

## Starting with ourselves in deepening our understanding of generativity in participatory educational research

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*Participatory educational research is generally characterised by a commitment to making a difference in the lives of those who participate in the research and more broadly, to promoting social transformation. This suggests a potentially fruitful synergy between participatory educational research and the multidisciplinary body of academic work on generativity as a human capacity that has at its core a desire to contribute to the well-being of others. As a research team of teacher educators from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, we seek to add an alternative dimension to current debates on participatory educational research by focusing on understanding the 'how' and 'what' of generativity in a participatory research process. The research question we address is: How does/can engagement in participatory educational research facilitate generativity? While participatory research literature often concentrates on collaboration between researchers and 'researched' communities, we are taking a reflexive stance by exploring our own participation in our dual roles as university community members and as researchers studying our colleagues' experiences in relation to integration of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) & Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)-related issues in university curricula. We describe how our use of the visual method of storyboarding facilitated insight into generativity in participatory educational research. Building on an earlier concept of generativity, we identify and discuss significant generative features of participation, playfulness, passion, and perspicacity in our research process.*

**Keywords:** generativity; HIV&AIDS; participatory research; reflexivity; storyboarding; university educators; visual methods

### Introduction

Researchers concerned with responding to educational challenges, faced by learners, teachers and other community members, often choose participatory research methodologies to involve these stakeholders in working together to find context-appropriate ways to address these issues (e.g. Mitchell, De Lange, Moletsane, Stuart & Buthelezi, 2005; Theron, 2012). Such participatory research tends to be characterised by a commitment to making a difference in the lives of those who take part in the research and, more broadly, to promoting social transformation (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). This emphasis on making a difference suggests a potentially productive synergy between participatory educational research and the multidisciplinary academic work that has been inspired by Erikson's (1963) concept of generativity as a human capacity that is rooted in "a calling to contribute to the well-being of others, particularly younger people" (Pithouse-Morgan & Van Laren, 2012:417). As a research team of teacher

educators from different disciplinary backgrounds, we seek to add another dimension to existing discussions of participatory educational research by exploring the ‘how’ and ‘what’ of generativity in a participatory research process.

While literature on participatory research frequently focuses on “community members, or stakeholders in communities, [collaborating] with researchers in addressing needs and enhancing resilience and well-being in societies” (Ferreira, 2012:512), in this article we take a reflexive stance to examine our own participatory engagement as researchers and university educators in a process of creating storyboards. In so doing, we expand on what is typically conceptualised as participatory research. As highlighted by various authors, including Cooke and Kothari (2001), Walsh (2012) and Milne (2012), a key tension in participatory research is the researcher/researched divide, so that often the study of issues of knowledge production and even participation itself carry this burden. Here we explore what happens when a research team goes beyond the researcher/researched tensions by focusing on its own participatory engagement.

In this article we explore the following research question: “How does/can engagement in participatory educational research facilitate generativity?” We begin by explaining the context of our inquiry. We then clarify our understanding of storyboarding as a visual, participatory research method and go on to describe our participatory storyboarding process. Next, we present and explain the two storyboards that we created. To follow, we identify and discuss significant generative features of participation, playfulness, passion, and perspicacity in our storyboarding process and consider how storyboarding as a visual, participatory method facilitated generativity. Finally, we offer some concluding thoughts on the value of exploring visual, participatory methods in relation to the concept of generativity in research.

### Putting our research into context

We are a team of five university teacher educators who work in a school of education at a South African university. While there are some interdisciplinary connections, we teach, research, and supervise postgraduate students in different disciplines within the field of education, namely, Gender Studies, Languages and Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Teacher Development Studies. We are, however, united in our commitment to integrating HIV&AIDS education across disciplines. In this article we focus on our experience of using storyboarding as a visual, participatory method to follow up our research into the experiences of our colleagues who integrate social aspects of HIV&AIDS into their teaching of various subjects.

In our view, addressing the resilience and well-being of students is a priority for university educators in South Africa, where in 2012 approximately 5.6 million people were reported as being infected with HIV (Averting HIV & AIDS (AVERT), 2012), and in 2010 the mean HIV prevalence rate for university students across the country was found to be 3.4% (Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme, 2010). Hence we

argue that it is crucial for all students to have a critical understanding of HIV&AIDS and related social issues when negotiating their lives and work in a context of high HIV prevalence.

