and sharing*” (p.13). Individuals now, not only find and read information but they also create and share their own work. This includes sharing it on Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is a term coined in 2004. It includes an ever growing collection of new and emerging Web-based tools. Many function similarly to desktop applications, with the browsers being used for access rather than software installations on computers. Many tools are freely available to

all, instead of having to be purchased or licensed on an annual basis. Blogs, wikis, and photo and video sharing sites are known as social sites (Solomon and Schrum, 2007).

Web 2.0 has brought about new opportunities for learners and teachers alike since free authorising tools are easily accessible, as is publishing on the web. Using web tools such as Movie Maker, Photo Story, or iMovie allows for easy access to uploading images or video clips into the storyboard ready for editing and/or re-ordering. As Maddin (n.d.) points out, these easy to use technological tools back up digital storytelling. Robin (2011, p.1) describes digital storytelling as “*combining the art of telling stories with a variety of digital Multimedia*” since digital stories by and large, include many forms of media such as images and /or video, music, text and narration. Thus by researching and organising information, choosing images and/or incorporating videos, selecting music and creating a narrative text, the learners are given the opportunity for “*deep mastery of the material they are learning*” (Maddin, n.d., p.3). Resources for stories can be obtained online. Some examples are Flickr for images or YouTube for videos or self-created media (Godwin-Jones, 2012). It is important that the economic and technological contexts within which the consumers, fan communities, or users operate, are understood .Within this environment, different forms of media can be perceived to be “*the key drivers and accelerators of a growing integration between culture and commerce*” (Jenkins and Deuze, 2008, p.5).

Livingstone (2003) says,

While to adults the Internet primarily means the World Wide Web, for children it means emails, chat, games – and here they are already content producers. Too often neglected, except as a source of risk, these communications and entertainment focused activities, by contrast with the information-focused uses at the centre of the public and policy agendas, are driving emerging media literacy. (p.5)

and Jenkins and Deuze (2007) point out that

[w]e are living at a moment of profound and prolonged media transition: the old scripts by which media industries operated or consumers absorbed media content are being rewritten. As those changes occur, we need to work across the historic divide in academic research between work on media industries and work on media audience. (p.5)

Within the last few decades, new media resources have expanded to become what Benkler (2006 cited in Jenkins and Deuze, 2008, p.5) refers to as “*hybrid media ecology*”. Those involved, such as commercial, amateur and governmental entities, non-profit activists, and educationalists should join forces. Each of these groups has the power to produce and distribute material and in doing so become changed by this new power and responsibilities in this “*emerging media ecology*” (p.5). In this context, personalised media may no longer be of value, but socialised media is. YouTube, Second Life, Flickr and My Space are a few examples of “*meeting space*” between a range of “*grassroots creative communities, each with their own goals yet each contributing to moulding the whole media environment.*” The “*top-down corporate-driven process and the bottom-up consumer driven process is known as convergence*” (Jenkins and Deuze, 2007, p.6).

Within convergence culture, there is also the idea of remix. Knobel and Lankshear (2008, p.22) state that to remix “*means to take cultural artifacts and combine and manipulate them into new kinds of creative blends*”. Accordingly, the authors point out that in the past, remix referred to the use of a technique that produced a different song from an original. This was achieved by remixing the instruments and the other components of the song. These include music and sound as well as static and moving images from the Internet, television and personal collections. They maintain that remix practices are a beneficial and rewarding means of becoming competent in new literacies, because humans are wired for learning, and effective learning and expert skills are linked to fun.

Richard Koman (2005) interviewed Lawrence Lessing on the topic of remix culture and Lessing says,

Now when you say the word writing for those of us over the age of 15, our conception of writing is writing with text.... But if you think about the way kids under 15 use digital technology to think about writing – you know, writing with text is just one way to write, and not even the most interesting way to write. The more interesting ways are increasingly to use images and sound and video to express ideas. (n.p.)

Jenkins et al. (2009) point out that “[p]articipatory culture shifts the focus of literacy from one individual expression to community involvement” (p.7). Accordingly, Jenkins et al. (2009) define participatory culture as being one

1. *with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement.*
2. *with strong support for creating and sharing one's creations with others*
3. *with some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices.*
4. *where members believe that their contributions matter.*
5. *where members feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created).* (p.7)

The new web has no gate keepers; it is open and democratic with most content being available without charge, and anybody can add to its volume of knowledge (Solomon and Schrum, 2007). On the one hand, with the technique of remixing it is important that one should be familiar with copyright symbols and how to obtain certain licenses, including how to read the End User License Agreements included with software and online services to gain knowledge of what is fair use (Knobel and Lankshear, 2008). Many learners are confused regarding which materials they may or may not use in their projects. It is a good idea to discuss the issues of copyright infringement connected to using media from the web to create a digital story and how the use of these materials fall under the umbrella of fair use (Robin, 2007).

Lessing (2008) maintains that contemporary culture as a whole can be seen as a type of remix. By this he means that comments on, or discussions with others on films seen or books read can be regarded as a remix of the author's original creativity. Remix has not come about with digitisation, but is part of any society's cultural development. He further points out that "remix" could "*inspire a deeper, much more meaningful practice of learning for a generation that has no idea how to read a book*" (p.1). In this light, Lessing has this to say about copyright:

This war must end. It is time we recognize that we can't kill this creativity. We can only criminalize it. We can't stop our kids from using these tools to create, or make them passive. We can only drive it underground, or make them "pirates." And the question we as a society must focus on is whether this is any good. Our kids live in an age of prohibition, where more and more of what seems to them to be ordinary behaviour is against the law. They recognize it as against the law. They see themselves as "criminals." They begin to get used to the idea. (p.1)

Multimodality

The second broad conceptual area of media making and digital storytelling is that of multimodality. Multimodality, as is highlighted by Jewitt (2014) and Kress (2010) is frequently used interchangeably with terms such as multimedia to refer to the ways in which “communication and representation [are] more about language, and ... attend to the full range of communication forms people use – image, gesture, gaze, posture, and so on – and the relationships between these” (Jewitt, 2014, p.15).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, p.111) assert that “*multimodal ensembles*” focus on two things. They focus on semiotic resources of communication, which are the modes, and media that are used; and the communicative practices in which the resources are used. These communicative practices are seen as multi-layered and include discursive practices, production practices, interpretive practices, design practices and or distribution practices. Each of these layers enhances meaning in different places within a range of semiotic resources as well as in various modes and media.

Semiotic resources exist in various ways for different people and groups of people and these take the form of signs or systems of rules. As these new ways of communicating develop so do new needs of communication technologies, and new needs for communicating theories develop. It should be borne in mind that no semiotic resource is either lexically or grammatically structured. However, colour has an important function as a formal semiotic device, but for it to be a complete mode it has to be a resource for making signs. It also has to be the signifier-material which is used to carry the meanings of sign-makers. Colour may be able to fulfil discursive meanings which speech and writing cannot. Discourses (socially constructed knowledge) may be made real by using colour. Besides colour, lexis, grammar, punctuation, layout, logo and paper can all be drawn into the realisation of discourse providing a powerful shaping or constraining effect. Thus semiotic modes play an important role in multimodal discourses which are “*socially constructed knowledges*” within a culture (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.4). Everyday interaction is both multimodal (since it makes use of speech and non-verbal communication) and multimedial (since it makes use of the senses). However, meaning is the result of human interaction with the world and the resources that are used in expressing and interpreting meaning are made up of both semiotic

modes and semiotic media. Therefore, media is socially formed and the body, the voice and the materials used to produce objects, play a role (Kress and van Leeuwen, (2001).

Kress (2000) says that technologies of information lend themselves to “*visualisation*”, the “*phenomenon*” in which information was previously stored in writing, is “*translated*” (p.183) into visual form. This happens because the transfer of information is more efficient in the visual mode than in the verbal form. Therefore, multimodality plays a vital role in communication; the new information technologies and media environment of the communication reform lends itself to representation of visual, audio and gestural meanings. Kress points out that multimodality is clearly evident in “*gesture language*” since it uses “*its own distinct ‘material’: facial expressions, disposition of mouth and eyes, movements and disposition of the upper part of the body*” (p.186). He maintains that music is no longer seen not as a means of communication but rather a means of expression. The same is true of visual and other modes. Additionally, Kress (2010) highlights the importance of colour in multimodal readings.

While, as Jewitt (2014) observes, the strength of multimodality research is that it can be used with many different types of texts, the area of the digital remains understudied in relation to multimodality. As she writes:

The digital poses many challenges for multimodal methods such as, how to develop methods and theoretical concepts to capture the relationship between the text and the text in use; the naming of the yet un-named resources of the digital; processes of coding complex multimodal digital interactions; and how to analyse the multimodal character of digital texts in ways what move beyond atomizing the text; methods for analysing time, space, and embodiment. (p.455)

As I explore in the next section, this work also calls for links to other media making approaches that seek to study the nature of the relationships between producers and the production itself.

PARTICIPATORY VISUAL AND OTHER ARTS-BASED RESEARCH AND MEDIA MAKING

Arts-based research has long intrigued me. During my course work at Honours level, and

while carrying out arts-based research in the form of photo-voice for my Master of Education dissertation, I had the opportunity to participate in several media-related projects. These included visual arts-based methodologies such as digital storytelling as well as photo-voice. When starting my first course, I was initially apprehensive but soon became fascinated and excited and remained so. Very soon, I realised that my two lecturers, Professor Claudia Mitchell and Dr Jean Stuart, were as Goldman-Segall (1998, p.67) wrote, “*Teachers [lecturers] in the electronic era of global communications... currently deciding how best to bring what is out there into their classrooms*”. I also became aware that they were, as Goldman-Segall maintains, set for change because of the modern technology that had come their way. They had “*undergone a constructionist shift*” where “*knowledge is no longer thought of as a ‘substance’ to be poured into the children’s [student’s] head*” (p.70). My lecturers were like the teachers Goldman-Segall described, at Hennigan and Bayside schools, as “*inspirational artists working with the technologies of our times*” (p.68).

I was first introduced to digital storytelling during one of my honours media education modules. This module was presented by Professor Claudia Mitchell and Dr Jean Stuart in 2004, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It was inspired, they said, by a conference held in London in July, 2004. This international conference was sponsored by the Centre for Study of Children, Youth and Media in London entitled *Digital Generations⁹: Children, Young People and New Media*.

The notion behind digital storytelling in the Honours module was that it was possible for digital technology to contribute to a deeper understanding of what it means to hope in the context of issues such as HIV and AIDS and gender violence, and that in the future, digital technology could become a tool for social change. During the course of the module we, the students, were placed in groups of three to study the area of what we called digital hope through digital storytelling.

My group explored a way in which our digital story could, perhaps, in a small way, have a positive influence on researchers, practitioners and policy makers, so that they might think

⁹ Digital Generations focused on the positive side of new media by providing new opportunities for “*creativity and self-determination*”. They presented “*exciting and challenging new research on children, young people and the new digital media of that time*” (p.1). They also addressed new research and approaches for teachers and workshops around such topic as games and web designers (www.ifacca.org/events/2004/07/26/digital-generations-children-young-people-and/)

anew about supportive services for those living with HIV and with AIDS. Our digital story highlighted the reality of HIV and AIDS. It focussed on the emotional state of a mother after her young daughter had died of AIDS. With all her hopes and dreams for this daughter dashed, she focused on the future of her daughter's small children. She hoped that her young grandchildren would not be infected with HIV and AIDS and that they would grow up to be healthy adults. She also hoped that a cure for the virus would soon be found. The heading of our story was "How I wish it would rain". Nonhlanhla, one member of our group, was very particular in the way she wrote her story. I felt that it was a tribute to someone close to her who had succumbed to the disease. Here is the story that was written by our group.

How I wish it would rain

Oh! My dearest child, how I wish it would rain. We have had wonderful times together.

I had so much hope and yearned for the day that you completed school.

When you had your beautiful children, I hoped you would be with them until they were able to carry their responsibilities on their own.

Then you became ill. I thought you only had caught a cold that would soon pass. But your return from the clinic brought me grief and I began to wonder about the future.

I was so devastated that I could not imagine life without you. My heart ached for your children and their future.

I prayed each day that God will help me to fulfil my dreams.

How much I hoped for your children to grow up uninfected by this dreadful pandemic, to be upholders of the future generations. How long shall we wait for it to be cloudy?

A long time has passed since you have gone with no cure having been found yet. But I cling to the hope that keeps me going until it is found.

Oh, how I wish it would rain soon!

(Nonhlanhla, Thompson and Maureen).

As I reflected on this experience, I realised that digital storytelling was an extremely powerful tool to express feelings that could be heard. As a white woman working with two black colleagues, I also became aware of differing perspectives. This was an important learning experience for me, since I, personally, had not lost anyone in my family to an AIDS-related illness. This made me realise the importance of positioning in research, and it was also the start of my interest in digital storytelling.

In the light of my interest in media and arts-based research, I took up the challenge outlined by David Buckingham (2003) “*to be ready to respond to new challenges*” (p.17). In this case it was the new challenge of exploring the use of an art-based-approach, namely digital storytelling. To do so, I involved Grade 10 girls in a series of Life Orientation lessons to discover what they understood about the issue HIV and AIDS. I agree with Mia, a learner, quoted in Goldman-Segall, 1998) who states, “*If you feel strongly about something, I think you should go for it and try to find out about it, and do things to help and do what you believe in*” (p.201).

The significance of visual and other arts-based research

Lister and Wells (2001) maintain that in the last 30 years, more and more qualitative researchers have embraced and fine-tuned visual approaches to enrich their understanding of the human condition. Thus, visual technologies and imaging have become important in our modern society and they encourage researchers to take note of them when carrying out their research. Springgay and Irwin (2004) observe that visual methodologies “*embrace the interwovenness of objects, texts, images and technologies in people’s everyday lives*”. (p.78). Grossi (2007) writes, “*The visual produces and preserves images which paint a picture, tell a story or record an event*” (p.86). Further, Weber and Mitchell (2004, p.2) point out that visual research raises numerous new questions and proposes “*new blurrings*” of boundaries.

Mitchell (2008) writes that drawings, videos, collages and photographic images are all visual tools that could be used to involve participants in visual research from which data arises. However, she maintains that the participants are not restricted to the visual data; captions, statements or explanatory writings can also be used by the participants to reflect on what they have to say about the visual data. She also states that each of these visual tools have their own methods, traditions and procedures.

According to Mitchell (2008) there are nine key areas in visual methodologies. These are drawings, photo-voice, photo-elicitation, researcher as photographer, working with family photos, cinematic texts, video production, material culture and advertising campaigns. She states that some approaches are fairly low tech and can be carried out without expensive equipment but other approaches involve the use of expensive cameras. For example, from a practical point of view, working with drawings is inexpensive since all that is needed is paper

and a pencil (Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith and Campbell, 2011). Moreover, Guillemin (2004) maintains that visual methodologies in social research have become quite apparent in recent years and that using drawing as a research tool results in knowledge production. She also asserts that it enables people to make sense of their own world. Kitahara and Matsuishi (2006) observe that far more can be gleaned from drawings than from language. Bearing this in mind, Weber (2008) maintains that, “*Images can be used to capture the ineffable...*” (p.44). She feels that by showing something, knowledge, which would otherwise be difficult to articulate, could be retrieved.

Mitchell, in Mitchell et al. (2011), observes that drawings have the power to evoke childhood memories and their richness has the power to move an audience. They are tangible and concrete and can be interpreted by everyone. Mitchell, however, draws attention to the fact that although it is simple to collect such data, there is “*a complexity in the interpreting process*”. She poses the following questions to the researcher to substantiate this: “*Does one ask for captions? Does one use the drawing as a type of elicitation? What do drawings really mean?*” (p.2). As a research tool, drawings have been used together with verbal research, giving voice to the actual intention of the drawing.

Huss and Cwikel (2005) assert that art can be a method of developing self-expression. Additionally, Mullen (2003) maintains that as researcher and facilitator of art-based activities,

[w]e need to find ways not just to represent others creatively, but to enable them to represent themselves. The challenge is to go beyond insightful texts, to move ourselves and others into action, with the effect of improving lives. (p.117)

Moreover, Silverman (2000) maintains that research should tap into what people do and not only into what they say. He feels that is how art works. Further, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) express that means of personal experience go “*inwards and outwards, backwards and forwards*” (p.152).

Additionally, Mullen (2003) points out that in qualitative literature, there has been an increase in arts-based research. Various researchers have attempted to define arts-based research. Eisner and Barone (1997) define it as

the presence of certain aesthetic qualities or design elements that infuse the inquiry and its writing. Although these aesthetic elements are in evidence to some degree in all educational research activity, the more pronounced they are, the more the research may be characterized as arts based. (p.73)

McNiff (2008) defines arts-based research as

the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expression in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies. (p.29)

In addition, Speiser (2004) defines arts-based research as

a method of inquiry that uses the elements of the creative arts experience, including the making of art by the researcher, as ways of understanding the significance of what we do within our practice and teaching. (p.1)

In contradiction of what Speiser says, I do not see myself as a researcher who is creating the art. As I noted in the previous chapter, I was eager to deepen my understanding of participatory approaches to HIV and AIDS by using the arts-based approach of digital storytelling with adolescent girls in their Grade 10 Life Orientation lessons.

McNiff (2004) points out that the “*conceptual foundation*” (p.1) of arts-based research can be attributed to the work of Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art* (1951). Further, Mc Niff (2008) maintains that her influence

can be attributed to the articulation of one essential idea, that all forms of symbolic transformation are not only basic human needs but they are also fundamental and intelligent modes of conception with each characterized by its unique framework of symbols that cannot be reduced to another system. (p.1)

However, Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gozouasis and Grauer (2006) assert that “*arts-based research must demonstrate that artful expression is at the heart of inquiry*” (p.1242).

Similarly, Mullen (2003) maintains that arts-based research is a process whereby the lived

situation is expressed rather than the end product being detached from the situation in which it was created. She also observes that communication outweighs the importance of the aesthetic criteria.

Further, McNiff (2004) writes that “*arts-based research can also contribute to enhance the language we use to describe experience*” although “*language furthers the integration of expressive modalities and in so doing generates new ideas and insights that emerge from the process of interaction*” (p.3). Similarly, Eisner (1995) observes that arts-based methods of research are useful in bringing to the fore that which would be difficult to grasp through the use of language only, or even that which would be difficult to say in words. Finally, Sinner et al. (2006) state that, “*...there is an organic and lively relationship where the researcher and the research are part of an intricate dance that is always evolving*” and, furthermore, “*arts-based research is a creative process that is tentative and frequently tension-filled but often transformative and tensile*” (p.1242). They also maintain that arts-based research is a combination of many different interests with varied voices and variations in research.

The significance of arts-based educational research

Within both the social sciences and education there has been a move towards using arts-based approaches in carrying out research with both adults and children. Evidence of educational researchers using the arts to carry out research can be found in the works of, for example, Eisner (1976) and Grumet (1978) and this approach continues to grow rapidly in the educational field. By the 1990s it had grown to incorporate forms such as music, dance and movement, multi-media practices, visual arts and photography (Sinner et al., 2006). As Diamond and Van Halen-Faber (2005) write, “*Arts-based educational research is inspired by and borrows its methods from the humanities, literature, and the visual and dramatic arts*” (p. 81).

Further, Barone and Eisner (1997) assert that there are two criteria for educational arts-based research. First, it is meant to improve perceptions related to human activities within education. Second, it has “*certain aesthetic qualities or ‘design element’ that infuse the inquiry process and the research ‘text’*” (p.95). Furthermore, the authors note that there are seven design elements present within educational arts-based research, but that these may vary depending on the form of art being used by the researcher. These elements are: the presence

of aesthetic form; the use of expressive language; the creation of virtual realities; the presence of ambiguity; the use of contextualised and vernacular language; the promotion of empathy; and the personal signature of the researcher.

Sinner et al. (2006) maintain that, “*Engaging in art-based educational research often means that the researchers are immersed in a journey of discovery, of learning about themselves in relation to others*” (p.1242) whereas Van Halen-Faber and Diamond (2002) assert that for researchers in arts-based educational research, it is an “*imaginative experience*” giving research an “*explanation*” and “*commentary*” (p.252). Mc Niff (2004) however, describes the creative imagination “*as a realm where all the faculties work together and where no one mode is superior to the other*” (p.3).

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

The beginnings of digital storytelling

Boase (2008) writes that the digital storytelling movement began in San Francisco. It was used for therapy, in which autobiography was an instrument for self-discovery. People were keen to take advantage of the arrival of a new media tool for self-reflection and for examining issues of identity.

In 1994, the Centre for Digital Storytelling was begun in Berkeley, California, and was inspired by the work of the late Dana Atchley. The centre worked with the medium of short, multimedia stories that they called “digital stories”. Joe Lambert was the founding director of the Center for Digital Storytelling. The Center facilitated the production of more than 10,000 digital stories (Alexander, 2008). The Center has worked with almost 1000 organisations around the world. It trained more than 15 000 digital storytellers across the wide fields of business, community, cultures, education, health care organisations and social services (Lambert, 2013). Its workshops have led to many self-sustaining, self-directed digital storytelling projects such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) project, *Capture Wales*, (Lambert, 2010) and *Silence Speaks*, (www.silencespeaks.org/who-we-are/). Robin (2008) notes that in the early period of digital storytelling, Lambert was fascinated by the fact that average people could “*capture their story in a really powerful way in a relatively short amount of time for a relatively small amount of money*” (p.222).

Capture Wales was one of the first large scale digital storytelling projects. Sponsored by the BBC, it was begun in the United Kingdom in 2001. The aim of the project was to capture stories that reflected local cultures and histories, and then share them. In San Francisco, a similar project was carried out by a public broadcasting radio station, but the stories obtained were from high school learners who told how they had come to live in California. This introduced the learners to the skills and tools of digital storytelling and also gave them the opportunity for personal expression (Educause Learning Initiative, 2007).

The Center for Digital Storytelling's tradition is that a 2 to 3 minute personal story is told using graphics, audio and video. Included are many or all of the seven elements that were devised by Lambert (2007). According to Lambert there are seven key elements:

1. Point of view: the aim of a digital story is for the writer to communicate her own ideas within her story.
2. Dramatic question: the crucial question that is answered by the end of the story and that holds the audience's attention.
3. Emotional content: an effective digital story that keeps the audience's attention while involving its members emotionally.
4. The gift of your voice: this is the most important of the seven elements since it gives meaning to the story in a personal manner and it assists in the audience's understanding.
5. The power of soundtrack: carefully chosen sounds and music that further enhance emotional response.
6. Economy: using only a few images, a few words with a few special effects to clearly and effectively convey the anticipated meaning.
7. Pacing: the speed – how slowly or how quickly the story flows affects its meaning.

(adapted from Lambert, 2007, p.9-19)

The 'inside story' of digital storytelling

The roots of digital storytelling start with the importance of storytelling and narrative. The art

of storytelling has been around since at least 3000 BC (Adams, 2002). The oral tradition of imparting knowledge has been the basic resource of education since human beings began teaching each other (Educause Learning Initiative, 2007). Young and old have always enjoyed listening to stories, whether for pleasure or for educational purposes such as teaching beliefs and values to others. Thus stories have immense power and they have influenced both adults and children. Shared personal stories provide learners with a way of thinking through their past and present experiences (Miller, 2009). Moreover, stories are also valuable for probing the social and cultural aspects of people as they investigate individual or group experiences (Riessman, 2008).

Additionally, storytelling is a way to explain and/or understand an experience. However, experience does not necessarily take on a story form; a story is created only once the experience has been reflected upon. Therefore, making a story uses an underlying pattern and combines this with what is imagined. Other skills are also needed to make a story and these are linked to critical thinking, (a mental process of judgment, analysis and reasoning) since verbal, written expression, experience, observation, reasoning and reflection are involved (Boase, 2008). Moreover, Ochs and Capps (1996) observe that, *“Narrative and self are inseparable in that narrative is simultaneously born out of experience and gives shape to experience”* (p.19). In similar vein, Sadik (2008) maintains that narrative is a way for learners to make sense of their *“complex and unordered world of experience”* (p.489). However, I agree with Kearney (2002, p.5) who writes that narrative is *“A tale... spun from bits and pieces of experience, linking past happenings with present ones and casting both into a dream of possibilities”*

Moreover, Hinyard and Kreuter (2007) state that, *“When audience members become immersed in a narrative, they are less likely to counter-argue its key messages, and when they connect to characters in the narrative, they may have greater influence on the audience members’ attitudes and beliefs”* (p.785).

However, Mc Drury and Alterio (2003) clearly sum up storytelling as:

a uniquely human experience that enables us to convey through the language of words, aspects of ourselves and others and the worlds, real or imagined, that we inhabit. Stories enable us to come to know these worlds and our place in them given that we are all, to some

degree, constituted by stories: stories about ourselves, our families, friends and colleagues, our communities, our cultures, our place in history. (p.1994)

These authors further maintain that storytelling demands the active use of previous knowledge and experience, therefore stimulating the cognitive resources. For Boase (2008) though it is the “*bread and butter of everyday interpersonal experience*” (p.2) providing a platform for communication, reflection, thought and action. Furthermore, Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) maintain that reflection is “*an activity in which people ‘recapture experience’, mull over it and evaluate it*” (p.19). The aspects of reflections that are innate in successful storytelling, can be advantageous in learning (Boase, 2008). In relation to this, “reflective learning” involves three aspects: “*returning to experience, attending to feelings, and evaluating experience*” (Boud, 2001, p.14).

However, technology that includes the use of computer and the internet, has taken storytelling to a new level in the form of digital storytelling. As Leslie Rule (n.d.) from the Center for Digital Storytelling observes,

Digital storytelling is the modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling. Digital stories derive their power by weaving images, music, narrative and voice together, thereby giving deep dimension and vivid colour to characters, situations, experiences, and insights. (p.1)

Green and Walters (2013) write, “*Digital stories are stories of lived experience and social action*” (p.79) whereas Riley and Hawe (2005) observe that digital stories are “*internalized soliloquies*” which they explain as “*...the conversations one has with oneself or imagined others*” (p.230) and these provide data in narrative research enquiry. The combining of image and text in multimedia digital storytelling surpasses, rather than unites, what is achievable in each specific mode (Hull and Nelson, 2005).

Digital stories can be produced by people on any subject, and shared electronically all over the world (Meadows, 2003). Digital stories can be presented in various formats such as web pages, websites, (Burgess, 2006; Robin, 2008) an online game, a virtual reality world, (Paul and Fiebich, 2002) a digital song or a digital video (Chung, 2006). Burgess, (2006) asserts that digital storytelling is a workshop-based process with little direct involvement by the workshop facilitator. However, Gubrium and Harper (2013) give examples where facilitators

co-mediate the entire digital storytelling process. In this way, a supportive and safe workshop environment is created for the participants and this encourages storytellers to reflect more deeply on their lives and their place in the world, resulting in richer stories being produced. Meadows (2003) points out the power-shift portrayed through digital storytelling:

No longer must the public tolerate being 'done' by media - that is, no longer must we tolerate media being done to us. No longer must we put up with professional documentarists recording us for hours and then throwing away most of what we tell them, keeping only those bits that tell our stories their own way and, more than likely, at our expense. If we will only learn the skills of Digital Storytelling then we can, quite literally, 'take the power back'.
(p.192)

Robin (2006) points out that there are many different types of digital stories but, the major types can be categorised into three groups: 1) Personal narratives that are made up of stories of accounts that are important in one's life and can be "*emotionally charged*"; 2) Historical documentaries which are stories that refer to "*dramatic*" events that help us in understanding the past; 3) Stories that "*inform or instruct*" thus imparting information on a particular subject to the viewers, usually learners (adapted from Robin, 2006, pp.2-3).

In their book, *Participatory Visual and Digital Methods*, Gubrium and Harper (2013) assert that digital storytelling workshops are set in place for participants to "*tell a story that speaks to their own experiences*" since these stories are personal narratives that are "*constructed from the participants' own subject positions*". Not only does the outcome of such a project assist researchers to investigate "*sociocultural understandings*" (p.125) of experience, it also provides a stage for participant contribution on such issues that bring about change for those who produce them. Thus digital storytelling works on the idea of first-hand reality and on who is in control of the production and the interpretation thereof.

The digital storytelling process

Gubrium and Harper (2013) write that normally a three day workshop is set in place to embark upon digital storytelling as a group process. This allows for less disruption of the process. Throughout the process, facilitators are available to "*guide participants*" through the process of digital storytelling (p.126). Participants "*learn by doing,*" (p.126) and produce a

digital story over a 24-hour period. The authors point out that there are usually three phases into which the workshop is organised and they explain them as follows. During the first phase the facilitators show a few examples of digital stories in order to familiarise the participants with the process since often participants may not have been involved in such a process before. The seven core “*steps*” or elements of digital storytelling are also discussed. These are linked to Lambert’s seven digital storytelling elements (Lambert, 2007) which are: 1) owning your insights, 2) owning your emotions, 3) finding the moment, 4) seeing your story, 5) hearing your story, 6) assembling your story, and 7) sharing your story (Lambert 2010, pp.9-29).

The second phase of the workshop focuses on creating a script or draft for the participants’ digital stories. These are usually one-and-a half pages long. Because of time constraints, participants are asked to bring these along to the first session after having worked on them at home. Visual material, such as photographs are also brought to this session. These are scanned and /or video clipped for them to weave into their stories during the latter part of this phase. At this point it should be borne in mind that it is the choice of the participant whether or not to include personal photographs. This is because, in some instances, they deal with sensitive issues. If this is this case, other visual material may be used. During this phase, short written or spoken ice-breakers may be used so that the participants can become familiar with one another. This could also enable them to think of ideas for their own stories. After setting aside an hour or two to fine-tune their draft stories or to write a story that has resulted from the ice-breaker, the participants present their stories in a story circle. Each participant is given 10 to 15 minutes. The idea behind this step is to “create a safe and comfortable space” for participants to present their stories and to allow for constructive feedback from other members of the circle. They may also discuss “*potentially difficult experiences*” (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.128) mentioned in their stories. Alexander (2011) points out that this “*creative state*” is important since it “*shifts our mental gears, allowing free association to replace linear routines, wandering instead of taking planned routes*” (p.194). This author also says, “*Digital storytelling lets students own their creative work, taking the narrative process to themselves*” (p.216).

Gubrium and Harper (2013) state that once the draft stories have been fine-tuned, a tutorial on scanning onto their computers and editing visual images as well as videos in a program such as Adobe Photoshop or Movie Maker, needs to be presented. The voice-over of their

revised scripts is recorded. To map out their digital stories, storyboards are used. These assist with the weaving in of the visual, oral, and written components.

Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out that the third and final phase consists of the facilitators presenting a lesson on working with a non-linear video editing application such as Movie Maker, or other applications that are available. Participants are taught how to import the images and/or videos, and to record voice-over. This produces a rough copy of their digital stories. Soundtracks, story titles, subtitles, and credits are then added to produce the final product of their own digital story. As a way of celebrating the group's achievements, all the digital stories are screened at the end of the workshop. This provides the "*safe space and group cohesion*" (p.129) for participants that was built up during the workshop. Alexander (2011) asserts that within a school environment, "*[e]ven without feeling or being skilled, students also make fine audiences for each other*" (p.221). Indeed, social learning is a hallmark of digital storytelling. As Alexander (2011) says, "*Once the story launches, we should realize that it now takes on a social life*" (p.195).

The diagram on the following page (Diagram 2-1) cited in Gubrium and Harper (2013) clearly maps out the digital storytelling process.

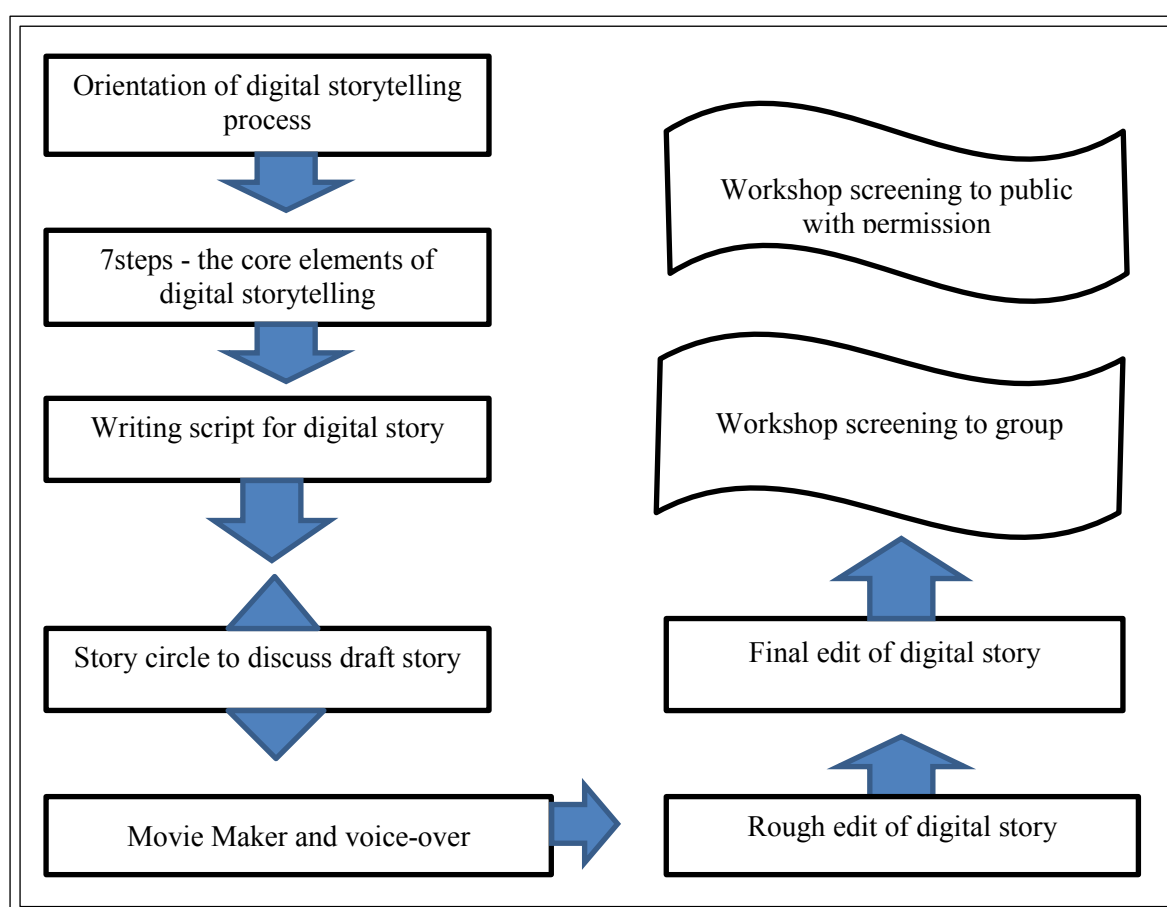
Using digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool

Digital storytelling is a fast-growing approach in the field of education (Gubrium and Harper (2013). In the classroom, it is being used at all levels, with learners creating their own digital stories in language and art lessons. It is also used for undergraduate and graduate courses in technology, and in teacher training courses. In addition, educators are using digital stories to enrich their lessons. Digital storytelling provides a sound basis for many types of literacies for learners such as information literacy, technological literacy, and visual literacy (Brown, Bryan and Brown, 2005). It is therefore obvious that digital storytelling can be used in many classroom situations (Lowenthal, 2009). Another area in which digital storytelling is used is in after-school programmes.

Lynch and Fleming (2007) state that the

flexible and dynamic nature of digital storytelling, which encapsulates aural, visual and sensory elements, utilises the multitude of cognitive processes that underpin learning – from verbal linguistic to spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist and bodily kinaesthetic. (p.7)

Diagram 2-1 The digital storytelling process (Gubrium and Harper 2013, p.127) informed by the work of Silence Speaks



In addition, Robin (2006) says:

Just about all digital stories bring together some mixture of digital graphics, text, recorded audio narration, video and music to present information on a specific topic. As in the case with traditional storytelling, digital stories revolve around a chosen theme and often contain a particular viewpoint. (p.1)

The process of digital storytelling has many learning benefits within the school curriculum.

1. *As an effective instructional tool for teachers* One way is for the educators to create their own stories and then show them to the learners. This is not only a way to present new material, but is a means of capturing their attention in order to create a desire to investigate new ideas. It could also assist with discussion. Educator-created digital stories may improve lessons because the inclusion of elements such as images, audio, and video captures the attention of the learners (Robin, 2006). Digital storytelling can also be used as a link between existing knowledge and new information (Ausubel, 1978).

Digital stories can be created by the learners themselves. As Miller (2009) points out, “*The subject of digital storytelling may be as diverse as the skills that are being honed*” (p.7). She notes that the flexibility and the many possibilities for “*subject matter*” enable digital storytelling to slot into many areas of the curriculum (p.7).

2. *For integrating technology* Unlike traditional learning styles, digital stories engross learners in the language with which they are comfortable. Therefore, since digital storytelling involves learners using modern technology with which they are familiar, it is an exciting way to awaken their interests and to give them a voice and a space in which to interpret their emotions (Lowenthal, 2009).

It can also be said that making use of digital storytelling in education provides a method for learners to learn while using technological skills to which they are already accustomed. It can also present a way to improve digital literacy for those with or without those skills (Boase, 2008). The technical skills the learners require during the process of digital storytelling are: how to use a word processor and a storyboard to download files; how to edit images and audio clips; how to search the web for certain resources, as well as how to use software tools and applications on the computer. (An example of this is Movie Maker.) The digital movie also needs to be edited in order for it to be published and distributed (Lathem et al. 2006). Working with numerous software programs enables the learners not only to improve their knowledge but also to teach their peers (Ware, 2006). As Pitler (2006,) points out, “*Applied effectively, technology not only increases students’ learning, understanding, and achievement, but also augments their motivation to learn, encourages collaborative learning, and develops critical thinking and problem solving strategies*” (p.38). Finally, Bull and Kajder (2004) observe that the use of digital storytelling places technology “*in the hands of*

the learner” (p.49). In this way total control is bestowed on the learners regarding how it is used, as well as independence.

3. *For problem solving and organisational skills development* As with a story, digital storytelling involves planning, but the latter is in the form of a digital layout. Although the point of view is shared, it is often that of the storyteller (Lowenthal, 2009). In creating a digital story, the learners are continually faced with making decisions in order to attain the “*desired outcome*” (Miller, 2009, p.17). To make these decisions, the learners have to organise and prioritise their thoughts to create a narrative. In addition, the learners need to think critically about effectively combining visual and audio features (Boase, 2008; Hull and Katz, 2006). Audio features such as carefully chosen music enhance the mood and emotional content of the digital story. Titles, transitions, and special effects need to be carefully considered in order to create a logical order of events (Lathem et al. 2006). It is also important for the learners to find and arrange images so that they can meaningfully support the message of their text. Text is important in digital storytelling because the script for the spoken word makes the story effective. Likewise, the digital story producers need to be critically aware of what meaning they desire to communicate (Boase, 2008). Participating in the process of digital storytelling can enhance the learners’ communications skills since they need to organise ideas, ask questions, express opinions and create stories (Robin, 2006).

4. *To enhance writing and reading skills* Some experts in the field of digital storytelling maintain that the written word is important in the creation of digital stories. Robin (2007) asserts that writing plays a crucial role in the process of digital storytelling, and Jason Ohler (n.d.) says, “*While writing may not be the final product of a digital story, it is the pathway students must take to create it*” and “[n]o matter how sophisticated our technology becomes, the future of digital storytelling will involve writing and conventional forms of literacy” (p.2).

Bull and Kajder (2004) observe that digital storytelling has the power to “*engage struggling readers and writers who have not yet experienced the power of personal expression*” (p.47). Miller (2009, p. 16) writes that learners gain experience in reading for “*depth and understanding*” because they often simply “*skim through their texts instead of reading for depth and understanding*” (p.15). Moreover, the author maintains that the nature of digital storytelling is such that it involves learners in higher-order thinking through interaction with the text at hand. However, Ohler (2008) maintains that the ability to read new media which

includes digital stories is not only about literacy but also about survival. Kadjer (2004) asserts that while working on a digital storytelling project, she became aware that the “*combination of story and student interest allowed me to challenge students to demonstrate that they knew what to do with texts beyond just saying the words*” (p.65).

5. *Transforming the school environment* In schools, the writing process has shifted from the traditional product-orientated approach to the process-orientated one. The latter can be presented in many ways and using digital storytelling is one such way. The process-orientated approach is a good method in which the learners “*are granted ownership of the writing act and an authentic voice, self-expression and writing as a tool for thinking*” (Pappamihel, 2011, p.1). Further, the approach involves reflecting on the purpose of the writing at hand, understanding or selecting the audience for which it is intended, and understanding the background knowledge of the writer. Through digital storytelling, learners are able to grasp narrative styling and composition by being given the opportunity to write creatively, to organise thoughts logically as well as being given the space for self-expression. Therefore, story writing is essential in spite of the fact that the ultimate purpose of digital storytelling is to tell a story to an audience (Xu, Park and Baek, 2011).

6. *Promoting a culture of cultural production and sharing* Learners’ digital stories can be shared in many ways; this can happen, for example, in the classroom with their peers, in the school or even in public places (Ohler, 2008). Since digital storytelling goes hand in glove with media, the learners’ writing is changed from private to public because they are able to create and publish their stories. They become authors because media spreads further than their personal boundaries (Green and Walters, 2013). The ability to show their digital stories online is an inspiration to learners since they are able to show them to a global audience (Standley, 2003). In this way the learners are able to tell their stories again and again (Lowenthal, 2009).

It is interesting to note that it is possible that digital storytelling has changed the way events are experienced and remembered, because they are “*permanent artifacts*” which are available for personal reflection and evaluation. They can also be used for sharing informally within a group of learners or globally on the Internet (Green and Walters, 2010, p.76). Robin (2006) points out that when digital stories are published on the Web,

students have the opportunity to share their work with their peers and gain valuable experience in critiquing their own and other students' work, which can promote gains in emotional intelligence and social learning. (p.712)

Latham et al. (2006) make the interesting statement that “*a digital story is a finished product, a work of art that captures a moment in time*” (p.3).

7. *For developing an integrated approach to arts education* Art educators have, over time, begun to use appropriate computer technology in search of significant and pertinent classroom practices. At the University of Houston in Texas, courses combining computer technology and visual arts education have taken place. The use of digital storytelling offers potential for integrating and teaching present-day visual culture, multimedia and matters of concern to the digital generation. In the arts classroom, the digital storytelling process encourages the students to change from producing art for the sake of producing art, to artwork that has meaning. This is because it forms part of a story which needs to make sense, as well as having contextual meaning to which the audience can connect (Chung, 2006).

8. *For deep learning* It seems that digital storytelling can be seen to be a tool for “*deep learning*” since the learners are engaged in project-based learning which incorporates technology into instruction and allows for reflection in deep learning (Barrett, 2004, p.1). Sadik (2008) notes that as a result of her project in which she aimed to help Egyptian teachers develop teaching and learning through the method of digital storytelling, it became clear to her that while the learners were using the process of digital storytelling, they thought more deeply about their topics. They also individualised their learning experience, and went further than merely repeating facts and thoughts related to the subject at hand. Accordingly, they reflected on their own “*thoughts and engagement*” (p.502) which was done visually and aurally. As Sadik points out, “*Students learned to think and write about people, places, events and problems that characterized their individual life experiences or others' experiences*”. She also points out that the learners “*enjoyed the idea of piecing together their thoughts and connecting them any which way they wanted to by titles, audio, narrations, motions, transitions and other Photo Story effects*”. Thus learners were given the chance to “*collect, organize, reflect and communicate evidence of their learning with others...*” (p.503).

9. *For peer teaching* Along with other opportunities that exist in the classroom, using

technology for digital storytelling provides the opportunity for learners to engage in peer teaching. Learners use ideas that they have acquired by watching their teachers or by assisting others, thereby presenting themselves as technology dons. This process enhances their self-confidence (Hull and Katz, 2006). During this process they assist with troubleshooting computer hitches or with advising others as to which audio tracks to use (Miller, 2009), for example.

Some challenges

At the same time, there are a number of technical and pedagogical challenges in making use of digital storytelling.

Time It takes time to create digital stories – from between three to four days to four to six months (Banaszewski, 2002). The curriculum does not allow for spending days or weeks on creating a project, therefore educators need to take into consideration the amount of time the learner will need when he or she is participating in a digital storytelling project (Lowenthal, 2009).

Lack of proper training Creating digital stories is not a simple task, and many educators do not have the technical skills required to facilitate such a project. Therefore appropriate training in the process is important in order for the digital storytelling project to be a success. Although learners do have the skills for such a project, they still require guidance (Lowenthal, 2009).

Curriculum Educators should find out what their learners need to know and are able to achieve, and then determine how the process of digital storytelling can meet these needs (Lowenthal, 2009). Learner-centred digital storytelling projects should be brought in line with appropriate standards and support learning (Hofer and Owings Swan, 2006).

Lack of Structure Without a proper structure, learners could focus more on images and music than on the story itself (Standley, 2003). Educators' expectations should be well defined since these can “*help determine the quality, focus and direction of the student products*” (Hofer and Owings Swan, 2006, p.681).

Emotions and trust Learners are often not comfortable with the “depth of emotion” that creating a digital story can bring. Therefore it is important to develop a “*safe and trusting environment*” in which learners are comfortable to express their emotions (Lowenthal, 2009, p.303). It is also recommended that educators develop their own digital story to show their willingness to share with the learners (Banaszewski, 2002).

Access Educators should not take it for granted that learners have access to all the equipment needed for digital storytelling so that they can complete their digital stories at home. This is particularly relevant when dealing with marginalised learners (Lowenthal, 2009).

Assessment Assessment of learners’ work forms part of the learning process. Hofer and Owings Swan (2006) assert that assessment is an important aspect of the digital storytelling process and that it should be carefully considered. Various authors have provided information on this subject (Barrett, 2006; Ohler, 2008). However, there are difficulties associated with assessing learners’ work especially when emotions have played a role in the digital story. Further, the learners might have received assistance from the educator while working on the digital story. Therefore programs such as those that take place after school, or digital story contests often prevent such a problem since these are not formally assessed (Lowenthal, 2009).

Copyright As noted above in relation to convergence culture and the idea of remix, copyright needs to be carefully considered, planned and addressed (Lowenthal, 2009; Gubrium and Harper, 2013). One should be familiar with copyright symbols and how to reach certain licenses, including how to read the End User License Agreements included with software and online services to gain knowledge of what is fair use (Knobel and Lankshear, 2008).

Ethical implications/issues Gubrium and Harper (2013) and Gubrium, Hill and Flicker (2014) point out that it is very important to be transparent with the participants about the projects objectives and goals. Further, they state the reasons for the project should also be made clear and that privacy, safety and confidentiality must be assured at all times. Thus, participants should be assured that the written work or images shown in their stories will be kept private, should the participants so wish. Hill (cited in Gubrium and Harper 2013) has formulated a set of guidelines and a bill of rights which she uses for her digital storytelling projects. However, this point will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

Digital storytelling as a research tool

The digital storytelling process can be a key research tool in such areas as participatory ethnography. According to Gubrium and Harper (2013), in participatory ethnography it is imperative that we research both the process and the outcome of digital storytelling. This is because a great deal of visual, oral, and textual empirical material results from this method. The digital stories are told by the participants and are, to a great extent, directed by them from their own experience within their own socio-cultural domain. These digital stories are thus seen as “*identity performances*” (p.129) and are created bearing an audience in mind.

Gubrium and Harper (2013) further maintain that the method fits together with other ethnographic methods and the workshop itself can act as type of micro-ethnography in which the participant’s “*identity construction*” (p.129) and social domains can be recorded. The digital story workshops themselves result in various sites for collecting data being brought to the fore. Within this workshop environment, the researcher, who acts as a facilitator, can obtain actual viewpoints on the participants’ “*narrative agency*” since the setting allows for “*participant observation*” (p.129). Moreover, the authors point out that the epistemological origin for digital storytelling is likened to the Mass Observation Movement in that it “*foregrounds micro, local understandings as empirical data for ethnographic research*” (p.129). It surpasses its predecessor since it moves beyond its observational qualities as a social research method. According to Fyfe (2007), “*Like Capturing Wales, Mass Observation was not issue-based but holistic in that it sought observation of the unobserved resisting a pastoral attitude towards the ‘people’ by not only being about them but for them and by them*” (p.6).

