theatre for life

developing resilient youth
No Monkey Business: Spick and Span

Learning hand-washing and basic hygiene through theatre
arepp: Theatre for Life

- Applied theatre NGO
- Nationally since 1987
- Creates targeted high quality dramatic theatre presentations
- for complimentary, interactive, social life-skills education
- to develop self-efficacy & resilience
- in relation to life-style issues, behaviours and choices
The Presentations

• Rights-based approach
• Travelling productions performed as an event
• in the real-life context for the audience

a] a Play
  • Age group and home-language* specific Character driven narrative
  • pre-school 2-4 yrs; grades (R)R-3, 4-7, 8-9, 10-12; Adults
  • Fosters identification and emotional recognition
  • Facilitates and models experiential observational learning

b] Facilitated Peer Discussion
  • Participant driven dialogue & debate
  • Encourages cognitive personalisation, contextualisation and problem-solving
  • Facilitates and models experiential cognitive learning

Experience is internalised as a lived “life-experience"
Playing

• Play is a quintessential (and arguably defining) element of performance or the theatrical event
• Play involves an imaginary situation with explicit roles and implicit rules, that requires concentration, application and commitment to, and total involvement in the activity for its own sake
• The theatrical event only exists through the shared, mutual agreement of both actors and audience in the playing
• Playing is not pretending; it is an agreed form of enacting something, consciously outside “ordinary” life, for an understood purpose
• In Performance the player becomes subordinate to what is being played for the purpose of the experience of the non-player
• In this Theatre is unique, where the beneficiary of the play is not doing the playing, and thus is an ideal form of play pedagogy
• Both free or self-driven play (mode A) & guided play (mode B)
The Project

- UNICEF & Department of Basic Education
- Produce a Health-promoting, Life-orientation Applied Puppet Theatre show developing Life-skills and Self-efficacy in relation to Basic Health, Hygiene, and Tuberculosis
- For Foundation phase learners, grades R-3
- No Monkey Business series established in 1996
- Perform in nominated Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP) and the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) programme schools
- NHI priority Heath Districts in KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and the Eastern and Northern Cape
- Home language: IsiZulu (KwaNatal/Mpumalanga), isiXhosa (Eastern Cape), Sepedi (Limpopo/Mpumalanga), Afrikaans (Northern Cape)
- Run for a term in the appropriate province, ea. year, for three years
Key Learning areas

• Medical care: seeking treatment, understanding the processes and fostering trust in medical facilities, clinics, hospitals, doctors and nurses

• Germ theory and the transmission of infection/sickness

• Health Skills: correct Hand Washing (how: soap, all over, between, underneath; when: before eating, after toilet/ playing/coughing, if dirty); how to Cough (elbow)

• Treatment of Illness: medicines, responsible use of medication, adherence to treatment therapies

• TB: symptoms, treatment, understanding and prevention

• Healthy Living: nutrition, hygiene, cleanliness and exercise
The Show

• *No Monkey Business: Spick and Span*

• Puppet Show: puppets are appropriate for age-group for appropriate distancing, accept the fantasy as real and true but not reality (of this world) and so non-threatening

• Characters:
  – Puppets Mac Monkey, Vanda Vulture, identifier characters, same age as audience, Nurse Hippo, Germy Germ
  – Thandi and Terri, adult care-givers, real actors, model the appropriate caring learning relationship

• Set: Soft, bright, colourful, clear delineation between ‘story space’ and ‘learning space’

• Narrative: Audience’s POV & voice, logical progression, Narrative segment per learning area, ‘facilitation’ segment, song

• Songs: catchy, sing along tunes, chorus verse structure, songs reenforce one principle theme/learning, each chorus reiterates and repeats the basic tenants of that learning
Monitoring & Evaluation

- Action Research approach
- Research, monitoring & evaluation embedded in every level of the intervention
- Designed to rigorously and systematically assess the engagement of the audience and record, by means of forms, the specific issues raised in order to determine the degree to which the presentation’s outcomes and their impact are likely to have been achieved
- Each presentation is evaluated by the performance team, educators and learners, who complete assessment questionnaires which are reflected and reported on per tour & annually
Project Achievements (April 2013 - December 2015)

- 400 schools
- 105 urban schools
- 295 rural schools
- 909 shows performed
- 125,619 learners
- 82% tap water 56% f-toilets
Impact

