

# Encouraging Grade 6 & 7 Boys to Embrace Different Perspectives Through Consensus in Group Learning

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## Further Information

This poster and further information is available at <http://www.theibsc.org/>

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## Introduction

Teamwork, essential to convey the message of dance, was highlighted as the DPHS Gumboot Dance team was guided through a series of activities to reveal and confront flaws in their collaborative team efforts:

- Personal differences,
- Communication skills,
- Cross-cultural identities,
- And a lack of consensus amongst team members needed to be resolved

## The Research Question

*"How might awareness of the power of consensus in group learning activities encourage Grade 6 and 7 boys to embrace different perspectives?"*

The teaching of collaborative skills and exploration of the impact of these skills to empower Grade 6 and 7 boys to embrace new and different perspectives were addressed in weekly rehearsals.

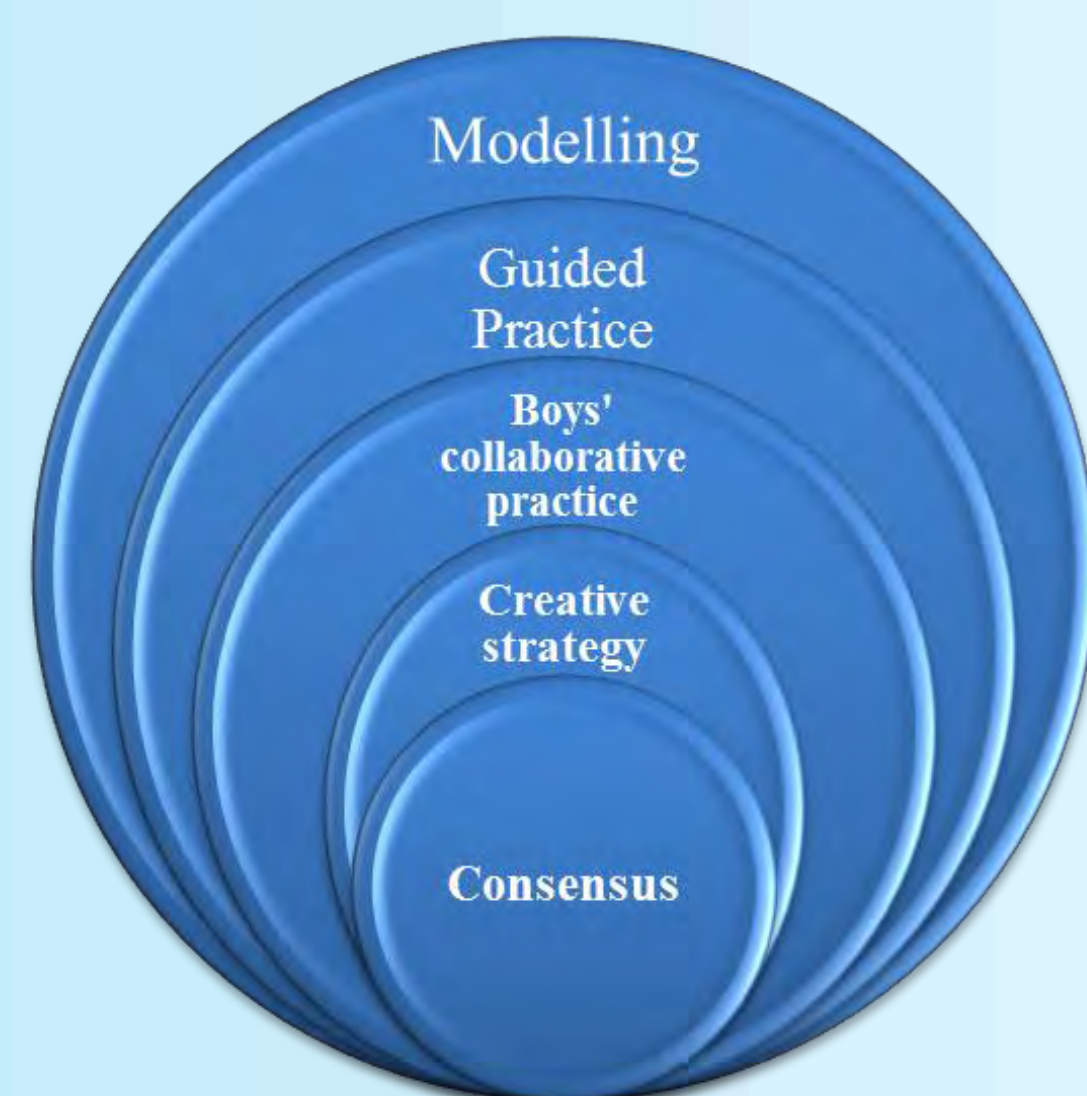
## Research Context and Participants

Durban Preparatory High School (DPHS) accommodates boys from Grade 0 to Grade 7.

The DPHS Vision to "prepare our boys for life" together with one of the cornerstones of the Prep experience, "Fresh ideas, traditional values," prompted me to look at the action research model. (DPHS, 2016)

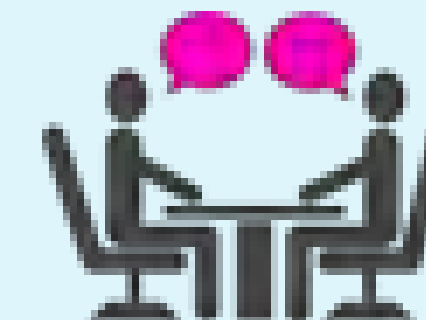
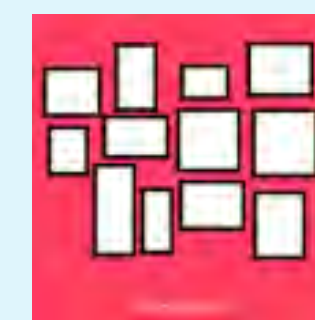
The Gumboot Dance Team, comprising 19 Grade 6 and 7 learners, participated in this action research project. These boys are from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds.

## The Research Action



## Data Collection and Analysis

The 'Look' phase, in which participants are observed whilst engaging in tasks and activities, formed the nucleus for the gathering of data in this project (Stringer, 2014).



- Each boy was assigned a code name.
- Journal entries, interviews and questionnaires were transcribed in the boys' own words.