The researcher-as-facilitator is also in the position to observe and to take field notes during the workshop activities, as well as observe how the participants interact with each other. The researcher-as-facilitator may also interact with the participants “*through a different power dynamic*” (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.129) in that the power is in the hands of the participant rather than the researcher. Although conventional data may not be gleaned as with the academic researcher role, a greater understanding of the participants’ lives and how they wish to represent themselves and their experience is obtained. In this way the participants are placed at the centre, thus presenting the researcher-as-facilitator with “*real*” data (p.129).

Gubrium and Harper (2013) draw attention to three core stories that offer different ways in which digital storytelling workshops have been carried out, bearing in mind the circumstances and the participants with whom they were working. These core stories show that the nature of digital storytelling is flexible in that it can be improvised to suit the circumstances surrounding the participants and their needs. These stories also highlight the advantages and disadvantages of improvising with digital storytelling. I discuss these stories briefly below.

Digital story 1: The first core story is based on the work of Aline Gubrium (Gubrium and Harper, 2013) whose work is directed to “*humanizing public health concerns through digital storytelling*” (p.130). The project, in which only three women participated, concentrated on the experiences of women using a contraceptive medication. Being in the position of co-facilitator of the workshop, Gubrium had the opportunity to take field notes on the process and on the outcomes of the project. She was also able to record discussions that took place, allowing her to obtain new viewpoints on the participants’ concerns regarding the health issue at hand. The large volume of data that was obtained from the feedback of the audience who viewed the digital stories during semi-private, in-workshop and public viewings, as well as from the follow-up discussions with the participants themselves (in which they explained and described why and how they made their stories and how the process had personally affected them), gave rise to the members of the audience and the participants analysing the content and interpretation of the digital stories.

Digital story 2: The second core story was based on the work carried out by Marty Otañez (for examples of his work see www.side-walkradio.net). As opposed to Gubrium’s structured method of carrying out digital storytelling, his method leaned towards “bending genres, bending purposes” (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.142). Accordingly, in his workshops he followed a more flexible approach. Thus, if participants felt they had a more pressing story to tell that did not necessarily lie within the boundaries of the project, Otañez was willing to grant the participants space to develop these stories resulting in a more holistic approach being taken. Moreover, he maintained that digital stories allow participants to focus on their own perspectives on pertinent issues.

Otañez uses digital storytelling as a “*three- pronged process: 1) to understand how digital stories can be used to influence community wellness; 2) to enhance different ways of doing*

anthropology; and 3) to explore the ways that this new media can be used to influence policymaking” (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.142–143). He uses critical discourse analysis in some of his research-orientated digital storytelling projects.

To accommodate participants with time constraints, he carried out a mini-workshop working with a small group of participants or one-on-one. However, he found these time consuming for himself, especially in the light of being able to obtain the same amount of data that a three day workshop would yield. Moreover, working during a one-on-one, the story circle process, an important stage necessary to kindle the spirit of the digital storytelling workshop, did not take place.

Otañez worked with participants who were from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, so some of them had never been given access to creative space and many were inexperienced in this type of project. Thus he found himself dealing with, and sometimes giving up, control of his “*aesthetic expectations*”. This challenge is one that many participatory visual researchers are faced with, and “*they must learn to carefully balance the give-and-take aspects of production*” (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.146). However, this is quite difficult to do, especially when participants ask for advice or they want to relinquish control of the technical aspect and give the narrative control to someone they consider to be the expert. Otañez pointed out the participants in the one-on-one session were happy to allow him to make changes to their work when he made suggestions, thus making him a co-author (or even first author) of the story.

Although the intention of digital storytelling is to give the participants a voice in order to construct knowledge, some participants were not able to do so because they either had a history of drug abuse that resulted in their being unable to express themselves in writing or verbally, or they had no experience of working with computers. On this issue, Gubrium and Harper (2013) write that Otañez admitted that as a result of his previous video-making background he left an “*aesthetic imprint*” on participants since he, himself, played an active role in the digital storytelling process.

Digital story 3: The third core story that Gubrium and Harper (2013) describe comes from the work carried out by Amy Hill, the founder and director of *Silence Speaks* at the Center for Digital Storytelling. Her research was carried out in South Africa; its focus was on

connecting policy matters, and developing curricula materials around digital stories. She also developed a radio campaign to air stories which were linked to public service announcements.

Hill worked in poorly resourced schools as far as access to technology was concerned, as well as with learners who had literacy problems. As a result, she had to adapt and combine various methods to keep in line with the participatory media approach. Because of the lack of access to the Internet, as well as working with participants who did not have their own photographs, she gave the participants disposable cameras to take photographs of their lives and their communities for their digital stories. (This was a Photovoice-style approach). Moreover, in cases where the participants were illiterate or even where there was no written form of their language, they were assisted by trained facilitators who used an oral history approach to storytelling and recorded the participants telling their stories line-by-line. Then, together, they would develop their oral scripts to use in the voice over. Thus the production was completed without any reading or writing having taken place.

Much of the editing was done by the facilitator. During the storyboard process the participants cut up pieces of their scripts and then placed and glued them in their preferred order. A thumbnail version of coloured photographs was attached to the script as a hard copy on paper storyboards so that the facilitator could construct and edit the digital stories. Another way of carrying out storyboard sessions was for the participants to interact with the facilitator on a one-on-one basis. Working with facilitators allowed Hill to deal with, for example, editing the participant's stories while at the same time a facilitator would be dealing with participants on another aspect of the process. Educational planning and support activities focused on creating various purposes of the workshop and they were also included with the process of digital storytelling. Thus, while the participants' stories were being edited, they were kept busy with training activities that included health education, gender related material, and anti-oppression issues.

Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out that Hill makes use of the digital storyteller's Bill of Rights and Guidelines (see Center for Digital Storytelling, <http://storycenter.org/ethical-practice/>) when she plans to work with participants. The reason for this is because people have different values when it comes to digital storytelling projects. In this way ethical tension is avoided with regard to the process and final product of digital storytelling. Hill maintains,

“If you are doing [digital story telling] strictly as a way for people to organise their own narratives and to take pictures, you’re going to have to stand back and refrain from inserting your own suggestions about content, wording or images” (p.140). Moreover, she says that for researchers this is difficult to do, and in fact not enough is written or spoken about regarding the ways in which researchers and facilitators *“mediate the content of the final stories produced”* (p.140). Hill believes that it is imperative to be transparent as far as the goals and objectives of the project are concerned and that support from the facilitator is important; the participants should be seen as co-producers of the stories. Hill’s view is that privacy, confidentiality, and the safety of participants are important and these can clash with the issues related to funding. She cautions against people who wanted to make their organisations look good, or raise money through the created digital stories. However, Hill believes that the researcher should be able to guarantee that if participants wish their work to remain private and confidential, this should be honoured. Finally, Hill (cited in Gubrium and Harper, 2013) cautioned those who would like to make use of digital storytelling:

People tend to get enamored with digital stories, the object– in the same way that people are enamored with YouTube videos or visual media in general. And so I think there’s a bit of a danger to being excessively focused on the fancy technology and the media pieces that can be created with that technology and losing focus on the lives of the people and the struggles that they may have experienced. Social change and movement are not going to happen by just making a bunch of little movies. (p.141)

From Otañez’s and Hill’s stories (cited in Gubrium and Harper, 2013) it can be seen that working with digital storytelling demands a great deal of time and effort especially if the participants have had no previous experience with modern technology or if participants are illiterate. These two stories pointed out that a more hands on approach is required on the part of the researcher which raised the point of their being co-authors of the digital story together with the participants. In this light, Hill’s story highlights an important issue that is concerned with the role of the researcher and facilitator and the ethics surrounding their roles which, she maintains, is not often brought to the fore. In contrast to her experience, the circumstances around Gubrium’s research project were such that she had time to take field notes and to record discussions, all of which enabled her to gather large volumes of data.

DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROJECTS

What is useful in the literature on digital storytelling, is the consideration of a broad range of ways in which this method has been used in a variety of geographic and cultural contexts. In the first section I consider some of this work in an international context and then go on to explore further how this work has been taken up in South Africa.

Digital storytelling projects in an international context

Alaska has a rich storytelling heritage and it was here that a digital storytelling contest took place. It was known as the *iDidaMovie* contest and the idea behind it was to encourage learners to express themselves. The categories included: Tell me a story; Tell me something new; Make me laugh; and Teaching and Learning in Alaska. As a result, this developed into a “*story by itself – one that crosses the Pacific Ocean*” (Standley, 2003, p.17) since the stories were shared broadly with other learners through digital media. Standley maintains that in today’s world, tools of electronic media together with “*great teaching methods have given educators a whole new way to give wings to a child’s learning*” (p.17). This is because the process of co-operative learning includes debate, discussion, and reflection as they work together on the various facets of the digital storytelling process. It also gives learners, through digital media, the opportunity to contribute to and construct knowledge which can be shared with their peers as well as with other learners.

The contest mentioned above, paved the way for learners and educators to develop learning communities, not only within the schools and districts but also across national and international boundaries. One such contest that came about was the *Island-Movie* contest under the leadership of Vicki Kajioko, the director of the Hawaii’s Advanced Technology Research Unit. This unit focused on creating an archive of Web-based, learner-created resources to share with other learners. One of the winning entries was from the Kamakahelei Middle School. The focus was concern over an increase in violence in the country’s schools. The aim of Kamakahelei Middle School was to create a learning tool that the learners’ peers would really heed and relate to that would teach them what to do in an emergency (Standley, 2003).

Digital storytelling has also been used in health promotion. Reed and Hill (2010) point out

that over the past 15 years digital storytelling has been used in various community health, educational, and academic situations. Community-based health practice narrative has become a helpful instrument in changing attitudes towards health behaviour. Gubrium (2009) has made use of digital storytelling for social research and practice, and as a method for health promotion research and practice. She maintains that digital storytelling is useful in assisting researchers to “*richly capture how people make sense of their experiences*” and by “*thinking through*” their experiences and reflecting on them may contribute to the “*recording of these phenomena*” (p.1).

Another area in which digital story telling has been used focuses on decision making and the incarcerated. This method has been used with youth in two jails in an *uCreate* project under the umbrella of The Global Kids Edge. The project took place over a period of six weeks from January to February 2010 and it made use of digital storytelling, not only to teach digital media skills to two groups of incarcerated young adults, but to motivate them to examine life and decision making while interacting with their peers in a safe and courteous situation. Once the digital stories had been created by these young adults, they shared them with each other and with the public (Panganiban, 2010).

Since young people have acquired skills in digital media technologies, the development of new media cultures has altered the traditional methods of obtaining knowledge in family and schools. This is also true of religious education in Norway (Kaare, 2008). Religious education in Norway was authoritative and it included strict behavioural control of the children and youth as well as the imparting of fixed Christian knowledge to the children collectively, rather than focusing on the individual child (Johnsen, 1993 cited in Kaare, 2008). The changing media environment of young people, especially as far as computers and the Internet are concerned, led to not only new forms of media literacy but also to a notion of *Bildung*. At the beginning of the last century the notion of *Bildung* referred to learning inner common values such as control, dignity, obedience and grace (Drotner, 2006 cited in Kaare, 2008). However, now the notion has come to mean identity, criticism, competence, reflection, and sense of community, and as far as religious *Bildung* is concerned, “*experienced belief*” (Søbstad, 2006 cited in Kaare, 2008, p.195). This notion has affected religious education in Norway in recent years because the emphasis has shifted to one of passing down its religious heritage to the next generations and focusing on aspects of human life. In order to analyse the outcomes of rethinking religious education, digital storytelling was used as the tool.

Moreover, it was used to examine whether the process could be depicted as *Bildung* in religious education (Kaare, 2008). The purpose of the project was to provide the children and young people with an opportunity to acquire life skills from their own faith tradition, and to enable self-representation. They created stories from their own lives and immediate environment which they were then able to share with others. Thus, the children and the youth were, in a sense, producers (Lundby, 2005).

The digital storytelling project, known as *Digital Faith Stories*, was funded by the Norwegian government. It took place between 2005 and 2008 in a Lutheran church in Haslum, outside Oslo, the capital of Norway. The project involved young people between the ages of 14-18 years of age and 4 leaders were involved. Twenty-nine digital stories were created. These contributed to the process of reforming religious education in Norway. Using digital storytelling is a means of giving people voice in a media saturated society and, since people sometimes find it difficult to verbalise thoughts and feelings, the process of digital storytelling is a good way of alleviating this (Lundby, 2005).

Digital storytelling projects in South Africa

As noted above, Amy Hill's work in South Africa has played a key role in establishing digital storytelling. In July 2005, the *Silence Speaks* project of the Center for Digital Storytelling carried out two digital storytelling workshops with workers and helpers from the *Engender Health's MAP* (Men As Partners) programme in South Africa. Participants in Cape Town and Johannesburg carried out narratives about their lives. They chose photographs, still pictures, video clips and music to tell their stories. They also learned how to edit the material into short digital videos and how to present them. These stories are now being shown throughout South Africa to promote the *MAP Network* whose aim is to actively involve men to take a stand against gender-based violence and help prevent HIV infection, and, therefore, AIDS (Engender Health, 2011).

In 2008, the *Sonke Gender Justice Network* joined with the Center for Digital Storytelling's *Silence Speaks* project to work with a group of young Xhosa people. This resulted in these young people developing eight digital stories depicting the challenges they were confronted with, and the futures for which they long in this post-apartheid era in South Africa (Reed and Hill, 2010).

A series of 7 digital storytelling workshops have taken place in sub-Saharan Africa under the auspices of *Sonke* and *Silence Speaks*. Many of the digital stories that were produced were from South Africa, but there were also digital stories from Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. The stories were based on the experiences of people (especially from rural areas) who have been affected by HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence or poverty. There were also stories that challenged the traditional notions of masculinity. These stories proved to be helpful to those working on HIV prevention strategies, and on gender-based violence (Sonke Gender Justice Network, 2007). The success of *Sonke*'s work lies in the fact that young people and adults who have been affected by HIV and AIDS and violence, have been able to share their stories. This offered "*participants a rare opportunity to talk about their own experiences and to bear witness to the lives of others, in a supportive setting*" (Reed and Hill, 2010, p.2).

A digital storytelling project also took place in an African community in the Eastern Cape, in South Africa. The workshop involved the participants using a prototype mobile digital storytelling system which suited rural oral participants' needs. Since computers and written literacy go hand in hand, it was imperative to find a way in which participants who are illiterate and whose origins stem from oral storytelling, share their stories. The stories clearly revealed social relations and issues related to identity (Reitmaier, Bidwell and Marsden, 2011).

In KwaZulu-Natal, the province where my own research took place, a three day digital storytelling workshop was conducted at rural Secondary School in Vulindlela involving 11 Grade 8 learners (MacEntee, in press). These learners focused on creating digital stories about what they thought and what they knew about the youth and HIV and AIDS in their community. They included narratives about how they experienced, and connected with, the problem of HIV and AIDS in places where infection rates are very high. The learners worked in three single-sex groups and produced three stories on "Youth, HIV and AIDS, and My Community". The boys produced a story of a young HIV positive learner who, having been abandoned by his family, was given support from the community. One group of girls portrayed the fact that in spite of sexual desire, both young males and females can choose to abstain from intercourse when a condom is not available. The last group's digital story focused on the stigma that is attached to HIV and AIDS. The story of this group was about a girl who had become pregnant and HIV-positive because she had had unprotected

intercourse. She received support from her mother, her boyfriend and peers. Two learners were chosen to present the stories to their community at an event at the School in December, 2010, that marked AIDS day and was part of the national 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women. The outcome of this project emphasises that young people's viewpoints and knowledge on the issue of HIV and AIDS is of utmost importance. (Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change, www.cvm.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/Annual_Reports/Annual_Report_2009_-_2010).

The above example points out that the digital stories produced in a rural Secondary School in Vulindlela were not told from the first-person perspective, as would be expected if one were sticking to the Center for Digital Storytelling Approach. Lowenthal (2009) states that the more popular digital storytelling becomes, the more it seems to change. This leads to many questions arising when digital story telling is explored in the educational field. Thus certain elements of digital storytelling become more important than others. This includes the element the lack of a first person 'point of view'. However, Robin (2006) asserts that there are various types of digital stories. Lowenthal (2009) maintains that on one hand, the further one moves from the Center for Digital Storytelling the weaker the stories become but on the other hand he states "*the power of digital storytelling is not in the CDS model, but rather in providing students with an opportunity to have a voice and to create something that is meaningful to them and relevant to their life*" (p.305).

GAPS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Clearly, as the literature suggests, while digital storytelling is a promising area of research across a number of different disciplinary areas and social issues, there is still a great deal to be explored as far as working with different populations is concerned and in dealing with a variety of questions and topics. As noted in Chapter 1, there is little in the literature on students in elite contexts in relation to HIV and AIDS in South Africa, and no specific work that I could find on the use of digital storytelling with this population, although as should be obvious, schools that are well equipped in terms of technology are in a good position to take up this work. At the same time, there are also gaps in relation to framing the work. While the work on meaning making through digital production in media studies offers rich possibilities for considering the ways in which we might draw on convergence cultures and

multimodality, this framework is an understudied area as far as participatory process and knowledge production is concerned.

SUMMARY

This chapter mapped out a framework/literature review, bringing together two important areas: digital storytelling; and participatory arts-based methodologies since digital storytelling is a method within this area of research as framed within media making. The beginnings of digital storytelling were discussed as were the research areas in which such projects have taken place. These areas include, amongst others, health, social sciences and education. Various projects that have taken place in and outside of South Africa were noted. Moreover, the challenges of digital storytelling were highlighted. In the following chapter, I will focus on the methods and methodology used in this research project.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

... teachers [should] give up trying to keep the barn door closed and ... take a look at what is on the outside of the barn first. Then they need to find ways to explore, with those children with whom they live throughout the day. They need to navigate new territories, learning how to construct larger groupings of human experience from the plethora of possibilities and points of viewing. (Goldman-Segall, 1998, p.81)

This chapter deals with methodology and the methods used in this research project. It discusses participatory digital and visual studies, and qualitative research. It describes the research setting, and brings to the fore the ethical issues that participatory visual and digital research holds for the researcher. It clarifies the three phases of the data collection process and the management of the data as well as the assessment and evaluation of the learners' digital stories.

INTRODUCTION

When I attended cohort lectures at the beginning of my doctoral programme, many of the lecturers with whom I came into contact were more familiar with traditional qualitative methods. I became so confused and frustrated (as I think they did, too, but they did not let on) that I decided to work step by step from what I considered the basis of the research project.

There are two key objectives of this study:

1. To explore digital storytelling as a tool with which to investigate knowledge production of HIV and AIDS, of adolescent girls in an independent school;
2. To investigate how digital storytelling makes particular contribution to HIV and AIDS, with girls in an elite school.

Thus the objectives of my study included two powerful verbs, “to explore” and “to investigate”, and my key research questions required me to find what knowledge and understanding the participants of the study had regarding the issue of HIV and AIDS and how the method of digital storytelling could contribute to knowledge production. Thus, for me the word “knowledge” was the place to begin.

Knowledge is incomplete in every subject area and human activity. There are always questions waiting for answers. These questions can be articulated and through systematic research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). Epistemology, which is derived from the Greek word “*episteme*” meaning knowledge and the idea of methodology are related because the term methodology also refers to “*how we come to know... by inquiring in certain ways*” so that we may understand our world in a more practical way (Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004, p.15). Methodology refers to the logical group of methods that supplement each other. The term method indicates a way of doing one thing, or the variety of approaches and techniques used to gather data as the starting point for description, inference, interpretation, explanation and prediction (Henning, et al., 2004).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Interpretivist Paradigm

Henning et al. (2004) write that in order to come to a decision into which theoretical paradigm particular research would fit, it is important to revert to some fundamental concepts. Further, it is imperative to decide whether educational research is scientific or not. Moreover, they pointed out that educational research is a hybrid form of enquiry which is influenced by the concept of behavioural science i.e. anthropology, sociology and psychology and social sciences such as politics, economics, history and geography. I followed this train of thought and decided that my research would best fit the paradigm of the behavioural scientists since it looks at people’s perceptions, understandings, and interactions. It would also fit into the social sciences. Since my research was taking place in an independent school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and was to a certain extent based on the social sciences mentioned above, I pondered which theoretical paradigm was best suited to my research, and which methodology, in turn, and best suited this paradigm. After all, a theoretical paradigm positions or orientates an inquiry in the discipline or subject in which the research is taking place. The lenses through which an educationalist views the world are different from that of perhaps the psychologist or sociologist (Henning et al., 2004).

There are three broad theoretical paradigms linked to educational research. The first is the positivist paradigm based on the scientific paradigm, which rests on the theoretical concepts of experiment control, observation, and refinement. The second is the critical paradigm that

takes into account the political and ideological perspectives. The third, the interpretivist /constructionist paradigm which I chose, “*is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people’s intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding*”. This paradigm further “*encourages varieties of data and different sources and analysis methods in order to strive for validity*” (Henning et al., 2004, p.20).

Qualitative research

Since I was aiming for an in-depth inquiry, I decided that this research study should draw on qualitative approaches. Denzin and Lincoln define qualitative research as

a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations...qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (2000, p.3)

Further, as Leedy and Ormrod observe,

when little information exists on a topic, when variables are unknown, when a relevant theory base is inadequate or missing, a qualitative study can help define what is important – that is, what needs to be studied. (2010, p.135)

As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) note, the aims and methods of qualitative research are made clear by three philosophies. These are hermeneutics, social constructivism, and interpretivism. The understanding of meaning is the common aim of all three but hermeneutics, in particular, draws on philosophy, theology and literary analysis, with the overarching question: “*What are the conditions under which a human act took place or a product was produced, that makes it possible to interpret its meaning?*”(Henning et al., 2004, p.16). The authors observe that in the last 40 years there has been a swing towards socially constructed content from individually interpreted content. The discursive viewpoint, which is what characterises discourse analysis methodology, sees the forming of certain modes of representing reality (especially language and visual images) as a powerful form of meaning

created by individuals and groups.

Henning et al. (2004) point out that within the interpretivist theory, knowledge is made not only by visible phenomena, but also by depictions of “*people’s intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding*” (p.20). Thus, in order to understand a phenomenon, the interpretivist needs to look in various places and at various things and in so doing grasp subjects’ beliefs, needs and so forth in an objective way. Thus, interpretivist researchers analyse data to look for the ways in which meaning is made by people in their lives and what meaning is made by them. Discourses which are “*socially constructed knowledges of (some aspect of) reality*” become part of the interpretivist’s assignment (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.4). Henning et al. (2004) state that “*unstructured observation, open interviewing, idiographic description and qualitative data are all ways to capture ‘insider’ knowledge that is part of an interpretivist methodology*” (p.20). In addition, they argue that “*all good interpretive inquiry should theorise and discuss data and conceptualise*” (p.47), while Trauth (2001) maintains that interpretivist research endeavours to understand the phenomena of meanings that people ascribe to data.

This work on interpretivist research seems particularly appropriate to working with participatory visual approaches. Knoblauch and Schnetter (2012) maintain that further than analysing video for content, this type of analysis is embedded in hermeneutics. To substantiate this (and, I believe, digital storytelling) they write that

Video interaction analysis is not a version of content analysis that exclusively takes into account those aspects documented on the video tape. In order to make sense of the recorded interaction – which is indeed the main object of analysis – the context it is embedded in has to be considered systematically.... Our methodological arguments are the following (1) video interaction analysis is a fundamentally interpretive method. Therefore analysing video data has to be considered a hermeneutic activity.

(2) Video recordings are only tools. The analytical focus lies on the interaction taking place in a certain social situation. Making sense of what has been tape-recorded essentially depends upon additional contextual knowledge.... (3) With the aim of further improving the existing video analytical methods... specific for video data. (pp.335-336)

Participatory digital and visual studies and qualitative research

My research methodology is particularly informed by the work of Gubrium and Harper (2013), Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) and Lankshear and Knobel (2003).

Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) maintain that education has failed to take into account the development of technology and its use in research. They also maintain that the mind-set of people, generally, is that the world has not changed but, rather, that it has swung more towards technology and that the viewpoint of the outsiders – the educationalists – still controls education. They believe that the point of view of the insiders – the learners – enhances learning experiences within the classroom and that education demands a higher level of learner participation and knowledge input. Moreover, since my learners have grown up with laptops, the Internet, Facebook, and YouTube both at school and at home, they are attracted to using these technologies.

Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out that emergent digital and visual methodologies, such as digital storytelling, are changing the way research is being carried out by social researchers (especially educational researchers). This is bringing about new possibilities for participatory approaches that appeal to different audiences and allowing participants to become co-producers of knowledge and, possibly, even co-researchers. They further point out that

[p]articipatory digital and visual methodologies produce rich multimodal and narrative data guided by participant interests and priorities, putting the methods literally in the hands of the participants themselves and allowing for greater access to social [and educational] research knowledge beyond the academy. (p.13)

They maintain that the use of the term participatory, when used together with visual and digital methods of qualitative research, allow the subject a greater voice when it comes to knowledge production. They point out, too, that social research is moving towards a new paradigm based on achieving equality of status and voice. This is especially important in relation to participants who were historically excluded. Moreover, they assert that social researchers should be reacting to new approaches when it comes to fieldwork. They should think in terms of “*who or what represents the field, who directs meaning-making in the field, and who sets the agenda for research*” (p.19). Accordingly, the authors state that visual methodologies are increasing in human sciences, including education.

Visual research and documentary photography developed in the 1900s, and early visual anthropologists argued against the preference of text over visual media by emphasising the technical advantages of using photos and film to record social practices (Mead and Bateson, 1977). The work of Paulo Freire (2000[1970]) and Augusto Boal (1979), who worked in the poorest urban communities in Central America, are early examples of visual methods being used in participatory action research. Freire gave the underprivileged children in Brazil cheap Brownie cameras to produce images of their daily lives and experiences to document evidence of their conditions. Allain and Harvie (2014) write that Boal believed that “*theatrical action*” has the ability to make a social and political effect on people and that, “*catharsis like carnival, is a device that maintains the status quo and keeps the oppressed passive by encouraging controlled dispersal of ‘steam’ or tension*” (p.33).

Pink (2007) states that modern-day visual interventions are a mixture of the Freirean approaches to participatory action research and are collaborative to image-making. The latter may well include photography, digital media or film. However, more recently, particularly since the increase in visual communication via the Internet as well as that in other digital technology, researchers have adapted collaborative image-making to assist with matters such as community policy interventions.

Banks (2001) points out that in practical terms, participatory visual researchers should be mindful of the many aspects and uses of photos, maps and film. One key way is to consider how they exist as documentary evidence of events and conditions. However, the author points out that

Euro-American society has constructed photography— and in due course, videotape —as a transparent medium, one that unequivocally renders a visual truth; that this is a social construction and not an inevitable technical consequence (2001, p.42).

Although photography is in a sense a powerful form of communication and much can be learnt from it, he cautions that it “*is not merely a neutral document or record of things that took place before the camera, but a ‘representation’ of things, persons, and events intended to explain society and its processes*” (Banks, 2007, pp.12-13, emphasis in original).

Visual images might also be used as prompts to obtain responses. Visual elicitation is a

primary component of digital storytelling, photovoice and participatory filmmaking, and participatory archival research. Some approaches include using interviews or focus groups to discuss images produced, not only by the participants, but also by the researcher, as well as from archives or from popular media. Images may be used to initiate engagement especially with an unfamiliar person since the focus is on the image and not on the participants themselves. Images may also be used to jog the participant's memory (Banks, 2007).

A third point about photos, maps and films is that they are to be regarded as forms of material culture since visual and digital images are considered artefacts of material culture. For example, the size of the image and the comments attached to the image communicate information about the intended audience or display practices. Subjects may feel more comfortable seeing themselves in photographs or, perhaps, videos, but may not feel comfortable seeing themselves in a poster on a large screen (Banks, 2007).

Participatory visual methods are often chosen by researchers to give a voice to the oppressed. The whole process of participatory visual methods gives the participants the opportunity to learn new skills by working with modern technology. This can be empowering. By having access to digital technology or control over images, individuals may gain social capital within their own communities (Gubrium and Harper, 2013).

Lastly, if visual and digital media is to be seen as socially constructed artefacts, we should be self-reflexive. Moreover, it is important that in participatory visual and digital projects, the researcher and the researcher participants take into consideration the basics of visual analysis and self-reflexivity (Gubrium and Harper, 2013). Accordingly, Banks (2001) maintains that “[r]esearchers must ask themselves questions to elucidate the external narrative (*Why does this image exist? Who created it? What is its biography?*) as well as the internal narrative (*What is the image of?*)” (p.114).

Putting the research project into practice

Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out that when designing participatory visual and digital research, the fieldworker should remain “*open and flexible to participants' interests and the realities of the field site*” (p.35). Before fieldwork is carried out, the researcher should be sensitive to the participants and their setting. The more background knowledge the researcher

has before the fieldwork is carried out, the better she or he can plan the research project. “*Clear expectations*” and open lines of communication are essential (p.36). Thus the fieldworkers should discuss issues such as the purpose, methods, the desired audiences, and the anticipated outcome of the project. It is also important that the team have a good idea of the research questions to be explored and then match the questions to the best suited visual method. They should also take into consideration the age of the participants. In my case the communication took place face to face, through email, and in letters to all those who were involved – my supervisors; the head of the Life Orientation department; the Life Orientation teacher; the girls; and their parents. Moreover, as is noted below, the setting was conducive to the use of digital storytelling.

Gubrium and Harper (2013) set out a table to carefully explain how the method of participatory visual and digital should be matched to the project. Below I have extracted the information pertaining to digital storytelling that I found useful to my research project (see Chart 3-1).

Gubrium and Harper (2013) also state that once a workable plan has been designed, a timeline can be created. Participatory projects are not driven by one person so the group should discuss and agree on when each task should be completed. This type of research, however, does need what the authors refer to as a point person and this is often the academic researcher who “*keeps track*” of what is known as the “*big picture*” (p.41). This point person should also bring the team together to return to issues such as adjusting the timeline and reminding them of the goals that were originally set.

Chart 3-1 Digital storytelling: Matching the method to the project (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.38).

Method	Digital storytelling
Types of questions	How is identity socially constructed? What types of stories are told about an event or experience? How are stories received by audiences? How does the workshop process affect participants?
Types of data produced	Life histories, narratives, producer and audience texts
Technology	Computers, editing software, audio recorders, scanners, cameras
Training Requirements	MEDIUM -Ethics -Digital multimedia software
Benefits	Strongly focused on participant’s story, builds technological capacities of participants
Limitations	Time consuming, participant-intensive, workshop size prevents large samples

RESEARCH SETTING

I carried out my research in the high school of an English medium independent girls' school in an affluent area in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Many of the parents of the girls are professionals, such as doctors or medical specialists, pharmacists, attorneys, while some are commercial farmers. The girls – black, so-called coloured, indian, and white – come from different cultural backgrounds.

Many of the girls come from other parts of Africa, such as Botswana, Kenya and Malawi, as well as from other parts of the world like, for example, Mauritius and Dubai. The school has a large, secure campus and a wealth of material resources including information technology, which is housed in three computer rooms, as well as in other parts of the school. Each pupil has access to email and Internet. In addition, a variety of audio and visual teaching aids such as overhead projectors, television sets, video machines and DVD players, and Mimeo/Smart boards attached to a computer can be found in nearly all the classrooms, and are available to the teacher as well as to the learners. It is on the Smart Board that the girls carried out their digital story presentations, but they had spent much of their time working on their digital story creations in one of the three computer rooms.

Positioning myself in the research

Participatory arts-based methodologies are an expanding element of qualitative research with researchers in qualitative research increasingly expected to position themselves in their work. Herr and Anderson (2005) write: *“One’s positionality doesn’t fall into neat categories and this might even shift during the study. Researchers will have to figure out nuances of how they position themselves with regard to the setting and participants”* (p. 32). Throughout the study I was engaged in a number of different roles. First, I was a researcher working with the girls in their digital storytelling project, but I was also a teacher in the same school teaching in the subject area of isiZulu. As noted in chapter 1, it was advantageous for me to carry out research in this school. Studying in this familiar setting as an ‘insider’ rather than an ‘outsider’ was helpful since I had previously taught the girls isiZulu and I already had a good relationship with them. Thus, during this project both the girls and I were at ease considering the fact that the sensitive topic of HIV and AIDS was being addressed, although it was not a topic I had broached with them in the teaching of isiZulu.

However, before the project took place I wrote a letter to both the parents of the girls and the girls (see Appendices 1 C and D at the end of this thesis). The letters informed them of my intention to carry out the research project with the girls and most importantly to obtain consent to use any written, photographic or oral data contained in the digital stories should the need arise. These letters, as well as the letter to the principal of the school were a requirement as stated by the Ethical Board at the University. In addition, I discussed ethical issues which pointed out that anonymity and confidentiality were protected as far as photographs of people were concerned. I suggested that faces in photographs be blocked out. The girls were asked to choose a pseudonym instead of using their names. Lastly, I reminded the girls that they were not obliged to show their digital stories to their peers and that they could withdraw from the project at any time if they wished. The reason for the above was to avoid any coercion that the girls might have felt as far as the research project was concerned.

As a researcher I occupied different roles. During this research project, I had chosen to be an observer and not a facilitator or a teacher. I had anticipated that I would not be offering assistance or advice to the girls with regard to either the content of their stories or the technology. However, this became a difficult act to follow since the girls considered me a teacher first and foremost and they were used to saying “Mrs St John Ward could you please help me” They did not think of me as researcher. There were moments of surprise when the girls did ask for advice and my role shifted to that of a teacher. Since the girls were not familiar with carrying out a project in which they had the space to carry out work in which there were no boundaries, they would ask for example, for me to check to see whether the idea they had for their story was a good one. They would also ask whether they were on the right track with their digital stories or whether that which they were doing was to my liking. Some were keen to show some parts of their stories as they progressed. One or two girls asked me whether I liked the songs they had chosen. A few girls initially battled with using Movie Maker and actually shared their frustration with me and indicated that they had to start their digital stories over again because somehow they had lost what they had already created. A few were unable to marry their story with the music in their digital story and asked for my help. However, on the technical issues I was not able to, so I suggested they ask the teachers in the computer department. The one area where I did not offer any advice at all was on the aesthetics of their work. That was left totally up to each girl. In the end of course, I did end up being a facilitator of sessions as well. Other than obtaining some guidance from the computer staff with the technical aspect of the digital storytelling process, I was the only

facilitator in each of the three classes The Life Orientation teacher was around for the first lesson and then she left the project entirely up to me. I must admit that the training that I had received on digital storytelling, in one of the modules whilst I was reading for my Honours Degree, stood me in good stead. It equipped me to facilitate this research project.

To sum up, I believe that being a teacher in the school, had a positive effect on the outcome of the project because the girls did not perceive me to be a researcher but rather their teacher whom they were used to and comfortable to work with. Moreover, the role of a teacher includes being a facilitator and in this light, I believe too that this would have had a positive effect on the outcome of the project.

Participants

Initially, I worked with all 70 girls from 3 Grade 10 Life Orientation classes. These girls were between 14 and 16 years of age and were from different races and cultures. But then I deemed it necessary to carry out in-depth work with a representative sample of 15 girls (5 from each of the 3 Grade 10 classes) who became my core group, in order to make the project more manageable. Based on the criterion of inclusivity of representatives from each race group, girls were selected to include representatives of all races in the school. These girls formed my core group.

The data collecting process - engaging the girls

I worked closely with the group of adolescent girls in Grade 10 during their Life Orientation lessons. Since I was not the Life Orientation teacher, I liaised with the Head of the Life Orientation department as well as with the Grade 10 teacher to find out whether they would be in the position to accommodate me to carry out the research project. Once I had done this, I followed the necessary steps to obtain written permission from the principal of the high school for me to take the lessons and to carry out this project (see letter to the principal in Appendix 1A). I also obtained ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to carry out this research project (see ethical clearance certificate at the beginning of this thesis on page vi). The time allocated for each lesson according to the timetable is two hours per week per class; the research project took place during these lessons over a period of one term of ten weeks. Thus the project took place during each of the three classes' lessons. The

introductory lesson, the second lesson and the viewing of the digital stories at the end of the project took place in the Life Orientation classroom, but the other lessons took place in the computer rooms since it was necessary to make use of computers to create the digital stories. Given that the girls had access to computers and the digital storytelling programme, they were also permitted to work on their personal computers at home: Movie Maker was loaded onto their computers.

The project was carried out over several phases.

Phase 1: Getting Started

During the first lesson, to motivate the girls before the actual digital storytelling process began, I showed them a huge red ribbon – the symbol or logo of HIV and AIDS. They were then asked the following questions which they answered, in writing, in their journals prior to the commencement of the discussion.

1. What does this ribbon symbolise?
2. What message is it attempting to convey?
3. What do you understand by HIV and AIDS?
4. How has HIV and AIDS affected you?

Introduction to Digital Storytelling

The next step involved the presentation of a digital storytelling workshop. The girls were shown an example of a digital story and then they were expected to produce their own. They were allowed to use cartoons, staged photographs (taken by the girls themselves using their peers at school) or collages to protect the identity of the girls.

This exercise gave the girls an opportunity to “*shared reality of concrete interest*” (Gubrium, 2009, p.186). The Freirian approach, which is explained below, accentuates the transfer of ideas into a physical form. This transfer of knowledge into a physical form provided the participants with the opportunity to confront their experiences in a new way. At the same time, this was a significant way of sharing what is real to them. Wallerstein and Duran (2002) maintain that “*[i]ndividuals must not only be involved in efforts to identify their problems but*

also to engage in conscientisation to analyse the societal context for these problems” (p.42).

The girls were also given guidance on keeping a journal during the project.

Phase 2: The actual process of creating digital storytelling

The process of digital story telling followed in this research study was based on Freire’s (1970) approach. This took place in the next eight lessons.

Step 1: This step enabled the participants to become more familiar with the process of storytelling. A few samples of digital stories were shown and the participants were informed of the seven elements of digital storytelling – point of view; dramatic question; emotional content; voice; music/soundtrack; economy; and pacing (Lambert, 2006). The participants were not only involved in oral activities but they were also involved in written activities that followed the lines of conventional storytelling. Question 3 and 4 from the introductory lesson were used to prompt, firstly the oral activities and then the written activities. The latter included brainstorming the girls’ own ideas onto a piece of paper of what they understood about the issue of HIV and AIDS and how it affected them, if at all. Thereafter the girls were asked to briefly outline the ideas they had for their digital stories. Thus these activities formed the basis for the girls’ first draft of their digital stories. I believe this created a safe and supportive environment during this process.

Step 2: The participants worked on a script, starting with a story circle. The story circle is an oral activity in which a discussion takes place concerning each of the participant’s scripts. The aim behind a story circle is to create a comfortable and safe environment in which the participants can share the first draft of their stories. At this point, they were given the opportunity to discuss the construction of their stories and offer advice to the other participants. They were reassured that all content would be kept confidential. I hoped that this step would give the participants the confidence to tell their stories. I reminded participants that they should not interrupt while a speaker was presenting her story ideas, but said that they could offer positive comments at the end. I did this to encourage them to uphold the ownership of each participant’s story. The same amount of time was granted to each of the participants for presentation and discussion. I urged the participants to bear in mind at all times those seven elements of storytelling while they were listening to the story and when

they were discussing the narrative of the storyteller. This was to allow for positive and constructive support, and to offer them an opportunity to recognise the value of these stories and, therefore, take something positive from them. This was in keeping with Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) belief that storytelling may act as a kind of catharsis.

Mezirow (1990) maintains that this "*learning circle*" which is used by Freire, may be a "*perspective transformation*" (p.9). This process enables us to "*become critically aware*" of how we see our world in terms of our perception, understanding and feelings and then "*reformulating these assumptions*" (p.9). This will affect, in turn, the decisions we make while acting on our new understandings.

Step 3: This step began with a presentation on photography. Since the girls were familiar with taking photographs, the aim of this presentation was to encourage them to think critically about the visual representations they planned to use when they were developing their stories. A tutorial on working with a digital image-editing software program, such as Adobe Photoshop, was also presented. In addition, the participants were taught to download their photographs onto the computer and to modify these photographs for use in the digital story. There was also an opportunity for drawing cartoons. Assistance during this step was obtained from one of the assistants in the computer department.

I assisted the participants in revising their story scripts. During this revision, the feedback received from the other members of the group was taken into account. Thereafter, the girls created storyboards for their digital stories. A storyboard is a visual layout depicting the construction of the story. Each participant was instructed to use a large piece of paper on which to arrange, in linear fashion, the various aspects of her story (see Appendices 4A and 4B). The storyboard representation had to include reference photographs, video clips and scanned photographs as well as to sound/music tracks. Then the girls were given the opportunity to incorporate the music, story titles, other textual features and credits they wished to use in their digital stories.

For the purposes of both privacy and better acoustics, I afforded the participants the opportunity to record a voice-over of their scripts in a separate room or at home. This voice-over, together with the background soundtrack, comprised the audio part of the digital story. However, sadly many girls opted not to make use of voice-over. I believe this was owing to

time constraints. It could also have been because the girls preferred confidentiality when presenting their digital stories to their peers who would immediately have recognised their voices.

Step 4: The final step was based on incorporating Movie Maker into the process of creating digital stories. The participants were taught how to import their materials and how to work with the materials, using this program. During this stage, the participants also edited their stories.

While not a formal step as such in the project, I also invited a speaker from a local NGO to come to talk to the girls about HIV and AIDS. This was because many issues and concerns had been raised in their digital stories. The speaker spent an hour raising issues and answering questions. This proved to be a fruitful exercise because the girls asked many questions pertaining to this topic. In this way they became more informed about HIV and AIDS and many misconceptions about this disease were cleared up.

Step 5: The participants presented their digital stories to other members of the group and with their permission; some of the teachers viewed the digital stories with the girls.

Phase 3: Wrapping up the project

At the end of the project all the girls were required to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix 2). I also conducted informal interviews with the 15 girls in my core group, and these gave me insight into their perspectives and ideas about the project. Denzin (2003) points out that our modern world has become an interview society. Whether interviews are carried out by social researchers, reporters, or anyone else, they have become a universal technique of constructing oneself.

The Data Sources

1. The digital stories: I carefully studied and analysed the digital stories produced by the girls (a total of 70) with an especially close focus on the 15 core group girls. At this point, it should be noted that other than the core group girls, no-one knew who was in the core group. In doing all this, I drew on the methods used by Mitchell (2011) who points out that visual

and audio data (including background music and special effects) needs to be transcribed in order to contribute to what is being told and the interpretation of the material at hand.

Following (Stuart, 2006) I also made use of close-reading strategies as well as Fairclough's (1995) framework for critical analysis (see Fairclough's framework below in Chart 3-3). I also analysed the producers' responses to the digital storytelling activities.

2. Participant Journals: The participants were asked to keep a journal during the project and I used the information collected from the journals as data. Moon (2003) states the emphasis of keeping a journal is to make "*explicit recordings of the learning that occurs*" unlike logs which are used to "*record events as they have happened*" (p.2).

3. Interviews: I conducted informal interviews with mainly the 15 core group girls at various points during the production of the digital stories, and at the end of the process. I carried these out in order to find out more about the how these girls understood the issue of HIV and AIDS; to glean more information from them about the digital storytelling process itself; and to hear about their own ideas for their stories. This formed part of the data collection process.

4. Questionnaires: Each girl was given a questionnaire to complete at the end of the project (see Appendix 2).

5. Audience responses: At the end of the process, the girls were given the opportunity to view each other's digital stories. Two of the participants in the case study group, Zanele and Grace, showed their digital stories to two small groups of learners from poor schools. Zanele and Grace were keen to show these girls their stories since they were part of a peer tutoring initiative that forms part of an outreach programme that is run by our school on Friday afternoons.

After the screening of the digital stories, the girls in the Grade 10 classes as well as visitors were required to give written feedback on how they interpreted the completed products. I wanted to see whether the audience understood the producer's intended message or whether further explanations of the images and narratives were needed (see Appendix 2 for the Grade 10 girls' questions). However, the following questions were asked of the visitors. These were formulated by Zanele and Grace.

1. How did you feel watching the digital story clip?
2. What effect would you say it had on you? (e.g. Did you feel part of the digital story when you were viewing it?)
3. Did you learn anything new?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on about the issue of HIV/AIDS?

6. Researcher's notes/field notes. As the researcher, I was in the position to observe and take brief field notes during the workshop activities on how the participants interacted with each other as well as on the girls' interactions with me. I also wrote down the responses to the informal questions that I asked the girls (particularly those 15 who formed part of the core group) at various times during the lessons as well as after the project had been completed. At the end of each lesson, I reflected on the experiences I had had during the lesson and, following Moon (2003) who points out that reflective diaries (notes) "*are more concerned with demonstrating reflection on an experience*" (p.2), I wrote these down. These notes assisted me in writing up my findings in Chapters 4 and 5.

I outlined above the various sources I used to obtain data. Accordingly, the data I produced, along with that related to the participants' productions, and the producers' responses to the digital storytelling process, as well as the audiences' responses were all analysed to produce the findings of this research project.

ETHICS AND PARTICIPATORY VISUAL AND DIGITAL RESEARCH

For Thomas (1996), "*Ethics refer to the character or conscience of a person in relation to a group*" (p.3). He makes the pertinent point that, as researchers, "*[m]ost of us prefer 'doing right' than wrong but, sometimes it is not easy to determine either what constitutes right conduct or how to do it*" (p. 2). I believe that this is particularly the case when a researcher carries out participatory digital research, so I deemed it necessary to find out more about the ethical issues that participatory visual and digital research hold for a researcher such as myself.

In the study I drew extensively on the work of Gubrium and Harper (2013) based on the recent and comprehensive work they have carried out in this area. However, Gubrium, Hill

and Flicker (2014) point out similar ethical considerations. Gubrium and Harper (2013) state that all participatory and digital research projects require an ethical sequence, although this will vary from project to project. They point out that these include the following:

1. Participation as an ethic

a) *Relationships, reciprocity and representation* Gubrium and Harper (2013), point out that:

Participatory visual methods do offer the potential to disrupt commonly accepted hierarchies between experts, audiences and members of local communities, and present an alternative to standard methods of media circulation, as stories are shared in local, national and global settings and online. (p.46)

This could have, on the one hand, implications for the relationships that the researcher builds with the communities that are being researched. The outcome could be either beneficial or harmful to the participants. On the other hand though, the research project could pose “opportunities for building a more ethical relationship between the research institutions and the communities they study” (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.46). Although research is more within reach with visual and digital technologies than it was with more traditional methods that involved the researcher studying “*subjects*” or participants, researchers and participants in this visual and digital work might be “engaged researchers” taking photographs of social experiences on one day, and on another they might be “research participants” in a focus group discussion of images on a tape. Then there are also the “subjects” of digital media – those who were photographed – and they form another group of participants whose rights and welfare as “*research subjects*” need to be considered (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, pp.46-47).

b) *Research relationships* Gubrium and Harper (2013) maintain that good communication and organisational skills are imperative when one is organising a participatory research project. However, this section overlaps with the information discussed earlier in this chapter under the heading “Putting the research project into practice” so I will not repeat it here.

c) *Process intent as opposed to outcome* The authors assert that within participatory research, participants are told that the process of research gives them voice because the process allows for reflection, healing and empowerment but at the same time, data is collected for the intention of analysis. Therefore researcher-facilitators should be aware that collected data is not purely for the benefit of the researcher or organisations concerned, but rather that it consists of work involving actual humans with feelings, wants and who can give

responses. Data collection should not “*get in the way*” and “*potentially disengage participants in the process*” (p.47). Thus, it should be borne in mind that from the beginning of the project, clear goals should be set “*for supporting the production and sharing of the products*” for the advantage of the participants (and their communities) (p.48). Should there be a need to create products that focus on a particular theme, participants should be informed of this from the beginning and reminded of it throughout the project. Moreover, the participants should be satisfied with their end product, even if they have received the assistance of the researcher-facilitator during the project.

2. Reconciling goals and institutional practices

a) *Consent to participate and release material* The informed consent expectations, such as maintaining confidentiality of participants and, at the same time, remaining transparent in recognising the aims of such a project, could prove to be challenging. Accordingly, obtaining consent to release visual material, for example, via a website or in a public exhibition, differs from obtaining consent to view visual material within a workshop situation or using it from an anonymous position in peer-reviewed publications.

