PUPPETRY AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS

By

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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted for the degree **M Tech: Performing Arts Technology,** at the Tshwane University of Technology, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution for higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

Anré Fourie

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to all the Foundation Phase teachers and learners in South Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for all my talents! I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Hanlie van Tonder, for her loving support. This study would not have been possible without you. I am grateful to my parents, Cathy and Herman Fourie, for their encouragement and love. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the supervisors of this study, Prof. Patrick Ebewo and Dr. Jan Nel, for all their guidance, as well as the previous Head of the Entertainment Technology Department, Me. Zuanda Badenhorst. Your passion for teaching and your contagious enthusiasm towards puppetry will always be remembered. I would also like to thank the Department of Education, especially Me. Melinda De Kock and the members of the Tshwane Child Protection Initiative (TCPI), as well as the teachers and learners from Sunnyside Primary School, Irene Primary School, Motheo Primary School and Zamintuthoko Primary School.

ABSTRACT

Puppets contribute greatly to the development of a child's learning by providing the child with opportunities to assemble, discover and comprehend a wide range of concepts, knowledge, skills, and situations. Puppetry also provides a stimulus for, and reinforcement of, the child's learning as he/she engages in a wealth of concrete experiences, which are linked to a purposeful activity (Currell, 1976: 55). Flower and Fortney believe that children prefer learning from puppets (Flower & Fortney, 1983: 127-132), and Taylor referred to puppets used in education by stating that puppets provide stimulation of the imagination (Taylor, 1964: 91-92). These specialists in education strongly believe that educational values are given a magical posture with the introduction of puppets, making this art form such a successful educational tool.

This research evaluates the perception of foundation phase educators and learners, on the value of puppets used in foundation phase education and it establishes the way the different aspects of puppets, as an educational tool, and puppetry as a form of communicating lessons, have on foundation phase learners. Chapter One introduces the research study by addressing the background to the research, the research framework in terms of specific objectives and the appropriate research methodology. Chapter Two comprises the literature review, which focuses on the important theoretical framework relating to the definition of terms that are used throughout the study. In addition, it presents a summary of the application of puppets throughout history with a definite emphasis on the role puppets have played in children's education.

The researcher provides an in-depth report in Chapter Three on the data collected and analysed from educators that formed the first group in the research population. The data collected took the form of different statements posed by the researcher to the educators, to formulate a better understanding on numerous seemingly obvious issues in the process of education for foundation phase learners in Departmental schools. Chapter Four describes the findings of the interactive observations with foundation phase learners at different schools. The sum total of the responses proved that puppets are invaluable tools in the education of learners. Chapter Five, which is the concluding chapter of the research study, overviews the impact of puppets used in education for foundation phase learners. The chapter highlights the conclusive findings and observations after analysing the responses made in all the previous chapters.

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GLOSSARY

Acronym/ Terminology	Explanation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-Profitable Organisation
TCPI	Tshwane Child Protection Initiative
MOOMPI	The name of the National Child Protection Character: Department of Education
Master Trainer Child Protectors	The qualification granted to a person that is skilled to train child protectors
Foundation Phase Learners	The term refers to learners between the ages of six and eight years
UNIMA	Union International de la Marionette
AREPP	The African Research and Educational Puppetry Programme
Puppet	A general term used for all types of figures manipulated from above by the use of strings or from below manipulated with a person's hand
Muppet	A muppet is constructed using soft materials or foam, with a wide movable mouth manipulated by the puppeteer's hand and arm
CHAPS	Community Theatre Awareness Puppeteers (CHAPS)

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The motivation for this study stems from the researcher's B-Tech research project in 2003, entitled, "The Manufacturing of *MOOMPI*: The National Child Protection Character" (Fourie, 2003). The above-mentioned *MOOMPI* was a "Muppet" project, a child protection initiative, designed for the Department of Education, Tshwane District D4. A renowned company known as Eye Spices Productions managed this project for the Department of Education. Eye Spices Productions had the mandate from the Department of Education to develop and market this child protection initiative. The partnership between the Tshwane Child Protection Initiative (TCPI) and Eye Spices Productions was established in 1999. In this project, the "Muppet" was used as an interactive educational tool, aimed at the development of social skills for foundation phase learners in Departmental Schools in the Tshwane District.

During the B-tech research project, the researcher concentrated on the manufacturing process of the *MOOMPI* "Muppet". The study provided practical solutions to a range of documented obstacles in the "Muppet" manufacturing process. The muppet, *MOOMPI,* was more than a mere object of entertainment. It carried lifelong learning messages for the learners. Inspired by the educational messages from *MOOMPI* and from other puppetry projects used in educational institutions in South Africa, the researcher decided to engage in further research in this sphere. The present study intends to investigate the perceptions of foundation

phase educators and learners on puppetry as an educational tool for foundation phase learners, the collective term used for learners between the ages of three to eight years.

In this study, the researcher uses the term **puppets**. Puppetry has become an increasingly popular art form in South Africa over the last thirty years, as is evident from the founding of companies such as AREPP Educational Trust, The Playhouse Puppet Company; and the Johannesburg Puppet Company (Badenhorst, 2005: 4). Overall, puppets are used for entertainment as well as education, both internationally and locally. Puppetry as an art form has evolved from a once off entertainment medium to an edutainment medium used for children's education.

Puppetry and the use of puppets have added tremendous value to the educational process. In a paper presented at the Fourth International Entertainment Education Conference in Cape Town, entitled: "Puppets in Entertainment-Education: Universal Principles and African Performance Traditions as a Model for Interaction", Kruger (2004) stated that for centuries puppets have not only been associated with entertainment but also used as educational tools. Puppets can fulfil many social, emotional, and intellectual needs; and as Leyser and Wood (1980: 292-293) pointed out, puppets serve three focus areas, namely: entertainment, education and therapy. Numerous types of puppets are used in the teaching of a variety of educational subjects. Over centuries, the use of puppets has played an important role in all forms of cultural rituals to transmit an educational message through animation. "The universal appeal and survival of puppets lies in the human

need to overcome crisis through illusion, to turn drama into reality, to visualise feelings and ideas; and to feel the power of creating life" (Dagan, 1990: 4).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the perceptions of foundation phase educators and learners on the value of puppets. It establishes the impact the different aspects of puppets, as an educational tool, and puppetry as a form of education, have on foundation phase educators and learners in South-Africa (District D4 schools).

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The objectives of this research project can be summarised as follows:

1. To evaluate the perceptions of educators on the value of puppets used in foundation phase education.
2. To establish the visual impact that puppets have on foundation phase learners of different gender and age groups.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were posed in order to fully understand the perceptions of foundation phase educators and learners on puppets used in education:

1. To what extent are puppets used as tools to educate foundation phase learners in South African Schools, and does the need exist amongst foundation phase educators for additional puppet training workshops to enhance the learning experience of the foundation phase child?
2. Does the appearance of puppets used in the foundation phase classroom during education appeal to all learners, no matter their age or gender?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, qualitative research design is utilised. Gay and Airasian (2000) aver that the qualitative paradigm seeks to probe deeply into the research setting in order to obtain an understanding about the way things are, why they are that way and how participants perceive them. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) state that qualitative research methodology employs a holistic approach towards people and their setting without reducing them to variables. The approach is flexible. Qualitative research design is an inquiry and interpretative process of understanding the social or human problem based on building a holistic picture, formed with words reporting detailed views of the informants and conducted in a natural setting. Since the study's aim is to investigate the perceptions of foundation phase educators and learners on puppetry, the researcher has decided to use questionnaires and interactive observations to elicit information pertinent to the study.

1.5.1 Questionnaires

Using structured questionnaires and interactive group discussions with educators, together with the interactive observation of learners, the researcher captured the effect that the various elements of puppetry have on learners from different age and gender groups.

1.5.2 Interactive observations

Since the subjects of the study are young children who are not able to deal with questionnaires, the researcher engaged the children in practical interactive observations to establish the reactions and associations of children to different puppets and other objects used during these observations. The researcher's approach was to collect and analyse the data also for the purpose of enhancing future projects and improving the learning experience of learners. The interactive observations were conducted with empathy and in the presence of the teacher from the specific school, as well as two Master Trainer Child Protectors. Observations involved interpersonal encounters and this seemed to be the best instrument to use in eliciting responses from the young learners. According to Taylor and Bogdan, "In an interpersonal encounter, people are more likely to disclose aspects of themselves, their thoughts, their feelings, and values than they would in a less human situation (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998: 88).

1.6 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Figure 1.1 indicates the schools, learners and age groups of the pupils that were identified for the purpose of this study. Four schools, namely Motheo Primary School, Zaminthuthuko Primary School, Irene Primary School and Sunnyside Primary School, collectively nominated 48 learners to participate - twelve pupils from each school. These pupils represented the age groups six to eight years and Grades 1, 2 and 3. For gender equity, these groups comprised six male and six female learners.

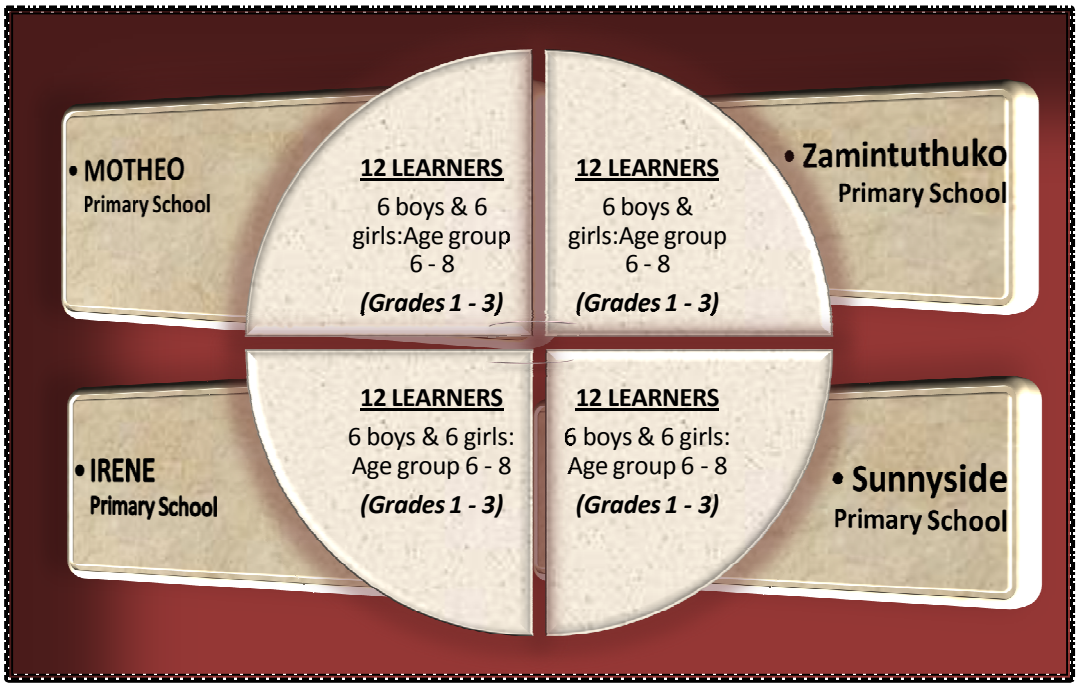


Figure 1.1: Population of the Study Indicating the Schools and Learners Involved In the Research Study

(**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

1.6.1 Educators' questionnaire: Utilisation of puppets

Thirty-two (32) educators completed a questionnaire relating to general information about puppets used in education and other relevant topics relating to puppets used in education. Eight (8) educators from each school completed the questionnaire. Some of the teachers have previously been exposed to puppet training sessions, while some of the teachers have not. By involving both experienced and inexperienced educators, the researcher was able to test the perceptions of educators that had some exposure to the use of puppets. In addition, by obtaining the views of the educators who have not been exposed to puppetry before, the researcher was able to assess the potential impact this educational tool could have on the quality of education.

1.6.2 Data collection

As already stated, the researcher administered questionnaires, conducted interactive interviews, and reviewed previously compiled questionnaires completed by educators after puppet training workshops. Before the administration of the instruments, permission was obtained from the NGO, Department of Education, as well as the relevant schools, parents, and children involved in this research project. The statistical analysis/frequencies and results of this research study was not conducted in isolation, but was closely guided by the researcher's study leader, P.J Ebewo, Research Professor at the Tshwane University of Technology, and P. Kobue, a Statistical Analyst also from the Tshwane University of Technology. The Tshwane University of Technology Ethics Committee subjected the questionnaires to rigorous screening.

1.6.3 Chapter summary

This research study focuses on the perceptions of life skills educators and learners on puppets in education, specifically when used during the education of foundation phase learners. Astell-Burt believes that educators need to be trained before they pursue the daunting task of this educational process. The author also believes that every organisation needs to enhance the teaching and empowering strategy for the educator.

> The application of practical puppetry is an empowering strategy. This strategy broadens knowledge and understanding of disability, wisdom, abuse, and enhances flexibility to adapt to the needs of any individual or group. The kind of puppet chosen is also believed to be based on how it is presented to enable an individual to externalise or give physical reality to an internal, imagined image (Astell-Burt, 2001: 3).

