


Engagement in health issues using drama

Connecting young people using drama – a work in progress



Goal

The goal of our presentation today is:

- **To share our experience of the use of interactive and dramatic role play strategies to engage young people in health and social issues that impact on their learning and well-being**

Background

- Identified need for engaging young people in delivering health education programs
- A two year pilot program working with year 10 students at a local secondary school using this approach

Why Drama?

- To understand the rationale for the use of drama to explore health and social issues with young people it is necessary to understand 'metaxis'.....

'Metaxis'...

- ...existing in the same instance both within the real world context and within the fictional world of the drama (Boal; 1995)
- 'participants exert control over their enactments and the separation from real life is never complete' (O'Toole; 1992)
- 'experience both being 'at cause' and being 'at effect' of the activity'
- transfer of learning from the fictional to the real context' (Winston, 1998; Bailin, 1998)

'Boalian' (drama) techniques

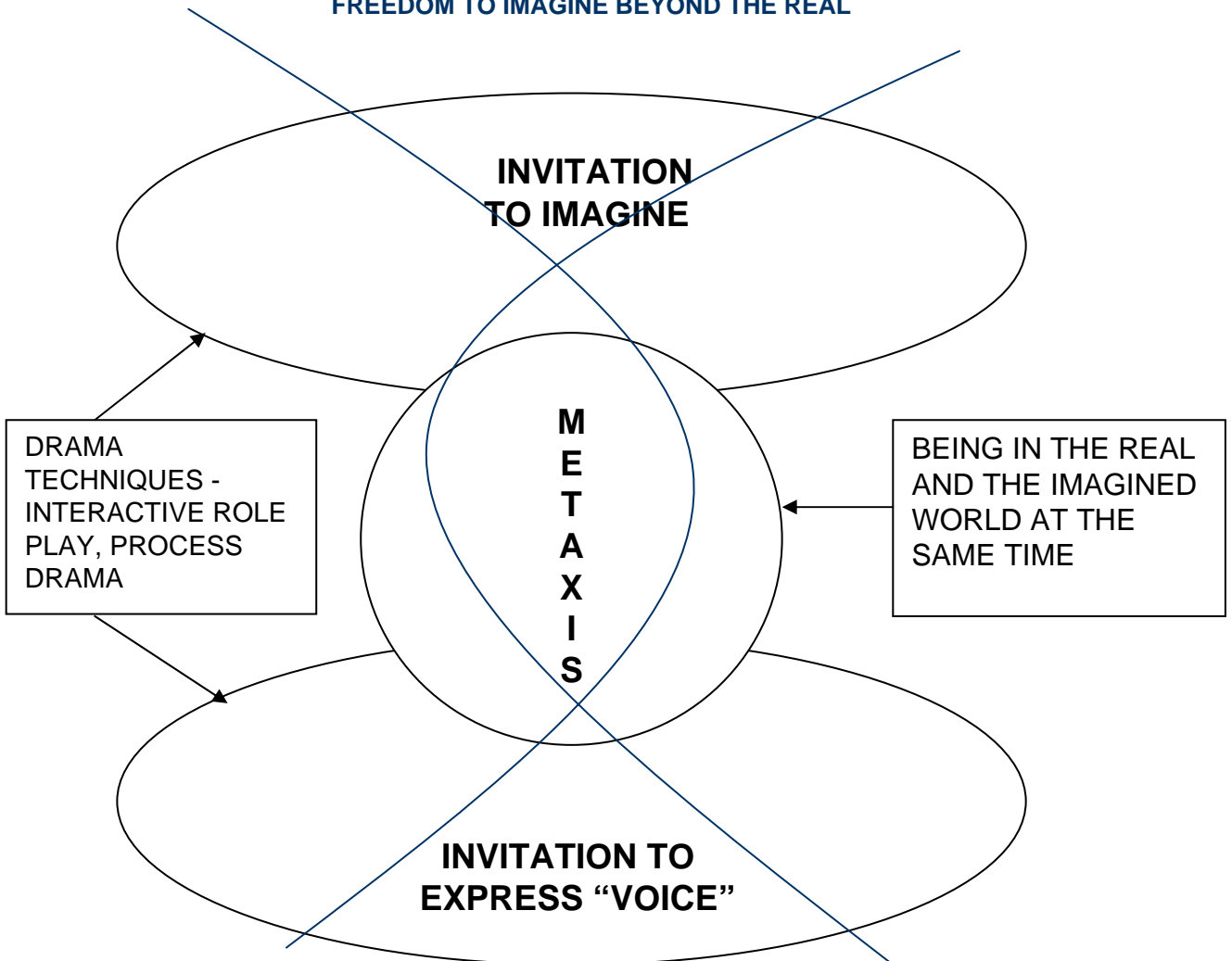
- Hidden Thoughts
- Role Reversal
- Decider
- Re-play
- Interview
- Advice to your character
- Truth Game
- Hot Seat

DRAMA PROCESSES AND LEARNING

PERSON A

PERSON B

FACILITATING THE DRAMA
IN AN AESTHETIC SPACE
FREEDOM TO IMAGINE BEYOND THE REAL



OUTCOMES

PERSON A

- SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS
- AN EXPERIENCE OF POSSIBILITY – IMAGINATION = YES
- AN EXPERIENCE OF EXPRESSIVITY – LEARNING THROUGH SPEAKING AND DOING – THE VALUING OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S VOICE/CONTRIBUTION TO THE GROUP
- AN ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE – POSSIBILITY OF TRANSCENDENCE
- RENEGOTIATION OF MEANINGS (LEARNING)
- REHEARSALS FOR LIFE IN A SAFE PLACE