Gubrium and Harper (2013) maintain that when one is considering informed consent, personal and structural aspects of participant consent need to be taken into account. At the point of recruiting participants, the researcher should immediately be transparent about the options for consent-to-release materials. Thereafter, before the actual project begins and data is collected, a discussion on consent to participate should take place. The information passed on by the researcher at this point should enable participants to decide what to say or show or omit in their productions. A final discussion should take place at the end of the project, and only at this stage should the participants be given forms to sign for the release of their material. It is then that the participants will know whether they are comfortable with releasing the information they have included in their project. Moreover, in requesting consent from participants, the following options of release should be taken into account: consent to release materials for educational, research, advocacy, therapeutic, and /or exhibition purposes; or only within the workshop situation; or, finally, consent not given.

The authors indicate that it is important to bear in mind that should a researcher receive funding for the research project, the funder may have expectations as far as producing stories for the public is concerned, thus the process can become complicated. While this was not a

concern in my research, I nonetheless include it here as a potential ethical concern. The researcher needs to take into consideration both the desires of the funder and the participants. Apart from trying to educate the funder, it is important that the researcher always informs the participants of the “*potentially public nature of their productions and the risks and benefits of such public exposure*” (p.50).

b) *(Re)considering confidentiality and the right to own knowledge/ expertise* Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out that the issue of confidentiality in participatory and visual digital research may create ethical issues even if participants do not disclose names. Within small communities, audiences could possibly know or think they know who is being referred to in the productions that are being shown. Perhaps even the stories or experiences that are being used could disclose encounters that members of a community do not wish to share with others.

Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out that since participatory research is based on the notion that the participants are on equal footing with the researchers as far as the ownership of knowledge production is concerned, there are questions that should be asked: What happens to that balance when participants are given pseudonyms or their names are removed from the material that has been produced for the research project? Can the participant take back an authorial role as far as knowledge production is concerned? Who has the right to portray themselves as experts or even to pass on their expertise as knowledge to the public? They assert that the “*key to a reconceptualization of confidentiality in knowledge production, representation and dissemination*” (p.51) can be found in Patricia Hill Collins’s (1998) train of thought that there is a difference between knowledge and wisdom. In her opinion “*knowledge*” has a scholarly role whereas “*wisdom*” lies in the lived experience of ordinary folk (p.51). Her black feminist epistemology places value on peoples’ stories i.e. their lived experience and therefore, pegs wisdom on the same level, if not above knowledge which is considered to be that of a scholastic nature i.e. that which has been taught (Gubrium and Harper, 2013).

Lastly, the authors assert that the concept of confidentiality might also be questioned since people in this modern world are increasingly sharing details of their lives through social media, for example on Facebook and twitter, or by blogging. Researchers should therefore not take for granted that they are in a position to overstep this line.

c) *Training participants in research ethics* Gubrium and Harper (2013) notes that it is a good

idea to begin participatory visual and digital projects with training to focus on the protocol and procedures of the stakeholders. These should include the institutions, funders and researchers, and their supporting institutions.

Gubrium and Harper (2013) also maintain that participatory researchers should treat their subjects according to ethical principles of informed consent. Therefore, when photographs are to be used, anyone who could be easily recognisable should be informed and permission to take a photograph should always be obtained. This can be done by using an oral script or a photo release form, but they warn that this could constrain spontaneity. Moreover, they point out that another option is to blur out the face of the individuals in the photograph. This is the option I encouraged the learners to use in my research project. However, the researcher should ask herself whether this will affect the ethics involved. The authors state that it should be borne in mind that by first seeking permission to use a photograph that is not changed in any way, the researcher respects the privacy of the subject that has been photographed, as well as the artistic ability of the participant. The participant and the subject, therefore, have equal rights to publically portray their experiences and expertise as does the researcher herself.

Ethical discussions should also refer to the power of representation. Accordingly, when one is taking photographs of others for research purposes, it is important to know that the participant has a certain “*representational power*” (Gubrium and Harper, p.54). Here, the participant is given the space over how those being photographed, are portrayed in the photograph but at the same time she should consider carefully how she represents her subjects. Her intentions should also be made clear to her subjects when she is seeking consent to photograph them. The results of how photographs have been taken have a bearing on how diverse audiences may interpret the experiences depicted in the photographs.

3. Presenting findings

Gubrium and Harper (2013) advise that during a digital storytelling workshop there are two points to be considered: the fact that the producer and the subject may not necessarily be the same person and, what occurs when the subject matter that is presented and results in negative stereotype of certain social groups? Accordingly, the themes that arise from stories in which the participants’ own experiences and prejudices are encouraged can lead to the outcome being different to the initial aims of the project. Gready (2010) states that

researchers who are conducting the project, have “*responsibility to the story*” and so there is a possibility that participatory research “*can be used to spread ‘uncivil’ stories [and] create... forms of exclusion and risk...*” (p.180). Therefore, the question arises of who has ownership of the knowledge, and control over representation.

4. The ethics of research products and outcomes

Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out that the modern world with its information technologies and Web 2.0 brings with it another ethical challenge as far as knowledge production, the right to information, and access and control are concerned. They maintain that from this, three ethical standpoints have arisen.

a) *Intellectual property rights* These pertain to inanimate objects that include artistic creations and inventions which, by law, belong to the owner who has exclusive rights to use and swap these. Copyright laws have put restrictions in place on how one can access such property as well as how it can be used and reproduced, even by the owner/author. This has always been a point to heed in academia.

b) *A free culture or open source framework* This has arisen because the intellectual property law and powerful media organisations are in a position to restrict access to information, knowledge and artistic production. This can result in restricting freedom of expression. However, Gubrium and Harper (2013, p.55) point out that “*intellectual production*” is regarded as part of this “*free culture*” framework and producers are inspired to share their work for non-commercial and educational purposes under titles such as “*Copyleft*” and “*Creative commons*” (p. 56). Authors and producers are allowed to retain copyright by allowing more uses than that of traditional copyrights. The “*Open source software*” is a programmers’ movement which is explained thus by open source.com (n.d.):

The term "open source" refers to something that can be modified because its design is publicly accessible. While it originated in the context of computer software development, today the term "open source" designates a set of values—what we call "the open source way". In general, open source projects, products, or initiatives are those that embrace and celebrate open exchange, collaborative participation, rapid prototyping, transparency, meritocracy, and community development. (<http://opensource.com/resources/what-open-source>) (n.p.)

The “*free culture ethic*” is in favour of access to knowledge and cultural production by the general public, while the “*intellectual property rights*” ethic gives individual ownership rights to cultural products for which many may legitimately claim rights, even if their publishers have restricted these rights (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.56).

c) *Indigenous intellectual property rights and ethics emerging from indigenous media*

Internet technologies are forming a part of everyday lives, and participatory projects are including the use of these technologies more and more. However, privacy, confidentiality and representational control pose a challenge. A good example given by the authors is that while it is acceptable for someone to post photographs of oneself involved in unsavoury behaviour on Facebook for example, it is unacceptable for someone to post pictures of others doing so. It is difficult for individuals to keep control of their personal information on the Internet. Although pseudonyms are used in various research projects, it is easy to identify people and places when making use of the Internet.

Lastly, Gubrium and Harper (2013, p.56) point out that information may be considered “*covert*” if research is carried out by using the Internet, for example by analysing blogs or websites by means of a forum. Thus, in light of this type of medium where consent is not always acquired, people may anonymously add material to the site. In my research project it was not a case of adding but rather making use of visual material from the Internet. Berry (2004) argues for “*online*” research to be based on an “*open-source ethics and thus a heterogeneous approach to research ethics that leaves the question of the ontological status of the Internet open*” (p.324).

Ethical issues in my research project

In this section I took up several issues that were raised by Gubrium and Harper (2013). Several of these issues overlap with issues raised by Gubrium, Hill and Flicker (2014). Moreover, The University of KwaZulu-Natal requires all researchers to comply with ethical issues and deal with them according to its stipulations. According to their requirements, I also dealt with those ethical issues.

a) Recruitment and consent to participate

Before carrying out this digital storytelling project, I carefully considered which girls in the school would best fit the project. As mentioned before, I was fortunate that since I taught at

the school in which I planned to carry out the research, I had background knowledge of the participants that I had hoped to involve. Because I teach in the junior school, I reflected on using the Grade 7 girls. However, bearing the topic in mind, I came to the conclusion that these girls were too young to cope with the challenges that might come their way. The challenges included the purpose, the method and the anticipated outcome of the project as well as whether they would be emotionally ready to tackle the topic. I then considered which grade I could use in the high school. I decided that the Grade 10 girls would be most suitable because they were possibly at a vulnerable age where they were perhaps becoming sexually active. Further, I had taught most of these girls before so they were not strangers.

I took the advice of Gubrium and Harper (2013) who point out that good communication and organisation skills are important when one is organising a participatory research project such as digital storytelling. There were no funders to satisfy in this project, but it was imperative that I sought written consent and obtained ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in order to carry out this research project (see Ethical Clearance certificate at the beginning of this thesis). Further, written consent to work in and with the Grade 10 classes was obtained from the principal of the school, the parents, and the girls themselves. In my letters to the stakeholders, I included important issues. These included that the project would take place during the girls' Life Orientation lessons, the topic of the project, and a brief description of what digital storytelling is. Further, I assured confidentiality and anonymity of the girls at all times and that they were at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time if they so wished. The latter, would not jeopardise these girls in any way. Lastly, I asked for permission to use any or all forms of data collected for the purpose of my research, publications and presentations (see Appendices 1 A,B,C and D).

b) Reconciling goals and institutional practices

As a researcher, I deemed it important to remain transparent with the girls at all times. Thus, before embarking on the project and collecting data with the girls themselves, time was taken to once again to discuss important ethical issues. These were discussed so that right from the start the girls could make important decisions on what or whom to include or omit once they were creating their own digital stories. Moreover, in this way the various institutional requirements could be brought to the fore. These included the purpose, the method, the audience and the anticipated outcome of the project as well as. In this case the audience were

to be the other girls in the grade as well as a small group of adolescent girls from other schools.

Additionally, the girls were made aware that any saved confidential information on my computer could be accessed only by the girls on their own computers. Information not stored on the computer was stored in a locked cupboard which is a requirement of the ethics board at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Further, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the girls were told to use pseudonyms instead of their names. They were also told to blank out faces of the girls in staged photographs or other people that may be recognised by others. As Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out, the latter formed part of another group of participant's whose welfare and rights need to be taken into consideration. Examples of how to block out faces were given. These were to either blank them out completely or to use hands, scarves or hats to cover their faces. The girls who chose to use photographs, made use of staged photos. This prevented the possibility of the HIV-positive status of any learner being established or the possibility arising that a girl who is not HIV positive being incorrectly labelled as being infected with the virus. Although, I did not mention the fact that voices could be recognisable when using the voice-over feature of digital storytelling, most of the girls chose not to include this feature in their digital stories. I believe that this was perhaps because they wished to remain anonymous. For me as the researcher-facilitator and for the girls it was important to be fully aware that although the project was about data collection, the process involved dealing with human being who had feelings.

c) Release of material

During the session another important issue was raised. It was the issue of consent-to- release their material for me to use for research purposes or even in publications and presentations should I need to. Further, I pointed out to the girls that should they not wish to show their digital stories to an audience (their peers), they were not obliged to do so and that this would not jeopardise them in any way.

d) Presenting findings and release of material

During the session, two other issues were raised. The one issue was that I would give the participants an opportunity to review the sections of analysis that related to their stories and informal interviews.

WORKING WITH THE DIGITAL STORIES

Gubrium and Harper (2013) observe that a traditional qualitative data collection consists of the interpersonal aspects of the research process in the form of dialogue between the researcher and the participants. However, participatory digital research allows for data analysis and dissemination.

Having gathered a huge amount of research data in a short time, I realised that I was faced with data that was presented for analysis in written, oral, aural and visual forms – digital stories with captions, voiceover, music, images and special effects as well as the journals of the participants (and my own reflective notes) and notes taken while carrying out the informal interviews with the 15 girls in the core group. I therefore took into consideration what the girls had produced, and began by processing and presenting the data in a form that would be easily accessible. These are discussed in more detail below in steps 1-3. A summary of the types of texts found in participatory visual/digital research is shown below in Chart 3-2.

Step 1: I watched all the digital stories produced by the girls (participants) and perused their written and aural information. This included the types of music and special effects used. Mitchell (2011) points out that music and special effects should also be analysed since they also contribute to conveying meaning. Thereafter, I read and noted on large white sheets of paper all the information the girls had written in their journals as well as their reflections, and their answers to the questions I had posed at the beginning and the end of the project. This information was noted under specific headings (see Chart 3-2 on next page). I did to consolidate into one place the various forms of data I had obtained, and to prepare it all for data analysis. This was so that I would have easy access to the data at all times.

During this step, the visual texts, symbols and language used were the focal point. I used these “*primary texts*” (Fiske, 1987, p.108; Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.185) for analysing content and themes, comparing or contrasting the digital stories that centre on similar topics or are produced by similar social groups in order to reveal patterns and differences, as well as shared or contrasting meanings. I heeded the advice of Mitchell (2011) who states that it may be necessary for researchers to “*transcribe*” visual materials before analysing data. The author states that the process is the same as when audio texts are transcribed to determine what is “*said and told*” and “*what is going on*”(p.80).

Chart 3-2 an extract of the consolidation sheet onto which the various forms of data were noted in preparation for the process of data analysis

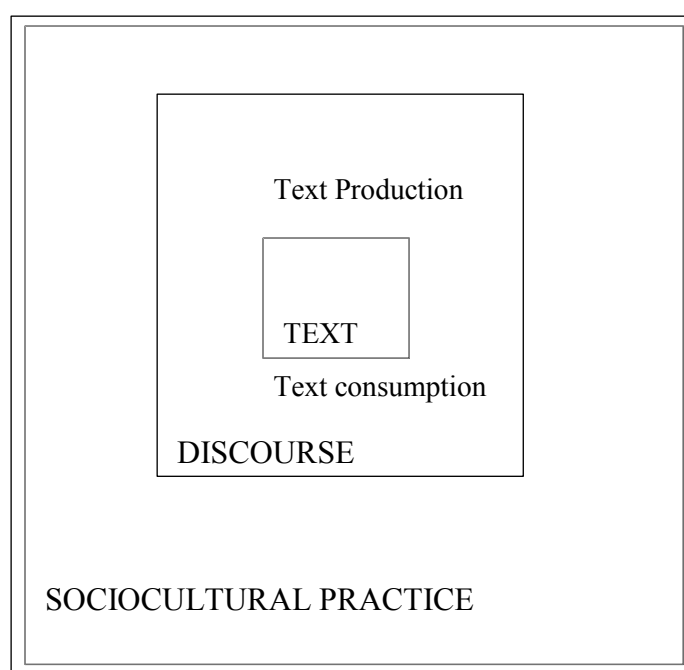
Participant's name		
Participant's pseudonym.	Kelly	Jane
Title of digital story.	HIV/AIDS awareness.	Break the silence.
Summary of digital story.	One can't get HIV and AIDS from hugging, holding hands, using the same gym equipment. Have yourself tested to know your status. Have faith and hope.	Shows the effects of unprotected sex.
Type of drawing used in the digital story.	Internet pictures.	Stick figures using a drawing computer program called Clip Art.
Type of music used in the digital story.	"Paradise" by Coldplay.	The instrumental version of "The Dog Days are Over" by Florence and the Machine.
What does the red ribbon symbolise?	Be aware of HIV and AIDS!	The ribbon symbolises hope for a cure to be found.
What message is it attempting to send out?	Not answered.	It acknowledges all people affected by HIV and AIDS worldwide.
How do you understand HIV and AIDS?	I do not know much about it except that it is a terrible sickness with no cure.	It is spread through exchange of body fluids, damaging the body's immune system.
How has HIV and AIDS affected you?	I have not been affected by it.	It has not affected me personally but it impacts all our lives.
How did you feel about making your own digital story?	It was tough to get started because there were no guidelines but as I progressed it became enjoyable.	I initially found it difficult because I battled to think of and choose an idea, but as soon as I found one it was fun and informative.
Tell the idea behind your digital story?	To create awareness by being factual.	It shows the effect of unprotected sex which can affect unborn children and break up families.
Describe your feelings about you digital story & the main character in your digital story.	I had no main character but felt sorrow and sympathy for affected people.	HIV positive woman passes on the virus to her husband and her baby. Their lives are all ruined. Upsetting and horrible to deal with this issue.
Describe your feeling while watching the digital stories of your peers.	Upset and sad. I also felt disappointed in myself for judging others who are HIV positive.	I learnt more as they covered other aspects of HIV and AIDS.
Which of your peers' digital stories had the most meaning for you?	None in particular. The digital stories that were real to life showing that old and young can be infected, had the most meaning.	The digital story that showed that even girls at my school can be infected. Bad that the reality is that even your friend can judge you rather than support you.
Learner's reflections on the digital storytelling project.	I was not very sure what I was to do in the beginning when the task was given to me, but it soon became clearer. I also learned some more technical skills.	I liked it as you could cover any aspect of the topic.
Other than your peers, who else would you show your digital story to?	Anyone who would like to watch it.	Uneducated children who do not know about the disease.
Was the project worthwhile? Why?-	I learnt a lot. It was a good change as we don't usually get a project like this where our own opinion is used. There is no right or wrong.	Yes it was worthwhile but it was lots of work to create so many pictures.
Should this project be carried out next year with Grade10s? If so, why?	Yes, because many of us do not know or understand the issue of HIV and AIDS.	Yes. New ideas will come out and they will be educated about the disease in greater detail.

Key: **Digital Stories**
Initial Questions
Final questions asked



Likewise, at this stage, and throughout the process of analysing the data, I drew on the close-reading strategies explained by Stuart (2006), who was inspired by Norman Fairclough's (1995) framework. Fairclough's framework for critical analysis of media discourse homes into, as Stuart (2006) correctly asserts "*the constructedness of texts and their links with other texts, discourses and socio-cultural practices*" (p.34). (See Chart 3-3 below).

Chart 3-3 Fairclough's framework for critical analysis (Fairclough, 1995, p.59)



It is interesting to note, that while his earlier work is based on language, Fairclough (2003) points out that although, "*to act and interact*" basically requires speaking or writing, communication is not just about language. Accordingly, Fairclough (2012) asserts that analysing of texts incorporates "*interdiscursive*" analysis of how genre, discourses and styles are expressed together, and at the level of social practises, resulting in "*hybridity*" or "*mixing of categories*" (p.457). Moreover, Fairclough (2012) agrees with Kress and van Leeuwen (2000) who assert that, included in the analysis of texts is not only linguistic analysis but also the semiotic analysis of visual images. For semiotics, these texts are typically "*multimodal*". However, Fairclough (2012, p.455) maintains that as part of a social activity, semiosis is comprised of genres, which are different ways of "*(inter)acting*" in their particular "*semiotic aspect*". It is also comprised of discourses that are different ways of representing social life as well as styles, which are ways of being. Accordingly, multimodal texts bring together visual

and verbal elements to express narratives (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994). Critically, as highlighted by Jewitt (2014) in the previous chapter in relation to studying the digital through multimodality research, the application of multimodality to digital texts (including digital storytelling) remains an understudied area. As I describe in Chapter 4, the inclusion of a multimodal analysis to talk about the digital stories complemented other close reading techniques.

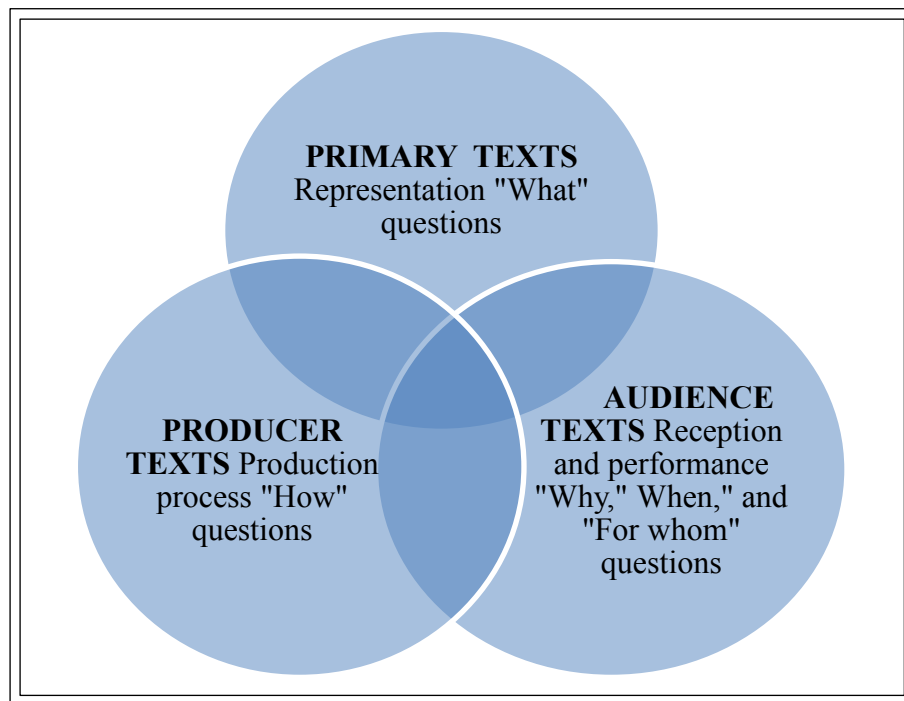
Step 2: This step involved working with the “*production texts*” or how the participants involved in the process describe the research project (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.185). These production texts were taken from the girls’ reflections during the project, from answers obtained to the questionnaire given to the girls at the end of the project, and from interviews which I had collected during the research process. The information gleaned from this data was also noted on the large piece of paper. The field notes¹⁰ in which I had documented information during the various stages of the project were also taken into consideration.

Step 3: This step involved the “*audience texts*” (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.185). The data collected centred on how individuals responded to their peers’ digital stories while they were viewing them. However, I envisaged that the audience texts in my case would pose a challenge for me because I was actively engaged in the event. In order to overcome this, I obtained assistance from two other teachers to document audience responses. The audiences’ responses were also noted on the large piece of paper. The diagram on the next page shows, in a nutshell, which questions each text stands for and therefore the importance of each type of text and that each forms part of a whole process of data analysis.

¹⁰ Field notes, 26 June, 2012

Chart 3-4 Types of data in participatory visual/ digital research

(Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.185)



Step 4: It is of paramount importance for me to answer my research question regarding the trustworthiness of my findings. To do this, I saw the need to triangulate the types of data I was dealing with. Thus I took the three texts that provided me with rich materials for analysing content, themes, narratives, and social interactions. Additionally, by comparing the responses of the participants to those of the audience, any factual inconsistencies and conflicting differences were exposed. Buckingham (2012, p.98) indicates that these texts make up “*the magic triangle*” of cultural readings. I believe that in this way I increased the trustworthiness of my findings which will be presented in the following two chapters.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION OF DIGITAL STORIES FOR TERM MARKS

Although I did not intend to assess or evaluate the work of the girls by giving them marks for their digital stories, after the second lesson the Life Orientation teacher mentioned that since the project would take most of the term she would have no other means of obtaining marks for their term reports. I was therefore obliged to work out and present an evaluation and assessment framework to the girls for their digital stories.

Boase (2008) maintains that if digital storytelling is used for learning, there needs to be a “*workable means of assessment*” (p.11). Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out that Otañez gives his students a grading rubric which specifies how their projects will be assessed. Moreover, Lowenthal (2009) asserts that when they are assessing digital stories, educators need to be mindful of the complexities that may arise in assessing the work of students that might be of an emotional nature or that they might have assisted in co-authoring.

There are certain practitioners who concentrate on analysing the stories themselves for proof of learner reflection, although some writers, including Ohler (2006), Moon (1999), and Mc Drury and Alterio (2002), use the proof of the procedures as they happen. However, Boase (2008) states:

Of course, an unresolved issue with all of these methods is that they minimise the importance of subject content as opposed to student reflections on subject content or the process of learning that subject content. (p.14)

Although I anticipated examining all angles of the digital storytelling process, I focused particularly on evaluating the subject content rather than the linguistic ability of the participants, as well as their reflections. It was imperative that I used an assessment tool that would cover all my requirements.

I decided to use some parts of the evaluation assessment framework (Draft 2 v) from Gloucestershire University (n.d.) and adapt other parts, because I believe it best fitted the needs of this project. Jason Ohler’s (n.d.) digital storytelling traits were also included in my evaluation and assessment framework (see Chart 3-6 below, numbers 1.B., 3, 4, and 5). Embedded in these traits are seven elements of digital storytelling: point of view; dramatic question; the gift of your voice; emotional content; voice; music/soundtrack; economy; and pacing (Lambert, 2007, p.9; see, also, Robin, 2008).

As is apparent in Chart 3-6, number 1.A. consists of the questions that I asked at the beginning of the first lesson with each of the Grade 10 classes. Moon’s (1999) map of learning was also included in the evaluation and assessment framework of which I made use (see Chart 3-6 below, number 2. Story (details)). Moon (1999) works on five stages of learning. These have been included in my Evaluation and Assessment Framework – Grade 10

(see Chart 3-6 below). These include: 1) *Noticing* is the first stage of learning. Here the cognitive structure assists the learner to notice what is to be learnt. At this point factors such as attitude, motivation and emotion play a vital role. 2) *Making sense* is the second stage of learning. At this stage, previous knowledge is set aside and the learner attempts to make sense of the new material by trying to organise it, and then construct ideas. 3) *Making meaning* is the third stage of learning. At this stage, new material is assimilated into the cognitive structure. This material is linked to what the learner already knows, and new meaning is made. 4) *Working with meaning* is the fourth stage of learning. At this stage, the cognitive structure includes material which the learner has learnt but is not required to think further about, and to reflect. Moon (1999) refers to this as being “*manipulation of meaningful knowledge to a specified end*” (p.144). Therefore construction of meaning involves a personal process. 5) *Transformative learning* is the final stage of learning. At this stage the cognitive structure is used significantly, and the learner is able to evaluate her own standpoint against the knowledge of others.

Moon (1999) considers another aspect that is linked to thinking and learning, and that is reflection. Moon states:

While reflection as a term is not used much to describe processes of self-development, that reflection facilitates development and growth of a person is assumed.... Reflection could be seen as a tool that facilitates personal learning towards the outcome of personal development – which ultimately leads to empowerment and emancipation. (p.88)

Moreover, Moon asserts that reflection “*is a mental process with purpose and/or outcome that is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas for which there is no obvious solution*” (p.152) and that reflection works better at the higher stages of learning: meaning making; working with meaning; and transformative learning. The author also maintains that there are three areas in which reflection is involved.

- 1) It is involved in new learning, owing to thinking being restructured, particularly at the stage of making meaning. However, the latter involves critical synopsis.
- 2) It is involved at higher stages of learning where working with meaning has been directed in such a way that there is progression in learning.
- 3) It is involved in the situation where there has been progress in learning.

Chart 3-5 Evaluation and assessment framework for Digital Storytelling

Grade 10

1. Project planning TOTAL: 20	<p>A. Evidence that the students have answered questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the red ribbon symbolise? 2. What message is it attempting to send out? 3. a) How do you understand HIV and AIDS? b) How has HIV and AIDS affected you? <p>(Number 3 above is the dramatic question)</p> <p>B. Evidence that students have used a story map, board or other planning method that helped them to think about how they would plan their story.</p>
2. Story (detail) TOTAL: 30	<p>The success of the story is dependent on the different levels which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noticing. 2. Making sense. 3. Meaning making which includes an appropriate title for your story. 4. Working with meaning in that the dramatic question has been answered. 5. Transformative learning has taken place.
3. Media application Literacies Technical delivery Flow, organisation and pacing Creativity and originality TOTAL: 30	<p>Was the use of media appropriate, supportive of the story, balanced and well considered? Were relevant images selected that supported and emphasised the story?</p> <p>Performance and presentation. Recognising the blend of digital, oral and written literacies in the presentation of the digital story, including quality of presentation and delivery.</p> <p>Recognition of a clear but appropriate level of technical delivery and presentation of the digital story including length of story, use of music and sound quality.</p> <p>Was the story well organised? Did it flow well, moving from part to part without bumps or disorientation?</p> <p>Evidence of creativity and originality from the student.</p>
4. Citations and permission TOTAL: 10	<p>Has everything that is not original been credited? Have permissions been obtained where necessary? (This includes the letter of permission from both you and your parents). Do citations appear in the format required?</p>
5. Academic understanding TOTAL: 10	<p>How well did the student meet the academic goals of the assignment and convey an understanding of the material addressed?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL: 100</p>

(Adapted and taken from the Evaluation and Assessment Framework Draft 2 v from the University of Gloucestershire, [Electronic Version]. Retrieved 25 April, 2012 from <http://www.digitalstorytellingsynthesis.pbworks.com/Assessment-criteria-for-digital-s>)

Addressing trustworthiness

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was important for me to triangulate the types of data I was dealing with in order to increase the trustworthiness of my findings. However, I believe that trustworthiness validity and reliability go hand in hand in order to reach the goals of

qualitative inquiry. Henning et al. (2004) maintain that “finding out whether, for example, an observation is “*valid*” is to ask other people – especially the research participants” (p.149). Moreover, Guba and Lincoln (2005) point out that an issue concerning validity has to do with the method and the interpretation being “*conflated*” (p.149). Postmodernists maintain that no single method can result in the delivery of the complete truth. For this reason, in my project I did not make use of digital storytelling only as a method of collecting data but I also made use of informal interviews with some of the girls as they developed their digital stories. In addition, I used the data that I collected from the questions which I asked in the introductory lessons. Additionally, I used data obtained from the internal audience who viewed all 70 digital stories as well as from the audience who were from outside our school. The data obtained from the girls’ journals and the questionnaires that they completed at the end of the project, were also used. I also kept notes. Pascarella (2009) writes that these data collection methods allowed him “*to access and examine the multiple layers of the meaning-making process students underwent*” (p.130) as they participated in this project. As Guba and Lincoln (2005) point out,

Social scientists concerned with the expansion of what count as social data rely increasingly on the experiential, the embodied, the emotive qualities of human experience that contribute to the narrative quality of life. (p.205)

This study relied on all aspects of the data produced by the girls, all of which had rich narrative qualities for analysis.

The Norwegian author Kvale (2002) says, about research, that

tension has moved to the relation between meanings and acts, between interpretation and action. When the dichotomy between facts and values is abandoned, aesthetics and ethics come into the foreground. When knowledge is no longer the mere reflection of an objectivity reality, but the construction of a social reality, the beauty and the use value of the constructed knowledge comes into the foreground. (p.307)

I agree with Pascarella (2009) who defines validity “*as deploying a variety of research methods to elicit data that produced sufficiently authentic findings, findings that included the*

inferences and observations of my participants” (p.131). As a result of the rich data that was authentic findings that will be discussed in the next two chapters.

SUMMARY

In this chapter the Methodology and Methods of the research were discussed. The work of several authors illuminated many important issues for me. These included the ethical constraints of a research project as well as the limitations and challenges a researcher, such as myself, is faced when carrying out participatory visual research such as digital storytelling. In the next two chapters I discuss, in depth, the digital stories of the core study group and their responses to the follow-up questionnaire. Where I deem it necessary, I include the responses of the other girls in the large group. I highlight the themes that emerged from this project and I discuss the responses of the producers to the project. Lastly, I discuss the audience's texts.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: PART 1 THE DIGITAL STORIES

Each of us, as an individual entity, has many ways of seeing events, many ways of reading texts. We can no longer be limited to one point of view or even one point of viewing. We are now aided by emerging tools that enable us to understand events from many perspectives, to see many sides of a story. (Goldman-Segall, 1998, p.4)

In this chapter I engage in the analysis and the findings of the data obtained from the digital storytelling research project that was carried out with the Grade 10 girls. Although I will attempt to analyse the data as thoroughly as possible, I am reminded of the story the well-known anthropologist Geertz tells.

There is an Indian story – at least I heard it as an Indian story – about an Englishman who, having been told that the world rested on a platform which rested on the back of an Elephant which rested in turn on the back of a turtle asked, what did the turtles rest on? Another turtle. And that turtle? Ah, Sanib, after that it is turtles all the way down. (cited in Goldman-Segall 1998, p.257)

This story is used by Geertz to refer to the “*incomplete nature of any form of cultural analysis*” (cited in Goldman Segall, 1998, p.257). In my view, making meaning of digital stories is not that different. No matter how well we think we have described a story or have tried to interpret it, there is always another turtle resting on another turtle’s back.

In this chapter I give an in-depth account of the digital stories of the core group as well as their responses to the follow up questionnaire. Where necessary, I will include the responses of the other girls. I draw attention to the themes that emerged from the girls’ digital stories. An overall reading of the introductory questions about the AIDS ribbon will be given. Where applicable I will also make use of my field notes. Lastly, I will reflect on multimodality and convergence culture in the light of this project.

WORKING WITH THE DATA

As I began to work with the data of my research project, I felt that I was in a quandary similar

to the one Stuart (2006) describes when she writes: *“I was faced with the dilemma of how I could or should represent the data in a manner that shows how I reach my conclusions and yet still provides the reader with data that can ‘speak for itself’”* (pp.89 -89). As noted in Chapter 3, I had managed to consolidate a great deal of the data on large sheets of paper (see Chapter 3 Figure 3-3 for an extract of the consolidation sheet onto which the various forms of data were noted in preparation for the process of data analysis). As Stuart did, I went back to my research questions and objectives to ask myself what could be learnt from the representations of how Grade 10 girls, in an elite school, using digital storytelling, understand HIV and AIDS.

My analysis was divided into three parts i.e. analysing the primary texts, the producer’s texts and the audience’s texts (Mitchell, 2011 cited in Gubrium and Harper, p.185). I began with reading the primary texts which will be dealt with in this chapter. Here I dealt with the actual digital stories and the producers’ understanding of HIV and AIDS. In order to do this, I needed to take into consideration *“that every text should be considered as coming from the author’s particular individual, social and cultural position”* (Stuart, 2006, p.34). Moreover, it was important that I interpreted the *“intertextual linking of texts”* (p.94) that Fairclough (2012) maintains, includes *“interdiscursive”* (p.457) analysis of how genre, discourses and styles are expressed together. In other words, it was not only the written word that would be taken into consideration for meaning making, but the visual and aural aspects would also be analysed since these are just as important in finding out how the girls understood the topic.

15 CASES

Although a total of 70 girls participated in this project, 15 girls formed a core group: Jane, Charlotte, Thembekile, Sasha, Catherine, Molly, Isabel May, Sally, Summer, Bonnie, Hollow, Annabelle, Zanele, Nandi, and Grace. My only criterion was to include girls from all the races represented in the school demographic when I chose five girls from each of the three classes. At the beginning of the first phase, before the actual digital storytelling process was explained, I presented all the girls in each of the three classes with four questions, beginning with a question that revolved around the red HIV and AIDS logo which is used in South Africa. Stuart (2006) asserts that people’s impressions can be obtained through their understanding of popular cultures, and logos as cultural texts in and of themselves. The red ribbon is one such text.

I posed the following questions to the girls. Their responses were written in their journals.

- 1) What does this ribbon symbolise?
- 2) What message do you think it is attempting to send out?
- 3) How do you understand HIV and AIDS?
- 4) How has HIV and AIDS affected you?

These questions became part of a prompt of sorts, for the girls to embark upon thinking about producing their digital stories.

While looking at the responses to the first question, “What does this ribbon symbolise?” I noticed that all the girls made explicit reference to HIV and AIDS or to AIDS. It was obvious that the girls positioned themselves from different stances when writing down the answer to this question. I became aware that several powerful verbs were used to describe this symbol or logo. From one stance some of the girls wrote with a more aggressive or angry slant to their understanding of the logo because they used militaristic verbs that refer to fighting. (It is important to note that I have not edited the responses of my participants; I offer them verbatim.) Charlotte wrote, *“The ribbon symbolises the fight against HIV/AIDS”*. Thembekile stated, *“Wearing the ribbon is also the first step to fighting against the disease”*. Zanele said, *“It symbolises HIV/AIDS and how we must all work together in fighting HIV/AIDS”*. This metaphor of war or battle indicated to me that these girls saw HIV and AIDS as a dangerous and threatening foe that needs to be vanquished. Further, it could be contextualised in terms of what they had heard in the media. However, it is interesting to note that in their terminology guide, UNAIDS (2011, p.11) encourages a move away from the militaristic tone by avoiding the use of words such as *“fight”*.

Verbs related to struggling were also used and this suggests that it is not an easy task to deal with HIV and AIDS. Summer wrote, *“It symbolizes Aids and represents the struggle that people go through”*. Hollow said, *“The HIV/AIDS red ribbon symbolises the struggle of this disease”*.

However, almost half of the girls focused on awareness of HIV and AIDS and suggested that we should be conscious of the disease. Sasha, Isabel May and Annabelle wrote, *“The ribbon symbolises awareness”*. Similarly, Thembekile said, *“The HIV/AIDS ribbon symbolises that*

we are aware of HIV/AIDS". Molly stated, "The HIV/AIDS ribbon is to show awareness – like a siren almost, to show awareness/ a warning sign".

Others approached it from a more empathetic view and said that we must acknowledge people who are infected or affected, and should show compassion and concern for them. We should also care for and support them. Jane wrote, *"It is an acknowledgement of all people affected by HIV/AIDS worldwide"*. Catherine stated, *"The red ribbon symbolises the support of those affected by Aids and support for progress in finding a treatment and a cure"*. Bonnie said, *"It is a symbol of sadness but also of hope, because it shows people living with Aids that people are supporting them"*.

Then there was a more positive view of the hope for a cure or vaccine. Jane wrote, *"It is also a symbol of hope that a cure will be found, and that a vaccine will prevent those living with the disease from further suffering"*. Catherine said, *"The red ribbon symbolises the support of those affected by Aids and support for progress in finding a treatment and a cure"*. Summer noted, *"It is a symbol ... of hope, because it shows people living with Aids that people are supporting them"*. Summer went on to say that the ribbon *"...commemorates those who have died from Aids"*. Two of the core group girls did not elaborate but merely wrote that the ribbon symbolises HIV and AIDS.

The second question was, "What message do you think it is attempting to send out?" As I read these responses to the second question I was interested to note that they seemed to mirror the responses the girls had written in response to the first questions. However, there were some interesting opinions as to what message the red ribbon is attempting to send out. In Charlotte's view, *"The red ribbon is famous so it warns people about HIV/AIDS and is a constant reminder of what some people are going through. The ribbon is red so it gets attention which makes it more effective in making people aware of the problem"*. Thembekile said, *"The message it is also sending out is that HIV/AIDS infected people are also humans just like normal human beings and we shouldn't make them feel uncomfortable but make them feel special"*. Sasha proclaimed, *"They [people] should also not be prejudiced against infected people because they are human too and have feelings. We should not ostracise them but accept them and support them"*. Summer wrote, *"I think it is red because red symbolizes blood, and many people die, but red is also vibrant and happy, and it has hope and tells*

people with Aids that people are supporting them”.

The responses to the third question, which was, “How do you understand HIV and AIDS?” were interesting and varied. Two of the girls’ responses explained what HIV and AIDS really are in their opinion. Jane explained:

HIV is a human immunodeficiency virus, which is spread through the exchange of body fluids, and it damages the body’s immune system, AIDs is acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and is the progresses state of HIV infection. There is no cure for HIV or AIDs but it is preventable!

Thembekile wrote:

In my opinion HIV means that a person was infected through blood transfusions or sexual contact. HIV is a disease that infects the immune system and if you take your ARVs regularly you can still live a long life although if you are infected with another disease such as TB then you have less chance of living. To me, HIV is a death sentence even though you can still live a long life but you have to live with it for the rest of your life. HIV seems like a dark cloud around your head that you cannot get rid of.

As has been noted, Thembekile also drew attention to the possibility of contracting HIV and AIDS through sexual intercourse. Three other girls also mentioned this fact. This constitutes nearly one third of the core group. Sally said the virus can be transmitted “*through sexual connection*”. Nandi said, “*What I understand about HIV/AIDS is that you get infected mostly through sex and it is really up to you whether you want to have sex without a condom or to have sex without knowing your partner’s status*”. Grace wrote, “*I understand it is a disease that is transferred by contact through blood and sexual contact with someone that has the virus*”. I asked myself here if this was evidence that these girls were at an age at which being sexually active was possible or likely.

Grace, Jane and Thembekile mentioned that HIV and AIDS are contracted through blood. They also made mention of the fact that the disease is transmitted through bodily fluids. Sally mentioned that “*many people can transmit the virus through sharing needles, and cuts and sores rubbing against each other*”. Summer and Nandi homed into the notion of

contracting HIV and AIDS because of being raped and they made mention, too, of innocent babies being infected. Nandi said, *“In some cases you are born with it and some cases it’s through rape”*. Summer wrote:

It also makes me sad because some babies are born with it and suffer the consequences even though it is not their fault. The thing that upsets me most is the raping part, because most of the time that is completely out of that person’s hand. It is someone doing something terrible to someone else and it is completely unfair.

The tone of Summer’s response was on one hand, indicative of her anger but, on the other, of fear that this might happen to her; she added, *“It makes me scared of getting it too”*.

Three girls spoke of the disease being a problem of the impoverished, of those who lack education on this issue, of an uncaring attitude; of being unaware; or of making bad decisions. Zanele said, *“I see HIV/AIDS to be a problem mainly for people that are not educated about the virus I feel as though HIV/AIDS is easy to spread because people just do not care and some people are unaware”*. Annabelle stated, *“I see HIV/AIDS mainly spread in third world countries, places where sex education is not available, where people are not aware of the consequences of spreading the virus”*. For Sasha,

[o]ften the poor communities, where people are not educated on the subject of HIV/ Aids, think they do not die of Aids but of Tuberculosis or influenza for example. This is because they are not actually aware that HIV /Aids has actually weakened their immune system and made them vulnerable to other diseases.

Two girls mentioned that HIV and AIDS are spreading amongst all. Catherine said, *“HIV/AIDS does not discriminate”*. Sally wrote, *“It is a virus that can be transmitted to anyone, any colour, any person”*. However, one of the other girls, Jaynie, responded with the following interesting comment which clearly highlights her lack of knowledge and naivety of the issue of HIV and AIDS. She wrote, *“Aids is not curable. It was started by gay men and spread fast among the uneducated because they’re unaware”*. In her response to this question, Sasha included reference to hope: *“Once you are infected you cannot be cured. However, you can take anti-retro virals every day to help you live a longer life”*.

The fourth question was, “How has HIV and AIDS affected you? I believe this question was rather a personal one and I expected many girls not to answer it. Only one of the core group girls, Grace, did not respond to this question and I respect her stance on that. However, most of the girls including Jane, Sasha, Charlotte, Catherine, Molly, Isabel May, Sally, Summer, Bonnie, Hollow and Zanele responded by saying that they had not been directly affected by HIV and AIDS although Sasha added, *“I only know of a friend’s maid who has HIV/Aids”*. It is possible that, to a certain degree, she is distancing herself from the issue of HIV and AIDS. Hollow wrote, *“HIV/AIDS has not affected me physically but emotionally. It is a disease that has taken so many lives and it depresses me that there is no cure but people slowly just get weaker and weaker in this time of struggle”*. Annabelle said, *“HIV/AIDS has not affected me much, to be honest. I am lucky for that”*. One of the other girls in the grade, Nicci, stated, *“Being a white female living in a ‘higher economic class’ HIV and AIDS has not affected my personal life”*. Each of these statements seemed to me to be coming from someone who is aloof, detached and thankful not to be one of those who are affected or infected. Yet another of the core group girls, Bonnie, said, *“I am blessed in that where I come from HIV/Aids is seldom heard about in the surrounding communities unless it is a rumour or a folktale”*. Another girl, Rose, who was not part of the core group had an interesting response. She said: *“the topic had no relivents to my life”*. I believe these responses highlight the fact that these girls had never been directly subjected to any real consideration of HIV and AIDS and therefore it is not a pressing issue for them. Perhaps they were even distancing themselves from the issue or perhaps they were displaying total ignorance at this point. However, two girls in the core group, Thembekile and Nandi, as well as seven other girls in the grade, admitted to having been directly affected by HIV and AIDS. Thembekile wrote:

HIV/AIDS has really affected me because recently a family member died of HIV. He had HIV and also got stomach sores and that is how he died. When that happened it really opened my eyes about HIV and how serious it is. HIV has opened my eyes to the real world because as school children, we are naïve about such and that we need to be more aware of the world around us.

Nandi wrote:

HIV/AIDS has affected me through a family member. My uncle had aids so I had to watch him suffer every day of his life. I had to watch him beg to die rather than to suffer. He lost a lot of

weight, he could not go to the toilet, he couldn't talk, he could not eat! And he couldn't do anything about it. That affected me and made me realise that Aids is not a good thing and it's scary. Seeing him die was the worst.

Reading these two girls' responses, Jane said that she is very "*cautious and responsible*" when interacting with others and I get the impression it is out of fear of contracting HIV. Molly never directly answered the question, but there seems to be a sense of urgency or even panic in her writing when she says, "*...so that the disease does not dominate our community*".

Taken as a whole, these responses set the stage for the presentation of descriptions of each digital story from each of the 15 girls who formed the core group. As I have already indicated, these girls are between 14 and 16 years of age. I have attempted to describe each of the digital stories and I have included, from the final questionnaire, the girl's written responses to question 2, which was: "Please tell me the idea behind your digital story?" and to question 3, which was: "Describe your feelings about your digital story. How did you actually feel while you were creating/developing your digital story?" I believe these responses will add value to the findings.

PRIMARY TEXTS

I work with the digital stories in three ways in this chapter. In the first section I present the 15 digital stories produced by the 15 girls in the core group. For each, I offer a description along with some of the images. In so doing, I give an overview of the types of stories produced. In the second section I turn to the work of Kress and others to provide a multimodal analysis of each of the core group stories. In the third section I go on to look at the themes that emerged across all 70 stories.

Section One: Looking into the digital stories

This is the dropbox link to all 15 stories produced by the members of the core group.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xikihsb9oceyr7d/AADrRsu3ba6BBiKGhoqcwrzea?dl=0>

Case 1, Jane's story

The title of Jane's story is *Break the Silence*. Using Clip Art, a computer programme, Jane drew simple stick figures and coloured them. The figures, all of which move during the digital story, were placed on a plain white background. Her story begins with an image of the red HIV and AIDS ribbon on top of a globe of the world. This immediately draws attention to the fact that this disease is a world-wide problem, and it alerts us to the issue under discussion.

The next scenes focus on a woman who has a one night stand with an HIV-positive man. His status is depicted by a thought bubble in which there is a red ribbon accompanied by a black plus sign. The fact that sexual intercourse has taken place is shown by a closed brown door from which little red hearts are reflected. Three months later the woman meets another man. They fall in love and they marry. This is depicted by the man going down on his knees with a red box in his hand. In this slide Jane depicts the innocence of a faithful partner who unwittingly entering into a relationship with a woman whose HIV status is unknown to him.

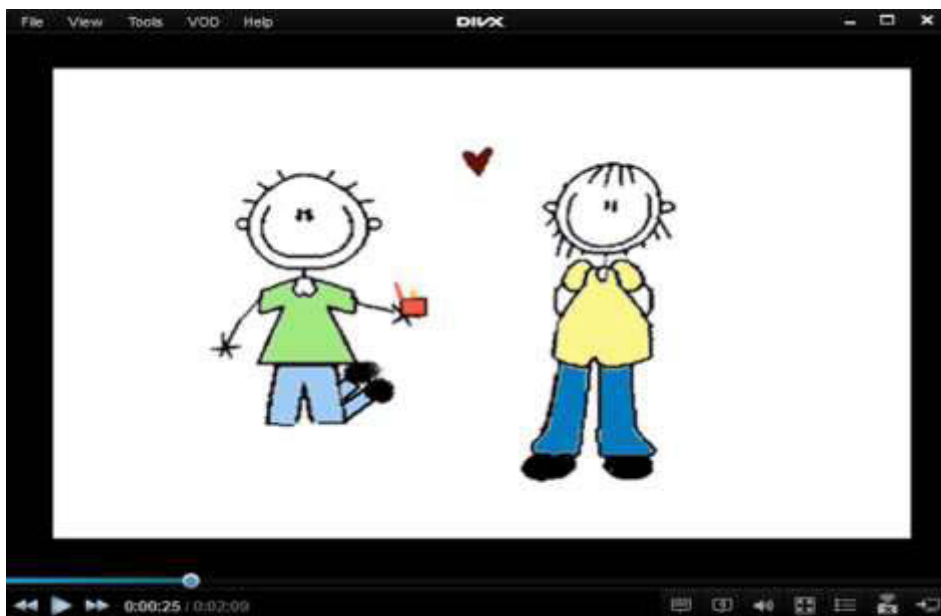


Figure 1

The following scene shows a sparkling ring on her finger. Small hearts are drawn on the pages to depict love and happiness.