Chapter One provided important information on the background to the study, research methodology, aim and objectives, as well as data collection procedures and tools. The literature review, which comprises specific references to the origin of puppets and the historic use of puppetry, will be covered in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous chapter dealt with the contextualisation, purpose and objectives of the study, as well as the research methodology that was applied throughout this research project. This chapter explains the key terms used in this research study and provides an overview of the history of puppetry and how it has evolved over the years to shift from a form of entertainment to a powerful tool for education.

2.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

D4 Schools: The term D4 is a regional classification of the Tshwane South, which includes Mamelodi, Eersterust, Pretoria East, Pretoria South, Atteridgeville, and Laudium.

2.3 PUPPETS PAST AND PRESENT

To modern man, moving ceaselessly in a world peopled by the creation of his detached intellect, the puppet remains an expression of his yearning for magic and poetry. In a state of continuous change, it lends form to the changing character of man. Over the last few years that little creature of cloth and cardboard, whose mystery time and again we try to unravel, has clearly acquired more matter-of-factness without, on the other hand,

losing naïveté, it has become more subtle without forfeiting its popular character, and more poetic without losing its spiritual substance (Niculescu, 1967: 6).

Currell (1976: 7) emphasised that the origin of puppetry remains a subject of dispute. Puppetry was practiced in India from as long as four thousand years ago. In the Indian culture, puppets were used before human actors because religious taboo forbade impersonation. Currell explains further that, within the Indian culture, the lead player in Sanskrit plays was called "sutradhara", which means "the holder of strings" or puppeteer in our modern day context. In China, puppets were used some two thousand years ago and marionettes featured as early as the eight-century AD. The Greeks used different types of puppets, such as marionettes and glove puppets, as early as 800BC. The Greek words "neurospastos/neuron" means, in direct translation, "cord/string", and "koree" refers to either "a long sleeve that covers the hand" or a "small statue". The first puppeteer, Potheinos, performed mainly in the theatre of Dionysus in Athens. Currell adds that "puppets, throughout the ages, have added continuous educational values to the enlistment of civilisation. Puppetry is one of the oldest and most triumphant forms of the performing arts" (Currell, 1976: 7). References have also been made to "living puppets", referring to children acting as puppets during performances called masquerades Ottenberg and Binkley (2006: 1). These authors further elaborate on the term "water puppets", as Vietnamese figures that were placed on wooden rafts floating on lakes and manipulated from a distance, using a complexity of strings.

According to Hagher, the Kwagh-hir, a great puppetry tradition of the Benue people of Nigeria, is a good example of teaching by using puppets. "Kwagh-hir performances

aimed at handing down information, opinions, beliefs and customs of the people through the oral narrative tradition, and secondly it offers metaphors for unravelling conflict in the social order. The Kwagh-hir performances also use a variety of other entertainment procedures to make the experience more "real," and teachings are established by using songs, dialogue, and narrations. Information is transmitted for posterity while mime, puppet, masquerades, dance movements, and décor become the engaging actions exposing the conflicts within social structure" (Hagher, 2004: 12).

African puppetry has always occupied a respected place among the higher genres of theatre and education. "Numerous secular experts in the field of puppetry consider African puppets as a form of serious entertainment". Hagher (2004: 13) emphasises that "intercultural research on puppetry might reveal a great similarity between the puppetry traditions of the world". Puppets have been used in a religious context as part of ritual drama throughout the African continent. These puppets transmit religious beliefs and moral values and play an enormous role in establishing social cohesion "Wherever there are people, there is also a puppet theatre, no matter how humble it might be. Its aims differ; it may be religious, educational, entertainment or therapy – and its fulfilments are different in every country" (Hagher, 2004: 15).

Dagan in 1990 stated that, to date, no early documentation on puppetry as art form, written by Africans, exists. This does not mean that puppets did not exist back then, although the existence of African sculptures was only formally acknowledged when they were "discovered" by the Europeans. Endless variations in styles and types of African puppets already existed at the time of colonisation, leaving no doubt that these

and other sculptural forms existed and have been in a constant process of evolution for centuries.

> From the earliest descriptions of puppet shows recorded by European travellers during the 17th century to various papers, essays and field work on African puppets in recent years, all information indicates that puppets and masks were integral parts of the traditional theatrical experience of many African societies and played important roles in shaping social order and control. Through puppetry heroes from the past and historical events are preserved as models, thus ensuring the education and enculturation of the new generations and the enhancement of group identity (Dagan, 1990: 30).

Arnoldi (1995: 186) referred to the masquerades of the Mande people in Mali, stating that although they are playful, the topics are profoundly pertinent. In these masquerades, masks, costumes and even life-sized puppets manipulated by the human body are used to convey its strong educational messages.

> Puppetry gained increased popularity in the twentieth century and saw a revival as a form of entertainment for both adults and children with its performances in theatres, on television, and at international festivals around the world. Overall, puppets appeal to audiences across the spectrum of age, education, status, gender and culture (AREPP, 2004: 1).

Union International de la Marionette (UNIMA), an international puppetry organisation, is the oldest puppet organisation in the world (Jacob, 1967: 49). UNIMA was founded in the city of Prague in 1929. In May of the same year, invitations went out for the constituent congress of UNIMA to be held in Prague. Years later, in 1980, Henry Jurkowski, the UNIMA Secretary introduced the programme of the First World Puppetry Festival in Washington DC. He said, "Today UNIMA unites the puppeteers from around whole world, bringing countries together to entertain and educate children and adults alike" (Jacob, 1967: 49). Sergey Obraztov the director of the state Central Puppet Theatre in the Russian capital, Moscow, can perhaps be described as the most famous puppet artist in the world. His use of rod puppets has influenced an entire generation of puppeteers, especially in Eastern Europe, evident from an article written, entitled, "Some considerations on the puppet theatre". In this publication, Obraztov (1967: 17) stated that, "the puppet theatre is among the earliest types of spectacle which has been least studied, most underrated, and precious of all traditions."

Baird (1965: 167) reported that details on one of the first collections of puppets and education were documented in Moscow between 1917 and 1918. Baird refers to Nina Efimova, a well-known painter, and her husband as "the couple who began to create puppets for children and effectively laid the groundwork for the educational puppet techniques". Efimova and her husband contributed largely to the Soviet education curriculum. Baird is also of the opinion that the governments of Eastern Europe have recognised the educational and attitude-forming power of performing arts. Astell-Burt (2001: 6) expanded to this view by stating that, "Puppetry, despite its robust folk origins as a performance art, is curiously associated with childhood, when in fact, it is a

superb art form for any age – it is visual art/ sculpture and performance". This author also referred to the work of Heinrich von Kleist and how he uses the marionette "to describe our dilemma as fallen gravity-bound beings and through puppetry, we can work without our fatal ego's interfering with our creativity". Astell-Burt also referred to the notes of artist, Oscar Schlemmer, after the performance of his marionette "*Triadic Ballet*," who wrote that, "egoism and dualistic contrast is transcended to give way to the collective" (Astell-Burt, 2001: 6).

Frazer (1998: 150-151) described the history of puppet theatre as "a wonderful story of the uninterrupted progress of a demonstration, which has, especially when compared to other forms of popular art, an unbelievable capacity for international diffusion". He further explained that puppets have been "worshipped, anathematised and publicly burned". Aston (1993: 267-268) explained that puppets have been "despised, treated as the lowest form of life, while, at the same time, monuments like the Sergei Obraztsov puppet monument have been erected in Moscow".

2.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF PUPPETRY

Surrounded by all the explanations that are widely available and documented by numerous practitioners in the field of puppetry, confusion often arises when references are made to puppets, muppets and mascots. In an interview with Badenhorst (2008) to clarify the differences between puppets, muppets and mascots, Badenhorst stated that puppets are a general term used for all types of figures manipulated from above by the use of strings or from below manipulated with a person's hand. Badenhorst further

explained that a muppet is constructed using soft materials or foam, with a wide movable mouth manipulated by the puppeteer's hand and arm. "As for mascots, that it is a body puppet manipulated by the human body" (Badenhorst, 2008).

Baird (1965: 13), cited in Kruger 2004: 4) defined a puppet as "an inanimate figure that is made to move by human effort before an audience". Jenkins (1980: 19) added that 'puppets, as any sculptural or pictorial representation, can move by the efforts of an operator. It can represent anything, such as animals, people, inanimate objects, or abstract ideas. Jenkins also refers to the puppet as a "man-made actor" (Jenkins, 1980: 19).

After an interview with Jim Henson conducted by John Skow in 1978, Skow wrote that the word "muppet" is derived from the words "marionette" and "puppet." During this interview on the explanation of the word 'muppet', Henson stated "It was simply a word that sounded good to me," and that "the sound combination of puppet and marionette was merely an explanation that happens to sound logical."

Traubner (1995: 2) wrote on the origin of the mascot in stage productions, going as far back as the year 1880. French composer, Edmond Audran (1842-1901) wrote a series of operettas and one of the most popular was called "La Mascotte" (1880), a light-hearted plot about a virgin farm girl who brought good luck to whoever possessed her. This production was so popular that it was translated from French into English. The translated title became, "The Mascot," and since then the concept of a mascot, whether as a person, animal or object, became symbolic with good luck (Traubner, 1995: 2).

McCusker (2005: 157-159) eluded to accepted standards of decency and good taste and emphasised the importance of the behaviour person inside the character, especially when children are the primary audience. Although McCusker was specifically referring to mascots in this case, the principle of ethical behaviour can be applied to any form of puppetry. Within the specific context of this research study, the general term "puppet" will be referred to throughout.

2.5 PUPPETS AND EDUCATION

Within the context of this research study, the researcher wants to highlight the importance of puppets in education specifically. Various sources on this topic have been researched to capture significant findings and views on the benefits and application of puppetry in education.

> The creative environment has to be affirming and fearless, or else it is absurd and meaningless. The social aspect of puppetry is one of huge value in enabling a person to express himself or her-self within the society and to find his/her own place. Without the arts and artists, the scientific and technological culture would not exist (Astell-Burt, 2001: xv).

Astell-Burt (2001: xi) is also of the opinion that "a challenging, creative, communicative community offers a better and more successful educational experience" and adds that "a creative expression gives coherence – personal coherence – to the

individual, even when their relationship to the outside world may be confused or apparently irrelevant" (Astell-Burt, 2001: xi).

According to Currell (1976: 55), puppets contribute greatly to the development of a child's learning. "Puppets provide the opportunities to meet, explore, and understand a wide range of concepts, knowledge, skills, and situations. Puppetry also provides a stimulus for, and reinforcement of, the child's learning as he/she engages in a wealth of concrete experiences, which are linked to a purposeful activity" (Currell, 1976: 55). In a book by the same author (1969: 11-16), entitled, "Puppetry in the primary school" puppets play a significant role in stimulating the imagination of a child". He explained that, through the medium of puppetry, children are enabled to develop their imagination. Used appropriately, puppets can become a dynamic medium in the field of education and if the teacher has a deeper knowledge of this art, of its possibilities, limitations and techniques he will be better equipped to maximise its own potential. Currell is also of the opinion that children would put far more feeling and expression into what they say when communicating via the medium of puppetry (Currell, 1969: 11-16).

Children may explore and represent imaginative fantasies, everyday situations and the realities of the wider world through puppetry. Furthermore, puppetry - in all forms of education - needs to be physical, technical, intellectual and social for a successful outcome. Children tend to focus more on the puppets and the story and not exclusively on the educator when puppets are used for teaching purposes (Currell, 1976: 55).

Astell-Burt suggests that it was Sigmund Freud who first explored the relationship between human beings and theatre. D.W. Winnicott, in turn, contributed in his investigation of the use of objects in childhood play and used the phrase "transitional object" to explain these objects.

> Puppetry and the use of puppets in education consist of different characteristics. Puppetry is inherently humorous, where there is robust play between objects replacing vulnerable human interaction, puppets can portray an event from an objective distance and by using drama techniques, overturn the status quo (Astell-Burt, 2001: 70-71).

Taylor (1964: 91-92) supported the notion that puppets used in education provide stimulation of imagination. He added that the introduction of puppets primarily aids with developing of the child's subjective mind and stated that, "If a child plays with a doll or any toy for that matter, the toy is commonly made present in the child's mind thus, an imaginary object is created which is more or less like the child" (Taylor, 1964: 91-92).

Referring to puppets as a visual metaphor, the Community Theatre Awareness Puppeteers (CHAPS) from Kenya had the following to say:

> The Puppet is a visual metaphor, representing "the real life," but at the same time, it is one-step removed from the real world. Puppetry can be used to break down racial, social, and political barriers and stereotypes, because it represents the

> "neutral" aspects of the human, exaggerating its larger than life issues. Puppets can say more than the live actor can. Puppets can get away with being highly controversial and thus often say more than would be possible for a live actor to say. This is especially true when dealing with taboo or sensitive issues such as family planning, sexually transmitted diseases or the reproductive system when a puppet performance can be less embarrassing to the audience than the human act (The Community Theatre Awareness Puppeteers (CHAPS) Fourth International Entertainment Education Conference, cited in Kruger, 2004: 3).

Flower and Fortney (1983: 127-132) advised that puppets can contribute profoundly to the teaching of different educational concepts such as self-expression, improvisation, music, singing, speaking, dramatic presentation, scenery painting, stagecraft and creative writing. Puppets are also extremely valuable in enhancing teamwork and improving self-confidence. To this end, the term "imaginative teachers" refers to the puppet becoming an educational extension of the puppeteer. Flower and Fortney believed that children prefer learning from puppets to learning from teachers, adding life to the more unexciting elements of education. These educationalists elucidated that education values are afforded a magical element with the introduction of puppets, making this art form such a successful educational tool.