Framed within a recognition of the role of university communities in addressing HIV&AIDS, we build on work completed for a larger project where we aim to document and encourage the integration of HIV&AIDS-related issues in university teaching. As university educators who are committed to addressing HIV&AIDS through our own teaching, our common research interest lies in learning more from colleagues who share these concerns. In a previous article focusing on the personal and professional lived experiences of seven colleagues, we highlight critical aspects of their stories of engaging in what we describe as curriculum innovating (Van Laren, Mitchell, Mudaly, Pithouse-Morgan & Singh, 2012). The emotional and professional challenges and benefits that our colleagues shared during interviews led us to conclude that there are risks and rewards involved in integrating HIV&AIDS-related issues in university curricula, and in particular, we drew attention to the psychosocial benefits and challenges for educators. These were discussed within three themes, namely: “selfing”, “distancing”, and “valuing” (Van Laren et al, 2012:138). *Selfing* referred to university educators’ renewal or change in their professional and personal selves as they responded to issues related to HIV&AIDS among students. *Distancing* signalled many students’ reluctance to engage with the topic of HIV&AIDS, which was reflected the way in which they separated or distanced themselves from the epidemic, thus creating a challenge for university educators who attempted to integrate HIV&AIDS in university curricula. Distancing also drew attention to how educators who integrated HIV&AIDS into their curricula often experienced isolation from colleagues who refused to do the same on the basis that this integration diluted ‘pure’ disciplines. Furthermore, distancing linked to how educators often felt afraid of the emotional impact of integrating HIV&AIDS and unsure of how they would manage the possible responses of students to this emotionally laden topic. *Valuing* emphasised how, despite perceived personal and professional risks, university educators in this study viewed the integration of HIV&AIDS as a worthwhile, valuable endeavour, and invested prodigious effort in designing and facilitating modules in a way that addressed the social challenges brought by HIV&AIDS. Hence, in the conclusion to the article we argued for the significance of these benefits and challenges being “sensitively, yet openly addressed in a university community” (Van Laren et al., 2012:157). As a follow-up to this article, we decided to respond to our own recommendation by trying out the participatory visual method of storyboarding to envisage possible ways of stimulating discussion and interaction among university educators and leaders in relation to integration of HIV&AIDS-related issues in university curricula.

#### Storyboarding as a visual, participatory research method

Storyboarding is typically regarded as a stage in the process of filmmaking and, more

recently, as a component of participatory video as a visual research method (Mitchell, 2011; Mitchell & De Lange, 2011). It is the planning component where film or video makers typically map out visually a series of shots that will tell a story.

Storyboarding as a research method has received limited attention, and the storyboard is rarely treated as a visual text in itself but rather as more of a 'means to an end', with the final video being the main visual research text. However, in a recent study Labacher, Mitchell, De Lange, Moletsane and Geldenhuys (2012) deliberately used storyboarding as a participatory method with teacher educators to address HIV& AIDS and curriculum integration. In this research the production of storyboards was the focus. In treating the storyboards as visual texts, Labacher et al. (2012) provide a framework for analysis that highlights three significant components: (1) pinpointing the problem and containing the issues; (2) resolution – what should be done?; and (3) ownership and engagement.

#### Our participatory storyboarding process

Responding to knowledge generated through qualitative research requires imaginative, resourceful ways to generate new insights. It calls for creativity, which can be facilitated by innovative and participatory methods (Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker, Jacelon & Chandler, 2002). We decided to use storyboarding as a visual, participatory method both to engage in reflection (Lillyman & Bennett, 2012) and to engage further with the conclusions we had arrived at in our previous article.

We began our five-hour research workshop with a discussion, where a team member introduced storyboarding and provided examples of its use in participatory video making. We established a working definition of a storyboard: a structured and preplanned visual outline or skeleton that comprises a series of drawings, sketches or explanations representing each scene or camera shot required to produce a video. Drawing on Mitchell and De Lange's (2011) steps for video making, we developed five steps for our participatory storyboarding process, as outlined below.

*Step 1: Developing the prompt.* This was our first key participatory activity. Given that we were building on our previous article, we started by reading aloud the *Conclusion and Implications* section to stimulate discussion about our storyboarding prompt. We developed the prompt: 'Beyond risky behaviour: HIV&AIDS curriculum innovating'.