- 3 year Evaluation
- Eastern Cape
- 2013
  - 29 schools, 55 shows, 110 learners, 55 Educators
- 2014
  - 41 schools, 94 shows, 198 learners, 94 Educators
- 2015
  - 36 schools, 85 shows, 170 learners, 85 Educators
- 2015 3x
  - 28 schools, 94 learners 40% gr2, 60% gr3, 50% male/female
Engagement

• Learners are thoroughly, comprehensively & intensely engaged
• The learners find the play to be captivating, engrossing, entertaining, fun and great way to learn.
• For many it is their first experience of a live theatre show not to mention puppetry and they are extremely excited and grateful to have been a part of the presentation
• What they like/engages them most:
  – The Form - puppets and songs
  – Narrative/content
  – Learning
• After 3 years teams report Learners confidently, eagerly and sometimes smugly demonstrating their learnings loudly and pre-emptively during the production/narrative
Content

• Learners actively engage with the content
• The teams and the educators report active, eager, involved and participatory involvement
• Educators enthuse about the medium, method and language, describing it as age-appropriate and well suited to the developmental phase of their learners, which enhances both the teaching and learning of the topics
• They feel that the presentation is applicable [3.86/4] to the Life Orientation Curriculum
• The Educators find that the learners engage easily with the concepts presented, and that the informal and relaxed learning environment allows them to understand the show's themes in greater detail
Knowledge

- Learners reflect on what is important, relevant, significant, memorable to them
- 2 levels - narrative/content & learning
- Engagement with the content increases every year, indicating that the learners find something interesting/relevant in the content each year despite knowing the show
Learning

- Learners report learning in key learning areas
- The Educators recognised that, in addition to promoting good health and hygiene, the presentation developed a range of life-skills, such as problem-solving and ideas of personal responsibility
- The Educators report significant increases in the learners’ ability to communicate effectively, problem-solve and adopt personal responsibility in relation to the show's themes
- Educators who have experienced a repp: Theatre for Life show before affirm these as the long-term impact of the presentations

![Graph showing improvements in communication, problem-solving, skills, choices, rights, and responsibility over years 2013 to 2015.](image)
What did you learn?

- 100% of learners responded with at least 1.25 (2013) of the desired learning areas, increasing to 1.4 for learners who had seen the show three times, with hand washing being at least double (and rising to three times) that of the next most reported indicator coughing.
When should you wash your hands?

- 100% of respondents responded correctly an average of 2.02 items
- Before eating (narrative) 84%

Chart showing:
- 'Eat': 84%
- 'Toilet': 62%
- 'Play': 32%
- 'Dirty': 14%
- 'Cough': 11%
How should you wash your hands?

• 100% of respondents responded correctly listing an average of 2.02 items

• water (71%), soap (72%)

• 100% average of 1.44 show specific

- Water (71%)
- soap (72%)
- hand (31%)
- inside (35%)
- outside (32%)
- between (41%)
- nails (35%)
What should you do when you cough or sneeze?

- Most significant indicator of the direct impact of the show
- 100% of respondents indicated covering of the nose and mouth
- 87% specifically mentioning doing so with the elbow
- This can be attributed directly to the show as the audiences had not encountered this piece of information before the show was first performed in 2013.
How often?

• Learners are able to thoughtfully and cognitively engage with their behaviour in relation to their learnings

Hand washing

- some times: 21%
- most times: 69%
- always: 5%
- hardly ever: 4%

Technique

- some times: 21%
- most times: 73%
- always: 4%
- hardly ever: 1%

Coughing

- some times: 21%
- most times: 72%
- always: 5%
- hardly ever: 1%
Why Not?

- Learners demonstrate understanding of what impacts on their ability to enact their learnings
- 19% access to water re hand washing
- 60% forget (distracted) - 11% explain why, 80% playing

![Bar Chart]

- no water
- away
- forget
- forget+
- don’t know
Conclusions

• The learners show a marked increase in their ability to express themselves and to articulate their understanding of the production, its broader ramifications, and what they had learnt or discovered.

• The learners present their views and opinions confidently, knowledgeably, and intelligibly, with conviction and self-satisfaction in being able to do.

• This suggests that, while it may have bored the adults, running of the project for three years results in a significant, profound and intrenched impact, where the learners have been able to incorporate the learnings organically into their life knowledge-base, where has transformed into knowledge that they "know" inherently rather than information that they recall as taught and learnt.

• Intervention (appropriately adjusted) suitable for ECD from 2 years old.