> Puppetry and the effectiveness of puppets is a dual medium that talks to the hearts and minds of children. The introduction of puppets in the classroom triggers interest (Flower and Fortney, 1983: 127-132).

They further explained that puppets are even used in educational programmes for learners with special needs, illustrated by how the National Committee of Art for the Handicapped use puppets to attract and maintain the attention of the children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and emotional problems. They also referred to the body puppets of Nancy Renfro and the importance of body puppets in therapy process with deaf, motor-impaired or multi-handicapped people. In the case of deaf learners, body puppets are extremely effective in that the hands of the operator are free to use for sign language and that body awareness is amplified (Flower and Fortney, 1983: 127-132).

Currell (1980: 10) rationalised that "learning takes place through the interaction of two processes, known as 'accommodation' and 'assimilation'". The author stated that 'accommodation' refers to how children are introduced to a concept, idea, situation, or event, unfamiliar to their existing mental structures. These structures are then modified to accommodate new knowledge or experience. The term, 'assimilation', on the other hand, implies that experiences fit in with the child's existing mental structures and therefore the object or event can be treated similarly to previous experiences. With assimilation, the existing structures are then reinforced. Although these processes are linked and any experience will stimulate elements of both, accommodation relates to the modification and extension of understanding, while assimilation is in effect rehearsal or practice. "The successful applications of puppets to the classroom can contribute to the principles of accommodation and assimilation as puppets consist of both the above mentioned aspects" (Currell, 1980: 10).

Szilágyi (1967: 35) explained the impact of puppets in education in a document called "The Modern Puppet Stage and its Audience", elaborating on the essential role of the puppet theatre in education. He said that, over the years, puppetry has been the ideal integrated art. Why does the puppet have such an element and powerful impact on an unsophisticated audience, mainly children? Szilágyi added that, in puppetry," it is not the aesthetic experience that is the primary factor but the puppet's immediate psychological impact". He concludes that two pivotal puppetry elements contribute to enhancing the overall experience of the audience. One is that the audiences at a puppet show "witness action in the form of the supreme act of creation, turning lifeless, dead matter into life. The other is the psychological factor of the puppet's suggestive power. In a living person moving on stage or in the classroom, the spectator recognises himself; or rather, he perceives his own nature" (Szilágyi, 1967: 35).

Speaight (1967: 29) suggests that the power of puppetry in children's education is founded in the fact that 'playing for children is not a cramping restriction', making children a responsive audience (Speaight: 1967: 30). It is crucial that educators learn proper puppetry techniques. Blumenthal (2005: 37) highlighted that puppets do not perform independently or on their own and that a so-called perceivable action is required for these puppets to communicate to their audiences. According to Gordon (1986: 4), puppets can act out private situations, such as family planning, or struggles, for example human rights issues, between people without offending the audience. Puppets provide opportunities to meet, exploring and a wide range of concepts, knowledge, skills, and situations. However, the real value of puppetry is positioned in its contribution to the field of education. Gordon explains as follows:

> Puppetry provides a stimulus for, and reinforcement of, the child's learning as he or she engages in a wealth of concrete experiences, which are linked to a purposeful activity. The activity should constantly be available in the classroom rather than something just for special occasions. Puppets are also a powerful tool, if applied in the correct context to teach children about moral values (Gordon, 1986: 4).

Kolar (1967: 31) described the puppet theatre as "a form of visual art". The authors suggested that those who held this view believed that the puppet theatre expressed itself in the character of the puppet, through an element of visual art.

2.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF PUPPET TYPES, FEATURES AND PRESENTATION

The introduction of life-sized puppets in the classroom can be as effective as the use of smaller puppets. In an interview conducted with Koekemoer (2008), the explanation of "the larger than life element" was effectively highlighted during a stage production the Breytenbach Theatre during 2001 and 2002, entitled "Ancient Stars," directed by Mullen and Koekemoer. In this theatre production, over-sized puppets were used. The life-sized puppet production was also enhanced through the application of effective lighting techniques. The production was a personification of the distortion of puppets and the effectiveness thereof (Koekemoer, 2008).

Proschan (1980: 30, cited in Kruger, 2004: 4) explained distortion as an element of puppetry whereby certain features of a puppet are exaggerated or reduced. An example of distortion is to enhance certain traits, such as creating bigger eyes with overemphasised eyelashes, or the reduction of features where the puppet's mouth is less prominent to focus attention on another feature instead.

A proper assessment of the specific audience is vital in determining the most suitable type of puppet. Currell (1980: 30) explained that, in some instances, the type of puppet may be determined by individual preferences. From an education point of view, the capabilities of the children play a significant role in deciding on the type of puppet. Etherington (2000: 160) considers puppets to be a form of expressive art, which implies that the inclusion of dance, song, poetry and drama can enhance the effectiveness of puppetry.

Astell-Burt (2001: 3) believed that "to enable someone to tell their story, having the 'right tools for the job' is essential". The author further emphasised the importance of training for educators who use puppets as a teaching tool. "When puppets are used, it is crucial that educators use their 'truthful, unaffected personal expression' to translate lessons into powerful learning for children" (Astell-Burt, 2001: 3).

Zuljevic (2004: 6) share the importance of training educators on the use of puppets within the educational setting. The author stated that the acquisition of specific skills of puppet performance, focusing on movement, vocal expression and gestures are basic

components of an educators training programme. The author added that teachers should consider the goals they want to achieve through the use of puppets (Zuljevic, 2004: 6).

Keogh, Naylor, Downing, Maloney and Simon (2006: 1) explored the use of puppets and storytelling as a form of stimulus when teaching in the field of science. According to the authors, children responded better to puppets than to teachers alone when typical science lessons were conducted. The authors reported as follows on the effect puppets had on the engagement of children:

> The positive impact on children's engagement is a valuable outcome of the research. Engagement is important in itself; it is also an essential prerequisite for thinking and talking about scientific ideas and for using higher order thinking skills, which are narrative, dialogue, context and purpose. Stories create all of these, and our research suggests that puppets can enhance the impact of stories in science lessons. In other words, the puppets can bring stories to life (Keogh et al, 2006: 1).

South African puppets are used to teach school children about HIV/Aids through stories told by a group of marionettes. The Sibahle Educational Puppeteers present a puppet show titled, 'Abangeni – Lean on me'. Mogotsi (2004: 1), who wrote on the effectiveness of this programme, had the following to say about the role of puppets in communicating important lessons to learners:

> Puppets are better used to convey important messages to children. What we are doing today is we are teaching learners to be responsible, attend school regularly, listen to their teachers, do their homework, and – most importantly – to be knowledgeable about issues around HIV/Aids (Mogotsi, 2004: 1).

Parker, Dalrympie and Durden (1998: 51-67) confirmed that the puppet theatre, as a form of community theatre, is well established in South Africa, especially in the areas of social education within disadvantaged communities. The authors highlighted the crucial aspect of involving government and non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in creating a culture of awareness of issues associated with, for example, HIV/Aids (Parker, Dalrympie and Durden, 1998: 51-67).

Chapter Two positioned the relevance of puppetry to children's education in general. Furthermore, the researcher explored the differences between puppets, muppets, life-sized characters and mascots. Although puppetry is known for its entertainment value, the chapter highlighted the connection of this art form to education and the development of self-expression amongst children.

CHAPTER 3: DATA ANALYSIS: FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS

3.1 DATA ANALYSIS: FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS

This chapter covers the data analysis process and deals with the responses from educators on the effectiveness of the use of puppetry in education and include important aspects such as the importance of puppetry in the disclosure process during sensitive cases where children are involved. This chapter also deals with the role of the Department of Education, in collaboration with relevant Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), in the success of the puppetry training programme and the importance of a well-formulated training manual with clear instructions on the use of puppets for educational purposes.

3.1.1 Background on the training of educators

In a interview with Fourie (2008), before conducting a training session, the relevant NGO requests the school to nominate life skill educators that fit the profile of being confident, outgoing, theatrical and creative. The NGO classifies these educators under the term "Key Role Players". Although the personality profile of the educator is important, it should be emphasised that the more reserved educator can play just as important role in the education process by being actively involved in assisting the school psychologist or social worker during a disclosure process specifically. The

training provided by the NGO also includes an extensive child protection and protocol session, which stretches over a duration of three to five days. During this part of the training, where sensitive issues such as verbal abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse are presented, a qualified protocol specialist and master trainer child protector take the lead in presenting the information to educators. In this part of the training, educators will familiarise themselves, with the help of the facilitators on the process of disclosure. Against the backdrop of legislation on child protection, educators will also be empowered on how to manage the disclosure process without harming the child, up to the point of intervention by a qualified social worker or school psychologist. The NGO feels that the educators play an essential part during the disclosure process whereby, acting as an informant to social workers in supplying them with notes on observations. The NGO believes that the process of compiling evidence during a disclosure process is extremely valuable, because in some schools social workers and psychologists are not always available. These basic skills taught by the NGO indirectly assist social workers with their investigations.

3.1.2 Information about puppets used in education

Thirty-two educators completed the questionnaire pertaining to general information about puppets used in education and other relevant topics relating to puppets used in education. Eight (8) educators from each school completed the questionnaire. Four schools participated in the project.

3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE 1: INPUTS BY EDUCATORS

Educators were asked to complete a questionnaire, consisting of fourteen statements relating to effectiveness of the use of puppetry in education. Participants had to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with these statements. Their responses were then recorded and reflected in the form of Frequency Tables. The main objective of these questions was to test if the educators understand their field of education, and to determine if the educators together with their peers value the power of puppets used in education. Only a small number of the teachers have been exposed to life skill puppet training sessions before and some of the teachers have never been exposed to the use of puppetry.

3.2.1 Statement 1: Some educators disregard the use of puppets

With this statement, the researcher wanted to determine the perception of educators on the use of puppets by analysing the responses of these educators, as well as their general perception on how they view their peers' willingness and ability to introduce puppets during the education of foundation phase learners. When responding to this statement, ten out of the group of 32 (31.3%) indicated that some educators disregard the use of puppets during their life skill education training. Nine (28.1%) educators indicated that they strongly disagree with the view that educators marginalise the use of puppets. Six of the educators (18.8%) indicated that they tend to disagree, four (12.5%) of the educators stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed. Three educators (9.4%)

did not know what to answer. The percentage responses by educators are graphically displayed below:

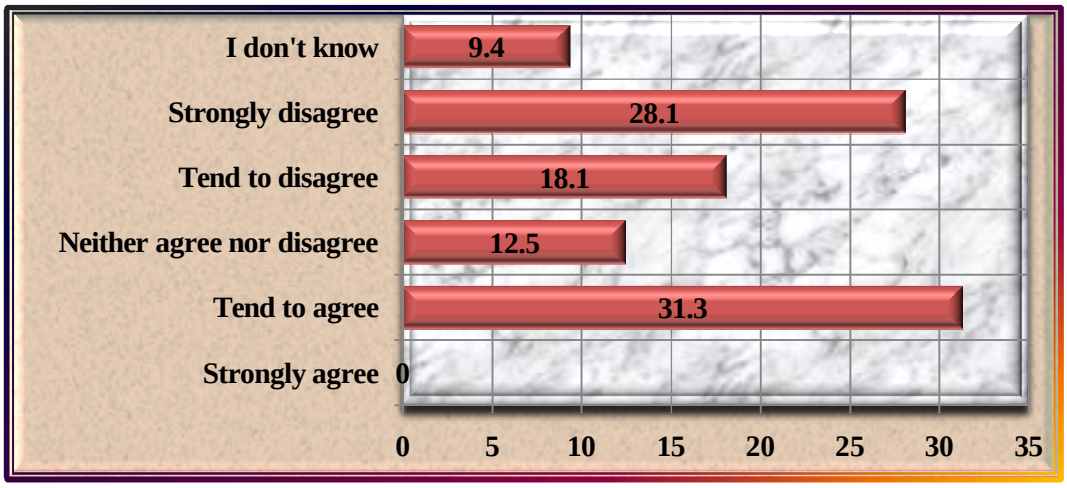


Figure 3.1: Statement 1: Graphical Illustration of Responses (% Percentage) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.1: Analysis of Statement 1 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	**0**
Tend to Agree	10.0	2.3	31.3	**31.3**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.0	0.9	12.5	**43.8**
Tend to Disagree	6.0	1.4	18.8	**62.5**
Strongly Disagree	9.0	2.0	28.1	**90.6**
I don't know	3.0	0.7	9.4	**100**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.2 Statement 2: The department of education (D.O.E) provides regular puppetry training in our region

This specific statement was included to gauge whether the D.O.E. offer regular training programmes to educators. In Statement 12, educators were requested to indicate whether they believed that they should be trained on a regular basis. The purpose of including both these statements was to identify any gap between supply and demand within the context of training.

Eleven members (34.4%) of the group of educators stated that they tend to disagree with the statement. Eight educators (25.0%) responded that they tend to agree with the statement and six educators (18.8%) indicated that they strongly disagreed with the statement. Four educators (12.5%) stated that they strongly agreed with the statement. The remaining three educators (9.4%) indicated that they did not know what to answer to this statement.