*Step 2: Forming storyboard groups.* Given the size of our research team (five members) we divided into two smaller groups to prepare two different storyboards in response to the prompt.

*Step 3: Creating the storyboards.* Each group worked independently for two hours. We followed a procedure mapped out by Mitchell, De Lange and Moletsane (2011) and Labacher et al. (2012). This started with each group brainstorming a list of possible storyboard concepts. Each group then selected a particular concept to develop. Group 1 focused on 'Academically generative workshops' and Group 2 on 'Building collegiality and collaboration'. Next we prepared the storyboards, with each group

providing a short title as a well as the genre and format of the proposed video.

*Step 4: Presenting and reflecting.* Each group presented its storyboard to the team and we discussed our selected theme, commonalities (and differences) and considered the next steps in terms of producing the videos. The discussion was recorded and transcribed for analysis. Later each team member wrote and emailed a reflection on her participation in the workshop.

*Step 5: Making meaning.* In considering the next steps we also contemplated how we could better understand the ‘how’ and ‘what’ of generativity in our own participatory engagement in the process of creating storyboards. We agreed that we had experienced the process as a generative one that held “[possibilities] for growth and development toward increased levels of potential knowing” (Ball, 2012:289). We felt that we needed to follow up by examining the concept of generativity in more depth and from a range of scholarly perspectives (Kincheloe, 2001). Hence, after the workshop we drew on a range of work from the domains of psychology and education (Ball, 2009; 2012; Epstein, 1993; 1999; Epstein, Schmidt & Warfel, 2008; Gergen, 1978; Strong, 2010) to assist us in exploring how our use of the visual method of storyboarding could facilitate insight into generativity in participatory educational research. Our data consisted of the storyboards that we developed collaboratively, transcripts of our recorded discussions during the workshop and individual team member’s emailed reflections on our storyboarding workshop.

*Ethical considerations and trustworthiness.* The discussion in this article is based on our own observations, interactions and reflections during and after our workshop. This means that by exploring our dual roles as researchers and as university community members we did not “hinder or hurt” (Samaras, 2011:183) any other participants. However, we did have to be mindful of behaving in an ethical manner towards one another as colleagues and co-researchers during the workshop and while co-authoring this article. This meant that we had to check at every stage of the process that we were continuing to build “a sense of trust, security, and mutual respect” (Conle, Loudon & Mildon, 1998:191) within our team.

To enhance trustworthiness, we are drawing on Mishler’s (1990) concept of trustworthiness for inquiry-guided (as opposed to hypothesis-testing) research. Mishler (1990:423) advises that trustworthiness requires researchers who are “engaged in inquiry-guided and interpretive forms of research [to articulate and clarify] the features and methods of [their] studies, of showing how the work is done and what problems became accessible to study”. Accordingly, in this article, we endeavour to give a clear and detailed account of our research and meaning-making process.

#### What our storyboards portrayed

Group 1 considered playful and entertaining video genres, such as stop-motion photography, sock puppets or animation. The storyboard (Figure 1) ‘Take a risk: It’s as easy as ABC!’ aimed to acknowledge risks and discomforts experienced by university educators in integrating HIV&AIDS and to encourage innovation and collaboration.

A 2 minute Animated (or stop motion) text (for YouTube) aimed at HED Educators:

**Storyboard** (n. A panel or series of panels of rough sketches outlining the scene sequence and major changes of action or plot in a production to be shot on film or video, Answers.com)

<p>Write a short title of your video here.</p> <p><b>TAKE A RISK: IT'S AS EASY AS ABC</b></p> <p>(On a separate sheet write the title in large letters and then take a shot of the title so that the audience can see the title of your video)</p>	<p>1. <b>OH NO</b> Not the ABC's Again!!</p>
<p>2. <b>TAKE THE INNOVATION</b></p>	<p>3. <b>TAKE A RISK</b></p>
<p>4. <b>ACT</b> (showed)</p>	<p>5. I need to make a change in my lesson plan....</p>
<p>6. <b>BE BOLD</b></p>	<p>7. Let's try some role play instead of lecturing!</p>
<p>8. <b>COLLABORATE</b></p>	<p>9:10 <b>Credits</b></p> <p>Write the names of the persons in your group here.</p> <p>(On a separate sheet write your names and surnames so that the audience knows who made the video. Then take a shot of the video)</p>
<p>9. <b>Yeah!</b></p>	<p>Re-enter the innovator!</p> <p><b>TAKE A RISK!</b> <b>WHAT ARE YOUR ABCS?</b></p>

Soak Puppers!