OUTCOMES

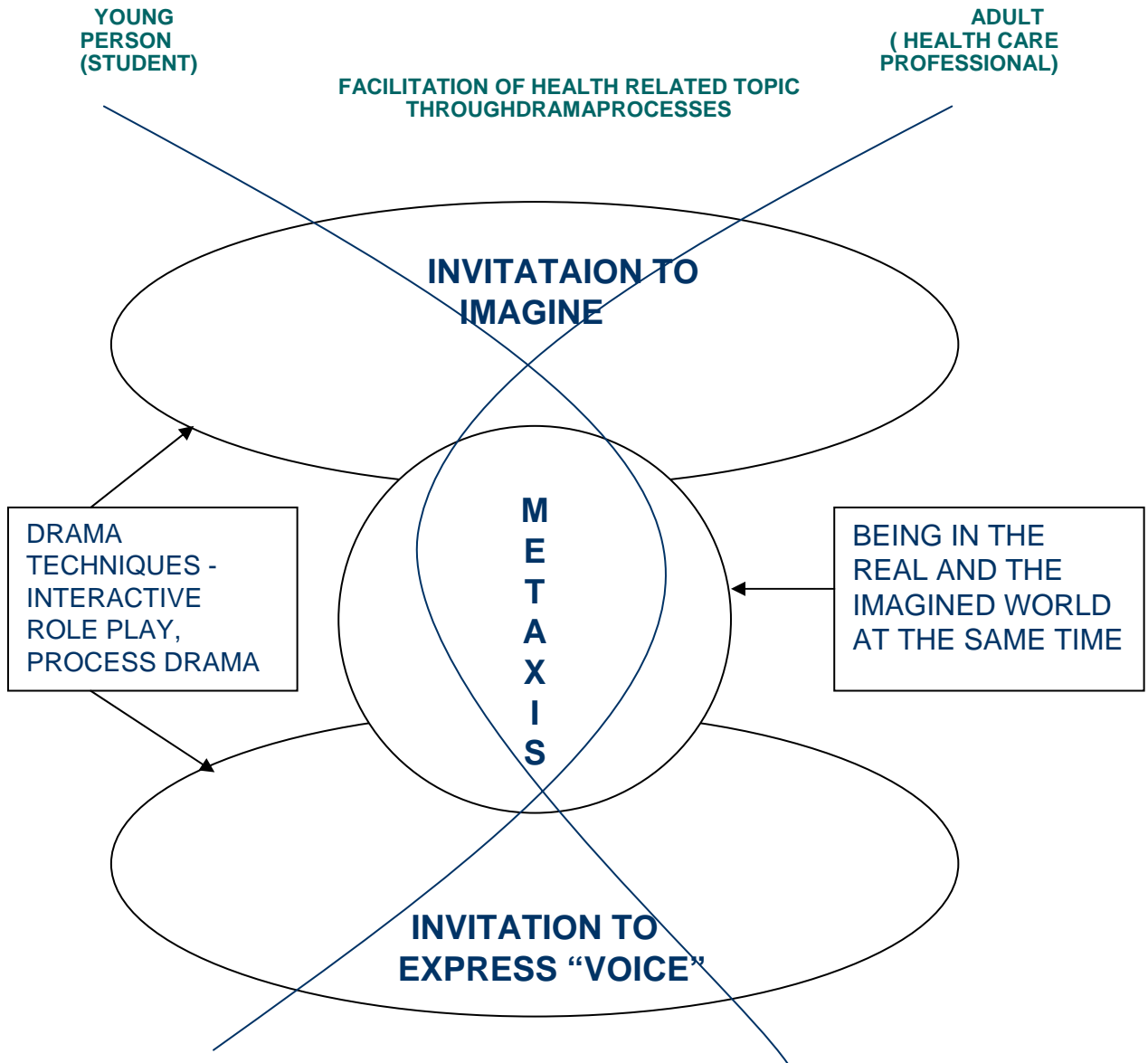
PERSON B

Some key outcomes...

- **Social connectedness**
- **An experience of possibility – imagination = yes**
- **An experience of expressivity – learning through speaking and doing – the valuing of the individual's voice/contribution to the group**
- **An artistic experience – possibility of transcendence**
- **Renegotiation of meanings (learning)**
- **Rehearsals for life in a safe place**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ADD HEALTH?

“DRAMA AS A HEALTH EDUCATION TOOL”



OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PERSON:	OUTCOMES FOR ADULT
●Personal and relevant	●Increased confidence in effective engagement
●Create new meaning	●Developed empathy
●Assimilated health information	●Improved skill base
●Empowered	●Improved understanding of population group

Some key outcomes...

Student (young person)

- Renegotiation of meanings (learning)
- Rehearsals for life in a safe place
- Learning is personal and relevant
- Assimilated health information
- Improved self efficacy

Health care professional

- Increased confidence in effective engagement
- Developed empathy
- Improved skill base
- Improved understanding of population group

What happens when you add health?

- Health information (social, emotional, physical) is assimilated with the individuals existing knowledge, experiences and understanding to create a new meaning that has been physically explored using imagination and voice in role play

Challenges & Potential

Challenges

- Essential to create a safe space
- Staged approach
- Built in partnerships between equally committed key stakeholders
- Skilled facilitators who understand both health & drama

Potential

- Engagement is immediate
- Potential for learning and real change
- Enhances self efficacy for students
- Strengthens meaningful partnerships in a community
- Links health & education

Contact details

Barbara Phillips & Andrea Grindrod
Health Promotion
Ranges Community Health Service
Belgrave & Lilydale
Tel: 9739 4577

Christine Sinclair
Research Fellow
Arts Education Department
Melbourne University
Tel: 8344 4465