Soon she falls pregnant and they have a baby. It is interesting to note in Figure 2 below that

the producer drew the pregnant mother facing away from her husband as if she is concealing something from him.



Figure 2

The baby becomes ill and they take it to the doctor.

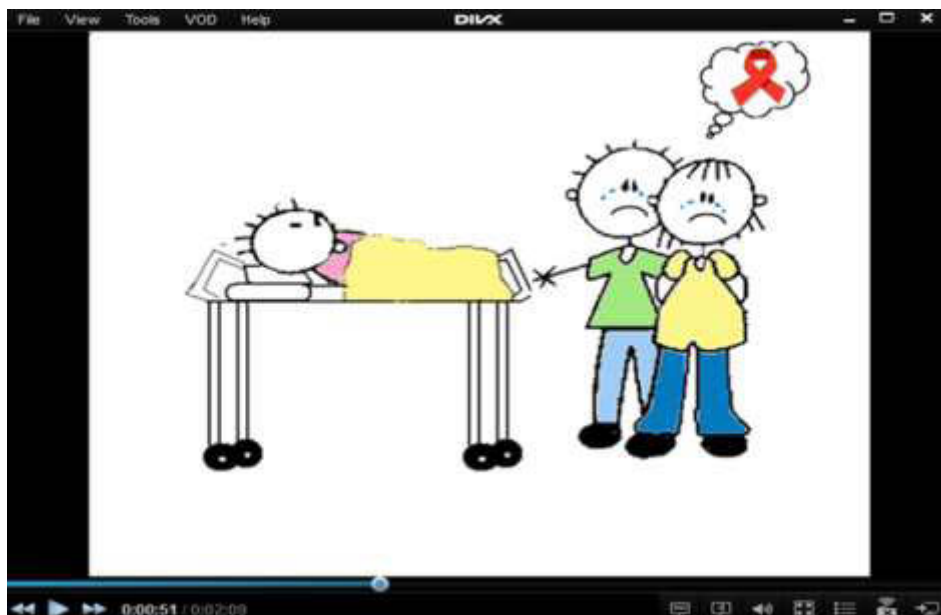


Figure 3

The doctor confirms the husband's suspicions that it could be HIV. As can be seen in the slide in Figure 3 there is a red HIV and AIDS ribbon in the father's thought bubble. The parents' sadness is depicted by blue teardrops rolling down their cheeks. In this slide Jane depicts the hurt and anguish HIV and AIDS causes a family to go through. Then a tombstone,

on which R.I.P. is engraved, depicts the baby's death. Next, the mother falls ill. The couple return to the doctor who confirms that she is HIV-positive. The husband is devastated when the mother dies. Her death is depicted by yet another tombstone which is next to that of the baby, and the anguished father is seen kneeling next to the two tombstones.

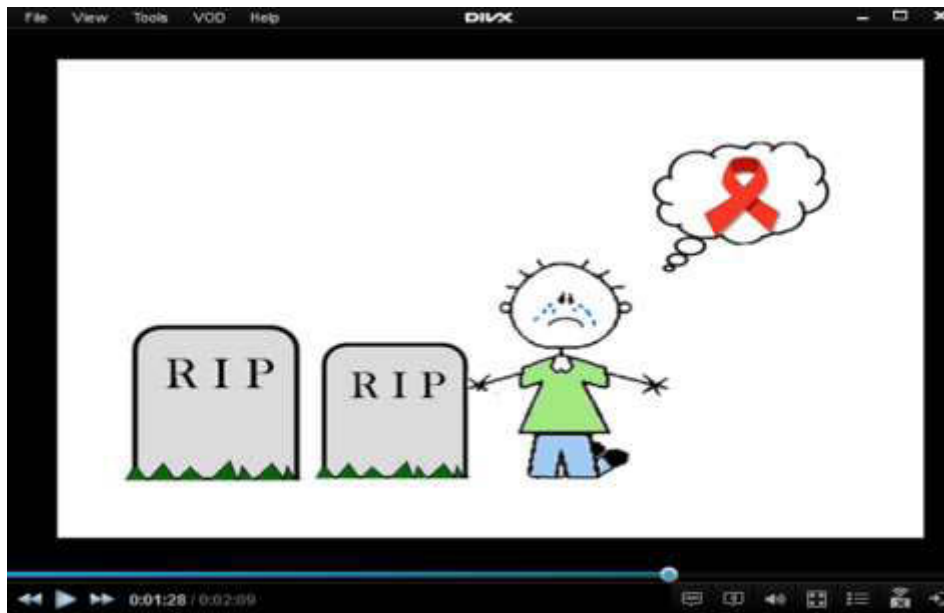


Figure 4

This scene in Figure 4 shows the devastation of a man who has lost his family to AIDS and the realisation that he, too, is probably infected; the repercussions for his own life are serious. Thereafter, there appears a scene that shows the father not only kneeling next to the graves but with his head bowed low. This slide shows that for this innocent man the death bell is tolling. Death is imminent for him. Not only has he suffered the pain of losing both his wife and child to AIDS, he himself is waiting to die as result of the disease.

Then a third tombstone appears next to the other two which suggests that the whole family has succumbed to AIDS. To complete the digital story, red writing on a yellow background reading “*Stop AIDS get tested*” appears. A red hand depicting a stop sign is drawn to emphasise the word STOP. The use of the colour yellow suggests a warning to the viewer, while the red signals danger.

Very few words are used in this digital story; we read only “Three months later...” and, of course, the final words of caution at the end. Throughout the digital story thought bubbles are

used with pictures in them. The red HIV and AIDS ribbon often appears in the father's thought bubble, and once it is followed by a question mark.

To complement her story Jane chose the instrumental version of a contemporary song called 'The Dog Days are Over' by Florence and the Machine (<https://soundcloud.com/flomachinelovers/dog-days-are-over-instrumental>). She did not want any words or voice-over in the movie. This instrumental version of the music begins with the slow strumming of a guitar. Then the beat of the drum accompanies the guitar. Slowly piano and percussion instruments are added. Then the same tune is repeated over and over. The build-up of the music, which is sombre, has an effect on the viewer of the digital story. They get the feeling that something serious is going to take place at some stage during the story, and it does. At the same time as the climax of the story is revealed – HIV followed by death from AIDS of the whole family – the music reaches a crescendo.

Jane wrote in a follow-up questionnaire that the idea behind the digital story was that she *"wanted to show the effects of unprotected sex and how it harms everyone. It [HIV and AIDS] breaks apart families and can be passed on to unborn children. Nobody is exempt from the disease. I wanted to send the message that you must be careful and protected"*.

Describing her feelings about her digital story she wrote, *"It is a sad topic to focus on... The woman in my story had HIV, she passed it onto her husband and unborn baby because she had unprotected sex and was not tested. Her life was ruined, and her husband's and it is a horrible thing to deal with"*.

Here it should be noted that this girl does not distinguish between HIV and AIDS; other girls fail to do so as well.

Case 2, Charlotte's story

The title of Charlotte's digital story, *One Mistake* is written in bold red capital letters on a white background so that it stands out. Using the same background throughout, Charlotte uses photographs in her digital story. Her photographs consist of silhouettes positioned at a fence in a shaded area. The sun is just visible here and there through the fence. This adds to

the atmosphere of the digital story. There is no reference to race or colour because black silhouettes are used to depict people.

Charlotte relates her story, with the words, always in red, as follows:

Slide 1: This is called “A happy girl” and she, a silhouetted girl standing among five other figures, is circled in red so the viewer’s attention is immediately drawn to her.

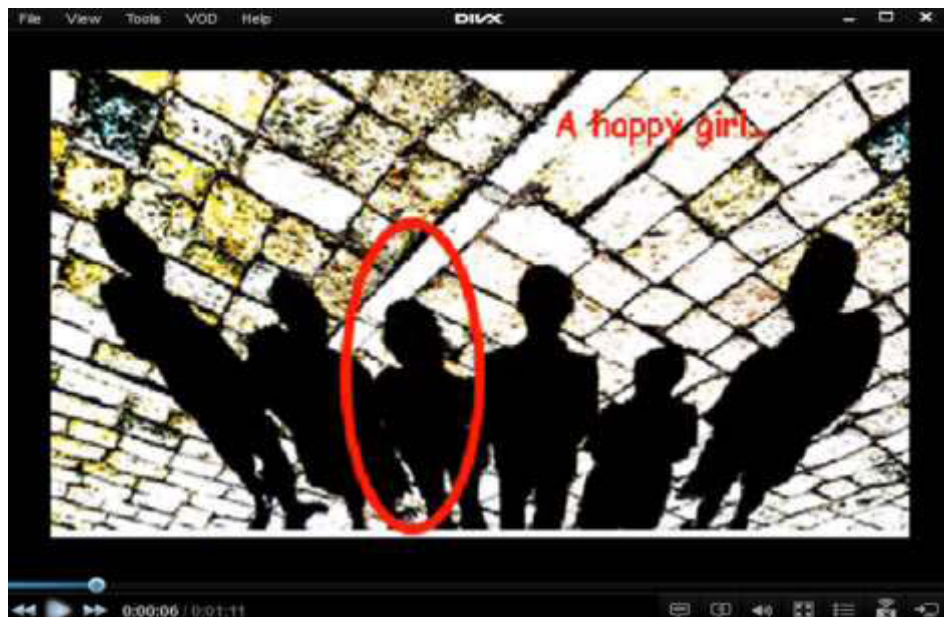


Figure 5

Slide 2: This is called: “She has everything” and it suggests a life without worries and cares.

Slide 3: The title of this slide is, “BUT... SHE GETS HIV/AIDS...” (see Figure 6) To the viewer this “BUT...” immediately suggests that something is about to change in a very big way.



Figure 6

Here I must draw attention to the fact that Charlotte, too, has not distinguished between HIV and AIDS.

Slides 4 to 8 show fewer and fewer silhouettes until only two are left. Slide 8 is named: “Time” (see Figure 7).



Figure 7

Slide 9: This slide, “NOW SHE HAS NOTHING” shows a single silhouette standing alone.

Slide 10: This slide is called, “No one ...” and it recalls the man kneeling next to the two tombstones in Jane’s story (see Figure 4). In her slide Charlotte depicts a seated silhouette seen from the side. The name of the slide emphasises the theme that some actions have

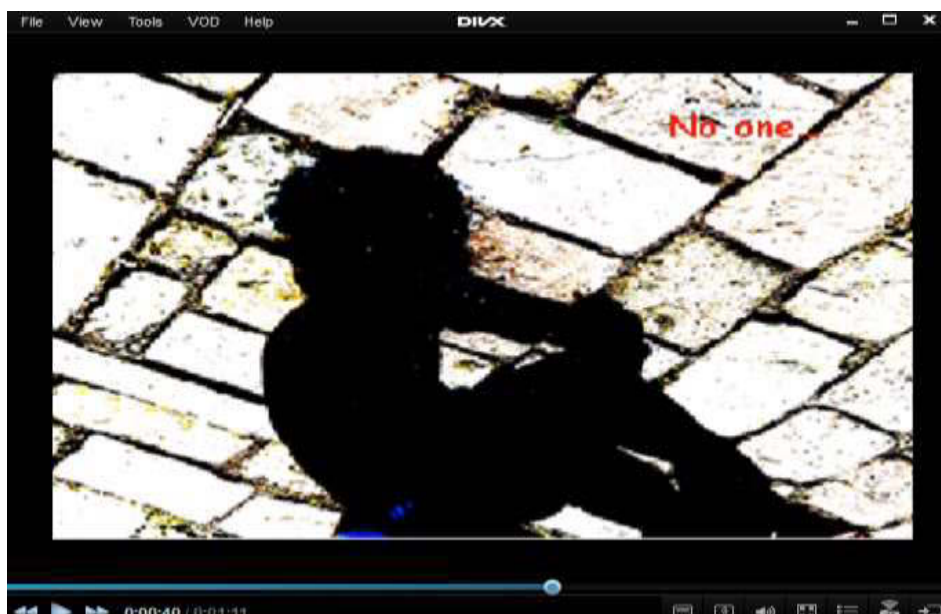


Figure 8

disastrous consequences; we realise that the subject of the story is experiencing the consequences of her actions

Slide 11 is called “Forever”. In it, we see a side view of the silhouette of a seated girl who is slumped over, her head bowed. Defeat is evident in her posture; in this image we read the awareness of the seriousness of her condition. We see that AIDS kills and that the death of family and friends isolates the subject of the story.

Slide 12 is titled, “IT COULD BE YOUR MISTAKE...” and this is written in red letters on a white background.

Slide 13 picks up directly from the message in Slide 12 in completing it; this slide is called “THAT CHANGES YOUR LIFE FOREVER!” and this, too, appears in red letters on a white background. Charlotte has repeated the point that the subject of the digital story is isolated and vulnerable as a result of a mistake.

Her idea behind this digital story was, as she said, *“to show that it can happen to everyone no matter how happy and privileged they are. It was to show someone losing all they hold close from One Mistake”*. Describing her feelings, Charlotte wrote, *“My story makes me feel quite sad because the main character loses all of her loved ones and I can’t even imagine how terrible that would be. However, I cannot really relate to how one would feel with HIV/AIDS”*.

Charlotte has not made use of music in her digital story.

Case 3, Thembekile’s story

The title of Thembekile’s digital story is, *What is HIV?* Her digital story is divided into two main parts that deal with what can and what cannot lead to HIV infection. She has made use of colourful stick figures and colourful writing to relay her message, and to assist in her explanations of the disease. This digital story is most informative.

Her digital story begins with the question: “What is HIV?” This question is written in white on a black background. Thereafter she gives a definition of the disease. The HIV-positive person in the pictures is always wearing a red HIV and AIDS ribbon.

The first part of her story covers the question, “What gives you HIV/AIDS?” This question is

written in white on a red background so that, once again, the question stands out. The pictures and the words typed at the bottom of the page, to explain how one can be infected with HIV, complement each other in their use of colour. She uses a number of examples.

She mentions blood transfusions/organ transplants (see Figure 9). However, here we have to note that although it is highly unlikely that a patient would receive an HIV-positive person's organ, Thembikele is showing an awareness of blood-related infection. She also refers to injections and drug use, and to occupational exposure and sexual contact (see Figure 10).

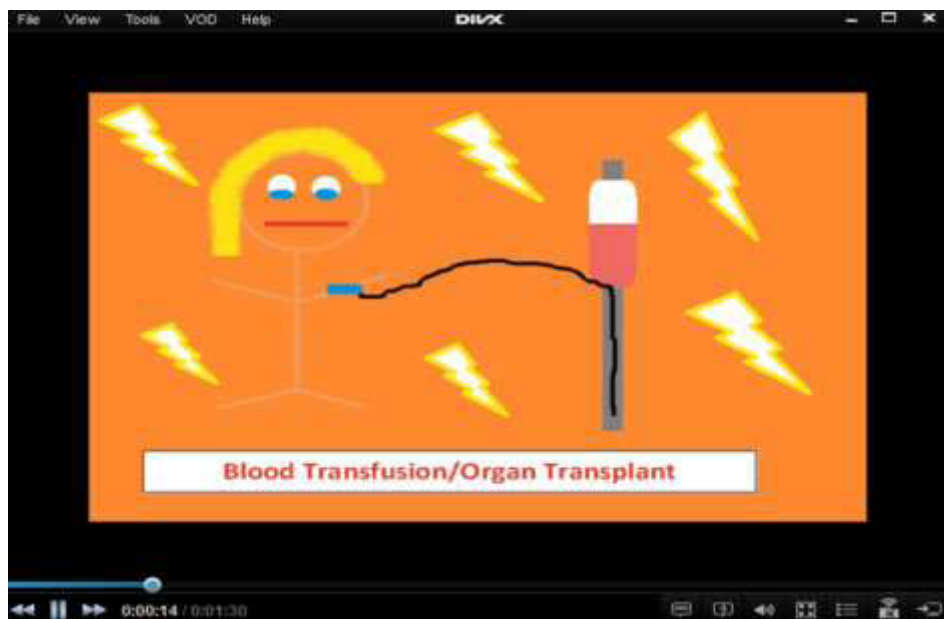


Figure 9

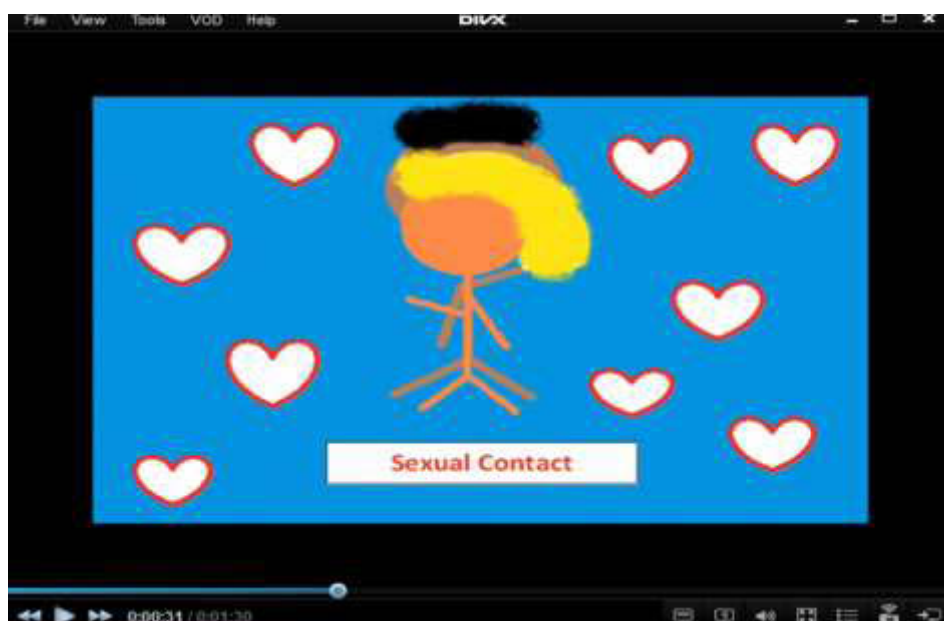


Figure 10

It is interesting to note that Thembekile has used an image of two people of different race groups in her illustration of sexual contact (see Figure 10) and in her depiction of two people hugging (see Figure 12). Then Thembekile goes on to list pregnancy, child birth, and breastfeeding. Here she is referring to unborn, neonatal, and older babies.

The second part of her digital story refers to the question, “What does not give you HIV/AIDS?” Thembekile has made an error here in that she is suggesting that one can be given AIDS. Once again this question is written in white on a red background and the pictures are colourful. She gives examples and uses these as her headings.

Holding hands

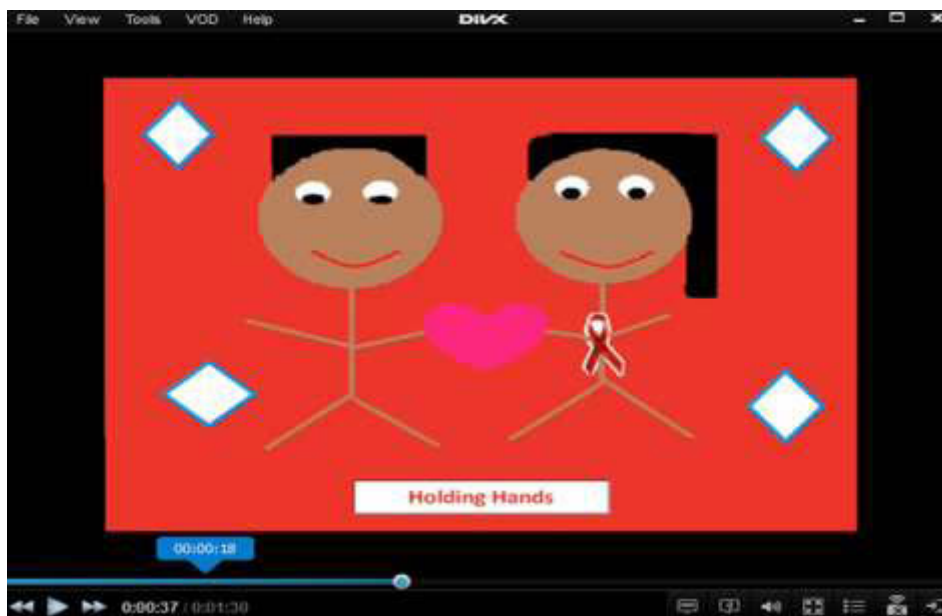


Figure 11

Hugging

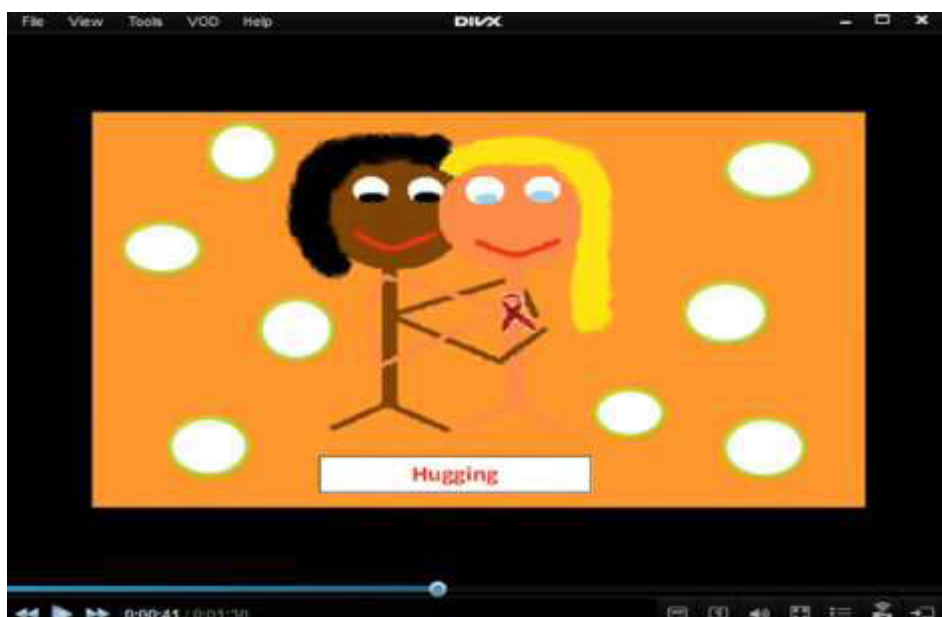


Figure 12

It is thought provoking that in the slide above (see Figure 12) Thembekile has portrayed the white girl as HIV-positive given that these privileged girls may well perceive that this is a problem unique to black people. However, the fact that Thembekile is black may have a lot to do with this depiction in that she seems to be implying to the viewers that whites can also become infected with the HI virus.

Two more examples of how one cannot become infected with HIV are given: kissing and living together. In the second of these Thembikele may mean sharing a house with an HIV-positive person.

Thembekile ends her digital story with the following written in white on a black background: “Having Aids is not the end of the world and knowing someone who has Aids does not mean he/she will infect you with HIV. Don’t discriminate.” In red she writes, “Love Life”. To re-iterate this statement, she draws a white heart with a red border on a black background.

Thembekile wrote, *“The idea of my project was to show what gives you HIV and what does not. We are never told in depth how you can contract it so therefore I based my project on it. During the digital story project I was not fully aware about how you contract HIV, until I researched about it. ...I felt educated and no longer afraid of being with a HIV person”*.

Case 4, Sasha’s story

Sasha’s title is *Some thoughts on HIV and AIDS myths*. All the pictures in her digital story are black stick figures which she has drawn using a computer drawing programme. The HIV-positive person is indicated by a little red ribbon attached to the character. The background of all her pictures is white except for the title page which has a red background with the title written in white. Her digital story is about the myths around HIV and AIDS, and these are presented in thought bubbles.

The opening scene of the digital story revolves around someone thinking, “How do I get HIV/AIDS?” It is evident once again that these girls do not all distinguish between HIV and AIDS. Sasha also uses a red ribbon in thought bubbles. The red ribbon becomes larger and larger as the first few moments of her digital story unfold until only a red ribbon is visible on the screen. This is an excellent way of drawing attention to how large the disease looms.

Next, a cloud appears with the question, “Holding Hands?” A slide follows in which the HIV-positive person, whose status is depicted by the little red HIV and AIDS ribbon attached to the upper arm, is holding the hand of a man (see Figure 13). The cloud and the happy expression on the HIV-positive person’s face, with her/his eyes turned away from the man’s anxious face, suggests that this person is considering the possibility of a new relationship.



Figure 13

Suddenly the anxious man runs off leaving the infected person in tears. The anguish of this person is depicted in the next slide (see Figure 14). It shows the immense emotional distress that is caused to HIV-positive people because of other people’s negative attitudes towards them.

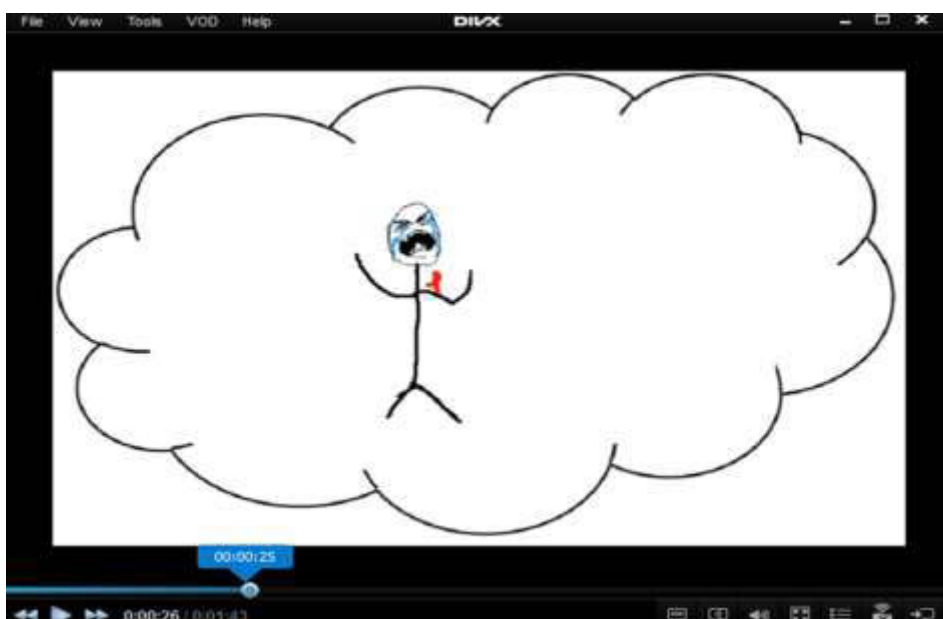


Figure 14

Each time Sasha discusses a myth in her digital story, the angry bird, (see Figure 15), appears and reiterates, “NO. That’s a myth!”



Figure 15

Another thought bubble appears, with the question “Playing together?” The slide sequence that follows is of an HIV-positive child asking to play with a group of non-infected children.



Figure 16

The smug look on the faces of each of the children in the group, as well as the gesture of the child who is casually holding her hands behind her head, clearly draws attention to the fact that they are not willing to include this child in their game of cars. This shows that it is not only adults who are capable of discriminating against those who are infected with HIV. Children, too, isolate and discriminate against peers who are different. Hence the answer from the other children is, “No. You have Aids. We’ll get it!” Once again the angry bird appears and repeats, “NO. That’s a myth!”

Again, I must note that here it appears that Sasha is still conflating HIV and AIDS.

The last slide, “Sharing drinks?” revolves around the myth that sharing a drinking glass can pass on the virus. Here the HIV- positive person offers a thirsty man a glass of water. The man’s reply is, “No!! Gross. You have Aids!!” The angry bird appears again and utters the same words as before, followed by the words, “Those are all myths.” The repetition of the words: “No. That’s a myth!” is an excellent way to hold the attention of the viewer and drive home the point in spite of Sasha’s apparent confusion.

Next follows, “HIV/AIDS is passed on when an infected person’s bodily fluids come into contact with another person’s bodily fluids.” This statement is meant to be educational, should one not be familiar with the facts but, again, Sasha has conflated HIV and AIDS. This is again apparent in her reflective piece. The digital story ends with a poignant statement: “People with HIV should be treated with respect and not ostracized.” It is clear that Sasha wishes to make the viewer of her story aware that they should change their attitudes towards those who are infected and be accepting of them.

Sasha makes use of a contemporary song called “No Way” by the Naked and Famous (www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkWpx6bi0a8) and, during her digital story the words, “No way” that are repeated in the song fit in well with her digital story given the repetition of the word, “No!” as uttered by the angry bird.

When Sasha was asked to describe the idea behind her digital story, she stated, *“I wanted people to know that people should not ostracise people who have aids in the fear that they might become infected. I wanted people to know the myths about how aids is passed on”*. She also said, *“I thought my story was creative and I put a lot of effort into it”*.

Case 5, Catherine' story

The title of Catherine's digital story is. Catherine has made use of pictures downloaded from the Internet as well as her own photographs in her digital story. The heading is written in white and appears on a red background. Then the words "*HIV/AIDS affects everyone*" appear. In her use of "affects", the singular form of the verb, she indicates her inability to distinguish between HIV and AIDS.

Next, Catherine makes use of pictures of many different people from all walks of life, of all ages, sizes and races. These people are all pictured from the back. These pictures appear on the screen, slowly at first and then a little faster and faster (as if in fast-forward mode) and then the show pauses and stops on a picture of a young child. This happens three times. Each set of pictures is different and the child on which the show pauses is also always different. While the pictures flash by, the song is played and we hear the words, "Pictures of you. Pictures of me, for the World to See" by The Last Goodnight (www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7QWZBiNTMc). These words weave in well with the pictures of the different people flashing by on the screen. This sets the tone of the story. Then the digital story focuses on a teenage girl who is standing with her family in a row in front of a red wall, their backs towards the viewer (see Figure 17 below).

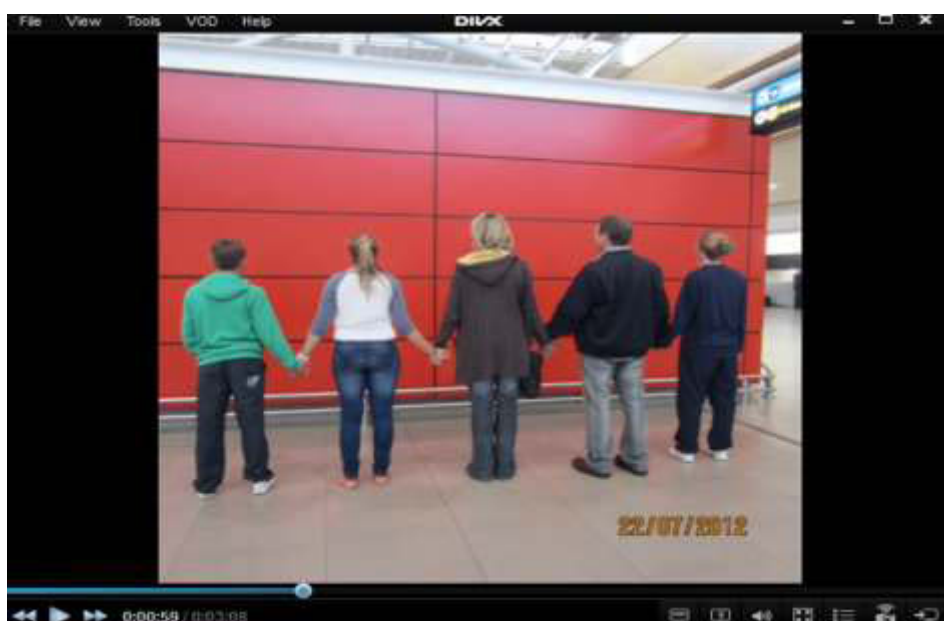


Figure 17

One by one they are eliminated.... (see Figures 18 and 19)



Figure 18



Figure 19

... until only the girl is left. The picture of the girl in Figure 19 implies that she is not able to face what has happened. In the next slide five AIDS ribbons are scattered on the wall to depict that AIDS is the cause of the death of all her family members (see Figure 20). That all the members of this depicted family would die of AIDS is unlikely but Catherine does convey, in her story, a sense of great loss so these deaths could be seen to be metaphorical.

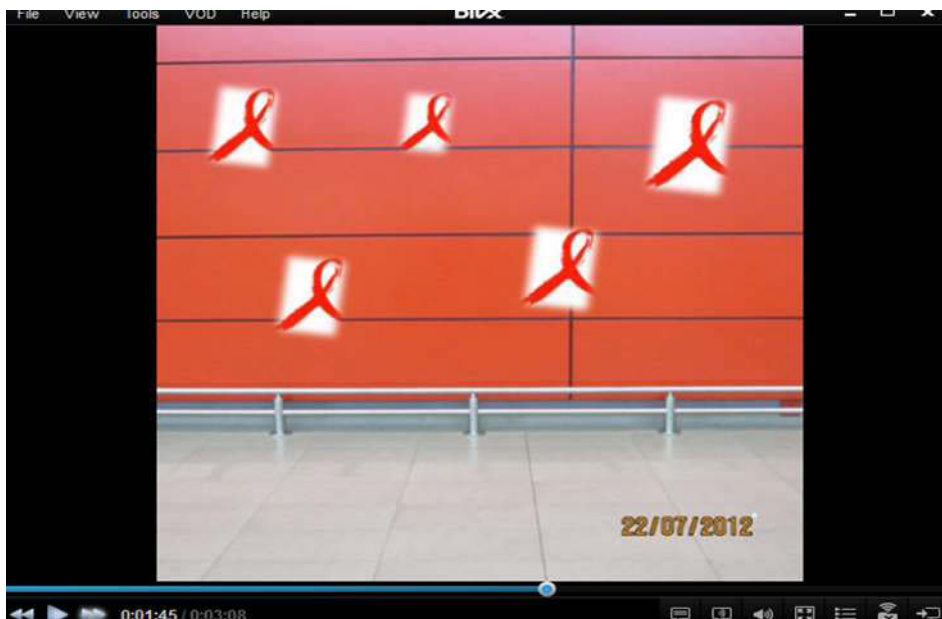


Figure 20

The next scene of the digital story draws attention to the necessity to use condoms to prevent HIV infection by showing a large white condom dispenser. Then a picture downloaded from the Internet that reads, “We all have AIDS if one of us does” appears on the screen.

This is followed by a black silhouette in the shape of a person’s head, with a white question mark in it. Under the silhouette a question is posed: “Could you be next?”

Catherine ends her digital story with “HIV/AIDS does not discriminate!” as if to recap the fact that HIV and AIDS affect everyone. This, it seems to me, is a good way to end this digital story. It bears repeating that her choice of song, “Pictures of You” by The Last Goodnight is a perfect match to scenes in the digital story given its lyrics.

Catherine explains that the idea behind her story is that, *“not only may people one interacts with everyday have Aids, but ‘you’ can just as easily get it”*. It is interesting to note here the use of ‘you’ in its inverted commas may be suggesting that Catherine is distancing herself from the HIV and AIDS issue even though she goes on to say that *“doing this film really opened my eyes to how many people are really suffering. It made me want to try and help every person who is infected. The character’s life with HIV was devastating; she lost her whole family until she finally died too. This shows how HIV can destroy families and influence the lives of more than just the infected person”*.

Case 6, Molly's story

The title of Molly's digital story is *Odd One Out*. Molly uses a combination of coloured stick figures which she has drawn on the computer, and pictures that she has downloaded from the Internet.

Molly's digital story begins with a stick figure waving at other stick figures that ignore him and walk past. (The strumming of a guitar accompanies these scenes.) Next the stick figure is introduced by the use of white writing – all in lower case except for the character's name – on a black background that reads, "that's Jack, in green." Then Jack appears next to a stick figure dressed in blue. Thereafter, we read, "he's just like you. he does everything you do." To illustrate this, Jack is seen dancing at a disco (see Figure 21). However, although Jack appears to feel there is no difference between him and other people, he is dancing alone. This shows that his perceptions are not shared.

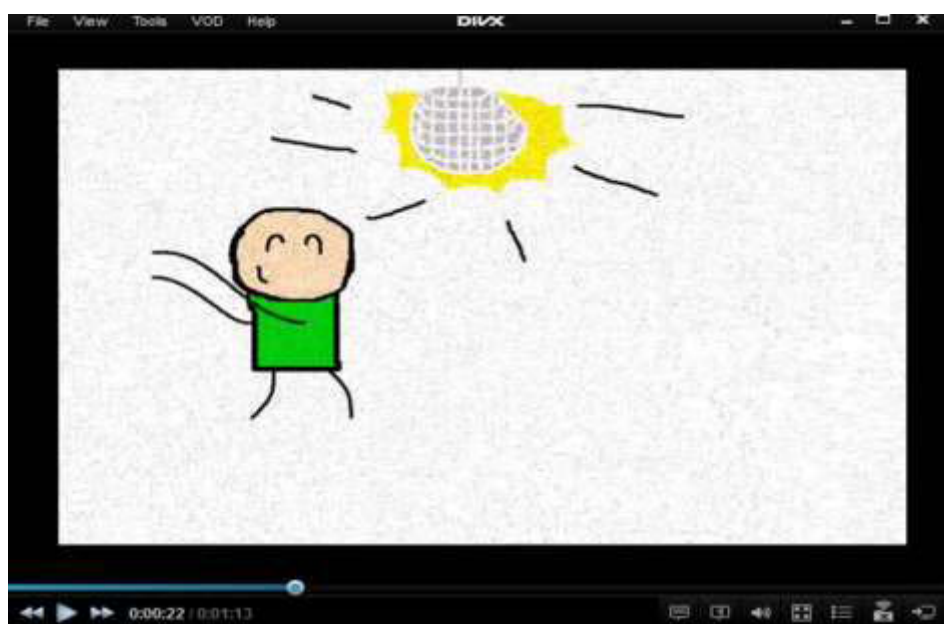


Figure 21

Then appear the words "but, he has aids." Thereafter, Jack is seen walking towards two stick figures, a male and a female. The male says, "hey isn't he the one with that disease?" (see Figure 22). This slide depicts the negative attitude towards people who have been infected. The shape of the man's mouth suggests distaste.

I must point out that Molly, too, has conflated HIV and AIDS. This is corroborated in her written piece when she says that her main character has AIDS. Furthermore, there is no way anyone who has AIDS could behave as energetically as Jack does; he is HIV-positive, rather.

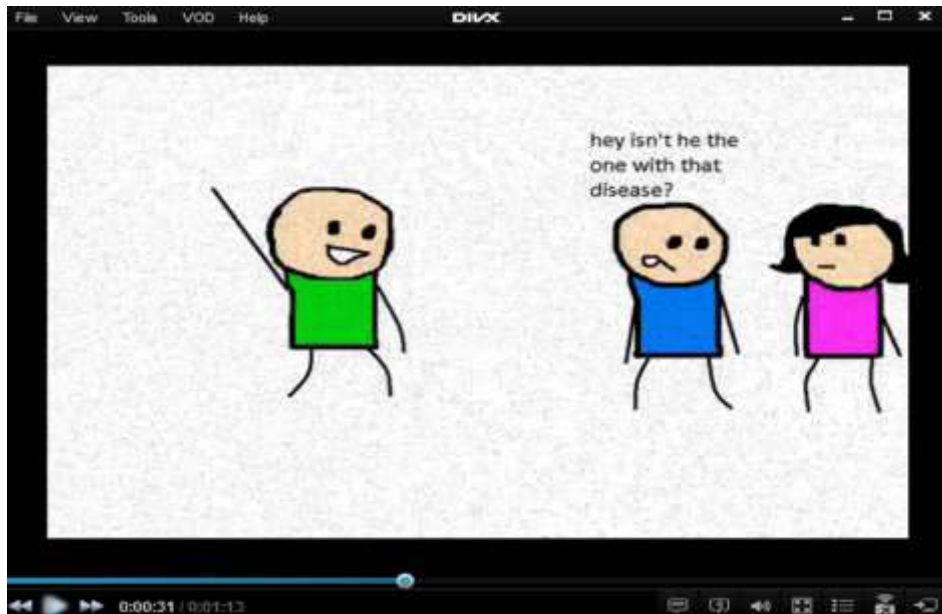


Figure 22

The female responds by saying, “let’s go! I don’t want it too.” Then written in white on a black backgrounds appear the words, “and now he is labelled as ‘the boy with the disease’.”

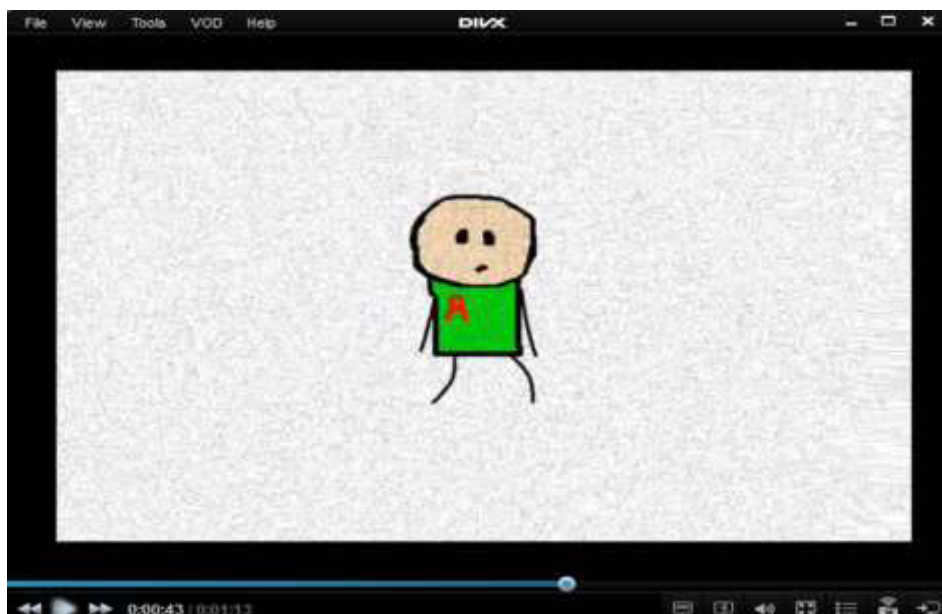


Figure 23

Molly then narrows her focus to Jack (see Figure 23) and the viewer’s attention is drawn to the discrimination that is directed against HIV-positive people.

From this point on pictures downloaded from the Internet are used. The first picture is that of a white woman whose face is seen from her nose up. Above this picture Molly has written, “don’t discriminate” once again, and, written in white on a black background, are the words, “aids is not a joke.” Three more pictures downloaded from the Internet are then used. The first is of two hands being held together, with the words, “so let’s work together.” The second picture is that of a pair of takkies (sneakers), with a heart drawn between them. Written across the picture are the words, “and love one another.” The third picture is of two hands linked together by the little fingers, with the words, “and support one another” written across them. A picture of a red HIV and AIDS ribbon concludes the digital story. Molly makes use of slow sad contemporary music. It is called ‘Mad World: All around me are Familiar Faces’ by Gary Jules (www.youtube.com/watch?v=yciO-_eYUFg). This music suggests Jack’s emotions when people discriminate against him.

Molly’s response to the idea behind her digital story is: *“Most people infected by HIV/AIDS are considered to be ‘different’ and are therefore looked down upon in society. I wanted to show through my story that the people that are infected are in fact ordinary people and should not be treated differently, but should be supported”*. When describing her feelings about her digital story, she wrote, *“My main character had HIV/AIDS. He was treated differently because of this. He felt alone and unwanted. It makes me quite angry and annoyed at the fact that people treat infected people so badly when this is the time where they need the most support”*. It is interesting to note that Molly’s emotions are that of anger and annoyance rather than pity for someone who is in a position such as Jack’s.

Case 7, Isabel May’s story

The title of Isabel May’s story is, *What’s your story?* In her digital story she used a variety of pictures which she downloaded from the Internet to tell her story of Ivy. It begins with a black and white picture of a girl’s face with “AIDS” written on the blindfold which is across her eyes.¹¹ Then it goes on to show a carefree indian girl walking in a sunny park. The girl is introduced to the viewer with the words, “Meet Ivy, your ordinary girl.” Next we see an image of autumnal shades that suggests the attitude of the elderly man, who is slumped on a park bench. This becomes clear when the man is introduced; we read: “Meet Barry the HIV

¹¹ As sourced by the learner (www.sodahead.com/united-states/aids-the-cure-to-homosexuality-how-d)

and AIDS victim” and here, too, we note that this girl does not distinguish between HIV and AIDS.

Then two sets of feet, half covered by a sheet, indicate that sexual intercourse is taking place. Isabel May makes no reference to the mortuary tag on the big toe of the woman’s foot in this picture even though it is so prominent and so significant to a picture of unprotected sexual congress.

The alarming words “Without protection” then appear and this is followed by a picture of a girl floating in a condom on which is written, “Someone as ordinary as Ivy can become someone as threatened as Barry”. The girl inside the condom may represent safe sex. In her storyboard, in Appendix 4 A, Isabel May also draws attention to unprotected sexual intercourse.

Next, the viewer sees a black and white picture of a light bulb which is a standard cartoon representation of thought. This is followed by questions that challenge the viewer: “What if you were HIV positive? What would you do?” The red filament inside the bulb is in the shape of the HIV and AIDS ribbon. Even the “o” in the word victorious which also appears in the picture, is an HIV and AIDS ribbon. Thereafter, a picture of four sets of hands converging at the fingertips is used. At the converged fingertips lies a red HIV and AIDS ribbon and in red is written “Together we can help”. Traditionally an open hand represents openness, gentleness, tolerance and empathy so this image (see Figure 24) suggests that the problem of



Figure 24

HIV and AIDS need a collective solution.

In the next slide, a black and white picture depicts a young girl sitting on a staircase. At the top of the staircase there is a window through which light floods the scene. The girl is sitting with her head slightly bent and her hands are clasped together in front of her mouth. We read the rest of the sentence that began on the previous slide: “to find the cure.” While this is an unrealistic ambition for a school girl, the idea behind this is that of a collective solution.

At this point, there is a similar picture of the carefree girl walking in the opposite direction in the park and the following words appear, “And let her be the ordinary Ivy she used to be.”

The mood of the digital story changes at the point when three pictures follow each other in an attempt to challenge the viewer. The first is of a hand, with the words, “One hand.” The second is of a golden heart with a light shining through it accompanied by the words “One heart.” (see Figure 25). Immediately after this golden heart is a reminder that together we can make a difference.



Figure 25

The third picture is a silhouette of a man calling “One voice” into a loud hailer. The digital story ends with yellow words on a black background, stating, “Be the change.”

Isabel May made use of a contemporary song called, “It will Rain.” by Bruno Mars (www.youtube.com/watch?v=61f48MgowcA). The song weaves in well with the digital

story. It is a slow, sad song and some of the lyrics are apt since they state that, “it would take a whole lot of medication, To realise what we used to have but we don't have it anymore.” These words are fitting since life for the girl in the story might never be the same as a result of having unprotected sex.

Isabel May's idea behind her digital story was to put across: “*HIV/AIDS and the importance of being positive; don't let the bad bring down but pick yourself up and remember you are not alone*”. Describing her feeling while creating the digital story Isabel May wrote, “*In the beginning I was unsympathetic and didn't show any enthusiasm, however once I got into the whole routine of the story I began to understand the topic more clearly and better and enjoyed it*”.

Case 8, Sally's story

The title of Sally's digital story is *HIV and AIDS*. The title is written in white on a black background with a grey ribbon placed on the centre of the slide. Thereafter, on the same background we read: “Doesn't matter what colour you are, what you look like, or where you live, or what you wear, you can still get HIV and AIDS”.

Here, yet again, we see a participant conflating HIV and AIDS.