Figure 1 Group 1's storyboard: "Take a risk: It's as easy as ABC!"

In HIV prevention campaigns in South Africa the acronym ABC represents ‘Abstain, Be Faithful, Condomise’, and has been used extensively. However, research (Piot, Bartos, Larson, Zewdie & Mane, 2008; Reddy, 2005) suggests that this simplistic, overused message is “inappropriate ... to manage an effective dialogue about sex” (Reddy, 2005:18). In this storyboard ABC represents ‘Act, Be bold, Collaborate’, which Group 1 identified as key to integration of HIV&AIDS in university teaching. Collaboration with colleagues was emphasised as a means of support for taking action, being bold, and responding to our recommendation of “[establishing] a learning community or a support group for university lecturers who take on the somewhat risky integration of HIV&AIDS issues in disciplines” (Van Laren et al., 2012:156).

Group 2’s storyboard (Figure 2) depicts a television interview scenario. The ‘actors’ in the interview are an innovator (university educator who integrates HIV&AIDS), a resistor (university educator who does not integrate) and a facilitator (interviewer). The discussion in this storyboard underscores challenges related to integrating and offers the ‘3 Cs’ (courage, conviction and collaboration) to address these challenges. Complexities and possibilities posed by the three Cs were debated during the interview.

Drawing on our storyboarding to gain insight into generativity in participatory educational research

*Generativity* has been researched in psychology from varied and often seemingly contradictory vantage points, including developmental psychology (Erikson, 1963; Erikson & Erikson, 1981), behavioural psychology (Epstein, 1993; 1999; Epstein et al., 2008), social psychology (Gergen, 1978), and critical psychology (Strong, 2010). Interesting insights emerge from bringing these scholars’ voices into dialogue with one another and with work done in the areas of teacher education and educational research (Ball, 2009, 2012).

This “multiperspectival” (Kincheloe, 2001:682) body of work on generativity – which builds on the foundation of Erikson’s conception of generativity (1963; Erikson & Erikson, 1981) – portrays it as a multifaceted human capacity, with three significant dimensions:

- responsibility – responsiveness to the needs of other people, particularly younger people;
- productivity – contributing to the vocational/professional domain; and
- creativity – envisaging and enacting new possibilities.

Hence generativity can be contrasted with ‘less desirable’ human qualities such as self-centredness, unproductiveness, and inertness.

Erikson’s (1963) work focuses on understanding generativity within his broader theory of psychosocial development. Drawing on the work of other scholars (Ball, 2009; 2012; Epstein, 1993; 1999; Epstein et al., 2008; Gergen, 1978; Strong, 2010), and our experience of storyboarding, we have identified four features of generative processes that point to possibilities for recognising and nurturing generative thinking

**Storyboard** (n. A panel or series of panels of rough sketches outlining the scene sequence and major changes of action or plot in a production to be shot on film or video, Answers.com)

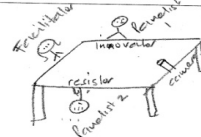
<p>Write a short title of your video here.                  Reducing risk thro' <del>to</del> collaboration, courage, conviction + collaboration.                  (On a separate sheet write the title in large letters and then take a shot of the title so that the audience can see the title of your video)</p>	<p>1. <u>T.V. programme</u>                  Location: Television studio/board room                  Panel of two + 1 facilitator.                  Facilitator introduces actors + brief background for academics background - Understanding of 'risky behaviour' to do or not to do</p>
<p>2. </p>	<p>3. <u>Facilitator</u>: Poses question to innovator who is a well known academic. (teacher) specialist                  Please share ideas on teaching of HIV/AIDS. Respond why motivated to integrate HIV/AIDS - generally for life not necessarily edn.</p>
<p>4. <u>Resistor</u>: Respond by pointing teaching HIV/AIDS is the domain of LO not specialist discipline (eg commerce) - I would not know where to start                  Enough difficulty time to teach discipline + research. Not practical to expect find time to integrate curriculum innovating of HIV/AIDS research, takes priority, time of all the HIV/AIDS</p>	<p>5. <u>Facilitator</u> getting scared                  not relevant to discipline</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>9. <b>Credits</b>                  Write the names of the persons in your group here.                  (On a separate sheet write your names and surnames so that the audience knows who made the video. Then take a shot of the video)</p>

Figure 2 Group 2's storyboard: "Reducing risk through courage, conviction and collaboration"



and interaction in participatory educational research, namely, participation, playfulness, passion, and perspicacity.