- Categories emerged within the codes
  - Categories were collated into themes
  - Themes were analysed in concept webs.

## Key Findings and Discussion

### Eliminating sources of dissension

#### Mindshift

- Prerequisites for a meaningful dance experience:
  - Physical comfort
  - Acknowledgment of comfortable spaces
  - Awareness of personal space .

### New perspectives in collaboration, inspired by performance

- Share "the juicy stuff" with the team.
- "...at the end of our dance, 8 other boys and I made a human net for my friend to jump into!"

### Embracing new perspectives

- "Deep, Meaningful Chats" - "DMC's"
  - the most effective way to embrace and implement the collaboration skills learned in the action research project.

## Conclusions

- Newly acquired skills in collaboration inspired the Gumboot Dance Team to create the final product in this project.
- Creation of new dance steps and choreography of new sequences were all based on Deep Meaningful Chats.

*"... the respectful, entertaining, amusing and energetic message conveyed in the performance resonated strongly within me!"* (HGD Pike, retiring Headmaster DPHS)

- The collaborative, creative, innovative, and critical thinking skills required to successfully confront individual and team challenges are those that empower boys to be effective 21st century citizens.

## Key Readings

Friedman, S. (2012). *Post-Apartheid Dance: Many Bodies Many Voices Many Stories*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.  
Harvey, S. & Daniels, H. (2015). *Comprehension and Collaboration*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.  
*Mastering Self - assessment: Deepening Independent Learning Through the Arts*. (2016). Retrieved 1 October 2016 from <http://www.edutopia.org/school/new-mexico-school-arts>

"I believe this kind of learning is very successful because people cannot backchat... It gets them to focus and actually get the work done properly and then they execute it properly."



"I think we should collaborate and dance without talking."