It is interesting to note that Sally has made use of only black and white pictures downloaded from the Internet. This may suggest that she sees the issue of HIV and AIDS to be an inclusive one. It is not only an issue for a particular racial group. It does not discriminate. The digital story is complemented by the use of a song called “Wait Outside the Lines” sung by Greyson Chance (<http://www.songlyrics.com/greyson-chance/waiting-outside-the-lines-lyrics/>). Sally effectively intertwines the words of the song by repeating them at times while they are being sung in the background as she shows various pictures during the digital story.

On the next two slides we see two pictures of smart houses with the words, respectively, “Doesn't matter where you live” and “You can still get HIV and AIDS”. This suggests that even if you are rich you can still contract HIV and AIDS. Thereafter, a few pictures are shown as examples of where people live – smart homes, a shack and flats.

The digital story then moves into seven pictures of young girls wearing various styles of clothing. On the first of these we read, “It doesn’t matter what you wear” and on the last of these pictures is written, “You gotta let your feet off the ground, the time is now” which is taken from the lyrics of the song. Immediately after this, a picture of young bare feet, walking away from the viewer is shown with words of caution written across them: “Walk away from the bad situation before it’s too late.”

Thereafter, Sally makes use of various shoes and pictures of legs from the knees down to illustrate the notion of walking away. We read: “Don’t do something you will regret” twice, once on a pair of black stilettos and then on a pair of white stilettos. Then a line from the song’s lyrics is used across a pair of bare feet walking in clear water. It reads, “How you going to walk ahead if you keep living blind?” (see Figure 26) This image implies that one cannot ignore the seriousness of the HIV and AIDS issue. There is a need to be educated on this topic. Further it cautions one to walk away from a situation and not to do something that one will regret.

As the digital story nears its end, a picture of two feet walking outside a white line is



Figure 26

shown. The viewer is challenged by the words, “Don’t always wait outside the lines, do something to help the people with HIV and AIDS.” Following that, a set of bare feet leaving foot prints at the water’s edge on the beach appears. Across this picture, the words from the

lyrics, “You gotta let your feet off the ground, the time is now” are used again as encouragement to the viewer.

Lastly, a pair of feet in white takkies (sneakers), positioned in front of three white lines, is used to reiterate the final words of the digital story. The challenge is, “Be brave enough to step over the line” (see Figure 27).



Figure 27

This image suggests the reluctance of people to become involved in the issue of HIV and AIDS, and Sally challenges us all to step out of our comfort zone and to do our bit for those infected or affected by HIV.

Sally wrote, *“I chose this idea because what came to mind was that everyone is always waiting behind lines...not breaking through... never following through”*.

Case 9, Summer’s story

Summer’s digital story title is *Sometimes*. This is written in red as are all the words she adds to her slides. Summer makes use of a short video in which she role plays a rape scenario for her digital story. She is the rape victim in her story. The digital story is accompanied by the song, ‘Stuck in Reverse’ by Coldplay (www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOhGWHzxl4E). The slow tune sets the mood for the digital story.



Figure 28

The story begins with the depiction of girl walking along a dusty road (see Figure 28). As she walks the viewer notices that the girl has white labels pinned onto different parts of her clothing that read: “happy”, “confident” and “self-respecting” (see Figure 29).



Figure 29

Just before the girl is overpowered by the rapist, Summer, as producer, indicates that something bad is going to take place, by showing on a black background the words, “things that are out of your control...happen.”



Figure 30

Suddenly a man appears from the long grass. He creeps up behind the girl and pounces on her back. A scuffle ensues and the man drags the girl into the long grass (see Figure 30). At this point the digital story goes blank for a short while. When the digital story resumes, the first thing to be seen is the girl rolling over onto her back. Clearly visible on her chest is one word only, “INFECTED” (see Figure 31).



Figure 31

To emphasise the next sentence , “You can let it destroy you.” the girl, who is now in a sitting position, rips off each label that is attached to her and then she holds her head with her two hands as if emotionally drained.

Next, written on a black background we read, “or you can rise above it”. Thereafter the rape victim pulls off the label “INFECTED”, crumples it up and throws it away. This scene is followed by two black backgrounds. On the first black background is written, “what’s important” And on the second, “is that you keep fighting”. Then the girl picks up all the labels she had ripped off earlier and momentarily holds them against her chest. She then collects her belongings and, holding the labels in her hand, she begins to walk back down the dusty road, in the direction from which she came. The digital story is concluded by, “HIV/AIDS”, a red ribbon and the words, “hang in there”. The simple message that Summer portrays here is that bad things happen to ordinary people but the only way to deal with them is to be positive and to carry on with life.

It is only in her reflective piece that Summer may be conflating HIV and AIDS though this is not necessarily so.

Summer says *“I chose this idea because it is something that I feel strongly about. The most difficult part was finding a way to express my opinion in a meaningful way. I focused more on the individual”* When she describes her feelings about the digital story she says, *“...as I progressed I realised just how relevant and real this topic was, and this project opened my eyes to how real and devastating HIV/AIDS really is”*.

Case 10, Bonnie’s story

Bonnie has produced a short, yet powerful digital story called *‘He said he loved you, didn’t he?’*. Bonnie chose the song “Down”, a slow one sung by Jason Walker (www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvGYYg40Ijw). The song together with the black and white pictures that have been downloaded from the Internet set the mood of this digital story.

Bonnie’s digital story begins with a silhouetted couple sitting together at the water’s edge. They have their arms around each other’s shoulders and their foreheads pressed together, apparently in love. Then in white writing, a question is posed to the girl, ‘He said he loved you ...didn’t he?’

Next on a black background we read, written in red, the word “TORN... TORN... TORN...” (see Figure 32). This slide alludes to her feelings of devastation at this stage because her

lover has left her but to the viewer it also suggests that this will be the feeling she will experience when she realises later that she has been infected with the HI virus by him.



Figure 32

A picture appears of a totally devastated young girl sitting in a dark corner. She appears to be emotionally torn. This is followed by a picture of a girl sitting on a step, her head turned back to watch a man walking away from her. The question, “Where is he now?” appears at the bottom of the picture. This image suggests that this man had turned his back on this girl. This is because he does not care or at this stage he, too, is unaware of his HIV status. This points out that it is the responsibility of both partners who are in a sexual relationship to be aware of their own and their partner’s status.

A blank black screen appears for a short while, then “GONE.” in huge white letters is used to emphasise this point to the viewer (see Figure 33).



Figure 33

The following scene is very effective. Bonnie uses a picture of an intravenous drip bottle which is accompanied by, “Infected, your body cries” written in red. The irony of this slide is that a drip usually contains medication to heal one from an illness but in this case the drip suggests to the viewer that the body is being contaminated with an illness. Then, in the next two scenes, on a black background, is written in white, “Invaded by a killer”. Immediately, the viewer gets the sense that the girl’s body has become a war zone in a fight against this infection. This is followed by the word “Who...” and then, in red writing on a stark picture of someone sitting at a grave, the word, “KILLS” appears.

Bonnie then uses a picture (two sets of feet peeping out of two bodies wrapped in a sheet) to warn the viewer against HIV and points to the danger of having unprotected sex. Having seen the picture of the stark cemetery before this one, the viewer, at this point, realises that after every unprotected sexual encounter there may be the possibility of death. Oddly enough, Bonnie appears to be unaware of the significance of the mortuary tag on the big toe of the woman’s foot in the picture depicting consensual but unprotected sex.

A picture of a black hand in an upright stop position, on which a red HIV and AIDS ribbon is drawn, concluding the digital story. The use of the colour black depicts the merciless effect of the disease and the use of red signals a warning against it.

We see that Bonnie, too, does not distinguish between HIV and AIDS.

Of her digital story idea, Bonnie wrote, *“I wanted to create an awareness of what HIV/AIDS truly is and that it does kill and destroy lives. The denial that fills us all, as we think it won’t happen to us is far too real and evident. One mistake can change and ruin everything”*.

When asked to describe her feelings about her digital story she stated, *“Research shocked me, I felt very strongly for the cause and the reality”*.

Case 11, Hollow’s story

Hollow’s digital story’s title *The fight against Aids* is positioned in the bottom right hand corner of a picture on which a red HIV ribbon is surrounded by a lot of black stick figures. Written across the next slide, a black background on which grey and white bubbles float, are the words, “This is how I interpret it.”

Hollow uses pictures that she has downloaded from the Internet. The first is the face of a girl with a blindfold over her eyes, on which is written: “AIDS”¹². Then, written next to the girl’s face we read: “This is an experience full of suffering...” The next picture of a hand holding a red heart broken into two is used to illustrate the caption: “An experience full of loss and heartache...” (see Figure 34).

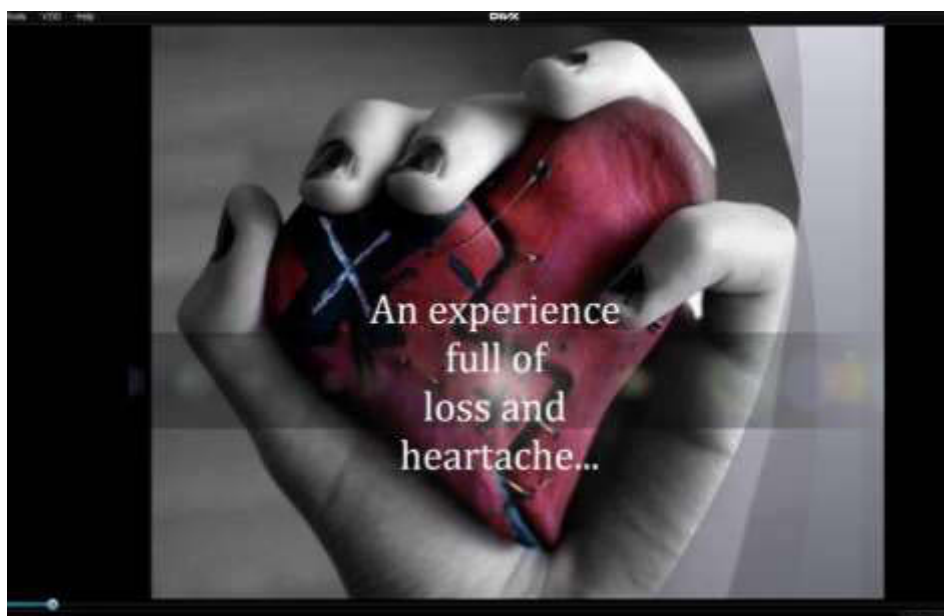


Figure 34

¹² (www.sodahead.com/united-states/aids-the-cure-to-homosexuality-how-d as sourced by the learner)

Then, a black and white picture of a father holding his daughter in his arms illustrates the words: “It causes broken families...”. These words, along with the absence of a mother, imply to the viewer that the child’s mother has succumbed to AIDS. This brings home to the viewer the devastating effects this condition has on families.

After this, a picture of a cross illustrates the caption, “It causes death...” The last point of this section, “It encourages anger...” is communicated on a face of a girl who is crying (see Figure 35)

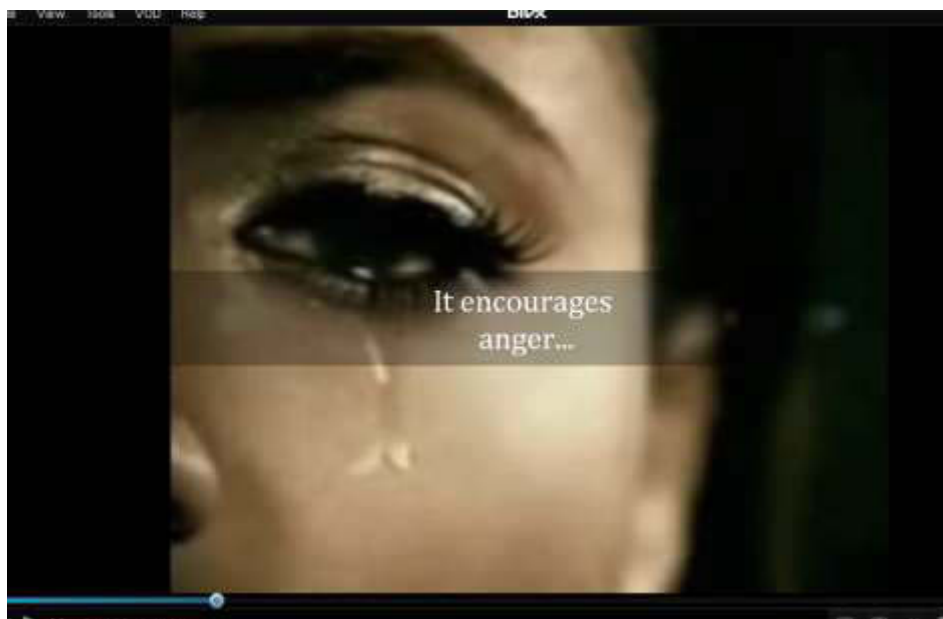


Figure 35

Hollow then uses a black picture of a map of Africa to convey the message: “It causes people from all over Africa to remain quiet and let the disease to spread quietly!” This image suggests that because HIV and AIDS both have a huge amount of stigma attached to them, people in Africa don’t talk about the subject. Here, Hollow is informing the viewer of the need to educate people about the topic. At this the point the viewer is reminded that “It is time to take a stand, to stop all this suffering, be a hero, a conqueror, a survivor!” which is immediately followed by two relevant questions posed on posters. The first reads, “What if you had HIV?” Here Hollow may be distancing herself by using the second person pronoun. The second poster reads, “What are you doing in the war against AIDS?” The inspiration for this poster is a World War 1 recruiting poster, according to a school historian with whom I discussed it. Along with its purpose then this poster suggests that everybody has a duty to

play a part in the fight against HIV and AIDS. However, Hollow offers two responses to the last question. They are, “Be supportive” and “Show no judgement.”

In response to the next poster which bears the words, “Just because you can’t see it, doesn’t mean you can’t get it”, Hollow offers sound advice: “Educate people.” “AND ... Use protection, or rather say NO to sexual activity!” The use of the image in which the admonitory finger has a drop of blood on it, together with the stern warning for the viewer: “Just one drop is all it takes.” is effective in showing how easy it is to contract the HI virus.

The viewer is then asked further important questions which appear on the same eye catching background of black with a light reflecting off each question as it is posed. The questions are: “Do you have morals? Do you have dreams?” Once again the viewer is offered advice, “For your own safety ... for your own benefit ... be safe. Life is just too short to take a risk.” At this point another bright HIV and AIDS poster is used. On it is written, “IGNORANCE, FEAR, SILENCE, DEATH, fight Aids. Further questions are asked by Hollow: “What are you going to do...? What are you going to change? How are you going to contribute to this....?” Then finally a statement is made at the end of the digital story: “Now is the time to think...”.

The song that Hollow uses to enhance her digital story is ‘All these Lives’ by Chris Daughtry (www.metrolyrics.com/all-these-lives-lyrics-chris-daughtry.html). Some of the words in the refrain of the song match the messages in this digital story since they could easily be referring to HIV and AIDS. These are:

You're not a person; you're a disease.
All these lives that you've been taking
Deep inside, my heart is breaking
Broken homes from separation
Don't you know it's violation? (n.d)

Hollow chose to include her feelings about the project in her digital story. She wrote, “*This project was not only time consuming but it made me think how I actually interpret AIDS. It made me realise just how depressing it really is and just how much I want someone to take control of the problem and find a cure*”. The digital story ends with Hollow’s view on HIV

and AIDS. She says, *“I believe that Aids is something that needs to be cured, both physically and mentally. You’ve got to believe, you’ve got to pray and you’ve got to have faith”*.

Hollow also appears to be confused about the terms HIV and AIDS and it would appear that she, too, sees them as necessarily inseparable and indistinguishable.

Case 12, Annabelle’s story

Annabelle’s story is called *My Shadow*. She has drawn black stick figures to illustrate it.

To complement the story, the contemporary song ‘Butterflies’ sung by SIA

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=Udmfsu28pI) is used. It is a slow song, sung by a young girl almost in a monotone who, at the same time, is strumming on a guitar with the odd note being played on a keyboard.

Annabelle’s title is neatly picked up in her having the main character always accompanied by a shadow with HIV and AIDS written all over it, except in the first and last drawings where the shadow does not have these words written in it. At the start of the story this character appears to be no different to any other. However, the next slide of her digital story reveals that although he appears to be like other people with aspirations and dreams, he has AIDS. We read: “Hi. I’m Fred. Just a regular guy. Or at least, you wouldn’t be able to tell if I wasn’t. I have the same dreams and goals that anyone would have. There is only one thing that stops me from achieving them...”.

In the next drawing, we see that yet another participant has conflated HIV and AIDS. Fred is accompanied by the same shadow but it is filled with the letters “HIV” and “AIDS”. A yellow circle is drawn around Fred and there are other stick figures in the scene pointing at him (see Figure 36). At the top of the page a short paragraph is written: “My shadow. It follows me wherever I go. It reveals me to others. Others who judge me for what I carry. HIV/AIDS. That’s what My shadow is. The Disease.” Here the viewer can see that Fred feels that others are defining him in terms of illness rather than as a person first who happens to be ill.

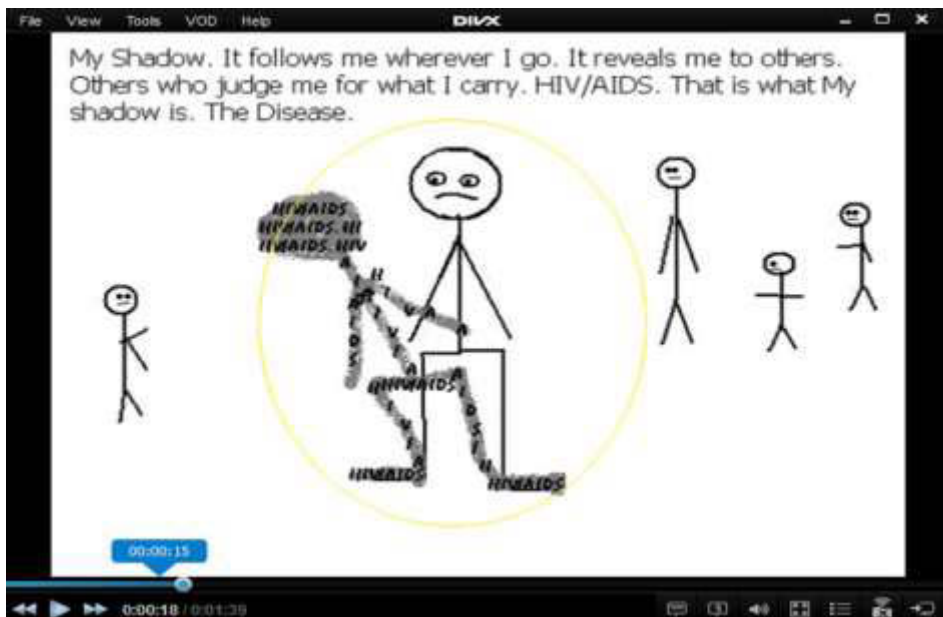


Figure 36

Next, the stick figure and his “HIV” and “AIDS” shadow are seen at a Café. The waiter is standing far away from Fred in an attempt to place the food on the table in front of him without getting too close. At the bottom of the page is written: “It affects every aspect of my life...”

Then four scenarios are given as examples of how HIV affects his life. The first is of Fred missing many days at work. This is illustrated by a block graph, with “Days Absent” written above it, in which red blocks attest to his frequent absences from work (see Figure 37).

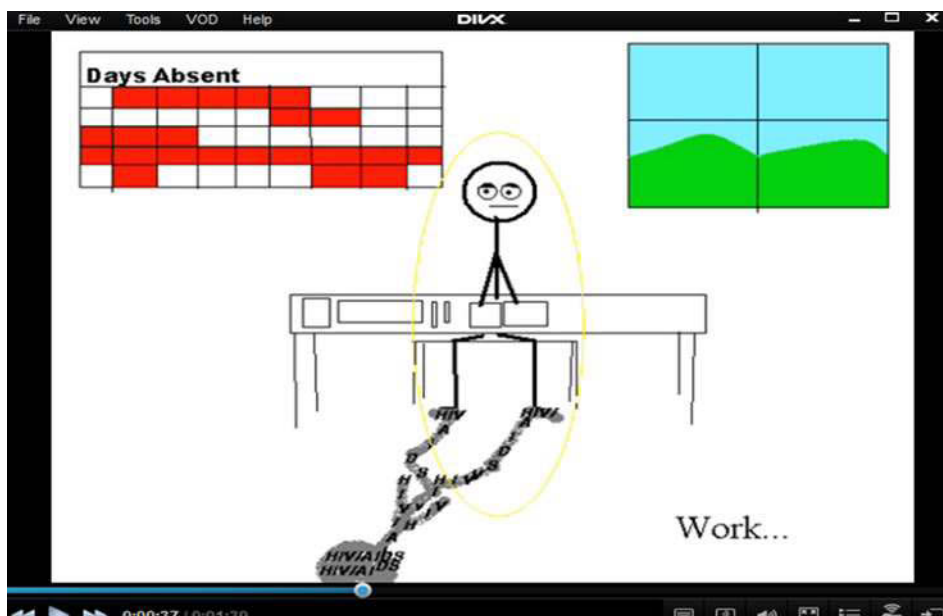


Figure 37

The second is of Fred running in the park and others pointing at him. Fred is attempting to remain healthy, but it is not working. The disease is taking its toll. It appears that people around him are noticing this. The third example is of Fred falling in love, but in the girl's thought bubble we see the same typography of "HIV and AIDS" that appears in his shadow. The girl is showing justifiable concern as can be seen by her having Fred's HIV and AIDS shadow in her thought bubble (see Figure 38).

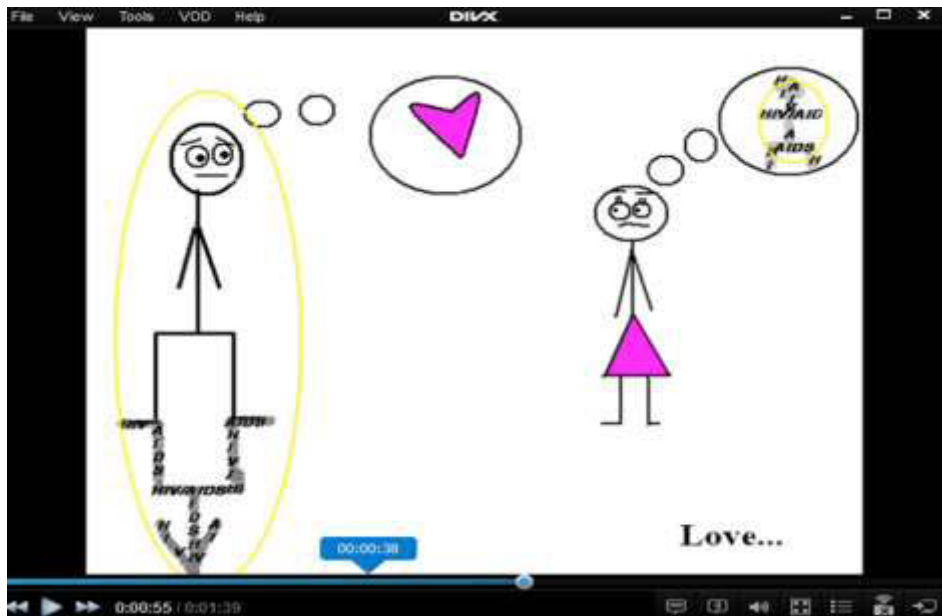


Figure 38

The last example is of Fred collecting medication from the hospital. A red ribbon is seen in the thought bubble of the person handing the medication to Fred. To the viewer, this implies that the unprofessional pharmacist is enacting his awareness of Fred's condition.

Then, in white on a blue background, a saddening paragraph reads, "I wish it would stop following me. Stop exposing me. Stop defining me. All I want is to be seen as me, not as HIV/AIDS. I want to be normal..."

Thereafter, a drawing circled in yellow of Fred holding someone's hand is used to illustrate his words: "I want to be an equal. No sympathies or pity or 'Better you than me'. I don't want people to be afraid of my shadow. I want them to take no notice of it and just be a friend" (see Figure 39).



Figure 39

The last drawing shows a shadow attached to Fred but, as I mentioned above, it does not have HIV and AIDS written on it. Above this shadow is written: “I just want to live without worries. I just want to live.” Fred’s words draw to the viewer’s attention the serious issue of HIV and AIDS. Fred says he just wants to live. The digital story ends with the display of a large red ribbon.

Annabelle pointed out that, *"The idea [behind her digital story] was to show how people who are +ve may feel discriminated against because of the infection and how at times they may allow that to define them"*. When she was asked to describe her feelings about her digital story, she responded, *"I felt that HIV/AIDS is a real problem and even if you are not +ve, our attitudes towards those who are +ve has a great impact on them"*.

Case 13, Zanele’s story

The title of Zanele’s story is *HIV&AIDS*. To set the mood for her digital story, Zanele chose the song, ‘Big Jet Plane’ by Angus and Julia Stone from Down the Way (www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFTvbcNhEgc). The lyrics of the song give the listener the sense of a boy trying to woo, flatter or sweet-talk a girl by saying that he wants to take her on a big jet plane. The plan of Zanele’s digital story, which is included in Appendix 4 B, is very close to the final digital story except that there are some interesting and powerful sentences

that form part of the digital story. I have transcribed them below. However, I encourage the reader to examine the plan first in order to get an idea of the story.

The digital story is in black and white and the stick figures are hand drawn. The message of the digital story is one of caution and it is about protecting oneself by not rushing into a relationship. The story is a standard boy-meets-girl one, but he is HIV-positive

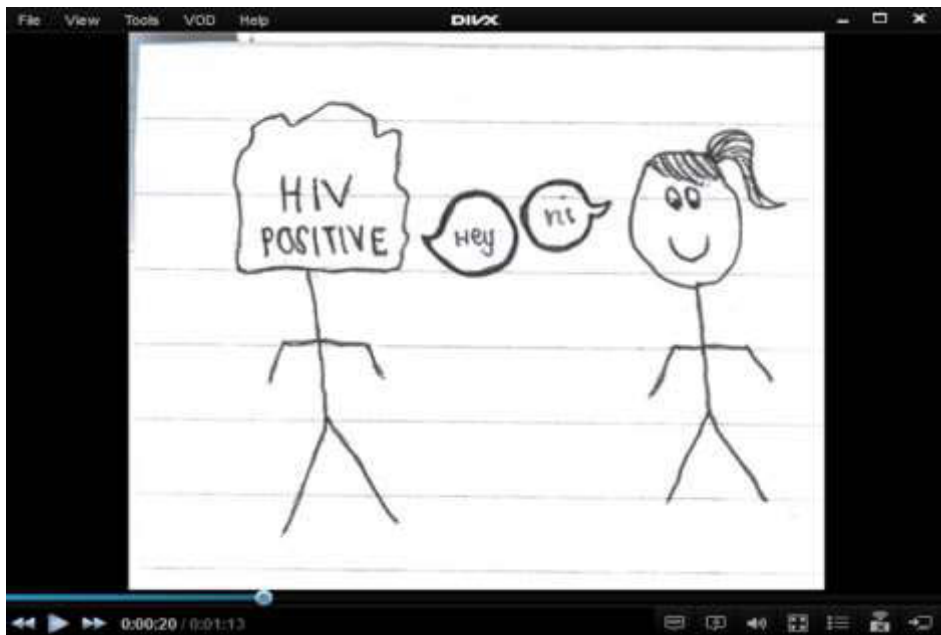


Figure 40

He asks the young naive girl out and they go to a party, where there is loud music, drugs and alcohol (see Figure 41).

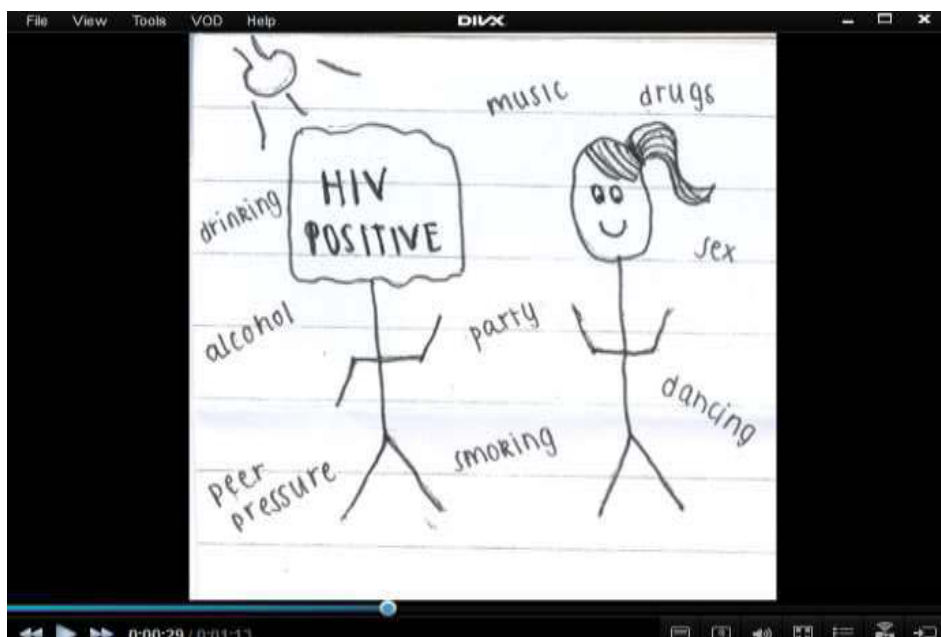


Figure 41

This slide also warns against peer pressure to which young people easily succumb.

Then on the next slide we see the two stick figures kissing.

On the following slide is written: “One thing leads to another...” and then we see the pair having sex (see Figure 42).



Figure 42

Then on the following slide we read: “Six months later the girl is also HIV positive”.

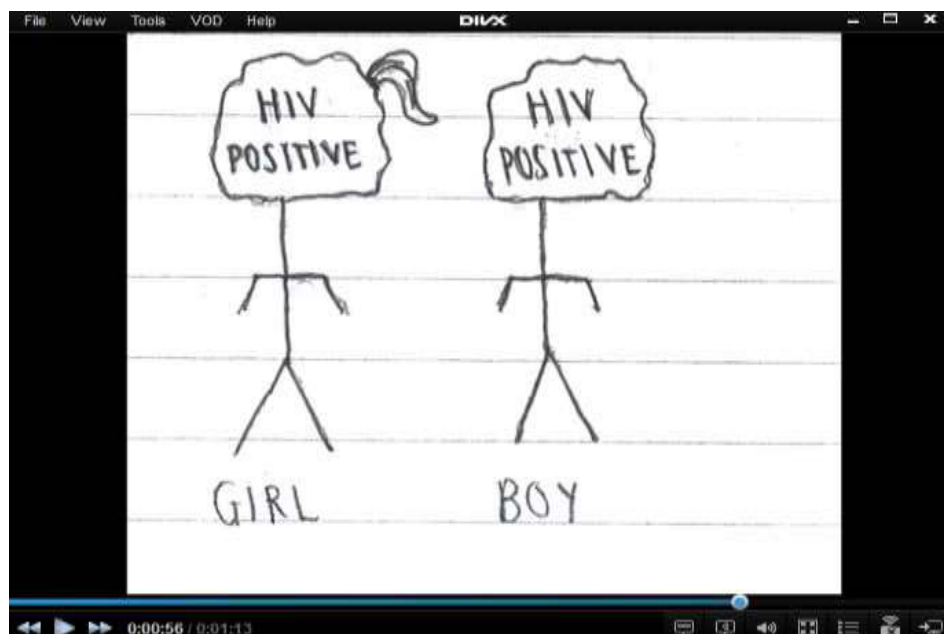


Figure 43

At the end of the story the viewer is cautioned: “Don’t rush into things...HIV & AIDS is real.” Zanele, too, fails to distinguish between HIV and AIDS.

Of the idea behind her digital story, Zanele wrote, *“I wanted my digital story to be very simple and to make an impact that is why I chose to do a cartoon that I drew... I wanted to show the audience that it is so easy to get HIV/AIDS. It can happen through one mistake of sleeping with someone and not protecting yourself. I chose to do it this way also to relate to teenagers with the typical boyfriend girlfriend story”*. When asked to describe her feelings about her digital story her response was: *“The main characters in my story are a teenage boy and girl, where the boy is HIV positive and sleeps with a girl, which results in her getting it too. It is sad that the girl becomes HIV positive over one mistake”*.

Case 14, Nandi’s story

The title of Nandi’s digital story is *Heaven Sent*. Her digital story is one of the first-hand experience of a family member succumbing to AIDS. Nandi has used pictures which she downloaded from the Internet, and the digital story is accompanied by the song, ‘I Was Here’ sung by the artist, Beyonce (www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RDUjA0fN4o). The song goes hand in glove with the story with which it is intermingled.

Nandi’s first slide is blue and contains the words: “Little girl: It’s been a year uncle, I really miss you. Mommy says you are in a safe now, in a beautiful place called heaven.” Behind this, written on the same slide in white writing, is the title of her digital story – Heaven Sent. The same message is written to her uncle again on the next slide but this time is on a plain blue background. However, on this slide, the title tumbles in after a few seconds.

On the following slide appears the black and white face of a girl who is blindfolded. “AIDS” is written on the blindfold. A short statement follows: “You’re never over...” and this is followed by a poster downloaded from the Internet on which quotes by prominent people appear. The viewer sees in the following poster facts about the disease (see Figure 44)¹³. This poster acts as a reminder that education on the facts of this topic is necessary.

¹³ As sourced by the learner (http://voices-hiv aids.com/quotes_promo.jpg)



Figure 44

Thereafter, another picture downloaded from the Internet, is used. It is of a young African boy, who has a white substance smeared all over his body. “HIV and AIDS” is written in red on his forehead and “Use a condom” on his body. This poster draws attention to the traditional alongside the modern and suggests that one’s traditions or culture need not be displaced by using a condom. Next, another downloaded poster from the Internet is used. This poster encourages women to speak out in public discourse.

In the following two slides, Nandi turns the focus on herself. The first slide is the side view of a girl sitting in a slightly slouched position with her legs crossed. The elbow of her left arm is resting on her lap and her hand is in a fist position close to her mouth. The next picture is of a girl standing sideways leaning against a pillar. It is raining but she does not appear to mind getting wet.

Then the viewer sees a picture of a black man from the back. He is suffering from AIDS. The clock on the wall is a reminder that time is running out for this man (see Figure 45). The producer exposes her personal association with AIDS by writing, “This is how aids makes you look. I know this from my uncle having Aids. This is what he looked like on that hospital bed. I know this because I watched him suffer and there was nothing I could do about it. I sat there thinking about when he dies.”

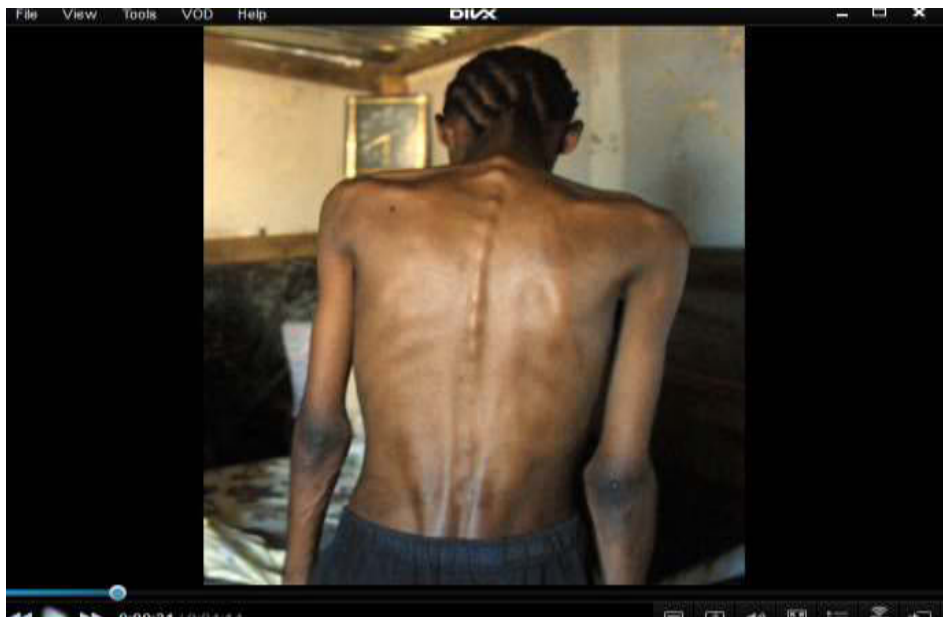


Figure 45

From this point on, she gives her personal account. “This haunted me for days and days. I loved him so much. We did everything together, from laughing, to cooking, to playing around. He used to fetch me from school and all he does now is lie on that hospital bed and there isn’t anything I can do about it.”

Next, the mood of the digital story changes as Nandi uses a scene that depicts inclement weather. Nandi’s feelings of sadness, despair and longing are then revealed in the following paragraph: “The days are cold living without you. The nights are long. I’m growing older. I miss the days of old, thinking about you. You may be gone but you are never over.” Nandi then imparts her uncle’s testimony to the viewer. She says, “I asked him how it all happened and he said, ‘I had sex with the wrong person without knowing her status and without using a condom.’” Immediately after this, Nandi uses a black and white picture of an old lady walking into the distance. This image suggests that unlike this old lady, her uncle will never get old.

Several pictures are used after Nandi’s uncle’s testimony and so is a plea for help made to the one in whom they believe. Two pictures, each of a side view of a girl standing and praying, are shown. The next slide shows a silhouette of a group of people standing with their hands in the air. On this slide is written: “We pray that he lives for a long time.” Next, the viewer sees a grey picture of a cemetery enveloped in mist, followed by a picture of a girl looking out through a misted window. Then Nandi uses a picture of an eye, from which a tear is rolling.

Once again, she reveals her feelings to the viewer when she shares three short quotes which she has downloaded from the Internet. The first one reads, “I thought about you all day today and I just wanted to let you know I miss and I can’t wait to be in your arms again.”¹⁴ This seems very inappropriate from a niece to an uncle. The second one reads, “You come to mind morningly, nightly and noonly, I wish I could see you this minute or soonly...” The third is, “So you're probably right if you're thinking it seems like I'm taking this missing-thing too far.”¹⁵ One cannot help wondering, though, at the appropriateness of these quotes in relation to a niece speaking to her uncle. Similarly, the pictures (see Figures 46 and 47) appear to be of children rather than of an uncle and his niece.

As the digital story nears the end, two stick figures are drawn on a page; one labelled “me” and the other “you” (see Figure 46).

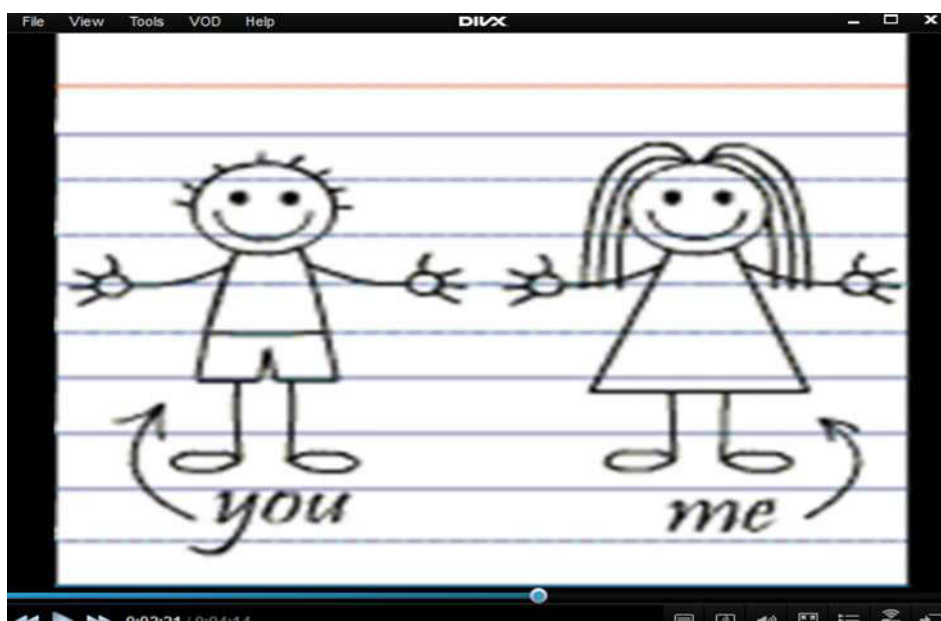


Figure 46

Then an eraser erases the stick figure “you”. This is followed by the sentence: “Aids is like that, you can run but you can’t hide. It keeps coming after you. Be fit and protect yourself. The eraser then erases the stick figure, “me”” and the producer writes, “Without you there is

¹⁴ <http://quotespictures.com/i-thought-about-you-all-day-today-and-i-just-wanted-to-let-you-know-i-miss-you-and-i-cant-wait-to-be-in-your-arms-again/> as sourced by the learner)

¹⁵ (<http://quotespictures.com/you-come-to-mind-morningly-nightly-and-noonly-i-wish-i-could-see-you-this-minute-or-soonly-sweet-quote/>) as sourced by the learner.

no me (see Figure 47). I wish life came with ... and she shows the signs one finds on a CD player i.e. reverse, fast-forward, pause and stop.

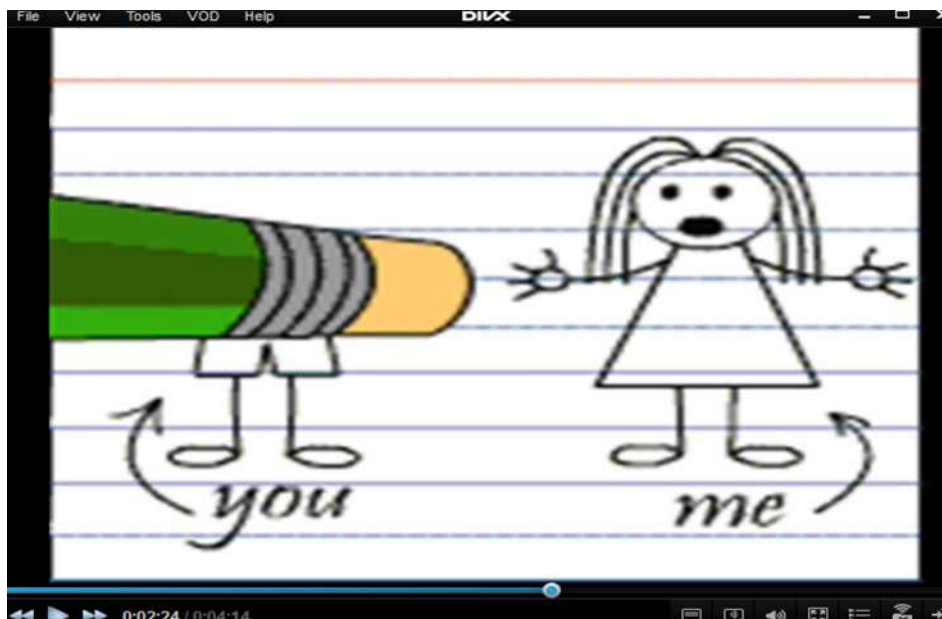


Figure 47

At the end of the digital story three pictures that have been downloaded from the Internet are used. The first picture is one of praying hands on a cross and this is accompanied by the sentence, “Missing you”. The second is, “Rest in peace” written on beach sand. The final picture is of the sun setting over calm water, and across the picture is written, “Death is like the golden key that opens the palace of eternity.”¹⁶

It is commendable that Nandi does not conflate HIV and AIDS; her story is clearly and consistently about AIDS.

Nandi wrote, “*The idea behind my digital story was to tell a true story, so that I connect more ...to what I am trying to put across. My uncle died two years ago of AIDS... We were devastated as we loved him so much*”. Describing her feelings, she stated, “*I felt like the past was out to haunt me. I felt a sense of longing for him. The hardest part was not to cry during the process of making my digital story...and it took the weight off my shoulders. I felt like I could move on*”.

¹⁶ (<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/johnmilton388304.html> as sourced by the learner)

Case 15, Grace's story

The title of Grace's digital story is *Life is short*. Grace has used black and white pictures of waves which she downloaded from the Internet. She has chosen sombre, slow music played on a saxophone, accompanied by drums to enhance the mood of the story. Unfortunately she did not reference the source of the music. When I asked she could not remember the source. (This kind of thing does happen from time to time with the learners in spite of the fact that they are always being reminded of this issue, and it can be frustrating). The title is written in white on a grey background. Throughout the digital story Grace uses white writing on a grey background whenever she speaks to the audience.

The opening scene of the digital story is that of small, even tempered waves rolling gently out to shore. In using these waves the producer depicts a quiet, calm mood, as though to indicate the notion of the calm before a storm in life. Then the statement, "Life is short..." appears on the screen. This statement immediately gains the full attention of the viewer who is likely to be intrigued by the brief statement. Two waves follow. The first is a white, short, stout wave whereas the second is darker, rising much higher with much more might than evident in the previous one. These waves give the viewer the idea that the peaceful situation of life is changing into a more tumultuous one.

Thereafter, a slide appears with a stern warning: "We need to protect ourselves by thinking before we act.." (see Figure 48).



Figure 48

Next the producer uses two huge, dark, aggressive waves which rise meters high in the swells way out in a tempestuous sea. The tip of the first one curls but the second wave is in a tumble turn position (see Figure 49).



Figure 49

The producer then points out that, “A bad decision is like a wave, it is made so quickly.” In the following slide the producer gives sound advice. We read: We need to protect our lives by thinking before we act..” (see Figure 50).



Figure 50

Bad decisions can lead to life's destruction, so the producer uses pictures of two destructive waves, out at sea, to illustrate the statement. At the bottom of the first wave there is a surfer attempting to ride the wave. The surfer is minute. This illustrates just how huge the wave is. To the viewer it is as if the producer is making a point that should the surfer make a bad decision while attempting to ride the wave, he, too, would have to suffer the consequences.

Grace then states, "The only way to stay safe is to be prepared and aware." To illustrate, this she uses three huge aggressive waves rolling out at sea. Two waves veer to the left and one to the right. The viewer finds herself feeling trapped between these waves, on guard and "prepared and aware" lest one of the waves crash unexpectedly.

The digital story ends with the producer issuing a final statement: "Use protection to prevent infection!" This is followed by the red HIV and AIDS ribbon shaped like a wave and this completes the digital story.

Grace's conflation of HIV and AIDS is made explicit only in her reflective piece.

Describing the idea behind her digital story Grace wrote, *"I chose this idea because people make the mistake of not using protection because they believe they are safe with sleeping with a certain person but that is NOT true"*. Describing her feelings about the digital story, she stated, *"I was proud of my digital movie because I felt I was contributing to society by raising awareness about a very important issue, HIV/AIDS"*.

Section 2: Multimodality and convergence culture

After focusing on each of the 15 core group member's digital stories, I realised, as did Stuart (2006), that I, the researcher, was the *"interpretive tool"* (p.91). However, at this point I decided that I needed to work through the primary texts (Fiske, 1987) which answer the question, "What?" While working through the digital stories, I positioned each digital story, as Stuart (2006) did, in relation to my understanding of the intertextual links between and amongst drawings, photos, pictures, music and writing, taking into consideration the particular girl who produced it. At times, following Stuart (2006), I expanded my interpretation to the social and cultural links and discourses to include Fairclough's (1995) framework for critical analysis which was discussed in Chapter 3 (see Chart 3-3).

While viewing the digital stories, I was immediately struck by the uniqueness of each one. Some girls including Jane, Thembekile, Sasha, Annabelle, and Zanele from the core group, chose to use their own stick figure drawings to illustrate their digital stories. Others, such as Summer, also from the core group, chose to use their own photographs or, in the case of Charlotte, Isabel May, Sally, Bonnie Hollow and Grace, to download pictures from the Internet. Some girls, including Catherine and Molly from the core group, used a combination of either their own photos or stick figures together with pictures downloaded from the Internet. Some of the girls remixed their images by adding into the original. I believe that these pictures added a great deal of meaning to the digital stories. Thus, I agree with Weber and Mitchell (1996) who assert that drawings are a type of a “*text*” that can be “*read*” and that “*visual imagery has a strong communicative function*” (p.303) as does good writing that evokes clear mental pictures in the mind of the reader. Weber, (2008, p.44) maintains that “[i]mages can be used to capture the ineffable” (p.44), and showing something can assist in retrieving aspects of knowledge which would otherwise be difficult to say in words and thus would not be brought to the fore. Likewise, I agree with Wilson and Wilson (1979) as cited in Weber and Mitchell (1995) that image-making is an important feature of human sense-making.