### *Participation*

In our consideration of participation, we draw on the work of Ball (2009), Epstein (1999) and Strong (2010), who emphasise teamwork and collaboration in generative processes. Epstein (1999) argues that it is useful to alternate between working individually and working with others. He advocates frequent changes in social environment by working with different groups of people or different combinations within groups. Ball (2009:53) advises that we can learn from others by “[tapping] into the rich cultural and linguistic resources” they offer. Strong (2010) cautions that genuine participation requires us to explore alternative ways of interacting with others.

As an established research team we are acutely aware of the value of learning from others. Coming from different disciplinary backgrounds and having a range of research interests, we serve as valuable resources for one another. This concurs with Epstein’s (1999) suggestion for promoting generativity by working with diverse groups of people. Likewise, Pithouse, Mitchell and Moletsane (2009:31-32) draw attention to how co-researchers from different backgrounds and locations can “[prompt] each other to engage in processes of cultural, linguistic, and disciplinary ‘translation’ and explication”, which can “be a trigger for intellectual, professional, and personal inquiry, growth, and renewal”. The following reflections show that we found value in working together:

*Claudia: Taken as a whole, however, I really liked the session and I loved the way we worked together as a team in doing this.*

*Ronicka: I did not feel threatened to step out of my familiar research terrain because I was working collaboratively with a group of friends, in a safe place. I benefitted from the kinship, enthusiasm and support offered by the entire group.*

### *Playfulness*

Playfulness, as an attitude, an atmosphere and as a way of doing things, makes a vital contribution to generativity. Strong (2010) and Epstein (1993; 1999) emphasise the generative value of engaging regularly in imaginative or open-ended activities, without predetermined limits or outcomes. Epstein (1993; 1999) also draws attention to the role of the physical environment in stimulating this kind of open-ended play.

Playfulness can also be stimulated by learning new knowledge and ways of thinking or doing – outside our delineated ‘areas of expertise’. This is what Epstein (1993:44) terms “broadening” and Strong (2010) explains as moving beyond our habitual thinking. Epstein (1993:44) argues that “the newer the knowledge – the more it differs from what we already know – the more interesting the [possibilities]” for imaginative play.

Particularly significant when engaging in participatory research is that because generative play involves risk-taking, it is essential to cultivate an atmosphere of trust

and mutual respect (Ball, 2009; Epstein, 1993; 1999; Strong, 2010). Participants must be able to try out new and different ways of doing things and offer fresh ideas without fear of ridicule or premature judgement.

We see playfulness as an appropriate way to describe our approach to storyboarding. As a team we explored imaginative ways to move beyond the challenges associated with integrating HIV&AIDS-related issues. We had to venture into our creative selves to become immersed in the process of storyboarding. We were able to move outside our familiar research boundaries because we worked collaboratively in a non-threatening environment. The following reflections reveal this playful element:

Kathleen: *I recognised that storyboarding could offer a fun and interactive way of planning.*

Linda: *I had fun working on our storyboard.*

We recognised that storyboarding also involved risk-taking. The following reflection shows a team member's enthusiasm about making use of an unfamiliar methodology, combined with feelings of riskiness because of her uncertainty about what to expect and how to proceed in using storyboarding:

Shakila: *I approached the workshop activity with as much enthusiasm as uncertainty. The major contributor to the reduction of my uncertainty ... was the collaboration with members of my group.*

The following reflections reveal that the creation of an enabling atmosphere, in which we participated collaboratively in an environment of mutual respect and trust, was essential to our generative research endeavour:

Claudia: *I loved the way we worked together as a team.*

Shakila: *... the increase in my enthusiasm was undoubtedly [due to] the collaboration with the members of my group.*

As a team we were therefore better able to cope with the risks in using an unfamiliar research method. Moreover, through working collaboratively in an area of research where we are passionate, we enjoyed the participatory process of storyboarding.