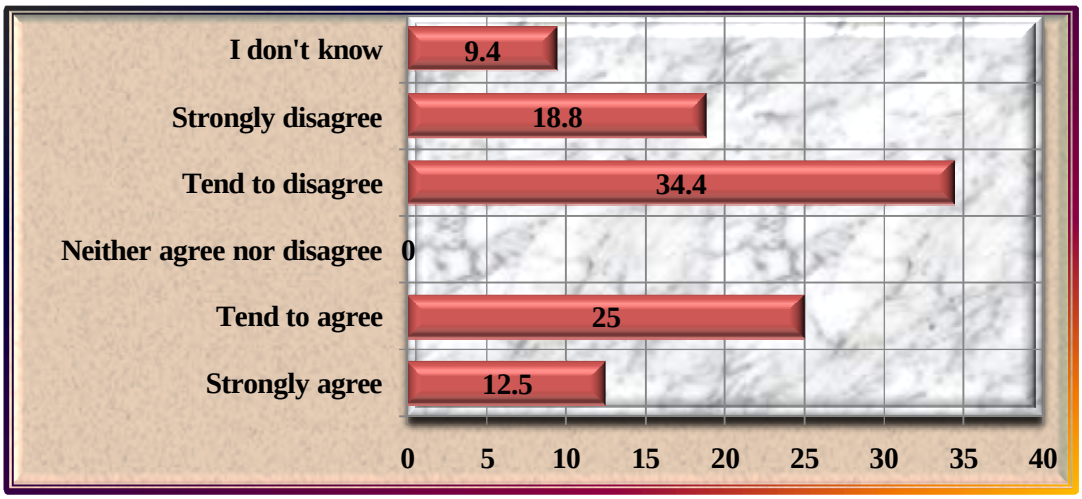


Figure 3.2: Statement 2: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.2: Analysis of Statement 2 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	4.0	0.9	12.5	**12.5**
Tend to Agree	8.0	1.8	25.0	**37.5**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0	0	0	**0**
Tend to Disagree	11.0	2.5	34.4	**71.9**
Strongly Disagree	6.0	1.4	18.8	**90.6**
I don't know	3.0	0.7	9.4	**100.0**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.3 Statement 3: Children, in general, respond positively towards the introduction of a puppet

By posing this statement, the researcher wanted to establish whether children reacted positively to puppetry during education.

The data collected on this statement proved that the majority of life skill educators believed that puppets enhance the response of children if introduced during a life skill class. Twenty educators, representing 62.5% of the total group, strongly agreed with the statement. In addition, six educators (18.8%) indicated that they tended to agree, while two participants (6.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed. One educator (3.1%) stated that she tended to disagree with the statement, followed by another educator (3.1%)

who strongly disagreed that the introduction of puppetry could enhance the education process. However, the researcher determined that the educator that strongly disagreed with statement on the positive impact of puppetry did not have exposure to puppetry as an educational tool before. Two educators (6.3%) did not know how to respond to the statement.

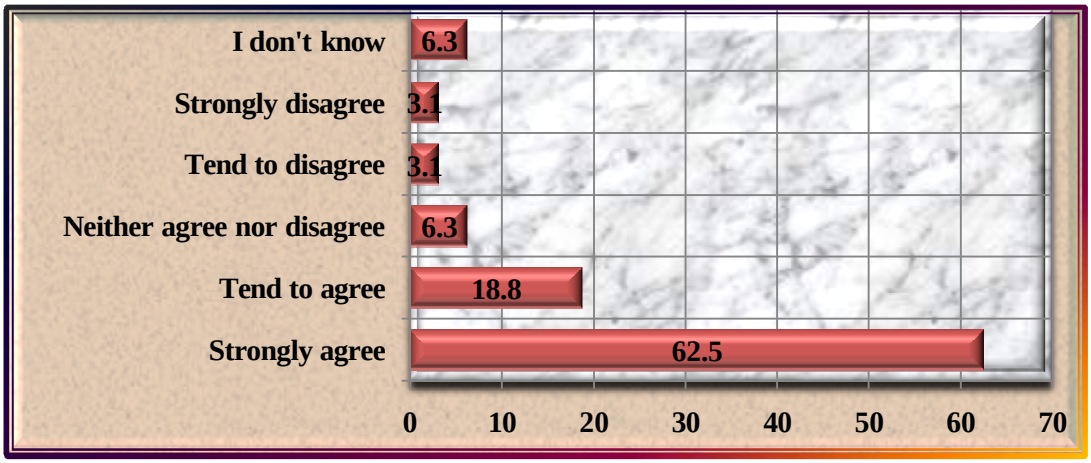


Figure 3.3: Statement 3: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.3: Analysis of Statement 3 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	20.0	4.5	62.5	**62.5**
Tend to Agree	6.0	1.4	18.8	**81.3**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.0	0.5	6.3	**87.5**
Tend to Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**90.6**
Strongly Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**93.8**
I don't know	2.0	0.5	6.3	**100**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.4 Statement 4: Most educators find it easy to use puppets in their education period

This statement refers to educators' ability and skills to translate educational messages through the use of puppets, testing the perception of educators on how easy or difficult some educators found the application of puppets. When analysing the data the researcher found that eleven educators (34.4%) out of the group of 32 tended to agree that they found it easy to use puppets, while five educators (15.6%) indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement. During further discussions, the eight educators (25%) who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement did indicate that they believe life skill educators do find it easy to use puppets, depending on the topic of education. Six educators (18.8%) indicated that they tend to disagree and two educators (6.3%) strongly disagreed.

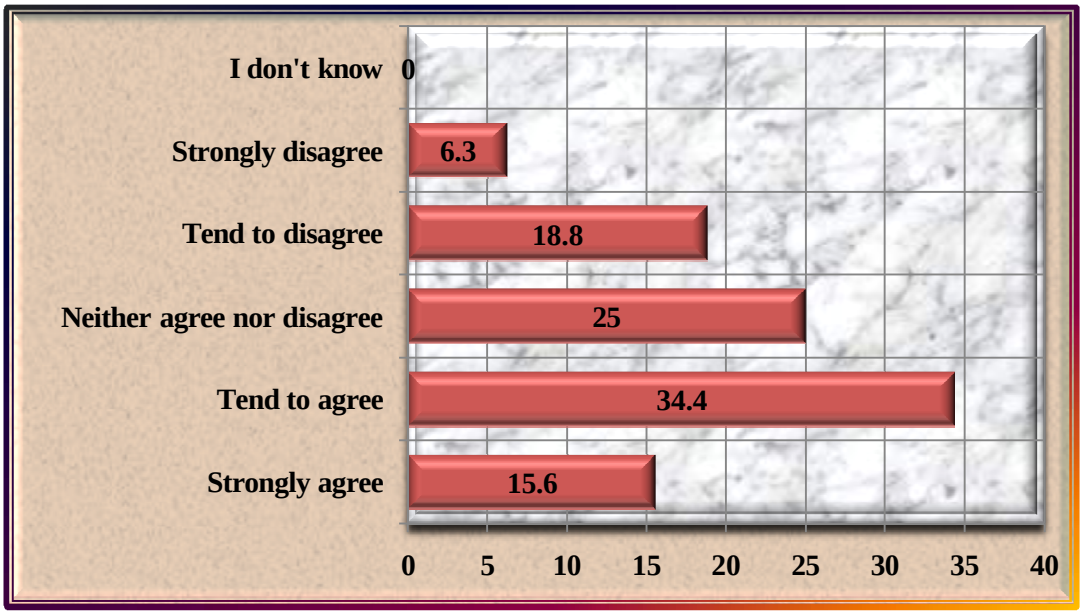


Figure 3.4: Statement 4: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	***Frequency***	***Percentage***	***Valid Percentage***	***Cumulative Percentage***
Strongly Agree	5.0	1.1	15.6	**15.6**
Tend to Agree	11.0	2.5	34.4	**50.0**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.0	1.8	25.0	**75.0**
Tend to Disagree	6.0	1.4	18.8	**93.8**
Strongly Disagree	2.0	0.5	6.3	**100**
I don't know	0	0	0	**0**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

Table 3.4: Analysis of Statement 4 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

3.2.5 Statement 5: It is difficult to manoeuvre, operate and manipulate puppets

With this statement, the researcher wanted to establish whether educators have specific skills for the manipulation of puppets. The responses reflected that only four educators (12.5%) believed that puppets were difficult to manoeuvre, operate or manipulate. Thirteen educators (40.6%) did not find it difficult to operate puppets and indicated that they tend to disagree with the statement. Eight more educators (25%) supported this notion and strongly disagreed with the statement. Four educators, or 12.5% of the total group, indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and three participants (9.4%) did not know what to answer. The percentages are summarised as follows:

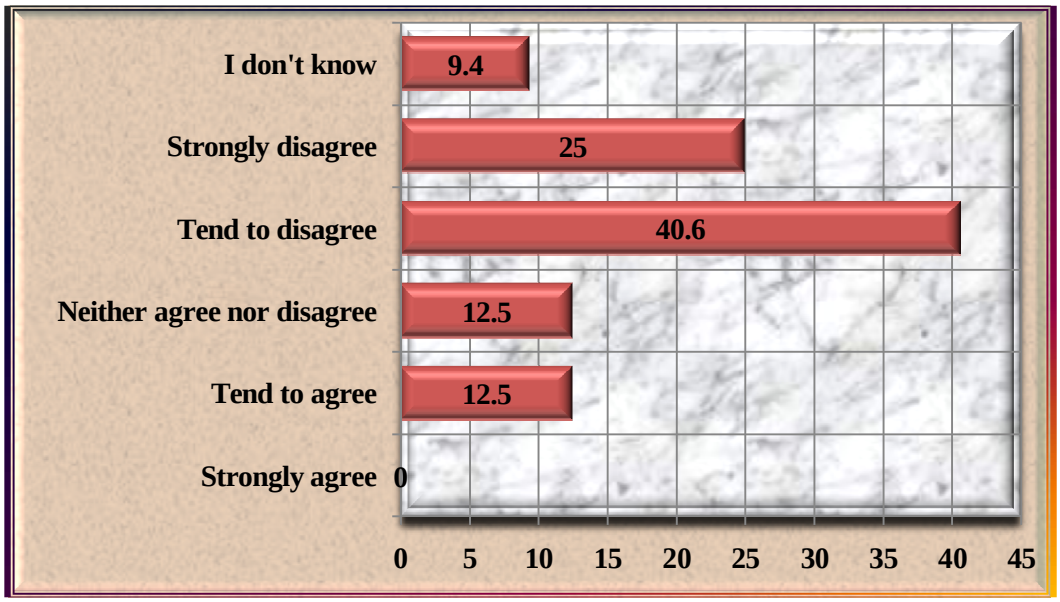


Figure 3.5: Statement 5: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.5: Analysis of Statement 5 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	4.0	0.9	12.5	**12.5**
Tend to Agree	0	0	0	**0**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.0	0.9	12.5	**25.0**
Tend to Disagree	13.0	2.9	40.6	**65.6**
Strongly Disagree	8.0	1.8	25.0	**90.6**
I don't know	3.0	0.7	9.4	**100.0**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.6 Statement 6: Puppets can play an essential role in a disclosure process when dealing with sensitive issues

Twenty-one educators (65.6%) strongly agreed that puppets could fulfil an essential role during the disclosure process. The eight educators who tended to agree with the statement comprised another 25% of the total group. Two respondents (6.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while only one educator (3.1%) strongly disagreed with the importance of puppets as far as the disclosure process was concerned. The diagram below depicts their responses:

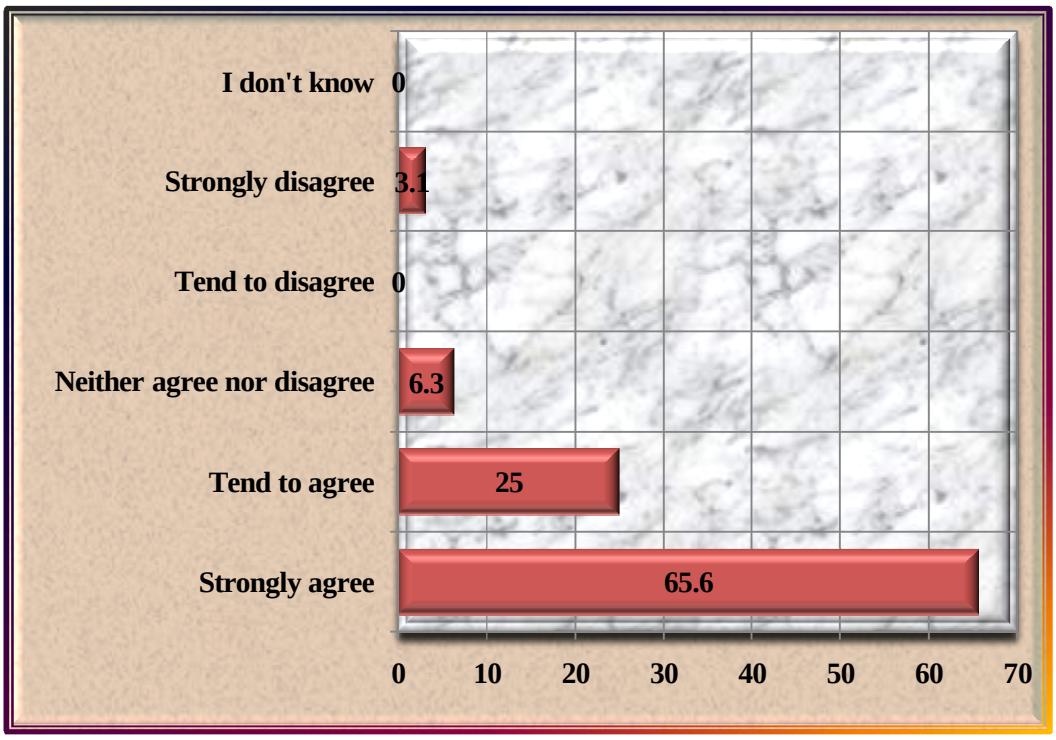


Figure 3.6: Statement 6: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.6: Analysis of Statement 6 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	21.0	4.8	65.6	**65.6**
Tend to Agree	8.0	1.8	25.0	**90.6**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.0	0.5	6.3	**96.9**
Tend to Disagree	0	0	0	**0**
Strongly Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**100**
I don't know	0	0	0	**0**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.7 Statement 7: The introduction of puppets adds value to the education curriculum

A structured training programme during education is a necessity for the successful use of puppets during education. Such a training programme supplies the information and the puppet becomes a support tool to the education of learners. With this statement, the researcher wanted to establish what the perception of life skill educators was with regard to the value derived from using puppets during life skill class.