I was interested in how an intertextual reading of the stories could deepen an understanding of their meanings in the context of the girls' knowledge about HIV and AIDS. One approach to intertextual readings of digital stories is developed by Gubrium, Krause and Jernigan (2014). Their protocol addresses such features as location, script, emotion, features of visual objects, people present, sound track, voice quality, and as such complements some of the critical features of the well-established area of multimodality research. These features include colour, language, grammar and punctuation, layout, music and gesture. Echoing Jewitt (2014) on some of the challenges of carrying out this type of analysis with digital data, I nonetheless attempt to put forward some ideas on how multimodality can be applied to digital stories.

Colour: Kress (2010) highlights the significance of colour in multimodal readings. Colour played a vital role in the digital stories in my project since it provided unity and consistency. For example, Summer's digital story was a video in colour. This caught my interest as the viewer, and drew me into the story. However, although one may assume that a colourful picture has more clout than a black and white picture, in Bonnie's and Grace's digital stories, only black and white pictures were used, and to great effect. Their using black and white set

the stage for the build-up of a feeling of sadness and despair in the viewer watching these digital stories.

The use of colour in highlighting important words or sentences is also effective in some of these digital stories. Charlotte, as well as some of the other girls, used red writing in their digital stories. This was a good way of drawing attention to what was written. The following extract from Charlotte's digital story substantiates this. She used red on a white background and wrote, "IT COULD BE YOUR MISTAKE... THAT CHANGES YOUR LIFE FOREVER!" Bonnie, in her digital story, for example, wrote, "TORN... TORN... TORN..." (see Bonnie's digital story: Case 10) and "KILLS" against the black and white pictures that she used in her digital story. These powerful verb forms are written in upper case and the use of the colour red further attracts the viewer's eye and gives them even more weight.

Language, grammar, punctuation, and layout: These features of multimodality provide powerful shaping mechanisms. This could be seen in Bonnie's and Hollow's digital stories. At the same time some features may have had a constraining effect on some of the digital stories. The latter was particularly obvious in the digital stories in which the girls were careless in their (mis)use of grammar and punctuation (see, for example, Molly's digital story: Case 6).

As mentioned before, in their digital stories many girls such as Hollow, Isabel May and Sally focused on using the second person pronoun "you" and not first person "I" or "we" or "me" although Grace made use of "we". The use of the second or third person pronoun links up with what I say in Chapter 5 about the girls seeing the potential audience of their digital stories to be social and racial groups other than their own. This for me, ties up with the concern that I raised in Chapter 1, that these girls were underexposed to the issues of HIV and AIDS.

Music and designed sound: West (2014) draws attention to the fact that music, as designed sound, can be seen as a feature of multimodality "*designed to warn or attract us*" (p.411). It is also a feature of communication that is less understood and, for that reason, often left out of social research (as opposed to work in aesthetics), something Mitchell (2011) highlights in her work on the addition of musical soundtracks to researcher-produced videos. As West

writes: “*While the phonemes in spoken language have been subject to thorough study, the meanings of other sounds seem more elusive*” (p.411). Interestingly, most of the girls used music to accompany their illustrations and writing. Clearly, it was an important mode in terms of their representations. One of the girls, Betty, used a voice-over together with music. The music was carefully chosen by each girl and was appropriate to each digital story. In many cases, the lyrics fitted hand in glove with the digital story. For example, in order to draw attention to what does not give one HIV Sasha chose an appropriate song “No Way. No Way.” by the Naked and Famous (www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkWpx6bi0a8). The song that Sally made use of was also a good choice. It is called ‘Wait Outside the Lines’ sung by Greyson Chance (www.songlyrics.com/greyson-chance/waiting-outside-the-lines-lyrics/). She wove some of the lyrics of the song into her digital story. One example of this can be seen in her writing the line “How you going to walk ahead if you keep living blind?” across a pair of bare feet walking in clear water. Another example occurs at the end of her digital story when Sally makes use of a set of bare feet leaving footprints at the water’s edge on the beach. Across this picture, she uses the words from the lyrics of the song: “You gotta let your feet off the ground, the time is now” as an encouragement to the viewer.

Although none of the songs used by the girls actually deals with HIV and AIDS, the refrain of the song that Hollow used was fitting. The words are, “You're not a person; you're a disease. All these lives that you've been taking... (by Chris Daughtry, (www.metrolyrics.com/all-these-lives-lyrics-chris-daughtry.html)).

Some of the music used by the girls created a general mood, which in many cases was sombre or sad. Jane's use of the instrumental version of ‘The Dog Days are Over’ by Florence and the Machine (<https://soundcloud.com/flomachinelovers/dog-days-are-over-instrumental>) is a good example of this. Right from the beginning of the digital story, the use of the instruments within the music makes sure that the viewer gets the impression that something bad is going to take place, and it does. I believe that Zanele’s choice of music also set the tone for her digital story. It was ‘Big Jet Plane’ by Angus and Julia Stone from Down The Way (www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFTvbcNhEgc). The mood of this song is perfect because it suggests that the young boy was wooing the young girl into having sexual intercourse with him.

Semiotic factors: It is clear that other semiotic factors such as symbols and signs (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001) play an important role in these digital stories. The girls used these to express, what I believe, words cannot adequately do. For example, Jane made use of small hearts to depict love in some of the scenes of her digital story (see an example in her extracts in Case 1) Hollow used a red heart which was broken in half to express heart break (see Case 11). To depict sadness in her story, Jane drew blue teardrops rolling down the cheeks of the mother and father (see an example in her extract in Case 1). Additionally, Jane used a picture of a stop sign to depict that HIV and AIDS should be stopped. This, I believe, was a powerful way to bring this point across to the viewer of her digital story.

Thembekile (Case 3) and Sasha (Case 4) made use of the red HIV and AIDS ribbons in their digital stories to depict the HIV and AIDS victims. Catherine, in her digital story scattered five red ribbons on a wall to illustrate that all five members in the family had succumbed to AIDS (see Case 5).

Isabelle May made use of the red ribbon where the fingertips of a number of open hands converged (see Case 7). This scene stressed the fact that together we can all help to fight HIV and AIDS. Some girls used the red ribbon to complete their digital stories.

Some girls also made use of a cross to depict death in their digital stories. Hollow did so and so did Nandi but Nandi made use of a cross with praying hands. These symbols tend to evoke feelings of grief and sadness in a viewer although, of course, they were presupposing only Christian viewers watched the digital stories.

Gestures: Gestures are used in the visual material of the digital stories. Kress (2000, p.186) points out that “*gesture language*” which uses for example, facial expressions and upper body movements, is an important feature in multimodality. Some examples of this can be seen in Jane’s, Sasha’s, Molly’s and Summer’s stories. These gestures have an influence on how the information that is intended for the viewers, makes meaning for them. Their extracts above, clearly depict this. For example, both Thembekile (see Case 3) and Zanele (see Case 13) in one of their scenes positioned their stick figures in a way that suggests that sexual intercourse is taking place. Additionally, in one of Jane’s scenes, the father is kneeling beside the graves of his wife and baby, holding on to one of the tombstones with tears streaming down his face. Immediately the viewer feels sadness and empathy for the man. In one of Molly’s scenes (see

Case 6) the HIV-positive man is holding his arms in different positions up in the air at a disco. This gesture suggests to the viewer that he is dancing there.

Remix: According to Jewitt (2014), remixing “*is a form of hybridization in which cultural artefacts – such as music, art, lyrics – are manipulated and recombined in order to transform their original meaning*” (p.467). While Robin (2006) offers copyright issues as a concern in digital storytelling, the other side of the argument is one related to remix and re-use as found in the literature on convergence. As mentioned before, many girls downloaded pictures from the Internet that they used in their digital stories. For example, Nandi made use of many pictures. One of the pictures that she downloaded was that of an AIDS victim taken with his back to the viewer (see Case 14). This picture was disturbing to me and I am sure would have been to many of the girls if they had viewed Nandi’s digital story, but she chose not to show her digital story to them. However, I do believe that this picture would have had a huge impact on the girls. Very few of the girls have ever been closely affected by HIV or AIDS and seeing this picture made them aware of the real world beyond their own highly protected, for the most part, lives. Nandi used other pictures downloaded from the Internet. These included a girl with AIDS written on the blindfold of her eyes, and a few pictures that depicted cold and rain (which complemented the mood of her digital story). Nandi also used a picture of a girl praying against a cloudy sky, one of a girl praying in the sunset and then one of a cemetery in the mist. Together with some quotes which Nandi downloaded from the Internet she also downloaded a few short poems and the song “I was Here” sung by the artist, Beyonce (www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RDUjA0fN4o) all of which she wove into her story. I think this is a perfect example of remix as discussed by Knobel and Lankshear (2008) who see remix as a way to “*combine and manipulate them [cultural artifacts] into new kinds of creative blends*” (p.22).

While I have identified some very specific multimodal features of the stories, I am also aware of Robin’s (2006) observation that most digital stories blend digital graphics, text, recorded audio narration, video, and music and that while separating them out is an important aspect of analysis, there is also a need to hold on to them all as a whole. The portrayal of information on a specific topic is done through the whole text around a chosen theme and, often, from a specific viewpoint. The examples given above illustrate this very well.

As can be seen in Chapter 5 on the analysis of the producer and audience texts, it is also

important to understand the meanings made of these texts by the producers, and not just focus on an analysis of the texts themselves.

Section 3: An overall reading of the themes in the digital stories

Following Stuart (2006), my reading the digital stories in a wider context illuminates the meanings or probable meanings of each of the productions. Accordingly, various themes emerged when I analysed the work of the core group and also that of the other girls.

Sometimes more than one theme emerged in some of the digital stories. Table 4-1 reflects the themes that I thought each producer explored the most. Before going on, I must point out that had I been able to elicit participant validation from the girls themselves, this thematic analysis may have been different (see also Chapter 6 in the section on the limitations of this study.)

In order to find out which themes emerged, I carefully watched the digital stories that were produced by the 70 girls in the grade. I recorded these by hand. The themes that emerged are stated below. I then counted the number of times each of the themes was depicted in the digital stories. Lastly, I counted how many girls made use of a particular theme (see Table 4-1).

Before I read the digital stories of the girls from the core group, I was intrigued as to whether or not there would be a similarity between the digital stories they produced and the responses they had given to the question posed to them at the beginning of the first session: “How do you understand the issue of HIV and AIDS?” Four of the girls’ digital stories, those of Jane, Bonnie, Isabel May and Catherine, mirrored exactly how they responded to their understanding of the issue of HIV and AIDS. However, only a thread of how they responded to the above question ran through the digital stories of Hollow, Zanele, Nandi and Grace. In each case, though, the girls further elaborated on their understanding of the topic. The digital stories of the remaining six girls, Charlotte, Thembekile, Sasha, Molly, Sally and Annabelle, did not reflect the responses they had given when they were asked about their understanding of HIV and AIDS. It is clear though, that these girls had extended their thoughts to other issues on the topic. I interpreted (see below), as best I could, under the heading of each theme that emerged, the digital stories of the girls, and particularly the stories of those who were

part of the core group. However, where I deemed it necessary I included information about overlapping themes in the digital stories of these 70 girls.

Table 4-1 Themes that emerged from the digital stories

THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE DIGITAL STORIES	No. of Girls
1. A weak or careless moment leads to unprotected sex with an HIV -positive person.	12
2. HIV and AIDS myths	6
3. Discrimination against HIV positive people	5
4. HIV and AIDS being a wrecker of homes and our country	5
5. HIV and AIDS do not discriminate.	5
6. Rape of young and innocent girls	6
7. HIV and AIDS statistics	1
8. Stand up and help in the fight against HIV and AIDS.	6
9. What are HIV and AIDS?	6
10. HIV positive people need to be supported.	6
11. Personal experience with death of a family member	1
12. Contaminated blood at a scene of an accident	1
13. The importance of HIV and AIDS awareness	4
14. The importance of a positive attitude if affected by HIV virus	3
15. HIV and AIDS leads to orphans.	1
16. How I interpret the issue of HIV and AIDS.	2

1. A weak or careless moment leads to unprotected sex with an HIV -positive person

Twelve of the 70 girls in the grade produced their digital stories around the theme, *A weak moment leads to unprotected sex with an HIV positive person*, which is a relatively high number. Four girls in the core group illustrated this theme, Jane, Charlotte, Bonnie and Zanele. I believe that this is of real concern to these teenage girls, since they portrayed how young girls of their age can so easily fall into the trap of being weak when in a relationship with a boy, or in a one night stand scenario with a boy whose HIV status is unknown to them. Some girls included the use and abuse of alcohol at parties, and, as a result of not being in control, their subjects overstepped the mark and contracted HIV. However, the crux of each

of these stories is that when engaging in a sexual relationship, it the responsibility of each of the partners to know their own HIV status and that of the other.

It should be noted that in their digital stories, almost all the girls failed to distinguish between HIV and AIDS. This suggests that these girls have not been properly informed about this topic.

2. HIV and AIDS myths

Six girls, two of whom were from the core group (Thembekile and Sasha), focused on *HIV and AIDS myths*. The girls' digital stories were an attempt to set the viewers' mind at ease about how one can and cannot become infected with HIV. Thembekile wrote that the idea behind her digital story was, "*knowing someone has aids does not mean he/she will infect you with HIV. Don't discriminate*". In terms of educational technique, Thembekile's final instruction: "Don't discriminate" commands rather than invites a viewer's response and suggests she is set on promoting change in people's response to an HIV infected person but may not yet have her at her own fingertips a range of ways to help promote such change. It is evident that these producers were attempting to educate the viewer on the facts and myths of HIV and AIDS, even in their conflation of these conditions. During the first part of Thembekile's digital story, she chose to list how one can contract HIV. She made mention that HIV can be contracted through organ donations. However, this is unlikely, but not impossible. It is also interesting to note that, on her list of how one can contract the HI virus, Thembekile lists sexual contact last. On the one hand, this may imply that for her this is not the crucial issue. She could appear to be thinking that her sexual relationship(s) would never be with a HIV-positive person. This mind-set is a dangerous one in that she could be vulnerable in her choice of partner resulting in her contracting the HI virus. On the other hand, she could have listed this last since she felt it to be the most significant of her points.

In the context of HIV in South Africa, these privileged girls may well perceive HIV and AIDS to be a problem unique to a particular race group. However, it is interesting to note that in more than one of her slides, Thembekile who is a Zulu home language speaker, uses an image containing people of different races in various states of intimacy. The white figure is wearing an AIDS ribbon. This alludes to the fact that it is a myth that only certain race groups can contract HIV. In this way Thembekile points out that this disease is not exclusive.

In Sasha's digital story, it is clear that one of her aims was to point out the myths related to HIV. Her idea of using an angry bird to highlight myths, was a good one in its fierce and determined way. Perhaps though, for some viewers, had Sasha used a different image for this purpose, it would have been more effective as it might have produced a more empathetic response.

3. Discrimination against HIV positive people

Five girls in the grade produced digital stories on this theme. Two of the girls from the core group explored it, Annabelle and Molly. Both producers draw attention to the HIV-positive person in their digital story and show how people, whose HIV-positive status is known to others, are discriminated against.

Molly's digital story has a constant refrain running through it. Discrimination and its effects are detrimental and she emphasises this. She does, however, not deal with the issue of HIV and AIDS in depth. Her focus is purely on discrimination. This may imply that she is not emotionally able to deal with the causes and so evades the pertinent issue or it may suggest a level of ignorance on this subject in general.

4. HIV and AIDS being a wrecker of homes and our country

Five girls focused on *HIV and AIDS being a wrecker of homes and our country* in their digital stories. Jane and Catherine of the core group, produced digital stories that focused on this theme. Their digital stories linked this theme to that of *A weak moment leads to unprotected sex with an HIV -positive person*.

During the latter part of Catherine's digital story, she concentrates on a white family who one by one succumb to AIDS. Catherine's intention is obvious in that she is drawing attention to the fact that all people can contract the HI virus. However, the scenario she uses to point this out is improbable in that a family with teenage children would be most unlikely to be wiped out by AIDS. She appears to be suggesting that each member of the family caught AIDS from another. Given the general conflation of HIV and AIDS by my participants, this is the most likely explanation. However, the death of all these people could be taken metaphorically to suggest that through the death of a family member, something inside each surviving person

dies, but I do not think this is the case here. I think it points to Catherine's lack of knowledge about HIV and AIDS.

5. HIV and AIDS do not discriminate

Five girls focused on the theme, *HIV and AIDS do not discriminate*. Two of these were girls from the core group, Catherine, and Sally. Each girl had her own idea of how to convey this message. However, as mentioned above, the latter part of Catherine's story focuses on a white family whose members, one by one, succumb to the virus, thus drawing attention to the fact that white people are not immune to it. Under the previous two headings I have discussed Catherine's digital story.

Sally's digital story begins with the following sentence, "Doesn't matter what colour you are, what you look like, or where you live, or what you wear, you can still get HIV and AIDS". Here she draws the attention to the fact that although she is a white girl she acknowledges that HIV and AIDS affects any race: it is inclusive and not exclusive.

6. Rape of young and innocent girls

Four girls in the grade explored the theme, *Rape of young and innocent girls*. Two girls from the core group, Summer and Isabel May, focused on this theme in their digital stories. Isabel May's story depicts a young and innocent girl being raped by an HIV-positive male. Her digital story ends on a positive note in its suggestion that the girl makes the best of things instead of dwelling on the terrible aspects of the rape.

Summer's digital story focuses on the rape victim who had been infected with the HI virus. By positioning herself as the victim, she is able to shape how she makes sense of the situation. This is substantiated by how she described her feelings about her digital story. She wrote "... as I progressed I realised just how relevant and real this topic was, and this project opened my eyes to how real and devastating HIV/AIDS really is".

In passing, I would like to note that Summer appears to have no idea at all of what being raped is really like. The instant recovery of the character and the state of her clothing further indicate this ignorance.

7. *HIV and AIDS statistics*

Only one girl, Dee Dee, in the whole group produced a digital story on the theme, *HIV and AIDS statistics*, although several others briefly touched on it. Because Dee Dee had access to downloaded information, she used this opportunity to focus on this informative and educational topic

8. *Stand up and help in the fight against HIV and AIDS*

Six girls produced digital stories which include the theme, *Stand up and help in the fight against HIV and AIDS*. Three girls from the core group, Isabel May, Sally, and Hollow, incorporated this theme into their digital stories.

However, both in Isabel May's and Hollow's productions, each girl asked the audience of their digital stories important questions such as, "What if you were HIV positive? What would you do?" Once again, as with several other girls who participated in this digital story project, these two girls made use of the second person pronoun 'you' which shows that they may be distancing themselves from the problems that HIV and AIDS pose. This could lead to their being exposed to infection in their own lives because of their seeming belief that this happens only to other people. Further, Hollow, in an attempt to be more proactive also asks questions such as "What are you doing in the war against AIDS?" and, "How are you going to contribute to this....?" She further suggests that she herself lacks the expertise to take control of this vast problem. This is substantiated by the response she gave regarding the digital project. She wrote, "*It made me realise just how depressing it really is and just how much I want someone to take control of the problem and find a cure*".

9. *What are HIV and AIDS?*

Six girls focused on the theme, *What are HIV and AIDS?* One girl from the core group, Thembekile, offered an informative and educational digital story. It is a good example of a learner giving a teach-back to her peers on information that she has obtained, in this case on the subject of HIV and AIDS. I agree with Miller (2009) who maintains that the flexibility and the many possibilities for topic material enable digital storytelling to fit into many areas in the curriculum.

10. *HIV positive people need to be supported*

Six girls focused on the theme, *HIV positive people need to be supported*. Molly, of the core group girls, included this theme in her production. While the focus of Molly's digital story is on discrimination, the second part of it may simply be an add-on to lengthen her story. The information conveyed by Molly in the latter part, implies that she is doing the "right thing" as a young girl showing "kindness and compassion" to those who find themselves in a less fortunate position in society.

One of the other girls in the grade, Jodi, depicted a young school girl who has many friends until she tells them that she has contracted HIV from her boyfriend. This is a real situation, not only young people find themselves in as a result sexual contact with an HIV-positive person. Thus, not only is AIDS a potential killer, but it isolates one from friends and family, resulting in emotional stress.

11. *Personal experience with death of a family member*

Only one girl, Nandi, from the core group chose to highlight her personal experience with HIV and AIDS, having experienced first-hand the loss of a loved one to. Although Nandi did not wish to show her story to the other girls in the group, the following description of her feelings while making the digital story, are pertinent.

I felt like the past was out to haunt me. I felt a sense of longing for him. The hardest part was not to cry during the process of making my digital story... [but] it took off a load of weight on my shoulders. I felt I could move on.

This is a clear example of catharsis taking place though digital storytelling as is referred to by Lambert (2013). Accordingly, in my remarks to her about her project, I mentioned that although she was not obliged to share her digital story with her peers, I believed that it was good that she undertook a project such as this, since it had given her an opportunity to begin healing. This digital story particularly reminded me of Robin (2008) who pointed out that Lambert was fascinated by the fact that average person's story could be encapsulated so powerfully. I realised, particularly with this story, that digital stories do have immense power and they influence both adults and children alike. I agree with Miller (2009) that personal

stories such as this that have been shared with others certainly do provide learners with a way of thinking through their past and present experiences.

12. *Contaminated blood at a scene of an accident*

One girl from the grade, Jaynie, focused on the theme, *Contaminated blood at a scene of an accident*. This digital story is typically educational in that it deals with the important issue of exercising caution at a scene of a motor vehicle accident.

13. *The importance of HIV and AIDS awareness*

Four girls focused on *The importance of HIV and AIDS awareness*. One of the girls from the core group, Grace, uses an interesting idea to impart her understanding of this theme. As mentioned earlier, she makes use of several black and white pictures of waves, some rolling gently out to shore while others roll viciously and tumble down. This was a good pictorial metaphor for depicting how life can suddenly change because of a bad decision. In between the pictures of the waves on black backgrounds is written, “Life is short... We need to protect ourselves and think before we act. A bad decision is like a wave, it is made so quickly. The only way to stay safe is to be prepared and aware”.

Another of the girls of the core group, Bonnie, created a digital story that begins as a love story but soon changes into a nightmare for a young girl who had been jilted by a man who said that he loved her. She is left with an HIV-infected body, and, as is written in her production, it is “Invaded by a killer... Who... KILLS”. This story highlights the reality of life when one has unprotected sex. Each time unprotected intercourse takes place there is the risk of being invaded by a killer. Therefore it is vital to know the status of one’s sexual partner or to use a condom.

14. *The importance of a positive attitude if affected by the HI virus*

Three girls from the group explored the theme, *The importance of a positive attitude if affected by HI virus*. One girl, Summer, was from the core group. Through their digital stories these girls draw attention to the fact that even though a person is HIV-positive, he or she can still lead a good life because of the antiretroviral drugs that are available. Therefore it is

important to have a positive outlook. It is the attitude one has towards difficulties that one encounters in life that make a difference to one's well-being. Thus it is an important way to triumph over adversity.

15. *HIV and AIDS leads to orphans*

One girl in the core group explored the theme, *HIV and AIDS leads to orphans* while three others also included this theme in their productions. By focusing on this theme, the girls highlight the devastating effect AIDS has on children in leaving them orphaned and emotionally scarred. In many cases children are placed in the position of being the head of a household. This places strain on these children because they are not emotionally ready for such a huge task in life. Lack of adult supervision can lead to dysfunctional families.

16. *How I interpret the issue of HIV and AIDS*

Two girls, Hollow and Rita, created a digital story around the theme, *How I interpret the issue of HIV and AIDS*. Hollow, from the core group, clearly shows how she interprets HIV and AIDS. As mentioned before, under the heading *Stand up and help in the fight against HIV and AIDS* during the last part of her story, in her questions she continually makes use of the second person pronoun and this seems to suggest that she is distancing herself from this issue.

In her digital story Hollow points out that protection should be used during sexual activities or, better still, that one should say NO. This is in capital letters and suggests, therefore, that one should be strong and determined not to bow to peer pressure to have intercourse at the age that these girls are.

Reflecting on the themes

It was clear to me that although the producers created unique digital stories, certain themes, all of which are pertinent, emerged from the analysed data. By my allowing the participants to use digital storytelling as a tool, they were given the freedom and the space in which to offer their own ideas and feelings about the way they understand the issue of HIV and AIDS. These girls are co-producers of knowledge (De Lange and Stuart, 2008; Mitchell, 2014), or,

they are examples of youth-as-knowledge-producers in spite of their factual errors since this is, in itself, knowledge about what they do not know.

It was interesting to observe that similar themes to those that emerged in this research project, also emerged in other such projects in South Africa. In the project that was sponsored by the Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change at the secondary school in the rural area of Vulindlela, KwaZulu-Natal, these themes were: *Discrimination against HIV positive people, HIV positive people need to be supported, A weak or careless moment leads to unprotected sex with an HIV positive person, The importance of HIV and AIDS awareness* (which included abstinence from sexual intercourse to reduce the spread of the virus.) In the *Sonke* projects under the guidance of Amy Hill, HIV and AIDS prevention and reduction in spreading the virus also came to the fore.

At the same time however, it was interesting to note that there were many themes in the digital stories produced by girls from this elite school, that were unique when compared to the themes that emerged with two projects mentioned above. Some themes that can be included in the category of unique include: *Myths about HIV and AIDS, HIV and AIDS statistics. What are HIV and AIDS?* These topics may have been chosen because the digital storytelling project was part of a Life Orientation class or because the project was a curricular activity (as opposed to an extra-curricular one). Accurate information on these themes can be looked up on the Internet and the girls in this affluent school have easy access to this information, whereas the learners in under-resourced rural schools often do not have such a luxury. At the same time however, as the study by Mbokasi, Rorke, Goba and Mitchell (2007) conducted several years ago that compared the collages on HIV produced by grade six children in under-resourced schools with those produced in elite schools reveals, the children in the under-resourced schools appeared to know much more about the facts of HIV and AIDS. The girls in this school may simply be revealing the importance of actually finding out facts for themselves. I believe the treatment of the themes *Stand up and fight against AIDS* and displaying a *Positive attitude if one is affected* typically reflect the caring attitude these affluent girls have been taught to display in the school towards those who are considered to be in a less fortunate position than they are. While these may be commendable attitudes in one sense, the presence of these themes may suggest a need for more owning and ownership of the issues and less of what might be regarded as doing or giving charity.

However, it is interesting to note that Nandi and Summer were two of the few girls whose digital stories focused on themselves. Nandi focused on her experience of watching her uncle suffer because of AIDS and then succumb to it. Summer chose to role play a rape ordeal in her story. In almost all the other digital stories, the focus was on others. For example, as I have already said, Isabel May and Hollow posed several questions in which they used the second person pronoun, “you”. Sally also made use of “you” in her digital story. To me it seemed they were distancing themselves from the real issue of HIV and AIDS. Once again, this highlighted for me the issue of race and class in South Africa.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I analysed in detail the digital stories of the 15 girls in the core group and also offered a broader thematic analysis of the 70 stories in order to find out how the participants understood the issue of HIV and AIDS. These digital stories blended digital graphics, text, the odd recorded audio narration, video, and music to portray information on HIV and AIDS from a specific viewpoint. Although each digital story was uniquely created, 16 distinct themes emerged from the findings. However, some digital stories included more than one theme. In the next chapter the data of the producers’ and audience’s text will be analysed and the findings will be presented.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS PART 2: THE PRODUCERS' AND AUDIENCE TEXTS

We must begin to think in terms of more encompassing categories – the individual's experiences, his frames of reference, his means of sense making, his overall world view. (Howard Gardner cited in Goldman-Segall, 1998, p.243)

In this chapter I analyse and discuss the findings of the rich data obtained from the producers' texts. The challenges experienced in producing the digital stories and producers' reflections on the process will be highlighted. I will discuss the girls' speculations on using a project such as this with future Grade 10s. The audience's responses to the digital stories will be discussed.

Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985, p.19) maintain that reflection is “*an activity in which people 'recapture experience', mull over it and evaluate it*”. It is impossible for me to interpret the girls' thoughts about their digital stories (the producers' texts), without reflecting on how I experienced the actual digital storytelling lessons with the Grade 10 girls.

After the introductory lesson, I had a similar experience to the one described by Miller (2009).

Enter a classroom where students are highly engaged in telling personal stories. Some students are brainstorming ideas for just the right song to accompany their story; others are working out the flow and rhythm of their writing. Still others are serving as peer tutors on computer technology. These students take pride in their authorship and labor to make their story 'just right'. Meanwhile, the teacher circulates about the room, encouraging, conferencing with or assisting students where necessary. She glances from student to student and sees that all, even the typically reluctant writers, are working diligently. Several similar class periods pass by until, finally, each student presents his or her work to an audience that interacts with the story, making it come further alive. This type of high student engagement and quality workmanship is possible with digital storytelling. (p. 6)

Although there were some participants who experienced a few problems while engaging in the digital storytelling process, I believe that, overall, the girls were enthusiastic about, and proud of, the digital stories they had created, and were equally enthusiastic about sharing them with their peers.

A READING OF THE PRODUCERS' TEXTS

Having worked through the primary texts (see Chapter 4), I set out to analyse the producers' texts, or what the girls had to say about their work. This process revolves around the production process and so I used the final responses to the question pertaining to this matter in the questionnaire for the analysis. This included a question regarding how the girls felt about the project; what they liked about the project and what they did not enjoy about the project. I also included an analysis of the oral responses from the informal interviews.

Challenges in producing digital stories

When I read the girls' comments on the questionnaire and questioned the core group during semi-formal interviews, I was immediately struck by the fact that close to half the girls found it a challenge to produce their digital stories. Some of the producers (Jane, Charlotte, Sasha, Isabel May, Sally, Hollow, Zanele, Zori, Kayleigh and S'negugu) found it difficult to do this project because they were not accustomed to being given a task in which they could focus on their own understanding and opinions. They struggled to formulate their own ideas and which information they should include. They were also not sure that they were doing the right thing or what I, as the researcher expected of them or even if what they were doing was good enough for me (I had told them there were no right or wrong ideas). I agree with Aasma, one of the participants who questioned why learners who are given a task in which they have the freedom to do as they wish, find it difficult to do so. She said, *"Education is extremely conformist and narrow-minded. It forces pupils to mould their ideas and thoughts to fit a rubric or criteria of marking. We are made to do things for marks"*. I believe that her reasoning is sound, and see why such a project could lead some learners to feel overwhelmed and inadequate. Sally maintained, *"It was harder doing your own thing without instructions to help you, guide you to make your finished product"*.

However, many of the participants (Thembekile, Catherine, Molly, Summer, Bonnie,

Annabelle, Nandi, Madeline, Kim, Tayla, and Aasma) embraced being given the freedom to interpret the topic and be creative. They enjoyed thinking outside the box, as the saying has it, and expressing themselves without any constraints. Hollow, for example, wrote, *“It [The project] made me think about what I wanted to say because I was allowed to do it how I wanted to.”* S’negugu said, *“I was glad for the freedom we were given which gave me a chance to explore certain ideas. It taught me to trust my own opinions”*. Madeline wrote, *“I used pictures as these speak louder than words”*.

Sasha made reference to the rubric I had given them half way through the project. A request for the rubric was made by the Life Orientation teacher since she needed a mark for the end of term reports. Most of the girls, however, did not seem to be hindered by the inclusion of the rubric; this was reflected in their journals.

Nandi, whose uncle succumbed to AIDS, wrote a touching response. It read, *“I felt a sense of relief because creating my own digital story let me express what I had kept in my heart for so long... I was required to connect with my feelings. This project helped me grow as a person and has stopped the past from haunting me”*.

Summer, who produced a digital story on a young girl being raped, stated, *“This project has really been a learning experience for me. Although I have not had to research I have learnt a lot. My thoughts and opinions have changed and I’ve become more compassionate towards people living with HIV”*. This statement shows me that a participant’s emotions can be affected by playing a role in the production of a digital story. This happened when Summer played the role of a young woman who was raped by a stranger on a quiet, dusty road. The following thoughtful statement was made by Nana, *“At first I felt it was torture because I was doing something about something we don’t always talk about”*.

In the questionnaire I also asked participants to reflect on the whole project noting what they enjoyed or and disliked about the process. The answers varied and are discussed below.

Most of the girls enjoyed participating in the project. They relished the freedom to express themselves and be creative. Jane wrote, *“I liked it that we could cover any aspect of HIV and AIDS that we wanted to”*. Grace remarked, *“I liked the fact that we had the freedom to do anything [on the topic] and express yourself”*. Summer said, *“I enjoyed being allowed to be*

creative and original". Sasha noted, *"I liked that it was not a normal project on paper"*. Madeline's opinion was: *"I enjoyed the project because I could use my own opinion which helps to express one's self"*. Violet noted, *"It allowed us to portray our thoughts and ideas not just use factual information"*. Mayayo said, *"I liked the fact that I could use my own creativity. It allowed me to come up with innovative ideas to formulate my masterpiece. I was happy with the outcome"*. She was clearly very happy with her digital story since she refers to it as her "masterpiece". Roseline stated, *"The project enabled me to better my skills in expressing my views and thoughts, in ways other than words & still make others understand how you feel"*. As Alexander stated (and I agree), *"Digital storytelling lets students own their creative work..."* This is evident in the comment made by Mayayo in referring to her digital story as her "masterpiece".

Some participants maintained that the project was informative. Two participants, Catherine and Nandi, both in the core group, commented, *"It was educational"* while one of the other girls, Kalayila, stated, *"I gained more knowledge myself on topic"*. Similarly Joni wrote, *"The topic taught me a great deal"*. Janet said, *"I learnt about realness of the disease"*.

A few participants pointed out that the project was time consuming. Hollow wrote, *"It was a long process to put it all together"*. Jane mentioned, *"It was a lot of work to create so many different scenes and put them together which was time consuming"*. Catherine also said, *"It was time consuming"* while Amy wrote, *"it [her digital story] took too long to create"*. However, Molly said, *"Despite it [the project] being time consuming it made me think about the effects of those with HIV and AIDS"*. Thandi said, *"It [the project] was tough in the beginning and time consuming"*.

Five girls were positive about the second step of the process, which is taking part in the story circle. Kayleigh said *"I enjoyed the story circle with peers as this helped me with my own ideas"*. Aasma pointed out, *"Being put into groups for the story circle helped a great deal as I was open to new ideas and suggestions. The plan also helped me put together my thoughts and idea"*. Zori maintained, *"It was nice to hear other people's ideas and to see that we all have different views"*. Molly noted, *"I had fun listening to other's points of view"* and Sally stated, *"It was good to hear the ideas and interpretations of others in story circle"*. Tarryn claimed, *"It was helpful that we got into small groups to discuss our ideas"*. These comments prove that the aim of this step, which was to create a comfortable and safe environment in

which the participants put forward the first draft of their stories, was achieved. However, one girl, Nana, did not enjoy the story circle; she wrote, *“Discussing HIV/AIDS with peers is not my thing”*. This is understandable since she has been personally affected by the disease. A few participants actually made mention of the fact that they enjoyed working with Movie Maker which was Step 4 of the digital storytelling process. Kate’s statement was interesting; she said, *“I was able to learn about Movie Maker but most important I was able to experience emotions in which many of our youth today are forced to feel. I really thought this project was worthwhile”*. Grace mentioned, *“It was a very effective task to do. It was very interesting to do digital storytelling. I enjoyed the whole process of putting things together. I enjoyed figuring out the movie-maker process and how to use the effects”*. Rachel wrote, *“I had lots of fun finding the pictures and working out how to place them in my digital story. I also learnt the programme on the computer which is an important skill to have”*. Sienna said, *“I liked using another aspect of technology”*.

In my reflective notes I wrote that most of the girls seemed to find the Movie Maker process easy, but that there were however, some girls who had difficulty with it. In her reflection on the project, Jean, one of the girls in the grade said, *“I took pictures but had to redo the project as I could not get my pictures on the programme and some of them were deleted. I was very upset”*. Another girl, Annie, wrote, *“The program ‘2 animate’ (which is a computer drawing programme) would not allow me to combine music with the pictures”*. Nandi also had difficulty combining her music and pictures. This was a great pity since music adds the finishing touches to a digital story. When I read these reflections, I was reminded of Luke (2002) who states, *“The ability to import, download, drop and drag texts and imagery creates new skills...that encourage interdisciplinary creativity and imagination”* (p.87). I agree.

Two participants reflected positively on the use of music in their digital stories. It is clear that both of them carefully considered which music to use to complement their stories. Rashni stated, *“I loved the song I chose for the movie although it took a while to find the right one”* while Isabel-May said, *“I liked adding music and great amount of thought went into it”*.

Seven participants, of which only two were from the core group, maintained that they did not enjoy the project. The reason the core group girls gave was that the instructions they received were vague. I accept this criticism, but I believe that the classroom situation does not lend itself to learners carrying out a project in which they are given the freedom to work without

boundaries, and I understand that they could find the experience daunting. Participant Rita, who was not from the core group, also shared the sentiments of the two girls in the core group. She said, *“It was daunting not to have a clear outline of the project and what had to be included because I had limited knowledge, so I researched the topic”*. Based on the feedback from these participants, I believe that I should interrogate the digital storytelling process and the limitations should I ever wish to carry out such a project again. (The limitations as well as the challenges of this digital storytelling project will be discussed in Chapter 6). However, Ayanda spoke from a personal point of view. She said, *“I did not enjoy the project because it is too emotional”*. This is understandable since her cousin died from AIDS. Amy’s opinion was: *“I didn’t enjoy it at all because it is hard to make a digital story if HIV/AIDS has not directly affected you so I battled to find an idea but once I did, I got a little more excited”*. Lindi wrote, *“I did not enjoy it because of seeing people that are suffering or even worse dead. But it opened my eyes to things I had never thought of”*. I feel that she responded emotionally since she had not been exposed to the reality of HIV and AIDS before. Rose said, *“The topic had no relivents to my life so I found it hard to find a topic that inspired me”*. I sensed arrogance in Rose’s response. I got the feeling that she believed that HIV and AIDS were not part of her world as an upper-class white girl which, ironically, makes her vulnerable. This comment of Rose’s, as well as the use of the second person pronoun “you” by, for example, Hollow, Isabel May and Sally (to which I referred in Chapter 4) can be seen to be linked to being distanced from the HIV and AIDS issue.

Other questions the participants were asked were, “Other than the girls in your class, who else would you like to have shown your digital story to? Why? Do you plan to show your digital story to others?”

Jane (Case 1) said that she would like to have shown her digital story to *“[u]neducated children who don’t know about the disease”*. Similarly, Bonnie, (Case 10) wrote that she would like to have shown her story to *“[c]ommunities, undereducated poor people to help them to understand the cause and effect of HIV and AIDS allowing awareness and hopefully abstinence”*. From the latter part of this comment, as well as from a previous comment in the first question to the audience, it seems that Bonnie considered abstinence from sexual intercourse to be the safest way to prevent HIV infection.

Thembekile (Case 3) maintained that her digital story should be viewed by *“[t]he*

middleclass citizens and rural people need to be educated” on this topic. Catherine (Case 5) believed that her story should be viewed by “[t]he underprivileged to educate them”.

Molly (Case 6) responded by saying that she would have liked her digital story to be shown “[t]o children in the rural areas as they deserve to be educated....” Similarly Zanele (Case 13) said she would like to show her digital story “[t]o children, teenagers in rural areas so that they can see that HIV/AIDS is serious and it can happen to them”. In fact she did show her digital story but this issue will be elaborated on further in this chapter (see The reading of the other audience’s responses.) Sasha (Case 4) responded by saying, “*If I were to show it, [her digital story] it would be to younger people because they often do not understand how HIV and AIDS is passed on*”.

Summer, (Case 9) however, thought that her digital story should be shown, “[t]o people with AIDS ...as it has an important message for them” (her message is to remain positive). Similarly Nandi (Case 14) would like to have shown her digital story to, “[t]hose suffering from it [HIV and AIDS] and to those who do not know much about it”. Sally (Case 8), maintained that she would like her digital story to have been shown, “[t]o other schools and other people who I know to change their point of view”. Annabelle (Case 12) thought it would be good to show her digital story to “[o]ther grades so that they too can empathise with those who are infected and to my family”.

Isabelle May (Case 7) responded that she would like to show her digital story to “*family and friends*” as did Grace (Case 15). However, Grace was encouraged by Zanele to join her in showcasing their digital stories to less privileged learners from their Peer Teaching Club. This issue will be taken up later in this chapter (see The reading of the other audience’s responses). Hollow (Case 11) said, “*I would like to show it to my maid and the gardener as I think it would be interesting to see how they feel*”. Charlotte (Case 2) said that she did not wish to show her digital story to anyone. I think that this is because of her personal experience with HIV and AIDS.

Lastly, when considering the responses of the participants, it is interesting to note that although they would have been keen to show their digital stories to others such as the uneducated, the undereducated, the poor, those living in rural areas, those inflicted with HIV or AIDS or to the maid and gardener, they did not wish to show them to the upper class or the

elite of society. However, Bonnie mentioned that she would like to have shown her project to communities but she did not specify which communities. Once again it is clear that these girls are distancing themselves from the truth about HIV and AIDS. Additionally, Baker Miller (2004) asserts that for privileged groups it becomes “normal” (p.113) to treat others differently. I asked myself whether this would have an influence on how these girls understood the HIV and AIDS issue.

The girls speculate on the future of the digital storytelling project

The final questions asked on the questionnaire were, “Do you think it would be a good idea or not to carry out this project with the Grade 10 classes next year? Why do you say so?” By reading what the girls wrote, it is evident that this digital story project proved to be a rewarding experience for them in various ways. As a result, they thought it would be a good idea to carry out this project with the next group of Grade 10 learners. The reasons they gave were that the project gave them an understanding of the HIV and AIDS issue. Jane stated, “...they will be educated about the disease in greater detail”. Thembekile wrote, “...this project gave me the opportunity to learn so much about HIV and we should come together and help with the fight against AIDS. Catherine maintained that a project like this “gets one very involved and informed” and Bonnie maintained “...it is enjoyable, educational and allows for individuality”. In Zanele’s opinion “...it is good to understand HIV/AIDS better and to teach others about it”. Isabel May said, “It is a good learning experience. It was fun to do and something different”.

Annabelle mentioned that they learnt new skills by using Movie Maker for creating their stories. In addition, Summer and Hollow pointed out that the project allowed for creativity. Grace pointed out that the project “raised awareness” while Molly and Nandi maintained that it allowed them to reflect on the issue of HIV and AIDS. Sally asserted that the project “helped with life” which as I understand it, is a life skill. This, I believe, was because she was focusing on her own life “within a setting that is socially and culturally relevant” to her (Stuart, 2006, p.160).

Hollow illuminated the fact that the project was “visual” and allowed for one’s own “perspective” on the issue of HIV and AIDS. It is interesting to note here that Porter (2006)

points out that it has been found that a person processes visual information 60 000 times faster than narrative information.

Bonnie maintained that the project allowed for “*individuality*”. I believe that this was so because the stories were “*constructed from the participants’ own subject positions and told as personal narratives*” (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.125). Sasha felt that this type of project is seldom used in class. However, Charlotte maintained that the project was time consuming which I believe is indeed a limitation.

Reflecting on the above statements I agree with Standley (2003) who states, “*Combining the tools of today’s electronic media, [which in my case is digital storytelling] with great teaching methods has given educators a whole new way to give wings to a child’s learning*” (p.17).

The core group reflects on the process

Reflecting on the process through journal writing proved to be revealing of the core group’s views. The reflections varied both in content and length. While some participants elaborated a great deal in their diaries, others chose to reflect briefly. This is a pity and I questioned whether they were unfamiliar with the reflection process; I found it difficult to evaluate their experience in writing.

However, as I analysed what the girls had written, I noticed that at least half of the girls made mention of their experience using Movie Maker. To begin with they found it a challenge since it was the first time that they had used this programme. However, it was pleasing to note that once they had mastered the programme they seemed to enjoy the experience. Jane wrote the following in her reflection: “*I initially found this project quite difficult, and battled to think of ideas for my movie. But once I started, it wasn’t too difficult, and I started enjoying making a movie*”. Molly observed, “*Making the movie was a lot of hard work and a bit pressurising but it was fun*”. Hollow stated, “*The project was quite time consuming and challenging to do but I enjoyed it. It was very exciting to be able to make my own movie*”. Annabelle said, “*When I started this project I felt very confused. Movie maker was complicated and I had to learn how to use it...After putting the music in and watching my disc several times, I was happy with what I had come up with and excited to hand it in...*”

Zanele pointed out that, *“In the beginning...I felt very unhappy and stressed ...but it was not so clear that there would be so much work involved especially using Movie Maker something I did not even know of. In the end I felt better because my project turned out good”*. Nandi stated that she never really wanted to do this project because it had *“hit quite close to home”*. However, in her final reflection she wrote, *“...it has been a ‘worth’ the experience and I had a lot of fun exploring Movie Maker because I had never worked on it before so it was a learning and growing experience”*. Sally’s opinion was: *“Learning how to use Windows Movie Maker was hard at first but it became easier after a while”*.

Once again it became clear that the project was an educational process for some of the girls while for others the project drew their attention to the severity of the issue of HIV and AIDS and they were keen to play a more active role in spreading awareness or even supporting those who are infected with HIV. Charlotte stated, *“It [HIV and AIDS] has never really affected me before, but since completing my project, I have thought about HIV/AIDS a lot more. I now realize what a big problem the virus is and that however well-educated one is, it is still possible to contract the virus. I now have a different perspective about HIV and hope everyone else does. This project made me want to help with people with HIV and help to find a cure”*. Thembekile reflected, *“I now have a different perspective about HIV and hope everyone else does. This project made me want to help with people with HIV and help to find a cure”*. Bonnie’s opinion was: *“I am well aware now of the vital and monumental set [enormous role]we as a human race need to take in order to stop the virus and with the understanding of the ribbon I am willing to play my part in preventing the expansion of HIV/Aids”*. A few took a more aggressive stance and were keen to take up the fight, as they put it, to prevent the disease from spreading, or even to help find a cure. Accordingly, Catherine wrote, *“I feel empowered by the knowledge that I have learnt and am eager to join in the fight against Aids and share my knowledge with others. Now that I am fully aware of what Aids is doing to our people I feel it is my duty to help where I can and spread awareness”*. Thembekile stated, *“I am glad we did this project so now everyone in grade 10 knows what HIV is and we can come together and help with fighting AIDS”*.

Sasha pointed out that she felt she needed to be more aware and keep herself *“safe”*. She hoped that she could prevent herself from being raped by an HIV-positive person. I believe that she felt this way after watching the digital stories and, in particular, Summer’s (Case 9)

story which portrayed a rape scenario. In concluding this section I feel it is apt to mention Mullen (2003) who states:

We need to find ways not just to represent others creatively, but to enable them to represent themselves. The challenge is to go beyond insightful texts, to move ourselves and others into action, with the effect of improving lives. (p.117)

Some of the girls made direct reference to how this project had improved their lives. They said that have become more aware of the issue and see it in a more positive way. This comment is substantiated by the above reflections written by the girls. Several girls, too, alluded to the fact that there should be a call for action against HIV and AIDS. For example, Charlotte wrote, *“This project made me want to help with people with HIV and help to find a cure”*. Thembekile said, *“Now that I am fully aware of what Aids is doing to our people I feel it is my duty to help where I can and spread awareness”*.

AN OVERALL READING OF THE AUDIENCE’S TEXTS

The third of Gubrium and Harper’s (2013, p.187) pointers refers to the questions such as *“Why”, “Where?” and “For whom?” and the key to this process is “reception” and “performance”*. Thus the attention in this instance was on the audience’s written responses to the digital stories viewed. Before actually analysing the audience’s texts, my thoughts went back to the day when the girls gathered together in the Life Orientation room to watch the digital stories of their peers at the end of the project. With permission from the girls I had arranged with the Life Orientation teacher as well as with two other teachers in the high school to screen all the digital stories, which meant we were making a day of it, so to speak.

The Life Orientation room is large and it was possible to accommodate all the girls in the grade comfortably. At this point the room came alive with a buzz of voices while the girls eagerly waited for their digital stories to be screened on the white mimeo board in the front of the room.