### *Passion*

Playfulness has connotations of enthusiasm and enjoyment. To play a game well, one must be committed to and immersed in the game. Thus, Ball (2009; 2012), Gergen (1978) and Strong (2010) draw attention to the central role of passion in generativity. Ball (2009:67) explains that generative thinking and action must be "grounded in work that [is] important...[and] of real interest" to those involved. Strong (2010) proposes that rigour in relation to generativity can thus be understood as acknowledging the social nature of the development of our interest in certain topics.

Each member of our team has a research interest in the area of HIV&AIDS and curriculum, and has published in this field. We share a genuine concern about integrating HIV&AIDS-related issues into university curricula in substantive and innovative ways, as opposed to ways that are purely symbolic or tokenistic. The following

reflections provide examples of how we expressed our passion for sustaining and furthering HIV&AIDS integration:

*Kathleen: In an area such as HIV&AIDS, where there is often a sense of hopelessness, it is good to feel as if we can move forward, together.*

*Linda: The morning workshop was purposeful and not just a 'talk-shop'. We had concrete actions for taking-up possibilities after the workshop and I believe that our storyboard team activity provided interesting and fun ideas for moving towards generativity.*

We were committed to becoming immersed in the participatory research process, and we did so with a great deal of passion, enthusiasm and delight, which is evident in our reflections. The following reflection reveals our eagerness about using the storyboards to develop videos:

*Claudia: The other thing that interested me was the enthusiasm we all had for actually making the videos we had envisioned in the storyboarding process.*

### *Perspicacity*

In highlighting the significance of passion in generativity, Ball (2009; 2012), Gergen (1978) and Strong (2010) are careful to also emphasise the need for cultivating perspicacity – or clear-sightedness and insightfulness – about what it is we cherish and the foundations and possible consequences of our passion. Gergen (1978:1356) contends that we must “confront more directly and honestly the valuational implications of [our] work” and “give self-conscious consideration to matters of value”. Ball (2012:287) proposes that researchers should engage in a self-reflexive process of “reflection”, “introspection”, “critique” and developing “personal voice” to move beyond advocating change to becoming generative agents of change. Thus, even though playfulness and passion might suggest that fostering generative thinking and action is an uncritical process, perspicacity reminds us that heightened self-awareness and constructive critique from self and others are essential.

Ball (2009) and Epstein (1993) draw attention to the importance of developing strategies for enhancing perspicacity. Epstein (1993:44) highlights the significance of finding simple and practicable ways to “capture” new ideas as they occur to us. He argues that all our new ideas, even if they do not seem very ‘good’ at the time, should be noted and can be revisited and evaluated at a later stage. He suggests notebooks, audio recorders and computer software as possible capturing tools. Ball (2009:66) illustrates how writing, in particular, personal narrative writing, can also be used as a “tool for reflection, introspection, and critique”.

Our commitment to generating new possibilities for stimulating discussion and interaction among university educators in relation to integration of HIV&AIDS-related issues in university curricula necessitated the development of perspicacity (clear-sightedness and insightfulness). Our storyboards show that we wanted to cultivate a deeper awareness of how we as university educators can work with colleagues to

respond to challenges associated with HIV&AIDS integration into disciplines.

Our storyboarding was driven by the desire to turn our passion into creation of something valuable. There was deep commitment to progress beyond the interpretation of research findings and to use the experiences of HIV&AIDS integrators to become generative agents of change (Ball, 2012). For example, in our reflections, team members wrote:

*Claudia: What struck me most about the activity was its relevance as a follow up tool to fieldwork/research... . So now I think we could pitch storyboarding as a way to go beyond data.*

*Linda: If we don't take-up or do something about the emotional stress experienced by our colleagues who are integrators of HIV&AIDS education then our research project work is pointless, because no one else will be willing or able to do something about the challenges of integrating HIV&AIDS education in disciplines.*

*Kathleen: I had a sense of purpose and saw storyboarding as something that would build on and contribute to our research – rather than as 'just an exercise'.*

Their reflections point to our desire to seek direct ways to encourage dialogue and interaction on the subject of integration of HIV&AIDS-related issues in university curricula.

Furthermore, our reflections reveal that throughout the workshop team members were aware of personal inadequacies, understandings and practices and how these might affect the storyboarding process:

*Ronicka: I had to engage with skills such as drawing and scriptwriting, which were new to me.*

*Shakila: However, as we began engaging with the task, I discovered that previous experience was not critical and that the activity took on a life of its own.*

These reflections show that we openly acknowledged our limited experience in storyboarding, but saw the workshop experience as an opportunity to develop and grow. Moreover, possible inadequacies and uncertainties did not deter us from learning through active participation in the storyboarding process.

How did storyboarding as a visual, participatory method facilitate generativity?

During our storyboarding workshop the team effort facilitated generativity in a variety of ways. First, we had previously gained knowledge about benefits, risks and discomforts experienced by our university educator colleagues who engage in curriculum innovating while integrating HIV&AIDS in curricula (Van Laren et al., 2012). Through storyboarding, we were able to envisage specific, pragmatic ways to provoke discussion of these benefits, risks and discomforts within and beyond our university community (Labacher et al., 2012).

Second, the process of creating storyboards allowed us to consider varied ways of stimulating dialogue and interaction in relation to integration of HIV&AIDS

education (Labacher et al., 2012). Working as a team of researchers with different levels of expertise and disciplinary backgrounds contributed to a broadening of the epistemological and methodological research base of the team. The generation of two quite different storyboards could be attributed to the diversity of interests of team members.

Third, by 'starting with ourselves', we found that we could begin to take up the recommendations that we presented in our previous article (Van Laren et al., 2012) by, for example, establishing a learning community among ourselves as university educators who take on the integration of HIV&AIDS-related issues in our disciplines. We simultaneously 'moved forward' by generating storyboards that will be turned into videos to share ideas and provoke discussion with our colleagues and with university educators in other contexts. Moreover, while as noted above not all team members were familiar with storyboarding, we were successful in taking this work up as part of a participatory process.

### **Concluding thoughts**

We have presented an exploration of storyboarding as a visual, participatory method that facilitated generative thinking and action within a research team of university educators. We have framed our findings within four features of generative processes, namely participation, playfulness, passion, and perspicacity. In a field of research such as HIV&AIDS-related education, within a context of the continuing high rate of HIV infection and the challenges that this presents to resilience and well-being in our society, it is not just useful but also necessary to move beyond familiar ways of thinking and working. As research has highlighted (Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme (HEAIDS), 2010), while integrating HIV&AIDS into university curricula receives endorsement 'from the top' at the level of policy (Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme (HEAIDS), 2012), it can often be lacking in terms of practical support for educators and recognition of what it takes to transform one's classroom from one focusing primarily on a disciplinary area into one that is also meant to offer students strategies for dealing with social and personal challenges. We attempted to address this work 'head-on' by creating storyboards that acknowledge and suggest ways to stimulate dialogue and interaction in relation to the psychosocial demands of integration.

This article highlights and opens up new ways of thinking about the value of visual, participatory methods in relation to the notion of generativity in research by minimising some of the inherent constraints in researcher/researched contexts that may overshadow or confound the study of generativity. Ultimately of course, power and ethics are key areas of concern in participatory research. We have simply argued for ways of nuancing this work, and especially for supporting research teams to take a 'starting with ourselves' approach that can also contribute to theorising. This does not mean that we wish to ignore power differentials that often exist in participatory

research; rather, we wanted to deepen an understanding of the ‘how’ and ‘what’ of participation in the absence of some of the constraints. Methodologically our inquiry confirms findings of previous work on the value of storyboarding in helping to identify solutions (Labacher et al., 2012), and it also has offered an analysis of the ‘doing’ itself. Thus it contributes to an emerging body of work on storyboarding as a visual, participatory method that both sits alongside and incorporates work on photovoice, digital storytelling, participatory video and drawing (Mitchell, 2008; 2011; Theron, 2012).

Our small-scale ‘starting with ourselves’ storyboarding project also offers an example of the kind of reflexivity that we see is required for ‘taking action’ in contexts where rates of HIV infection are still unacceptably high and where it complements other work linked to reflexivity through participatory video (Yang, 2012; Milne, 2012; Mitchell & De Lange, 2011). At the same time it has helped us to envisage ways of giving a public face to this work (in the form of the final videos), which can be made available for screening and discussion in professional development sessions with higher education colleagues or online to reach a broader audience.

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