The Global Youth Solutions Programme:

Exploring Freirean Influences and Transformative Pedagogy as a Toolkit for Empowering Young People

2001 – 2019.

by

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Acknowledgements

Biography – Yasmeen Ali BA MEd FHEA

As a Senior Lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire (hereafter UCLan), my primary role consists of leading and developing academic programmes in Community Leadership, delivered through the Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership (hereafter CVCL). The programme incorporates practice-based learning, so that students can gain professional experience in community action, mentoring and more importantly lead on community projects (University of Central Lancashire, n.d.). Formed around a transformative framework, the academic courses examine students' own ontological and epistemological assumptions, values and beliefs, allowing them to contextualise and therefore reconceptualise their reality, 'equip[ping] them to work with and guide others in translating their perspectives, perceptions and goals into agendas for social change' (Brown, 2004:99). Viewing this as an essential pedagogical element, I have successfully embedded transformative pedagogy within the teaching and learning framework of the university[1]. The additional aspect of receiving external accreditation through the Institute of Leadership and Management (hereafter ILM) is a further attraction for UCLan students and staff.

The Global Youth Solutions Programme has evolved from my keen interest in social and cultural anthropology. As a young female Asian woman, growing up in the wards of Frenchwood and Avenham, Preston, Lancashire[2], one of the most deprived communities regionally, my desire to study behavioural and cultural meaning became a long-standing mission, driving my career path. My initial encounter with community development came in 2001 as a student volunteer, studying BA (Hons) Criminology and Criminal Justice at UCLan. Curious to see theory translate into practice, I was drawn to the CVCL's commitment to practice-based learning. By securing voluntary positions involving being an advocate for looked-after children and through mentoring young offenders, I often had to articulate the thoughts and feelings of young people. Through the experience acting as an advocate, I soon came to the realisation that I was powerless to make a real change. My naïve understanding of community development also meant my practice reflected thoughtless (Johnston, cited in Ledwith 2016:148) and imposing action.

Through continued interaction with the CVCL educators I experienced a transformative culture, particularly proactive methods around collaborative working to co-create new knowledge. Later, after securing employment with the CVCL team as an East Lancashire Volunteer Coordinator in 2003, I began

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[1] Embedding an interdisciplinary transformative experiential learning programme on undergraduate courses across the university has resulted in the engagement of over 100 students, annually.

[2] The 2019 Indices of Deprivation reveals Preston as the 46th most deprived areas out of 317 districts (Lancashire County Council, 2019: para 20)

engaging with transformative pedagogy through involvement with various community-based projects. So, to develop the knowledge of transformative approaches, I engaged with the Global Youth Solutions (hereafter GYS) programme as a participant. Experiencing an increase in self-belief, I started to appreciate the valuable components for transformation, most importantly the dialectic interaction process, which seeks to reconceptualise what young people regard as oppressive structures, so co-creating solutions for positive change (Freire, 1996:82).

Taking a lead role in coordinating the GYS programme allowed me to adopt the fundamental pedagogy of the programme and reframe it within teaching practices. In 2009, following recognition for my work in transformative practice, I was appointed as consultant to the Offender Rehabilitation Charity, User Voice (London) to develop a framework for Prison Councils. User Voice is a charity led exclusively by ex-offenders, providing valuable insights into offender behaviour and rehabilitation of those currently in the criminal justice system (Guest, 2019: para 7). Using a transformative pedagogical approach, we were able to create a platform for ex-offenders, prison staff and current prisoners to co-create new solutions to existing problems in an environment where everyone is valued, heard and respected (Ledwith, 2016:42). The success of the Prison Council has led to further development of a Community Council model, working with people on probation and influencing the support they receive (Guest, 2019: para 11).

Further examples of a transformative approach included engaging elderly community members with secondary school children in the Cumbria and Pendle area, sharing childhood stories and maintaining local heritage. Again, the dialectic interaction broke down any preconceived views, aiding the co-creation of knowledge, producing a book called 'Chatting it'. This was replicated with the Traveller and Gypsy Community in Preston, preserving the deep-rooted oral culture.

In 2015, GYS was recognised formally at an institutional level as a vehicle for 'unlocking potential' for UCLan students. This recognition lead to UCLan further supporting the programme, expanding it to international communities such as Turkey, Oman, and more recently to refugees and asylum seekers on the Greek island of Lesvos. This has enabled me culturally to extend my knowledge through supporting and influencing communities globally.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the impact of transformative pedagogy within the GYS Programme. It will help develop a greater understanding of the process and offer an opportunity to influence policy and practice regarding young people's role as community development agents, incorporating action towards systematic change (Jemal & Bussey, 2018:51). With reference to Freirean pedagogical methods the study intends to evaluate the GYS programme as an effective community-based practice model, addressing social injustices and inequitable social structures. Enhancing knowledge of youth-led community development through evidence-based data, it will also inform professionals in transformative community-based educational situations and academia.

Relying heavily on subjective interpretations of participants' accounts, the study employs qualitative methods, consisting of focus groups and semi-structured interviews with nine participants. Utilising a thematic analysis approach, I gained a greater understanding of how individuals think, feel and do (Clarke & Braun, 2017:297). In accordance to community development principles, a secondary analysis method was used to dig deeper into key issues. Interpretivist Voice Centred Relational[3] methodology favoured a more nuanced and human understanding, allowing to uncover and hear 'participant voices'.

Supported by Ledwith's (2016:152) six-step process (Cycle Model), confirmed participants' critical thinking for liberation and formed the basis of the research methodology and pedagogical practice. Using Boal's (2008:98) suggestion of 'rehearsals for revolution', role play proved to be a vital element for 'conscientisation.' Creating a safe and protected environment to imitate/assess potential solutions, presented confidence and courage to act in the wider world. Key findings show naïve animateurs felt empowered to participate in transformative action to reconceptualise their reality. By understanding how to communicate their vision to peers, they demonstrated co-constructed knowledge for action.

Through understanding the process for transformative education, specifically the liberating components, this thesis will examine how the GYS programme has influenced student knowledge exchange and community engagement.

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[3] Developed by psychologist Carol Gilligan (1993) and her colleagues, VCR is a narrative analysis method focusing on disconnection and disassociation of men's and women's voices.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This chapter relates to the stage of 'Being' in Ledwith's amended version of Rowan's Research Cycle Model (Rowan, 1981:98; Ledwith, 2016:152), the point of initial action whereby a 'problem' is identified. The problems here are the structural inequalities faced by young people from marginalised backgrounds and their lack of voice. The chapter provides the contextual background to the GYS programme, introducing the reader to the influencers, the theory and the practice that has shaped the trajectory from the stage of Being, to the stage of Communication, this thesis being the embodiment of the latter. The chapter examines how the GYS programme has evolved from CVCL, its grounding within community development values and the underpinning pedagogy of Paulo Freire. Moreover, it will explain how community development values and Freirean pedagogy provide a rational conceptual framework for this thesis.

By dividing the thesis into five chapters, each relating to the stages of Ledwith's version of the Cycle Model, the overall structure of the thesis will provide an understanding of political and pedagogic drivers and influences. Beginning with an in-depth discussion of the key theoretical perspectives, Chapter Two will explore the impact of transformative education and practice on youth-led community development. Using Freire's (1996) conceptualisation of transformative education as a theoretical underpinning, and Ledwith's (2016) explanation of emancipatory action research (EAR) as a methodological framework, we have co-created a youth-led action research model. Outlining my methods of data collection, Chapter Three will focus on data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations. This chapter will also explore the ontological and epistemological foundations of the study. Chapter Four will present key findings from the study, with each participant telling a story. Through the individual voices of the participants, I will be able then to develop key themes around collective accounts. This chapter will also draw upon the theoretical perspectives, thus providing a clearer understanding of the impact of transformative pedagogy on youth-led community development. The final chapter is a reflexive discussion, drawing together the salient themes, and creating pathways for further for further research journeys.

1.2. Ontological Journey

The research journey begins with my own personal reality as a student volunteer with CVCL based at UCLan. It was during this time I was first introduced to the notion of young people as community changemakers and leaders. It was my experience as a Millennium Volunteer (hereafter MV) that shaped my ontology and direction along this research journey.

Founded in 1999, CVCL was originally initiated to deliver the MV[4] scheme, which was aimed to promote sustained volunteering amongst young people aged between 16 and 24 (Davis-Smith et al, 2002:vi). The volunteering activity provided a learning environment to develop 'soft' employability skills sought by employers, such as commitment, motivation and reliability (Duckett, 2002:96). The promotion of the 'soft' employability skills of the MV project, coupled with a widening participation agenda, gave CVCL a perfect opportunity to develop a framework which enhanced empowerment and leadership skills amongst disadvantaged communities. Both governmental and institutional strategies gave CVCL educators the autonomy to create a democratic and inclusive programme.

Since 1999, CVCL has supported over 19,000 volunteers in community development activity within some of the most disadvantaged wards in Lancashire,[5] subsequently working with marginalised communities locally, nationally and internationally. Under the auspices of CVCL, the GYS programme was created in 2001 to focus on the development of transferable skills amongst young people over the age of 13. Through the delivery of innovative projects, the programme has supported approximately 500 (Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership, n.d.) students and community volunteers. External funding from various sources such as Department for Education, Heritage Lottery Fund and small local grants supporting extracurricular activities within schools has allowed GYS educators to work with a wide range of young people. For example, homeless young people through partnership organisations such as Harbour House, Blackpool and pupils at secondary schools such as Marsden Heights Community College. Furthermore, the universities internal funding distributed through the widening participation budget as well as the international fund has allowed the programme to be delivered to university students, locally and internationally. More importantly a combination of external and internal funding has allowed community volunteers and university students to attend simultaneously, leading to valuable skills exchange and co-creation of new knowledge.

Offered over a three-day period the programme is designed to challenge young people, personally and collectively. Beginning with exploring the 'self' on day one, individuals will identify encounters, assumptions, roles and relationships that have come into being through the processes of socialisation, identification, instruction and reification (Boyd & Myers, 1988:268). Focusing on perspective transformation, individuals engage in activities such as personal shield and decision making, to unearth unconscious views. Through dialogue and reflective action individuals begin to encounter perceptual

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[4] MV is based on nine key principles: sustained personal commitment, community benefit, voluntary participation, inclusiveness, ownership by young people, variety, partnership, quality and recognition (Davis-Smith et al, 2002:vi).

[5] Burnley is the most deprived district within the Lancashire-12 area, with an average rank of 11, where one is the most deprived and 317 is the least. Hyndburn (18), Pendle (36) and Preston (46) are also in the top 20% most deprived authority areas in the country (Lancashire County Council, 2019a: para 3)

changes, altering the way they see themselves in the context of their social relationships and the way they act (Boyd & Myers, 1988:264). Moving into day two of the programme, individuals begin to explore behaviours and choices, particularly their interaction with the existential world (Boyd & Myers, 1988:270). To do this, participants are presented with theoretical explanations of concepts such as conflict resolutions and collaborative working. Being re-introducing to the same concepts via role play and simulated action, critically examining (through further discussion and reflection) their behaviours and choices. This leads to individuals connecting with their inner truth, exposing both personal qualities and practical abilities (Boyd & Myers, 1988:282). Transcending the limitations, participants begin to vision alternative realities allowing the final day for individuals to plan and formulate ways of implementing positive change. Building on peer-led education and acknowledging students as co-creators of knowledge, their contribution has been imperative to reconceptualising social justice.

The work of CVCL is underpinned by the principles of community development as described by Ledwith (2016:148):

1. Principles of social and environmental justice.
2. A vision of a just and sustainable world.
3. Values of equality, respect, dignity, trust, mutuality and reciprocity.
4. A process of critical consciousness through popular education (critical pedagogy), practical projects and collective action for change.
5. A theory base that helps to analyse power and discrimination.
6. Contextualising practice in its political context (Ledwith, 2016:148).

Thus, the work links research and evidence involving and driven by young people with policymakers to shape future interventions and approaches. By integrating Ledwith's methods into teaching and learning, the GYS programme has provided young potential community activists with the core skills needed to lead communities. Through focusing on aspects such as leadership, mentoring and project development, students and young people have gained an understanding of sustainability. By providing the tools needed for community regeneration, students have been able to cascade them to peer groups through mentoring. By identifying individuals and groups who would not traditionally access education for cultural and social reasons, GYS can empower communities to take control of regeneration and manage it positively. Thus, through GYS, CVCL has created a toolkit to enable socially responsible students and young people to continue making positive impacts on society throughout their lives

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(UCLan, n.d.a).   Transformative practice has played a key role in developing socially responsible graduates (Motion & Burgess, 2014:524).[6]

Critical pedagogy advocated by Paulo Freire and more recently Margaret Ledwith underpins the GYS method of transforming student skills into praxis or the process of combining action with reflection, which intertwines practice and knowledge, leading to critical consciousness (Ledwith, 2016:35).   It is upon this process that I have built my own ontological standpoint regarding developing young people for community action.   With praxis as a key determinant, a dialectic exchange between the tutor and the student must occur, transforming the naïve thinker from conforming and normalising 'today's' world to a critical thinker championing the humanisation of others (Freire, 1996:73).   On mediating the action/reflection process, the GYS programme acts as a platform for individuals to engage in dialogical relationships, allowing them to reflect on topical issues affecting their lives, thus creating methods to overcome difficulties.   Moreover, the programme counsels' individuals to view this as an ongoing process, reflected in our everyday lives and behaviours (Hingangaroa, 2015:71), a stance taken by the GYS educators as practitioners but also replicated in academia.

The process of empowering individuals for transformative practice is fundamental to this thesis and underpins ontology.   Having said this, it has not always been the case, and during my early years of practice as a MV youth leader, the link between education and empowerment remained opaque.   The initial stages of my experience involved outdoor education[7] with young women from the South Asian community in Preston, Lancashire, with the view to build confidence and instil belief in their own capabilities.   Experience had taught me that girls from this diaspora were nurtured to follow traditional practices such as marriage and family, with education being secondary.   I hoped my interventions would rank education in the same standing as family and traditional practices; however, I found it remained unimportant (Bhopal, 2000:49, Melling & Khan, 2015:277).   My lack of experience and understanding of 'empowering to transform reality' was evident, in my 'vertical' hierarchical approach, believing my role was to give (as the power holder) knowledge to those who 'lacked knowledge', instructing them to think, decide and act (Younghusband, 1978b:241).   This created a power imbalance and was anti-dialogical.   The art of reflexive learning was notably absent, thus delivering simplistic managerial training which generated action without thinking (Ledwith, 2016:148, Johnston, 1999:184).   It was not until I joined the CVCL educators, in early 2000, that I began critically to examine my approach to community development, emphasising my method of 'thoughtless action' (Ledwith, 2016:148).

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[6] This section of my work has been cited in Skinner, 2020:42.

[7] Conducted in 1999, the young women were members of the Clarendon Street Community Centre. Funding by Lancashire County Council, they visited Tower Wood Outdoor Education Centre to engage in team building activities.

Engaging in discourse with colleagues, I began to see the importance of learning through a collective voice (Johnston, 1999:186).

My alliance with CVCL came at the time of a political shift towards community development, equality and inclusion (Labour Party, 1997), a change that provided new opportunities to fulfil the aim of empowering young people. The political commitment to finding 'local solutions to local problems' (White, 2001:4, Gilchrist, 2003:17) was a driver towards adopting a practice of youth-led collective action as emancipatory praxis (Ledwith, 2011:80).

A further political shift came in the form of Lord Dearing's (1997) report urging higher education institutions (hereafter HEIs) to attract more students from underrepresented communities, and this paved the way for HEI-led community engagement. In fulfilling their new role as social institutions, HEIs deployed both academics and students in applying their skills, resources and talents to address issues affecting communities (White, 2001:4, Ching Mey, 2016:15). As a 'new' 1992 group HEI, UCLan led the way as a community university[8], working with deprived index areas such as Burnley, Nelson, Blackburn with Darwen, Rossendale, Hyndburn and Preston Central, thus demonstrating institutional commitment to widening participation and exceeding the 14.8% benchmark set by the Higher Education Statistic Agency (Higher Education Statistic Agency, 2018c). As a consequence of academic-led community engagement, local community groups requested some additional support around raising awareness of structural injustices embedded into everyday lives and assessing the scope for change. My aim was to focus on both social and the economic injustices faced by young people in our local communities (Mawby & Walklate, 1994:70, Ching Mey, 2016:15), particularly amongst underrepresented groups. The programme I envisaged had to both encompass meaningful and inclusive elements, empowering young people to transform their reality.

The journey underpinning this thesis had a global direction and I drew upon international experiences and partnerships to influence and shape pedagogy. This ranged from Brazilian influence, epitomised into the work of Paulo Freire, to Russian youth-led peer education. However, one of the pivotal influencers was the Californian Association of Student Councils (hereafter CASC). Founded in 1947, CASC was established to allow students to propose changes in educational policy to the State Board of Education. Following participation at the Global View Summit in Rio de Janeiro and Global Youth Forum,

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[8] Based in the heart of Lancashire, UCLan recruits 85% of its student population from local and surrounding areas, also known to be some of the most deprived communities. Already having extensive experience in dealing with issues such as isolation, not belonging and low self-esteem, UCLan was able to continue to support individuals representative of the widening participation agenda, expressing similar issues (Abramson & Jones, 1994)

USA, CASC supported the co-designing of policy for the Corporation for National and Community Service[9] (California Association of Student Council, n.d.). Recognised for their influence at governmental level, CASC developed links with a nonprofit organisation, the Association of Young Leaders (hereafter AYL), Russia, later becoming an inspiration for the GYS programme. CASC's commitment to peer-led pedagogy attracted me to this form of education as I regarded peer leadership advantageous when it came to influencing others, especially if they shared a common social group (Hogg & Smith, 2007:110, Taylor, 2011:260, Schubroeck et al, 2016:45). By incorporating transformational methods, empowered young people would bring about change among marginalised communities. However, it soon became apparent that CASC and I were ideologically polarised. Although we did share common ground through peer leadership and pedagogy, CASC's focus on managerialism and meritocracy was creating a corporate ideology. Their deep-rooted values represented a neo-liberalistic agenda, forcing marginalised communities to embrace competitive attitudes (Dean, 2013: para 6, Jones, 2012:2). Failure to comply was seen to be a personal failing, dismissing the processes by which marginalised communities traditionally adopt a working-class culture and identity (Best, 2017:38).

CASC operated via a scientific management style, training individuals to improve performance for productivity (Courtney, 2002:61; Apaliayh et al, 2012:33). They favoured a competitive and single-minded approach and their use of simplistic definitions such as 'facilitator' and 'delegate' echoed managerial functions, thus creating hierarchical distinctions between the two roles, a negative competitivity and intellectual passivity. I saw the role of the 'facilitator' as a peer educator who was responsible for facilitating the 'delegates' in critical action rather than an author of rules, schedules and structure. My rejection of neo-liberal managerialism drove me to search for an alternative. I considered Ledwith's (2016:55) reference to the French term 'animateur' (meaning those who 'animate' others into action). Ledwith describes the role as someone who acts as a critical educator and is responsible for stimulating learning and change, based on mutual and horizontal relationships. Supporting Freire's (2013:42) concept of critical consciousness, there must be an element of questioning and probing deeper into the issues (Ledwith, 2016:56). Those who initiate and introduce critical thinking are 'critical animateurs'. Their responsibility is to set out a framework and direction for thinking to help bring to life the issues affecting their peers through critical action, whether it be verbally or through theatrical performances. Those engaging in the learning process to improve their situation are 'naïve animateurs'. They are individuals submerged by their naïve consciousness: unquestioning, passively and fatalistically

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[9] Corporation for National and Community Service is a US federal agency that leads on improving lives, strengthening communities and fostering civic engagement through service and volunteering (CNCS, n.d)

accepting the injustices they face (Eversley, 2019:196). Nonetheless, their experiences and knowledge should not be dismissed; it must be used collaboratively to unveil reality, connecting both groups critically to understand the reality and thus co-create new knowledge (Freire, 1996:51). Acknowledging both parties to be 'co-intent on reality' (Freire, 1996:51) led me to revise the term 'facilitator', replacing it with 'critical animateur', and 'delegate', replaced with 'naïve animateur'.

For real conscientisation to take place, questioning needs to be complemented with real or simulated action. In Boal's (1979:8) depiction of theatrical performances, imitating disparities within society and connecting them to personal reality is essential. Through abolishing scenes of illusion and passivity, performances favour the action of knowing and action is guided by knowledge (Ranciere, 2011:6). Naïve animateurs can begin to reconstruct reality, empowering them to take control and become active citizens (Ranciere, 2011:6). My concern with the appropriateness of CASC's meritocratic method led to a reconsidered curriculum using a democratic and transformative approach.

This revised approach encourages problem solving through dialogue, stimulating critical thinking, self-awareness and a break away from remaining passive objects. It is a rationale for creating a framework for critical consciousness. Recognising Freire's idea of exposing individual voice, this rationale supports the unveiling of personal belief and ability to bring about positive social change (Ledwith, 2016:58). Incorporating a collaborative approach also establishes a sense of ownership allowing young people to co-create solutions agreeable on a mutual basis (McManus, 2005:77). The fundamental aim to empower all allows young people to lead on personal initiative and mentor others to do the same.

By implementing a transformational approach based on 'cognitive restructuring' (Benfari, 2013:17), young people engage in authentic dialogue discovering and connecting to social injustices (Kohlrieser, 2006:37). Benfari (2013:17) views cognitive restructuring using self-development practices, thus encouraging young people to evaluate existing behaviour, modifying attitudes for the better. Similarly, transformational practices aim to evaluate social injustices and co-create solutions to help modify social structures. Therefore, adopting CASC's methods would mean creating an environment where precision and standardisation are paramount (Courtney, 2002:62). This is dehumanising, 'producing' characters without individuality and independence of thought (Enteman, 1993:164). Moulding an individual's behaviours and values to mirror those of an organisation/state creates an existence which no longer corresponds with reality (Enteman, 1993:154, 164). CASC's aim, albeit subliminal, was to cultivate a mindset regarding power and domination, permitting young people to reinforce a dominant neo-liberal culture and exercise power over others (Deem & Brehony, 2005:231). Any expressions of individuality

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were discouraged, and behaviours modified accordingly. Young people mirroring the behaviours of the leaders were rewarded (Groves & LaRocca, 2011:512). These rewards consisted of respect and credit from the leaders, with opportunities to move up the 'ladder' and 'rise to the top' (Littler, 2013:52), a meritocratic approach reflecting a managerial culture. This process attempts to 'produce' individuals through a competitive, linear and hierarchical system, giving little thought to young people who 'failed' (Newman, 1998:337, Littler, 2013:54). Through my personal values of democracy and inclusion I seek to generate meaning and characterisation by challenging perceived views, provoking intellectual stimulation (Groves & LaRocca, 2011:512). Nurturing innovation and creativity through questioning and reframing of issues, this aims at co-creating new knowledge leading to a theoretical framework underpinned by transformational pedagogy.

A further rationale for this thesis is mitigating the challenges of neo-liberalism. Living in a pluralistic world, domination and control has become deep-rooted in working values (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995:517), forcing UCLan to adjust its focus and compete in the continually changing HE market. The resulting perpetual organisational restructuring became a norm, impacting on the GYS trajectory. Without affecting the deep structure, UCLan introduced incremental changes to make way for improvements (Burke, 2008:69), many in response to political changes. The release of the Dearing Report in 1997 presented a commitment to widening participation, incorporating life-long learning (Dearing, 1997:370, Taylor, 2006:101). Capitalising on this, UCLan increased the number of students recruited from underrepresented areas, offering them the same opportunities as those from affluent areas (University of Central Lancashire, n.d.b). In response, and mirroring Freire's desire to engage disadvantaged groups, the CVCL educators created innovative ways to empower students from underrepresented backgrounds, and this has been integrated into the framework of the GYS programme.

The political focus on 'soft' skills remained pivotal until the appointment of the Coalition Government in 2010, which saw an increase in tuition fees, forcing individuals to reassess their decision to attend university. Placing additional pressures on underrepresented groups (PR Newswire, 2011), and further isolating them from HE. Although there is no evidence to support this (Sa, 2014:1), it certainly impacted on how universities operated. Experiencing business related pressures, the HE sector had to reassess their operational drivers for survival (Newman, 2000:45, Allen, 2012:49). Placing emphasis on student experience (Allen, 2012:49) and the development of professional skills (Mishra, 2014:51, Osmani et al, 2019:2), universities modified their focus on becoming the most attractive institution, creating curriculums which incorporated technical and interpersonal skills, offering a good experience combined

with employability skills that prepared students for the job market (Osmani et al, 2019:2). Furthermore, the release of Wilson's (2012:1) review into business-university collaboration recommended universities to consult businesses to evolve with the needs of the market, producing job-ready graduates who could instantly join the workforce (Osmani et al, 2019:1). Looking at the practicalities of this, Osmani (2019:8) found inconsistency in universities' ability to satisfy employers. Enlisting critical thinking and problem solving as insignificant (Osmani, 2019:7), universities were compelled to engage students in 'thoughtless action' (Johnston, cited in Ledwith, 2016:148). Clearly indicating the actions of an oppressive society where power and domination is maintained over the oppressed (Newman, 1998:337), programmes like GYS are essential for cultivating the necessary attributes in pursuit for positive change. Only through working together as co-investigators can change be obtained (Freire, 1996:87). A further adoption of Appreciative Leadership (Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015:235), where leaders seek the positives in people, has allowed the GYS programme to generate animateurs that are critical actors in the world seeking for positive change.

Further adjustments within the GYS programme have also contributed to the progressive curriculum. Naïve animateurs engage with the programme at stage one, where critical animateurs challenge their reality through theatrical and problem-posing questions. Following this process, naïve animateurs are invited to stage two of the programme where they are trained as critical animateurs. The annual recruitment of animateurs offers the opportunity to train new people with unique experiences, bringing in fresh ideas and new ways of implementing the curriculum to future generations. For example, it was recently recognised that the activity 'group development model' did not engage participants, limiting their learning and understanding of the concept. The introduction of 'Tuckman's Model', elaborating the four stages of group development through performance, allowed animateurs to communicate the concept practically, resulting in a higher level of understanding. Moreover, my role is to work in partnership with the animateurs, allowing animateurs to take control of planning, management and directing key decisions. Accepting my position as a professional practitioner with extensive experience, I provide an insight into the challenges and co-created solutions through problem-posing questions. Adopting this process embeds a sense of self-belief in their natural power to take control of their reality and remain confident in their abilities to make decisions affecting their lives (Weyer, 2011:95).

There is a strong rationale for GYS as a vehicle for youth-led community development. The notion of community development is a complicated and evolving concept. It could be argued that the development of communities has existed since the emergence of communities (Phillips & Pittman, 2009:3); however, the concept was not used widely until the late 1950s and early 1960s, that saw an

upsurge of community work in Britain (Popple, 2008:8), giving rise to literature and shaping the profession.

The formation of the United Nations in 1948 saw a commitment to protection of human rights (United Nations, 1986:3; Equality and Human Rights, 2018: para 10), strengthening the belief that individuals had a right and duty to participate as community members. Respecting citizens as equals, their involvement in life-changing decisions became paramount (Younghusband, 1978b:239, Ledwith, 2016:7). The lack of knowledge and research saw community workers helping individuals come to terms with their oppressive environment (Kuenstler, 1961:15), with little thought of how to transform their reality. Further demands came following the 1973 world recession where employment mobility became a necessity, coupled with geographical mobility. Young people were forced to source employment in the cities away from family and community networks (Younghusband, 1978a:21). The withdrawal of resources from democratic control significantly impacted on community workers, increasing the demand for more community-based engagement (Younghusband, 1978b:239). Evolving literature uncovered various professions identifying themselves as community development workers, further extending the term and subsequently adding to the widely disputed concept. However, there was little evidence consisting of programmes which represented youth voice or youth involvement (Alcock & Christensen, 1995:116).

Over the years, much of the community development process has been primarily focused on increasing adult education with very little attention on the socialisation of children and young people (Henderson & Vercseg, 2010:46). The introduction of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 (Henderson & Vercseg, 2010:46; Bacon et al, 2013:488) recognised young people as participating members of society, demanding their right to express their views and be heard (UNICEF, n.d. para3). Bacon et al (2013:488; Archard & Skivenes, 2009:392) however, has found UNCRC to fall short on delivering young people with the right to make decisions, more importantly failing to even refer to them as citizens of society. This partial acceptance contributes to frustrations, driving individuals to deviant behaviour for approval (Cohen, 1985:122). Merton (1968:199) claims the unequal means of achieving goals, set by the social system, adds great pressures on individuals, and an aspect requiring reform.

Modern times still pose concerns for young people, especially with the widespread negative perception (Ipsos MORI, 2006; Jones, 2012:2). It is claimed, 'British society through a combination of government anti-youth policies and negative media reporting now perceive and treat young people as both a social

problem and a social threat' (Grattan, 2008:255). Providing an argument for children and young people's involvement in the community development agenda, Henderson & Vercseg (2010:46) highlights that their involvement enhances learning, producing collective objectives relevant to contemporary norms and customs. Offering the GYS programme in a university setting captures young and mature minds, remaining inclusive to all and obtaining vital life experiences that can be shared to create solution-based outcomes. Empowering them to broaden their learning, students can extend the transferable skills to a wider context of life.

Due to the complexity that is associated with understanding 'empowerment,' (Mohajer & Earnest, 2009:425) it is important to underline 'empowerment' for the purpose of this thesis to be, simply altering the thought processes of those involved. To transform individual thinking, the GYS programme establishes a protective learning environment, blocking out any power relationships and creating a democratic process to nurture critical reflection (Mezirow, 2000:31). This brings together, participants to co-create new ways of working, empowering them to act and manage change, collectively (Drenkard, 2013:57). The collective and reflective discourse nurtures critical thinking, thus initiating the process of transformative thinking (Larkins, 2019:417). Exposing individuals to an alternative way of understanding their reality, simply activates the empowerment process. It is due to this, 'empowerment,' for the purpose of this thesis, will be understood as a mere transformation of thinking.

Mezirow (2000:3) expresses transformative learning to be a process starting with a human need to understand individual experiences and distinguish it within the context of existing knowledge. Similarly, the GYS programme refuses to accept naïve animateurs as intrinsically passive participants (Larkins, 2019:417) but recognises them as conscious individuals with a pre-existing social identity. Societies, pre-determined social structures, deny individuals the opportunity to effectively have a say, crucially keeping their concerns off the agenda and ultimately silencing their voice (Larkins, 2019:417). People begin to turn to authoritative figures to rationalise and create meaning to replace their muteness, which often involves imaginary meanings (Mezirow, 2000:3, Larkins, 2019:417). Hardened into one's being, the imaginary meanings begin to form a frame of reference that is integrated into the cognitive and emotive structures, shaping their points of view (Boyd, 2008:222). The GYS programme acts a platform for naïve animateurs to expose imaginary meanings (Mezirow, 2009:103), re-evaluating experiences and co-create meaning. Through collective reasoning and assessment, naïve animateurs uncover a role they feel they can invest in, validating their understanding and position within society (Mezirow, 2000:7, Boyd, 2008:222, Larkins, 2019:418).

By focusing on individual and social dimensions, participants become aware of how they have come to acquire knowledge, instigating what Mezirow (2009:8) calls perspective transformation or re-framing their perspective of the world. Engaging in critical and reflective discourse both naïve and critical animateurs devote themselves to exploring a common belief and assessing their personal justifications for such perspective (Mezirow, 2000:11). Embedded within the GYS programme is also simulated action in the form of role play, presenting participants with alternative images realities (Mezirow, 2009:104), co-create new information and multiple perspectives (Boyd, 2008: 214). Role play is essential in transforming the habits of the mind and constructing meaning (Mezirow, 2009:92). For example, naïve animateurs, who view themselves as partial players within society re-examine their role as active citizens, revealing their true potential and altering their opinion and function within society (Mezirow, 2000:21). Moreover, incorporating a peer led approach equalises power struggles, a vital aspect for establishing meaningful and authentic relationships to expand individual awareness (Boyd & Myers, 1988:261, Mezirow, 2009:104).