During analysis of the responses to this statement, the researcher found that fifteen educators (46.9) strongly agreed that puppets add value to the education curriculum, supported by another thirteen educators (40.6%) who tended to agree with the

statement. Two educators (6.3%) strongly disagreed and another respondent (3.1%) also tended to disagree with the value that the introduction of puppets offered to the education curriculum. One respondent (3.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The analysis is depicted below:

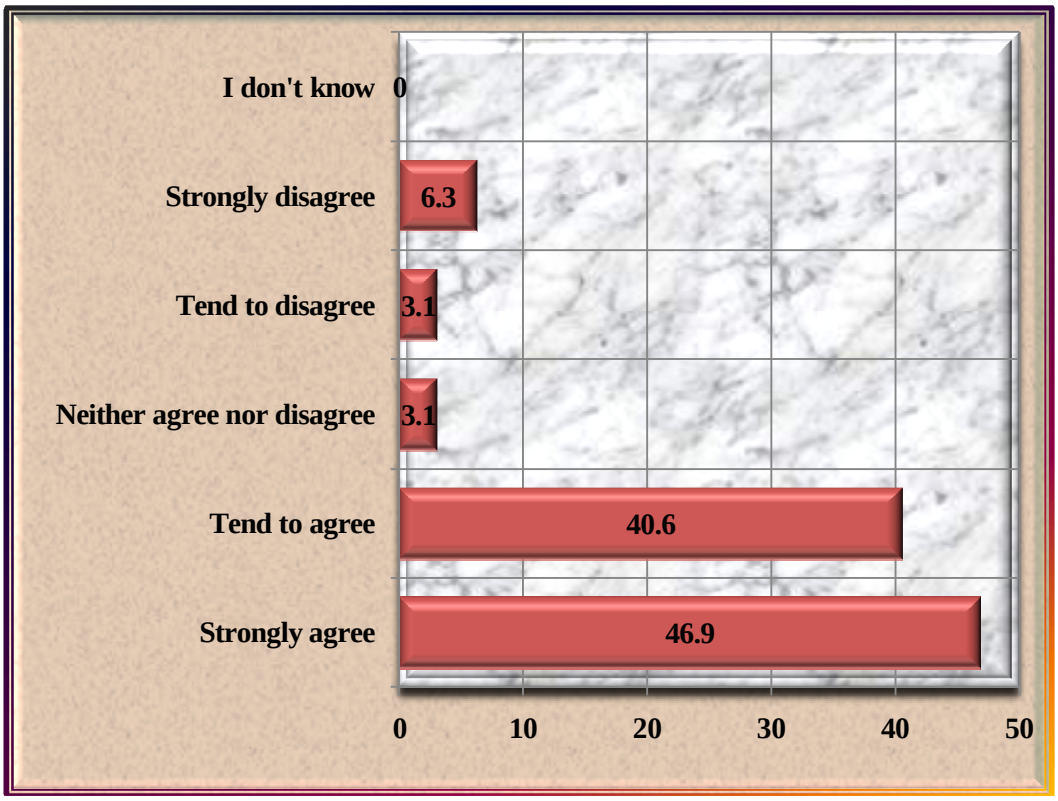


Figure 3.7: Statement 7: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.7: Analysis of Statement 7 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	15.0	3.4.	46.9	**46.9**
Tend to Agree	13.0	2.9	40.6	**87.5**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**90.6**
Tend to Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**93.8**
Strongly Disagree	2.0	0.5	6.3	**100**
I don't know	0	0	0	**100**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.8 Statement 8: Children tend to remember more efficiently if a puppet was used during a lesson

Pivotal to the effective teaching of children is a child's ability to retain the essence of the information afterwards. Puppetry offers educators a creative way to convey messages in a visual manner. With this statement, the researcher wanted to gauge whether educators' experiences confirmed this notion. The majority of life skills educators believed that children tended to remember more effectively when puppets are used during education. Eighteen educators (56.3%) strongly agreed and another eleven educators (34.4%) tended to agree with the statement, collectively accounting for 90.7% of the participants. One educator (3.1%) strongly disagreed and another (3.1%)

tended to disagree with the statement. The remaining educator (3.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed. The graphical illustration of the percentages and analysis follow below:

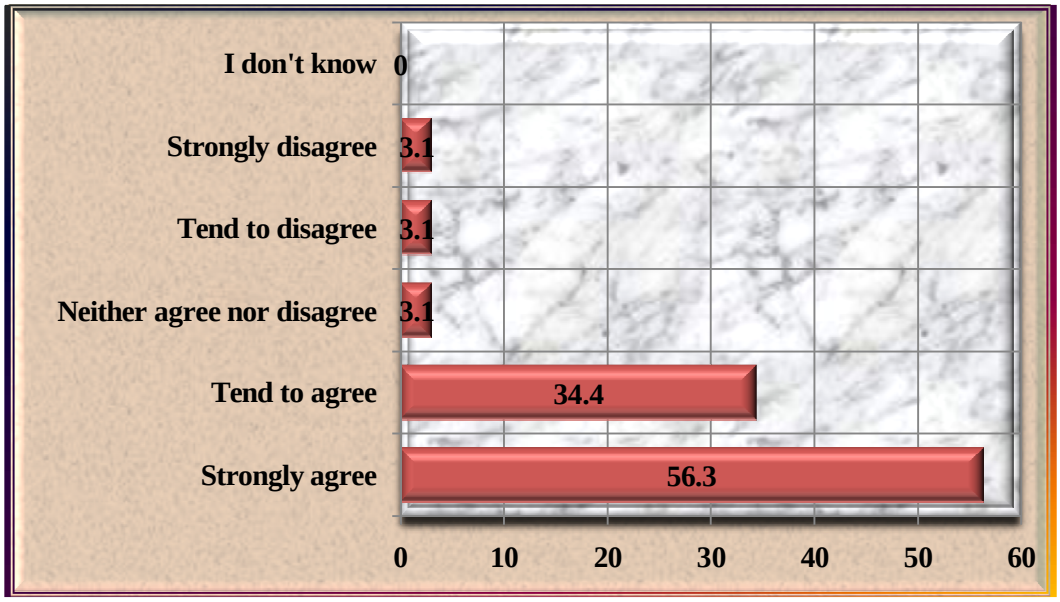


Figure 3.8: Statement 8: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.8: Analysis of Statement 8 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	18.0	4.1	56.3	**56.3**
Tend to Agree	11.0	2.5	34.4	**90.6**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**93.8**
Tend to Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**96.9**
Strongly Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**100**
I don't know	0	0	0	**100**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.9 Statement 9: Puppets can only be resourceful in education when used in accordance with a structured training manual

The responses to this statement reflected that the majority of the groups agreed that a structured training manual could render the use of puppets more resourceful during education. Ten educators (31.3%) strongly agreed with the statement and seven educators (21.9%) indicated that they tend to agree that a training manual would be valuable. The four participants who strongly disagreed with the statement accounted for to 2.5% of the total group and another eight respondents (25%) tended to disagree. Two participants (6.3%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, followed by one educator (3.1%) that did not know what to answer in this case. Below is a summary of the percentages and analysis:

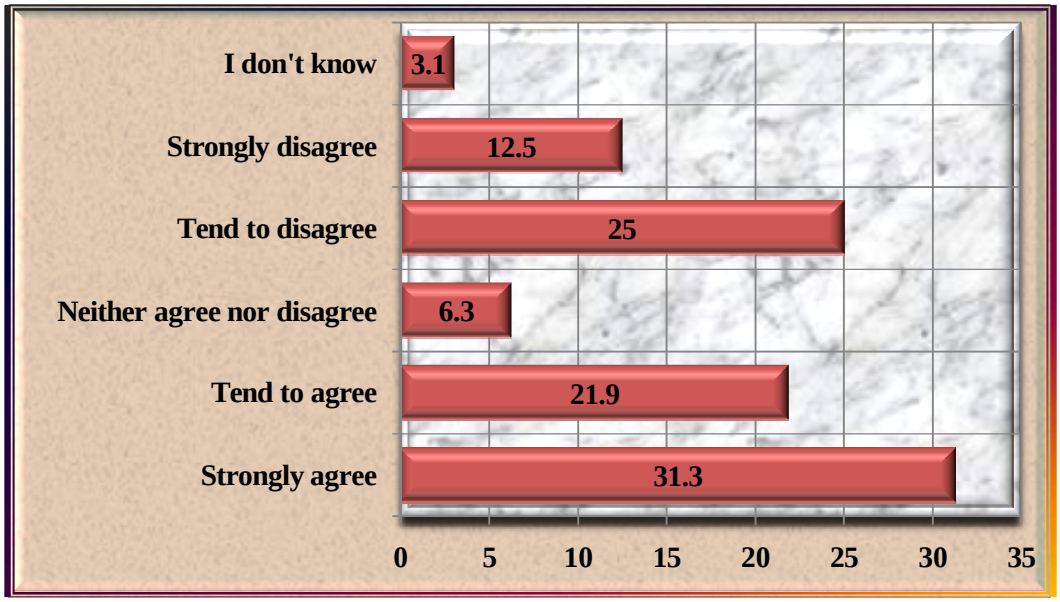


Figure 3.9: Statement 9: Graphical Illustration Of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.9: Analysis of Statement 9 (**Source**: Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	10.0	2.3	31.3	**31.3**
Tend to Agree	7.0	1.6	21.9	**53.1**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.0	0.5	6.3	**59.4**
Tend to Disagree	8.0	1.8	25.0	**84.4**
Strongly Disagree	4.0	0.9	12.5	**96.9**
I don't know	1.0	0.2	3.1	**100**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.10 Statement 10: Puppets enhance the imagination, concentration and creativity of children

With this statement, the researcher wanted to establish if life skill educators really believed that puppets could enhance the imagination, concentration and creativity of children. The responses below reflect that the majority of the group indicated that puppets could fulfil this role. The total number of educators who agreed with the statement amounted to a high percentage of 90.7%, or 29 educators, collectively representing 19 educators (59.4%) who strongly agreed and 10 educators (31.3%) who tended to agree with the statement. Only one respondent (3.1%) disagreed with the statement and two respondents (6.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed. The graphical summary of this statement follows below:

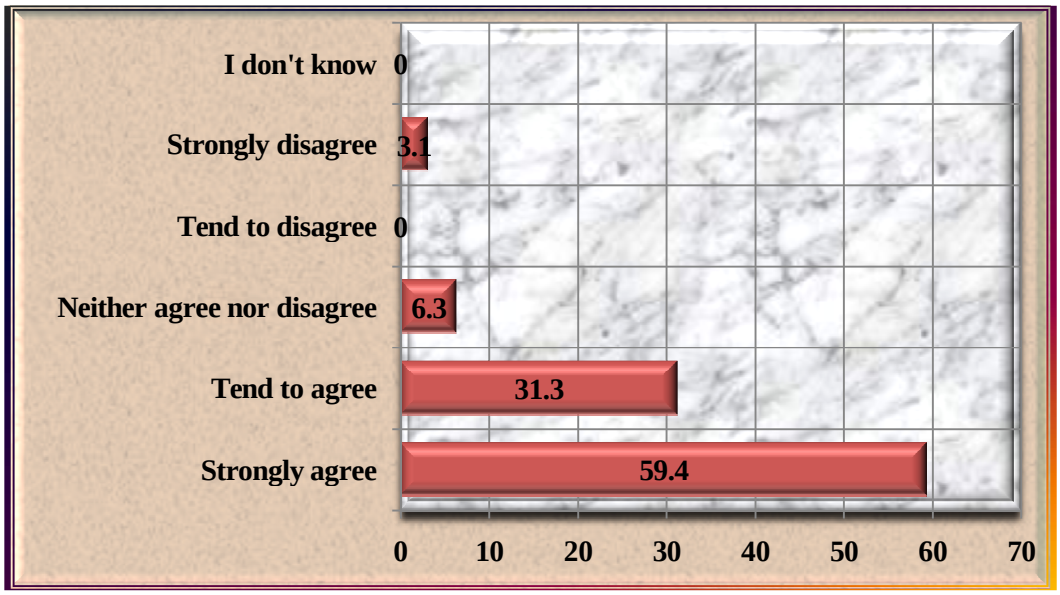


Figure 3.10: Statement 10: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.10: Analysis of Statement 10 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	19.0	4.3	59.4	**59.4**
Tend to Agree	10.0	2.3	31.3	**90.6**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.0	0.5	6.3	**96.9**
Tend to Disagree	0	0	0	**0**
Strongly Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**100**
I don't know	0	0	0	**100**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.11 Statement 11: Puppets used in education need to be of no gender (androgynous)