I remember that the girls excitedly settled down to watch the digital stories. In my field notes I wrote:

Today we concluded our project by showing the girls the digital stories they had created. As the screen came alive with the digital stories, many faces lit up, many eyes widened and a great deal of elbow nudging and whispering took place. After the screening of each story, there was a loud round of applause from the audience and much lively chatter amongst the girls. Amazingly, when each digital story first appeared on the white board, one could hear a pin drop it was so silent in the room. We were all delighted with the outcome of the project. (Field notes, June 26, 2012).

To me it became clear that we had found, “*some new key to unlock the secrets of the people and stories we [had studied]*” (Goldman-Segall, 1998, p.99).

Kidd (2005) maintains that the “value chain of traditional producer-consumer relationships is fundamentally shaken, or ‘*bent like a pretzel*’ by developments in technology such as Internet and even projects like *Capturing Wales*” (p.4) because traditionally the participants were in control of the stories they were creating and at the end of the project they were able to take a copy home with them. Thus, stories like these were not available to the public for viewing but were collected to build up an archive. However, since digital storytelling has progressed in the field of participatory media, and the emphasis is not only on the production but also on distribution, the distinction between the producers and the consumers has blurred.

Burwell (2010) asserts that in this participatory culture media audiences are taking on a new role by interacting on the Internet. This role is one of convergence with the producer because young people are accustomed to an interactive role in this culture. In this light, it can be noted that there has been a shift in focus for the audience who now, it seems, is playing a more active role.

Boase (2008, p.5) maintains that digital storytelling is a heuristic process whereby the “*narrative repair*” can take place throughout the digital storytelling process or even when it is shown at the end of the process. Moreover, Sylvester and Greenidge (<http://www.readingrockets.org/article>) maintain that after the digital stories have been created, the producers should show them to their peers. Learners do not usually enjoy showing their work but it is considered a “*publishing step in the writing process*” (n.p.)

When taking into consideration the role of the audience, Solomon (2012) at the end of her

project with First Graders' digital storytelling, realised that the producers "*developed a deep awareness of audience*" and "*discovered new potentials for audience involvement in the meaning-making process*" (p.14). By this, she meant that "*there seemed to emerge an important transactional role for the audience involvement as the digital stories were shared ...*" (p.14). She likened this role to that of Rosenblatt's ([1938]/1995) transaction theory (cited in Solomon, 2012) which takes place during the process of reading. In summary, this questions whether meaning-making exists in the space between the producer and the audience as it does between the reader of a poem and the poem itself.

As with Solomon's First Graders' digital story screening, this was "*a new experience*" for these producers to share their work with an audience and so I am sure that each producer wondered how her digital story would be received by her peers and the teachers present (p.16). Solomon (2012) points out that memory of audiences' responses add meaning, value and depth to producers' creations, and also enhance their storytelling experience. Moreover, the author maintains that the audience experiences the digital stories "*through their own filters...*" (p.18). By this she means that factors such as the venue and the lighting play a part in how the audience receives a digital story. Accordingly, Solomon asserts that within her First Graders' project, the audience did create

a space with the power to generate reflection and power to change the author's perceptions of their own storytelling, the power to generate reflection, and a power to add layers of meaning beyond the author's original intent. (p.20)

The reading of the audience's texts

The first question I posed to the audience was divided into three parts but required the girls to respond with one answer. These were: "When you watched the digital stories of the other girls in the class, how did you feel? What effect did they have on you? Did you learn anything more about the issue of HIV and AIDS? Please elaborate." Sadly, some of the girls did not elaborate and answered only what they felt was important. The responses of the girls in the core group are presented first and these are followed by the responses of other girls in the grade.

As I studied all of these responses, it became clear that each member of the audience viewed

the digital stories through a different lens (Solomon, 2012). As a result, several interesting issues were highlighted. The first thing that struck me was that a new knowledge of HIV and AIDS was acquired by many of the girls. Three girls from the core group claimed that they were more knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS after watching the digital stories. Jane said, *“I learnt more as they [the other girls in the class] covered different areas to me. I learnt how it can destroy other people’s self-esteem and how it affects their lives forever”*. Thembekile wrote, *“When I watched the other stories, I felt that I learnt a lot more”* while Summer pointed out, *“because in my story I focused more on the individual whereas others had focused on the effects of AIDS throughout the world, on friendships and how it affects others”* watching the digital stories of others was a *“was a good learning experience. It helped me realise how others see AIDS and how it affects them. It made me see AIDS in a different light”*. Others, such as Charlotte said, *“It was quite interesting to see others’ views”*, while Sasha maintained the digital stories gave her food for thought. Isabel May stated that the other stories were, *“...clear, simple yet very good...”* and Kim claimed, *“They made me think deeply about the issue”*. Janet learnt that *“...there are many people in the world that are affected by HIV and AIDS and we need to make people more aware and caution them against contracting the disease”*.

It also became clear to me that the digital stories evoked an emotional response in many of the girls. For example, Jane and Sally were saddened by some of the stories they viewed. Jane wrote, *“I felt sad and the music also added to this [feeling of sadness]”*. Kelly was also saddened and upset by the digital stories she viewed and said, *“I was disappointed in myself for judging others who are HIV positive”*. Moreover, Catherine, Grace, and Betty were emotionally *“moved”* by the stories they watched. Rachel was touched by *“the visuals of little children who are victims [of HIV and AIDS]”*. Amy was also *“touched”* and said that the stories had a *“deep meaning”* for her since they showed the *“horrendousness”* of the disease. Kalayila was *“...emotionally touched by the other stories because of the reality of the situations presented in them”*. Bonnie described feeling *“devastated”* by the consequences of HIV and AIDS and decided she would *“...abstain from sexual intercourse”*. Pauline expressed shock *“...at how bad it is and how many people are affected”*. The digital stories also made her, *“...realise how valuable life is...”*

Additionally, the stories certainly included information that resulted in some of the girls in the audience feeling empathy for those who are infected and affected by the disease. Jane

maintained that while watching the digital stories, she realised how HIV and AIDS “...*can destroy other people’s self-esteem and how it affects their lives forever*”.

Sally pointed out that she felt sad “...*because of how people are left out and not included because of the disease they have*”. Annabelle drew attention to the fact that HIV and AIDS “...*affects more than the infected person, as loved ones pass away, families members are lost and that anyone can become infected*”. Summer noticed that HIV and AIDS have an effect “*on friendships*”. Having watched the digital stories, Bonnie realised that “*discrimination is never an answer*”. Molly (Case 6), Zanele (Case 13) and Betty were reminded that no-one is immune to the disease, and Ella was made aware of “...*the severity of the disease*” and realised that “*while sitting in the classroom there are millions of people out there struggling against Aids*”.

From the above comments, I realised that one of Joe Lambert’s (2007) seven elements of a good story, emotional content, was evident. According to Lambert, this should be evident in an effective digital story because it keeps the audience’s attention while involving them emotionally. I believe that the digital stories of the Grade 10 girls definitely met this requirement.

The second question I asked the audience was, “Which digital story/ies made in your class/grade had the most meaning for you? Why? Was there perhaps anything you agreed with? Explain what it was?”

The following is a summary of the responses of girls in the core group. Jane and Catherine felt that Jodi’s digital story had the most meaning for them. Jodi made a video of the girls from her class dressed in their school clothes, in the school passage. The shots were taken from their waist down. The gist of the story was that she had many good friends until they found out that her boyfriend had infected her with HIV. Thereafter they turned their backs on her. As Jane wrote, “*Friends judge you rather than stand by you*”. Catherine maintained that “... *it was effective using a school girl our age*”.

Charlotte, Isabel May, Nandi, and Grace stated that Betty’s digital story had the most impact on them. Betty was the only girl who made use of voice-over in her story which, as Charlotte pointed out “... *made it feel more close and real*”. Betty’s story also showed the reality of

HIV and AIDS since she showed some disturbing pictures of AIDS sufferers which she had downloaded from the Internet. She also gave interesting statistics. She showed a little HIV-positive black boy walking down a dusty road. Isabel May (Case 7) wrote that while watching the digital story she “...*felt sympathy and hurt for the HIV-positive people*”. It is clear that she was emotionally affected by this particular story. Nandi (Case 14) commented on the positive aspect of Betty’s story which she said, “*showed the effect of AIDS and how we can work as a team to overcome it*” while Grace (Case 15) wrote that “*it was simple, but effective and had a good amount of information which was well portrayed and presented*”. From the core group, Thembekile, Sasha, Hollow, Annabelle, and Zanele believed that Summer’s story had the most impact on them (see Case 9). It is interesting to note that all the girls commented on the fact that, although a young girl who was of a similar age to them was raped and infected, she chose to overcome it by picking herself up and being positive about her situation.

Sally and Summer did not choose a particular digital story, but Sally seemed to like them all and Summer stated that she liked “*the ones that dealt with friendships and disloyalty of friends*”. She also liked the digital stories that “... *showed that AIDS people are normal and need support*”. Unfortunately Molly did not answer this question.

Showcase productions to audiences from other schools

During an informal interview at the end of the screening of all the Grade 10 girls’ digital stories, two girls took up my challenge to show their digital stories to girls who were not from our school. These girls come to our school on a Friday afternoon to receive assistance with their studies. This outreach project is called “Peer Tutoring”. Zanele and Grace organised to show their stories to these girls. Once Zanele and Grace had shown their digital stories to six Grade 11 girls, they described their feelings to me about their stories after they had had feedback from their audience. Three of the girls were from a predominantly coloured school in the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg, and three were from an under-resourced school in a rural area outside of Pietermaritzburg. Zanele said,

The girls were gathered in a classroom at our school. When my digital story played they were attentive and really engaged with the clip. There were laughs and giggles at the stick figure characters, especially at the point where there was a rather explicit scene (See

Case figure 3 of Zanele's digital story). *After reading the comments made by the audience about the digital stories and seeing the positive attitude the girls had to my story, I felt very proud of my work because they gave very positive feedback, like my video made an impact on them. I would like to show it to other children/students to spread HIV and AIDS awareness.*

Grace said,

Intense but the girls enjoyed the digital stories. They liked my illustrations I used of waves, and the sound effects. They felt that my digital story was very informative and a good way of making people aware of HIV and AIDS. The vibe I got from the responses while the girls were watching was that my digital story was very positive. I felt proud that I was educating them about HIV and AIDS.

When I read these responses, I realised that the two girls were pleased with the audience's positive responses to their digital stories. It seems to me that "narrative repair" Boase (2008, p. 5) was not necessary. They both felt proud of their work and although Grace believed that she had educated the girls, Zanele had the desire to show even more people her digital story. When Zanele and I had a short informal discussion after the screening session, we both agreed that short digital stories like hers could be viewed on television in the same way that Amy Hill's radio slots, and call-in radio shows were (Gubrium and Harper, 2013). Zanele also mentioned that when she viewed her digital stories with this audience, it suddenly occurred to her that one of the scenes was "*rather explicit*" (a brief scene of stick figures in a position that suggested intercourse but was certainly not at all obscene) but I believe that this was a way of pegging in at the level of the young audience. In this way it gave the issue meaning and became real to them, Alexander (2011) maintains that just as with musicians, the beginning and endings are what audiences remember most. He states that the beginning and end "*powerfully shapes how (and if) an audience proceeds*" (p.197). However, to my mind, a powerful and rather explicit scene such as the one to which Zanele was referring, also "*powerfully shapes*" an audience. Scenes that cause laughs and giggles are often a good "punch line" and are remembered by the audience. I agree with Boase (2008) who maintains that stories often have a moral message for the audience. This was evident in, for example, in Zanele's story.

Gubrium and Harper (2013), state that various methods can be used to collect audience data. This data, they maintain, can assist researchers to gain knowledge of whether the audience understood the message intended by the producer, or whether further interpretations of the images and narratives were evident. The following responses from the audience to Zanele's (see Case 13) and Grace's (see Case 15) digital stories attest to this. Below are Zanele and Grace's questions to their audience.

1. How did you feel watching the digital story clip?
2. What effect would you say it had on you? (e.g. Did you feel part of the digital story when you were viewing it?)
3. Did you learn anything new?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on about the issue of HIV and AIDS?

I found the comments valuable and interesting since it was evident that the girls had been told about HIV and AIDS but they felt that it was good to be reminded of the issues covered in the digital stories. To substantiate this Justine said, *"It is nothing like most video clips that I have seen and it is an eye-opener for people who are unaware of HIV and AIDS to see it"*. Nomvelo stated, *"It made me review things I already knew"*. Celeste noted, *"It is sad that things can happen so fast"*.

The audience responded in various ways when they viewed the stories. Some of the girls were emotionally affected and used words such as *"scared"* *"scary"* and *"sad"* in their responses, while others, for example, Justine, responded more positively by saying, *"I liked it. It was eye-opening"*. Nomvelo was reminded of the seriousness of HIV/AIDS. She wrote, *"I feel that we sometimes take this very lightly and we don't know it and we end up in a difficult situation like HIV and AIDS"*. Aphiwe said, *"I'm feel a part of the digital clips you must think before you act"*. Mandisa wrote, *"I felt inspiring and I actually thought of just being myself instead of going out and having fun with friends"*. Celeste stated, *"It made me reconsider rushing into any relationship and really think of the consequences"*.

It is clear that Zanele's and Grace's digital stories had a powerful effect on the girls. Nomvelo wrote, *"It made me view things in a different way like being more careful. It made me review things I already knew"*. Celeste decided, *"To make my decisions wisely based on*

the knowledge I have". Justine wrote, *"It makes me feel like I need to look after myself"*. Laverne mentioned, *"Don't sleep around and be very careful with what you gonna do. Don't rush into dating"*. Mandisa stated, [The digital stories] *"remind me that we rather wait instead of rushing into relationships"*. Laverne pointed out that, *"...it's true life stuff that really happens"*.

When asked whether they had learned something new, Nomvelo responded enthusiastically by saying *"Yes. Yes"*. Aphiwe wrote, *"Yes I learn something that if you date with someone you must and you have the right to go to the clinic to check the blood before you sleep with someone"*. Laverne said it made her realise that *"... it's true life stuff that really happens"* and *"...people just do stuff without thinking"*.

There were some interesting comments made by the audience regarding the last question posed by Zanele and Grace, which was: Is there anything else would like to add or comment on about the issue of HIV and AIDS? In Mandisa's opinion, *"HIV&AIDS can destroy your future"*. Celeste is of a similar opinion. She says, *"The virus affects people for the rest of their lives"*. Laverne states, *"Always use protection to avoid all illnesses"*. However, Justine says, *"There are also other ways you may get HIV and AIDS for e.g. HIV positive mother, or using unclean needles"*. I feel that these comments are pertinent to both young people and adults regarding the issue of HIV and AIDS. I believe that much was learnt from the audience's point of view and I agree with Solomon (2012, p.18) that an audience experiences digital stories through their own *"filter"* and their responses vary. The stories are viewed from different *"points of viewing"* (Goldman-Segall, 1998, pp.3-4).

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the data of the producers' and the audience's texts was analysed. Some participants found the project challenging because they were not accustomed to being given a task on the completion of which they had the freedom to focus their own understanding, while others embraced the idea of being able to create a digital story about HIV and AIDS as they understood it. They maintained that they learnt a great deal from the whole process.

The audience's responses to the digital stories varied. Each member of the audience chose her favourite digital story and many said that by watching these stories their knowledge of the issue of HIV and AIDS had increased. Others felt that they were emotionally affected in being faced with the reality of HIV and AIDS.

In the closing chapter I will summarise the project, offer concluding thoughts, and highlight the possibilities for further research.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Using digital media environments, young people have begun to carve out their own pathways, becoming accepted and respected as capable learners with their own intellectual passions, theories, and ways of understanding. Within these electronic spaces, they take on personalised thinking attitudes – ways of thinking, that are not fixed and impenetrable, but rather flexible to their ways of making sense of the world. (Goldman-Segall, 1998, p. x)

In this chapter, I summarise my research project and offer some conclusions. I also discuss the limitations of this study and the obstacles I encountered as well as attempting to offer new knowledge with particular reference to HIV and AIDS and adolescent girls in an elite environment.

SUMMARY

Wrapping up the findings of the research project

Now that this research project has been completed and has resulted in many valuable findings, I think it would assist the reader of this thesis for me to recap these briefly. Otañez (cited in Gubrium and Harper, 2013) observes that digital stories allow participants to focus on their own perspectives on pertinent issues. I agree with him; I saw that when the girls from this elite school were given the opportunity to address the issue of HIV and AIDS from their own point of view (one of the seven elements of digital storytelling referred to by Lambert, 2007), they were able to frame their knowledge and understanding of HIV and AIDS through their digital stories.

The primary texts

From the findings of the digital stories I analysed in Chapter 4, 16 themes emerged but sometimes two or more themes were incorporated into one digital story. Below is a summary

of the knowledge that was gleaned from the how the girls understood the issue of HIV and AIDS.

A high number of girls explored the issue of how *A weak or careless moment leads to unprotected sex with a HIV positive person*. The reasons they gave included being easily influenced by a partner or being caught up in a weak moment by a partner at a party following substance abuse. Another theme that emerged was that of *HIV and AIDS myths*. These digital stories attempted to show how one can and cannot become infected with HIV and that empathy should be shown towards HIV and AIDS sufferers. Accordingly, they created an awareness that HIV positive people should not be discriminated against, out of fear of becoming infected with the virus. *Discrimination against HIV positive people* was also a theme that emerged. Besides showing how HIV positive people, whose status is known to others, are discriminated against, some digital stories showed the burden that is being carried by the afflicted person. Also, there were those who explored the theme: *HIV and AIDS do not discriminate*. These stories showed that people from all walks of life, all ages, and all races can be infected by HIV and then go on to develop AIDS.

Another theme that was explored was of *HIV and AIDS being a wrecker of homes and our country*. Here the digital stories focused on how the virus can be passed on to any member of a family, with devastating results. One of the girls gave an example of a whole family succumbing to the disease, which is highly unlikely. This pointed out her lack of information on the topic. However, this example could have been used metaphorically suggesting the emotional death of those surviving the death of a loved one. The theme, *Rape of young and innocent girls* showed that young girls are vulnerable and the likelihood of a young girl being raped is great but that it is best to remain positive under such circumstances. One girl focused on *HIV and AIDS statistics*. The statistics pointed out the seriousness and devastation of this pandemic. One girl explored the theme, *HIV and AIDS leads to orphans* in which she illuminated the fact that many young children are left behind “without hope”.

Additionally, the theme *Stand up and help in the fight against HIV and AIDS* was explored. These digital stories encouraged the viewers to take an active role in fighting HIV and AIDS and to work towards finding a cure. Moreover, some girls explored the theme, *What are HIV and AIDS?* Then there were two girls who chose to include their own interpretation of the theme *How I interpret the issue of HIV and AIDS*. The issues that were raised here were that

HIV and AIDS is a huge problem that should not be ignored as well as that the experience is one of suffering, heartache and loss. Further, people should be educated in an effort to curb the spread of the HIVirus and that condoms should be used during sexual activities or, better still, that one should say “*NO*” to such activities. Another theme that emerged is that *HIV positive people need to be supported*. The girls who created these digital stories focused on the importance of supporting those who are HIV-positive and not treating them differently.

One girl drew attention to the theme of *Contaminated blood at a scene of an accident* and she pointed out the need to exercise caution when assisting an injured person at such a scene. Similarly, the theme, *The importance of HIV AND AIDS awareness*, focused on the need to protect ourselves and think before we act, especially when in a relationship with a man. The theme, *The importance of a positive attitude if affected by HIV virus* drew attention to the fact that an HIV-positive person can still lead a good life and therefore should have a positive outlook.

Lastly, the theme, *Personal experience with death of a family member* emerged in a heart-wrenching story in which the producer revealed her first-hand experience of a family member’s suffering and subsequent death. I concur with Miller (2009) who points out, that personal stories such as this, provide learners with the opportunity of thinking through their past and present experiences.

Having seen how the girls came to understand the issue of HIV and AIDS, I believe that they fit into the category of youth-as knowledge-producers. It was interesting to note that some of the themes that emerged covered or overlapped those that emerged from a digital storytelling project that had taken place with rural youth at a Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal. Similar themes emerged during the *Sonke* projects under the guidance of Hill. The themes are: *Discrimination against HIV positive people*, *HIV positive people need to be supported*, *A weak or careless moment leads to unprotected sex with an HIV positive person*, *The importance of HIV and AIDS awareness* (which included reference to abstinence from sexual intercourse as a way of reducing the spread of the virus.)

The production texts

After the research project had been completed, I realised that digital storytelling can make particular contributions to knowledge production. I believe that the use of digital storytelling was a critical interest space for them in which to create their own knowledge on the issue of HIV and AIDS. The girls had previous experience in using computers, and this, to a certain extent had stood them in good stead when they carried out the project, even though most of the participants had never before been exposed to Movie Maker software. Bull and Kajder (2004) state that the use of digital storytelling places technology “*in the hands of the learner*” (p.49), which is precisely what I became aware of when the girls created their digital stories.

The digital stories created by the girls included many forms of media which were critical to their knowledge production on HIV and AIDS. The value of digital storytelling as a visual participatory method of research lies in its interwoven use of different media to create meaning. The visual forms of media included images that were drawn on the computer using the computer programme, *2 animate*. Some girls scanned their pictures onto the computer, while others used photographs which were taken by their friends. Others downloaded images from the Internet. By showing something those bits of knowledge that are difficult to say in words, can be retrieved and/or expressed. Besides downloading visual images, the girls also downloaded music for their digital stories from the Internet. Through carefully selected sounds and music, the girls enhanced their digital stories while also evoking emotional responses. This is another of Lambert’s (2007) elements of a good digital story and is known as the power of soundtrack.

Kress (2000, p.111) points out that modern technologies lend themselves to visualisation and that is how I perceive the nature of digital storytelling. The digital stories of the girls are good examples of “multimodal ensembles” which included not only visual but also audio and gestural meaning and that resulted in communicating meaning. Further, semiotic modes such as colour, music, sign and symbol also played a vital role in the digital stories (Kress 2000; 2010). They assisted in communicating meaning to the audience that written text alone could not have accomplished. The use of colour attracted the eye of the viewer and brought about unity and consistency within the digital stories. Colour, for example, also added meaning to important words that the producers used in their digital stories to highlight significant information for the viewer. In addition to language and grammar, the use of symbols and

signs, which are also considered semiotic modes, allowed for untold possibilities of human expression and connection to the digital stories and beyond. The symbols that were used by the girls in their digital stories included, for example, red hearts and ribbons, and crosses in a cemetery. Gestural meaning was also used. For example, a head bowed down suggesting shame or despair. Another example is that of upper body movements such as a set of arms swaying above the head suggesting the person is dancing (Kress, 2000; 2010).

Text writing and narration was also done on the computer. Since the participants had access to the Internet, and because they were familiar with obtaining information from this source, the task of downloading appropriate images, music or other information was easy. This demanded less energy than, for example, drawing or using a photo they took themselves, even though I had mentioned in the introductory lesson that their own photos or drawings should be used. I believe that another reason that some of the girls chose to download pictures from the Internet, is that they believed that these pictures would have a greater effect on the viewer and would be more effective than, for example, stick figures. This was particularly obvious when images of HIV and AIDS sufferers were included in the digital stories of some girls. A further reason could be as Maddin (n.d.) correctly observes, that by using web tools such as Movie Maker, images or video clips can be easily uploaded into the storyboard. These easy-to-use technological downloads can also be edited and/or re-ordered. Moreover, as Maddin points out, and I agree, by researching and organising information, choosing images and/or incorporating video, selecting music and creating a narrative text, the learners are given the opportunity for “*deep mastery of material they are learning*” (p.3). Barrett (2006) asserts that during digital storytelling learners are engaged in project-based learning which incorporates technology into instruction, and allows for reflection in deep learning. This became clear to me as I read the girls’ reflections in their journals once the project had been completed. Some of them observed that knowledge that had been imparted from the digital stories and, for that matter, the whole process, was educational. For some of the girls, the knowledge that was shared through the digital stories drew attention to the severity of HIV and AIDS and they were motivated to play a part in the lives of those living with HIV or living with AIDS.

I experienced how comfortable the participants were in sourcing images and music from the Internet to create and enhance their digital stories on HIV and AIDS. Thus I agree with Carrington and Robinson (2009) who maintain that youth are typically involved in remix,

although Knobel and Lankshear (2008) observe that with remixing it is imperative to be familiar with all aspects of copyright symbols and to gain knowledge of what is ‘fair use’.

I believe, as do Gubrium and Harper (2013), that moving through the whole digital storytelling process allowed the participants, *“to construct and represent their own experiences, as well as to consciously observe the way they move through the production process”* (p.129). One step in the process that was particularly significant for the girls in their creation of knowledge on HIV and AIDS, was the story circle. In their responses, several girls were positive about this step. They maintained that it helped them brainstorm ideas, cultivate fresh ideas and hear other girls’ points of view on the issue of HIV and AIDS. I agree with Gubrium and Harper that this step *“create[s] a safe and comfortable space”* (p.128) for participants to present their stories and, at the same time, allow for constructive feedback from other members of the circle. Alexander (2011) points out that this *“creative state”* is important since ... *“it shifts our mental gears, allowing free association to replace linear routines, wandering instead of taking planned routes”* (p.194). Additionally, as Gubrium and Harper (2013) observe, the story circle allows for discussion of *“potentially difficult experiences”* (p.128) mentioned in their stories. Although this may have been so for most participants, one girl who has personally been affected by HIV and AIDS did not enjoy participating in the story circle.

Some girls’ digital stories focused on first-hand experience. For example, Nandi’s (Case 14) experience was with the death of a family member to AIDS. Therefore, I concur with Gubrium and Harper (2013) that *“[t]he workshop places the multiple dimensions of participants’ experience on the center stage instead of backgrounding them to the presentation of the ‘real’ data at hand”* (p.129).

In creating their knowledge on how they understand HIV and AIDS, the girls *“...enjoyed the idea of piecing together their thoughts and connecting them any which way they wanted to by titles, audio, narrations, motions, transitions and other Photo Story effects”* (Sadik, 2008, p.502). This gave the girls the opportunity to *“collect, organize, reflect and communicate evidence of their learning with others...”* (p. 503). As I mentioned in my field notes, *“many faces lit up when their digital story was being screened and we were all delighted with the outcome of the project”*. It was as if the learners had indeed found *“some new key to unlock the secrets of the people and stories we study”* (Goldman-Segall, 1998, p.99).

Hull and Katz (2006) point out that the process of digital storytelling enhances self-confidence. This is true for participants such as Sasha (Case 4) and Sally (Case 8) who initially lacked self-confidence. The opportunity to create their own digital story gave them a sense of accomplishment and a new level of confidence

Sadik (2008) points out that with digital storytelling, “[s]tudents learned to think and write about people, places, events and problems that characterized their individual life experiences or others’ experiences” (p.502). This was particularly evident when some girls shared their personal experience of how family members have suffered and eventually succumbed to AIDS (see Case14). If it were not for this digital storytelling project, this knowledge may never have been shared. Others such as Summer (Case 9) depicted a rape scenario, very common in South Africa today, for her digital story in which she was the rape victim.

Although many girls mentioned that they initially found Movie Maker difficult to use, they seemed to enjoy the experience in the end, and were pleased with the outcome. They felt that they had been able to convey their understanding of the implications of HIV and AIDS. Additionally, for some girls the knowledge they gained while creating their own stories and from watching the digital stories of their peers was invaluable. It gave them knowledge of all the themes that emerged (as discussed in Chapter 4).

The audience texts

The responses of the audience when they watched the digital stories of their peers were interesting and they too, highlighted the value of digital storytelling. Although each member of the audience looked at the digital stories though a different lens or filter (Solomon, 2012), valuable information was obtained from these stories. It was pleasing to observe that many of the girls gained a new understanding of the issues related to HIV and AIDS. Moreover, the digital stories gave the audience food for thought and stirred the emotions of many. Some stories aroused sadness while others resulted in members of the audience being “*touched*” or “*moved*”. Additionally, the digital stories included information that resulted in several of the girls in the audience having empathy for those who are infected and affected by HIV and/or AIDS. Some members of the audience became aware of how HIV and AIDS affect families and friendships as well as how those who are infected are ostracized. Other members of the audience pointed out that after viewing some of the digital stories, they became aware that no

one is immune to HIV. Thus, the information gleaned from the audience, both from the Grade 10 girls in our schools and from the girls in the other schools, can assist the researcher to gain an understanding of whether the knowledge created by the girls was understood by their audience as was intended by the producers of the digital stories: the digital stories certainly had an impact on these girls. Some of the girls in Zanele's and Grace's audience were also emotionally affected; they used words such as "*scared*" "*scary*" and "*sad*" in their responses to the questions posed. Thus, it is clear that the third element of digital storytelling, which is emotional content, played an important role in these stories. They were effective and kept the audience's attention while involving them emotionally as Lambert (2007) explores.

One girl observed that the digital stories were an eye-opener, while for several girls these stories re-enforced the seriousness of HIV and AIDS as well as re-iterating some information they already knew. For others, the knowledge gleaned from the digital stories was a reminder to take stock of how life should be lived, and the importance of acting responsibly when making decisions. I, the researcher, obtained a great deal of knowledge from this. It was clear that Lambert's (2007) second element of digital storytelling, the crucial dramatic question, was answered and that its purpose, holding the attention of the audience, was realised.

For me, the feedback I obtained from most of the girls in the grade was that they enjoyed carrying out the digital story project because they were given the freedom to express themselves creatively. I believe that in order for personal knowledge to be nurtured and expressed, it is critical for learners to be given this kind of space. As I mentioned before, "*[d]igital storytelling lets students own their creative work*" (Alexander, 2011, p.216): I saw this happening. One girl mentioned that the project allowed for individuality and I agree with her because, as Gubrium and Harper (2013) point out, digital stories are constructed from "*the participants' own subject positions and told as personal narratives*" (p.125). However, one girl did not enjoy the project because she had experienced a cousin dying from AIDS. Even though this could be seen in a negative light, there is a positive side. She and the other girls who had experienced a family member's suffering and death as a result of the virus, appeared to experience catharsis once they had completed their digital stories. One girl maintained that it was difficult to create a digital story because of her limited knowledge about the HIV and AIDS topic and another stated that it was difficult because she had not been directly affected by the virus. I believe that as a result of having watched all their peers' digital stories, they understood that HIV can affect anybody and that everyone has a

responsibility towards the issue. One girl did not enjoy the project because she had never been exposed to the reality of HIV and AIDS and therefore felt emotional. However, I feel that in order for people to experience the reality of HIV and AIDS, it is necessary for them to be exposed to the suffering of people who either have the virus or who are living with AIDS.

One girl however, observed that she would like to have shown her project to communities but she did not state to which communities.

The questionnaires

The comments on the questionnaire which the girls filled in at the end of the project revealed that close to half the girls found the project difficult or challenging to carry out. They were not accustomed to being given a task on which they could focus their own understanding of something like HIV and AIDS. They found it difficult to think up their own ideas or even what information should be included. They were also not sure if they were on the correct path or sure regarding what was being required of them or what would be pleasing for me. Many of them enjoyed the freedom and creativity that digital storytelling grants. It helped them to focus on their understanding of HIV and AIDS and at the same time to think outside the box, as the saying goes, and to express themselves in ways that more traditional classroom methods of pen and paper learning do not permit. As Mullen (2003) correctly observes,

We need to find ways not just to represent others creatively, but to enable them to represent themselves. The challenge is to go beyond insightful texts, to move ourselves and others into action, with the effect of improving lives. (p.117)

Van Laren, Mudaly, Pithouse-Morgan and Singh (2013) observe that participatory research can be seen to be a “*commitment to making a difference in the research participants’ lives*” (p.1) and to bring about social transformation. I believe this to be particularly the case with digital storytelling because some girls wrote that after completing the project they view the issue of HIV and AIDS in a different light. One girl maintained that before the project she was not completely aware of how one can contract the virus, but after the project she was not afraid to be in the company of an HIV-positive person. Others had a change of mind in that they realised that anyone is at risk at contracting the virus and it is not only the poor lower socio-economic class of people who are at risk of contracting it. Thus, it seems they no longer

look down on those who are infected, and are also more aware of how they conduct themselves in their own lives. Lastly, some girls pointed out that it is everyone's responsibility to fight against HIV and AIDS which clearly shows a shift in their mind set.

In the introductory chapter I focused on the high rates of HIV infection in South Africa and highlighted that *everyone is infected or affected* discourse that is still significant. Since I believed that there is silence on this pressing issue in affluent schools, I discussed the notion of elite schools and Elite Studies, and considered carefully why there is a need for this kind of work in them. I also addressed the issue of HIV and AIDS in a school context in South Africa and highlighted arts-based projects that have been carried out in the classrooms in this country. Other HIV and AIDS projects which have taken place outside of the classroom were also highlighted.

In the second chapter I mapped out the literature review on the use of digital storytelling as a participatory visual tool in relation to meaning making. I began the chapter with a conceptual framing of the work in the context of multimodality and convergence culture. Since the work on digital storytelling is located within the broader study of participatory visual and arts-based research, I went on to consider this work as research and discussed its educational significance. Lastly, I considered the challenges of digital storytelling. These included the length of time such a project takes to carry out within a school term and the lack of technical experience the educator may have to carry out such a project.

The third chapter of this thesis dealt with the methodology and methods for this research project. The theoretical framework for methodology was discussed and since I was aiming for an in-depth inquiry, I explained my decision that this research study should draw on qualitative approaches. These were participatory, digital, and visual studies. Moreover, I discussed the research setting in which the research project took place, and the three phases of the actual process that were essential to the fieldwork with a group of Grade 10 girls. The data sources were outlined. The ethics pertaining to visual participatory research were discussed and the ethical constraints of my research project were illuminated. The steps of working with the data from the digital stories were explained. Lastly, I discussed the assessment framework for the girls' term marks.

In Chapter 4, I analysed the rich data obtained from the 70 digital stories and the interesting findings were noted in detail. The chapter focuses particularly on the work of 15 girls who formed the core group of the study. In this chapter I analysed the texts across several different modes including multimodality.

In Chapter 5, the producers' texts on the process of digital storytelling were analysed and the findings were noted. Their challenges were illuminated and I considered the use of such a project in the future with other Grade 10 girls. I analysed the audience's responses to the digital stories and noted the findings noted. Finally, a synopsis of the finding was included.

CONCLUSION

The study set out to explore two research questions:

1. What knowledge and understanding of HIV and AIDS is revealed when adolescent girls in an elite school engage in digital storytelling?
2. What is it about digital storytelling in and of itself that is critical to knowledge production, particularly in the context of HIV and AIDS?

Question 1

In posing and answering research question 1 (What knowledge and understanding of HIV and AIDS is revealed when adolescent girls in an elite school engage in digital storytelling?) I had set out to explore with the girls themselves the overall effectiveness of using digital storytelling to address HIV and AIDS. While I did not carry out a before-and-after investigation, I was able to explore the ways in which this work provided a space for the girls to think critically, and the freedom to express themselves on how they understood HIV and AIDS, thereby unleashing their creativity. This approach also assisted me in deepening my understanding of this population by allowing the girls the opportunity to explore their own understanding of HIV and AIDS. This understanding helped build on, and contribute to, the existing knowledge of youth about HIV and AIDS in South Africa. The data that was gleaned from the girls' digital stories is evidence that this project contributed to making the girls more aware of the significance and ramifications of HIV and AIDS. Further, I believe that this project made the girls more aware of the fact that they, as part of the wider community, and as part of an elite subsection of it, have a social responsibility towards those who are infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. Accordingly, I agree with Sajan Virgi (2012) who observes

“One of the most powerful outcomes of photovoice is the space it provides participants to create new knowledge and draw meaning from it” (p.6). Digital storytelling has the same outcome.

Throughout the study I have been particularly interested in the area of Elite Studies and the notion of studying up (Nader, 1972). I believe that this study revealed how a group of learners in this elite environment in South Africa could come to understand more about HIV and AIDS and understand more about their understanding of the subject. In South Africa, various arts-based projects drawing on digital technology have focused on youth in rural schools, with the aim of creating a more youth-centred method of generating knowledge and effecting changes in behaviour related to HIV and, therefore, to AIDS. However, these visual arts-based studies focused on youth-as-knowledge-producers at the other end of the social spectrum, the population that the Higher Education HIV and AIDS programme (HEAIDS, 2010) recommended needed to be addressed, too.

Before I carried out this research project, I had gained the impression that the school itself as a whole appeared to be unaffected by HIV and AIDS, and its population uninfected in spite of the fact that South Africa is in the grips of the HIV pandemic. One of my concerns, as I pointed out at the beginning of this project, was for the well-being of these girls who have limited life experience. It seemed to me that by drawing their attention to the issues related to HIV and AIDS through a digital storytelling project I could make a difference to their lives. However, after the project had taken place, the data that was produced showed me that there were some girls who had been personally affected by the loss of a family member to AIDS. This I would never have known had I not embarked on this project. I believe that the digital story project increased the possibility of some healing in these girls. Here I am reminded of Nandi’s comment: *“I felt a sense of relief because creating my own digital story let me express what I had kept in my heart for so long... I was required to connect with my feelings. This project helped me grow as a person and has stopped the past from haunting me”*. This might not have taken place had she, and others, not been given this opportunity.

The research that the girls carried out to produce their digital stories was considerable, and it is noteworthy that some of the girls made the need for information the very theme of their stories. At the same time, a critical feature of the work was to realise that a number of the girls in Grade 10 had misinformation about HIV and AIDS. This was evident, for example, in

their use of the term HIV/AIDS as opposed to HIV and AIDS. In their digital stories they were not able to distinguish between the two. In another, a girl mentioned that the HI virus can be spread through organ transplants in South Africa which is highly unlikely, though not impossible. Another spoke of an entire adult family succumbing one by one to AIDS. This gave the impression that AIDS can be caught, like a cold or influenza. After the completion of the fieldwork, a speaker from outside the school was invited to come and address the girls on the subject of HIV and AIDS.

I would also be remiss if I did not draw attention to a worrying feature of some of the girls' responses which relate to the issue of othering, or distancing one's self with a not-one-of-us attitude in relation to HIV and AIDS in South Africa. I had hoped that the project would help to address the fact that HIV and AIDS is everyone's responsibility. While I was analysing the data, it became evident that many girls made extensive use of second and third person pronouns such as "you" and "they" as opposed to using first person 'I' and "we" in their digital stories. This suggests that they were detaching themselves from this issue, perhaps either because they were inadequately informed, or as Baker Miller (2004) observes, because these privileged groups become the model for what they themselves consider to be typical in their treating other human beings differently. The privileged do not want to know about the experiences of those who are in less fortunate positions than they are. However, as a teacher, I realised that this attitude as well as being morally unacceptable, could place these girls at risk, so this issue was also addressed in the open discussion on HIV and AIDS which took place at the end of the project.

I do not have concrete evidence beyond the girls' testimonies, as to whether or not this digital story project did in fact assist with or change their behaviour in their personal lives. I cannot know, for example, if the discussions on substance abuse and the lack of emotional-closeness and the ways in which these factors might link to HIV and AIDS affected them personally. I would like to believe that the project did lead to lasting behaviour, or even, attitude, change. In their digital stories several girls focused on the importance of being cautious when in a relationship with a partner or when at a party where alcohol and other substances were being used. Perhaps this project contributed to placing the girls in a position as advocates for caution through their own digital stories. As noted earlier, my concern is the fact that girls and young women between the ages of 15 and 19 years of age have a higher rate of HIV infection than males of this age (van der Linde, 2013).

Overall, I believe that this study fitted into the notion of research itself as a type of social change that researchers such as Schratz and Walker (1995) and others write about. Likewise, I agree with Mc Clelland (2006) who states that the voices of young people are significant in identifying key issues in combating HIV. I would say that digital storytelling looked further than the conventional educational programme does. It was an excellent resource to use in order to cover various topics as stipulated in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in Life Orientation classes for Grade 10 learners, including the development of self in society, social and environmental responsibility, and democracy and human rights. This work highlighted the need for solutions related to critical issues affecting themselves and their society as well as their human rights. In summary then, engaging the adolescent girls from this elite school in the digital storytelling project contributed to existing knowledge on HIV and AIDS in South Africa. It contributed to knowledge in the area of Elite Studies and it slotted into the idea of research as social change. Lastly, this project was an excellent and innovative way of covering the topics specified in the CAPS document for Life Orientation at the level of Grade 10.

Question 2

In posing and answering question 2, I was particularly interested in what it is about digital storytelling (as opposed to participatory video, photovoice or other participatory visual approach) that would be beneficial. As Jewitt (2008) points out,

how knowledge is represented, as well as the mode and media chosen, is a crucial aspect of knowledge construction, making the form of representation integral to meaning and learning... That is, the ways in which something is represented shape both what is to be learned that is the curriculum content and 'how' it is to be learned. (p. 241)

Digital storytelling, the production of which includes the use of the Internet, photographs, drawings, videos, music, text, and narration as well as other digital forms requires that the producer chooses from a variety of different signs and symbols results in powerful meaning-making. While this clearly overlaps with photovoice and participatory video, digital stories are multimedial, and the process and outcome offer a collection of visual, oral, and textual material. The use of these modes allowed the girls to express themselves in a variety of ways through, for example, the choice of various program options in Movie Maker and choice of music, as well enabling them to connect with their peers and external audience on the critical

issue of HIV and AIDS. A feature of using digital storytelling in the way I used this method to carry out this study, is that each girl produced her own unique story, created by herself but with input from her peers and her teacher/facilitator. Other factors also had an influence on the digital stories that were produced. These were the institutional setting (including other teachers and institutional expectations) society, local cultures and dominant discourses and the history of apartheid. The study was also very participatory in relation to the follow up discussions and viewings.

Before embarking on this project, I had instructed the girls to make use of their own photographs or to draw their own pictures for their digital stories. However, it soon became apparent to me that Web 2.0 has brought about new opportunities for learners. Since free authorising tools are easily available, using Web tools such as Movie Maker allowed for easy access to uploading images or video clips into the storyboard ready for editing and/or re-ordering. As Maddin (n.d.) points out, this user-friendly technological tool is an important support to participants in creating digital stories. Moreover, much data – many examples of convergence culture and remix – resulted from their use of images and music from the Web. By looking for and organising information, selecting images and music, and creating a narrative text, the learners were given the opportunity to offer full meaning of the material they were learning about and creating (Maddin, n.d.). Additionally, this information from the Web as well as the information that was creatively produced by the girls contributed to a large extent to visualisation which forms a considerable part of digital storytelling. Therefore, multimodality together with mutlimediality played a key role in terms of meaning making,

Applying the multimodal analysis of Kress (2000; 2010) in this project has been a useful way for me, as the researcher, to interpret the data that was produced in each of the girl's digital stories. While language, grammar, punctuation, and layout were powerful in shaping the girls' digital stories, the (mis)use of grammar and punctuation were also constraints. The use of colour provided unity and consistency in the digital stories, while the use of black and white evoked, for example, feelings of sadness and despair. Additionally, the colour in which words were written gave emphasis to their meaning. Their use of audio, which included music and sound, assisted me in interpreting the girls' data in that these components had the potential to create the mood of the digital stories as well as communicate meaning. "*Gesture language*" (Kress, 2000, p. 186) such as the facial expressions of people, their body movement and posture were important, too, to the meaning-making process. Semiotic modes

like symbols and signs such as the use of hearts, stop signs and red ribbons expressed powerful meanings that words alone would not have done. These “*multimodal ensembles*” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 111) resulted in multiple layers of meaning being communicated to all who viewed the digital stories.

Although the girls live in the age of new media and modern technology with which they are surrounded both at school and at home, I believe digital storytelling expanded on their digital media and computer skills while at the same time focusing on the critical issues of how they understand HIV and AIDS. The technological skills they acquired during this project were used effectively to produce and disseminate knowledge on HIV and AIDS, and will be beneficial to them in the future. This approach is in line with the second of the two important aims of the National Curriculum Standards (NCS, 2011) which is to “*use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others*” (p. 5). The digital storytelling approach humanises learning and teaching. It also satisfied what Lankshear and Knobel (2003) and other researchers see as the need for approaches that are relevant to putting young people at the centre of knowledge production.

This study provided evidence on the usefulness of digital storytelling to teaching itself as a pedagogical approach. Using the hands-on approach of digital storytelling made it less daunting for me, and less daunting for the girls to raise awareness of, and discuss sensitive issues around, HIV and its prevention, and about AIDS, with girls in the classroom during Life Orientation lessons. This new direction of addressing HIV during Life Orientation lessons was effective since the girls were placed in a position where they were not merely listening to the teacher but were, instead, engaged with their own ideas and their own meaning making and in doing so they themselves became the knowledge producers. This helped to test out recommendations from the HEAIDS (2010) report cited in Chapter 1 on the use of participatory visual methodologies. In summary, then, from the above it is clear that digital storytelling can be seen to be crucial to knowledge production, particularly in the context of HIV and AIDS.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEW KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes to new knowledge in several areas of research, framed in particular by its focus on Elite Studies – itself an emerging body of work – in its having taken place in an

affluent independent school as well as its focus on the idea of youth-as-knowledge-producers.

Theoretical contribution

First, it addresses reducing the huge gap in the research literature in the area of Elite Studies and studying up (Nader, 1972). This study contributes to the integration of HIV and AIDS education in the context of Elite Studies, thus adding to the sparse literature available on the ways in which affluent or elite schools address this issue, as well as considering gender and class. In particular, it contributes to expanding knowledge of how HIV and AIDS are understood in a school context, in this case an affluent school, in South Africa. This project fits into the work that has resulted from the breaking-the-silence discourse on the topic of HIV and AIDS in South Africa.

Further, the project created a space in which this issue could be discussed openly in the classroom, itself already a critical space for learning. I believe that sharing their experiences and understanding of the issues pertaining to HIV and AIDS was, for these girls, a powerful approach to knowledge construction. This approach is in line with one of the two important aims of the NCS (2011) that focus on producing learners who are able to “*identify and solve problem and make decisions using critical and creative thinking*” (p. 5).

The study contributed to, and expanded on, the research area of youth-as-knowledge-producers and the idea of allowing for the girls to be co-producers of knowledge (De Lange and Stuart, 2008, Mitchell, 2014). This was evident in the thick data that the girls presented in their digital story project. Accordingly, this study confirmed the contribution of previous work that has made use of participatory approaches to addresses HIV and AIDS. It also highlighted the fact that similar themes emerged in this work with the youth in an elite school as those that came up in a rural school as far as their understanding of HIV and AIDS was concerned. Regardless of the socio-economic level of these project participants, they had similar concerns on the topic. At the same time, there were other topics and themes raised by the girls. Some of these were *Statistics on HIV and AIDS*; *What are HIV and AIDS?* and *Myths about HIV and AIDS*. Since these girls had access to the Internet, unlike many learners in underprivileged schools, they were able to look up information on these topics themselves. Thus these girls were illuminating the significance of actually finding out facts for themselves.

The treatment of other themes such as *Stand up and fight against AIDS* and displaying a *Positive attitude if one is affected* on one hand reflects the caring attitude of these girls towards those who are regarded to be in a less fortunate position than themselves. However, on the other hand, although these attitudes may be admirable, the presence of these themes may suggest a need for these girls to actually own the issues.

Methodological contribution

While there is a growing body of literature on digital storytelling, this study contributed to this. In particular this study has helped to address the gap as noted by Jewitt (2014b) in applying multimodal analysis to working with the digital. When I set out to find literature to draw on in order to apply a multimodal analysis, I was able to find little that pertained directly to working with digital data, and especially with digital storytelling. Given the proliferation of social media tools, including Facebook and YouTube, this is clearly an area where much more work needs to be done.

Pedagogical contribution

Lastly, this project focused on, and contributed to, what I describe in Chapter 1 as a new direction in teaching and learning in sexuality education. Initially, some of the girls had difficulty in embarking on a task in which they had no boundaries to which they had to conform. One of the girls, Aasma pointed out, that in its conformity education is based on learners doing assignments for marks. This is like being forced to colour inside the lines, only. However, after the project had been completed, these girls had a different outlook. In their responses several girls gave positive feedback on the value of such a task in education. For example S'negugu's response was as follows. "*I was glad for the freedom we were given which gave me a chance to explore certain ideas. It taught me to trust my own opinions*". I think that this was that she had learnt to trust her own opinions in being given this kind of freedom. I believe that a learner-centred project such as digital storytelling, which incorporates technology, a familiar part of their everyday lives, is beneficial. It allows for individuality thereby enhancing learning by developing the learner. Additionally, it brings the outside world into the classroom. I concur with Ivan Illich cited in Goldman-Segall (1998) who states:

Learning is a human activity which least needs manipulation by others. Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting. (p. 67)

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

There were several limitations concerning this project. One limitation relates to the length of time it took to carry out the project. Since three days or 24 hours is the norm for a digital workshop (Gubrium and Harper, 2013), the team at my school involved in the planning process of my research project calculated that we would need the two hour time-slot assigned for Life Orientation lessons on the class timetable, for the whole of the second term which was ten weeks long. Using as much time as this project needed caused problems since the Life Orientation syllabus is large and the work that needed to be covered over the year was therefore not completed.