It is important to highlight, the GYS programme is designed to initiate the transformative learning process and by no means does it conclude once individuals have completed the programme. Firstly, the length of the programme does not warrant enough time to delve deep into the complexities of transformative learning and empowering individuals. Secondly, transformative learning should not be viewed as a process with an end goal, stopped once achieved. It is an ongoing process with no resting point (Mezirow, 2000:25, Boyd, 2008:223). Learning is constant, however when combined with critical reflection, discourse and reflective action, the nature of the learning becomes transformative (Mezirow, 2000:24). Acknowledging it as an ongoing process, indicates the process having multiple layers, with each person progressing at different stages. Similarly, participants attending the GYS programme also achieve a state of transformation at different stages, whether it be during the 3-day programme or after. Transformative learning is heavily reliant on individuals desire to take control of their own learning (Kasl & Elias, 2000:274). Without this, educator's task to alter frame of reference remains challenging (Kasl & Elias, 2000:274). Everyone comes with their own interests and priorities (Mezirow, 2000:25) and how they progress through each stage is determined by their frame of reference and how deeply their opinions are engrained in the habits of the mind (Kasl & Elias, 2000:232). For naïve animateurs, 3 days may not be sufficient time to fully share personal experiences, however the simple emancipation of thinking is a significant moment in transformative learning (Kasl & Elias, 2000:275).

Achieving a level of transformation creates a sense of empowerment. Mezirow (2000:5) claims empowerment cannot be achieved unless individuals engage in critical dialogue and alter their interpretations of the world. Critical dialogue, however, must not encapsulate the notion individuals are enslaved and motivated by hate for the world, and a master of critique is required to reveal their oppression (Hodgson et al, 2018:10). By negating the present and focusing on the future, animosity for the existing world is cultivated, producing cynicism and distrust (Hodgson et al, 2018:18). Instead, the GYS programme creates a space for thought, re-establishing connections to our words and opening possibilities to act (Hodgson et al, 2018:17). Driven by love for the world, both naïve and critical animateurs engage in dialogue that focuses on areas for improvement as well as acknowledging good things that need preserving (Hodgson et al, 2018:15). Having access to this knowledge is empowering for both current and future generations to act (Hodgson, 2018:18).

Initially emerging from industrial times (Rowlands, 1995:104) community leaders acknowledged empowerment theories to have several advantages to developing communities. Similarly, the basic idea of motivating individuals to 'break out of inactive mindsets, take risks and enhance their self-responsibilities,' (Cheong et al, 2016:602) was an appealing for the GYS educators. Cheong et al (2016:602) further suggest individuals should also 'be accountable for their outcomes' (Cheong et al, 2016:602). Detaching blame from organisations, failure is deemed as an individual responsibility (Oliver, 2018:1), a concept denied by the GYS educators. Cheong et al (2016:602) unassumingly implies individuals are free agents, responsible for their personal economic growth, supressing and omitting any complexities presented either socially, economically or politically (Klein, 2016:510). Denying the fact, resources are often unequally distributed, consisting of several barriers, marginalised communities are often considered as products of their own failures (Rappaport, 1987:137). Creating a sense of hopelessness and despair communities feel immobilised to act (Freire, 2014:3).

Like Freire (2014), Webb (2013:398) considers 'hope' to be a key factor in reframing thinking, particularly as people operate better with it than without it. Understood as a human instinct, 'hope' cannot be denied that it 'belongs to the hard, unchangeable core of our anthropological specificity' (Mandel, 2002:247). It is a universal human ontological need, developed through a dialectical approach demanding for people to become fully human (Sutton, 2015:41). Both Freire (2014) and Webb (2013) allude to the fact individuals are incomplete, not yet determined or conditioned into existence, implying they are compliant to being conditioned through education (Sutton, 2015:41). In fact, there is no pre-determined trajectory for human existence, present reality is conditioned by the past and shaped by options available in the present (Sutton, 2015:41). The present is concealed with possible futures one

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can only hope for, however through dialectical interaction, opportunities for recreating themselves anew, are established (Sutton, 2015:42, Hodgson et al, 2018:16, Schwimmer, 2019:502). The role of the critical animateurs is to 'unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be' (Freire, 2014:3). Beginning with revolutionising the classroom setting, critical animateurs offer a platform to learn, opening hearts and minds beyond boundaries, making education and learning a practice of freedom and not control (Hooks, 1994:12, Sutton, 2015:45). Creating new visions, critical animateurs ignite hope allowing naïve animateurs to annunciate a better alternative to their reality and uncover new beginnings (Webb, 2013:409, Hooks, 1994:12, Schwimmer, 2019:502). Firmly focusing on the preservation of good and areas for future development (Schwimmer, 2019:502) both negative and positive aspects of reality are considered, opening new forms of thought and action (Schwimmer, 2019:503). Recognising and reassess structures of assumptions and expectations, ultimately lead to naïve animateurs feeling empowered and becoming active participants in learning (Hooks, 1994:11). The GYS programme by no means promotes hope to change the world, it simply offers an alternative perspective on their world and hope to change their own reality.

The idea of transforming 'inactive mindsets' remains key to GYS educators, paving way for re-framing individual thinking, and empowering them to take control (Mezirow, 2009:90). According to Rappaport (1987:122) empowerment is 'a mechanism by which people, organisations and communities gain mastery over their affairs'. Involving naïve animateurs to work collectively to improve their lives, helps develop linkages with agencies and maintain a better quality of life (Zimmerman, 1995:582). If not executed correctly, control and power can be an overarching aspect where individual agendas are used achieve something for themselves (Wahid et al, 2017:1361). Traditional educational settings have been heavily criticised for replicating this within teaching practices, leading to limited development and learning (Freire, 1996:52, Hooks, 1994:10).

The concept of 'power' is viewed as a relationship between individuals or individuals and institutions rather than personal property (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2014:5). This relationship between people or institutions is determined by actions and these actions can be a source to reinforcing dominant ideologies (Jones, 2006:29, Meyer & Land, 2006:3). Individuals within marginalised communities are systematically denied power and influence within the dominant societies by controlling the messages about how they should be and how they come to believe the messages to be true (Rowlands, 1995:102, Hooks, 1994:3). The actions of dominant communities are disguised in the way of expansion and development in pursuit for a better life (Jones, 2006:29). Moreover, they are concealed as a form of care and solidarity for the passive communities (Somerville, 2011:4).

Retaining 'power over' how messages are communicated, ensures marginalised communities not only internalise them, but they also become so ingrained within their lives they begin to mistake them for reality (Rowlands, 1995:102, Mezirow, 2000:4, Boyd, 2008:222). Thus, leading to members of the marginalised communities feeling powerless to express their own opinion, eventually believing their opinions are of no value (Rowlands, 1995:102). In context to the young people involved in the GYS programme, the constant partial acceptance of their existence in society (Cohen, 1985:122), results in feeling powerless to express their voice, in fear of being characterised as worthless. Relocating the power to the naïve animateurs creates a more inclusive and equal way of working (Wahid et al, 2017:1362). Re-evaluating 'power' to be 'power to' rather than power over' eliminates domination and obedience, replacing it with a desire to see individuals achieve based on their interests and their collective agenda (Rowlands, 1995:102). Involving those outside of any decision-making process, especially those affected by the decisions (Rowlands, 1995:102), develops confidence and alters behavioural patterns to focus on development (Christens & Peterson, 2012:630).

Introducing peer leaders within the GYS programme remains key to ensuring the equal distribution of power, creating a democratic environment for acquiring knowledge (Fisher & Fisher, 2018:74). Lee and Koh (2001:685) claims actions of the teacher need to be reformed in order to transform the cognitive state of the student. Similarly, critical animateurs relocating the power to the naïve animateurs by creating a supportive environment nurtures confidence (Christens & Peterson, 2012:630) however the relationship exists as peers. Lee and Koh (2001:686) argue any reform of cognitive state amongst peers should be viewed as an act of encouragement, not empowerment. A previous study exploring the peer-led aspect of the GYS programme, reveals participants express an increased sense of self belief when motivated by their peers, leading me to reject Lee & Koh (2001:686) beliefs of 'empowerment' as unsuitable terminology within a peer led approach.

Equalising power amongst peers, remains a vital element in the empowering process especially when developing critical awareness amongst naïve animateurs, both socially and politically (Kasturirangan, 2008:1467, Riger, 1993:280). Participants begin to understand why and how barriers to resources have been constructed (Kasturirangan, 2008:1467) seeing themselves as individuals who are entitled to an opinion and their involvement in the decision-making is valuable (Rowlands, 1995:102). Thus, generating power through knowledge (Freire, 1996:64) naïve animateurs feel empowered to create goals for social and cultural change (Kasturirangan, 2008:1467). Their fight for liberation through solidarity incorporates discourse and individuals 'speak a true word… to transform the world' (Freire, 1996:68). These words spoken however must be understood using two dimensions, action and

reflection. It is not possible to have one without the other, those engaged in dialogue must act on the words spoken but also reflect on the action in order to truly transform the reality. Similarly, the GYS programme has been developed in order to ensure that there is a continual dialogue between the critical and naïve animateurs. Critical animateurs are trained to introduce situations affecting naïve animateurs and facilitate dialogue by posing challenging questions. This dialogue between critical and naïve animateurs is valuable as it creates an understanding of their reality and enables them to act (Rowland, 1995:103). Essentially, becoming subjects within their own lives, as complete human beings (Freire, 1996:49, Rappaport, 1981:15). Embedding a narrative approach not only recognises naïve animateurs stories but also revolutionises their thinking through discourse. Engaging in discourse with those who are "out of power" and using methods to allow them to gain access to power sharing and influence, results in a change in their status (Pigg, 2002:120). Allocating power to the participants, liberates them to gain control over their own learning and transforming their reality (Hooks, 1994:3).

Like transforming thinking, empowerment is also an ongoing process, determined by enhanced confidence, connections and consciousness (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2014:8). Encompassing a group based, participatory and developmental process naïve animateurs can gain greater control of their lives and environment (Maton, 2008:5). The idea of the process being participatory and developmental fully supports Freirean values of collaborative working when fighting to restore humanity. Occurring and reoccurring amongst peers to support and inspire each other to make positive change makes is an indefinite process. Recognising the effects of systematic oppression as inescapable, through participatory and dialectic processes individuals can continually co-create new knowledge for positive change (Kasturirangan, 2008:1467), continually building on confidence, connections and consciousness (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2014:8).

Studies on empowerment strategies and transformative practices amongst young people within marginalised communities remains limited, indicating a clear gap within this area and something my doctoral research aims to answer. Mohajer & Earnest (2009:433) findings has shown the need to extend empowerment strategies to young people focusing on transformative development, including direct and meaningful involvement in change processes (Christens & Peterson, 2012:632).

1.3. Conclusion

Keen to understand how the GYS programme cultivates young minds through peer interaction, a previous investigation of the programme uncovered a feeling of empowerment. However, the understanding of the concept varied phenomenally. Prompting further investigation, this thesis seeks

to understand individual interpretations of empowerment and more importantly the transformative practices used for liberation. Having experienced the GYS programme as an animateur and coordinator, my involvement remains significant, especially for encouraging the co-creation of knowledge (Ledwith, 2016:148).

Moreover, my previous participation in a study conducted by Melling & Ali (2015), examining critical dialogue used to empower Gypsy Traveller communities in Lancashire, broadened my desire to explore transformative practices in detail. The study accepted the deep-rooted oral culture amongst the Gypsy Traveller communities, recreating the classroom to represent a visual and verbal learning environment. Using the oral tradition of storytelling, the group expressed their reality through fiction, connecting with UCLan students during a moment of collaborative conscientisation (Melling & Ali, 2015:217). Mirroring a visual and verbal learning environment, the GYS programme conducts learning through art and theatrical performances. This encouraged me to unearth the key components of transformative practice, particularly highlighting the process used to bring about positive change. This had to be explored using dialectic methods to gain a deeper understanding of participants' thoughts, understanding and knowledge of their reality (Jordan, 2009:43).

Freire (1996:53) suggests shifting the power or learning from the tutor to the student ensuring learning is taking place but guided by the students (McLaren & Leonard, 1993:9). Disagreeing with this, is Vlieghe (2018:923) who claims Ranciere's explanation of adopting a 'thing-centred' approach is emancipatory. They state focusing on a thing/subject matter close to both student and teacher maintains attentiveness and an opportunity to put intelligence to work (Vlieghe, 2018:923). Although this is an important factor, participants accessing the GYS programme largely consist of members from marginalised communities. Establishing an authentic relationship is key and can only be achieved through a 'student-centred' approach, putting participants voices and experiences at the centre of any discourse. Advancing naïve animateur's counter-translation of reality determines the co-creation of new knowledge and equalisation of power relationships (Ranciere, 1991:70, Vlieghe, 2018:923). A 'thing-centred' approach, would not only dismiss individual voices and independence to express opinion (Enteman, 1993:164) however GYS programme participants would be further denied a voice, thus making the programme disempowering and counterproductive. Moreover, relying on critical animateurs interpretation of reality implies reality is universal. Known to be a subjective constitution 'reality' or 'thing' is epistemically inaccessible until it has been experienced and without awareness of that 'thing' it cannot be investigated (Deely, 2009:9, Riva et al, 2016:10). By Problem-posing questions about 'codified existential situations,' individual thinking is nurtures to arrive at a critical view of reality

(Freire, 1996:99; Murphy, 2008:32). Likewise, the GYS programme attempts to transform individual thinking, using the social process of equal dialogue (McLaren & Lankshear, 1994:180), encouraging the assessment of unjust aspects of reality, suggesting possible ways to transform them. My aim in this study is to see if allowing participants to take control of their learning in a critical manner enables them to break away from the 'culture of silence' and develop self-awareness, freeing them to be more than just 'passive objects' (Fritze, n.d). More importantly, this study will help create a deeper and theoretical understanding of the transformative practices, feeding into to future projects and initiatives developed by the CVCL team.[10]

The questions used to explore the impact transformative methods have on participants within the GYS programme are indicated below.

- To what extent do participants perceive transformation to take place?
- How is 'empowerment' understood, experienced and applied by participants beyond the programme?

My existing and deep-rooted connection with the GYS programme as a participant and coordinator, undoubtedly influenced my desire to explore this process. My initial encounter came at a time I was young and naïve, with a quiet and compliant nature, easily persuaded by those in power, fostering certain models of family conduct and adopting particular mores and values which shaped my involvement in society (Mizen, 2010:25). My engagement with the programme as a naïve animateur provided me with a platform to reflect critically on the world, offering solutions for positive change, stipulating a humanised and just world (Beck & Purcell, 2010:26). The simple aspect of being able to express my views gave me a sense of acceptance and confidence to act beyond the programme.

Similarly, as the GYS coordinator, I observed participants to communicate experiences alike, prompting me to explore the process. Further motivation to conduct this study came from Jemal & Bussey (2018:56) who suggest the need to produce effective and transformative community-based practice models for community practitioners to address social injustices and inequitable social structures.

All participants involved in this study had some involvement with the GYS programme at some point in their lives. With a total of nine participants, five took part in the focus groups and were new to the GYS programme. The focus group participants comprised of students studying various subjects at the International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM) and UCLan. The remaining four

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[10] This section of my work has been cited in Skinner, 2020:42.

participants, contributing to the semi-structured interviews, played a part in the GYS programme for some time, delivering the programme to others on several occasions. Two of the participants involved in the semi-structured interviews were graduates of BA (Hons) Community Leadership, UCLan, while the remaining two participants were current students on the course.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter forms the second stage of the journey through Ledwith's amended version of Rowan's Research Cycle Model (Rowan, 1981:98). Here is where the issues identified during the previous chapter, the stage of Being, are problematised within the context of a literature review. This is manifested as a critical examination of the political contexts and key literature influences underpinning the development of the GYS programme. Moreover, it provides an understanding of the problematising and how it led to a transformational pedagogy that shaped a forum for young people to undertake their own problematising and thus co-create solutions to community issues. Drawing on the third stage process of Conscientisation, I will illustrate how it contributed to the evolution of the programme, expanding on the main theoretical influencers, such as Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal and Margaret Ledwith. I will identify and capture the key components needed for transforming communities and empowering individuals.

2.2. Transformational Pedagogy

Paulo Freire's vision regarding community empowerment has been inspiring the educational arena since the late twentieth century and remains equally influential in my study and praxis. His theory of liberating education and using literacy as a tool for social change acts as a means of providing those oppressed in society a way of breaking away from the 'culture of silence' and transforming their world (Ali, 2018:204). Although his original work was conducted over 50 years ago, it still has political and pedagogical resonance today (Ireland, 2018:21).[11]

In his book, '*Pedagogy of the Oppressed',* Freire begins by stating that the central problem for mankind is 'humanisation'. This reflects an order of love, consisting of universal aspirations which giving true significance and full value to individuals (Teilhard De Chardin, 2011:81). Individuals' continual desire for humanisation, however, is constantly denied by the 'oppressors',[12] leading to dehumanisation (Rappaport, 1981:1; Freire, 1996:25). This dehumanising experience is a direct consequence of the power imbalances existing in society (Freire, 1996:29) with economic disparities as a leading factor (Ledwith, 2016:23). Recent times have seen a rise in social media, placing immense pressure on young people to document a perfect portrayal of oneself, also adding to the economic disparity and aiding the power imbalances which are apparent at both local and micro level. Overarching views of parties, shopping trips and holidays are also becoming benchmarks for social class and seen as a basic necessity

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[11] This section of my work has been cited in Skinner, 2020:34.

[12] Freire sees oppression as a division of class embedded within society, depriving people the right to be fully human

(Jones, 2006:32). Supported by grassroot organisations, the overpowering obligations imposed by the ruling class are classified as natural and unchangeable values (Jones, 2006:32). This reinforces dehumanising qualities on those unable to achieve such status, creating social divisions which are evident, particularly amongst the lower socio-economic classes. Creating a sense of powerlessness, robbing people of their hopes and aspirations, strengthens the feeling of dehumanisation (Ledwith, 2016:23). Many communities in the North West of England still resonate with the description highlighted by Freire where there are multiple communities experiencing high levels of deprivation, coupled with third generation unemployment (Ayre, 2018:1). Unemployment has led to social and economic isolation for many communities, trapped into a culture that is characterised by hopelessness and self-harming behaviours (Kohl-Arenas, 2015:805). In order for oppressed communities to recover their lost humanity, they need to become restorers of humanity by softening the power of the oppressors and highlighting the injustices and exploitation (Freire, 1996:26). Developing programmes like GYS provides young people with the opportunities to discuss and question the injustices they face and is appropriate for those students studying at UCLan. Additionally, the recent introduction of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (Research England, n.d) in HE cements the function of GYS in the wider community by creating knowledge through sharing of ideas (UCLan, n.d.a). By engaging UCLan students in a transformational process, it builds on the local knowledge economy through knowledge exchange and the mutual creation of new futures (liberty).

Freire (1996:52) suggests this transformational process must encompass a liberating element and through his work in Brazil he claimed that, for liberation to occur, the existing educational system has to go through a transformation. It must consist of analysing the relationship between the teacher and the student, describing the existing relationship as a 'narrating subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students).' Similarly, when interpreted into a community context, the connections between the privileged groups (narrating subjects) and deprived communities (listening objects) need to be scrutinised. Freire (1996:52) explains how narrating subjects need to stop 'filling' the listening subjects with information detached from their reality. Offering them little opportunities for communication, it starts becoming an act of depositing information into empty vessels. This concept of 'banking' (Freire, 1996:53) information prevents young people from confronting and questioning the recurring dehumanisation. By altering the teaching and learning process, the GYS programme addresses issues highlighted by Freire, offering a platform for transformation to take place.

Many decades before Freire's work came into fruition, the likes of John Dewey (1915) had previously advocated for educational reform. Dewey (1915:7) requested the educational system to combine

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individualism and socialism to create future community members. Resembling neoliberal thinking, this perception allows organisations like CASC to launch programmes that train everyday people to participate in competitive environments. Dewey, however, spoke of the full growth of all individuals in order for society to be true to itself (Dewey, 1915:7). By exposing the disparities between knowledge and power (Dewey, 1915:22) in social situations (Dewey, 1915:8), a more inclusive environment is created, appealing to those 'whose dominant interest is to do and make' (Dewey, 1915:28). Like Freire, Dewey criticised the educational system for creating passive objects through the mode of listening (Dewey, 1915:33) and producing industrialised robots (Dewey, 1915:18). Advocating for a step by step process, both Dewey and Freire appealed for individuals to recognise their needs by acknowledging the mechanisms they have come to adopt in order to cope with such situations (Dewey, 1915:152). It is through this awareness and development of knowledge that transformation can occur and change is achieved (Dewey, 1915:152). Although Dewey's work resonates with my study, much of it is centred around developing the minds of primary school children. While I agree with cultivating young minds, it does not address existing inequalities experienced by young adults.

Mary Parker-Follett, on the other hand, focused on adult education, highlighting the importance of collective action (Smith, 2002). Also prominent at the time of Dewey, Follett, saw community-based education as a route to transformational change (Gibson et al, 2013:444). During a time where there was an evolving management agenda (Gibson et al, 2013:442), Follett was made to reconsider her contribution to fit with the existing managerial responsibilities (Berman & Van Buren, 2015:46). That said, it did not take away from her insightful input into community-based learning (Follett, 1918) claiming community groups must involve themselves in a democratic process bringing together a genuine and collective will where everyone has the opportunity to contribute and express themselves (Follett, 1918:7). Thus, creating a process that allows varying ideas to emerge, so the common ideas are driven forward. It is through 'learning how to make facts[13], how to view facts, how to develop criteria by which to judge facts, then only we have a vision of a genuine democracy' (Follett, 1924:29).

This is a true indication of developing the social consciousness (Follett, 1918:25) complementing Freire's idea of transformative education. Developing social consciousness, however, remains partial if the focus is at personal and local levels. Failing to notice the social trends that are linked to power and structural injustices will address the symptoms and overlook the causes (Ledwith, 2007b: para 4). Although I am in agreeance with Ledwith, I do believe the young people engaging with the GYS programme need to be systematically trained to develop social consciousness. Starting at a personal

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[13] Follett refers to 'facts' as an individual's reality determined by social, economic and political structures.

and local level, members of the group can uncover commonalities and adopt an attitude of collectivism, helping to discover similar realities (Follett, 1918:29). Training naïve animateurs in how to form opinions on their lived experiences and draw conclusions from this (Follett, 1924:29) initiates the process of social consciousness and forms the foundation for linking power and structural injustices. Later extending to developing critical consciousness through problem-posing tactics.

Follett (1918:5) explains governmental process as autocratic and biased however by involving young people in a democratic and inclusive approach, community workers can aim to address the imbalance of power and structural injustices. Follett (1918:6) explains how governmental successes rely heavily on the engagement of individuals, however; their attempts for engagement through 'ballot boxes' completely fail the people and depend on the creative power of every man (Follett, 1918:6). Democracy needs to be at the forefront of transformative action and to achieve true democracy there needs to be a 'genuine union of true individuals' (Follett, 1918:5) that dictate the modes of the activities for the people (Follett, 1918:7). Establishing social relationships which evolve through interaction, trust and obligation (Day, 2006: cha 1) can determine transformative action; however, action which reinforces the dominant ideology (Stewart, 2000:178; Jones, 2006:29) can be harmful to wider society. The current Brexit debate is a modern example of Follett's description. Presenting the UK residents with an option to exit the European Union came with language which echoed togetherness, using slogans such as 'take back control' (Dunt, 2018:24), symbolising the public's sense of powerlessness (Dunt, 2018:26). Confirming pre-existing prejudices through platforms such as social media, the messages were concealed in the form of expansion and development for a better life, enhancing the feeling for care and solidarity amongst the largely passive community members (Day, 2006: chap 1). This is a clear example of Gramsci's notion of 'great power,' exercising domination by representing the common and general interests of the public (Fontana, 2010:357). The use of inaccurate and mutually incompatible statements (Dunt, 2018:26) reinforces power and endorses patriarchal structures (Somerville, 2011:4), trapping people into a world of being governed. Follett (1918:11) claims that freeing oneself from being governed, and focusing on self-government, releases energies that promote change and respond sensitively to every need. Holistic communities are created through reciprocal relationships (Follett, 1918:166) and rebalancing the power *with* the people, as opposed to power *over* the people (Follett, 1924:184; Gibson et al, 2013:449).

Uncovering inequalities with a view to liberating the oppressed does not come without consequences. Freire (1996:27) claims it is 'almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle [for liberation[14]], the

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[14] Freire sees liberation as a process to gain freedom from oppression, through collective action.

oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors[15], or "sub-oppressors[16]"' (Freire, 1996:27). Existing hierarchical structures and self-serving quests for power can be an attractive and alluring concept, especially for young people who are easily enticed to replicate and maintain the continual power struggles already existing between the resource rich and underrepresented members in society (Wolf, 2018:309). Moreover, resisting the structures of a dominant culture can be a difficult and challenging process, especially if actions are overlooked and ignored (Gledhill, 2000:67), thus leading to young people surrendering belief and assuming the situation that shaped them (Freire, 1996:27). The oppressed, therefore, need to distance themselves from the desire to become oppressors, but instead interact with the world through the process of reflection and action. Interestingly, in facilitating co-created pedagogy workshops, I note that many of the young participants do not exhibit what Freire defines as oppressive or sub-oppressive behaviours. Moreover, they are motivated to ensure others facing similar struggles are liberated, meeting the basic human rights of dignity, fairness, equality, respect and independence (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018: para 3). By working alongside each other, they emphasise and endorse fairness, respect and more importantly equality, so minimising the concept of power. GYS interprets knowledge as power and the role of the critical animateurs is to share this knowledge in the form of a two-way dialogue. The dialogue allows the participants to create their own understanding of the knowledge.

Collaborative working through neutralising any power imbalance between those involved promotes transformation (Freire, 1996:75). I have found incorporating peers within the GYS programme to be an effective way to defuse any power struggles between critical animateurs and naïve animateurs (McLaren & Leonard, 1993:9), ensuring learning was taking place. Additionally, studies have found that peer observation enhances performance (Buechel et al, 2018:302). The learning, however, needs to be guided by the critical animateurs (Ali, 2018:204) combined with problem-posing questions about 'codified existential situations to help learners arrive at a more critical view of their reality' (Murphy, 2008:32). This will aid them to break away from the 'culture of silence' and develop self-awareness, freeing them to be more than just 'passive objects' (Fritze, n.d.). Empowering individuals to take an active role in reconceptualising their world view on the social stage not only leads to raising the consciousness, but also in understanding the principles that govern human knowledge (Schutz & Natanson, 1973:59, 66). McLaren and Lankshear (1994:180) discuss Freire's understanding of 'critical consciousness' and 'naïve consciousness', suggesting those of naïve consciousness see the world as complete and their role is to be passive and accept that they can only be what they already are. For

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[15] Freire explains oppressors as individuals who exploit others by virtue of their power.
[16] Sub-oppressors are seen as individuals who have gained liberation but adopt the characteristics of oppressors and maintain the exploitation of others by virtue of their newly acquired power.

humans to make the transformation from naïve consciousness to critical consciousness, they need to engage in the social process of dialogue and this dialogue needs to be equal. Within the GYS programme the dialogue consists of the participant reflecting on unjust aspects of their reality and working towards transformational co-created solutions, using simulated action.

Furthermore, the interaction through dialogue must be *with* the people and *for* the people reflecting Follett's stance on collective action. Freire (1996:30) believes that engaging in dialogue would in turn lead to the revolutionary transformation of reality. This idea of transforming reality could however lead to the 'fear of freedom' for both the oppressed and the oppressor. The oppressed are left with the anxiety to reject the internalised images of the oppressor and replace them with autonomy and responsibility, whereas the oppressors are afraid to lose their freedom to the oppressed (Tyler, 2007:345). The oppressed are then left in the predicament of realising that without freedom they are unable to survive authentically. However, desire for freedom does not come without the fear of responsibility. According to Freire (1996:30), in order to expel this fear of freedom, education must be transformed and constructed *with* the oppressed and not *for* the oppressed. Therefore, adopting this way of teaching should ensure that those involved in the education process will be fully empowered (Freire, 1996:53). The curriculum within the GYS programme has been designed and developed, with the support of peers, to ensure this 'fear of freedom' is expelled. Both critical and naïve animateurs come together to co-create knowledge in action, based on their practical experiences away from the programme (Ledwith, 2007b: para 18). This co-creation of knowledge is accomplished through equal and collective action to ensure each person has an opportunity to voice his or her opinions. According to Follett (1924:180), there is a risk of individuals misinterpreting the notion of promoting equality and perceiving it to be an equal opportunity to gain power over their fellow colleagues. The role of the critical animateur can be perceived as a position of power and can lead to individuals exercising power over the naïve animateurs. Embracing the power relations 'with' all involved helps creates an approach where problems are solved creatively, leading to positive outcomes (Gibson et al, 2013:449). Ledwith's (2011:146) more recent work supports Follett's account of combined power, claiming that power 'with' one another is central to the process of change and transformation. The programme has also been designed to offer a platform for dialogue and this research project will be exploring whether this platform for dialogue is what contributes to the transformation of reality and the empowerment of the people. I will discuss the various approaches to transformational practices and the method most appropriate to my work.

2.3. Transformational Action

The idea of transforming communities has featured heavily in community development for many years; however, methods have differed along the way. The lack of research and theory have led to these diverging methods with practitioners creating their own techniques and developing their own interpretation of the issues faced by the people. For much of the early years, community work was seen as a way to sympathise and commiserate with communities, an approach adopted during the early years of my practice due to my lack of experience. Younghusband's (1978a) exploration of community work between 1950 and 1975 supports this theory as well as uncovering an array of techniques, many of which assumed a one-dimensional style (Younghusband, 1978b:241). This directive approach pushed forward the objectives of practitioners and guided developmental practices. Having little impact on the people, especially on the poor and underprivileged communities, it did not transform the lives of those who needed betterment the most (Batten, 1974:96). The practitioners' lack of understanding of the underprivileged groups contributed to 'imaginative translation' through imposing techniques, preventing a full portrayal of the issues (Du Sautoy, 1966:2, Biddle, 1966:6). Reflecting on the early stages of my career, I do believe I adopted elements of 'imaginative translation'; however, I do not consider lack of understanding as the concern. Through a common life experience as a young Asian woman, I fully understood the situation of other young Asian women and therefore retained all the answers. As important as this shared experience is, there is a danger of imposing my perceptions of what it means to be a young Asian woman in the UK. Compelling naïvely conscious individuals to accept and act on what I, as a community worker, had already decided, meant losing the true meaning of 'community development' (Batten, 1974:98). Similarly, CASC also operated on the understanding that those progressing through the programme acquired all the answers, running the risk of dehumanisation and not being transformational (Ledwith, 2011:34; Bass, 2005:363).

Prior to Younghusband's research, Batten (1974:100) had already proposed a non-directive approach, suggesting community workers need to direct the issues to the people. The use of critical animateurs supports this thinking and advances technique over ethos. A focus on a transformational style ensures an informed and realistic outcome. Presenting the people with techniques which allow them to think in a more orderly, systematic and logical manner, will ensure they are in possession of all the facts allowing them to think, decide, plan, organise and act for their own betterment (Batten 1974:102). Although this undertakes components of a transformative practice, Batten's suggested method lacked action and reflection (Freire, 1996:35). There is also no drive towards interpreting the social and historical construction of society (Kemmis, 2010:13) and connecting them to their reality. Moreover, the absence of shared experience and empathy between the practitioner and people posed a barrier

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not only with understanding community issues but also with co-creating knowledge (Ledwith, 2016:148).