The word androgynous refers to something having both male and female characteristics or being neither distinguishable between masculine of feminine. It was important to the researcher to establish whether life skill educators felt that puppets needed to be of any gender or not. The responses clearly indicated that the majority educators believed that puppets needed to be androgynous. The groups who indicated that they supported the statement consisted of 10 educators (31.3%) who tended to agree and seven educators (21.9%) who strongly agreed. The accumulative percentage of the abovementioned groups resulted in a final percentage of 53.2%. Nine educators (28.1%) tended to disagree and one respondent (3.1%) strongly disagreed. Five educators (15.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The percentages and analysis are indicated below:

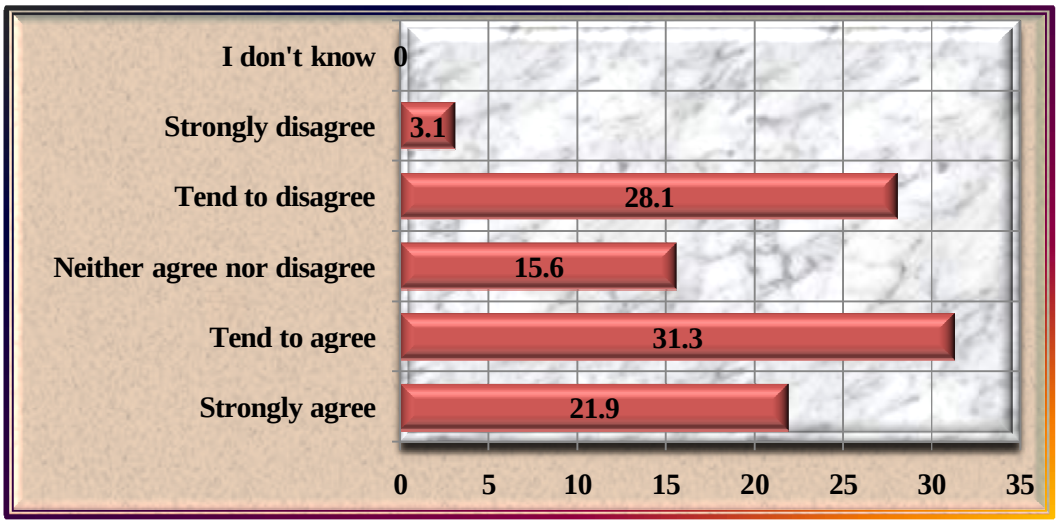


Figure 3.11: Statement 11: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.11: Analysing Statement 11 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	7.0	1.6	21.9	**21.9**
Tend to Agree	10.0	2.3	31.3	**53.1**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.0	1.1	15.6	**68.8**
Tend to Disagree	9.0	2.0	28.1	**96.9**
Strongly Disagree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**100**
I don't know	0	0	0	**100**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.12 Statement 12: Educators need to attend puppet training sessions on a regular basis

With this statement, the researcher wanted to establish whether a need existed for training on a regular basis. Eight educators (25%) acknowledged the importance of regular puppet training sessions by indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement, supported by another twelve educators (37.5%) who also tended to agree. Four educators (12.5%) tended to disagree and five respondents (15.6%) strongly disagreed, collectively indicating that 28.1% of educators did not see the need for educators attending regular training sessions on the use of puppets. Three educators (9.4%) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. A summary of these findings is depicted below:

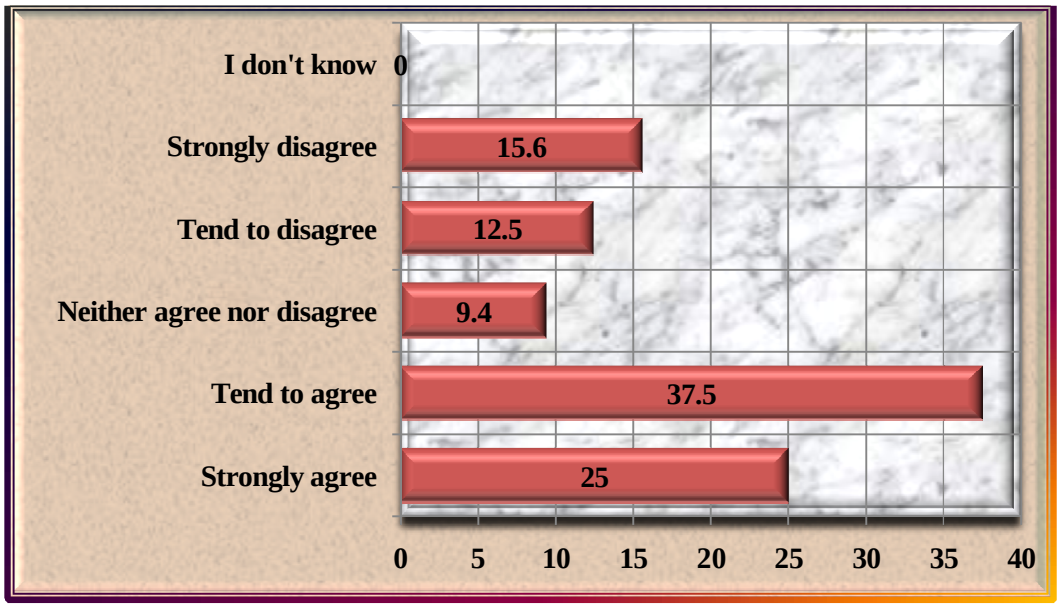


Figure 3.12: Statement 12: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table.3.12: Analysis of Statement 12 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	8.0	1.8	25.0	**25.0**
Tend to Agree	12.0	2.7	37.5	**62.5**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3.0	0.7	9.4	**71.9**
Tend to Disagree	4.0	0.9	12.5	**84.4**
Strongly Disagree	5.0	1.1	15.6	**100**
I don't know	0	0	0	**100**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

3.2.13 Statement 13: To use a human voice as the voice of the puppet can scare children

This statement deals with the use of the human voice and its effect on children when used as the voice of the puppet. The researcher wanted to establish whether educators believed that the introduction of a human voice, as the voice of the puppet, would scare children. Twenty-one educators (65.6%) believed that the addition of the human voice posed no threat, consisting of nine educators (28.1%) who indicated that they tend to disagree and a further twelve educators (37.5%) who strongly disagreed with the statement. Only one educator (3.1%) strongly agreed that the use of the human voice as that of the puppet could scare children and two educators (6.3%) tended to agree with the statement. Five educators did not agree or disagree with the statement. The percentage graph and analysis follow below:

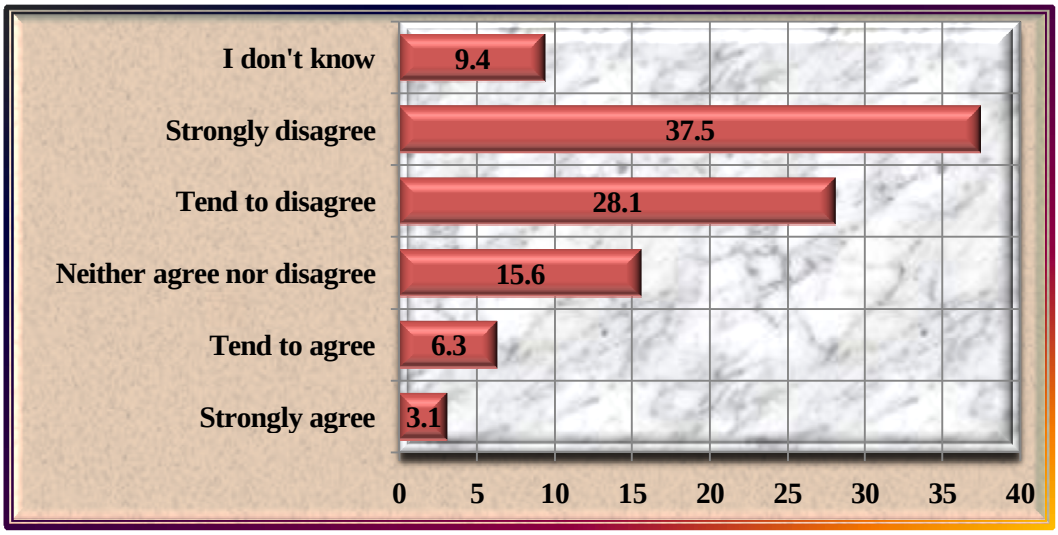


Figure 3.13: Statement 14: Graphical Illustration of Responses (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Table 3.13: Analysis of Statement 14 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Valid Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Strongly Agree	1.0	0.2	3.1	**3.1**
Tend to Agree	2.0	0.5	6.3	**9.4**
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.0	1.1	15.6	**25.0**
Tend to Disagree	9.0	2.0	28.1	**53.1**
Strongly Disagree	12.0	2.7	37.5	**90.6**
I don't know	3.0	0.7	9.4	**100**
TOTAL	**32**	**7.3**	**100**	

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS: FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS: FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS

Since the subjects of the study are young children who cannot deal with questionnaires, the researcher engaged the children during interactive observations to determine, from a learner's perspective, which factors contributed to the effective use of puppets. Children in the age groups six to eight years (Grade one to three) participated, as illustrated in population diagram below. In the researcher's capacity as a Master Trainer Child Protector, this exercise was conducted with empathy and in the presence of the teachers from each school. All observations and responses were listed on the relevant observation templates.

4.2 POPULATION

The learners were divided into the following groups:

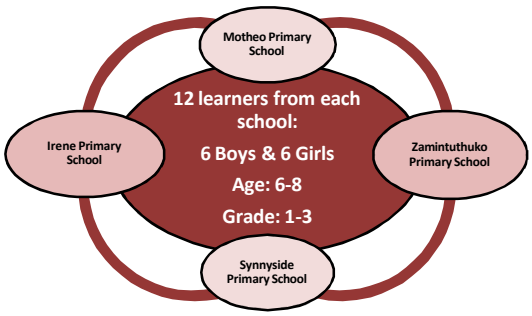


Figure 4.1: Demographic Profile: Research Population, Foundation Phase Learners (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

4.3 CAPTURING INTERACTIVE OBSERVATIONS

The researcher compiled a data-capturing book that was used during the interactive observation process, which was used to document any relevant responses, whether verbal on non-verbal comments and specifically the actions of the learners. The researcher constructed and/or adapted all the test objects, which consisted of various puppets and toys, specifically for the purpose of this study.

During the interactive observations, girls from grade one were asked to make their selections first, followed by the boys from the same grade. This pattern was then repeated for learners from grades two and three. Learners were asked to select, given the different scenarios described below, the puppets or toys that appealed to them. In doing so, they were encouraged to pick up these objects, touch them, carry them around, look at their features carefully and then indicate the one they would prefer.



Figure 4.2: The Researcher with Participants from Sunnyside Primary School (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

4.3.1 Interactive Observation Category 1: Does the gender of a child play a significant role when educators select puppets that are most suitable during an education session?

The first observation category consisted of two sections and was specifically introduced to assess the influence of a child's gender on the type of puppets that should be used during education. With these two statements, the researcher wanted to establish the measure in which a learner needs to be able to relate to an object for it to be deemed an effective communication or training tool. Colour was introduced in blue and pink shades, traditionally "masculine" and "feminine" colours, specifically to observe whether boys instinctively relate easier to blue toys and girls to pink toys. The researcher introduced this observation in two parts, as the colours attached to specific gender-type objects were deliberately jumbled to observe the reactions of the learners. With Part 1 of this interactive observation category, a completely blue doll was introduced together with other objects. In Part 2, the researcher observed learners as they reacted to two masculine objects - a truck and an action hero – both presented in pink. Since the affect of gender-type objects was tested, the researcher specifically divided the objects to observe if boys and girls reacted in different ways to these objects.

4.3.1.1 Part 1: Does the colour of an object influence the way in which a learner from a specific gender group relates to such an object, or is the nature (e.g. the perceived gender-relation of the object the only determining factor?



Figure 4.3: Objects for Observation Category 1 (Part 1) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

During the first part of this observation, a blue car (ostensibly masculine) was introduced, together with a blue doll (a feminine object, but in a masculine colour), introducing both masculine and feminine objects, but only in a masculine colour. The third object was the soft blue puppet, which had more androgynous features and could be seen as a more gender-neutral toy. These objects were placed in a specific order not to make the neutral object the focal point – placed in the middle - thereby eliminating the possibility of influencing the learners' choices.