Given that this project was so time consuming, half way through the project the Life Orientation teacher asked me whether it would be possible to give the girls a mark for their digital stories since each girl was required to have a term mark for this subject. This worried me since it was not my intention to give the girls a mark for the work they were producing. However, I realised that “[s]uch assessment is part of the reality of working within formal education” (Stuart, 2006, p. 74). I had originally planned to follow Pascarella who used an arts-based approach to the study of blogs for his thesis, which he noted, “[Do] not invoke rubrics, scales, or other traditional measurements” (2009, p. 42). However, since I was faced with the challenge of formulating a plan to best measure or assess the work of the girls for this project, I realised it was important to read deeply in this area, and I came across some interesting information which I adapted to suit the needs of my research project. (I discussed this issue in Chapter 3.) I was in a situation similar to that of Stuart (2006) who points out, in relation to her own work, that

students were not, in effect, volunteers. The direction and aim of the research was primarily dictated by me, the researcher, agreed to and written into the course by their lecturer, and student participation was ensured because the workshops formed part of their credit-bearing module (p. 71)

The question I asked myself here was: “Since marks were allocated, did this have an impact on the outcome of this research product?” As mentioned before I had not planned to assess the work of the girls for marks. However, evaluation and assessment form a part in any educational environment. Thus, I believe that except for a few girls most of them would have given their best in order to obtain good marks. However, for me as a teacher, I did find it difficult to assess the work of some of the learners because one’s emotions tend to play a role when assessing and evaluating the particularly the emotionally charged digital stories.

Mitchell (2008) points out that photographs and visual images can have an emotional impact on the researcher and the viewer which can colour the analysis. The digital stories of some of the girls, especially those who had been personally affected owing to the loss of a family member, did have an emotional impact on me and it did prevent “proper analysis of content”(p.12) in these cases. Although it seemed practical to carry out this research project in the school where I teach, it did have its limitations. When once the research project was underway, I had chosen an observer role but I found that this was not possible because to the girls I was their teacher, so I found that I was placed in a dual role of facilitator cum observer. However, I did not offer advice nor did I offer aesthetic assistance as did Otañez in Gubrium and Harper (2013) even when the girls asked. Having chosen not to become involved in their digital stories was difficult because the girls perceived me to be a teacher and not a researcher. Therefore, being accustomed to receiving assistance from me as the teacher and now being told that I was not in the position to help was difficult for the girls and for me. From my side, perhaps this was so because my work as a teacher in the school usually demands that the learners are given assistance where necessary and I now felt that I was not fulfilling my duties.

Lastly, as I mentioned in Chapter 4, had I been able to elicit participant validation from the girls themselves, on the themes included in the digital stories, the thematic analysis of this project may have been different.

Clearly, this work with digital storytelling with the particular population of girls with whom I worked, suggests the need for further research. The first area is that of using digital storytelling with other affluent young people to find out how they understand HIV and AIDS. The second area is that of elite studies in which clearly there is a gap.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR EDUCATION

On reflecting upon this research project, the findings reveal that digital storytelling is a useful learning tool in the classroom. Although this project focused on the subject of Life Orientation, I believe it can be used successfully across the curriculum. Since digital storytelling is learner-centred rather than the focus being on the teacher to teach, it affords the learners the opportunity to create and own their own work. This empowers them to contribute their own knowledge to the field of education. It also provides the learners with an opportunity to gain greater competence with their writing skills as well as with technology as they refine their digital story. Further, it enhances their thinking skills. Furthermore, sharing of personal stories and engaging as an audience whilst viewing the digital stories of their peers is a rewarding experience for the learners. The process of digital storytelling is also rewarding for the educator who assists as a facilitator throughout the process. I believe with careful planning and preparation, the process of digital storytelling presents learners with a meaningful learning experience which outweighs the limitation of it being a time consuming process.

Without doubt the most significant implications from this study relate to education and how we take into account the location of young people. The vast range of themes and issues raised in the girls' digital stories suggest the need to take seriously the views that adolescent girls hold about gender and sexuality. This is not simply about misinformation, a point I have raised earlier, but also about views such as "a weak or careless moment leads to unprotected sex with an HIV-positive person". As the vast range of South African and international studies attest, girls and young women, this is a view which ignores the fact that adolescent girls are often in situations that are not about being "weak" or "careless" but where they are negotiating their own sexuality when issues of power and control are at stake. Many of these studies have focused on girls and young women in situations where there are high levels of poverty and where it seems to a given that girls and young women will be at risk because of the constant need to negotiate their own safety and security. My study extends the research into a demographic group which is assumed that these same conditions do not prevail, and yet it is clear that the girls hold views and perspectives that also place them at risk.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

My study is a start in this area of addressing HIV and AIDS knowledge in elite schools but more research needs to be done with both boys and girls. As the fieldwork suggests, rich data was gathered on how Grade 10 girls in an elite school understand HIV and AIDS and demonstrate this understanding by using the participatory method of digital storytelling. However, I am not aware of any other study in which digital storytelling has been used as a tool in working with either adolescent girls or boys in affluent schools in South Africa. In view of the fact that the infection rate for girls is higher than that for boys, it is imperative that accurate knowledge about HIV and AIDS be disseminated. I do believe that research including adolescent boys and how they understand HIV and AIDS, should be carried out. I concur with Walsh (2007) whose study highlighted that HIV and AIDS is a critical issue for all young people growing up in South Africa because the HIV infection rate in this country is the highest in the world (UNFPA South Africa, 2013). Therefore, I believe that it is imperative that this area of Elite Studies be further addressed. This would be a fruitful issue for the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa to take up.

The second area relates to deepening an understanding of what constitutes Elite Studies and of the significance of studying up as a sociological phenomenon. I remember that when I began working on this study I had various ideas about how I should locate the work and an interesting discussion took place when I defended my proposal before the committee at the university. As I have already discussed, some of the committee members asked, vehemently, why I was working with privileged girls and not in a township or rural school. One member on the panel was astounded that I was planning to work with affluent participants. However, only when I began to read in the area of Elite Studies and began to explore the notion of studying up did I realise the size of the gap in this sort of enquiry. In South Africa particularly, where there is a huge divide between rich and poor we need to address this academic gap.

Another area in which we should consider doing further research is that of what Kress (2010) refers to as multimodality. As noted in the section above, the possibilities for developing further work in the area of multimodality and digital storytelling are extensive. To the best of my knowledge, my study is one of few on digital storytelling in South Africa or

internationally that uses multimodality as central to data analysis. Further studies of this nature would help to contribute to the literature on methodology and analysis.

The last area to consider for further research is the need to increase knowledge on the subject of HIV and AIDS. The Southern and Eastern Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) III study (2010) developed an HIV-AIDS Knowledge Test. It involved Grade 6 learners (who are between 13 and 14 years of age) as well as their teachers. The test was an important step towards establishing baseline information on HIV and AIDS in Southern and Eastern Africa as far as the levels of knowledge of young learners and their teachers is concerned. The study showed that most teachers throughout the 15 SACMEQ countries had good levels of knowledge in the 2007, thus providing a basis for the continued health and well-being of the teachers and for developing proficiency in their teaching. However, the Grade 6 learners showed much lower levels of knowledge and only a few achieved the required proficiency target of 75%. The difference between the high level of knowledge of the majority of teachers as opposed to the low level of knowledge for the learners was worrying. It showed that although these teachers had the knowledge about this topic, they were not imparting it to the learners who are in urgent need of such information. Were the teachers incompetent or were they reluctant to teach sexuality education in a broader sense, and HIV more specifically?

HIV and AIDS is a critical health issue that the world is facing today (WHO, 2014). Inadequate knowledge about HIV and AIDS remains of concern and there are many misconceptions about the transmission of the disease (UNFRP South Africa, 2013) as some of my participants revealed. Education has a vital role to play in preventing this lack of knowledge of HIV and AIDS (Kelly, 2002) and, because of this the issue cannot be ignored by either public or independent schools. In recent years the Department of Basic Education (2014) has acknowledged a need to assist teachers with educational content that is pertinent to specific sexuality and HIV and AIDS education. As Wood and Roller (2014) observe, “risk-related sexual behaviour among young people continues to fuel the HIV pandemic in this part of the world” (p. 536) and, as they point out, “[u]ntil teacher education programmes find ways to equip teachers in this regard, there remains a need to ensure that sexuality education is not ignored in schools or covered ineffectively” (p. 536).

Indeed, key areas that could be further explored in digital stories relates to sexuality,

unprotected sex, and sexual violence. In looking at the themes I found in my participants' stories, I saw that 12 addressed the point that "*a weak or careless moment leads to unprotected sex with an HIV -positive person*", and another 6 dealt with sexual violence. These 18 digital stories – more than 20% of the 70 – represent a significant body of work from a group of adolescent girls attending an elite school. While it was beyond the scope of this study to delve further into specific thematic areas, the representation of matters related to sexuality and sexual violence by the girls shows that this is clearly an area that requires further study. As noted in the Chapter 1, the social and biological vulnerability of girls in the age range of those in this study remains a key issue in relation to sexual and reproductive health in South Africa, so an important implication of this study is to consider ways of working with these digital stories in order to deepen the understanding of sex and sexuality in this population.

I believe that this digital story research project was an effective way to engage the girls in thinking more about HIV and AIDS since it placed them in the position of youth-as-knowledge-producers, or as of co-producers of knowledge (De Lange and Stuart, 2008; Mitchell, 2014) in relation to HIV and AIDS. The information to which the girls were exposed by working on their own digital stories as well their viewing of the digital stories of their peers contributed to making them more aware of, and more knowledgeable about, the crucial issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. Therefore it is vital that further research be carried out to increase HIV and AIDS education in South African schools. It is worth noting that the Life Orientation teacher in the school in which I carried out the study intends to continue this work with digital storytelling within a youth-as- knowledge-producers framework. If I were to carry out another project of this kind, which I will endeavour to do with future Grade 10 girls, I would carry it out in much the same way. However, I would request that the computer teachers prepare the girls more fully on how to work on Movie Maker before embarking on the project. As the girls pointed out in their responses, working with this tool was not easy at first. However, once they had mastered the method of working with it, they managed well. This would save time, thus allowing more time for the rest of the process to be carried out.

Finally, I recommend that more research be carried out on the emotional dimensions of addressing HIV and AIDS. I started out in my first chapter, by offering a personal account of why I think this work is so important. Throughout my work with the girls who were producing the digital stories, I was struck by how emotionally involved many of the girls

were in the overall project. The stories mattered to them and I saw powerful evidence of how they were moved by this. The emotional dimensions of addressing HIV and AIDS are seldom addressed and I see from this study how critical it is to pay attention to, and to study, emotion. While it was clear in what some of the girls produced that misinformation about HIV and AIDS was also an issue, I am of the view, after completing this project that the psycho-social issues in addressing HIV and AIDS should become the number one priority in HIV and AIDS education. In an affluent school such as the one where this study was conducted this work is critical.

CONCLUDING WORDS

Now that I have completed my research project on using the participatory approach of digital storytelling in a Life Orientation class, with Grade 10 girls in an affluent school, I conclude that it is a valuable tool to use in research. Although there were limitations since the research took many hours of school time, the rich data that was gleaned from this visual arts-based project, gave a distinct indication of how these adolescent girls understand the issue of HIV and AIDS, and also how they gained interest in the area as we carried out the study. From this it is clear that the girls became more aware and much more knowledgeable about this critical issue that is relevant to all youth not only in South Africa but throughout the world. Having chosen to work with predominantly white girls from an affluent school has been interesting and it was a valuable exercise for me as a researcher. I concur with Nader (1972) who maintains that studying up has as much to contribute as studying down or studying sideways. I am pleased that I chose to work with this particular group of adolescent girls since I believe that by having done so I will encourage future researchers to further this kind of research.

Throughout the study I occupied a dual role, as I have mentioned before, as a researcher working with the girls and as a teacher in the subject area of isiZulu. Besides the practical aspect of carrying out this research in my school (in that I was not required to leave the campus), it was advantageous for me, the researcher, to carry out this research school for various reasons. Van Manen (1992) and others write that it is important to start with ourselves in conducting research. Therefore studying in this familiar environment as an insider as opposed to studying in an environment where I was an outsider, was beneficial because I knew the participants and I had a good rapport them. It was more comfortable for

them and for me to be involved in focusing on this sensitive topic of HIV and AIDS during their Life Orientation lessons. Lastly however, as a teacher I believe that I fulfilled an obligation which was to address the issue of HIV and AIDS thereby making them more aware and knowledgeable on the topic. In this way I hope I have made a difference to the well-being of each of these girls and that I helped them to live more meaningfully.

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APPENDICES:

On the following pages are the copies of the letters which I wrote to the principal, the girls and their parents requesting permission to carry out this research project. A copy of the questionnaire which the girls filled in once their digital story project had been completed is included as well as examples of two of the girls' storyboards. A short synopsis on each of the girl's digital stories is also included.

[REDACTED]
Pietermaritzburg
3201
20 April, 2012

Dear Miss Tasker

Re: Permission to carry out research at the [REDACTED]

I am enrolled as a part time student for a PhD degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The topic of my thesis is 'Exploring the use of Digital storytelling in the classroom: Towards HIV and AIDS knowledge production'. I identified this topic as a result of attending a modern media module which dealt, specifically, with digital storytelling and HIV and AIDS during one of my honours media education modules and which was presented by my supervisors, Professor Claudia Mitchell and Dr Jean Stuart. After attending this course, I realised that digital storytelling may contribute to a deeper understanding of HIV and AIDS. It also provided me with an opportunity to view life from a new perspective and it inspired me to extend my teaching practises by experimenting with this approach during Life Orientation lessons.

Digital storytelling has become a popular method of providing a 'hands on' approach to dealing with various important life issues, such as HIV and AIDS. Accordingly, since the topic of HIV and AIDS forms part of the Life Orientation curriculum in the grade 10 year, I decided it would be a suitable topic for my thesis. In addition, I realised that, by engaging the girls in a project that involves modern technology with which they are familiar, it possible to kindle a keen interest in learning about this important issue of HIV and AIDS.

Digital storytelling is a modern way of storytelling that combines images, music, narrative and voice together, using a specific programme on the computer. It leans towards being a more visual rather than verbal approach. However, the process also allows for class and group discussions as well as for individual reflection time on the set topic.

During Life Orientation lessons, each girl will be responsible for developing her own digital story, using her own choice of narrative, music, voice as well her own choice of images. These images may either be in the form of cartoons, drawn by the girls themselves, or staged photographs which will be taken at school by the girls themselves and then downloaded onto the computer programme in particular order to form the basis of a mini movie. Thereafter, music and narrative will included to enhance the movie that should last about 3-5 minutes. The girls will then show their project to the rest of the class only if they wish to. However, please bear in mind that the staged photographs will be such that the faces of the girls who are in the photographs will not be identifiable. Hands, hats and scarves will be used to cover their faces. Should a face inadvertently still be visible, it will also be blanked out on the photo before it is used in the digital story process.

In view of the above, I hereby request your permission to allow me carry out the research with the Grade 10 girls of The Wykeham Collegiate in the second term of this year, during their Life Orientation lessons and to use the written, photographic or

oral data contained in their digital stories, for the purposes of research, in presentations and publications, should the need arise. Should the girls be chosen to be interviewed after the digital storytelling process has been completed, the interview should not last for more than thirty minutes. Please be assured that I intend using a pseudonym, instead of the names of the girls in my thesis in order to ensure both confidentiality and anonymity at all times. Obviously any financial expenses will be borne by me. Please also be assured that a decision not to participate will not compromise the Grade 10 girls in any way.

Once my thesis has been completed, it will be available throughout the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Any data such as the digital stories and interview details will be secured under lock and key for a period of five years. Thereafter, it will be disposed of.

Should you have any further queries about this project, please feel free to contact either myself or my supervisors. The following are the email addresses at which we may be contacted.

Professor Claudia Mitchell at claudia.mitchell@mcgill.ca

Doctor Jean Stuart at stuartd@ukzn.ac.za

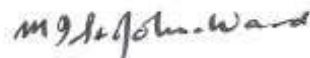
Maureen St John-Ward at maureens@twc.org.za

I may also be contacted at the school.

Should you be willing to grant permission, kindly complete the declaration on the following page.

Thank you, in anticipation, for your help.

Yours sincerely



MAUREEN ST JOHN-WARD

LETTER OF CONSENT FROM THE PRINCIPAL

APPENDIX 1 B



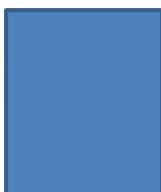
Declaration

I, Miss Susan Tasker hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the letter/document and the nature of the research project, 'Exploring the use of Digital storytelling in the classroom: Towards HIV and AIDS knowledge production' and I give consent for Mrs Maureen St John-Ward to use the written, photographic and oral data contained in the digital stories for the purposes of research, in presentations and publications, as well as the oral data obtained from the interview of the Grade 10 girls should the need arise.

Signature of Principal: S/Tasker

Date: 21/4/2012





20 April, 2012

Dear Grade 10 parents

I am enrolled as a part time student for doctorate degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The topic of my thesis is 'Exploring the use of Digital storytelling in the classroom: Towards HIV and AIDS knowledge production'. I identified this topic because I attended an interesting modern media module, which dealt, specifically, with digital storytelling and HIV and AIDS, during one of my honours media education modules. This module was presented by my supervisors, Professor Claudia Mitchell and Dr Jean Stuart. After attending this course, I realised that digital storytelling may contribute to a greater understanding of HIV and AIDS and it gave me an opportunity to reflect on life from a different perspective. It also inspired me to extend on my teaching practises and to experiment with this approach during Life Orientation lessons.

Digital storytelling has become a popular method of providing a more practical approach to dealing with various important life issues, such as HIV and AIDS. In addition, since the topic of HIV and AIDS forms part of the Life Orientation curriculum in the grade 10 year, I thought that it would be a suitable topic for my thesis. I also realised that, by engaging the girls in a project that involves modern technology with which the girls are familiar, it would be possible to kindle a keen interest in learning about the important issue of HIV and AIDS.

Digital storytelling is a modern way of storytelling which makes use of images, music, narrative and voice to form a mini movie, using a specific programme on the computer. Therefore, it is my plan that during Life Orientation lessons this term of this year, each girl will be responsible for developing her own digital story using images of her choice. These images may either be in the form of cartoons, drawn by the girls, or staged photographs which will be taken at school by the girls themselves. However please be aware that the faces of the girls will not be identifiable as hands, hats or scarves will be used to cover their faces. Additionally throughout the project, there will also be set times for class discussion and written work dealing with the topic. At the end of the process the girls will be given the opportunity to share their digital stories with their peers if they wish to do so.

In view of the above, I hereby request your permission to allow me to use the written, photographic or oral data contained in your daughter's digital stories, should the need arise. Should your daughter be selected to be interviewed, after the digital storytelling process has been completed, I wish to assure you that the interview should not last for



more than thirty minutes. Please be assured too that, instead of using your daughter's name, I intend using pseudonyms in my thesis in order to ensure both confidentiality and anonymity at all times. Obviously any financial expenses will be borne by me. Also please be assured that a decision not to participate will not compromise your daughter in any way and should she wish to withdraw from the project at any time, she is free to do so without prejudice

Once my thesis has been completed, the thesis will be available throughout the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Any data such as the digital stories and interview details will be secured under lock and key for a period of five years. Thereafter, it will be disposed of.

Should you have any further queries about this project, please feel free to contact either myself or my supervisors. The following are the email addresses at which we may be contacted.

Professor Claudia Mitchell at claudia.mitchell@mcgill.ca
Doctor Jean Stuart at stuardj@ukzn.ac.za
Maureen St John-Ward at maureens@twc.org.za

I may also be contacted at the school. Should you be willing to grant permission for your daughter to participate in the project, kindly complete the declaration below by Thursday 26 April, 2012.

Thank you, in anticipation, for your help.
Yours sincerely


MAUREEN ST JOHN-WARD


SUSAN TASKER
HEADMISTRESS

Declaration

I _____ (full names of parent/guardian) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the letter/document and the nature of the research project, 'Exploring the use of Digital storytelling in the classroom: Towards HIV and AIDS knowledge production', and I give consent for Mrs Maureen St John-Ward to use the written, photographic and oral data contained in the digital stories for the purposes of research, in presentations and publications, as well as the oral data obtained from the interview of _____ (daughter's name), should the need arise.

Signature of parent

Date:



20 April, 2012

Dear Grade 10s

I am enrolled as a part time student for a doctorate degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The topic of my thesis is 'Exploring the use of Digital storytelling in the classroom: Towards HIV and AIDS knowledge production'. This topic came about since during my Honours course I attended a modern media module which dealt specifically, with digital storytelling and HIV and AIDS. This module was presented by my supervisors, Professor Claudia Mitchell and Dr Jean Stuart. After attending this interesting course, I realised that digital storytelling may contribute to a deeper understanding of HIV and AIDS. In addition, the course also gave me an opportunity to learn a new method of dealing with the important issue of HIV and AIDS. It also inspired me to extend my teaching practises and to share with you this exciting method during Life Orientation lessons.

Digital storytelling is a modern approach to telling stories. It makes use of s modern technology that will result in you producing your own mini movie. In addition this is a fast growing and interesting approach to dealing with various important life issues, such as HIV and AIDS.

During the your Life Orientation lessons you will be given the opportunity to take staged photographs within the school parameters, or you may choose to draw cartoons or you even make a collage for the purpose of the visual aspect of the digital story. Please note that should you make use of the opportunity to take photos, the identity of the girls who will be involved, will be protected since hands, hats and scarves will be used to cover their faces. Accordingly, since the topic of HIV and AIDS forms part of the Life Orientation curriculum in the grade 10 year, I thought it would be a good idea for you to experience working with this approach whilst dealing with the issue of HIV and AIDS during your lessons this term. In so doing, I also thought it would be a suitable topic for my thesis.

In view of the above, I hereby request your permission to allow me to use the written, photographic or oral data contained in your digital stories, for the purposes of research, in presentations and publications, should the need arise. Should you be chosen to be interviewed after the digital storytelling process has been completed, the interview should not last for more than thirty minutes. Please be assured that I intend using a pseudonym, instead of your name, in my thesis in order to ensure both confidentiality and anonymity at all times. Obviously, any financial expenses will be borne by me. Please also be assured that your decision not to participate will not



compromise you in any way. Should you wish to withdraw from the project, you are free to do so without any bias.

Once my thesis has been completed, it will be available throughout the University of KwaZulu -Natal. All data such as your digital stories and interview details will be kept under lock and key for a period of five years. Thereafter, it will be disposed of.

Should you have any further queries about this project, please feel free to contact either myself or my supervisors. The following are the email addresses at which we may be contacted.

Professor Claudia Mitchell at claudia.mitchell@mcgill.ca

Doctor Jean Stuart at stuardt@ukzn.ac.za

Maureen St John-Ward at maureens@twc.org.za

I can also be contacted at the school.

Should you be willing to grant permission, kindly complete the declaration below by Thursday 26 April, 2012.

Thank you in anticipation for your help.

Yours sincerely


MRS MAUREEN ST JOHN-WARD


MISS SUSAN TASKER
HEADMISTRESS

Declaration

I _____ (full names) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the letter/document and the nature of the research project, and I give consent for Mrs St John-Ward to use my written, photographic and oral data contained in my digital stories as well as the oral data obtained from the interview, for the purposes of research, in presentations and publications, should the need arise.

Signature

Date:

1. How did you feel about making your own digital story? At school it is the norm for the education to be rather prescriptive in that learners are told what they need to do or not do or what to add in or not .How did it feel that you were able to ‘do your own thing’ without being told what you needed to include or not in your digital story?
2. Please tell me the idea behind your digital story? What were you hoping to show or put across to others through your digital story? (Is this how you understand the issue of HIV and AIDS?) Do you think you achieved this? Why did you choose to use this idea? What was the most difficult part of the process?
3. Describe to me your feelings about your digital story? (If there is a main character in the story, describe to me her/his feelings by elaborating on how she/he felt life with HIV and AIDS would be?) How did you actually feel while you were creating / developing your digital story?

4. When you watched the digital stories of the other girls in the class, how did you feel? What effect did they have on you? Did you learn anything more about the issue of HIV and AIDS? Please elaborate.
5. Which digital story/ies that were made in your class had the most meaning for you? Why? Was there perhaps anything that you not agree with? Explain what it was?
6. Other than the girls in your class, who else would you like to have shown your digital story to? Why? Do you plan to show your Digital Story to others?
7. When you reflect on the whole project do you feel it was a worthwhile assignment to carry out? What were your likes? What did you not enjoy about the project?
8. Do you think it would be a good idea or not to carry out this project with the Grade 10 next year? Why do you say so?

PSEUDONYM	TITLE OF DIGITAL STORY	SYNOPSIS OF DIGITAL STORY
Sienna	<i>HIV and AIDS</i>	Sienna's digital story was about Sophie, a young teenager who went to a party with friends to have "fun". At the party, the music became louder the alcohol flowed freely. Having consumed too much alcohol, Sophie made a bad decision. She had intercourse with an HIV/ positive man. Sienna said she felt scared when creating her digital story because the above scenario can happen to anyone. Therefore one needs to act responsibly in life. We live in a society of loud music drinking and drugs which may seem fun but there are consequences. Most young people can relate to this. For this reason she believed it important to help spread knowledge about the virus and not the virus.
Nicci	<i>It could never happen to me....</i>	Nicci's digital story dealt with the idea that HIV and AIDS does not discriminate. She made use of pictures of all types of people which she downloaded from the Internet to substantiate this. Her digital story also drew attention to the different ways people can contract HIV and AIDS but "personalised" it by making use of the faces of different people, who said, "I contracted HIV and AIDS because...."
Sally	<i>HIV/AIDS.</i>	Sally's digital story pointed out that it does not matter where you live, what you wear or who you are, you can contract HIV and AIDS. The digital story was entwined with pictures downloaded from the Internet and a contemporary song called 'Wait outside the lines' sung by Greyson Chance. (www.songlyrics.com/greyson-chance/waiting-outside-the-lines-lyrics/). By making use of the song mentioned above, Sally's digital included that everyone always "waits behind the lines and is not breaking through to help" with the issue of HIV and AIDS or waiting and never following through to help those afflicted with HIV and AIDS.
Rashnee	<i>What is HIV/AIDS?</i>	Rashnee's digital story revolved around how HIV and AIDS it is transmitted and spread to others. This included contaminated blood, unprotected sex and mother to child transmission. Her story also focused on how the virus can be prevented and how one should care for and love those with it and that having HIV is not a crime.
Tarryn	<i>Once a perfect life...</i>	Tarryn's digital story highlighted that an ordinary teenage girl, who had so much going for her, had it all taken away from her. The reason for this was that she made "one mistake" which changed her life forever. She had sexual intercourse with a young HIV positive man at a party where alcohol flowed freely. Thus a once perfect life faded away because HIV and AIDS. Tarryn's digital story further pointed out that we only have one life, one chance and HIV and AIDS can take it away from you because it can kill.
Aasma	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	Aasma's digital story focused on a young girl who had "fun" with her friends by drinking and then having sex with a partner who used needles and was HIV positive. As a result of this the young girl's life was ruined. The digital story was thought provoking and created sympathy for the teenager who was faced with the disease. In the final part of her story, Aasma declared, "Open your eyes, before aids closes them".
Jean	<i>Suzie's story</i>	Jean's digital story focused on a young girl, Suzie, who was

		<p>raped by an HIV positive man, while on her way to visit her friend. After this Suzie too became HIV positive. However, she quietly battled with the disease because she did not tell anyone about her status nor did she go to the doctor. Finally she succumbed to the virus.</p>
Cathy	<i>AIDS</i>	<p>Cathy's very short digital story homed into the devastating effect HIV and AIDS has not only on one person but on entire families. It breaks families apart. Children are left alone. She ended her story with the well-known slogan, "Spread the word, not the disease".</p>
Milly	<i>HIV/AIDS world's worst home wrecker.</i>	<p>Milly's digital story revolved around the fact that HIV and AIDS is a home wrecker. Many young (black) children have been orphaned by the negative effect that the HIV and AIDS virus has had on families. Moreover, families and loved ones left behind as a result of the HIV virus, sometimes, without hope for the future.</p>
Isabelle May	<i>What's your story?</i>	<p>Isabelle May's digital story was about a young girl Ivy who was raped in the park by an HIV positive man, Barry. Since Barry did not use a condom, Ivy was infected. This ordeal left her feeling devastated and helpless as her life was now cast into turmoil. Towards the end of the digital story Isabelle May included a challenge to those who viewed the story. It was to stand together and to try to find a cure so that people like Ivy could be the girl she used to be.</p>
Carmen	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	<p>Carmen's digital story was about a young and happy girl who contracted HIV and AIDS because of being pressured by her boyfriend (who was HIV positive) to have unprotected sexual intercourse with him. This resulted in her becoming HIV positive too. Moreover, the story showed how this girl's life was completely changed after contracting the virus and how quickly things started going downhill for her. Most of her loved ones left her and she felt vulnerable.</p>
S'negugu	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	<p>S'negugu's digital story revolved around a little white girl telling her story on how she missed her dad who has died from HIV and AIDS. Since the little girl was very young, she did not understand why she did not have a dad anymore. S'negugu's attempted to show that the virus does not only affect black people but that no matter what race you are you could still become infected. Her story also emphasised that children are left orphans or raised by one parent because of HIV and AIDS.</p>
Anele	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	<p>Anele's digital story focused on HIV and AIDS being a killer and that it does not discriminate. To substantiate this she gave various examples of people who were infected with HIV. This included a beautiful girl and an innocent baby. In her digital story Anele also drew attention to the fact that people should stand together and fight the disease because although it cannot be cured it can be prevented.</p>
Zanele	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	<p>Zanele's digital story told of a HIV positive boy who took a young girl out on a date to a disco. At the dance they drank too much alcohol and they had sexual intercourse. Six months later, the girl discovered that she too was HIV positive. Zanele's story pointed out that one should not act impulsively as it is easy to become infected with the virus.</p>
Nomzamo	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	<p>Nomzamo's digital story dealt with myths and facts about HIV and AIDS. The idea behind her story was to educate people that, for example the virus cannot be passed on by holding hands with an HIV positive person. Thus the digital story attempted to erase some hurtful and untrue myths about the virus so that those who have it could be treated with kindness.</p>

		and the respect which they deserve.
Nana	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	Nana's digital story attempted to send out a message to inform society not to turn its back on those who are HIV positive. The story also explained how one can be infected by the virus. Lastly, a clear message was given and that was to abstain from sexual intercourse or "condomise".
Rose	<i>Rape</i>	Rose together with one of her peers enacted a very short skit in which a young girl is raped in her bedroom by an unknown HIV positive man. As a result the victim becomes infected.
Grace	<i>Life is short...</i>	In her digital story Grace's made use of various shapes and sizes of waves which represented life. The idea behind her digital story was to pass on a message that without using protection during intercourse, a person could easily contract HIV and AIDS. This could result a person's life crashing like waves in the sea.
Belle	<i>Voices...</i>	Belle's digital story encouraged people be tested and to know their HIV status. Her story also drew attention to the fact that people should not be silent about their status. For young people the message was rather to abstain from sexual intercourse or to make use of condoms if their partner's status is unknown. The final words of her story gave the viewer food for thought. They were, "Freedom is knowing your status."
Candy	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	Candy's digital story was from the viewpoint of an HIV positive person. The idea behind it was an attempt to allow the people watching the story to feel the same "pain" that the HIV positive person would. It was a story of sadness and hurt.
Mbali	<i>What is HIV/AIDS?</i>	Mbali's digital story began with the question, "What is HIV and AIDS?" being typed onto Google. Thereafter many answers were given. These included not only the clinical name for it which is Human immunodeficiency virus infection / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome but also words (held up on boards by people) such as "the fight", "struggle", "the killer" and "death" The digital story also showed how serious the disease is and how it is acquired It also attempted to change the mind -set of people that it isn't something to be ashamed of!
Ayanda	<i>HIV/AIDS ... It all started like this.</i>	Ayanda's digital story focused on warning young people that it is important to act responsibly when at a party. She made use of the typical scenario of boy meets girl at a disco party where alcohol and drugs were in abundance. As a result of not being in control of their senses the boy and girl, who were strangers to each other, had sexual intercourse. This had devastating consequences for the young girl who became infected with HIV.
Summer	<i>Sometimes...</i>	Summer's digital story was about a teenage girl who was raped while walking along a dusty road in a secluded area. The girl, now infected with HIV, realised she should be positive about the situation and that having HIV /AIDS should not make her a different person. It should not affect her good qualities and that she should attempt to rise above this adversity.

PSEUDONYM	TITLE OF DIGITAL STORY	SYNOPSIS OF DIGITAL STORY
Kelly	<i>HIV/AIDS awareness</i>	Kelly's digital story created awareness of HIV and AIDS by being factual. She pointed out that one cannot become infected by hugging, holding hands or using same gym equipment. She also drew attention to the fact that it is important to be tested for the virus to prevent spreading of the virus.
Irina	<i>Common myths and reality with HIV/AIDS</i>	Irina's digital story explored the myths and realities of the virus. She drew attention to the fact that a common myth is that people believe there are people and ways to cure HIV and AIDS. An example she gave that faith healers and "amasangoma" (witch doctors) have the power to do so. People also believe that for example that only the poor and homosexuals can contract the virus. On the other hand she also pointed out that anyone, no matter what race, faith whether poor or rich is at risk of contracting HIV and AIDS.
Bonnie	<i>He said he loved you... didn't he?</i>	Bonnie's digital story focused on a boy who encouraged a girl to have sexual intercourse with him. He said that he loved her! But he infected her with the virus and left her emotionally "torn" and "invaded by a killer". Her story was a warning to people that this could happen to anyone and that one should not think that contracting the virus cannot happen to us.
Charlotte	<i>One mistake</i>	Charlotte's digital story related to a young, happy privileged girl who contracted HIV and AIDS because she "made one mistake". As a result of her status one by one her family deserted her until she was left alone and dejected to suffer the consequences of the virus.
Bronwyn	<i>HIV/AIDS what it means.</i>	Bronwyn's digital story began by showing that HIV and AIDS means those who are infected with the virus are left to walk alone and scared. However, she pointed out that it does not need to be like that. She feels that we should help by putting a smile on their faces by giving them love and hope because that is what they need.
Madeline	<i>Once upon a time darkness swept across the land.</i>	Madeline's digital story told this story. Once upon a time darkness swept over taking colour out of people's lives. As darkness consumed the land. As it spread it trapped people. Sickness came with it. Many people lost loved ones. Grieving for them, people clung to the shadows, hiding behind a mask, ignoring the pain around them, fighting back the heartache, thinking that all hope was lost. But a generation taught them that anything was possible. They stood together and joined hands.... in the fight against HIV and AIDS.
Mary-Jane	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	Mary-Jane's very short digital story began with two friends standing together. In the next scene the HIV positive person was rejected by his friend. Thereafter the friend returned with the red HIV ribbon and the meaning of it was explained.
Kim	<i>Aids Myths</i>	Kim's digital story explored the myths around how one can and can't contract HIV and AIDS. However, she also drew attention to the fact that although having a baby if one is HIV positive is not without risks, it is possible if one works closely with a doctor.

Jane	<i>Break the silence</i>	Jane's digital story began with a woman having a "one night stand" with an HIV positive man. Then later in her life she met the man of her dreams. They married and had a baby. Then the baby became ill and was diagnosed with HIV. Soon the baby died. Thereafter the mother became ill and died. Finally the virus took its toll on the husband and he too succumbed to it.
Violet	<i>Spreading!</i>	Violet's digital story told of a young woman who had unprotected sex. A boy was born. Soon thereafter, the mother died. The father wept because his son was motherless. He felt guilty because he had kept it silent that he was HIV positive and now he had transmitted the virus to the mother of his son and to the boy too.
Joni	<i>HIV/AIDS affects us all</i>	Joni's digital story explored how she interpreted the issue of HIV and AIDS. It showed that everyone is affected by the virus and that those who are infected should be supported to make life easier for them. The story also focused on myths about HIV/ AIDS. It ended with the fact that HIV/AIDS can be decreased by educating people and creating awareness until a cure is found.
Leila	<i>What does HIV/AIDS mean to you?</i>	In Leila's digital story the main character felt isolated and affected by the stigma of being infected by HIV and AIDS. The story then unfolded to shows the importance of HIV and AIDS awareness and that the stigma of this disease should be broken. In this way a difference could be made in the lives of those who live with the virus.
Thembekile	<i>What is HIV?</i>	Thembekile's digital story began with what HIV and AIDS is. Thereafter she focused on how the virus can be contracted and she gave the following examples: Blood transfusions/organ transplants injections /drug use, occupational exposure, sexual contact, pregnancy /child birth / breastfeeding. Thereafter she focused on the myths of how the virus can be contracted. These are the examples she gave: Holding hands, hugging, kissing and sharing a home with an HIV positive person.
Sasha	<i>Some thoughts on HIV/AIDS myths</i>	Sasha's digital story focused on the myths and an important fact of contracting HIV and AIDS. The following examples were given on the myths of how the virus can be contracted. They were: holding hands, playing together and sharing drinks. The fact she used as an example was that HIV AND AIDS is passed on by contact with bodily fluids of an infected person. At the end of her story she pointed out that those infected with the virus should not be ostracized.
Thumi	<i>Aids is not the end, it is the beginning of a change.</i>	Thumi's digital story told of a young girl, Thumi, who was raped by an unknown HIV positive man. As a result she contracted the deadly virus. However, she chose not to let being HIV positive destroy her future but instead continued to live life with a positive attitude.
Ella	<i>Together we can change the world.</i>	1. Ella began her digital story by showing the statistics of how many people in the world are infected by HIV and AIDS. This highlighted the seriousness of the issue .Her story also included myths about HIV and AIDS in order to educate people. Her story was based around the song "Together we can change the world" by Rilee O'Neill (www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFy54NmYPyc)
Mayayo	<i>What are you doing to help?</i>	In her digital story Mayayo posed several pertinent questions about the issue of HIV and AIDS in the world in which we live today. Some responses were that HIV and

		AIDS is a serious issue which faces us all. Help should be given to those who are infected by it. This help should be so they don't feel lonely and abandoned.
Sienna	<i>Life after Aids.</i>	In her digital story Sienna spoke to an imaginary HIV positive person. She asked him, "Are you afraid of being alone or of death? She then encouraged him not to have a negative outlook about his future because of his status, but rather remain positive because he could still live a good life.
Tay	<i>Myths on ways to contact HIV/AIDS.</i>	In her digital story Tay used stick figures which she had drawn, to illustrate the myths around HIV and AIDS. The story pointed out that hugging, holding hands or drinking from same utensil are not ways to contact HIV and AIDS. In this way she put the minds of those who were viewing her digital at ease.
Kalayila	<i>Hello Candace!</i>	In Kalayila digital story a little boy asks a girl by the name of Candace to tell him what the red HIV and AIDS ribbon stands for. Candace replied that we should not stand alone in the fight against HIV. We should fight it together. He then asked her how HIV and AIDS has affected her. Her reply was that it she was fully aware of what she could let herself into if she was not careful in life.
Catherine	<i>HIV/AIDS affects everyone.</i>	Catherine's digital story pointed out that anyone, any colour or any race can become infected with HIV and AIDS. As a result of HIV and AIDS a whole family can slowly be wiped out. The use of the song, Pictures of you. Pictures of me wove in well with her story. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7QWZBiNTMc)
Janet	<i>A Moment of weakness</i>	Janet's digital story told of a young girl who thought she knew her partner well but she became infected because in a moment of weakness she had sexual intercourse with him. She became angry with her partner and also stressed and angry with herself at being so careless. However, she realised that she had to live with the consequences of her actions). At the end of story she became more positive determined to live life to the fullest.

PSEUDONYM	TITLE OF DIGITAL STORY	SYNOPSIS OF DIGITAL STORY
Dee Dee	<i>HIV and AIDS</i>	Dee Dee's created her digital story around HIV and AIDS statistics. It was effectively created using stick figures and maps to bring across an important aspect of HIV and AIDS. Her digital story was the only one in the whole group that was based on statistics. Her idea was to use statistics to make people realise the seriousness of the issue.
Hollow	<i>The fight against aids</i>	Hollow's digital story covered several aspects related to the issue of HIV and AIDS. It began with how she interprets it. Then she pointed out that although it is spreading no one is prepared to take a stand against the issue. She also drew attention to using condoms when engaging in sexual intercourse or rather to abstain. At the end of her digital story, Hollow posed some powerful questions, "What are you going to do...? Now is the time to think..."
Kayleigh	<i>A story of an ordinary person with an unfortunate fate.</i>	Kayleigh's digital story focused on an ordinary girl who became ill and was taken to the doctor. He tested her to be HIV positive. Life for this girl changed thereafter all because of a "silly" night out. Because of her status she was rejected by her family and friends. Kayleigh's digital story had a happy ending when the girl found a friend who accepts her and she was able to start a new life.
Roseline	<i>Ivy is indifferent</i>	Roseline's digital story centred on Ivy a teenage girl who had unprotected sex and became infected with HIV. In the story Ivy wrote a letter to the virus (disease) and told it exactly how she felt i.e. outcast, discriminated against and judged by people in society.
Rita	<i>What does HIV/AIDS mean to me?</i>	Rita's digital story began with how HIV and AIDS started. Then it clearly showed how the virus multiplies in the body of a human. Thereafter Rita made use of several interesting (and often amusing) cartoons drawn by the well-known South African cartoonist, Zapiro. These cartoons conveyed how the issue of HIV and AIDS is understood and dealt with by various Ministers of Parliament.
Annie	<i>HIV/ AIDS</i>	Annie created her digital story by making use of colourful pictures which she drew using a computer programme called "2 animate". Her story was heart wrenching because it focused on a devastated, orphaned, HIV positive child living with disease after her parents succumbed to the disease. She was left with many unanswered questions after her parent's deaths.
Kate	<i>Dark...but you can still dream</i>	Kate's digital story focused on a girl who had dreams for her future. She wanted to obtain a degree, be successful in life, be a wife and live in a beautiful home. However, these were dashed because she contracted HIV. Now she felt alone and helpless living in the "dark". Then she developed positive attitude towards her illness and life.
Jodi	<i>I am human too...</i>	Jodi's digital story focused on a young teenage school girl. She was popular with her many friends until she told them that she was HIV positive. They turned their

		backs on her and left her feeling lonely and sad. Her life was changed forever, because she had unprotected intercourse with her HIV positive boyfriend.
Thandi	<i>Rise up and fight against H/a.</i>	Thandi's digital story was about as young girl's fight against HIV and AIDS. In the story the angry girl whose innocence was taken away by an HIV positive man, talked to the virus as if it were a person. She claimed that it was attempting to tear her down but that it would not happen.
Mpo	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	Mpo's digital story attempted to demonstrate that some HIV positive patients are angry, depressed and lonely and die alone in their hospital beds. Others have a positive attitude and are happier and fortunate to be surrounded by friends and family who love and support them. This happens right to the end where the dying patient's family and friends are seen congregated around the hospital bed.
Betty	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	Betty's digital story showed the reality of HIV and AIDS. Her story began with a little seven year old black HIV positive boy walking down a dusty road. To show the severity of the illness she included some pictures of HIV and AIDS sufferers. She also gave some statistics to show the how quickly HIV spreads. This made the viewer aware that we are all at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.
Annabelle	<i>My shadow</i>	Annabelle digital story drew attention to the fact that HIV and AIDS is a shadow that followed the infected person wherever he goes and it never leaves him. As a result of this he felt that people discriminate against him and he was always concerned about other people's reactions towards him (and his status). This had a negative impact on him.
Lindi	<i>HIV and AIDS world epidemic.</i>	Lindi's digital story told of a young black girl whose parents died of HIV and AIDS. She too became ill and was cared for by an empathetic young white doctor. She slowly became weaker and weaker until she too died. Lindi observed that the idea behind the story was to open people's eyes to the fact that there are many people in our community that are suffering from HIV and AIDS but it is not something we talk about every day nor are we exposed to it.
Tsilani	<i>It is not the end Tselani</i>	In Tsilani digital story a young 18 year old girl (her aunt) who fell in love with Tom, the boy next door. He was her prince charming and because of her deep love for him, she agreed to have intercourse with him. Unfortunately he was unfaithful to her and he contracted HIV. As a result she too became infected. Tsilani said that she chose to create this story in memory of her aunt who in spite of the fact that she was HIV positive, lived life to the fullest for 15 years before she died.
Zori	<i>No heading</i>	Zori's digital story focused on the thought that Africa, a wonderful continent, was fading away because it was being destroyed by HIV and AIDS. This was because of the carelessness of its people that Africa is suffering. She attempted to show this by including several scenes of cemeteries. She also showed several pictures of people who have been affected by the virus.

Rachel	<i>Nobody asks for HIV /aids</i>	Rachel's digital story pointed out that no matter who you are and no matter where you live, you can contract HIV and AIDS. She elaborated on this by focusing firstly on a popular, sporty, pretty girl who had all she wished for but she contracted HIV and AIDS. Then she focused on a shy, clever girl who contracted HIV. Lastly she focused on a poor, girl who has no family, no one to love and she too had HIV and AIDS.
Sarah	<i>You'll do it if you love me.</i>	Sarah's digital story was about an HIV boy who encouraged young girl to have sexual intercourse with him. He infected her with the virus. When she told her friends that she was HIV positive, they all turned their backs on her. This caused her so much pain and disappointment.
Amy	<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	In Amy's digital story and young boy encouraged a girl to go out on a date with him and then he raped her. As a result he infected her with HIV. That was a night that she regretted forever. From the moment that she became infected with the virus her life changed because she was discriminated against. Her life changed and she felt lonely and dejected.
Nandi	<i>Heaven sent</i>	Nandi's digital story was based on a true story It was a tribute to her uncle who had contracted HIV and AIDS because he had sexual intercourse with an infected partner. Nandi's story showed the suffering he endured and the pain she experienced watching him suffering and eventually succumbing to the virus.
Pauline	<i>One love, one night, one lifetime.</i>	The title of Pauline's digital story "One love, One night One lifetime" summarised a sad story of a young girl whose HIV positive boyfriend turned his back on her after he infected her with the virus. At the end of her story she asked a pertinent question which was, "How many more will he infect?"
Margaret	<i>A life of hurt.</i>	Margaret's digital story about young girl old who was always ill. She was told that she was infected with the HIV virus by her father, who had since died from disease. On hearing about her status, her boyfriend rejected her and her friends made fun of her resulting in the girl feeling much hurt.
Molly	<i>Odd one out.</i>	Molly's digital story focused on a boy called Jack. He was treated differently because he had HIV. He was looked down upon in society. The idea behind Molly's story was to point out that although Jack was infected with the virus, he was an ordinary person who should not be treated differently but should rather be supported
Komo		Thabe used a poem to tell the story of the results of a teenage girl who had sexual intercourse with her boyfriend who unfortunately for her was HIV positive. However, since she was a strong, independent young girl she was willing to fight to overcome the disease.
Amy	<i>Labelled</i>	Amy's digital story focused on the severity of the HIV virus. She showed several disturbing picture of HIV patients. Then she focused on the fact that these people should not be alienated and that. She also drew attention to the fact that should act responsibly when with a partner. She ended her story with the words, "HIV should not define who you are!"
Jaynie	<i>HIV/AIDS anyone can get it.</i>	Jaynie used stick figures which she had drawn drew herself in her short digital story. Her story drew attention to the fact that one should be cautious when helping at a

		scene of an accident. To show this she told of a man who became infected with the virus because he had helped an HIV positive girl at scene of a car accident.
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