For transformational practices to be empowering and effective there are two components to the approach that need to be explored. First, the values of the practitioner, and second, the approach undertaken to empower the people. Those suggested by Margaret Ledwith, an Emeritus Professor in Community Development and Social Justice, I believe are the fundamentals to any transformative action, elements that have underpinned my research and will be discussed further, below.

The basic principle for transformative action is exposing social injustices and stirring the consciousness of the people (Sherman, 2011:9). To nurture this process there needs to be an in-depth assessment of the practitioner's moral and ethical values, coupled with reflexivity (Ledwith, 2016:151). Freire (1996:42) states 'those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly.' Conversations must take place to allow the 'profound rebirth' of the individual, taking on a new form of existence each time (Freire, 1996:43). Without social integrity, action cannot be depicted as either honourable or proper, leading to a social justice crisis. Social justice must remain at the heart of the everything and by recognising Freire's values in a community context, true transformation of society and a step towards changing the world can be achieved (Ledwith (2016:139). Ledwith (2016) recognises the injustices highlighted by Freire to be pertinent to the modern world and suggests change through emancipatory action research (EAR). This must encompass a commitment from the practitioner to fight social injustices through a value-based approach (Twelvetrees, 2008:6). A mindset dedicated to building respect, dignity, equality, mutuality and reciprocity amongst the community members is the first step to transformation (Popple, 1995:41; Twelvetrees, 2008:6; Ledwith, 2016:148). Without these factors, trust cannot be developed and engaging others in actions that are beneficial for all cannot be achieved. Moreover, the enhancement of skills and capabilities of the individuals to act in new ways becomes challenging. Working with members within marginalised communities has taught me the importance of building trust through respect, dignity, equality, mutuality and reciprocity and the challenges this brings. When campaigning for individuals whose voices are silenced, it can go in one of two ways. Firstly, members become deferential to the community worker, not being able to fully distinguish between their needs and those suggested by the community worker, resulting in the support becoming a one-sided exchange (Parker, 1999:64). In my experience this has been the case when working with young people within the Omani student community. Due to the deep-routed banking concept throughout the educational system, rather than taking control and developing solutions to issues they faced, they became captivated by the suggestions

made by the critical animateurs. In their view the critical animateur's role was authoritative, one who gave all the answers, answers which were to be true due to their position. Secondly, members can also become highly cautious and closed, hindering the development of the community, an issue I faced when working with the Traveller Community in Preston. Their notoriously closed and secretive culture presented a real barrier when it came to engagement and nurturing an inclusive learning environment (Melling & Ali, 2015:214). Their existing and well-established networks, depicting strong bonds and exclusive social capital, do not value the need to develop trust with members outside of this group. Refraining from what they perceive to be the 'other' (Eller, 2009:53) reinforces further segregation and isolation, developing a resilience to their situations and creating a challenge for practitioners in forming meaningful intervention plans. Trust is only achieved through the support of a gorjio (an outsider) with whom they had already established a trusting relationship. Their continual presence during each meeting paved a way for interaction allowing me a route in and ensuring the interaction remained *with* the community members.

All the above could not be entirely and genuinely achieved without being complemented by reflexivity. Through self-critical reflection practitioners can connect theory and practice. Ledwith (2016:151) suggests supporting this using a reflexive journal to bridge the gap between knowledge, experience, theory, action, values and skills (Ledwith, 2016:151; Ledwith, 2018:40), a suggestion that could be beneficial. However, through experience I have found the use of a critical friend to be just as effective (Schuck & Russell, 2005:107). Engaging in dialogue with a critical friend has helped expose my one-dimensional approach during the early years, forcing me to re-evaluate my practice. Using the Cycle Model (Figure 1: The Cycle Model, Page 40) suggested by Ledwith (2016:152) I have been able to problematise the issues to my practice, informing me of the relevant action needed to modify my approach, thus ensuring it is transformative. Exposing my unconscious interpretations provided me with a deeper understanding of the community I planned to work *with*. Valuing the importance of the reflexive element, I integrated it in to the GYS process, beginning at the planning and design stages right through to delivery. Assessing and adapting the curriculum throughout the process not only responds to the needs of the target audience but also the needs of the critical animateur. Regular meetings and continual dialogue in the form of a 'critical friend' can ensure reflexivity of practice, centralising the transformative component (Wright & Adam, 2015:422).

Moving on to the application of the transformative components, they must encompass Freire's underlying ethos. However, processes must be reinvented when engaging in social action. Applying a literal interpretation of the approach Freire used to address adult literacy in Brazil would not be

appropriate, due to ever-changing and unique communities. Freire himself insisted that practitioners need to use his pedagogical concepts as tools to help make sense of the here and now, specific to the political climate (Ledwith, 2016: 45). The GYS approach is therefore sympathetic to Freire but not necessarily a literal interpretation. The basic principles of confidence-building through the medium of trust ensures that individuals have the knowledge and understanding of their own abilities. Coupled with dialogue and consciousness-raising of the complex and structural social injustices faced in their respective communities, individuals can venture out and make positive change in the wider world. Dialogue plays a key role in transformative action and builds on the legacy of social change leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr (Sherman, 2011:10, Kirk, 2013:89). Their use of nonviolent strategies incorporates dialogue to negotiate change (Kirk, 2013:89) and has been highly successful in playing a key role in transformation. Sherman's (2011:11) study into 'how we win' builds on the dialectic approach, claiming human psychology also needs to be considered. Calling it 'social aikido,' Sherman (2011:11) argues, for transforming negative thought processes into positives, with a primary aim for everyone to win (Sherman, 2011:12). It is very easy to expose the social injustices and cultivate hatred and anger amongst the people (Sherman, 2011:12). However, through collective action (Sherman, 2011:12; Ledwith, 2016:42; Walzer, 2016:158) based on understanding and respect there are means to promote a win–win situation (Sherman, 2011:12). A true transformative practice must seek to regain humanity without the oppressed becoming the oppressors of the oppressors (Freire, 1996:26). Only by preserving their role as restorers of humanity for both, oppressed and the oppressor, can liberation be achieved (Freire, 1996:27).

According to Mtika and Kistler (2017:83) nurturing a win–win situation must be focusing on two elements: firstly, development being 'in' the community, and secondly, 'of' the community. Residents 'in' the community must address the needs and issues before the development 'of' the community can take place. This can only be achieved by involving community members and focussing on enhancing the relationships, togetherness and self-worth of the community members. The two sides however must not work in isolation and must complement each other (Mtika & Kitstler, 2017:83). Similarly, my desire to champion for the marginalised and impoverished communities led me to adopt such practice within my professional role at UCLan. Mtika & Kistler's (2017:83) understanding of development being 'in' and 'of' the same community allowed me to address the known and unknown divisions of the students before commencing on developing solutions to these issues. This had to encompass the involvement of the student community by enhancing relationships, togetherness and self-worth (Mtika & Kitstler, 2017:83) using non-controlling methods and working as co-creators of knowledge (Ledwith, 2016:148). A central vision of a fair and just world is core to my practice, ensuring the sustainability of

humanity is achieved (Ledwith, 2016:6). Combined with the core values of trust, dignity, respect, equality, reciprocity and mutuality, my approach to community development would help bring about change without it being a meaningless representation (Ledwith, 2016:7).

Ledwith (2016:151) captures the elements of transformative practice using the Cycle Model (Figure 1: The Cycle Model) to underline the key stages of development. Highly influenced by Freire, Ledwith provides a guide for practitioners to reimagine Freirean principles and apply them in a community context. It was this model and Ledwith's work surrounding EAR that became instrumental in shaping the design and delivery of the GYS programme. I will now discuss the six stages of the Cycle Model and how they influenced my practice, inspiring me to embed within the GYS programme.

2.4. The Cycle Model
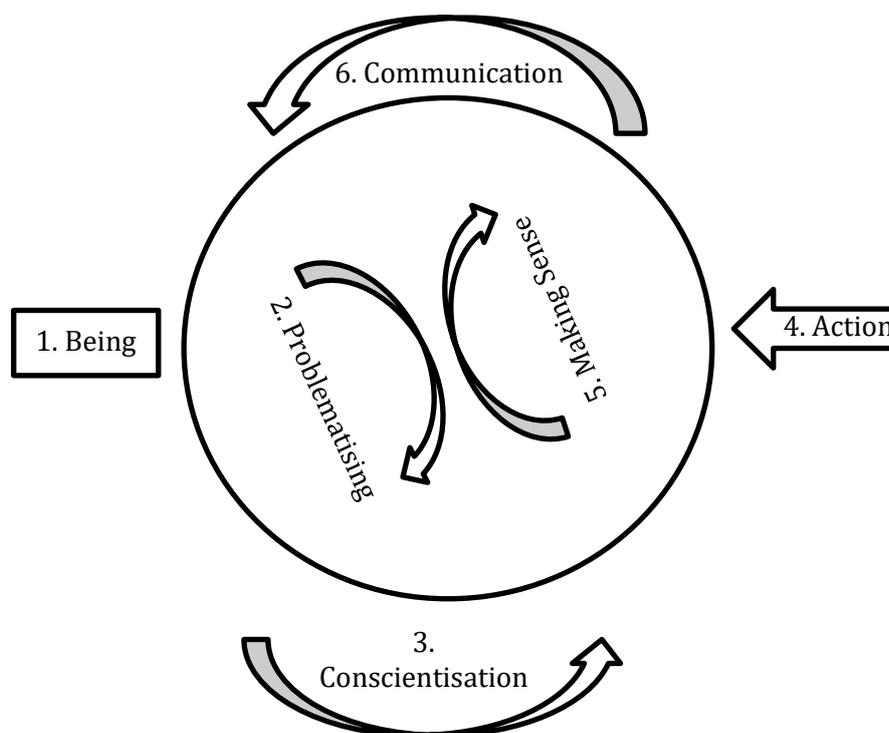
Figure 1: The Cycle Model

2.4.1. *Being*

Ledwith (2016:152) describes 'being' as the first stage of the model and 'the point in everyday practice where you notice an issue or a situation that needs attention' (Ledwith, 2016:152). Although I agree with Ledwith, concern lies with the interpretation of this claim. Working as a guide for practitioners, the word 'you' could be understood to mean the role of the practitioner and their responsibility to identify the issue/situation, conceding to the perils of 'imaginative translation' (Du Sautoy, 1966:2, Biddle, 1966:6). Having already assumed this role previously, I soon learnt that it is the responsibility of all involved to identify and co-create knowledge for transformation, guaranteeing trust and motivation amongst the members (Bass, 2005:367). The exploration of individual opinions that are deep-rooted, and where awareness of their origins is unknown, must be included to promote the reconnection with reality.

Furthermore, I have found Ledwith's notion of 'being' echoing the work of the Brazilian playwriter and philosopher, Augusto Boal. Inspired by Freire, Boal (2008:103) also advocated for 'liberty where people can free their memories, emotions, imaginations, thinking of their past, in the present and where they can invent their future instead of waiting for it' (Boal, 2002:5). Using theatre as a method for liberating education Boal (2002:103) defined the first stage as 'knowing the body.' Boal's reference to the 'body' comes in the context of theatrical performance and engaging in 'a series of exercises by which one gets to know one's body, its limitations and possibilities, its social distortion and possibilities of rehabilitation' (Boal, 1985:126). Metaphorically, young people need to engage in a series of exercises/activities which are designed to 'undo' the dominant structures driving them to study and analyse themselves (Boal, 2008:104).

The GYS programme supports the uncovering of personal values and beliefs that shape the young people, raising their level of consciousness, so that they understand, see and feel to what extent they are governed by dominant ideologies (Boal, 2008:104). Distinguishing their understanding of reality and how they have come to acquire this knowledge places them in a better position to begin the process of problematising. Coupled with Ledwith's (2016:151) promotion of a critical reflexivity for practitioners, both naïve and critical animateurs can engage in the notion of 'thinking and doing' (Ledwith, 2016:148). Urging critical animateurs to assume the role of a 'critical friend', participants will have a better understanding of how their existing understanding of reality has contributed to the shaping of solutions.

2.4.2. *Problematising*

The identification of solutions, determined by critical animateurs' ability to capture the situation relevant to the young people (Ledwith, 2016:152), is the second stage of the model, problematising. Acknowledging the young people as 'conscious beings' (Freire, 1996:60), and treating them with the respect and dignity they deserve, critical animateurs can instigate problem-posing questions and provoke intellectual stimulation to transform individual thinking (Bass, 2005:367). This in turn opens up new levels of awareness to the situation (Ledwith,2016:152). Although I am in agreeance with Ledwith, I would include a slight modification to stage 1, involving the unravelling of ontological and epistemological perspectives to allow this stage to develop. Without connecting to the young people's existing understanding of reality, the process of co-creating knowledge becomes misleading and meaningless. Embracing a dialectic approach is fundamental to exposing new levels of awareness, and although this remains instrumental, I have found Boal's (1979) use of participatory theatre key to initiating dialogue and problem-posing questions. Offering young people, the opportunity to nurture their own art (Boal, 1979:53), and bring to life necessary issues, stimulates debate for exploring possible solutions. The theatrical performances embedded within the GYS programme has allowed young people to express creatively their emotions within a safe and secure environment, rehearsing possible solutions to solving problems (Woodson: 2012:39).

Boal (2002: xxii) did not view acting as a performance but a way of 'thinking with our hands' (Boal, 2002: xxiii), claiming image, invisible and forum theatre (Boal, 2002: xxii) as the three main categories that give people the strength and confidence to overcome oppression (Boal, 2002: xxiv). The first category, 'image theatre', is used during the process of problematising, incorporating a series of exercises and games designed to uncover essential truths about society and cultures without resorting to language, adding to the various dynamics of image (Boal, 2002: xxii). Embedding image theatre throughout the GYS programme helps paint an overall picture of the situation, prompting the identification of the direct issues or situations affecting them. Also acting as a platform for those who may struggle to verbally articulate themselves for various reasons (Boal, 2002: xxiii), the use of 'image theatre' provides them with a voice through performance. Moreover, the use of image theatre has also proved to be essential when working internationally, since solely relying on dialogue can hinder any international development, especially when language and culture act as barriers to communication. Incorporating active involvement and sharing of personal experience (Dunn & Griggs, 2000:16) raises awareness which begins the process of 'conscientisation' (Freire, 1996:90; Ledwith, 2016:153).

2.4.3 *Conscientisation*

Succeeding the emergence of the conscious (Freire, 1996:62), this stage begs the question of 'what shall we do about it?' (Ledwith, 2016:153) and co-creating a critical intervention of reality (Freire, 1996:62). Ledwith (2016:153) describes this as an outer stage where critical awareness of structural implications become exposed. However, I consider this as process very much embedded at all stages of the Cycle Model. Consisting of three phases, the intermediate stage of conscientisation firstly occurs during the stage of 'being,' a point that is also seen to be the pre-critical consciousness stage. This is the point at which individuals are aware of injustices but have not yet connected oppression with social structures. Through interaction with peers and the engagement of authentic dialogue the individuals shift to the second stage of consciousness known as integrative consciousness. Connecting personal issues with oppressive systems, individuals enter a point of ongoing reflection and action. Intertwining knowledge in action and action in knowledge, individuals progress on to the final stage of full critical consciousness, maintained with constant reflexivity to bring about positive change (Ledwith, 2016:59).

By introducing Boal's concept of 'forum theatre', the young people on the GYS programme can collectively involve themselves in games/activities enacting solutions to issues, ultimately transforming their understanding. Through pooling together knowledge, the young people engage in 'debate (in the form of action, not just words) to show alternatives, to enable [them] to become the protagonists of their own lives' (Boal, 2002: xxiv). I believe that reaching a point of conscientisation is an essential and empowering factor in this process, as it provides confidence and self-assurance amongst the young people to take positive action. It also brings to life social situations and meaning that are pertinent to the young people, allowing them to rehearse possible solutions, developing critical thinking and acting as a vehicle for social change (Woodson, 2012:40). Presenting this as a single stage within the Cycle Model prevents individuals from acquiring meaning at other stages of the Cycle Model, thus should be embedded within the entire practice.

2.4.4. *Action*

Ledwith (2016:153) describes action as the fourth stage of the Cycle Model, encouraging residents to participate in the wider community. Given that the GYS programme is designed as a training course for naïve animateurs, providing young people with the tools on how to take positive action, encouraging the young people to partake actively in the community during the 3-day programme would not be feasible. This action however is constructed in the form of rehearsed action, created and performed in a safe and trustworthy environment. Continuing Boal's concept of 'forum theatre', the young people begin to visualise the results of positive action and, although it may not incite revolutionary action, it

certainly provides 'rehearsal of revolution' (Boal, 1979:141). The sense of the action being fictional is irrelevant, as the fact that action is taking place is central (Boal, 1979:122). I strongly feel that short-term action through rehearsal can have a long-term impact on making sense of the wider world. I believe this process supports critical animateurs to continue engaging in reflective action and their collaboration with the wider community members.

2.4.5. *Making Sense*

This is the stage where all involved gain a deeper understanding of their reality and plan the next stages for development (Ledwith, 2016:153). The use of theatrical performances to rehearse different solutions is the point where I believe situations start making sense and new knowledge is formed. Action and reflection play a vital role in achieving this by questioning innate knowledge and weaving it together in action to co-create new knowledge (Ledwith, 2016:58). Engaging individuals in a process of action and reflection creates theory in action and action as theory, thus building a unit of praxis (Ledwith 2016:58). Although reflection must be implemented throughout the Cycle Model, it is as this stage young people begin to 'make sure that [they] are doing what [they] claim to be doing' (Ledwith, 2016:153), through critical reflection. Ledwith (2016:153) advises on checking the quality and validity of the process by asking six questions relating to methodology and methods, process, power, dialectical, legitimacy and relevance. Understanding action using this process prevents any imaginative translation and thoughtless action.

2.4.6. *Communication*

The final and most important stage of Ledwith's (2016:154) Cycle Model is communication, the point at which co-created new knowledge is shared with others, fostering an insight into the transformed situation. Failing to share new knowledge prevents others from progressing and transforming their reality, hindering the permanent humanisation of others. The GYS project embeds this by offering naïve animateurs firstly to implement and communicate the learning directly within their social circles. They are also offered the opportunity to train as critical animateurs, taking their experiences to empower their peers. Through engaging with the evidence questions suggested by Ledwith (2016:154) the young people can reflect on the practices and processes they have engaged in to empower those involved.

2.5. Conclusion

Following a review of the literature, there is clear evidence of scholars fighting for educational reform, each exhibiting their own understanding of how education should be used to transform reality. Scholars such as Dewey (1915) feel the need to combine individualism and socialism to create future community

members, targeting children at a tender age. Although Dewey's work expounds on my understanding, I felt his work was limited in involving young people on empowering and transformative practices. Furthermore, in my current interaction with young adults who came with life experience, Dewey's suggestions would not be considered relevant. Follett (1918), on the other hand, who campaigned for adult education with collective action, developing social consciousness, connected with my current practice. Follett's claim for a democratic approach, using dialectic means also complemented Freire (1996) and Ledwith's (2016) claim for neutralising power and co-creating knowledge for transformation.

I found myself being drawn to Ledwith's (2016) suggested Cycle Model, a process Ledwith claims must be entrenched in the lives and practices of a community worker. Recognising the six-stage model to reflect my personal values and approach to transformative action, I will be using this to analyse whether or not the GYS programme depicts an empowering and transformative programme.

Also embedded within the GYS programme is Augusto Boal's (1979) proposed use of theatrical performances to break down barriers, rehearsing possible solutions to solve problems. Using the mode of acting as a vehicle for change, the young people involved in the GYS programme can alleviate any struggles by imitating possible solutions. Combined with the Cycle Model, I believe Boal's suggestion of simulated action could be beneficial in providing a deeper insight into to transformational pedagogy working as a tool for community practitioners and members.

Through the exploration of the literature and the entrenched transformative element within the GYS programme, it is vital the methodological standpoint echoes this. As suggested by Ledwith (2016:148), the primary factor for any working relationship is to build trust, respect, dignity, equality, mutuality and reciprocity, and thus to value these qualities within my research I embarked on an interpretivist approach. Wanting to grant the young people with a voice, I combined both focus groups and semi-structured interviews within my data collection methods.

The young people attending in the GYS programme as naïve animateurs participated in the focus groups, allowing me to capture their experiences and further understand the transformative elements embedded within the programme. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews supported the in-depth understanding of critical animateur's experience and application of transformative and elements within their everyday life. Both data collection methods portrayed the underpinning philosophy of Paulo Freire (1996), observing an equal and collective discourse with the participants.

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CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND IDENTIFICATION OF METHODS:

3.1. Introduction

This chapter covers the journey through stage three of Ledwith's (2016:152) amended version of Rowan's Research Cycle Model (Rowan, 1981:98): Conscientisation or 'co-creating a critical intervention of reality' through a critical methodology process. Here I will explore the methods and methodologies used to support the research, offering a deeper understanding of how data was collected and analysed. Through recognising my own epistemological and ontological viewpoints (Being), the reader will be guided into understanding how an interpretivist approach was used to develop the study. Furthermore, theoretical perspectives will be used to support the debates presented, particularly highlighting the challenges that come with conducting interpretative research. Concluding with the ethical implications is an explanation of how I overcame challenges such as insider knowledge, positional power and representing the voice of others.

3.2. Methodological Overview

The research question was an ideal place to shape and identify a methodology most appropriate and effective to my research. However, before I embarked on this, I needed to understand and expose my own viewpoint on the reality I was about to study. Undoubtedly, the stage of 'Being,' or the reality and current discipline, has shaped my perception, thus influencing my chosen approach (Creswell, 2009:6). For this reason, I need to be conscious of such opinions, to guarantee I did not easily sway towards an approach which would be inappropriate and unconnected to my research. Being a social scientist, with a keen interest in social and cultural anthropology, much of my previous research has been to try to understand the experiences of participants, particularly trying to advocate on behalf of individuals marginalised from society and trying to pursue social equality and justice for those who are otherwise frustrated by existing authorities (Gergen, 1998:133). Similarly, this study also aims to understand the experiences of participants on the GYS programme, driving the methodological stance towards and an interpretivist viewpoint. Allowing participants, the opportunity to reflect deeply on their social world, and the unjust aspects of reality, will provide a better understanding of their reality and a holistic view of their lives (Ritchie et al, 2014:13). Having direct contact with the participants on the GYS programme enabled me to question their reality (O'Reilly, 2009:3) and extract a comprehensive picture needed for this study. Moreover, my inextricable link with the GYS programme required a degree of phenomenology to be adopted (Oliver, 2010:73) allowing me to 'focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience [the] phenomenon' (Creswell, 2013:76) and, in the case of this study, the GYS programme. Components of ethnography were also incorporated, to understand to what extent the GYS programme provided young people with the opportunity to reflect

on unjust aspects of their reality. Moreover, the research project aimed to see if the GYS programme acted as a platform for developing solutions for transformation by granting the young people with a voice. The knowledge extracted will not only be transferred to other similar settings (O'Reilly, 2009:84) but also presented to those external to the GYS culture (Grossoehme, 2014:112). Evaluating and presenting these experiences using positivist approaches such as experiments, and deductive methods, would not present the participants with a voice nor would it extract their reality or the in-depth accounts needed for this study (Miller & Brewer, 2003:236/237).

Adding to the interpretivist methodology, I also amalgamated paradigms such as feminism and co-constructivism. The focus on social justice and empowerment expanded the search for equality amongst the underprivileged communities and more importantly co-creating a knowledge that advocates for social change (Burns & Chantler, 2011:71). Feminist scholars tend to favour qualitative methods, believing it is key to permitting women to fully express and describe the world as they see it (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1995:221). Using this concept, I believe, is an appropriate approach for marginalised communities, especially for granting them a voice they are largely denied (Maton, 2008:5). Moreover, it will assist the young people to share experiences from their perspective, enabling me to piece together the reality of both naïve and critical animateurs, creating a wider understanding of the transformative methods used within the GYS programme. Derived from this are the challenges that come with interpreting and piecing together the representations and how they fit into complex situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:4). How these challenges are addressed will be discussed later in this chapter.

Corresponding with Freire's (1996:69) philosophy of providing individuals with a voice, I embraced a participatory action research (hereafter PAR) approach. Known to offer researchers the flexibility to be creative when engaging participants, this approach allowed me to create an environment where the young people felt confident to be open and involved in the process (Nind & Brindle, 2011). More importantly, when working with young people from communities that are largely marginalised, impoverished and excluded (Bowd et al, 2010:1), the flexibility to extract voice is essential. This is especially pertinent when co-constructing an understanding of the transformative methods used within the GYS programme. PAR also allows researchers and the participants to work together in achieving a greater understanding, rather than attempting to interpret the experience and knowledge of one person (Simmons & Watson, 2015:56). Co-constructing meaning and understanding together in favour of acquiring facts illustrated my commitment to providing young people with a voice within my research (Jordan, 2009:42). Co-constructing meaning also allowed both myself and the participants to 'become

agents of knowledge, seeking truths that emerge from dialogue based on lived reality' (Ledwith, 2011:80). Thus, it was not only reflecting the Freirean principles, but also reiterating the notion that 'every idea has an owner and that the owner's identity matters' (Hill Collins, 2000:265). Furthermore, it reconceptualises knowledge in relation to both a subjective and objective world, which can only emerge by working 'with' the participants rather than conducting research 'on' them (Simmons & Watson, 2015:56).

Although, PAR mainly sits within an interpretivist tradition, in some instances it is known to lean towards a positivist framework (Cousin, 2009:150). Some would argue, the methodological focus should be aimed at resolving problems rather than debating on the chosen data collection method (Chaudary & Imran, 2012:8). Applying a n epistemological approach capitalises on the capabilities of human problem solving, whilst increasing the potential for credible and trustworthy conclusions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010:271). Rather than dismissing any particular technique for data collection, I felt that adopting methods and methodology closely matching the research question would be most appropriate; consequently, connecting the question and method and guaranteeing conceptual clarity in the research (Punch & Oancea, 2014:29). PAR's aspiration 'to change the world for a more equal and inclusive one' (Cousin, 2009:150) was most relevant to the research and research questions, more so as the research did not seek to problem solve (although this is a peripheral process outcome); rather, it was more concerned with co-constructing meaning, understanding and providing a voice to the participants. This led to the decision to use an epistemological approach, triangulating several qualitative methods for data collection.

Engaging in dialogue with the participants is necessary to any research methodology used to gain a deeper understanding of the transformative pedagogy within the GYS programme. Given that the programme was evolved to embed a dialectic approach, it would be erroneous to have data collection methods contradicting this. Therefore, the data collection methods consisted of approaches that allowed me to converse with the participants throughout the research process, to develop an understanding and interpret reality from their perspective (Corbett, 2007:83, Flowers, 2009:3). Before the data collection process began, I established that all participants felt at ease and comfortable in sharing their stories. The initial concern was to build rapport, to ensure a deep and meaningful account of their experiences was recorded. The level of information disclosed by the participant was interdependent with the rapport I developed (Cousin, 2009:7). Although rapport-building is vital, it is just as important to be conscious of the tensions between professionalism and friendship (Kvale, 2007:29). As a researcher I needed to ensure I was not overcompensating the warm, caring and friendly

nature to an extent where I was displaying levels of being a 'fake friend' (Dunsncombe & Jessop, 2002:108), resulting in participants not fully disclosing their experiences and so invalidating the findings. As the GYS coordinator, having worked with the critical animateurs prior to their participation, an appropriate relationship was already established, therefore mitigating any misplaced perceptions around faking an interest for the purpose of this study. However, the relationship with the naïve animateurs, who had recently engaged with the programme, was not as well established. I did however, have an opportunity to build some level of rapport before participants consented to the research project. Moreover, my role as a participatory researcher further helped alleviate any participant concerns around 'fake friendship' and establish professional integrity.

On completing the data collection process, I was faced with interpreting the data. This needed careful consideration, particularly when conducting a study where information was being collected from other humans (Oliver, 2010:73). It would be impossible to dismiss any subjective interpretation, especially as the research was being understood through the consciousness of the researcher (Oliver, 2010, p73). My position and involvement in the GYS world placed additional pressure on me, knowing that the data collected may be contaminated by personal viewpoints and knowledge. According to Corbetta (2003), everyone interprets and perceives social facts using a multiple of realities and perspectives. To ensure personal understanding of these multiple realities and perspectives did not overshadow those of the participants, it was necessary to address my consciousness, uncovering reflexive viewpoints. Taking on a critical attitude towards the data (Miller & Brewer, 2003:259), I critically reflected on factors such as location, sensitivity of the topic, positionality and the interaction between myself and the participants. This helped contextualise and situate the data, it also provided a clear and unambiguous explanation of how my account was socially constructed. Any areas of uncertainty were cross referenced with the participants throughout the data collection and analysis process to ensure my voice did not overshadow participants stories. As graduates from the programme, participants become instant members and contact details are preserved in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GOV.UK, 2018). This allows participants to continually influence the development of the programme however it also allowed myself and participants to remain in regular contact, sharing ideas and interpreting data.

3.3. Participant Selection Strategy

The recruitment strategy consisted of two sets of participants: firstly, naïve animateurs, making up the focus group; and secondly, the critical animateurs who contributed via semi-structured interviews. Including two groups of participants helped identify which elements of the programme were empowering and whether these aspects supported application beyond the programme. To achieve

this, it was imperative to collate the views of naïve animateurs, exploring the short-term impact of the GYS programme, followed by critical animateurs' perspective for the long-term impact. This would also assist in identifying whether transformative initiatives like the GYS programme provide a platform for young people to make positive change within a higher education context.

3.3.1. Focus Groups

Selecting the right group was crucial for a valid, reliable and useful outcome (Daniel, 2012:2). With the GYS programme being central to the study, the individuals had to consist of young people that had experienced the programme (Creswell, 2013:155), driving me to settle on a criterion[17] selection strategy. This directed me to narrow the range of variation and focus on the similarities (Palinkas et al, 2015:534). Further research, however found that the focus groups would need to consist of an amalgamation of criterion and an opportunistic selection strategy, creating an opportunity to recruit the naïve animateurs from the GYS programme delivered at the time.

All naïve animateurs were made aware of the research intentions on day one of the programme, by explaining a maximum of 10 participants were required and removing any obligatory pressures amongst the young people. They were presented with an information sheet and consent form (Appendix 1) containing detailed aims of the study, allowing them to make an informed decision of their participation. It could be argued that informing participants on the day does not warrant appropriate time to make an informed decision. Unfortunately, the recruitment process for naïve animateurs makes it difficult to determine the individuals in advance, hence the reason this approach was adopted. Participants had a total of seven hours to make an educated decision regarding their involvement, recognising this as ample time for the young people. They were also advised of my availability during the day for any questions regarding the research. As I was not approached by anybody, I can only assume that the information sheet was well constructed, providing the participants with the necessary information required. A gentle reminder was introduced part way through the day; however, I was conscious of not being too forceful. Those not yet decided or who lacked confidence could have felt overwhelmed, inadvertently excluding themselves from the research. This would be crucial to my study as it could mute the voice of the less confident individuals and lead to a partial and limited analysis (Barbour, 2014:138).

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[17] Criterion in this case is the GYS programme, hence the young people's role and relation to the programme was essential within the research project.

A designated room at the same venue was allocated for the focus groups to take place. This was a conscious decision to ensure that the participants felt comfortable to share their views in a relaxed and familiar environment. Those willing to partake in the research were asked to come to the specified room at the end of the day. The five participants that reported to the designated room then became the decided individuals for the focus groups.

A graduate of the GYS programme myself, albeit many years ago, my experience is also pertinent, enabling me to participate in the focus groups. This presented several issues for consideration: firstly, being conscious that my views did not overshadow or influence others; and secondly, the research development process meant I was entering with advance knowledge of the theoretical perspectives, practices and impact. Putting aside this knowledge and facilitating the discussions allowed the conversations to flow, ensuring all participants had the opportunity to share their experiences. Additionally, my role as the GYS coordinator may have influenced participants' responses; however, informing them of my participatory position within the focus group meant they could disregard this. Not being naïve, however, I was also aware that my position may have been embedded into their subconscious, impacting on the stories they shared.

3.3.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

The selection process for the semi-structured interviews differed to that of the focus groups. All critical animateurs engage with the programme on an ad hoc basis and for this reason all GYS alumni are invited to be added to a mailing list for their participation on any future projects. In line with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act, this list is stored electronically on a password protected spreadsheet, accessible to the CVCL director and myself as the GYS coordinator. Forming the contact list for this study, it predetermined the adoption of a convenience recruitment strategy allowing me to contact all critical animateurs, past and present, selecting the first five to respond (Robinson, 2014:32). The email sent to all critical animateurs requested their participation with a detailed information sheet and consent form (Appendix 2) attached, similar to that of naïve animateurs. Each critical animateur's level of involvement in the GYS programme was irrelevant, as I was more interested in their experiences beyond the programme and whether or not they felt the GYS programme contributed to them making positive change in the wider community.

My initial aim was to interview the first five critical animateurs to respond positively, recognising that five would be a sufficient number to help produce a comprehensive picture on how critical animateurs applied the skills learnt beyond the programme. The participants that came forward consisted of two

alumni and two active members, thus making up the final group for the semi-structured interviews. Upon reflection, I felt amending the approach to recruit a further participant would not be necessary. The individuals were well-balanced and representative of participants, providing the relevant information needed for the study.

3.4. Profile of the Naïve Animateurs

The focus groups consisted of five participants in total, four from International College of Engineering and Management (hereafter ICEM), Oman and one from UCLan, UK. Those attending ICEM were studying BSC (Hons) Fire Safety Engineering, completing Year Two. The final participant consisted of a UCLan student in Year One of a Foundation Degree in Arts in Community Leadership. My participation as an alumnus of the GYS programme and as UCLan staff was recorded but not included in the data as I was mainly concerned with the young people's current experience on the programme.   My involvement complemented the experience of the current participants and allowed me to compare any changes over the years.

Reflecting on the individuals participating within the focus groups, there was a large representation of females from an Omani background, a paradox of common Western rhetoric around Middle Eastern countries and their representation of women (Bastian & Zali, 2016:458). Oman has seen an increase in female citizens obtaining employment since the introduction of the government policy, Omanisation, in 1988 (Amzat et al, 2017:2). Leading to a growing number of job opportunities for women, they have been encouraged to pursue higher education to gain the qualification needed to compete for such jobs (Amzat et al, 2017:3). Moreover, a high representation of participants aged between 20 – 24, clearly shows many follow the traditional route of continuing into higher education following tertiary education in Oman (Expat Women, 2013: para 2). Although it is important to understand the reality of the younger generation, I cannot disregard the stories shared by those representing 25 – 34-year olds. The reality of mature students is just as significant, offering a breadth of life experience they can share.

3.5. Profile of the Critical Animateurs

The semi-structured interviews consisted of four participants; all having studied Community Leadership. Two were graduates with a BA (Hons) in Community Leadership, while the remaining two participants were in their final year of the FdA Community Leadership. All participants were heavily involved in supporting the GYS programme and had delivered the programme at least once during their time as a critical animateur. Similar to the naïve animateurs, the critical animateurs also presented a

high female representation, echoing the data collected by the Higher Education Statistic Agency[18] (Higher Education Statistic Agency, 2018b). HESA have found female enrolment within HE to be marginally higher than that of their male counterparts, over the past five years (Higher Education Statistic Agency, 2018b). The ages of the participants, however, display an equal representation of the age groups. As I was working with university students, using HESA's guide to differentiate students ages, was an appropriate place to start to define the age brackets for this study. HESA (2018a) defines students between the ages of 19 and 20 and any students over the age of 21 are deemed as mature students. Having studied this, I felt it did not provide a varied range and as a result I settled on creating my own metrics. Following a review of all the young people CVCL educators had worked with, the average age was 20. By implementing a five-year window between each age group, I was able to determine the age brackets for this study. Had I stuck to HESA's classification; the results would not have provided an accurate picture of the differing age ranges. Similarly, a breakdown of ethnicity uncovered an equal split between White and British Pakistani participants. UCLan's (n.d.a) commitment to equal opportunities and the institutional support for diverse communities is reflected in the equal split between the two ethnic backgrounds. Having said this, given my research objective is about gaining a deeper understanding of how critical animateurs make a positive change in the wider community, data on intersectionality within the group is not included in this analysis. This will be utilised as part of further study.

3.6. Methods

This study adopted two forms of qualitative data collection methods, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The semi-structured interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis with critical animateurs, whereas the naïve animateurs participated in the focus groups. The decision to use an epistemological approach for collecting and analysing data helped expand the range of the study targeting specific enquiry components, thus offering increased nuance and flexibility compared to a single method approach (Darlington & Scott, 2002:125). Moreover, implementing a multiple method approach ensured data integrity (Franklin & Ballan, 2001:283). The next section of this thesis will explore each method in detail followed by the ethical implications of my research.

3.6.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Wanting to collect in-depth accounts of the experiences encountered by those involved in the GYS programme, the chosen data collection methods had to support this. Having explored several techniques, primarily a case study method, I settled for semi-structured interviews. Initially I felt a case

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[18] HESA is the official agency to collect and publish information about the UK HE sectors.

study would lend itself well in producing an in-depth analysis of participant experiences (Hamel et al, 1993:33). However further research found this approach did not allow me the opportunity to reflect on change in the same way as a participatory approach (Lawson et al, 2015: xiii) using semi-structured interviews (See Appendix 3: Semi-structured Interview Questions for Critical Animateurs). The semi-structured interview process would support a deeper insight and understanding into the thoughts and feelings of the participants in a way no other process would. Furthermore, in line with Freirean principles, participatory action offered participants a voice and empowerment through collaboration. As 'the best qualitative interviews are guided not by the researcher but by the interviewees' (McIntyre, 2005:222), my decision to conduct semi-structured interviews was not difficult. Giving the participants the autonomy to direct the conversation enabled them to express their voice on a one-to-one basis, acting as informants. Additionally, embracing a participatory approach gave me further autonomy to cross reference the findings with the participant and discuss/clarify any further changes to their reality. Taking the interview beyond the notion of gathering facts, the participant was able to present an authentic voice (Atkins & Wallace, 2012:88)

My initial aim was to interview five critical animateurs, a person from each year representing their involvement over the past five years and presenting an insight into the long-term impact and the transformative nature of GYS. A call for voluntary participation meant a total of four participants came forward, making up the final group. Concern with recruiting a fifth person was not important, as the four critical animateurs between them had a vast amount of invaluable experience. Semi-structured interviews are synonymous with small numbers of participants, therefore limiting generalisation (McNeill & Chapman, 2005:59). As the research is concerned with creating insights, informing practice and contributing to wider understanding, wider generalisations are immaterial. Moreover, semi-structured interviews are commonly used when little is known about the research area (Menter et al, 2011:129) and although Freire's teaching practices are widely used, very little is known about how they are executed within the GYS programme. Implementing a semi-structured interview process would help co-create new knowledge around transformative pedagogy, developing a wider understanding.

Like all data collection methods, semi-structured interviews also have their challenges especially when building meaning to the events described by the participant (Cousin, 2009:73). How each party construes meaning can have its own interpretations and can result in misconception. Creating a 'third space' to conceptualise 'meaning making' (Cousin, 2009:73), I was able to engage in a reflexive journey with the participants through dialogue (Cousin, 2009:74). Committed to the participatory action research approach my concern was not to determine an outcome using formal 'end of program'

analysis (Owen & Rogers, 1999:222). Evaluation with participants had to remain constant, gathering information on further developments, deemed to be highly valuable as well as gaining clarification on existing information (Finlay, 2002a:216; Owen & Rogers, 1999:222). Embarking on this dialectic process, via email, telephone and face to face, allowed clarification and refinement, leading to a nuanced understanding of the messages conveyed (Talmage, 2012:296).

There is a further danger of participants feeling obliged to share stories they believe could benefit the research. My position as GYS coordinator and Community Leadership lecturer could be an influencing factor, putting participants under pressure to share positive stories to avoid the prospect of compromising their position as a critical animateur/student. This was mitigated by ensuring participants were aware of my 'participatory position', asking them to disregard any other roles. Having already established a trusting relationship with the participants outside of the research project, I did not envisage issues with building rapport. However, entering an interview-like situation can heighten anxieties. Moreover, informing the participants the sessions would be recorded would amplify anxieties, influencing responses. Behaving in a friendly and interested manner helped relieve the apprehensions of being recorded and maintained trust and rapport, thus supporting mutual self-disclosure (Johnson, 2001:109). Although I employed all of the procedures possible to limit any angst, the interview situation incites fears that may be embedded in the subconscious and out of researcher control. Acknowledging this through reflexivity aided me to be truthful and analytical when presenting the data.

3.6.2. Focus Group

My decision to conduct focus groups was based on a couple of reasons: firstly, accessibility for the participants, and secondly, ability to generate qualitative data around attitudes, opinions and perspectives regarding a service or programme (Kumar, 2011:127). I achieved this by granting participants a safe and secure environment to voice their opinions in a free, relaxed and open discussion with myself as the researcher and other members of the group (Kumar, 2011:128). Interaction, however, remained between the participants, leaving me to select the topic and facilitate the discussion, not directing it completely (Kane & O'Reilly-De Brun, 2001:273). The participatory role allowed me to be immersed in the discussions regarding the daily activities but also giving me the flexibility to refer back to the research question as a guide, when required. This helped gain a deeper understanding of the transformative practices used within the GYS programme, identifying specific techniques that contribute to the feeling of empowerment. Similar to the semi structured interviews, the participatory approach gave flexibility for clarification of data as well as an opportunity for

participants to relay any additional information they deemed significant to the research. Due to geographical reasons naïve animateurs were contacted via email and telephone.

Following a voluntary selection process, five naïve animateurs presented themselves to the daily informal debriefing sessions (See Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions for Naïve Animateurs). The sessions provided participants with a relaxed and comfortable environment to discuss the daily activities, reflecting on how they translated into opportunities to break away from the 'culture of silence', nurturing their critical consciousness. A relaxed and comfortable environment was essential to ensure accurate accounts were communicated and I feel that sharing my reality as a naïve animateur contributed to this.

The aim, to generate themes by exploring an individual's experience of the GYS programme, could only be uncovered through discussion with those who had been through the same experience. The flexibility within the focus groups allowed participants to use different forms of communication such as anecdotes and jokes (Manoranjitham & Jacob, 2007:125), essential for those who may use jest to relieve anxiety. Moreover, the Omani participants' ability to articulate their experiences in English was admirable. However, having the option to converse in Arabic if they struggled in English was available. With each other's support they were able to acquire the words in English, translating their story in English and providing me with a clearer picture of what they were trying to convey. Offering the Omani group the opportunity to communicate in their own language demonstrated valuing diversity and helped generate problematisation of issues pertinent to them (Manoranjitham & Jacob, 2007:125).

Although the Omani participants' English-speaking skills were exemplary, there were occasions where I had to refer back to certain points, asking for clarification. Similarly, all participants felt comfortable to do the same if they were unsure of the questions I presented to them. Knowing that participants felt comfortable to seek clarification assured me that they were at ease to share personal and intimate stories of their reality. My ability to develop a good rapport in a relaxing environment contributed to the disclosure of personal life experience, helping me to construct a deeper understanding and see what extent the GYS programme has played in shaping individual skills for positive change.

Alternative methods would not have captured the data in the same way as focus groups. Approaches similar to semi-structured interviews would have denied participants the opportunity to engage in discussions with others in the same setting. Moreover, as I had not previously developed a relationship with the naïve animateurs prior to their involvement with the GYS programme, participants would not

have felt at ease to share authentic stories in a one-to-one situation, thus invalidating the data. Focus groups on the other hand, comprising of several participants in the same situation, would help ease any unnecessary anxieties, especially as they will have worked together throughout the day on various activities. A key aspect to the GYS programme is to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all involved, had this not been created on day one of the programme I would have struggled with developing a trusting relationship with those participating in the focus groups. Incorporating a collaborative culture within the GYS programme further assisted me in creating a relaxed and welcoming environment. It also helped set the tone of the focus group, so participants could freely share experiences without interruptions (Kumar, 2014:194).

Like the semi-structured interviews, the focus groups were also audio recorded, presenting the possibility of directed responses. I believe my ability to establish rapport and positive relationships with the participants helped minimise this. The honesty and openness regarding my participatory role also assisted the sharing of accurate and genuine stories during and after the focus groups took place. Implementing steps to avoid any limitations to the study is important, whilst also acknowledging that any unavoidable restrictions need to be expressed honestly and openly within the findings using a reflexive approach.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

Considering ethical implications must remain central to any research project carried out. Simons (2009:96) states the underlying intention must be to 'do no harm'; however, this intention should be positively stated. By acknowledging the intention is to research *with* the people rather than avoid doing harm *to* them will positively contribute to participant experience (Simons, 2009:97), offering honest and genuine data. By simply allowing the participants within the study to engage in voluntary participation and mutual consent, ensured respect and adherence to standards (Alderson & Morrow, 2011:3). Placing emphasis on voluntary participation guaranteed no physical or psychological coercion, basing their agreement on full and open information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:65). Informing participants of what they were consenting to does not eliminate additional underlying pressures such as my role as the GYS coordinator. My position could be misinterpreted due to the influence and power I occupy, swaying individual choices (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012: para 38). Other factors such as peer groups and institutional positions may also contribute to decisions made. However, it is important to note that participants may not be aware of these subconscious pressures, yet these still could impact upon their choices (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012: para 39).

As mentioned previously, prior to their involvement, all participants were presented with an information sheet and consent form (See Appendix 2: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Critical Animateurs; Appendix 1: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Naïve Animateurs) clearly highlighting the research aims and request for participation. Following UCLan's ethical procedures (see Appendix 5: University Code of Conduct for Research) and Creswell's (2013:153) explanation, the information sheets included the right to withdraw at any point without repercussions, protection of confidentiality and from risks associated with participation. This information was not only provided in written format via the information sheets but also reiterated at the point of recruitment and again prior to signing the consent form.

Acknowledging my role as the GYS coordinator and Community Leadership lecturer was key to ensuring valid and reliable results, more so because my position placed me in a situation of power, especially when conducting semi-structured interviews. Those engaged in the interviews were not only involved in the GYS programme but also students on Community Leadership courses, causing a conflict of interest. Concerned their responses could compromise their position as a critical animateur and possibly as a student, their replies may be directed to what they felt I would like to hear, nullifying the data. To avoid this, I ensured the interviews took place in familiar surroundings and a rapport was built prior to the interview. Reassuring them, I was only concerned with the reflective element of the discussion and that their responses had no bearing on their connection with the GYS programme or their role as a student helped put participants at ease. With dialogue playing an instrumental role in the interview process, the exertion of power was something I did not attempt to eliminate but reflected on when analysing the data (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009:33), providing an honest and critical account of the findings.

Recognising similar issues with the focus groups, I had to be honest and open about my participatory role, encouraging participants to disregard the roles, to shape sincere and authentic responses. Employing a participatory action research approach helped retain the basic teaching of Paulo Freire, allowing me to consider the participants as informants. Moreover, incorporating problem-posing questions to create dialogue prompted the sharing of knowledge and supported me in the development of critical consciousness and self-realisation. Gentle encouragement throughout also enabled the participants freely to explore their perceptions of the programme. Alternative methods would not have had the desired effect, hindering meaning checking, discussion and reflexivity.

Asking all participants to view themselves as informants, co-constructing knowledge, aided trust and rapport, enhancing a secure and comfortable atmosphere for sharing GYS the experience (McNeill & Chapman, 2005, p 65). This created an additional challenge of objectivity, something I regarded as irrelevant due to the interpretivist stance the research had employed. Recognising that subjectivity will always be present, I was able to be interrogate and acknowledge my own perceptions in an honest and open manner (Cousin, 2009:35) when engaging with the data, reassuring me that subjectivity is acceptable (Barbour, 2014:36).

3.8. Techniques for Data Analysis

Before I began analysing the data, I firstly had to ask myself the significance of such task. Swift (2006:153) explains data analysis as the point at which the researcher 'tunes' into the meaning and messages, building up an appreciation of the nuances and structure. The level of 'tuning in', however is highly dependent on the quality of the data records and the researcher's ability to translate ideas and explanations (Richards, 2009:73). This presented me with increased pressure to ensure that the relevant data collection methods were adopted. Knowing the close connection between the two pushed me into a well-researched and through investigation of the different data collection and analysis techniques. An extensive investigation led me to identify semi-structured interviews and focus groups as the most appropriate methods to accompany the research.

Being an early career researcher, the number of data analysis techniques available left me feeling overwhelmed, confused and bewildered as to which technique would be the most appropriate and effective for the study. Edwards and Weller (2012:203) stresses that the analysis process must be shaped by the social reality that informs the research project. The research analysis process had to imitate the practices of Freire (1996) and engage individuals to reflect on unjust realities through dialogue, giving focus to individual voices. Without losing participant voices, tuning into the conversations was essential. Unconcerned with generating theory or developing patterns, I began searching for analysis methods that provide a deeper understanding of how participants speak and make sense of their reality. This took me down the route of exploring the 'conversational analysis' method.

The conversational analysis process grew out of the ethnomethodological tradition developed by Harold Garfinkel in the 1960s (Garfinkel, 1967:35; Liddicoat, 2011:2). A tradition focusing on the social order and members' interpretation of the social world (Liddicoat, 2011:2), I felt this approach would provide an insight into participants' interpretation of the transformative elements of the GYS

programme. Following extensive research, it soon became apparent, conversational analysis focused on how people talk to each other, rather than providing a deeper understanding of what is being discussed (Silverman, 1998:101). As the research was not concerned with the intricate details of how participants interact during a conversation, it was decided to discard this approach. Although Alasuutari (1995:63) claims conversation analysis can be used to explore data that focuses on the reflection of reality, it does not allow a connection to individual voices. Moreover, conversational analysis process is very much data driven, within minimal guidance from the research question (Liddicoat, 2011:69). According to Liddicoat (2011:69) this process allows the researcher to immerse themselves in the findings, not imposing an interpretation. I strongly believe that researchers are unable to engage with any data analysis process with total objectivity, meaning that some level of interpretation is always present. Through acknowledging the researcher's subjective nature, the data presented will offer valid and reliable data. Furthermore, a sole emphasis on data can result in extracting information, which is irrelevant to the research questions, subsequently distorting the direction of the research. For this reason, I chose to re-examine the data analysis process, searching for an approach applicable to the research

As a novice researcher I struggled to find a starting point, though having read Braun & Clarke's (2006:78) advice on thematic analysis I felt this was a helpful guide. Claiming thematic analysis to be used as a foundational method for qualitative approaches and the first method of analysis researchers should learn, I commenced with this. Regardless as to whether you are new to the research arena, Richards (2015:103) believes that almost all qualitative data should have some sort of coding involvement and should always be for a purpose and not an end. In response to this, I felt the qualitative data analysis software NVivo Version 11 would be the ideal starting point to help categorise dominant themes present in both the focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Although the emerging themes had to be of a natural occurrence, the late introduction of voice-centred relational method (VCR) provided me with the opportunity to draw attention to the individual stories in a way that thematic analysis did not. This process allowed me to identify generative themes using critical reflection and dialogue to understand how participants' perception of reality limited their ability to take positive action (Weninger, 2018:86). This helped complement Paulo Freire's theory of oppression and his explanation to develop a liberating practice to bring about change (Ledwith, 2016:21).

Taking on a multi-analysis approach using thematic analysis and a VCR method permitted me to focus on reconstructing the holistic meaning of the stories (Edwards & Weller, 2012:204). It also ensured that I captured a complete understanding of each story using the following steps:

1. Transcribe the recorded data

2. Embark on several readings of the data

3. Construct themes using thematic analysis software, NVivo Version 11.

4. Use of Voice Centred Relational Method to extract participant voices

5. Consider the validity and authentication of interpretation

6. Acknowledge how data should be presented to represent the participants.

The challenges each stage presented to me will be discussed in more detail below.

3.8.1. Transcription of Recorded Data

I firstly began with transcribing the focus groups and the semi-structured interviews using the original recordings. Although it was a very time-consuming process, I found it extremely helpful in developing the valuable skill of transcribing data for research. Moreover, I gained a deeper understanding of the data collected, providing me with the additional advantage of revisiting the data on several occasions.

3.8.2. Several Readings of the Data

Following the transcription process, the first point of call was to read and re-read the data several times to absorb the stories and gain an overall feel of what was being communicated. Progressing on to the next level of reading and re-reading the data, I began unearthing relevant information. It soon became clear that coding topics was not as simple as initially anticipated. The choices made about what to code, and how, would influence every stage of the research from this point onwards (Darlington & Scott, 2002:145), increasing the pressure on making the correct choices. The first reading consisted of extracting and discarding any information that I felt was irrelevant to the research. Proving to be a challenge, I was nervous of discarding information that could be potentially vital to the research. Richard (2009:85) emphasises the importance of revisiting the data several times during the project to ensure that important data is not lost. Each time I revisited the data the interpretation differed to the previous reading, observing a different picture of what was being articulated. This meant I had to intentionally keep the remit for 'useful' information largely general to counter the possibility that important data was accidentally omitted from the research at an early stage.

Referring to the research questions on a regular basis also helped me to remain grounded in the information I was aiming to extract, preventing me from falling into the coding trap and become over-zealous about coding everything. Richards' (2009:110) advice on asking yourself 'why am I interested in this' and 'where does this text go' really helped me evaluate the coding strategy and ensure I did not

develop a coding obsession. Having read Punch's (2009:176) explanation of the coding process I began to tag, name and label the data using the qualitative data software NVivo version 11.

More importantly, this stage of the analysis process allowed me to clarify any ambiguity emerging from the data. Directly contacting participants and treating them as meaningful partners removed any researcher privileges, maintaining mutual creation and interpretation of the data (Byrne et al, 2009:68)

3.8.3. Constructing Themes Using Thematic Analysis Software, NVivo Version 11

The decision to adopt a thematic method, was uncomplicated and came about, more so, because I had used this approach in a previous research project consisting of focus groups. Using the same coding analysis method would also suit this study and familiarity with this method meant I was comfortable with coding the data. I began by adopting Richards' (2015) three-point coding process, descriptive, topic and analytical. At this point, I was not highly concerned about the descriptive attributes, such as age, gender and ethnicity, as I felt this could be introduced later on in the data analysis process. I was more concerned with engaging with the data to identify topics I could interpret and reflect on to create themes (Punch & Oancea, 2014:225). I used this opportunity to examine further how participants described their reality, for example, their thoughts on empowerment and feelings towards programmes like the GYS, as a way of developing confidence to bring about positive change.

I found myself including all accounts shared by the participants and tagging them as highly important. It seemed to me that the accounts shared consisted of rich and powerful descriptions and could not be discarded. For example, some of the participants had shared storied of incidents they experienced prior to the programme and although it did not link directly with their GYS experience it was fundamental to understanding how external factors influenced their reality. Following further readings, clarification with participants and referral back to the research questions I concluded that some aspects of the wider picture did not contribute to the research and should not be included in the findings. This extra data, however, gave me food for thought for further research into factors which determine individual's involvement in transformative programmes.

The tagging and labelling process supported critical engagement with the data and identification of subliminal messages. These messages began to unravel patterns helping me to summarise and pull together themes (Punch, 2009:176). The themes extracted from the data can be found in the table below (See Figure 2: Thematic Analysis of the Data, Page 63).

Figure 2: Thematic Analysis of the Data

Method	Data stored	Data Generated	Themes
Semi-Structured Interviews	Audio Recording	Transcript	• Fear of Freedom • Self-Awareness • Problem Solving
Focus Groups	Audio Recording	Transcript	• Humanisation • Critical Consciousness • Transformation of Reality

These emerging themes, however, were very much personal reflections and interpretations of the participants' realities. Although the themes were useful in creating an overall picture of participants' experience, I did not feel I was extracting the individual voices and the wholeness of the stories shared.

I entered the data analysis topic with inexperience and naivety, thinking only one analysis method could be implemented. Discovering that researchers who struggle to find appropriate tools and procedures are encouraged to adapt several analysis techniques (Grbich, 2007:37) was reassuring. This pushed me to find alternative methods to answer the research questions. Going back to the research questions as guidance (Auerbach & Silverstein's, 2003:44), I was able to revisit the aims, directing me to the VCR method as an approach used to capture the voices of the participants (Fairtlough, 2007:2).

3.8.4. Using Voice Centred Relational Method to Keep Participants' Voices at the Centre of Analysis

The thematic approach was a great starting point to identify the patterns emerging (Braun & Clarke, 2006:80); however, individual voices were missing. When consulting the research aims, I was reminded to connect with the individual stories of each participant and their reflection on the transformative practices. Upholding the underpinning philosophy of individual interaction through dialogue as a fundamental element to a revolutionary transformation of reality, it was vital that the data reflected this (Freire, 1996:30). Not only was I concerned with capturing the voices through dialogue, but the analysis process also required that the voices to be apparent too. Giving focus to the individual voices of the participants could also lead to a revolutionary understanding of the programme. The coding process only allowed me to group together similar or repeated ideas to create themes, thus a detailed understanding of individual voices was absent.

Appreciating the feminist movement's commitment to researching individual voices, particularly in gender-related debates (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002:1), supported a desire to produce knowledge based on evidence of truth (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002:23). Like the feminist perspective, I am also

concerned with creating an authentic interpretation of the participants' stories. Generating a true account must remain central, confronting the researcher's subjective and interpretative natures of what they do (Fairtlough, 2007:9). Acknowledging personal beliefs and values helped me create a valid and true representation of the respondent's accounts (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998:122) and will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

The notion of 'tuning into' and 'understanding' individual voices was challenging, particularly listening to and interpreting other people's stories. The voice is a very complex concept and can refer to many things at the same time (Denzin, 1997:40). Several things such as language, different tones in the voices and pauses had to be considered when connecting with the different stories. The VCR method allowed me to focus on each point, truly connecting with the data but also complemented the themes uncovered through the thematic analysis process.

The VCR method was developed and adapted following psychologist Carol Gilligan (1993) and her colleagues' initial creation of a listening guide. The listening guide was a form of narrative analysis focusing on and listening to the disconnection and disassociation of men's and women's voices (Jankowska, 2014:8, Gilligan, 1993: xiii). It was dedicated to reading and listening to the voices by questioning who is speaking and who is listening to the data (Byrne et al, 2009:68). This must be done during both the data collection and interpreting processes, allowing the researcher to reinsert the act of listening into the act of reading (Byrne et al, 2009:68). Although I did not adopt the VCR method until later, the question of 'who is speaking' and 'who is listening' was already embedded into the research. Qualitative research requires these questions to be rooted throughout the study, creating an honest and true account of the stories shared. Capturing the individual voices helped me reconstruct the holistic meaning of the stories (Edward & Weller, 2012:204), creating a valid and authentic account of their reality. Furthermore, by granting a voice to the participants, I am rendering a human quality (Ardovini, 2015:51), complementing the Freirean understanding of humanisation.

While the listening guide developed by Gilligan and her colleagues proved to be a useful tool, Mauthner & Doucet's (1998) adaptation of the VCR methods resonated with the research. Mauthner & Doucet (1998:125) further developed the listening guide and modified the VCR method to reflect interdisciplinary backgrounds focusing on sociological interests. Their adaption included four distinct readings of the transcripts, with each reading listening to and highlighting certain aspects of the story. I found this highly valuable as it provided me with a structure and drove me to focus on particular points during each reading. The four stages of reading also eliminated any concerns relating to missing vital

messages emanating through the data due to personal ontological and epistemological viewpoints. Revisiting the data on several occasions allowed me to reconnect with the participant and clarify any uncertainty, ensuring a full extraction of the voice and more importantly a connection with the silent voices.

The first reading allowed me to search for the overall plot and the story being told (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998:126), particularly focusing on the main event, listening for any recurring words, metaphors and contradictions. Referring to the thematic data analysis process, I used the themes as a starting point to identify any connecting plots. I was, however, conscious not to limit myself to these themes, remaining open-minded to any additional topics surfacing in the data. As I continued to extract data, it seemed the themes identified within the thematic data analysis process were not appropriate to this form of analysis. I found that grouping the findings under headings that described the overall plot more suitable. For example, participants spoke of personal values they deemed important to the feeling of empowerment, and these factors were categorised as 'values.' Recognising these elements helped me to understand participants' ontological perspectives.

The second reading focused on the voice of 'I' (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998:128), pinpointing the moments the participants referred to themselves using personal pronouns such as 'I', 'we' or 'you' (Edward & Weller, 2012:207). There were several occasions where the participants referred to 'we' rather than 'I', something I could not dismiss, especially as the element of teamwork and equal participation was imperative and embedded into the GYS programme. This also verified and strengthened the intent to represent Ledwith's (2016:148) explanation of co-creating knowledge.

The third reading allowed me to listen for participants' descriptions of interpersonal relationships with GYS group members, their family and the wider community (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998:131). A sole focus on relationships was highly valuable in revealing information which supported theoretical explanations surrounding oppression and the distribution of power. Moreover, it uncovered personal relationships away from the programme which contributed to the feeling of empowerment, providing a clear picture on GYS's actual contribution to empowerment for transformation.

The final reading allowed me to place the participants within a wider network of social, political, cultural and structural settings (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). This being the most challenging segment of the reading, I had to ensure that personal cultural and social interpretations did not overpower those of the participants (Fairtlough, 2007:6). Understanding the social world from the perspective of the GYS

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participants (O'Reilly, 2009:150), I could appreciate that no single account of any reality was more respected than another (O'Reilly, 2009:168). Valuing each individual version, I represented the voices of those involved. This took me back to the initial thematic data analysis process and the moments I discarded information which I felt was not relevant to the study. Revisiting the data to double-check that I had not sub-consciously selected one participant's account over another, it forced me to rethink any assumptions I may have had. Interpreting personal understanding in a written format also enabled me to cross-reference with the participants, exposing any assumptions.

The VCR method presented opportunities to reconnect with participants at each stage of the readings, honouring the chosen PAR approach. Combining VCR and PAR approach, brought participant's voices to the fore and helped me listen with care and attention to what was said and not said (Byrne et al, 2009:76). Sharing the outcomes with participants following each reading, not only created a sense of involvement and belonging within the research (Corbett et al, 2007:84) but also a feeling of inclusivity. This assured participants, their voice and issues were heard and deemed important. Involving participants at this stage added to the existing data, and more importantly they were able to contribute their interpretation of the data. Participants reflecting on their accounts and contributing to the findings led to further understanding, clarity and reconstruction of meaning where necessary (Corbett et al, 2007:84). By engaging participant throughout the entire research process, participant's voice and experiences were firmly placed at the very heart of the project creating a pluralistic positioning of knowledge (Corbett et al, 2007:83).

A large amount of cross-referencing occurred with the participants involved in the semi-structured interviews, mainly because they were individually applying the knowledge co-created with their peers to make positive change in the wider community. Moreover, critical animateurs are at a stage where they are engaging with the cycle of action and reflection, leading to a continual state of learning and knowing the world around them (Corbett et al, 2007:86). Being able to consult with participant at each stage added to the data collated during the semi-structured interviews. It also helped extract genuine accounts of their experiences and the topics emerging from the VCR method can be found in the table below (see Figure 3: Narrative Analysis of the Data, Page 67)

Figure 3: Narrative Analysis of the Data

Method	Data stored	Data Generated	Themes
Semi-Structured Interviews	Audio Recording	Transcript	• Values • External Influences • Programme Delivery • Activities • Making Change • Empowerment
Focus Groups	Audio Recording	Transcript	

Comparing both the narrative and thematic analysis uncovered an overlap between the two. For example, those aspects labelled 'fear of freedom' and 'self-awareness' revealed a direct correlation to external[19] influences and personal values. Revisiting the data corroborated the links between the themes and topics generated and the table below highlights the connections between the two. (See Figure 4: Comparison of Thematic and Narrative Analysis of the Data).