The selections of the learners can be summarised as follows:

None of the girls in any of the grades opted for the blue car, a masculine object painted with a masculine colour. None of the boys in any of the grades selected the blue doll, a

feminine object painted in a masculine colour. From the total group of 48 participants, comprising an equal number of boys and girls, 16 boys (33.3%) selected the blue car. Nine girls (18.8%) selected the blue doll. Twenty-three learners (47.9%), fifteen girls and eight boys, selected the neutral object.

Table 4.1: Interactive Observation 1 (Part 1) Analysed (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Observation Category 1 (Part 1)			***GROUPS***						
			Grade 1 Girl	Grade 1 Boy	Grade 2 Girl	Grade 2 Boy	Grade 3 Girl	Grade 3 Boy	**Total**
OBJECTS	**Blue car**	**Count**	0	4	0	6	0	6	**16**
		% of Total	.0%	8.3%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	12.5%	**33.3%**
	Blue puppet	**Count**	5	4	6	2	4	2	**23**
		% of Total	10.4%	8.3%	12.5%	4.2%	8.3%	4.2%	**47.9%**
	Blue doll	**Count**	3	0	2	0	4	0	**9**
		% of Total	6.2%	.0%	4.2%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	**18.8%**
	Total	**Count**	8	8	8	8	8	8	**48**
		% of Total	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**100.0%**

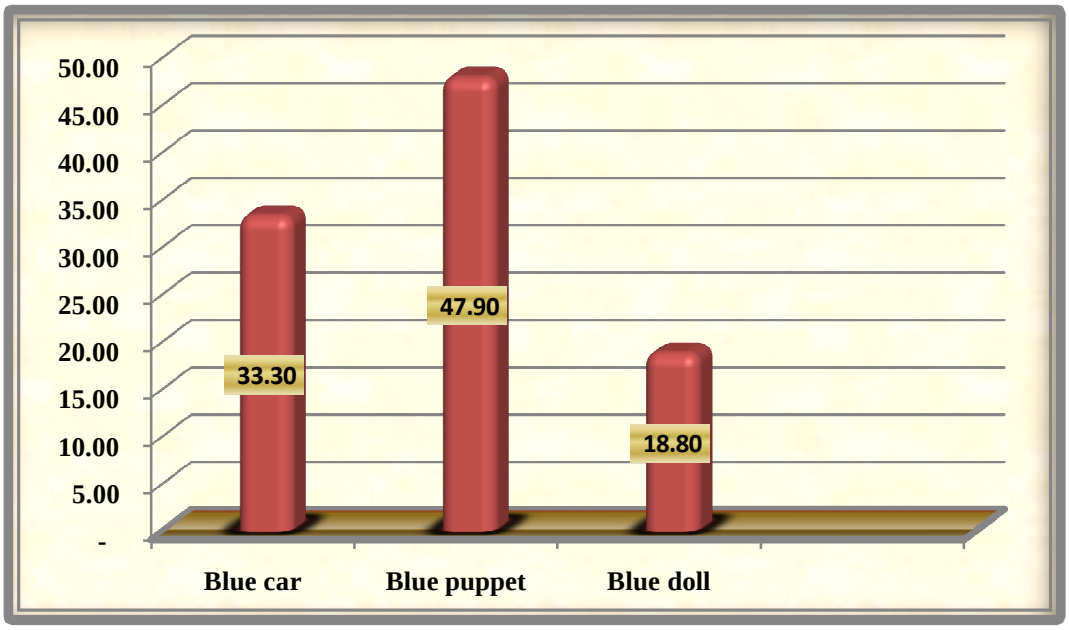


Figure 4.4: Graph: Interactive Observation 1 (Part 1) Analysed (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

4.3.1.2 Part 2: how did learners react when masculine objects were introduced in only feminine colours?



Figure 4.5: Objects for observation category 1 (part 2) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

During this, the second part of this observation category, only masculine objects were introduced, the first being a truck and the second an action hero. However, the researcher painted these objects in an obvious feminine colour (pink) to determine whether odd combinations had influenced the way learners, from both genders, made their selections. The soft blue puppet was again introduced as the neutral toy. In this case, however, the neutral toy was placed in the middle specifically to separate the two gender-related toys. The researcher selected this placement order to prevent a repetition of the first order.

The majority of the learners selected the pink truck. Accounting for 39.6% of the total group, eleven girls and eight boys chose this as their favourite object. The second preferred object was the pink action hero, representing 31.2% of the total responses. In total fifteen learners - three girls and twelve boys - opted for this object. The neutral object was selected by fourteen (29.2%) respondents consisting of ten girls and four boys.

Table 4.2: Interactive Observation 1 (Part 2) Analysed (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Observation Category 1 (Part 2)			***GROUPS***						
			Grade 1 Girl	Grade 1 Boy	Grade 2 Girl	Grade 2 Boy	Grade 3 Girl	Grade 3 Boy	**Total**
OBJECTS	**Pink truck**	Count	3	4	3	4	5	0	**19**
		% of Total	6.2%	8.3%	6.2%	8.3%	10.4%	.0%	**39.6%**
	Blue puppet	Count	4	1	3	2	3	1	**14**
		% of Total	8.3%	2.1%	6.2%	4.2%	6.2%	2.1%	**29.2%**
	Action hero	Count	1	3	2	2	0	7	**15**
		% of Total	2.1%	6.2%	4.2%	4.2%	.0%	14.6%	**31.2%**
	Total	Count	8	8	8	8	8	8	**48**
		% of Total	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**100.0%**

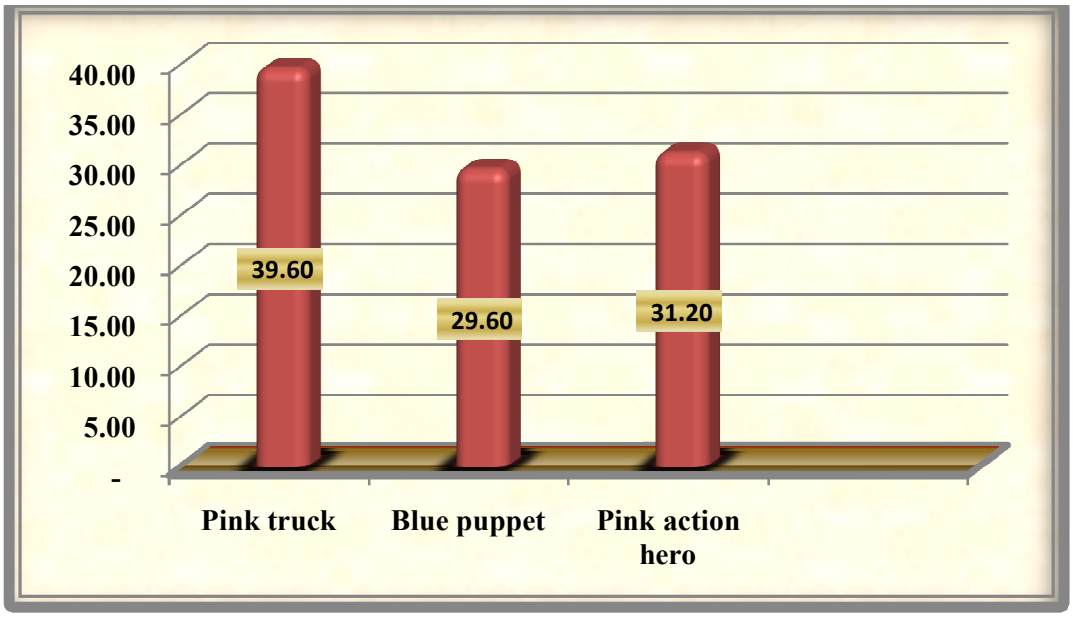


Figure 4.6: Graph: Interactive Observation 1 (Part 2) Analysed (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

4.3.2 Observation Category 2: Does the presence of perceived "human features" in a puppet (ears, eyes, hands, etc.), make it more appealing and do children find it easier to associate with?



Figure 4.7: Objects for Observation Category 2 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

During this observation, three seemingly similar puppets were placed next to each other. However, only the puppet on the right had all the features to render it complete. The puppet on the left had no eyes, but it had ears and hands. The puppet in the middle had no ears or hands, but it had eyes.

From the total group, 29 children (60.4%) indicated the complete puppet as their preference. The next preference was for the puppet with the eyes, but no ears or hands. This group made up 11 children, or 22.9% of the total group. Eight children (16.7%) opted for the puppet that had hands and ears, but no eyes. On differentiating between the responses from the boys and girls respectively, the margin for the group that selected the complete puppet was small – fourteen boys and fifteen girls. The puppet without the eyes was selected by more girls (five) than boys (three). This scenario is reversed in the case of the puppet with hands and ears, for which seven boys and four girls opted.

Table 4.3: Interactive Observation 2 Analysed (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Observation Category 2			***GROUPS***						
			Grade 1 Girl	**Grade 1 Boy**	**Grade 2 Girl**	**Grade 2 Boy**	**Grade 3 Girl**	**Grade 3 Boy**	**Total**
OBJECTS	**No eyes**	Count	2	1	1	0	2	2	**8**
		% of Total	4.2%	2.1%	2.1%	.0%	4.2%	4.2%	**16.7%**
	No ears and hands	Count	1	5	1	1	2	1	**11**
		% of Total	2.1%	10.4%	2.1%	2.1%	4.2%	2.1%	**22.9%**
	Complete puppet	Count	5	2	6	7	4	5	**29**
		% of Total	10.4%	4.2%	12.5%	14.6%	8.3%	10.4%	**60.4%**
	Total	Count	8	8	8	8	8	8	**48**
		% of Total	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**100.0%**

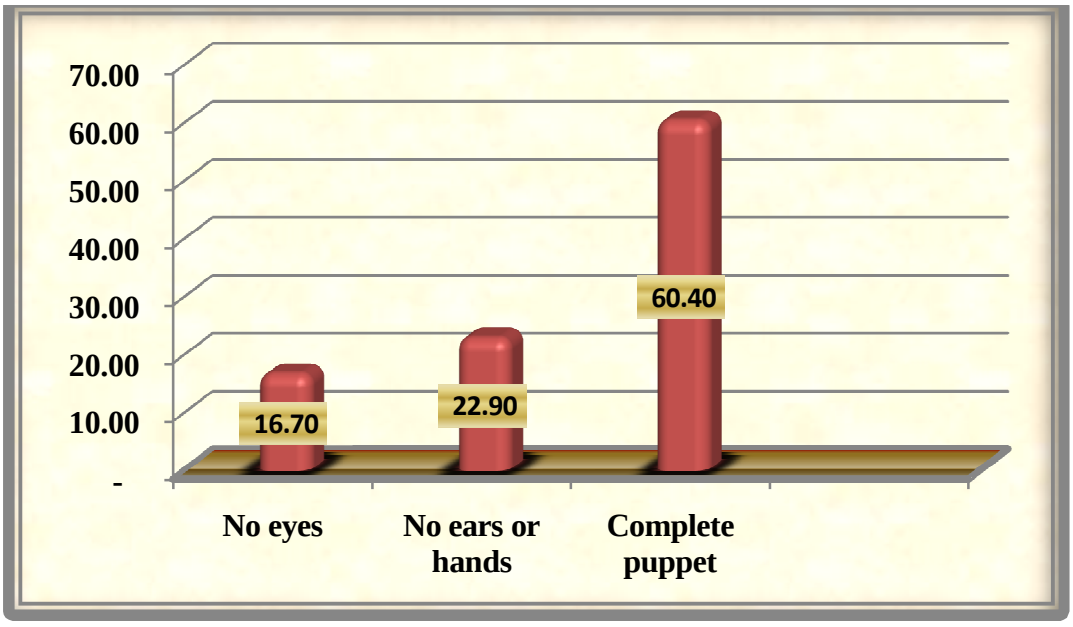


Figure 4.8: Graph: Interactive Observation Category 2 Analysed (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

4.3.3 Interactive Observation Category 3: Do children relate to dynamic puppets rather than to static ones and does the ability of a puppet to simulate realistic movement and facial expression, through its puppeteer, contribute to the reaction it evokes among children?



Figure 4.9: Objects for Observation Category 3 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Three different types of objects were introduced as part of this observation category. Firstly, a sock puppet was placed on the left of the object arrangement, followed by a wooden marionette in the middle, and a soft blue puppet was placed on the right. Twenty four learners (50%) of the group opted for the soft blue puppet, as their choice. Within this group there were seventeen girls and seven boys. The wooden marionette received the second highest selection, being the object of choice for seventeen learners (35.4%). This group included fourteen boys and three girls. The sock puppet received only seven votes (14.6%) from three boys and four girls.