Figure 4: Comparison of Thematic and Narrative Analysis of the Data

Thematic Analysis			
Fear of Freedom Self-Awareness	Problem Solving Humanisation	Critical Consciousness	Transformation of Reality
Narrative Analysis			
Values & External Influences	Programme Delivery & Activities	Making Change	Empowerment

3.9. Considering Validity and Authentication of Interpretation

Constructing a true and accurate interpretation of the phenomenon being researched and reported (Plowright, 2011:135) is essential for any study. The subjective nature of the research project made it difficult to produce data that was directly truthful and accurate. However, identifying personal ontological and epistemological viewpoints helped authenticate the data. Supplemented with a reflexive journal, I was able to recognise my personal theoretical stance when interpreting the young people's accounts, distinguishing my voice from the participants (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998:137). Incorporating a reflexive element also assisted me to situate myself in the knowledge-making practices (Finlay & Gough, 2003:37), further authenticating the research to be real and as insightful as possible (Finlay & Gough, 2003:3). Engaging in the act of critical self-reflection remained focal throughout the study, particularly focusing on personal social background, assumptions and behaviours impacting on

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[19] External factors in this case consist of influences within their immediate social circle and not at the level of macro politics.

the research process (Finlay & Gough, 2003: xi). Moreover, embracing a humanistic quality offered me a foundation to the psychological understanding and allowed me to accept any pre-existing assumptions (Walsh, 1995:335). Again, accepting personal theoretical and ontological frameworks exposed the realisation that I may pay attention to certain issues and not so much on others. Understanding that participants may address their own concerns (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003:33) was not a major issue, especially as the data collection processes was designed for participants to have the freedom to do this. My role was to expose the connections between their concerns and mine (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003:33). Explicitly stating the effect inter-subjectivity had on the data collection and analysis process enhanced the trustworthiness, transparency and accountability of the research (Finlay, 2002:211). Moreover, acknowledging my various roles and how they influenced the collection and interpretation of data (O'Reilly, 2009:183) remained core to the reflexivity process. The different voices amongst the participants and myself had also to show through the transcription. This section will highlight the steps I took to ensure that the findings were genuine and sincere, focusing on how I overcame the challenges attached to this process.

Embarking on a reflexive approach helped distinguish between the two voices. However, using Finlay's (2002) advice I was able to negotiate the swamp of reflexivity. As an inexperienced researcher, I found the reflexivity process to be filled with muddy ambiguity and multiple trails (Finlay, 2002:209), but following Finlay's (2002) guidance I was able to settle on reflexivity as introspection. Finlay (2002:215) claims researchers who engage with reflexivity as introspection explore and unravel personal experiences using them as a springboard for interpretation and more general insights. Being new to reflexivity, I sensed this technique would be ideal for the research and, through the creation of a reflective journal, it helped me deconstruct my journey, self-analyse and self-disclose my reality (Finlay, 2002:209). The main challenge was connecting with subconscious thoughts (Mazzei, 2009:51) and more importantly unearthing my silent voice before attempting to discover the voices of others. Highly concerned about how I would locate the silent voices if I am not consciously aware of them led me to Ownby's (2015) work around reconstructing silent voices. Ownby (2015) advocated for photography as a vehicle to expose the silent voices inspiring me to retrieve old photographs and materials over the time. Bringing back memories and encounters I had forgotten disclosed some of the silent voices. Documenting this in a reflective journal supported me in differentiating my voice from that of the participants.

Remaining open to other practices, I incorporated intersubjective reflection and mutual collaboration, allowing participants the opportunity to engage in the reflexive process, central to their role as co-

constructors of knowledge. Separating personal realities from that of the participants by using a reflective record assisted the separation of the distinctive voices during the data collection process.

Data analysis, however, proved to be more challenging in differentiating the voices. Although the pressures of ensuring that my subconscious voice did not overshadow the reality of the participants remained, the exposure had to be articulated accurately in the written process.

I hoped that by creating a reflective account of personal reality, it would help me discover and differentiate from the voices of the participants. I became rather concerned about how I would go about locating these silent voices, especially if I was not consciously aware of them. Having read Ownby's (2015) work around reconstructing silent voices using photography, I felt the need to recover the old photographs and materials during my time as a delegate. I found this process helped to bring back memories and encounters I thought I had forgotten, in turn unearthing some element of my silent voice. Following the data collection process, I referred back to the document not only to remind myself of my reality and ensure it remained separate from that of the participants, but also to cross-reference it with the stories shared by the delegates. This again enabled me to reflect and recall my own experiences and identify the moments common to myself and the participants. I repeated this process again when conducting and analysing the semi-structured interviews with the critical animateurs. The outcome of this process will be discussed further in the following chapter.

As well as locating my own silent voice, I needed to connect with the silent voices of the participants. It was not enough just to listen to the words being said, I had to connect with what was not being said by the participants. Dolar (2006:23) states, '[N]ot all voices are heard, and perhaps the most intrusive and compelling are the unheard voices, and the most deafening thing can be the silence.' Similarly, Mazzei (2009:46) feels it is the 'silent voices' that are often ignored due to the lack of connection with the interpreter's everyday life or the difficulty in making sense of what is being said or not said in many cases. Connecting with the silent voices can be a real challenge, especially as you are entering into the research project with your own understanding and knowledge of the topic. Mazzei (2009:46) suggests that the researcher needs to attack the data from a different angle. Taking on the VCR method during the data analysis process not only challenged me to be more attentive to the individual accounts but also helped to uncover the silent voices through various readings. Although this took me into uncertain ground and really pushed me out of my comfort zone, it was vital that I delved into these fascinating territories to really get a trusting and true sense of what was being conveyed.

3.10. Challenges of Representing Participants' Voices.

Interpreting and representing the experiences as told by the participants needs to be clearly explained through the researcher's writing (Plowright, 2011:95). This depiction of voice however is often manifested at the author's discretion (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997:193). Although authors are encouraged to 'keep their voices out of the reports,' we cannot ignore that they come with their own will, intent and feeling to report in a particular way (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997:193). Distancing oneself from an innate agenda can be extremely difficult. However, creating a narrative account of my own experience of the GYS programme allowed me to separate personal beliefs from those expressed by the participants.

By maintaining this reflexive stance, I am able to identify the multiple voices emerging within the study and distinguishing the experience from those voiced by the participants. Hertz (1997: xiii), refers to this as 'situated actors' who bring their own understanding, and at times during the data collection can be prompted to recall these events. As the GYS coordinator, I was conscious of the personal attachment to and subjective views of the programme. Had I not taken a critical approach towards the data (Miller and Brewer, 2003:259) in the form a reflexive interpretation, my close link to the programme would have undoubtedly contributed to the contamination by my own understanding and knowledge. Critically reflecting helped contextualise and situate the data as well as provide a clear and unambiguous way of how the accounts were socially constructed. It also informed the audience of my role as a 'situated actor' within the research and provided me with the opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate that each participant's reality is different, and I had to be true to representing those realities and not allow personal views to overshadow them.

Moreover, the reflexive stance not only helped me overcome the challenges of locating my own voice, but by using Ownby's (2015) suggested approach I was able to situate my own silent voice. This method, however, would not be appropriate to detect the silent voices of the participants. As the author of this thesis I was fearful and concerned about how I could trace and interpret the unspoken voices of the participants. I was unsure if I would be able fully to capture vital messages, especially those communicated through their silent voices. Charmaz & Mitchell (1997:195) point out that, unlike writing, voice cannot be refined with practice or improved with time. It can only be improved as the writer becomes 'more sensitive to communicating the fullness of fieldwork phenomena'. This did fill me with the added pressure of ensuring I was not only listening to the voice but also demonstrating it through transcribing in a clear and concise manner.

Murray (2006:10) advises writers to not become enslaved by the participant voices but to be guided by them. The simple act of listening to the voices and writing what has been said should not prevent you from contributing your own unique and original voice (Murray, 2006:10). Secondly, the responsibility as researcher to represent the voice needs to be done as best and as true to the word as I can. Clearly expressing the reflexive process throughout the transcription will help me achieve the valid and authentic interpretation of the participants' stories I am looking for.

3.11. Challenges of Insider Knowledge

Conducting the research with participants on the GYS programme presented me with several challenges. Firstly, the critical animateurs consisted of students studying on various Community Leadership courses. As a member of the teaching team I had already established a close working relationship with these students; moreover, their involvement with the GYS programme added to this. This well-formed relationship put us in the fortunate position to be able to discuss their reality informally and subjectively. As this study was not concerned with creating objective perspective, these subjective discussions remained valuable. Having access to the participants in such manner provided me with what Labaree (2002:99) describes as 'insiderness'. This unique perspective cannot be understood by an 'outsider' in the same way as an insider (Labaree, 2002:99). The unique position as an insider, however, needed to be acknowledged throughout the research process to ensure it did not dominate. Especially when selecting the research methods, I had to guarantee a well-thought-out approach was implemented so I was able to utilise the data as effectively as possible (Alvesson, 2003:169). Selecting appropriate methods provided the participants the freedom and independence to express their views. Implementing a more structured and rigid method would only reinforce my power and position and in turn suppress theirs.

Many would argue that conducting research at the place of work could leave me in an untenable position and break the trust between UCLan as the employer and myself (Alvesson, 2003:167). Although this could be seen as problematic, I see this study as resourceful and innovative, not only for the teaching team in CVCL but also the university as a whole. Having the fortunate position of being an insider meant I was able to utilise fourteen years of experience to recognise the encounters expressed by the participants and cross-reference them against my own. Acquiring this insider knowledge also enabled me to respond to the complexities such as language and professional jargon. Having this knowledge presented the participants with the freedom to discuss their realities without the pressure of having to explain them further. Complementing this with a reflexive approach ensured that I was

not only reporting on facts but also interpreting the reality and questioning how these interpretations came about (Hertz, 1997: viii).

3.12. Conclusion

Within this chapter I have been able to clearly highlight the methodological stance and methods I used to conduct the study. By emphasising the reasoning behind embracing an interpretivist viewpoint, I have been able to incorporate the basic teachings of Paulo Freire, thus providing the young people with the opportunity to voice their reality in relation to the GYS programme. By applying data collection methods that permit the exposure of voice, techniques such as focus groups and semi-structured interviews have been crucial in engaging young people in dialogue to share the fundamental components for transformative practice. Incorporating quantitative methods, which are controlled through variables, experiment and measurement (Punch, 2014:207) would not have allowed for a dialectic approach to advance, hindering the sharing of stories and experiences essential for this study.

The focus on the GYS programme meant enlisting young people who had experienced the programme at some point in their lives. Through a criterion and opportunistic recruitment strategy I was able to recruit naïve animateurs to partake in the focus groups. Concentrating on the short-term element of the programme, the participants were able to discuss the factors which lead to the feeling of empowerment and more importantly the aspects they will adopt to transform their reality.

Using a convenience strategy to recruit critical animateurs, the participants contributed to the study using semi-structured interviews. Taking advantage of the non-hierarchical research relationship (Punch, 2014:148) rooted in semi-structured interviews, I created an atmosphere where participants felt relaxed and open to the ideas of sharing new ways they see the world (Punch, 2014:149). More importantly the young people were able to share how the GYS programme has left a lasting impact on their lives.

Following on to the data analysis process, this came with additional pressures to ensure the correct investigative method were implemented. Given the vast amount of analysis techniques, I found myself overwhelmed and confused with where to start, finally settling for a familiar method I had previously applied, thematic analysis. It soon transpired this did not expose participants' voices in the way I had originally set out to do. Upon further analysis I discovered the VCR process which would allow me to draw attention to the individual stories in a way thematic analysis would not. Rather than dismissing

the data analysed using thematic analysis, I combined the two methods, providing a deeper understanding of the data.

The overall process highlighted above had to be accompanied with ethical considerations at all stages of the research project. Scrutinising the actions and choices at each point helped illustrate the consequences, balancing the benefits and harms arising from those actions (Oancea, 2014:39). Firstly, the role as the GYS coordinator and Community Leadership Lecturer put me in a state of power; however, being explicitly clear about my participatory role eased any anxiety. Moreover, conducting the focus groups and semi-structured interviews using informal settings that were familiar to the participants also helped alleviate any apprehension, leading to honest and authentic stories.

The deep-rooted subjectivity within an interpretivist approach must incorporate reflexivity throughout the study in order to create valid and reliable data. Through continual scrutiny, I as the researcher developed ideas and understanding in relation to existing transformative practice and the new knowledge that was derived from this doctoral study (May & Perry, 2011:83). Acknowledging each and every element as imperative, I could ensure that I did not dismiss any vital components as trivial (May & Perry, 2011:83). Although reflexivity must be present throughout the study, I felt the need to hone into this, particularly within the data analysis procedure. As an early career researcher, interpreting data was the most daunting part of the process, especially as I had to remain conscious of personal thoughts and feelings, without them overpowering those of the participants. By using Ownby's (2015) suggestion, I was able to expose my own subconscious and silent voice, proving to be an important starting point for me.

Following the above process during the data collection method helped me to construct human behaviour, setting the foundations for me to describe the young people's social world for future practitioners and young people. The next chapter will describe the interpretation of the data, in particular focusing on the participant's voice.

<u>CHAPTER 4: FINDING OF THE STUDY</u>

4.1. Introduction

This chapter reflects stage four of Ledwith's amended version of Rowan's Research Cycle Model (Rowan, 1981:98), 'Taking Action', and will include the exploration of the findings gathered from both the semi-structured interviews and the focus group. By highlighting the coding and voice centred relation method used to identify the themes from both data collection methods, I will discuss in detail the connection between the findings and the literature, more importantly drawing upon any comparisons with Ledwith's Cycle Model. By presenting the findings in a narrative format I will be able to provide individual accounts, predominantly focusing on individual voice. By interpreting the stories in the interest of the participants, there is the opportunity to take action through 'see[ing] the different possibilities for changing the story, and therefore for changing the world' (Ledwith, 2016:139).

4.2. Coding Process and Voice Centred Relational Method for the Semi-Structured Interviews

The coding process for the semi-structured interviews consisted of four individual interviews conducted in partnership with critical animateurs involved in the GYS programme. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed to be uploaded onto the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo Version 11. Following the thematic analysis process a further analysis process was applied using the VCR method. Transcribing the interviews allowed the recordings to be transparent and accessible, establishing vocal and non-vocal activities that unfolded on the tape (Clayman & Teas Gill, 2009:593). More importantly, I was able to revisit the data on several occasions to gain a deeper understanding of the recordings, identify any recurring themes.

I initially began reading through the transcripts, coding and extracting data in an attempt to characterise topics using the thematic analysis process. The first engagement with the data, meant I could discard any information that I felt was irrelevant to the research. Apprehensive of dismissing vital data, I intended to incorporate a wide range of topics, reassuring me that important data was not missed during the first reading. I then progressed onto the four stages of the VCR method, allowing myself to capture and fully absorb the story being told. Numerous readings began to uncover several themes. By way of example, below is an extract from one of the participants describing their feelings about acting as a critical animateur on the GYS programme.

> "I felt like I didn't have enough knowledge, to like, I wasn't like, academic enough or knowledgeable enough to actually teach them"

I initially coded this under the topic of 'self-doubt', interpreting this to mean that the participant doubted their knowledge-based skills to facilitate sessions. Using the VCR method, recurring words such as 'I didn't' and 'I wasn't' became apparent, clearly emphasising participants' insecurity. Furthermore, reference to not being 'academic enough or knowledgeable enough…' was understood to underline the participant's lack of self-belief and passively accepting situations, prompting me to categorise this element of data under the topics of 'naïve-consciousness' and the 'culture of silence'. Translating this statement to reveal doubt in their knowledge, it also uncovered their lack of understanding of how, if ever, to achieve this knowledge. They are, therefore, remaining in their 'naïve consciousness' and enhancing the 'culture of silence' as highlighted by Freire (1996).

Continuing to analyse the data via the thematic analysis process, I began to recognise topics I felt were alike and would essentially create an overall theme (shown in Figure 5, Table of Codes and Themes using Thematic Analysis, page 78). Aiming to evaluate transformative practices, it was important that the overall themes complemented Freire's process of liberating praxis for change. This led me to link the topics of 'self-doubt,' 'naïve-consciousness' and 'culture of silence' under the theme of 'fear of freedom.'

I applied this analysis process to each interview transcript and a detailed summary of this is presented in Figure 5, Table of Codes and Themes using Thematic Analysis, (Page 78). Nevertheless, the general themes that emerged from the thematic process included:

- o Fear of Freedom
- o Self-Awareness
- o Posing Problems
- o Humanisation
- o Critical Consciousness
- o Transformation of Reality

The VCR method uncovered similar themes; however, through the many readings I was able to concentrate on specific elements of the story, situating them into the overall plot. For example, sections where participants expressed 'self-doubt,' 'naïve consciousness' or 'culture of silence' all seem to relate to external influences contributing to this feeling. Moreover, characteristics I considered to be valuable, having recorded them in my reflexive journal, participants did not place in the same regard, recognising them to be insignificant. Participants were, however, extremely vocal on the delivery

process of the programme, expressing how they felt refined and confident to solve problems. Indicating an elevated level of consciousness, they signalled empowerment which allowed them to take control of their own learning and make change.

Combining the themes from the thematic analysis process and the VCR method, I was able to create an overall picture of the data, found in Figure 6, Table of Themes using VCR Method, page 79. The overall themes consisted of the following:

- o External Factors and Values
- o Programme Activities and Delivery
- o Making Change
- o Empowerment

4.3. Coding Process and Voice Centred Relational Method for the Three-Day Focus Groups

The data analysis process for the focus groups was conducted in the same way as the semi-structured interviews. Consisting of five naïve animateurs who were attending the three-day GYS programme, the focus groups were held at the end of each day. Reflecting on how the programme developed their skills for positive change, the focus groups were recorded, transcribed and uploaded to the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo for Windows, version 11. Like the semi-structured interviews, both thematic and VCR processes were implemented to analyse the data.

The main challenge for analysis came during the second listening as I tried to capture the personal pronouns. Starting with the pronoun 'I', it transpired I was not getting a full picture of what was being said. Having to capture several voices proved to me more difficult than a simple one-to-one interview. Discovering Mauthner & Doucet's (1998:128) adaptation of the VCR method assisted me in this dilemma, guiding me to listen also for the pronouns 'you' and 'we.' I first listed all the instances where participants referred to 'I', revisiting the data to list the instances consisting of 'you' and 'we'. I found that on the occasions where participants referred to 'I' they expressed a sense of hesitation and uncertainty. Examples of this can be found below.

"I changed my mind"
"I will not know the answer"
"I will hear other opinions"

In contrast, the points where the participants referred to 'we', they portrayed a more positive and confident voice. Examples of this can be found below.

> "We work together"
>
> "We start to build"
>
> "We discuss"
>
> "We came together"
>
> "We won"

This highlights content and confidence when working together as a team, supporting Freire (1996) and Ledwith's (2016) claims for collective action, predominately consisting of critical dialogue. Categorising this under the topic of 'teamwork' during the thematic analysis process, I later placed it under the overall theme of 'problem-posing' following the VCR method. The VCR method helped situate this perception within a wider context. I interpreted this to mean that participants expressed a sense of togetherness due to the critical discussions to which they were exposed. The problem-posing questions uncovered similar experiences, allowing participants to connect with others and their unjust situations. Furthermore, participants expressing belief in themselves and restoring their fundamental right to be human (Ledwith, 2016:23) was a clear indication of a 'positive experience'. The emerging themes from the focus groups remained similar to those identified in the semi-structured interviews.   A full breakdown of how the data was coded and themed can be found in Figure 5: Table of Codes and Themes using Thematic Analysis on page 78 along with a breakdown of the VCR process in Figure 6, Table of Themes using the VCR method, page 79.

Figure 5: Table of Codes and Themes using Thematic Analysis

Code	Theme
Culture of Silence Dehumanisation Naïve Consciousness Self-Doubt	Fear of Freedom
Self-Awareness Explanation of Empowerment Feelings Prior to the Programme Needs for Empowerment	Self-Awareness
Open Dialogue Problem Solving Teamwork Voice Opinions	Problem Posing
Humanise Empowerment from Programme Empowering Programme Activities Critical Animateurs Role Feelings of Empowerment Positive Experience Ways of Empowering	Humanisation
Critical Consciousness Reflection of Reality Take Control of Learning Transfer of Knowledge	Critical Consciousness
Transformation of Reality Change the views of Others	Transformation of Reality

Figure 6, Table of Themes using the VCR Method

Thematic Themes	VCR Method
Fear of Freedom Self-Awareness	External Influences and Values
Problem Posing Humanisation	Programme Delivery and Practice
Critical Consciousness	Making Change
Transformation of Reality	Empowerment

The next part of the thesis will explore in detail the key themes that emerged from both the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups. Providing a comprehensive narrative for each theme highlighted in Figure 6: Table of Themes using the VCR Method, coupled with Figure 5: Table of Codes and Themes using Thematic Analysis, I will present personal interpretations of the findings.

4.4. Theme of External Influences and Values

This theme was made up of two topics identified within the thematic analysis process, 'fear of freedom' and 'self-awareness.' When reanalysed using the VCR method, I found that many stories connected to participants' individual values and/or external influences which shaped their understanding of the world. This led me to group the two topics together, creating an overall theme of 'external influences and values.' The topics will be discussed in more detail below.

4.4.1. Topic 'Fear of Freedom'

This topic was formed following the identification of four codes in the five transcripts I analysed. The content was separated into codes that I felt reflected the participants' feelings of personal failure and fear to achieve. For example, when critical animateurs were questioned about their ability to critically reflect on their reality, one participant's response was

'It's hard to see myself, where I want to be...'

I interpreted this as the participant's awareness to the problem but their inability to do something about it and thus coding this to the topic of 'naïve consciousness'. The level of powerlessness to achieve success was communicated, also impelling me to categorise this under the topics of 'culture of silence'

and 'dehumanisation'. A further element of self-doubt within this quote prompted me to create an overall theme tagged 'fear of freedom.'

The data analysis software package NVivo Version 11, primarily, helped differentiate the topics and relate the most significant topics under each theme. Linking four codes to create the overall theme 'fear of freedom' included the following codes.

- Culture of Silence

- Dehumanisation

- Naïve Consciousness

- Self-doubt

Utilising the VCR process, I further analysed these topics, situating them in the wider context of what was being told. The VCR method played a vital role in exposing external factors that contributed to individuals' 'fear of freedom', encouraging me to situate this theme under the subject of 'external influences.' All topics and themes were generated following an in-depth discussion with the participants within the focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The next section will explore the topic of 'self-awareness' before examining the overall theme and the findings uncovered from the individual data collection methods.

4.4.2. Topic 'Self-Awareness'

This theme emerged following the identification of four codes amongst the five transcripts analysed. The thematic analysis process helped generate the subjects listed below, also contributing to the overall topic of 'self-awareness'. They can be found in Figure 5: Table of Codes and Themes using Thematic Analysis, page 78.

- Self-awareness

- Explanation of Empowerment

- Feelings Prior to the Programme

- Needs for Empowerment

Engaging participants in a reflective process helped largely to uncover knowledge and the origins of this knowledge. Through meticulously unpicking the data, I made links and grouped together topics I felt recognised individual insights into liberation and from where this knowledge originated. Applying a

reflective practice was vital if I was to raise participants' self-awareness and familiarise them with themselves (Billon, 2016:734). It also supported participants to recognise events in their lives which liberated them, differentiating knowledge gained prior to attending the programme. By focusing on empowering encounters prior to attending the GYS programme, the participants within the focus groups shared comments such as:

"I have this feeling of power after I start meditation session..."

"My grandfather... he gave me empowerment"

The thematic analysis process led me to interpret this under the topic of 'explanation of empowerment'; however, when employing the VCR method, I situated these past realities as contributing factors to their knowledge of empowerment and the aspects most valued to them. Also falling under the topic of 'self-awareness', I situated both codes under the overall theme of 'external[20] influences' and 'values' following the VCR method. I found the interconnectedness between the two meant I was unable to explore them independently. Many of the personal values are determined by external factors, directing me to group the thematic themes 'fear of freedom' and 'self-awareness', to create an overall theme of 'external factors and values.'

Both analysis methods were applied to the transcripts produced from the focus groups and the semi-structured interviews. The findings from each data collection method relating to the theme of 'external influences and values' will now be discussed in more detail.

4.5. External Influences and Values for Naïve Animateurs

Designed to develop the skills of young people, the GYS programme attracts individuals from deprived communities, offering them the opportunity to acquire skills parallel to their affluent counterparts. Motivating them to fulfil their desire to authentically exist with their oppressors (Freire, 1996:30) can be daunting. Comments made by naïve animateurs support this, reiterating their fear to interact with those external to their own social circle. The quotes below underline these fears.

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[20] The external influences are interpreted to be pressures immediately affecting the participants lives, e.g., family, friends, work colleagues, etc

"When some individuals with respect come to visit, like… lords or people who would be working with the government with high positions… I would be afraid, how do I deal with and interact with these people?"

"I won't be able to do this, this is not right, this is a little bit private, I cannot talk they will laugh at me, they will not like it."

The findings show that naïve animateurs not only fear the thought of being equal to their affluent counterparts, but also fear the idea of questioning their situation. For example, one participant shared how some tutors prevented students from questioning their everyday reality, urging them to assume the attitudes of the dominant culture.

"… My teacher told me that you are living in another world. Your mind is living in another world amongst other things. It is always that your ideas are more than what you do. I would argue with him about what we have and how we can rebuild it… I was making my point then he gave me the name 'you are living another way, another world'."

This is a clear example of Freire's banking concept, where teachers view themselves as knowledgeable sources. Their sole purpose is to present this knowledge upon those whom they consider knowing nothing (Freire, 1996:53). This is an obvious exercise of power, echoing the attitudes and beliefs of the dominant culture and inserting self-doubt into individuals and their abilities to bring about positive change.

The above quote was also coded under the topic of 'naïve consciousness', particularly for their inexperience in addressing the situation. Credit however should be given to the participant for having a high level of awareness regarding their situation and an understanding that these ideas need to be challenged. The response from the teacher led to self-doubt and the questioning of their ability to make a change. The quote below illustrates this.

"Why am I living in another world? why can I not carry the people who are around me to that world, where we are better?"

This clearly shows frustrations in their lack of control and inability to make a change, feeling powerless and dehumanised.

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Adding to the thematic approach and implementing the VCR method meant I could examine the data, scrutinising the stories being told. By focusing on the pronoun 'I', the desire to achieve, self-worth and acceptance within the wider community, were clearly emerging through the data. Quotes below are examples of participants expressing their longing for acceptance.

'I want to be happy'

'I want to be successful'

'I want to have unconditional love'

When situated in the wider context, it was clear to see educational institutions and members of affluent communities as the guiding factors, suppressing such desires, creating a feeling of powerlessness. Participants maintained family and friends to be the restorers of these needs.

A large part of the data showed naïve animateurs echoing Freire's description of the oppressed and their desire to feel fully human (Freire, 1996:26). The findings categorised within the topic 'fear of freedom' showed naïve animateurs illustrating a lack of understanding of how to deal with situations that made them feel powerless, preserving the 'culture of silence' and helplessness to transform their reality. The topic 'self-awareness', on the other hand, exposed participants being aware of their own skills and values.

When developing the skills of others to make positive change it is imperative to begin with focusing on the 'being' as stated by Ledwith (2016) and Boal (2002). It is only after gaining clarity on your own strengths, weaknesses, values, biases and styles that you will be better placed to engage with others and wider external influences to make a positive change (Levy Shankman et al, 2015:8). This is an additional reason as to why the GYS programme is designed to incorporate elements of reflection and self-examination.

Respecting this appreciation for reflection and self-examination, the data collection process engaged participants in discovering the skills and attributes they acquired prior to attending the GYS programme. The participants were very forthcoming in sharing these skills and below are some quotes communicating their own personal traits.

"I know how much I can deal with it. I know what I can manage myself, the things I can deal with and the things I can't deal with."

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"When everyone knows their limits and knows their strength, we can work together, and we will have the best and more efficient score than what we had."

While participants expressed certainty of their personal qualities, they also voiced their intentions of how they planned to utilise skills developed during the programme. Examples of this are illustrated in the quotes below.

"I learnt the things I need to do for the community, to build the community, when I build the community, I can build my country in advance"

"I learnt the importance to work in a group and decide a decision with all and sometimes they will not do what you decide but you also have to accept others' decisions."

"I realised that we have to start from our own self to being positive actions."

Recognising empowerment as a vital component of transformational practices, exploring participants' understanding was essential if I was to understand how the GYS programme implemented this. The term empowerment, coined with several definitions (Mohajer & Earnest, 2009:425), can become overwhelming. However, simply listening to the voices of the people can reveal what it means to them to be empowered (Rappaport, 1995:798).

Applying the VCR method found participants expressing periods during which they experienced the feeling of empowerment prior to attending the programme. I deemed this to be poignant, especially if these encounters will have shaped their overall understanding of the concept. The statements below distinguish their previous encounters.

"My grandfather… he gave me empowerment so that I can face any person in the world."

"I have this feeling of power after I start mediation sessions."

Openly sharing their reality not only demonstrates a safe and secure environment but also how these past experiences have shaped their lives. I strongly feel that without this understanding and self-reflection individuals would engage in ineffective actions for positive change.

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4.6. External Influences and Values for Critical Animateurs

All participants contributing to the semi-structured interviews were at different stages of their academic and GYS journey. Consciously choosing to interview participants with a wide range of experience would inevitably offer a holistic understanding of the encounters experienced on the GYS programme. Targeting critical animateurs new to the role as well as those with many years of experience would provide me with that breadth of knowledge needed for this research. I felt taking this approach gave me an indication on whether the notion of conscientisation is an immediate occurrence or an evolving thought.

Like naïve animateurs, many of the critical animateurs expressed a desire to achieve. However, one particular critical animateur stated that their inability to see an end goal was holding them back. New to the role as a critical animateur and in the second year of FdA Community Leadership degree, the participant was very vocal in highlighting 'failure to see an end goal' as due to external influences making them feel powerlessness to compete with the affluent members. Rook (2013:1) believes it is not the lack of power that prevents young people from envisaging a career but the varying factors and directions they need to navigate before achieving their goal. Analysis shows that participants' claims, highlighted below, add to Rook's explanation of student choice and enriches Freire's (1996:26) explanation of 'false generosity.'

> 'Not seeing the achievement rather than being scared of failure'

To 'soften' the oppressor's power, the oppressed are provided with an ample amount of choice, forcing them to feel appreciative of the opportunities, at the same time leaving them feeling overwhelmed with the extensive options. This results in a feeling of guilt if they fail either fully to embrace or succeed at the given opportunity. Moreover, young people living in insular communities, who have very limited access to different cultures and friends outside of their immediate social circle, struggle with the idea of moving themselves forward for fear they would be ostracised from the very community that nurtured them. It is clear these external factors play a central role in young people acting for transformation.

Moreover, I found the fear of failure to be a continual theme across all critical animateurs regardless of their experience. The quotes below illustrate the participants continually questioning their ability to take on the role as critical animateur.

"I felt like I didn't have enough knowledge to like I wasn't like academic enough or knowledgeable enough to actually teach them…"

"I wouldn't think I have the confidence and ability to just go over and think hey yeah I can talk to them and I can communicate…"

As well as questioning their capability, they were also distancing themselves from the idea of improving their lives. One participant shared their dream of becoming a police officer; however, their response below shows levels of self-doubt and dehumanisation.

'Can't apply for this because it's not me or you know it's too much…'

The participants' failure to place themselves in an improved situation reiterates Freire's (1996:29) claim of the oppressed becoming so immersed in the dominant culture that they 'become resigned to it [and] are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom… [feeling] incapable of running the risks it requires.' Denying themselves the opportunity to improve their situation, the hope of imagining individuals from their stature in professional careers such as the police force, is beyond their reach (Freire, 2014:82). Placing reflection in the highest regard, individuals need to grasp the power struggles within society coupled with self-examination to help weaken the dominant ideology and empower individuals to see the world through a new lens (Robson & Spence, 2011:296, Ledwith, 2016:7).

Encouraging reflection and self-examination, the GYS programme emphasises this to be a continual process through dialogue in order to discover truth (McLaren, 2015:28). Critical animateurs follow this process via one-to-one feedback sessions with myself as well as team meetings with other critical animateurs. The semi-structured interviews acted as an additional platform for reflection enabling me to entice information to gain a deeper understanding of how the GYS programme develops skills for emancipation. The comments below illustrate the participants' understanding:

"[GYS] has given me the confidence and given me the skills I need to go out in a community, the community, and help these women."

"Now I am more open, I can communicate, I can trust a lot more people than I use to…"

"This has opened me up to critically analyse myself."

"It makes me think a bit more, like, a bit more deeper…"

Expressing positive experiences on how the GYS programme has shaped their skills and attributes, one critical animateur was mindful of additional contributing factors of the programme. The opportunity to travel to other countries, experiencing different cultures, was instrumental to this critical animateur, claiming it helped enhance skills and viewed this to be a very valuable aspect to the programme. The level of importance the critical animateur placed on this I interpreted as significant, especially as they were a first-generation student into HE. With little inspiration to leave their local community, travelling out of the country was viewed to be brave and daring. The quote below highlights this.

"…Going Oman… working with like people, like who speak Arabic or just different culture altogether. I learnt a lot from that."

"…I wouldn't say it was specifically GYS, just going to a different country and experiencing another culture."

While the thematic analysis uncovered participants expressing feelings of empowerment, the VCR method uncovered participants placing importance to the underlying feature, confidence. Situating this within the wider context, I interpreted this as participants treasuring the opportunity to facilitate the programme, allowing them to build on the confidence of others. Without such opportunity, the feeling of empowerment would not surface, and individuals would not flourish. The quotes below reveal some of the comments shared by the participants:

"Empowerment to me is giving a person the confidence…"

"Giving them that confidence…"

"… Give them the confidence to be able to complete a task or do something more effectively…"

"…It's not about skill, it's about like confidence… you need to instil confidence into someone to empower them…"

With the aim to develop confidence, the participants acknowledged that you sometimes have…

"… to do something that you probably wouldn't have…"

"… out of your comfort zone."

Appreciating the importance of venturing out of your comfort zone and challenging personal values and external influences, critical animateurs also recognised the significance of challenging others to explore unknown territory to bring about change. Claiming trust as a crucial element in achieving this, they explained on how the GYS programme enabled them to do this.

"… The [activity] personal shield… is a very, very big thing and you don't want to sit there and tell your personal life… so I as a [critical animateur] give the encouragement that you can do it, whatever is being said will stay in this room, so I give them that confidence and give them that trust."

4.7. Theme of Programme Delivery and Practice

Like the above theme, this theme was also made up of two topics identified within the thematic analysis process, 'problem-posing' and 'humanisation.' The VCR method revealed that the programme objectives offered participants a platform to engage in problem solving, creating opportunities to formulate solutions to change their world. The data showed participants feeling supported when given the opportunity to reflect on ways to change their world, eventually leading to them taking control of their learning (Freire, 2013:43). Although there is a clear overlap between posing problems and raising critical consciousness, I decided to keep the topic of 'critical consciousness' independent, more so because I believe the critical realisation of reality comes after individuals have collaborated in dialogue and action. Once the participants enter this process they can then further reflect on the action through dialogue, to nurture critical consciousness (Ledwith, 2016:35). This dialogue and action however are largely dependent on the transformational methods of the programme (Freire: 2013:51) largely consisting of humanising an individual by challenging their naïve consciousness through problem-posing questions. It is for this reason that I grouped the two topics 'problem posing' and 'humanisation' under the overall theme of 'programme delivery and practice', and these will be discussed below.

4.7.1. Topic 'Problem Posing'

Following the thematic analysis of the five transcripts, I was able to link four codes that resulted in the evolution of this theme. I interpreted the data to expose the varying different platforms offered on the programme to allow naïve animateurs to engage in problem solving behaviours. For example, one participant stated that when,

> "… the other person spoke, and they voiced their opinion, it helped me think of ways to build my answer…"

Indicating that participants would gather all the views and thoughts of others before mentally constructing their point, this could be interpreted as participants feeling unsure and reluctant to share their views for fear of being unpopular. Many young people from marginalised communities will have experienced exclusion in the past and to avoid such humiliation they choose to adopt a 'culture of silence' as described by Freire. Creating a safe and secure environment where the young people can engage in open dialogue gives them the confidence to share their views, also generating a starting point for solving problems presented to them. As topics emerged, I was able to combine them to create an overall theme of 'problem-posing' and a list of the topics can be found below as well in Figure 5: Table of Codes and Themes using Thematic Analysis, page 78 for a visual plan.

- Open Dialogue
- Problem Solving
- Teamwork
- Voice Opinion

Further applying the VCR method to gain an overall understanding of the data, I found it mainly to consist of participants expressing elements of empowerment, largely due to the processes and practices of the programme. For this reason, I translated this to come under the subject of 'programme delivery and practice.'

4.7.2. Topic of Humanisation

This theme emerged following the creation of seven topics during the thematic analysis process. From the five transcripts analysed I was able to extract information which conveyed participants' understanding of empowerment, as well as aspects that led to the feeling of empowerment. According to Ledwith (2016:24), the first act of empowerment is to equalise power relationships, providing young

people with the space to have their voices heard. This in turn re-humanises individuals and restores the right to become fully human. Incorporating a peer-led element in the programme ensured the equalisation of any power imbalances, more importantly increasing the confidence of the young people to voice their opinions.   The quote below was interpreted to represent participants' understanding of this process.

"This programme gave me that chance, gave me the confidence to be able to talk about my own opinions and my… values…"

Illustrating that participants felt a sense of empowerment through the GYS delivery methods, this was also reiterated during the VCR method. With empowerment playing a substantial role in participants' feelings towards humanisation, I was able to gather the following topics to create the overall theme of 'humanisation'.

- Humanise
- Empowerment from the Programme
- Empowering Programme Activities
- Feelings of Empowerment
- Critical Animateur's Role
- Positive Experience
- Ways of Empowering

The critical animateur's role as a peer educator, combined with the curriculum to build confidence were all seen as contributing factors to humanisation, and as a result included within this theme. Further exploration, using the VCR method, also uncovered how delivery methods added to this feeling, leading to me creating an overall theme of 'programme delivery and practice' to the narrative analysis process

The next section of this chapter will explore the topics, explaining how the focus groups and semi-structured interviews were interpreted using the data analysis software NVivo and VCR method, creating the overall theme 'programme delivery and practice.'

4.8. Programme Delivery and Practice for Naïve Animateurs

Following thematic analysis, it transpired that the topic 'problem solving' received the greatest number of references within this theme (See Appendix 6: Thematic Chart). With the programme designed to

foster critical thought in an attempt to solve problems and bring about positive change, the data echoed this. Critical reflection is facilitated through dialogue, exposing the existing assumptions that have created individual realities and teasing out alternative ways of the seeing the world (Ledwith, 2016:35). Given that the GYS programme is designed to challenge the thought processes of the naïve animateurs from the very start, the quotes shared on the first day of the focus groups echo this. Below are extracts from the transcript which was created from the first focus group session:

"… We have to think about it, to think about it deeply… because there are… things… exist in our life but we didn't erm… think about."

"… You forget …and when people talk about it you remember…"

Embedding dialectic interactions within the programme undoubtedly introduced alternative thought processes, fostering questions about reality. Prompting each other to pose problems (Freire, 1996:61) also supported consciousness-raising and development of new knowledge amongst the naïve animateurs. The discussions centred around cognitive qualities, challenging oppressive and controlling behaviours of the oppressors. By establishing non-hierarchical relationships, communicating critical knowledge was made and remade together (Locke, 2015:507). Additional to the peer-led educators, I found incorporating open dialogue also emphasised non-hierarchical relationships between critical animateurs and naïve animateurs. The quote below exemplifies the naïve animateurs' understanding and appreciation of this.

"We are just friends helping each other."

Furthermore, the opportunity to voice opinions also allowed participants to reach some levels of self-realisation, as one participant stated:

"[The] yes, no maybe [activity] helped me to change the way I think towards some aspects and what others are thinking. I started to look at it from different angles."

This exhibited a process where participants moved from an opinion, controlled by their conscious will, to a perception, established through dialogue and self-reflective practice (Nielsen & Norreklit, 2011:160). Reiterating the importance of self-reflection, this process not only allows the participant to

unearth thoughts, transferring them to their conscious mind, but also understand how they remained so invisible (Ledwith, 2016:143).

Nurturing relationships also remained dependent on dialectic interactions (Nielsen & Norreklit, 2011:167), articulating teamwork as a vital factor to programme delivery. Although the topic 'teamwork' did not reference highly under this theme, I understood it as participants feeling that teamwork and debating through issues was highly important, quoting the below.

> "We were one group… we started to collect other ideas and then that idea, we had to change as conflict occurred. Each one of us participated… Not most of us, ALL of us knew how to deal with it at the end of the session."

> "I feel if err… everyone in the class or in the group is participating and taking part in the discussion, that is what will actually help us. if we are only listening and not participating or not discussing with others it will not help us."

In contrast to the above, one participant claimed critical reflection does not always have to be in the form of dialogue with others, it can be in the form of self-critical reflection, leading to empowerment:

> "Talking to yourself actually, you feel that you are… powerful…"

Noticeably a very significant factor for this participant, this led me to interpret the 'self' as an important element within discourse. Denying participants the opportunity to discuss themselves will result in the 'self' being absent from any discursive practice and knowledge (Spellmeyer, 1989:720). Allowing individuals to explore intrapsychic factors such as personality and motivation (Zimmerman, 1990:17), you are reclaiming presence and power for the dehumanised community (Ledwith, 2016:142).

It is clear from a widespread examination of the topic 'humanisation' that the feeling of acceptance was a by-product of the dialectic approach, coupled with reflection. Also referenced highly under the overall theme of 'humanisation' was 'positive experiences.' Embedding a welcoming and accepting culture within the GYS programme allows naïve animateurs to discover, create and give voice to their own personal life stories in a positive way, ensuring empowerment (Rappaport, 1995:796). This feeling of empowerment, has permeated into what I believe are positive experiences, with one participant explaining in the quote below:

"I felt empowered and the [critical animateurs] for me were the ones that helped me and guided me to be like that…"

Although the thematic analysis process helped create the topic 'positive experience', it was the VCR method which enabled me to truly listen to what was being conveyed within this subject. Examining the overall plot revealed chapters in their lives where they felt powerless to reach their hopes and aspiration (Ledwith, 2016:23). The quote below is an example of an instance shared by a participant on the first day of focus groups.

"When some individuals with respect come to visit [my grandfather], like, what do you call them?... Lords, people who would be working with the government, with status… I would be afraid, like how to deal, how to interact with these people?"

Fast forward to the final day of the focus groups and the same participant is recorded saying;

"I am doing stand-up comedy… it's not stand-up comedy as such but more about issues within my university which I want to change… I go on stage and I say it in a funny way and bring the issue closer to the listener… I have all these things, what do I do? Where do I start?... but today when I saw this… I am starting to build the idea about how I can manage myself."

This is a clear example of the participant positively experiencing a shift from the realms of dehumanisation to a feeling of control, confidently changing their lives. Moreover, involving all naïve animateurs in co-creating knowledge (Ledwith, 2016:148) not only helped explore their own values but also uncover thoughts suppressed by the oppressors. The quotes below illustrate participants acknowledging their values, highlighting the importance of dialogue for critical thought.

"Never mind if I have money or not because I have all these values and I can take then for myself… already I have it, so I feel ok, we are powerful, we have the things we need."

"Sometimes we have an idea and we also have the leadership… but like what we have here today, we need someone to remind us of what we have… to inspire us and to give us inspiration to go further."

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Embedding liberating components within the GYS programme, along with critical reflection participants are evidently voicing what can be perceived as humanising qualities. Without involving all naïve animateurs as co-participants in co-creating the knowledge this realisation and consciousness cannot be achieved (Ledwith, 2016:149).

4.9. Programme Delivery and Practice for Critical Animateurs

Critical animateurs engaging in the semi-structured interviews focused on how they implemented emancipatory action with their everyday lives and wider community. Consistent with the naïve animateurs participating in the focus groups, critical animateurs also referenced highly within the 'problem solving' topic. Specifically emphasising on the processes used to engage individuals, they refer to several crucial components needed for solving problems. A common theme throughout both sets of data, appeared to be dialogue as a central factor to solving community issues. The quotes below highlight this.

> "You want to go get them involved and start talking about their own values and their own dialogue."

> "Without knowing what your community, what other people want in your community, you can't really change it."

Collaboratively working remained pertinent to the young people especially when exploring issues which would establish steps towards changing the story. Communication amongst both parties had to incorporate mutual and respectful levels, connecting the hearts, minds and emotions and eliminating any power imbalances (Ledwith, 2016:57). The quote below illustrates critical animateurs approving and acknowledging the importance of this approach, relinquishing the traditions of power.

> "You want them to feel comfortable and you don't want them to feel like you are a threat… so… you will talk to them on their level."

Further connecting with the overall story, the VCR method also uncovered critical animateurs expressing the need to engage naïve animateurs in discussion, claiming a relaxed and trusting environment as being fundamental to empowering individuals with a voice. Through open and honest dialogue, you can begin to resolve issues pertinent to them. One participant highlighted the need for…

"… offering them a different way to think, not just textbook talk"

Removing a top-down approach to teaching and implementing a mutual and reciprocal learning environment (Ledwith, 2016:22) eliminates power struggles, offering individuals that space to think differently, as mentioned above. It also contributes to the humanisation of the individuals involved. When I came to explore the topic of 'humanisation', I approached the semi-structured interviews slightly differently, mainly focusing on how they symbolised this quality within their practice. Like the focus groups, the topic of 'positive experience' again received a high number of references under this theme (See Appendix 6: Thematic Chart). Permeating through was a generalised view on how the GYS programme positively empowered them into using innovative practices. The quote below is an example of how they valued the empowering attribute.

"It doesn't empower you just as an individual, it enables you to empower other individuals and work better within a group…"

"I personally think that I've benefited… I haven't got a one-track mind set anymore… I'm quite open… this has opened me up to critically analyse myself."

As well as the GYS programme having a positive influence on the young people transforming their reality, I was also able to explore distinctive features that allowed critical animateurs to walk away feeling somewhat humanised. The participants highlighted different characteristics ranging from across the board. The quotes below illustrate the differing views.

"General sessions helped me a lot…during the general session you are speaking to everybody."

"Decision-making… it's got me to think more about making decisions."

Designed to improve the lives of the young people least well off (Labonte: 1999:432), the GYS programme aims to reinstate hope by confronting the obstacles they face (Freire, 2014:3). The data however reveals that participants do not feel it should be exclusive. The quote below clearly highlights the reasoning behind their thinking.

"You shouldn't categorise an individual whether they are from an oppressed community or a different community… you have to sit down and help an individual, make them reach for the

best and it doesn't matter where they are from, what their background is, every individual has a need and for me as a [critical animateur] or a chair of an organisation it is important for me to work with individuals… whatever their background…"

It was also stated by another participant that the main aim is to be,

"Working with people who don't have confidence…"

Upon analysing the stories shared by the participants, I interpreted this to signify participants' commitment to supporting all human beings regardless of their social status. I deemed this highly important as participants express their thoughts on portraying an inclusive practice. Refusing those from a higher social status contradicts the collaborative function, overlooking the opportunity to raise critical awareness amongst this community. Exposing the harmful actions of the dominant culture attempts to reveal the invisible privileges and helps understand how they have come to remain so invisible (Ledwith, 2016:143).

Critical animateurs' role in rendering human qualities is vital in creating an environment of trust, accomplishing cooperative behaviours (Hurley, 2012:7). The quote below highlights how building trust results in individuals obliging to engaging in dialogue.

"To feel like they got a chance to voice their opinion more and like get involved in debates."

"You want to get them involved and start talking about their own values and their own dialogue."

Skills and qualities of critical animateurs are fundamental in extracting humanised attributes and the data reveals a number of qualities they feel are essential to liberating marginalised communities. The ability to read and adapt to a situation, responding in a way that does not alienate members and develops trust is a starting point. Some, however, feel the primitive praxis should be simply being a good person, overriding all qualities. The quotes below are examples of this.

"Be able to adapt to that situation."

"I think it's about being a good person, being a good [critical animateur]."

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Freire's philosophy of rejecting the traditional teacher-student relationship has enabled critical animateurs on the GYS programme to act as peers, building trust and eliminating any hierarchical connections. It clear from the data this fundamental aspect has played a crucial role in its success and sustainability. Taking into consideration critical animateurs' comments, highlighted below, justified the reasoning to incorporate a peer-led element.

"If you are going to go and deliver a conference you don't want to go there and feel like a teacher."

"Facilitating and getting feedback from the students, that helped me."

4.10. Theme of Making Change

Although the theme 'making change' emerged via the VCR method, it followed on from the identification of the topic 'critical consciousness' during the thematic analysis process. It uncovered that the emergence of critical consciousness must be nurtured through a dialectic interaction, coupled with critical self-reflection. This process however must encompass a collaborative approach if the individuals are to be truly be critical, transporting the dialectical insight to alternative realities and thus taking control of their learning to make positive change (Freire, 2013:89). It is due to this I decided to keep this topic independent to any other theme, primarily focusing on the reflective characteristics of the programme which lead to conscientisation and driving participants to making a change.

4.10.1 Topic 'Critical Consciousness'

The creation of this topic developed following the identification of four topics from the five transcripts collected via the focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The data revealed information which provided an insight into how participants critically analysed and reflected on their reality. An example of this is in the quote below.

"Something that is in the back of your head but then actually talking about it and bringing it to the front... you see other opinions"

This indicated participants beginning to question their reality and their subconscious thoughts. Through the medium of dialogue, they were able to take on board and appreciate alternative truths of reality. Having the opportunity to reflect on their experience inevitably led to participants being more conscious of their surroundings. Encouraging participants to question the connection between power

and knowledge not only created new knowledge, but also informed action for change (Ledwith, 2016:22). It is due to this I was able to group the following topics under the theme of 'critical consciousness'.

- Critical Consciousness
- Reflection of Reality
- Take Control of Learning
- Transfer of Knowledge

Further analysis using the VCR method captured critical learning, positioning it within a wider context. It revealed moments where participants were particularly vocal in their discovery of reality, linking it to their immediate situation and explicitly sharing how they plan to make a change, clearly displaying a point of conscientisation. Taking on board Ledwith's (2016: xi) explanation of conscientisation being a process which connects everyday reality with political injustices, I have found the data to contest this. It seems the young people are more concerned with the micro-level political. One can only presume, further down the line, once they have assumed a transformative praxis, their connection with macro-level politics would evolve. The data clearly reveals, during the early stages of transformative praxis, especially for young people, the simple realisation of the micro-level political is key for making change. The quote below highlights this and the reason I situated this theme under the overall subject of 'making change' following the narrative analysis.

> "It has given us an idea of what to expect, what might happen in the future so if something bad happens you have an idea of how to deal with it or at least prevent that bad thing from happening."

The following part of this thesis will explore the topics generated within the theme of 'critical consciousness' in more detail. I will describe how I interpreted the data shared by participants from the focus groups and semi-structured interviews using the thematic data analysis software, NVivo, Version 11 and the narrative analysis method VCR.

4.11. Making Change for Naïve Animateurs

The data showed the topic of 'critical consciousness' to be referenced favourably within this theme, particularly highlighting the characteristics that steered them to analyse their thought processes. The participants stated the activity 'personal shield' to be powerful in assessing their current situation. Set

out to engage young people in assessing their personal values and future goals, it initiates debate for considering barriers for progression and visualising possible behaviours for making positive change. From this new-found knowledge the participants can begin to seize the power to dream (Freire, 2014:81). Commencing the discussions using social and cultural structures allows participants to then begin making factual connections between political and powerful arenas (Ledwith, 2016:22). The quote below provides an example of the importance of the shield.

> "Whenever I feel that I'm weak, I'm sad, I'm tired, just need to that shield and think that ok I have a lot of things precious in my life and I'm not weak, I'm full of power"

When questioned on the factors contributing to the feeling of weakness and sadness, participants were recorded, disclosing the following:

> "… teachers at university, fellow students, family, the wider community"

This echoes Freire's claim of oppression being internalised, absorbing the oppressor within and becoming the gravest obstacle to achieving a humanised and fulfilling life (Freire, 1996:33). From personal experience this remains a recurring fact, particularly within marginalised communities where behaviours towards achievement are discouraged, subsequently normalising such attitudes. By engaging in the 'personal shield' activity the young people could visualise the micro-level political, resulting in conscientisation and motivation to take control and make a change. One participant shared how they would, metaphorically, use the shield as a form of protection. The quote below illustrates this.

> "As a shield you can see it motivates you, something that protects you"

> "The shield, every time I feel low… I will think about that, I promise myself to put the paper in front of me"

The use of a shield has proved to be a powerful representation for participants to reject oppressive structures and act on liberating themselves.

Inciting critical thinking through thought-provoking exercises needed to be complemented with dialectic interaction and, it is clear from the findings, participants valued the opportunity to

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communicate in meaningful discussion with each other. These discussions were seen to be at the heart of developing critical consciousness (Ledwith, 2016:57) and the quotes below support this.

> "I feel everyone in the class, in the group is part of the… education and we can learn… everyone is part of that… discussion and I can say I get information from everyone in the group, not only from the leader or the [critical animateur]."

> "If everyone in the class or in the group is participating and taking part in the discussion, that is what will actually help us. If we are only listening and not participating or not discussing it with others it will not help us."

The discussions also inspired participants to act upon the emerging solutions. Without action, individuals cannot connect with liberation and thus hindering the movement for making positive change (Ledwith, 2016:153). The quotes below are examples of how participants see the importance of action.

> "I learnt by actually applying it."

> "If you didn't try, if you didn't interact with it, it will not be that much stronger."

4.12. Making Change for Critical Animateurs

Similar to the focus groups, the topic of 'critical consciousness' also referenced highly within the thematic analysis process for the critical animateurs. Approaching this topic slightly differently, critical animateurs claimed to have a sense of responsibility for stimulating critical thinking amongst the naïve animateurs. The quotes below show participants highlighting the importance of challenging naïve animateurs' thinking, subsequently inspiring them to discover alternative ways of scrutinising their reality.

> "Offering them a different way to think, not just text book talk"

> "Giving then the opportunity to speak and voice opinions"

In order to achieve, motivate and inspire others, all practitioners need to engage in reflective practice or risk the danger of employing in thoughtless action (Johnston, cited in Ledwith, 2016:148). The

participants revealed the opportunity to participate in the GYS programme as a naïve animateur prior to becoming a critical animateur was highly valuable. They saw it as a platform to expand on their own thought processes through reflection, challenging their own thinking and giving them the knowledge and confidence to support others to do the same. The quotes below highlight this transformation.

"The programme obviously enabled me to then think differently."

"It's made me think more out of the box."

"Before doing that game or being involved I was quite like oh, we need to just get this for us and it's all for us but it's not and it's about basically helping each other."

"On a personal level before I think I thought on one level or very tunnel vision… whereas this has opened me up to critically analyse myself, look at myself, the way I act, the way I talk around people, like my body language maybe, you know, the way I communicate with people."

Moreover, by challenging their own behaviours and attitudes the critical animateurs were able to take control of their learning experiences, urging them to make change. Some participants approached the role of critical animateur with caution, envisaging it to replicate the role of a traditional teacher. The belief that they, as critical animateur should be key to all scholarly knowledge, filled them with fear. This initial view, and clearly a result of past experiences, supports Freire's notion of the teacher being recognised as a depositor (Freire, 1996:53). However, through their participation with the programme, they soon realised the true extent of this role and the quotes below support this.

"You don't necessarily have to be the source of all knowledge."

"You realise there is a lot more you can teach someone without being academic."

Once participants acknowledged their position as co-creators of knowledge, claiming they were able to develop methods positively to transform their own reality. Through a continual process of reflection and positive messages, consisting of reassuring words to oneself, the participants were able to reframe their thought processes, instigating positive change. The VCR method echoed this as a method adopted by participants, promoting a continual feeling of humanisation. The quote below is an example of a participant expressing their desire to dream and continue dreaming (Freire, 2007: xvii).

"When you are a [critical animateur] you build up your courage… I can do this, and I know I can do this."

4.13. Theme of Empowerment

This theme was again constructed following the VCR method, including the topic 'transformation of reality' that emerged during the thematic analysis process. Attention was paid to the empowering characteristics participants revealed as well as how they intend to utilise these qualities to transform reality through action (Freire, 2013:89). Both data collection processes where approached differently. The contributors to the focus groups were asked how they intend to address unjust aspects of their lives following their interaction with the GYS programme. Critical animateurs, however, were questioned on how they implemented change following their experience as a naïve animateur and their current role as a critical animateur. It is understood that, without confidence and self-belief, participants are unable to make transformative change and for this reason creating the overall theme 'empowerment' which explored empowering characteristics was needed.

4.13.1. Topic 'Transformation of Reality'

Following the analysis of five transcripts, I was able to link two topics, creating an overall theme 'transformation of reality.' Having explored the data, I found this theme to be more relevant to participants within the semi-structured interviews sharing. It was an opportunity for critical animateurs to share situations where they have been able to use their learning to transform the lives of others and their own. The quote below illustrates a critical animateur sharing an incident enabling them to make a difference within their community.

"I am a chair of a community organisation in Burnley where I work… only reason I can do that is because of the GYS because it has given me the confidence and given me the skills I need to go out in the community and help these women."

Naïve animateurs, on the other hand discussed how they plan to implement the learning within their everyday lives and the quote below highlights this.

"I have learnt a lot… I am the president of… German language 'GO' in the university [this] gave me an idea of how can I deal with about 63 students? With this model, we can get to one idea by voting for them so that was a clever idea for me."

Furthermore, the critical animateurs were able to challenge the views of community members with whom they worked. Ledwith (2016:58) highlights that changing the innermost attitudes can alter the way we make sense of the world and in turn change the way we act in the world. It is due to this I was able to link the following topics to the theme of 'transformation of reality.'

- Transformation of Reality
- Change the View of Others

When situated within the wider story the above quotes were interpreted to reveal critical and continual reflection to be the key component to empowering individuals to act and transform their reality. A desire to transform personal situations was interpreted to be a direct outcome of the liberating process experienced on the GYS programme, generating the overall theme of 'empowerment' when employing a narrative analysis approach to review this.

The next part of this chapter will explore how I interpreted the data using the thematic analysis software, NVivo, Version 11 and the VCR method for narrative analysis. The transcripts from both the focus group and semi-structured interviews were used in the analysis process which developed the topics to create an overall theme of 'empowerment'.

4.14. Empowerment for Naïve Animateurs

The topic of 'transformation of reality' appeared to be heavily referenced during the thematic analysis process. Upon completing the VCR method, it transpired that participants were expressing qualities which supported and inspired change, leading to the overall theme of 'empowerment' emerging. There was a clear recurring undertone throughout both thematic and narrative analysis process highlighting the importance of action. Acknowledged by the participants on day one of the focus groups, one person was transcribed to state the following:

"I learnt by actually applying it… you have to try it."

"If you didn't try, if you didn't interact with it, it will not be that much stronger as if you would interact with the things that you are studying."

This 'action' however, coupled with a reflective dialectic approach, expands on naïve animateurs' critical view of knowledge and learning (Johnston, 1992:74). Only through this critical understanding

and exchange of learning can the act of 'doing' lead to 'thoughtful action' (Ledwith, 2016:148; Johnston, 1992:74). Below are quotes from the participants supporting the importance of engaging in critical dialogue.

> "Something that's in the back of your head but then actually talking about it and bringing it to the front… you see the other opinions"

> "Things that you forget… when people talk about it, you remember oh, that should matter, I should write in this and I should what he wrote."

Critical dialogue needs to be present and emancipatory, allowing participants to alter their thinking thus build on confidence to take part in collective action (Ledwith, 2007a:598). The quote below is a clear indication of how the liberating elements of the programme provided the participant the confidence to take a stand and fight for their voice.

> "So, whenever I have an opinion which I think is right, I will discuss it, no matter who is in front of me."

The participants' emphasis on 'no matter who is in front of me' was interpreted to reclaim the desire to feel humanised, free them to challenge the status quo and transform the present for a better future (Ledwith, 2016:149). As mentioned above, this cannot be achieved without engaging naïve animateurs in critical dialogue through emancipatory action. The quotes below show how the participants valued the thought-provoking elements, leading to mutual and liberating discussions.

> "It helped me to change the way I think towards some aspects and what others are thinking. I started to look at things from different angles."

> "Firstly, we discussed, and we came to the same point, if we did not agree we left the idea. It was because of this, that we came together."

Building on the foundations using the above process, and only then, participants can piece together their understanding on to how to transform their reality. By articulating their roles beyond the programme, the young people were able to make connections with the current situation, clearly articulating how they plan to make positive change. For example, one participant highlighted her role

as student president for the German Language Society. With a total of 63 members she found it difficult to allocate a voice to all the members and their varying opinions. The GYS programme however offered solutions and tools, empowering her to take control of the situation, feeling confident she can obtain a collective voice without discrimination and inequality. The quote below indicates this.

"I have learnt a lot about [project planning and conflict resolution] because I am the president of German language so that [activity] gave me an idea of how I can deal with about 63 students. With this model, we can get to one idea by voting."

Others also stated how they felt confident to deal with situations they deemed as problematic, specifically those that rose from subliminal oppressive structures, e.g., traditional educational structures. The quotes below are examples of participants sharing their intention of taking control and making positive change.

"I am now starting to build an idea about how I can manage myself."

"I have been talking with other colleagues and now I think today I will go, and I will put a plan together."

4.15. Empowerment for Critical Animateurs

Critical animateurs partaking in the semi-structured interviews shared stories, emphasising how they felt liberated to make a difference in their communities. Three of them openly shared how they assumed lead roles within local community organisations because of their time on the GYS programme. Although they did not specifically state if participating in the GYS programme led them to securing those roles, they were explicit in expressing how they adopted the transformative practices used within the GYS programme to support the people with whom they worked. The quotes below highlight a participant's account.

"I am a local youth coordinator at a local youth club and we actually did a volunteer weekend not long ago and we used actually the GYS method in our volunteering weekend… after the weekend we have seen a lot of results with the youth club. After bringing them together and we used a lot of the facilitation methods through GYS."

"I am a chair of a community organisation… I have got to say GYS made me who I am today… it has given me the confidence and given me the skills I need to go out in a community and help these women."

In contrast to the above, one participant felt the GYS programme did not inspire them to transform their life. Rather, it provided them with the opportunity to acknowledge their skills, strengthening their ability to voice their opinion.

"I don't think it really changed me."

"It just makes me comfortable doing more"

Moreover, it gave them the confidence to attempt partaking in activities they would not otherwise consider. For example, they developed a desire to learn Arabic following their visit to Oman; however, the fear of achieving soon became overwhelming to complete, coinciding with Freire's explanation of the oppressed fearing freedom. The quote below highlights this.

"I felt erm… actually really empowered when I got back to actually learn Arabic but gradually that empowerment like decreased."

When questioned on why this was the case the participants shared the following:

"It's hard to see myself where I want to be… the end product, I don't see it… it's not seeing the achievement rather than being scared of failure. Like I couldn't imagine myself speaking Arabic."

Contradicting Freire's (2014:81) claim of there being 'no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope,' this participant clearly had hopes, dreams and opportunities to achieve. However, the missing ingredient was courage to act. Largely it was the failure to envision achievement, trapping them in a state of unconscious oppression. Another participant, on the other hand, embraced the opportunity, showing courage and making the necessary changes to alter their reality. An example of this can be found in the quotes below:

"It has helped me in my daily life because its what's made me actually apply to the police force."

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"It's empowered me because it has given me the ability to [pause]… to think yeah I can."

The slight hesitation and pause evident in the last quote, I believe, coincides with what Clance & Imes (1978:241) describe as imposter phenomenon. Sensing the reluctance, I interpreted it as continual disbelief of their own abilities, and persistent fears of failure (Clance & Imes, 1978:242). Believing this to be the case for the previous participant, I believe the overriding feeling of imposter syndrome led to them abandoning their dream.

4.16. Summary of Findings for Naïve Animateurs

This next section of the chapter will provide an overall interpretation of the three transcripts analysed for the focus groups. Using two data analysis processes within this study allowed me to obtain an overall picture of the stories before focusing on the individual stories nested within the transcripts. The thematic process, firstly, extracted the general themes, acting as a foundation for the narrative method. This proved to be a very useful exercise, especially for a novice researcher like myself. The VCR method, on the other hand, enabled me to expand on the themes, broadening knowledge and establishing the overall content, structure and language used within the stories, assigning the focus to participant voices. In line with the above analysis process, I will now present the participants' stories, concentrating on the beginning, middle and end; it will act a guide through the young people's journey.

Before I do this, it is important to remind the reader of the basic construction of the GYS programme. The programme curriculum is designed to promote empowerment through emancipatory action using peer leadership as the predominant factor. The primary approach is to involve naïve animateurs in exploring 'self/being' during the first part of the programme. Through the medium of dialogue and simulated action, naïve animateurs are encouraged to work together, co-create knowledge, inspiring them to take control of their lives and visualise alternative ways to make a change. The stories shared supported this process, providing a greater insight into personal experiences of each participant. The summary below will explore each of these stages in line with the data collected.

4.16.1. Beginning – Exploring 'Being', Shaped by External Influences and Values

The data collection process amongst the focus groups participants consisted of naturally flowing discussions, with a gentle encouragement to reflect on the day's activities. The VCR method played an instrumental role in unpicking the discussions, revealing individual encounters. The data coincided with stage 1 of Ledwith's (2016:152) Cycle Model, who declares the exploration of 'being' as the opening

stage of the Cycle Model. Ledwith's (2016:152) interpretation of 'being' differs slightly to the findings, showing the participants highly concerned with their inherent emotions and cognitive state (Lupton, 1998:17). Rather than making connections with the macro-level political environment, the participants are more interested in making sense of themselves (Lupton, 1998:40), trying to get to grips with their own ontological and epistemological perspectives. Exposing their own beliefs and values helped uncover internal and external factors that led to shaping them. Revealing knowledge so personal to the young people activated understanding towards issues that Ledwith believes needs attention at this stage, such as the political and economic structures (Ledwith, 2016:152).

Corresponding with the literature, the data also exposed participants' desire to be accepted within society. However, a feeling of powerlessness to achieve typically overpowered this desire. I interpreted the feeling of powerlessness to originate from external influences such as tutors and local community members. Family members, on the other hand, were seen to be encouraging and empowering, shaping their fundamental values. Regrettably, however, these values habitually imitated the views and attitudes of the privileged (Ledwith, 2016:142). By introducing self-reflective practices these values can be exposed into their consciousness, rejecting and overriding the feeling of powerlessness (Ledwith, 2016:143).

The most alarming aspect of the data revealed the depth to which the 'banking' concept (Freire, 1996:53) was still embedded into the educational system. One participant's attempt to challenge a university tutor's views was met with a dismissive attitude, declaring his tutor to say, 'You live in the perfect world, which is not reality.' Supported by Milgram's claim of people's predisposed attitudes to obey orders of legitimate authority (Blass, 1991:409), this is a clear example of the 'banking' concept, and a characteristic Freire encourages tutors to move away from. Eliminating the notion of authority and introducing dialectic opportunities along with theatrical performances within the GYS programme allowed naïve animateurs to verbalise and visualise supressed views, raising critical consciousness and empowering participants to transform their reality (Freire, 2013:107).

4.16.2. Middle – Problematising, Conscientisation and Action, Nurtured through Programme Delivery and Practice.

Following the discovery of 'self', the GYS programme attempts to shift naïve animateurs from a sub-conscious thought process to a conscious state. By maintaining the act of communication through dialogue and performance, both the naïve and critical animateurs can co-create new knowledge, sustained through collaborative action. When studying Ledwith's (2016:152) Cycle Model, the aspects

of problematising, conscientisation and action, I believe, are intertwined and make up a large part of the transformative practice. Within the GYS programme, critical animateurs problematise situations through dialogue and simulated action which in turn raises critical consciousness for action. Without this vital process individuals cannot progress onto the stages of 'making sense' and 'communication' within the Cycle Model.

Enlisting peers to facilitate this process is a deliberate aim to allow communication in languages and gestures relevant to the participants (Freire, 2013:123). The data revealed how naïve animateurs referred to critical animateurs as 'friends', clearly indicating this to be an important aspect to empowering individuals. Lee & Koh's (2001:686) view of empowerment being non-existent amongst peers, and should instead be interpreted as encouragement, was rejected by the findings. Although there is an element of encouragement, a fellow colleague's ability to shift individuals from naïve consciousness to critical consciousness is empowering and plays an instrumental role in achieving liberation. It is only following this process that participants expressed a feeling of confidence and motivation to take control of their reality.

Implementing Freire's (2013:40) idea of the 'culture circle'[21], the GYS programme transformed traditional and passive concepts of education. The role of the teacher was replaced with critical animateurs, lectures consisted of equal dialogue and pupils were viewed as co-collaborators in extracting new knowledge for transformation. Rebalancing relationships between all involved in the GYS programme created a non-hierarchical environment, generating a 'horizontal structure' of communication, assisting a change in the truth and knowledge being created (Freire, 2013:121). Appreciating the opportunity to share personal experiences through simulated action aided conscientisation, reassuring participants that the structural injustices they encounter, such as powerlessness, are not exclusive to them.

Establishing a safe and secure environment allowed critical animateurs to introduce 'problem-posing' questions, fostering self-realisation and in turn leading to a clear understanding of invisible assumptions (Ledwith, 2016:143). Following the exposure of these indistinguishable assumptions, through communication and action, the data revealed how naïve animateurs connected micro and macro politics, co-creating new knowledge and addressing the injustices with which they are confronted. The process of peers nurturing naïve animateurs' understanding of reality through dialogue and

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[21] Cultural circles reject the traditional classroom environments. Through incorporating a coordinator who engages in mutual dialogue, group participants can seek clarification on situations, leading to action.

collaboration clearly motivated naïve animateurs to act, explaining a firm understanding of how they plan to make immediate changes within their lives.

4.16.3. End – Making Sense and Communicating New Knowledge, Resulting in Empowerment

There was a distinctive shift in language used by naïve animateurs on day one of the focus groups to the final day. Below are some of the quotes, highlighting words with negative connotations expressed on day one.

> "I couldn't do it…"
>
> "I don't think I would…"
>
> "I could not do these things…"

Advance to the final day and participants are recorded to convey phrases with positive associations, and examples of these can be found in the phrases below.

> "I felt I learnt things I need to do for the community…"
>
> "I can build my country in advance…"
>
> "I have a voice…"
>
> "I never had as much confidence as I have now…"

It is clear from the above that participants are moving to the final two stages of Ledwith's Cycle Model, 'making sense' and 'communication' (Ledwith, 2016:153). Ledwith (2016:153) explains the stage of 'making sense' as the point which community workers can support those involved, to gain a deeper understanding of their reality and help identify alternative forms of development. For naïve animateurs, I believe this is the point they begin to gain a deeper understanding of their own reality, searching for alternative forms of development in their own lives. Connecting and 'making sense' of the knowledge co-created with their peers gives them confidence and belief in their ability to make a change to their reality. There was also evidence of participants beginning to make sense of their surroundings and expressing ways they can engage in collaborative action, communicating new knowledge to others away from the GYS programme.

It is understood, once exposed to this process, that participants would implement it in everyday praxis. From the data, there is a clear motivation and drive to make change following the attendance of stage one of the GYS programme. The next section of this chapter will now explore the critical animateurs'

perspective on how this feeling of empowerment to make change is carried out beyond the GYS programme.

4.17. Summary of Findings for Critical Animateurs

The themes emerging from the data collected with the critical animateurs remained the same, although the findings were addressed in a slightly different manner. The data collated from critical animateurs explored how participants continued to engage with the Cycle Model (Ledwith, 2016:152) beyond the programme. Expanding on the themes established during the VCR method, I will focus on the structure and language nested within the critical animateurs' stories. The overall interpretation of the transcripts will be discussed in the same format as above, focusing on the beginning, middle and end.

4.17.1. Beginning – Exploring the 'Being' Shaped by External Influences and Values

Like the focus groups, I facilitated the discussions to take on a natural format, with a gentle reminder of the questions if the topic was veering off course. Again, the thematic analysis process acted as a foundation whilst the VCR method aided the unpicking of stories shared by the participants. There were several points which shaped and influenced participants' understanding of reality; however, the most poignant feature was the absence of connecting political and economic injustices as suggested by Ledwith (2016:2). Having been through stage one of the GYS process, it was assumed this link would remain apparent, formulating a continual reflective process amongst the critical animateurs. In fact, participants were very vocal in reflecting on their immediate social circle and the influences they have had on acting for social change. Making links to macro-level politics remained insignificant. One participant's story, in particular, revealed how living in an insular community with unchangeable principles hindered their abilities, leaving them powerlessness to make actual change. Rejecting the idea of powerlessness being connected to the wider social, political and economic structures, the participant instead internalised the situation, seeing it as a direct link to personal incapability.

I interpreted this to mean several things. First, the dehumanising characteristics are so entrenched into the participant's psyche that they are unable to detach themselves from this belief. Second, a complete awareness of the power imbalances may have been apparent; however, shifting into an unknown territory, where they would be solely responsible for challenging community traditions, was clearly daunting. Third, the notion of imposter syndrome, as explained by Clance & Imes (1978), could be used to describe the feelings presented by the participants. Clearly wanting to strive for change, but the continual fear of being exposed as a fraud and their limited confidence in personal skills and intellectual abilities, left them feeling powerless to make the change (Clance & Imes, 1978:241). The data also

revealed that participants' engaging in self-reflection to maintain critical thinking (Ledwith, 2011:32) was limited. The fact that young people are trained to memorise masses of information from an early age, ignoring the vital aspect of critical and reflective thinking (Ghanizadeh, 2017:102) leaves young people struggling to engage with this process without guidance. Without the element of self-reflection, the personal goals set upon themselves can become overwhelming, preventing any vision of achievement. The encouragement of small changes may prove to be manageable coupled with continual reflection.

Moreover, international opportunities were articulated as valued factors, more so because they forced individuals out of their comfort zone. It seemed that being pushed of their comfort zone was only valued when this was done collectively with all involved. Participants struggled to challenge themselves without the support of others, supporting Ledwith's (2016:60) claim of empowerment being part of a collective movement.

4.17.2. Middle – Problematising, Conscientisation and Action, Nurtured through Programme Delivery and Practice.

Participants in the semi-structured interviews were very vocal in highlighting the importance of 'problem-posing' questions to extract the personal values of others. However, when it came to self-reflection, the importance of this subsided for one participant. An explanation for this could be that they felt they had exceeded this process following their attendance on stage one of the GYS programme and no longer needed to engage in this method. This coincides with early experience as a community worker and the techniques I adopted.

The participants did, however, continue to place great emphasis on the importance of rebalancing the realms of power amongst critical animateurs and naïve animateurs as a way of humanising individuals. Promoting a culture of equality and confidence, would deliver open and honest accounts of their reality. Coupled with 'problem-posing' questions, critical animateurs expressed their capability to 'offer [naïve animateurs] a different way to think…' Accepting Freire's basic principles as a way of empowering individuals, they felt the removal of such process would be unfavourable and the quote below illustrates this.

"If you were to take the Freirean approach away what would you be left with?"

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This clearly indicates participants valuing alternative methods of teaching, where equality between critical animateur and naïve animateurs is paramount. Only when eliminating the power struggle between them can co-creation of knowledge begin, developing a new story and forming the basis for action and change (Ledwith, 2016:7).

It was also clear from the data that many of the participants were able to use the process of problematising and action to achieve conscientisation amongst their peers away from the GYS programme. One participant shared how their role as youth worker allowed them to integrate communities through collective action, specifically saying,

> "I am local youth coordinator at a local youth club and we actually did a volunteer weekend not long ago and we used actually the GYS method in our volunteering weekend for basically the community to get involved in team building and bringing the team together… they discussed personal issues within the group… after the weekend we have seen a lot of results with the youth club…"

4.17.3. End – Making Sense and Communicating Resulting in Empowerment

The final part of critical animateurs' story focused on how they had been able to make change beyond the programme and out in the wider world. Although some participants failed to comprehend the changes they made, others were able to reveal the small steps they made in their everyday lives and communicating them with fellow peers. Changes in employment saw one individual being offered a role as a staff advocate, supporting the views of their colleagues and resulting in them winning a community award. These incremental changes are just as important, acting as encouragement and inspiration to continue making change. Claiming transformation practices to be replicated in the wider teaching world, one participant was quoted sharing the following:

> "This sort of method would work in opening up students to be more comfortable and confident in speaking and discussing issues."

While some saw the benefits to this method, others viewed it as a free and open environment to voice their opinion with little inspiration to communicate it to the wider world. An explanation could be the enormity of the task to change the views and beliefs of people within their immediate social circle who exhibit very insular and narrow-minded opinions. This participant expressed immediate feelings of empowerment following their engagement with the GYS programme. However, this soon subsided as

their involvement with the programme decreased. There is a need for individuals to remain critical, self-reflective, knowledgeable and courageous to speak the truth. However, without the constant reminder or encouragement to foster this it seems some individuals are being enticed back into the dominant culture, raising questions about whether or not the process of co-creating new knowledge can really answer the cries for social justice (Ledwith, 2016:172).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter relates to the fifth stage of Ledwith's amended version of Rowan's Research Cycle Model (Rowan, 1981:98), and it is where I begin to 'make sense' of the research findings. Throughout this thesis my main concern has been to explore the transformative elements within the GYS programme, specifically focusing on the delivery and empowering elements. Firstly, from a naïve animateur's perspective, I was interested in how the GYS programme empowered participants to transform their reality. Continuing this understanding, the research extended to critical animateurs and their application beyond the programme.

This chapter will present an overall summary of the findings in relation to Freire's principles and Ledwith's (2016:152) version of the Cycle Model. The authenticity of the findings along with limitations and recommendations for future research will also be discussed. A reflective account of the doctoral journey will highlight key learned points with a parting case study articulating how this process has empowered South Asian women in East Lancashire.

5.2. Discussion of Findings – An Overall Summary

Included below, as a reminder, are the research questions, used to structure this section of the thesis and provide an in-depth discussion of the findings.

- To what extent do participants perceive transformation to take place? *(Evidenced through naïve animateurs' perspective)*
- How is 'empowerment' understood, experienced and applied by participants beyond the programme? *(Evidenced through critical animateurs' perspective)*

The methodology for the doctoral study was determined by my commitment to giving a voice to marginalised communities. Ensuring I remained true to this philosophy, the data was constructed using participants' stories, obtained via interpretivist approaches and guided by ontological and epistemological perspectives. Having previously and unconsciously assumed a neo-liberalistic agenda, an ideology which creates a competitive culture (Bass, 2005,363), I was highly mindful that the research methods did not imitate a transactional relationship with the participants. Instead I wanted the data collection methods to reflect transformative practices, introduced to me by the CVCL educators. Accentuating the damaging effects of a neo-liberalist stance, it was vital the research methods did not create division and isolation, especially amongst the most vulnerable participants. The transformative

methods, involving collaborative techniques, not only formed personal and professional development practices, but also remained fundamental to this research project.

Guided by the work of Paulo Freire (1996) and Margaret Ledwith (2016), my praxis is fashioned on collaborative action in search for co-creating new knowledge with young people. Using this philosophy to direct the methodology, I embarked on using focus groups and semi-structured interviews as the data collection methods. Wanting to create honest and open accounts of participants' reality, I had to ensure the methods comprised of non-controlling styles (Ledwith, 2016:148). By building trust, dignity and respect, I was able to develop equal, reciprocal and mutual relationships with the participants (Ledwith & Springett, 2010:179, Ledwith, 2016:7). The fact that participants in both interviews and focus groups openly shared experiences pertinent to them is a clear indication of achieving the above.

Starting with the naïve animateurs' perspective, the findings illustrate participants progressing through Ledwith's Cycle Model (2016:152), albeit interpreted differently. Their overall experience on the GYS programme indicates a widespread feeling of transformation. Designed to explore 'being', the GYS programme focuses on the personal values and beliefs that shape young people's views. By developing social consciousness, participants comprehended dominant ideologies governing their understanding of the world (Boal, 2008:104). Understanding of these dominant ideologies, however, remained at personal and local levels, failing to link with wider political power and structural injustices. A failure to make connections with political power and structural injustices, Ledwith (2007b: para 4) believes, overlooks the causes. The data shows participants are not concerned with power imbalances existing at macro-level politics, but instead they are attentive to the direct injustices affecting their lives. Supporting naïve animateurs to draw conclusions on everyday reality forms the foundation for exploring deeper injustices at a macro-level at a later date. Moreover, corresponding with Bacon et al.'s (2013:488) explanation of young people being partially accepted in society, it is clear the naïve animateurs' connection to the wider world also remains partial. For this reason, designing the GYS programme to include elements which discuss 'being' from a personal perspective helps the young people understand the influences which have shaped their values and beliefs and their place in the world. I believe that establishing personal perspectives through equal, reciprocal and mutual relationships cements the first steps of transformation (Twelvetrees, 2008:6; Popple, 1995:41; Ledwith, 2016:148).

As suggested by many advocates for transformative practices, primarily Follett (1918), Freire (1996), and Ledwith (2016), incorporating a collaborative element nurtures a sense of togetherness and self-

worth. It is apparent in the data, where collaboration has been cited as being core to engagement. Moreover, the opportunity to visualise situations, using theatrical performances, supported participants creatively to express emotions and rehearse possible solutions (Woodson, 2012:39). Ultimately transforming their understanding, participants sustain a point of conscientisation and became protagonists of their own lives (Boal, 2002: xxiv). An example of this is below.

"I will do it this way, in that project I will do this thing in that project… I am now starting to build an idea about how I can manage myself in the few months coming."

The opportunity to rehearse possible solutions in a safe and secure environment established a sense of confidence and self-assurance to take positive action. It is important to highlight that the fictional aspect of action is marginal, whilst the expansion of critical thinking using performance as a vehicle for social change remains fundamental (Woodson, 2012:40). Participants' understanding and ability to make sense of the situation was the basis for co-creating new knowledge and sharing it with others. Whether it is with other participants on the programme or their peers away from the GYS programme, the data shows participants voicing an insight into transforming their lives.

Similarly, critical animateurs also progressed through the Cycle Model (Ledwith, 2016:152), albeit in a different way. By engaging with the GYS programme and exposing themselves to transformative practices, the new knowledge acquired formed the foundation to deliberate with themselves and others in their profession (Kemmis, 2010:19). Their newfound role as revolutionary leaders (Freire, 1996:114) meant that they could support communities without portraying false generosity (Freire, 1996:114). The data reveals how the participants progressed through the Cycle Model, which quickly became the ideal paradigm to adopt a critical approach into their praxis.

Taking the opportunity to interview critical animateurs revealed the long-term impact of the GYS programme, their confidence and liberation to apply the transformative practices beyond the programme. It is clear from the data that many of the critical animateurs engaged in the self-reflective concept highlighted by Ledwith (2016:151). Regularly assessing their own personal beliefs and values allowed the process of problematising, advances conscientisation. Notably, the participants shared stories of how they engaged community members, using collaborative and non-controlling methods, supporting liberation.

Although many of the critical animateurs shared stories of engaging with this process, one participant expressed their struggle with implementing change, raising questions as to why this was the case. Freire (2013:34) notes that 'education is an act of love, thus an act of courage'; without courage there remains fear. It could be argued that this young person struggled with implanting change for fear of being rejected by their immediate community. Engaging in critical thinking requires a huge amount of courage, especially as this process unconsciously changes the person's understanding of the world. When living in an insular community, with little experience or friends outside of their immediate social circle, having the courage to step away from this safe and secure environment can be daunting (Coleman, 1988: S96). This is even more so for a young person who may have limited experience of visualising the effects of change. Inghilleri et all (2014:34) claim that the greater the level of experience in a given activity, the greater their involvement in the activity, thus transforming their intention to act. In this case, the young person's involvement with the GYS programme is a clear indication of their intention to act but the lack of experience of sharing new knowledge with insular communities indicates lack of courage to educate others. In fact, they have assumed two identities, one which reinforces the persona of an oppressed individual when engaging with the insular community and another when uniting with their university colleagues. This is a clear indication that this particular participant has not progressed through that Cycle Model in the way that I had anticipated. They have clearly acknowledged and connected to the current situation; however, they remain in a naïve/magical consciousness, 'resigned to the impossibility of resisting the power of facts' (Freire, 2013:41).

Moreover, a concept based on a failed bank heist in Stockholm where the captives developed intimate bonds with their captors (Ahmad et al, 2018:542), the Stockholm Syndrome could provide an alternative explanation. It could be argued that the young person has become resigned to the dominant authoritative figures, accepting their helplessness in the situation (Ahmad et al, 2018:545). Developing the Stockholm Syndrome into a coping strategy, individuals distort their cognitive patterns, justifying and internalising the abuse they face from the oppressors (Ahmad et al, 2018:551). The data collated from critical animateurs exposed most participants accepting failure as a consequence of their own personal inabilities rather than a consequence of oppressive structures. It is clear that participation alone is insufficient, and I believe the inclusion of a mentor/critical friend would aid the process of reflection and influence the development of individuals (Wallerstein, 2006:9, Inghilleri et al, 2014:181). This claim is supported by my personal experiences of engaging with a critical friend. Throughout my career, I have found the presence of a critical friend to help ground and maintain practice in 'thinking and doing' (Ledwith, 2016:148). Similarly, I believe critical animateurs must engage with this process

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to continue developing and improving practice. Taking this into consideration, the next section of this chapter offers guidance for community leaders when working with young people.

5.3. Limitations

Like majority of research projects, this study is also subject to limitations. Crucially, I have already discussed in length the challenges that come with representing participant voice. Incorporating elements of ethnography leaves my data open to partisan, unlocking more questions than it answers (Boyd, 2008:216). Using a reflexive process I have attempted to evaluate my own subjective responses (Finlay, 2002a:532), however being inexperienced in reflexivity, it has proved to be a difficult and complex process, specifically when focusing on identifying my role in the creation of new knowledge (Berger, 2015:220). Finlay (2002a:541) claims effective reflexivity comes with practice and for a novice researcher like myself, there is a danger of under analysing or misinterpreting information (Rabbidge: 2017:969). Acknowledging the data can be understood using countless alternatives, particularly when revisiting the data during several reading, I anticipate the data I have presented, to be authentic and valid

Furthermore, in the interest of gaining a deep and meaningful account of the participant's experiences, the research can be deemed to have sacrificed the prospect of producing generalisable data. Although there was no intention to provide generalisations, I am hopeful the readers can acknowledge the significance of my findings in relation to relevant literature. Moreover, producing generalisable data within a field that is continually evolving would be inappropriate and superficial. Accepting youth development issues to be unique, comprising of individual experiences, it is important to provide a framework for individuals to develop their own techniques for youth led regeneration.

It was anticipated that the findings from this research would further support policy makers in decision making. A recent speech given by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson in 2019 (Gov.UK, 2019) highlighting government priorities, exposed their lack of commitment to young people. The speech largely consisted of actions where immediate steps could be taken (Gov.UK, 2019: para 18) and undoubtedly, the transformation of young people is a complex and time-consuming process. The governments vague dedication to young people, is clear that any findings from this research will not fair highly on their agenda. I do, however, anticipate the data will provide a foundation for those working in direct contact with young people on a day to day basis.

5.4. Recommendations for Transformative Practice with Young People

When working with young people to support the transformation of their lives, this research has revealed the following:

In the development of naïve animateurs:

- Peers should work collaboratively in the transformation of the young people's lives.
- A non-hierarchical relationship should be established, eliminating any power imbalances.
- Equal, mutual and reciprocal relationships should be established through building rapport, trust, dignity and respect.
- Implementing interactive activities which incorporate simulated action will allow young people to simulate and visualise the change.
- Safe and secure atmospheres should be established for young people to engage in the interactive and simulated techniques.
- Positive environments should be promoted to enhance participants' confidence and abilities to make change.

Critical animateurs need to engage in the following to ensure the transformation of others:

- Training on how to engage young people, specifically on the points raised above.
- Co-operation with a critical friend to encourage the reflection of daily practice.
- Continuous contact with a critical friend.

As a community worker and GYS coordinator, I will be implementing the following learning points:

- Provision of critical animateurs with a critical friend.
- Implementation of a stage by stage process so that all critical animateurs can experience conscientisation without feeling excluded or isolated.

The implementation of the above, I believe, will have real impact on young people, granting them a voice and confidence to become active changemakers in their own community. Change does not necessarily need to be at a wider political level; localised changes, affecting their immediate social circle such family/friendship groups/fellow work colleagues, remain just as important. Engaging in small-scale changes as a young person can foster confidence to implement greater changes at political and structural levels.

5.5. Recommendations for Further Study

As I progressed through this thesis, several key sections for further study were revealed. Firstly, there are questions surrounding the length of the GYS programme and whether three days is sufficient time for naïve animateurs to develop critical thinking for transformation. It is clear from the data collated that naïve animateurs approve of the three-day programme, indicating sufficient time for transformation to take place. The opportunity to visualise change was understood to be beneficial and yielded confidence to implement change, again indicating transformation. However, when interviewing the critical animateurs, not all participants felt confident enough to implement change. This implies some naïve animateurs may need longer than three days to refine conscientisation. Those who may have succumbed to Stockholm Syndrome would struggle to evade the oppressive structures (Ahmad et al, 2018:545) and take longer to reclaim a level of conscientisation. Acknowledging the fact that individuals progress at different stages, a more directed study into the different stages of critical thinking would offer a deeper understanding. Investigating the average length of time it takes for naïve animateurs to progress to critical thinking would provide a further insight and guide for community workers. Expecting all young people to progress through the process at the same rate could potentially cause harm, further isolating them and reinforcing the existing oppressive structures they already experience.

Moreover, the transition process from naïve animateurs to critical animateurs remains a significant element for further study. Although the data collated via the semi-structured interviews reveals that most participants transition between the two roles seamlessly, there was one participant who expressed uncertainties. Simply put, developing a culture circle (Freire, 2013:40) did not provide this young person with the courage to move out of the stage of magical consciousness. It could be argued that young people who have spent a large part of their lives being dependent on parents and teachers struggle to transition from a stage where they feel safe, secure and have minimal responsibilities. To then enter a world where they are in control of their lives, guided by the decisions they make, can be daunting. Progressing naïve animateurs to support others when they have not made this transition is ineffective and harmful.

A final point for further study is the evaluation of skills needed for being a successful peer educator. This would prove to be extremely valuable and advantageous for CVCL educators and other community workers. Weyer (2011:90) has already investigated the habits for being an effective community worker and can provide a foundation for further study.

5.6. Personal and Professional Development

Over the years there have been several key learning points that have guided my personal and professional practice. Prior to involving myself with this study and academia in general, my practice relied heavily on the development of others, engrossed in action with very little reflection. I found myself adopting transactional techniques, mainly through imposing action. Committed to seeking a fair and just world (Ledwith, 2016:5) my practice incorporated the basic values of trust, dignity and respect (Ledwith, 2016:7). It did not however incorporate equal, reciprocal and mutual relationship as stated by Freire (1996:112) and Ledwith (2016:7). It was not until I involved myself in critical dialogue with CVCL educators that I recognised the damaging effects of practice. Being introduced to philosophers like Paulo Freire (1996) and Margaret Ledwith (2016), I was able to adjust practice to be collaborative and transformational. This became a guiding approach to my overall practice in and out of academia.

Moreover, during the early stages of developing the GYS programme, I had collaborated with an American organisation, California Association of Student Council (hereafter, CASC). CASC's commitment to directing opportunities to citizens regardless of their social position was an attractive prospect for myself, more so as it also complemented my commitment to empowering marginalised communities. However, it soon became apparent that CASC's methods were dedicated to creating a 'managerial society' (Burnham, 1972:71) fostering competitive environments. Mainly consisting of cherry-picking individuals who represented the ideologies of the dominant culture, it conflicted with the approach represented here. Their commitment to the 'American dream' and neo-liberal culture showed that they were actively seeking to mobilise members of the wealthy elite, extending their own interests and power (Clarke, Gewirtz & MCLaughlin, 2000:1, Littler, 2013:53). Foreseeing that this would further socially isolate struggling communities, I declined the partnership, developing a programme instead that connected with the hardest to reach citizens and providing them with opportunities for empowerment. To drive them to make a change and succeed, transformational approaches had to remain at the heart of any development work.

Through critical dialogue with CVCL educators, I nurtured my practice, creating the GYS programme using the six stages of Ledwith's (2016:152) amended version of Rowan's Research Cycle Model (Rowan, 1981:98). The theoretical components of transformational education saw the GYS programme designed to provide young people with a voice, incorporating peer education and in turn humanising participants in the process. The reality as a naïve animateur granted me with the understanding and confidence to support the voices of others, crucially permitting them to make a change. Acquiring the role as a GYS coordinator meant I could instil Ledwith's (2016:152) Cycle Model, based on my journey,

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as an empowering tool. Being able to recognise the processes and challenges I encountered when advancing through Ledwith's (2016:152) amended version of Rowan's Research Cycle Model (Rowan, 1981:98), I not only, adapted the three-day programme but also incorporated it in personal and professional practice. It is important to highlight that the three-day programme has continued to evolve over the years, based on the reality of those involved, keeping the programme current and up-to-date.

Taking the underlying methods within the GYS programme, I adjusted practice to meet the needs of the target audience. The most noteworthy adaptation is the work carried out with the Traveller Gypsy community in Preston. Recognising their deep-rooted oral culture, their voices were extracted using creative art to develop a critical monologue by embracing the traditional form of storytelling. Still granting the basic values of trust, dignity and respect, the work was carried out collaboratively through mutual, reciprocal and equal partnership. Illustrating the transformative methods used to engage one of the most marginalised communities, I co-authored a research paper (Melling & Ali, 2015) published in Peters & Besley's (2015) book *Paulo Freire: The Global Legacy*.

Co-authoring papers as a working-class Asian female I see as a rarity for someone of this stature. Already questioning my position as a lecturer, the idea of entering the world of research was beyond imagination, heightening the notion of 'imposter syndrome'. I found employing Ledwith's (2016:152) Cycle Model in my personal development as beneficial, as it helped direct me through the process, with the support of critical friends. Starting with stage one of the Cycle Model, 'being', I reflected on the situation, firstly as a female, secondly of ethnic minority background and thirdly of my social class. Critically altering the way I see my position in the world in turn changed my behaviour (Ledwith & Springett, 2010:212). Basic questioning of 'What was happening?', 'Why was it happening?' and 'How is this experienced differently by other people?' transformed me from observing the situation to thinking critically about the possibilities for change (Ledwith & Springett, 2010:213). Using CVCL educators as critical friends who helped question and re-envision my thought processes, I affirmed a process of conscientisation.

The most challenging aspect of the Cycle Model (Ledwith, 2016:152) was the final two stages of, making sense and communicating new knowledge. I believe this was due to the overwhelming feeling of 'not belonging'. As mentioned above, a working-class Asian female in academia is a rarity, to be placed in unknown territory I would regularly question if my voice had any value. The personal struggles contradicted practice where I was inspiring young people in self-belief, encouraging them to recognise

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their place in the world as significant. I found, once reaching the stage of making sense, I would question my own place within academia and whether the knowledge I have acquired is worthy of communicating with people whom I viewed as professionals. This would take me back to stage one of the model, questioning my 'being.' I strongly believe the support and encouragement from critical friends has impelled me to accept personal worth and engage with this doctoral journey. Having the opportunity to communicate the findings through this process has given me confidence and belief in my abilities, thus validating my position as a lecturer and active researcher.

Recognising personal contribution to community development, via the GYS programme, as influential, I feel obliged to share the knowledge surrounding peer-led educational programmes for young people. I have found that this doctoral process deepens insight into empowering young people and expands knowledge about conducting practice-based research. More importantly, it has generated confidence in my ability to share knowledge within academia without feeling like an imposter.

5.7. Impact so Far

Having spent many years working with students and young people to develop the GYS programme, this section looks at the impact it has had to date. As a peer research and leadership project for social justice, the GYS programme has been delivered in Pakistan, Oman, and in local Lancashire communities., as well as contributing to the training programme for Sochi 2014 student volunteers. In 2013, the GYS programme developed a partnership with University of Gujrat (UoG), Pakistan, resulting in a student-led conference. This included student volunteers from UCLan's CVCL and UoG, co-creating a conceptual 'volunteer centre' at UoG, with the mission of delivering peer leadership education for social justice. The result was 'The Centre for Civil Society' based within UoG, ratified in 2014 by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Mohammad Nizamuddin, now the Head of the Pakistan Higher Education Commission. Moreover, the GYS programme has contributed to the development of some outstanding student volunteer peer leaders, who have gone on to contribute at national and international platforms. For example, Alnisa Baig, who participated in the GYS leadership training in Pakistan, went on to join the (G)irls 8 programme at the United Nations as well running youth leadership training through the Centre for Civil Society, UoG. Additionally, Wajid Khan, also an alumnus of the GYS programme, went on to become a North West MEP (Labour); and more recently, UCLan student volunteer Zuleikha Chikh has been named on the Muslim Woman in Sport Power list, 2019.

Similarly, the GYS programme has also been successfully delivered within the HEI system in Oman, engaging with ten Omani HEIs. The core programme was delivered by UCLan Student volunteer peer

educators at Nizwa University and The International College for Engineering and Management (ICEM), Oman. Between 2014 and 2017, the programme engaged 260 Omani Students as peer leaders, and forged a Memorandum of Understanding with Nizwa University to continue the concept of transformative education to co-create new knowledge. Students from ICEM also made up part of the sample for this study.

On a local level, GYS engages young people addressing issues relating to social justice inequalities. The work with the Traveller Community in Lancashire is an example of this and although not as high profile as Sochi 2014, or working with Pakistani and Omani HEIs, it still has a big impact on those involved and a deeper resonance from the learning co-created. Education is social justice, as without it, people struggle to become socially integrated egalitarian agents of change. The freedom to access a meaningful and empowering education is a social justice issue, with repercussions for democracy and community development. Therefore, when CVCL was approached by the Traveller Education Service in 2014 to develop an educational inclusion project with the Traveller community in Preston, they were determined that the Traveller young people would be co-creators with student volunteers. The GYS programme worked on the site with young people to deliver a story telling project about Traveller sports, experience, culture, and how the young people saw their place in the world. In the spirit of Freirean pedagogy, representatives from the Traveller community have formed an ongoing dialogue with undergraduates, engaging on Traveller culture, rights, and social justice. Collaborating with Traveller communities has richly informed research and pedagogical approaches, thus influencing emerging work with marginalised communities such as Shadsworth, Blackburn with Darwen, and Whitehaven, in West Cumbria. The programme has also engaged in developing sport and well-being activity with Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seeker communities in Italy, Greece, and Lancashire.

5.8. Final Concluding Thoughts

As I commenced this doctoral journey, I was highly motivated and intrigued to explore the transformative elements within the GYS programme. Throughout the process there have been many twists and turns leaving me feeling disheartened to continue. Firstly, working through the masses of literature coupled with the multiple data collection methods left me feeling overwhelmed with the enormity of this project. Also, a constant personal battle of feeling like I do not belong within the world of academia was a theme that has ran right throughout the doctoral journey. I have recognised this as pertinent to the study, especially as the young people I am aiming to empower are almost certainly feeling the same. By regularly referring to Ledwith's (2016:152) amended version of Rowan's Research Cycle Model (Rowan, 1981:98) and re-positioning myself within the six stages I have been able to

progress through the research project. On many occasions I found myself swaying between stages one and four before I could advance onto stage five and six. Progressing to the stage of action, took me back to re-evaluating what I was doing and why, keeping me grounded in the process. It was only following the reflective process I could move forward and make sense of the research project. The continual reminder of the research aims focused and guided me to uncover the fundamental qualities to critical development of young people. Also, acknowledging the importance this will play in informing practice and unearthing some vital attributes motivated me to continue this journey. Maintaining the improvement of current practice, leading to the effective empowerment of young people, remained a fundamental aim for me to achieve.

Exploring the transformative elements within the GYS programme has been extremely helpful in identifying the reason behind the success of the programme. The co-creative and peer-led aspect has maintained the underlying principles for transformation, at the same time making it sustainable and relevant to the young people of that generation. In line with the Cycle Model, young people have developed critical thinking by focusing on personal beliefs and values that shape them, ultimately leading to the examination of barriers. Accomplished via dialogue and simulated action, these two components have been vital in co-creating new knowledge for communication. Playing a key role in expanding knowledge, I have been able to transfer this understanding into my role as a lecturer.

A key learning point at this stage is understanding that not all young people will progress through the Cycle Model at the same time. This suggests the need maybe to reassess the process adopted by the American organisation CASC. Although I remain poles apart from their competitive ideology, the different stages of the training programme they offer could be a feature I adopt. This new adaptation of the different stages of the GYS programme however will continue to incorporate the transformative elements, ensuring no individual is left feeling disadvantaged or undervalued. By eliminating the competitive quality, the differing stages will provide the young people with the courage to act upon change.

Following this evaluation, it is also important to add the impact this experience has had on my ability to participate in the world of academia. Collaboratively writing a paper which was presented at an international conference, I was inspired to share the findings at a conference held at UCLan titled 'Paulo Freire and Transformative Education: Changing Lives and Transforming Communities' (see Appendix 7 for Conference Abstracts and List of Publications). More recently I contributed to Steve Skinner's (2020)

book containing guidelines frameworks and a range of approaches to help plan and implement effective community support.

On reflection, this journey has been extremely challenging yet still the most rewarding. Uncovering knowledge which will continue to improve practice in empowering young people has been most insightful. The most empowering is overcoming the personal and professional challenges. The continual battle is to assure myself that my voice in research is just as significant than someone with many years of experience in this field. Feeling accepted in this world through publications gave me the confidence to complete this thesis and I remain determined to continue co-creating and sharing new knowledge for others to transform communities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Naïve Animateurs

Appendix 2: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Critical Animateurs

Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Critical Animateurs

Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions for Naïve Animateurs

Appendix 5: University Code of Conduct for Research

Appendix 6: Thematic Chart

Appendix 7: Conference Abstracts & List of Publications

<u>Appendix 1: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Naïve Animateurs</u>

<u>Information sheet for individuals partaking in the focus groups:</u>

The Global Youth Solutions Programme:

Exploring Freirean Influences and Transformative Pedagogy as a Toolkit for Empowering Young People 2001 – 2019.

<u>Study title</u>

This research is: The Global Youth Solutions Programme: Exploring Freirean Influences and Transformative Pedagogy as a Toolkit for Empowering Young People 2001 – 2019.

After completing a recent research project on the peer led aspect of the GYS programme within the Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership, it was identified that there was a lack of understanding of the word 'empowerment' amongst the participants. This led the researchers to evaluate the programme further and look at what aspects of the programme contribute to the feeling of empowerment.

<u>Invitation to participate</u>

You are being invited to participate in this study; however, before doing so it is important to fully understand the reasoning behind the research. I would strongly advise that you read the following information and discuss with others if you feel the need to. If you are unclear at any point and require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at the contact details below. Please do take the time to consider your involvement in this study before consenting.

Thank you for taking your time to read this information sheet and please retain it for your records, should you decide to partake in the study.

<u>What is the purpose of the study?</u>

The aim of this study is to evaluate the Freirean approach used within the GYS programme and look at what aspects of the programme contribute to the feeling of empowerment. This will be done by evaluating the programmes delivered in 2014/15. An exploration of the portrayal of the Freirean methods within the GYS programme will provide the researchers with a more theoretical understanding of the success of the programme as well as insights into how and whether the adoption of the Freirean approach does contribute to the delegates' feeling of empowerment.

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Why have I been invited?

Your participation in this study will help gain a deeper understanding of how participants perceive the transformation from 'naïve consciousness' to 'critical consciousness' can take place through dialogue. Your contribution will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of using the Freirean approach within the programme and help bring to the forefront any future developments.

Do I have to take part?

You are under **no** obligation to take part in this study and if you do decide to participate you will be asked to retain this information sheet as well as sign a consent form. Your decision to participate does not bind you to the study and you are free to withdraw at any point without reason.

What do I have to do if I decide to take part?

As part of this study you will be invited to take part in a focus group which will last approximately 60 minutes. The focus group will consist of no more than 10 people and you will be asked a series of questions relating to the Freirean approach used within the Global Youth Solutions programme.

What are the benefits and risks of taking part?

The information gathered from this study will help identify the strengths and weaknesses of using the Freirean approach in the Global Youth Solutions programme. It will also help inform the improvements required for any future programmes. An academic report will also be completed as a result of the information gathered. In terms of risks, this has been assessed and it seems there is no significant risk in taking part in this study. Care will be taken in ensuring confidentiality in focus groups and interviews, and any contributions which are used in written reports or publications will be anonymised by changing names and any personal details which may enable identification.

What if I have a complaint about the study?

If you are unhappy at any point of the study and wish to raise this concern then please contact the researcher Yasmeen Ali on YAli4@uclan.ac.uk or the course leader Dr Candice Satchwell on CSatchwell@uclan.ac.uk

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information provided will remain confidential within the group and will be seen only by the research team. However, if a participant discloses any information which could result in actual harm to themselves or a third party then they will be required to disclose this information to the relevant authority. Any information provided by you which will contribute to a written report or publication will be anonymised.

As this study will be conducted through the University of Central Lancashire the researchers will be required to adhere to the University's regulations. The regulations state that the information collected will be stored for a maximum of 5 years. The information will be kept in a locked cupboard on UCLan campus and any electronic information will be password protected and only available to members of the research team.

The discussions taking place within the focus groups will be tape recorded and notes will also be taken. The notes and the tape recording will only be available to the research team and will be destroyed after a maximum of five years. You are under no obligation to answer the questions and can opt out of answering any questions you feel unsure of or uncomfortable with. Please note that withdrawal from the research half way through the focus group will mean that any data collected prior to withdrawing will be included in the data as it is not possible to withdraw any individual comments due to it being a group discussion. All participants, however will be anonymised in any publication of the findings.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results from this study will allow the researchers to identify any areas for improvement with the Freirean approach used in the Global Youth Solutions programme and make suggestions for future programmes. The findings may also be identified in reports and publications.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The organisation and funding of the research will be undertaken by Yasmeen Ali, Global Youth Solutions Coordinator.

Who has given permission for the study to go ahead?

The Ethics Committee based at the University of Central Lancashire has approved the research to be completed.

Contact for further information

If you require further information, please contact me, Yasmeen Ali on YAli4@uclan.ac.uk or the course leader Dr Candice Satchwell on CSatchwell@uclan.ac.uk

Thank you for considering taking part in this research.

<u>Consent Form for individuals partaking in the focus groups:</u>

The Global Youth Solutions Programme:
Exploring Freirean Influences and Transformative Pedagogy as a Toolkit for Empowering Young People 2001 – 2019.

Please acknowledge that you agree with the following statements:

- I understand the purpose of this focus group and the information obtained will be useful to the Global Youth Solutions programme. The information will help evaluate the Freirean approach used and will be used to inform any future programmes.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can opt out at any point. I understand that I do not have to answer all the questions if I do not feel comfortable answering. I understand I do not have to take part in the focus group.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I have been offered the opportunity to ask any questions relating to this research and they have been answered to my satisfaction.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time of the focus group, without giving any reason and my wishes will be respected. I understand that if I withdraw half way through the focus group then any comments made by myself prior to withdrawing will not be withdrawn from the findings as it is a group discussion.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I understand the focus group I take part in will be recorded, and the tape recordings and notes made during the interview will be kept at the University of Central Lancashire in a locked cupboard with restricted access. After 5 years the recordings and notes will be destroyed.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I understand that any data about me will remain confidential and my identity will be anonymous unless I disclose information which suggests that I or someone else may be at risk of serious harm.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I agree that I have read and understood the information sheet.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I am happy to take part in this research.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Critical Animateurs

Information sheet for participants partaking in the semi-structured interviews:

The Global Youth Solutions Programme:

Exploring Freirean Influences and Transformative Pedagogy as a Toolkit for Empowering Young People 2001 – 2019.

Study title

This research is: The Global Youth Solutions Programme: Exploring Freirean Influences and Transformative Pedagogy as a Toolkit for Empowering Young People 2001 – 2019.

After completing a recent research project on the peer led aspect of the GYS programme within the Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership, it was identified that there was a lack of understanding of the word 'empowerment' amongst the participants. This led the researchers to evaluate the programme further and look at what aspects of the programme contribute to the feeling of empowerment.

Invitation to participate

You are being invited to participate in this study; however, before doing so it is important to fully understand the reasoning behind the research. I would strongly advise that you read the following information and discuss with others if you feel the need to. If you are unclear at any point and require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at the contact details below. Please do take the time to consider your involvement in this study before consenting.

Thank you for taking your time to read this information sheet and please retain it for your records, should you decide to partake in the study.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to evaluate the Freirean approach used within the GYS programme and look at what aspects of the programme contribute to the feeling of empowerment. This will be done by evaluating the programmes delivered in 2014/15. An exploration of the portrayal of the Freirean methods within the GYS programme will provide the researchers with a more theoretical understanding of the success of the programme as well as insights into to how and whether the adoption of the Freirean approach does contribute to the delegates' feeling of empowerment.

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Why have I been invited?

Your participation in this study will help gain a deeper understanding of how participants perceive the transformation from 'naïve consciousness' to 'critical consciousness' can take place through dialogue and whether or not they have been able to exercise this in everyday life. Your contribution will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of using the Freirean approach within the programme and help bring to the forefront any future developments.

Do I have to take part?

You are under **no** obligation to take part in this study and if you do decide to participate you will be asked to retain this information sheet as well as sign a consent form. Your decision to participate does not bind you to the study and you are free to withdraw at any point without reason.

What do I have to do if I decide to take part?

As part of this study you will be invited to take part in an individual semi-structured interview which will last approximately 60 minutes. There will be approximately 10 semi-structured interviews that will take place with current and past facilitators and you will be asked a series of questions relating to the Freirean approaches used within the Global Youth Solutions programme.

What are the benefits and risks of taking part?

The information gathered from this study will help identify the strengths and weaknesses of using the Freirean approach in the Global Youth Solutions programme. It will also help inform the improvements required for any future programmes. An academic report will also be completed as a result of the information gathered. In terms of risks, this has been assessed and it seems there is no significant risk in taking part in this study. Care will be taken in ensuring confidentiality in focus groups and interviews, and any contributions which are used in written reports or publications will be anonymised by changing names and any personal details which may enable identification.

What if I have a complaint about the study?

If you are unhappy at any point of the study and wish to raise this concern then please contact the researcher Yasmeen Ali on YAli4@uclan.ac.uk or the course leader Dr Candice Satchwell on CSatchwell@uclan.ac.uk

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information provided will remain confidential within the group and will be seen only by the research team. However, if a participant discloses any information which could result in actual harm to themselves or a third party then they will be required to disclose this information to the relevant

authority. Any information provided by you which will contribute to a written report or publication will be anonymised.

As this study will be conducted through the University of Central Lancashire the researchers will be required to adhere to the University's regulations. The regulations state that the information collected will be stored for a maximum of 5 years. The information will be kept in a locked cupboard on UCLan campus and any electronic information will be password protected and only available to members of the research team.

The discussions taking place within the semi-structured interviews will be tape recorded and notes will also be taken. The notes and the tape recording will only be available to the research team and will be destroyed after a maximum of five years. You are under no obligation to answer all the questions and can opt out of answering any questions you feel unsure of or uncomfortable with.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results from this study will allow the researchers to identify any areas for improvement with the Freirean approach used in the Global Youth Solutions programme and make suggestions for future programmes. The findings may also be identified in reports and publications.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The organisation and funding of the research will be undertaken by Yasmeen Ali, Global Youth Solutions Coordinator.

Who has given permission for the study to go ahead?

The Ethics Committee based at the University of Central Lancashire has approved the research to be completed.

Contact for further information

If you require further information, please contact me, Yasmeen Ali on YAli4@uclan.ac.uk or the course leader Dr Candice Satchwell on CSatchwell@uclan.ac.uk

Thank you for considering taking part in this research.

Consent form for individuals partaking in the semi-structured interviews:

The Global Youth Solutions Programme:
Exploring Freirean Influences and Transformative Pedagogy as a Toolkit for Empowering Young People 2001 – 2019.

Please acknowledge that you agree with the following statements:

- I understand the purpose of the semi-structured interviews and the information obtained will be useful to the Global Youth Solutions programme. The information will help evaluate the Freirean approach used and will be used to inform any future programmes. The information may be used to apply for funding for similar conferences to take place in the future.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can opt out at any point. I understand that I do not have to answer all the questions if I do not feel comfortable answering. I understand I do not have to take part in the semi-structured interview.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I have been offered the opportunity to ask any questions relating to this research and they have been answered to my satisfaction.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time of the interview, without giving any reason and my wishes will be respected.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I understand that the semi-structured interview I take part in will the recorded, the tape recordings and notes made during the interview will be kept at the University of Central Lancashire in a locked cupboard with restricted access. After 5 years the recordings and notes will be destroyed.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I understand that any data about me will remain confidential and my identity will be anonymous unless I disclose information which suggests that I or someone else may be at risk of serious harm.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I agree that I have read and understood the information sheet.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

- I am happy to take part in this research.

Please tick to confirm   ☐

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

<u>Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Critical Animateurs</u>

<u>Semi-Structured Interview Questions</u>

1. What does empowerment mean to you?

2. Were there any events or learning experiences, which took place during your time as a facilitator that led to the feeling of empowerment? Why?

3. As a result of the GYS programme, what actions have you taken that have benefited yourself and /or others in the community?

4. Do you feel you have been able to critically reflect on reality?

5. Do you feel the GYS programme has contributed to this in anyway? If so how?

6. Are there any suggestions for improvement to the programme?

Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions for Naïve Animateurs

Focus Group Questions

1. What is empowerment? (Will only be asked on day 1 of the programme)

2. Were there any events or learning experiences, which took place during the day that led to the feeling of empowerment? Why?

3. Have any of the activities completed today enabled you to take control of your own learning?

4. Where you able to engage in dialogue with the facilitator?

5. Was this an equal dialogue?

6. Have any of the activities enabled you to critically reflect on reality?

7. Are there any suggestions for improvement to today's activities?

Appendix 5: University Code of Conduct for Research

University Code of Conduct for Research

Introduction

The University of Central Lancashire requires all its staff, researchers and students engaged in research or peer review of research processes to be aware of and agree to comply with its code of conduct of research. The University is committed to conduct research in accordance with the seven principals identified by the Nolan committee on standards in Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. The University expects these standards to be maintained by all academic, research and relevant support staff, students and their supervisors and other individuals conducting research or involved in the peer review of research process within or on behalf of the University.

Honesty and Integrity

Researchers should be honest in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research, including experimental design, generating and analysing data, applying for funding, publishing results, and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

All researchers should refrain from plagiarism, piracy, the fabrication of results or infringement of intellectual property. Committing any of these actions is regarded as a serious disciplinary offence. Researchers should also declare and manage any real or potential conflicts of interest, both financial and professional.

Openness and Accountability

Whilst recognising the need for researchers to protect their academic research interests in the process of planning of research, carrying out and writing up research and, where appropriate, handling of intellectual property rights (IPR), the University encourages all researchers to be open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and with the public. Once results have been published, the University expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials to other researchers, on request, provided that this is consistent with any ethical approvals and consents which cover the data and materials, and any intellectual property rights in them.

Professional Guidance and Legislation

The University expects researchers to observe the standards of practice set out in guidelines published by funding bodies, academic and scientific societies and also other relevant professional bodies. All researchers should be aware of the legal requirements, which regulate their work noting particularly health and safety legislation and data protection. Ethical approval of all research at the University must be obtained from the relevant departmental, faculty and/or University ethics committees. Researchers must obtain the necessary regulatory approval from the relevant national and European regulatory and/or statutory bodies.

Leadership and Supervision

Heads of departments and their senior colleagues should ensure that a research culture of mutual cooperation is created in which all members of a research team are encouraged to develop their skills and in which the open exchange of research ideas is fostered. Research group leaders and supervisors must ensure the appropriate direction of research and its financial propriety. Research misconduct is unlikely to arise in an environment where good research practices including documentation of results, peer review of research, regular discussion and seminar, are encouraged and where adequate supervision exists at all relevant levels.

Recording Data/Results/Samples/Equipment

Throughout their work researchers are required to keep clear and accurate records of the procedures followed and the approval granted during the research process, including records of interim results obtained as well as of the final research outcomes. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained. All primary data as the basis for publications should be securely stored for at least 5 years unless otherwise required by contractual terms or the guidance of relevant professional bodies in a paper and /or electronic form, as appropriate, after the completion of a research project. Proper documentation and storage procedures will minimise cases of allegations of research misconduct where original data cannot be found or allegedly been lost. Researchers should utilise means of data storage appropriate to the task.

Dissemination and Publication Practice

The University encourages the publication of and the dissemination of results of high quality research but believes that researchers must do this responsibly and with an awareness of the consequences of any such dissemination in the wider media. The University believes that although researchers must have academic freedom, the funding sponsor should be notified in advance when the research might be published or disseminated. The University also acknowledges the legitimate interest of the sponsor in securing patent protection for inventions in the course of research prior to publication or dissemination of the results. All funding sources must be acknowledged in any publication or publicity. Researchers should make every effort to ensure research is peer reviewed prior to it being published or disseminated.

The practice of honorary authorship is unacceptable, i.e. only those who have contributed to the research should be included as authors on the publication. The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assisted or indirectly supported the research should be specified and properly acknowledged.

The University recognises that publication of the results of research may need to be delayed for a reasonable period pending protection of any intellectual property arising from the research. Any such periods of delay should be kept to a minimum.

Research Misconduct

Any member of the University has a duty to formally report misconduct in research to the head of the appropriate department. For the purpose of this code of conduct, misconduct in research includes any breach of this code of conduct, but is not limited to the following, whether deliberate, reckless or negligent:

- Fabrication, falsification or corruption of research data
- Plagiarism or dishonest use of acknowledged sources
- Unauthorised use of another person`s research data, materials or writing
- Unjustified destruction of research materials
- Deception in relation to research proposals
- Fraud and misuse of research funds

Any allegations made against University staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Allegations of Research Malpractice. Allegations against research students will be dealt with in accordance with the Section L of the University Academic Regulations. The University undertakes to inform the relevant body of any substantiated allegations of research misconduct when appropriate.

Appendix 6: Thematic Chart

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Critical Consciousness	5	443	19/12/2017 09:46	YA	11/02/2018 12:06	YA
Reflection of Reality	5	119	19/12/2017 10:30	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Take Control of Learning	5	131	19/12/2017 09:55	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Transfer of Knowledge	5	101	19/12/2017 11:05	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Fear of Freedom	5	202	11/02/2018 11:16	YA	11/02/2018 12:06	YA
Culture of Silence	5	66	19/12/2017 09:45	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Dehumanisation	3	26	05/01/2018 15:27	YA	08/01/2018 16:59	YA
Naive Consciousness	4	43	19/12/2017 10:55	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Self Doubt	5	67	22/12/2017 08:29	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Humanise	5	497	05/01/2018 15:33	YA	11/02/2018 12:06	YA
Empoerment from Programme	4	34	05/01/2018 15:46	YA	08/01/2018 16:57	YA
Empowering Programme Activities	4	83	19/12/2017 09:43	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Facilitators Role	5	49	19/12/2017 09:32	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Feeling of Empowerment	5	86	19/12/2017 11:58	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Positive Experience	5	145	19/12/2017 09:30	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Ways of Empowering	5	77	19/12/2017 09:39	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Posing Problems	5	244	10/02/2018 18:27	YA	11/02/2018 12:05	YA
Open Dialogue	5	53	19/12/2017 10:27	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Problem Solving	5	88	19/12/2017 11:19	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Team Work	3	48	19/12/2017 11:42	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Voice Opinion	5	55	19/12/2017 11:48	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Self Awareness	5	198	20/12/2017 14:27	YA	11/02/2018 12:06	YA
Explanation of Empowerment	5	56	19/12/2017 09:11	YA	21/01/2018 15:25	YA
Feelings Prior to the Programme	3	38	19/12/2017 09:34	YA	21/01/2018 15:26	YA
Needs for Empowerment	1	7	05/01/2018 15:14	YA	05/01/2018 15:16	YA
Transformation of Reality	5	87	20/12/2017 14:26	YA	11/02/2018 12:06	YA
Change Views of Others	2	5	05/01/2018 15:45	YA	08/01/2018 16:02	YA

YA   27 Items

Appendix 7: Conference Abstract & List of Publications

Freirean Approach within a Peer Led Programme
Yasmeen Ali

The ethos of the Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership is to engage, empower and enable young people in finding and fulfilling their true potential.

In order to achieve this, the Centre has largely based its teaching methods on the work of Paulo Freire. Freire (cited in McLaren and Leonard, 2004) offers a system where the power of learning is shifted from the tutor to the student. The role of the tutor becomes facilitation of sessions to ensure learning is taking place however the learning is guided by the students. Murphy (2008, Cited in Hall et al 2008, p 32) argues that according to Freire's perspective the role of the teacher is not to only facilitate the sessions, it is about posing problems about 'codified existential situations in order to help learners arrive at a more critical view of their reality.' Allowing the students to take control of the power of learning in a critical manner enables them to achieve critical awareness and break away from the 'culture of silence' (Fritze, n.d.). It also allows the young people to develop a self-awareness which will free them to be more than just 'passive objects.' (Fritze, n.d.)

This paper explores the Freirean approach adopted within the Global Youth Solutions programme by identifying which aspects of the programme allow facilitators to act for change through critical thinking. It also discusses whether or not the programme provides the participants an opportunity to break away from the 'culture of silence.'

Aronowitz (1993, cited in McLaren & Leonard, 1993, p 8) suggests teachers frequently say they are using Freirean methods within their teaching styles however what they mean by this is vague. Similarly, the Global Youth Solutions programme is adopting the methods of Freire however there is no clear evidence of its impact and how the methods are implemented. This study will help identify and determine the methods as well as identify whether any shift in power from teacher to student is only in the classroom or does it extend to a broader social context. This will also help inform the teaching and learning methods within the Centre.

The session will include a short presentation on the Global Youth Solutions programme to highlight the elements of the programme that allow the participants to break away from the 'culture of silence.'

Reference

Fritze, C (n.d.) http://www.stclares.ca/pdfs/The%20Theory%20of%20Paulo%20Freire.pdf Last seen 23rd December 2013

Hall, K. Murphy, P. & Soler, J. (2008). *Pedagogy and Practice: Cultural and Identities*. Milton Keynes: The Open University.

McLaren, P. & Leonard, P. (1993). *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*. Oxon: Routledge.

McLaren, P. & Leonard, P. (2004). Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter. 2nd ed. London: Taylor and Francis.

Travellers in Time: A critical dialogue with the Gypsy Travellers of Lancashire
Alethea Melling and Yasmeen Ali

'Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage'. Paulo Freire

Introduction

The Traveller Communities of Lancashire are predominantly Romany and Irish. Their culture and language is oral, rather than written. This not only limits the communities' ability to access services, but also to articulate their views and to understand their rights. This paper seeks to explore how Freire's pedagogy and the rich and colourful Traveller tradition of storytelling can be used successfully to engage the Traveller Community in the production of a creative yet critical monologue which will facilitate not just 'reading' but reading their own reality and the development of a hopeful praxis. Moreover, it explores how the act of dialogue is an act of sharing a gift; the gift being education. Within this paper, we discuss how a group of undergraduates formed a learning community with the Travellers and how this became a vehicle for a new knowledge leading to understanding, trust and respect.

The Traveller community in the UK is complex and made up of the number of different ethnic and social groups. The generic term is Gypsy Travellers. This group consists of firstly, Romany Gypsies, who have been recorded in the UK since the 15th Century. Originally referred to as Egyptians due to their dark complexion, it has been suggested that this group originated in India and moved into Europe, although this assertion has been contested by Okley and others. This ethnic group has been persecuted since the Middle Ages through purges and more recently, through the genocide inflicted by the Third Reich. (Clark, 2006, pp. 24 - 26) For example, in the time of Henry the VIII in England, it was a capital offence to fraternise with Gypsies. Indigenous Travellers in the UK are Irish (Minceir) and Scottish Travellers (Nachins) and Welsh Gypsies (Kale). There are records indicating nomadic communities in Ireland centuries ago. (Clark, 2006, p. 15) Added to this group are travelling show people and New Age Travellers. The former of these groups works in the travelling entertainment industry, such as fairgrounds and circus. The latter consists of people from the non-nomadic community who are seeking an alternative lifestyle, and often environmentally sustainable lifestyle. Both these groups are usually well educated; the show people as they have to manage complex businesses, and the New Age Travellers, as they are often from highly educated backgrounds seeking an ethically sound lifestyle for themselves and their children. However, the community that forms the basis of this study are Irish Travellers.

Reference

Clark, C. (2006). *Here to Stay: Gypsy Travellers of Britain.* Hertfordshire: Hertfordshire University Press.

Transformative education: Exploring Leadership and Identity with Unaccompanied Minors Asylum Seekers on the Greek Island of Lesvos.

Yasmeen Ali & Bob Walley

The Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership (CVCL), based at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), UK, has been delivering refugee empowerment and integration projects since 2017, as part of its Lancashire county wide 'Welcome' Refugee project. Extending this work to an international level, CVCL educators have coordinated and managed two active research projects on the Greek Island of Lesvos, engaging over 246 unaccompanied minors. Working with the UNHCR and associated local partners at METAdrasi, an education centre specifically working with unaccompanied minors, CVCL educators explored concepts surrounding leadership and identity with participants. Underpinned by Freirean philosophy, the projects aimed to relocate learning from the teacher to the student giving unaccompanied minors a voice through using Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology. Key findings showed the young people welcomed the collaborative element to learning, empowering them to visualise future goals. Using creative approaches, which explore theatrical and artistic expression, proved to be a vital element for 'conscientisation,' the point thinking becomes critical. Using Boal's (2008) suggestion of 'rehearsal for revolution' created a safe and protected environment to explore personal and sensitive issues pertinent to the young people. These creative activities are designed to raise aspirations and provide transferable skills useful for the participants. Recommendations from this research include further continuation and adaption of these working methods in order to provide the most impact, and be of most value, in participants' unstable and unpredictable environment, whilst exploring new ways of telling their stories to a wider demographic.

Reference

Boal, A. (2008). *Theatre of the Oppressed*. New ed. London: Pluto Press.

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

List of Publications

Ali, Y. (2018). Using a Freirean Approach within the Global Youth Solutions Programme. In: Melling, A. & Pilkington, R. *Paulo Freire and Transformative Education: Changing Lives and Transforming Communities*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Melling, A. & Ali, Y. (2015). *Travellers in Time: A Critical Dialogue with the Gypsy Travellers of Lancashire*. In: Peters, M. A. & Besley, T. Paulo Freire: The Global Legacy. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.