Table 4.4: Interactive Observation Category 3 Analysed (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Observation Category 3			***GROUPS***						
			Grade 1 Girl	**Grade 1 Boy**	**Grade 2 Girl**	**Grade 2 Boy**	**Grade 3 Girl**	**Grade 3 Boy**	**Total**
OBJECTS	**Blue puppet**	Count	7	3	7	2	3	2	**24**
		% of Total	14.6%	6.2%	14.6%	4.2%	6.2%	4.2%	**50.0%**
	Wooden marionette	Count	1	4	1	4	1	6	**17**
		% of Total	2.1%	8.3%	2.1%	8.3%	2.1%	12.5%	**35.4%**
	Sock puppet	Count	0	1	0	2	4	0	**7**
		% of Total	.0%	2.1%	.0%	4.2%	8.3%	.0%	**14.6%**
	Total	Count	8	8	8	8	8	8	**48**
		% of Total	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**16.7%**	**100.0%**

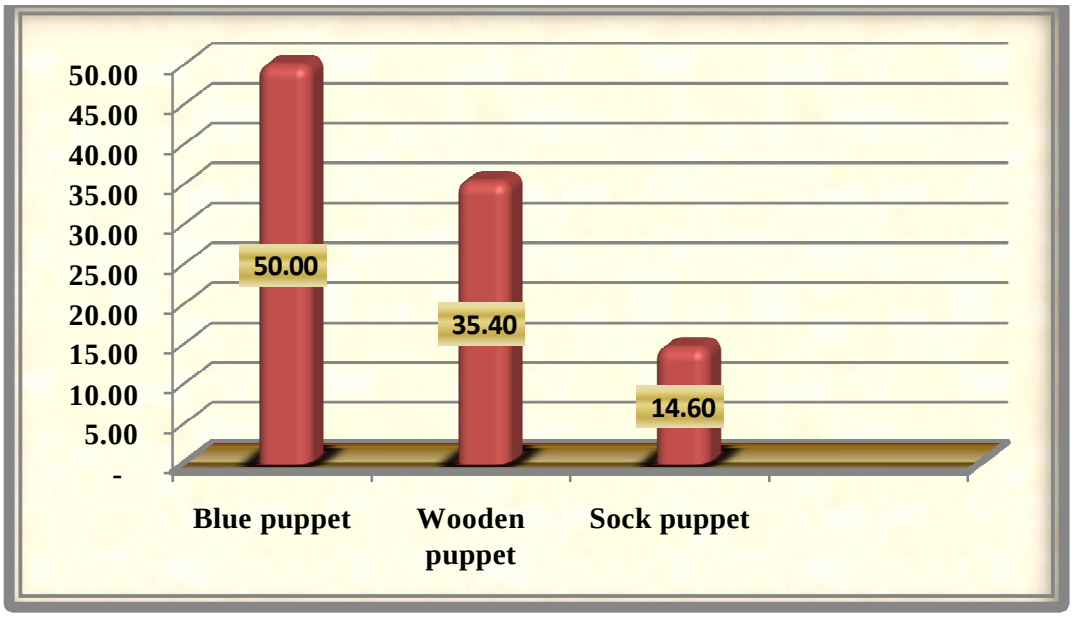


Figure 4.10: Graph: Interactive Observation Category 4 Analysed (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

4.3.4 Interactive Observation Category 5: Do the features that relate to the texture of the puppet play any major role?



Figure 4.11: Objects for Observation Category 5 (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

In this set of objects, the same type of puppet was used, but it was given different textures to test whether the construction features that relate to the texture of a puppet play any major role. The first puppet, called a "bling" puppet for the purpose of this research was placed on the left. This puppet's face was edged with silver wire and parts of his body were covered with soft feathers. The second puppet was completely covered by multi-coloured sandpaper and the third puppet was the soft blue puppet in its original texture.

The selection for first and second choice was extremely close in this case. Nineteen (40%) learners, consisting ten boys and nine girls, opted for the original puppet. Eighteen learners, representing 38.3% of the group, selected the bling puppet. Among this group were ten girls and eight boys. The sandpaper puppet evoked the least measure of appeal, as only ten children (21.3%) selected this puppet as their choice. The last group consisted of six boys and four girls.

Table 4.5: Interactive Observation 5 Analysed (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

Observation Category 4			***GROUPS***						
			Grade 1 Girl	Grade 1 Boy	Grade 2 Girl	Grade 2 Boy	Grade 3 Girl	Grade 3 Boy	**Total**
OBJECTS	**Original puppet**	Count	2	2	3	3	4	5	**19**
		% of Total	4.3%	4.3%	6.4%	6.4%	8.5%	10.6%	**40.4%**
	Bling puppet	Count	3	1	3	4	4	3	**18**
		% of Total	6.4%	2.1%	6.4%	8.5%	8.5%	6.4%	**38.3%**
	Sandpaper puppet	Count	3	5	1	1	0	0	**10**
		% of Total	6.4%	10.6%	2.1%	2.1%	.0%	.0%	**21.3%**
	Total	Count	8	8	7	8	8	8	**47**
		% of Total	**17.0%**	**17.0%**	**14.9%**	**17.0%**	**17.0%**	**17.0%**	**100.0%**

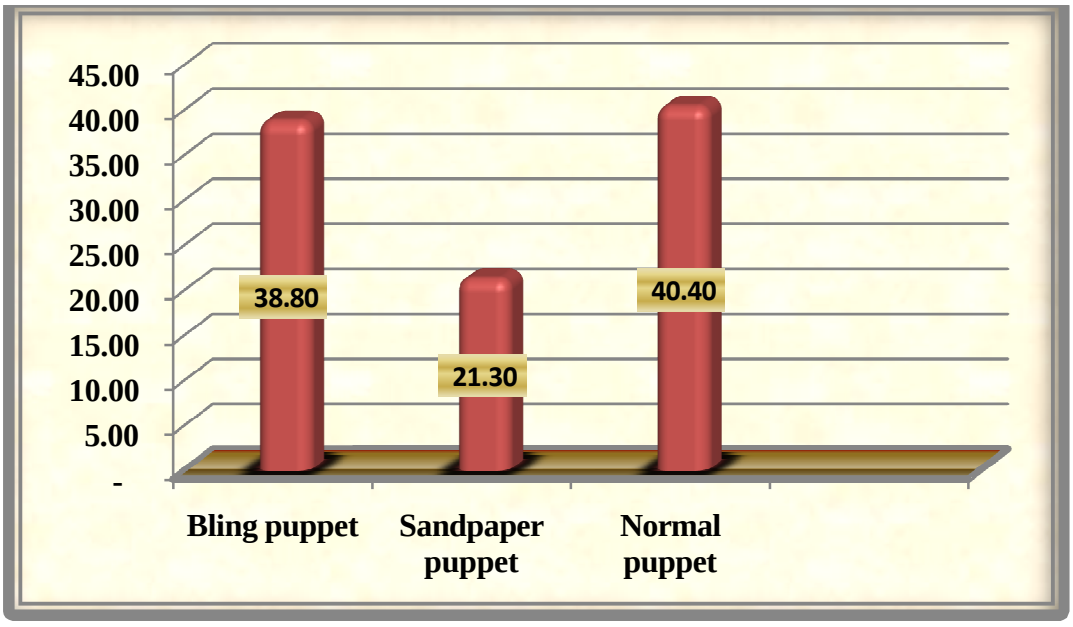


Figure 4.12: Graph: interactive observation category 5 analysed (%) (**Source:** Fourie, 2009)

The focal point of this chapter was on the way learners related to the different forms and features presented as part of the test objects. The conclusion of this analysis is covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 CONCLUSION AND GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The previous two chapters provided insight to the responses from thirty-two educators and forty eight foundation phase learners that represented the study population.

When dealing with the educators the researcher realised that the effective and unremitting education of those who teach has a compelling influence on those who learn. Puppetry, when initially introduced as a training tool to educators, seemed overwhelming and even daunting because it had transformed the education of foundation phase learners into a tremendously powerful interplay of fantasy and reality. While it was clear to the researcher that the responses from the educators confirmed the effectiveness of the use of puppets in teaching foundation phase learners, it was also evident that further training and a more intensive focus on the use of puppets could further enhance its value.

In the researcher's quest to understand the way puppetry – and the use of puppets – is perceived by these young learners, one finding stood out. Although the way the message is conveyed is based on a make-believe character, the character still has to be believable for it to be able to captivate the mind of a young learner. Facial features and expression, texture and colour play a considerable role in the way learners react to puppets.

5.2 FINDINGS: RESPONSES FROM THE FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS

It was encouraging to realise that the majority of educators included puppets as an educational medium for foundation phase learners. However, there is still a significant portion of respondents that indicated that they often disregarded to the use of puppets. When engaging with these educators, the researcher found that their hesitance could be laid at the door of insufficient training to do so. Most of these educators indicated that, provided they received the relevant training on the use of puppets, they would gladly include puppetry in the education routine. In addition, not all educators found it easy to manoeuvre and manipulate the puppets, also due to a lack of proper training.

Almost eighty percent of educators agreed that children reacted positively to the introduction of puppets. The researcher found that the personalities of the educators played a pivotal role in, firstly, their ability to extend themselves to the puppets and, secondly, their confidence to introduce puppets to their training programmes. The age groups of educators were not relevant during data capturing phase, but from discussions with these respondents, it became obvious that the older generation educators, who might have been exposed to a more conservative educational system than the younger ones, were more reluctant to use puppets because they found it more difficult to do. From this feedback, the researcher has concluded that the younger educators are much more daring in their teaching approach and more open to different teaching styles. It is important that, during training of these educators, the focus is not only on capturing the various elements of the curriculum, but that educators are also

exposed to some level of interpersonal training on the facets of puppetry that they might find challenging.

Across the board, educators agreed that puppets add a welcome and positive dimension to their training curricula. In general, educators confirmed that children respond well to puppets, and learning takes place when learners are relaxed and responsive, making it possible for them to retain the information that they have learnt far more effectively. The visual image of the puppet, together with dialogue between puppet and learner, assists these learners to recall a great deal of their "conversations" with the puppet afterwards.

In conclusion, it is clear that suitable training - supported by an apposite training manual - would go a long way towards ensuring the optimum use of puppetry in education. Educators firmly believed that puppets indeed speak to the imagination of a child, enabling a more focused and creative learning experience. However, these educators also indicated that puppetry can often not be done in isolation. It is up to each educator to find additional ways to teach, such as the introduction of appropriate visual material, musical improvisation and storytelling. The researcher has found puppetry to have a tremendous impact on children when used effectively, and that the creativity of the educator largely contributes to exposing children to the full spectrum of learning. Puppetry is not only an educational tool in the training kit of the educator; it is an integrative method to combine different educational media into a relatable message to the learner.

As Astell-Burt (2001:108) states, "In a child's mind, the puppeteer disappears and the character, as represented by the puppet, is the actual figure that remains in their minds" (Astell-Burt, 2001: 108). The researcher believes that the creativity of the educator, using puppets as a teaching tool for education, and the level of confidence with which he or she captures the imagination of the learners are the key building blocks towards this type of imaginative dialogue.

5.3 FINDINGS: RESPONSES FROM THE FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS

A puppet is only an effective means of education if the learner finds it believable. This was the key finding when observing and interacting with these learners – the proverbial golden thread that interwove the educational intent of puppetry.

The researcher, through specific questions relating to the learners' response to the puppet's colour, shape, texture and facial features, found the value in interrelating with these learners indispensable.

Based on the researcher's observations, colour played a noteworthy role in the way in which learners respond to puppets. According to Litosseliti, L. & Sunderland, J. (2002:101), colour can be an important signifier of gender. "In western society, pink has acquired a definite association for what it is to be female. Other colours, like blue for boys or dark blue for men, attach values to the idea of masculinity." What was interesting is that positive association for girls stemmed from the object being visually

appealing, whereas the boys associated best with objects that are true to the real-life object it represents. The researcher concluded that the gender of the learners plays a pivotal role in their response to puppets. Therefore, it might be safer to introduce androgynous puppets during education.

During the observations, puppets that had no eyes or that had distorted facial features were shown to the learners. When asked to select the most acceptable puppet, the vast majority opted for puppets that had all their facial features in tact. The researcher has found that a puppet that is used for educational purposes is more effective when "human features" are present, with which children can associate and connect to, such as the eyes, ears and hands. During the observation, some of the children indicated that they felt sorry for the ones with the so-called "deformities", which could also indicate that these puppets might have stirred a sense of sympathy in some of the children that had selected these puppets.

When introducing differently textured puppets, it came as no surprise that learners felt more at ease with puppets that had a soft texture.

In researching puppetry as an educational tool for foundation phase learners, the researcher explored the minds of young learners and tapped from the experience of their educators. During this probing journey, the researcher found that the most important element of effective puppetry was the way the child was able to associate with its character. Throughout their young lives, children at this level are taught the power of emotional and physical discernment as they absorb the world around them;

through sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. And these senses need to be strengthened if they are to be raised to optimum levels of awareness. Therefore, if puppets are introduced as an extension of an educator's teaching arm during education, they too need to speak to the senses of these learners. Equipped with a wide smile, soft hands, kind eyes and a sense of gentleness and compassion that surrounds it, the effective puppet becomes the embodiment of what educators teach. Where children are concerned, there is probably no scientific academic conclusion to be derived. But with this research study, the researcher has delved into the quintessence of understanding that a child never stops exploring. Puppets, through the skilled guidance of their puppeteers, allow children to travel into a world of magical discovery.

> The children in a classroom find themselves in a situation where their liberated imagination fills in the details and discovers new correlations of reality; the child's normal play activity is extended to such a degree during a puppet education session that it becomes "real" living activity. In their imagination they enter the stage themselves and transform its abstract world into the real one (Szilágyi: 1976, 36).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

APPROVAL LETTERS AND FORMS

APPENDIX B:

QUESTIONNAIRE: EDUCATORS AND INTERACTIVE OBSERVATIONS: FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS