

**EXPLORING THE LIFE ORIENTATION POTENTIAL OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL MUSICAL PRODUCTIONS: THE
CASE OF *THE GREEN CRYSTAL***

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Dedicated to
my husband, Ferdinand Potgieter, who has rehearsed
and practised with me on so many of life's stages and
without whom there would never have been a study,
and to
my co-writer and co-producer,
Heinrich Hamm, and all the participants and production
team-members with whom I have shared the secondary
school musical experience at Hoërskool Birchleigh over
a period of more than twenty years.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts...

William Shakespeare

(As You Like It)

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Abstract

KEY WORDS: musical, musical theatre, musical production, life skills, Life Orientation, secondary school, educative value, dialogic, dialogue, dialogic educative space, interpersonal life skills, individual life skills, self-in-society

The problem I investigated in this research is the extent to which participation in a secondary school musical production contributes curricularly and pedagogically towards equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society within a life skills education programme. The importance of creating a dialogic space where secondary school learners may practise life skills within the Life Orientation curriculum has been my main focus. My aim was to investigate and discuss the Life Orientation potential of the secondary school musical production as dialogic educative space for life skills attainment.

I specifically employed a hybrid epistemology, namely *constructivist hermeneutic phenomenology*. In this qualitative study a small number of participants were interviewed individually and in focus groups because of their particular knowledge and lived experience regarding the research topic and the musical *The Green Crystal* as the chosen case study. This enabled me to construct and interpret their subjective reality and construct meaning within the particular social context of the secondary school musical production.

The data I generated, coded and interpreted validate the notion that the secondary school musical production is a hybrid genre which is essentially a practise ground for life skills attainment through the media of music, movement and drama. It also emerged from the data that the secondary school musical production provides a dialogic and educative space to and for all participants to practise life skills within the subject Life Orientation. The participants indicated that their participation in the productions have been life-changing events. A notable contribution from the data was the confirmation that life skills learnt and practised during the musical production are transported into adult life. The life skills learnt through participation in a secondary school musical production are embedded in the memory of the participants and the lessons learnt purify over time. These individual and

psychosocial life skills gained, honed and practised by participants assisted them in adapting to a changing and transforming society as functional and contributing adults (self-in-society).

Opsomming

KERNWOORDE: musical, musical theatre, musical production, life skills, Life Orientation, secondary school, educative value, dialogic, dialogue, dialogic educative space, interpersonal life skills, individual life skills, self-in-society

Die probleem wat ek in hierdie verhandeling ondersoek is die mate waartoe deelname aan musiekblyspele in sekondêre skole kurrikulêr en pedagogies binne 'n lewensvaardighedsprogram tot leerders se betekenisvolle en suksesvolle lewe in 'n snelveranderende en transformerende samelewing bydra. Die belangrikheid daarvan om 'n dialogiese ruimte te skep waar lewensvaardighede as deel van die vak Lewensoriëntering aangeleer en inge oefen kan word, was die hoofokus van my studie. Ek het as doelstelling die potensiaal van musiekblyspele in sekondêre skole as dialogies opvoedkundige ruimtes vir die aanleer van lewensvaardighede binne die vak Lewensoriëntering nagevors en beskryf.

Vir hierdie doel het ek myself van 'n epistemologiese hibried, te wete *konstruktivisties hermeneutiese fenomenologie*, bedien. In hierdie kwalitatiewe studie het ek sowel individuele gesprekke as fokusgroepbesprekings met 'n beperkte aantal deelnemers gevoer, aangesien hulle besondere kennis en deurleefde ervarings ten opsigte van deelname aan 'n sekondêre skool musiekblyspel, genaamd *Die Groen Kristal* (wat ek as gevallestudie ondersoek het) gehad het. Dit het my in staat gestel om hulle subjektiewe werklikhede te kon (de-)konstrueer en binne die besondere sosiale konteks van sekondêre skoolmusiekblyspele te kon interpreteer.

Die data wat ek ingesamel, gekodeer en geïnterpreteer het ondersteun die aanname dat sekondêre skoolmusiekblyspele 'n hibried van die musiekblyspel as genre is en dat dit, as sodanig, wesenlike oefenruimtes vir die aanleer van lewensvaardighede deur middel van musiek, beweging en drama skep. Verder toon die data aan dat die musiekblyspel in die sekondêre skool 'n dialogies opvoedkundige oefenruimte skep waarin alle deelnemers lewensvaardighede kan aanleer en inoefen as deel die vak Lewensoriëntering. Deelnemers aan die studie het aangetoon dat hulle deelname aan hierdie besondere musiekproduksie 'n lewensveranderende ervaring was. Die data toon oortuigend aan dat die lewensvaardighede wat deelnemers aangeleer en

ingeoefen het as 'n gevolg van hulle deelname aan die musiekblyspel ook na hulle volwasse lewens oorgedra is. Hierdie lewensvaardighede wat deelnemers aangeleer het, is verewig in hulle herinneringe wat met verloop van tyd gesuiwerde lewenslesse geword het. Hierdie individuele en psigososiale lewensvaardighede wat aangeleer, verfyn en inge oefen is, het tot deelnemers se suksesvolle aanpassing by 'n veranderende en transformerende samelewing as individu-binne-samelewing bygedra.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

I used as a case study *The Green Crystal*¹, (Afr. Die Groen Kristal) a secondary school musical that has its cultural roots in the post 1994 social climate in South Africa. Within this social climate of rapid change and transformation parents often, intentionally or unintentionally, neglect to equip their children with the life skills necessary to lead a meaningful and successful life. As a consequence, the title of the musical *The Green Crystal* was agreed upon by the authors at the time to serve as a heuristic that could refer symbolically to those life skills that should, ideally, assist in buttressing the current social climate where the educational management and control of teenage risk behaviour such as substance abuse, the influence of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), including HIV / AIDS, and moral decline is no more mainly the responsibility of the parents, but increasingly seems to become the inherited responsibility of the school.

The musical production, *The Green Crystal* was written by Heinrich Hamm and myself and performed in 2004. It was indeed not the first time we had written and produced a musical, yet I was fascinated with the production from its inception. The *Green Crystal* incorporated elements of drama, cabaret and revue but it was more than just that. *The Green Crystal* was a parallel of symbolism and realism which reflected on both the created reality and the mythical world inhabited by creatures that embody both good and evil as the plot (which exposes themes of isolation, group cohesion, good versus evil and family values) progressed. It provided social commentary on themes such as greed, corruption, parental neglect and escapism in various guises.

A key component of the musical was the integrated text, which incorporated dramatic exposition, music and movement. Furthermore, the text was written to span all age groups and during the week of performances we had a community outreach to the local old age homes and it was a triumph. During three performances we were able

¹ The full plot / book and video recording of the production are available on the DVD included in this study.

to play to almost five hundred foundation phase learners from the local pre-primary and primary schools. The characters featuring in this musical were encouraged to interact with members of the audience during the intermission, something that most producers would frown upon. In this case, however, the message of involvement and sharing was central to the life skills that formed part of the educative value interwoven in the plot of the musical, *The Green Crystal*.

We challenged the participants from the outset and auditions were fierce, even the sports jocks came to audition. Perhaps because the previous musicals had been such a success we had numerous learners who had never shown any interest in cultural activities who came to the rigorous music, drama and choreography auditions. Amongst these were learners who were notorious for bad behaviour and disrupting of lessons and we were warned by several colleagues to refrain from casting them. We gave almost everyone who auditioned a chance to take part. However, all participants had to sign a pledge promising, with their parents, to practise regularly and adhere to the individual and inter-relational demands which Heinrich and I knew were part of such a huge production. They all signed and committed themselves to the production.

1.2 Rationale

The performing arts embrace the fundamental principles of the learner as creator, performer, historian, critic and consumer (Alberta Education, 1989:1). This elevates participation in music and drama productions to a medium of learning and teaching and not only an art form. As learning and teaching take place both implicitly and explicitly within the school environment, it becomes possible to investigate whether secondary school musical productions may serve any particular purpose in setting and maintaining the scene for additional Life Orientation education opportunities.

The annual, biennial or triennial production of musicals, as extra-curricular, cultural activities, have more or less been an expected part of school life in (especially) Afrikaans medium, secondary schools in Gauteng. To this day, in these schools (and to a lesser extent in several English medium secondary schools in that province)

educators² are routinely expected to provide extra-curricular opportunities for their learners' to perform in a variety of musical and drama genres.

In contrast to what Pitts (2008: 2) reported with regard to secondary schools in the United Kingdom, having to assist in producing a secondary school musical seems to continue to constitute the least satisfying part of their assigned extracurricular duties for the majority of educators in (especially) Afrikaans medium secondary schools, mainly because it is so demanding of their limited spare time and energy. Field notes which I have collated from personal observations, during personal interviews and also after casual conversations with educators in my former capacity as English teacher at a secondary school in Gauteng, stretching over a period of more than twenty-seven years, strongly support this inference. It is also suggested that the possibility that the educators' participation in producing a successful secondary school musical may allow them to use and develop not only their own musical skills, but also their organisational, managerial, social, disciplinary and other related life skills, as well as fostering similar enthusiasms amongst their learners, does not necessarily motivate all participating educators to pledge and show their commitment equally enthusiastically to the value of such opportunities. The irony of it all is, however, that these schools' musical productions have acted (despite the observed levels of depleted enthusiasm and commitment of many participating educators) as a 'showcase' for their learners' abilities to celebrate the cultural side of the human spirit in as professional and disciplined a manner as is humanly possible, given all the things that can possibly go wrong (and more often than not do) when working with secondary school learners.

When observed from the learners' side, it would seem as if the production of secondary school musicals may be viewed almost as a tale of two eras. During the

² Although the newest version of the relevant CAPS documentation clearly seems to favour the use of the term "teacher", I have, for the purpose of this dissertation, solicited legal advice. Based on this advice, I have subsequently chosen to use the term "educator", because this term corresponds with the preference for the term "educator" in all relevant legal and policy documentation. *'Educator'* means any person, excluding a person who is appointed to exclusively perform extracurricular duties, who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education psychological services, at a school; [Definition of 'educator' substituted by s. 6 (a) of Act 48 of 1999.]

first era (from, roughly, the 1960's up to the middle to late 1980's), it was frequently a demanding and testing exercise (for educators) trying to sign up enough volunteering learners in (especially) Afrikaans medium secondary schools to make the staging of a secondary school musical a worthwhile endeavour. At the time, the participation of (Afrikaans-speaking) boys in a secondary school musical production was often frowned upon and in a number of personally observed instances it was even considered to be culturally taboo. To a lesser extent the same was true with respect to girls. The majority of parents, educators and community representatives at the time favoured and supported extra-mural sport activities such as Athletics, Hockey, Netball, Rugby and Tennis. Consequently, the majority of those learners who dared to volunteer their participation in the production of a secondary school musical did not only have to cope with peer group pressure and ridicule; they also had to cope with pressure from their parents and educators, especially if they were good in and displayed talent for the above-mentioned sports.

During the second era (from roughly the middle to late 1980's to the present), the social and educational climate started to change. For whatever reason (perhaps as a result of musical films and television series such as *High School Musical*) it slowly became more and more socially acceptable for boys and girls in (especially) Afrikaans-speaking secondary schools in Gauteng to volunteer and participate in the production of secondary school musicals. From the field notes which I have managed to collate over the past twenty-seven years, I was also able to observe that from the middle to late 1990s, it was not only considered progressively fashionable and *au courant* amongst secondary school learners to participate in a secondary school musical production, but during all the scheduled auditions that were held and in which I had personally been involved, the peer group competition for the number of available positions in the cast increased annually.

Despite the fact that extra-curricular musical productions is a widespread feature of many secondary schools in Gauteng, there has (up till now) been little scholarly discussion of how such productions may contribute to equipping participating learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society. Appropriate studies that specifically focus on, for example, the potential of

secondary school musical productions to increase learners' sense of social involvement and responsibility, the development of their performing arts identity, the shaping of their longer-term attitudes towards music and drama, or even the possible life skills related benefits that could be derived from fostering and maintaining a thriving musical production culture in a school have proven to be exceptionally difficult to trace. It is, therefore, academically challenging to establish satisfactorily why participation in secondary school musicals has become increasingly popular amongst secondary school learners of late. Similarly, instead of it being accepted as just another organised attempt at keeping these learners sensibly occupied and off the proverbial streets, it seems equally difficult to determine adequately whether participation in a secondary school musical production may contribute to equipping learners for life in a changing, transforming society.

This is encouraging, as the available body of scholarship (cf. §2.6) on the subject suggests that secondary school learners participating in a school musical do, in fact, demonstrate evidence of social, physical, emotional and intellectual growth. The academic challenge, however, is to establish whether they also develop additional to physical co-ordination, self-regulating skills and the ability to think creatively and critically (so that they may be able to work both individually and within a group), the ability to live a meaningful and successful life amidst rapid social change and transformation (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles, 1999:25).

In the National Education Policy Act section 3, subsection 2, par. viii, subpar. b, (South Africa, 1996:27) it is clearly stated that all learners are entitled to full development: morally, socially, culturally, politically and economically, which in turn would develop the nation at large. The achievement of an integrated approach to education (which the learning area / subject Life Orientation endeavours to accomplish) is, furthermore, vital to effective education *per se*. In light of this it would seem that the inclusion of an extracurricular cultural activity, such as participation in a secondary school musical production, may be used as an educationally justifiable vehicle to help guide and prepare learners for life and its possibilities, as stipulated in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Life Orientation (Department of Education, 2002:4). This is what my study intended to research.

The critical outcomes set by the NCS envisage learners who will be able to use their problem-solving skills, especially through critical and creative thinking processes, within the world of work as well as in social groupings in order to prepare them for living a meaningful and successful life amidst rapid social change and transformation (Department of Education, 2002:1, 4). The kind of learner that is envisaged is one who will be inspired by these life skills, and who will act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social responsibility. The curriculum seeks also to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate, multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen. The outcomes as set for the learning area / subject Life Orientation comply with this vision as it strives to equip learners with those life skills that will enable them to become responsible, accountable citizens who can respond to challenges of the world of work and in society at large (Department of Education, 2002:4).

With regard to these introductory remarks that were made towards a rationale for and justification of the envisaged research, the focus of and intellectual conundrum of this research are offered in §1.3 below.

1.3 Problem Statement

The importance of creating a dialogic space where secondary school learners may practise life skills within the Life Orientation curriculum has, throughout this study, been my main focus. Although the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Education, 2010:7) document has provided new insight into the curricular knowledge, skills, norms, values and demands of propriety that need to be taught it does not provide a solution as to how these skills may be practised within a real life scenario. It, therefore, creates a dilemma for educators who are tasked with this most important obligation of instilling those life skills as deemed necessary in all secondary school learners and yet face challenges regarding this daunting mission.

1.4 Research Question

In this research, the problem being focused on is: *To what extent, if any, can participation in a secondary school musical production contribute to equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society?*

1.5 Research Aims

My main aim in this research was to explore and establish the extent, if any, to which participation in a secondary school musical production assisted in equipping learners for meaningful living in a changing and transforming society.

I used the following aims to investigate the research problem (cf. §1.4):

Research aim 1: to determine theoretically the nature of secondary school musicals as pedagogical activities with reference to the ontology, cosmology and anthropology of secondary school musicals as hybrid genre of musicals *per se*.

Research aim 2: to identify and discuss theoretically the ontology, cosmology and anthropology of life skills education within the learning area / subject, Life Orientation.

Research aim 3: to investigate qualitatively (by referring specifically to the musical production *The Green Crystal*) and report on the experiences, perceptions and broad understanding of participating learners, educators and parents with regard to how secondary school learners' participation in a school musical may have equipped them for meaningful and successful living in a changing and transforming society.

Research aim 4: to determine theoretically and empirically how the secondary school musical production as pedagogically secure and safe dialogic³ educative space

³ For the purpose of this dissertation, I choose to understand the adjectival qualifier "dialogic" in the Bahktinian sense of the term "dialogue", meaning that it denotes a relationship that involves at least two people who respect one another (as equals) and who are committed to greater, growing understanding of one another. In other words, the adjective "dialogic" not only reflects a commitment to greater understanding; it also has more semantic specificity, direction and purpose than the term "dialogical" which, although interchangeable with the term "dialogic" in certain discursive contexts, seems to signify a more general semantic value.

provides a practise ground for knowledge, life skills, norms, values and demands of propriety to be acquired and transferred to adult life.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

For my reading audience to appreciate the context in which my research claims are made as well as the constraints that were imposed during the study, I wish to name the following limitations.⁴

A seven year lapse since the staging of the musical production *The Green Crystal* has caused much speculation as to whether participants would still remember enough detail in order to answer the questions set in the interview schedule (cf. Addendum D). I was, therefore, alert to the fact that some of them might have been tempted to fabricate some of the details that would be difficult for them to recall in order to please me as interviewer and researcher or to tell me what they might think I would like to hear.

A second concern was the fact that many of the participants had moved all over the country and overseas. This posed a problem tracing all of them. I had to make use of *Facebook* and *e-mail* communication to find as many of them as possible. In particular, I eventually had to interview two of the participants through e-mails and therefore had to make sure that they understood the questions clearly.

The staging of secondary school musicals as an extra-mural cultural and educative activity has become very expensive. This economic determinant has deterred many schools from producing school musicals. It has, however, provided an opportunity for educators, producers and participants to find more creative options in order to uphold this extra-mural activity. The future of this type of educative musical venture in the public school environment in South Africa does, however, appear to be in the balance.

As I am no longer an educator in a secondary school and not in a position to stage a musical production I was obliged to select a research method which would explore a

⁴ This aspect is discussed in much more detail in par. 5.3 in Chapter Five.

musical that had been staged in the past rather than creating a musical and researching it as it unfolded.

Finally, the interviews had to be done in Afrikaans and translated into English. As the participants' home language is Afrikaans and they felt more comfortable in expressing themselves in their home language, it was imperative that I allowed them to do so. I therefore had to make sure that they understood the questions before they answered them.

1.7 Clarification of Key Concepts

1.7.1 Secondary school musical production / musical

In this study, the secondary school musical as a descendant of musical theatre on the world's stages through the ages may be understood to include a "book" which contains the dramatic plot, carried by the dialogue and music, all of which is enhanced by choreographed dance and movement (Gänzl, 1997:2). The themes are either explicitly or implicitly incorporated in the dramatic text and are usually associated with a socially relevant topic. The choice of music is usually influenced by the popular music trends at the time and displays a variety of musical forms. It reflects in essence reality as interpreted by the writers, production team and cast who all participate in creating this dramatic, staged version of life within a dialogic space.

A secondary school musical is essentially a pedagogical event, because it represents a purposive socio-conventional and educational intervention in individual and collective human development which is deeply drenched with the values and history of the particular society and community in which it is located and contextualised.

Secondary school musical productions as feature of the pedagogical and educational activities of the secondary school's curriculum and extra-mural activities are primarily driven by educators, learners and parents. The secondary school musical essentially wants to entertain and educate. Musicals often provide a light-hearted observation of

significant issues (*educating through enjoyment*) (Steyn, 1999:12), thus becoming a means for conveying life skills.

1.7.2 Life skills

Life skills can be defined in this context as those psychosocial and personal skills needed by a person in order to lead a worthwhile adult life within a particular social community or combination of social settings (Cronin, 1996:54; Bohlin, 2005:3). These life skills often transcend moral and values clarification and follow a more holistic approach to leading a worthwhile life (Cronin, 1996:54; Plant & Plant, 1999:389). Not only does life skills education aim to lead a learner to be a successful and well-balanced adult but also to be resilient in dealing with the trials and tribulations of life such as, for example, drug abuse and inappropriate sexual behaviour, which may be detrimental to life itself (Plant & Plant, 1999:389; Eisen, Zellman & Murray, 2003:887).

The definitions of life skills are varied but in general the following definition by Junge, Manglallan and Raskauskas (2003:165) seems to set the theoretical and semantic benchmark for delimiting the concept of “life skills”: *non-academic abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that must be learned for success in society*, when merged with the holistic view of Elias and Kress (1994:62) who included socio-cognitive, affective and critical thinking skills. The intention of life skill education seems to be to help learners to develop those skills that will be crucial in developing healthy relationships with others and themselves, their environment and society steering them away from the quandary of risks associated with modern society.

The CAPS document envisages a holistically developed learner equipped with knowledge, skills and values that will assist in achieving their full potential (physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social). Learners should acquire skills and practice these skills in order to become active and responsible adults in society (Department of Education, 2010:7).

1.7.3 Life Orientation

The amended and comprehensive CAPS document (Grades R-12) for each subject will replace the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and Assessment

Policy Statement documents for Grades R - 12 (Department of Education, 2011:2). At the time of writing this dissertation the proposed date of implementation of the CAPS document is given as January 2012, starting with implementation in the Foundation phase and grade 10. Implementation of the curriculum in other grades will be scaffolded as from 2013 onwards (Department of Education, 2011:1). The CAPS document incorporates the guidelines for learning and teaching in South African schools in all approved subjects as listed in the policy document. In the South African context Life Orientation includes life skills education. It is essential to the holistic growth of learners and is therefore incorporated in all learning phases (Department of Education, 2010:7, 8).

The main aim of Life Orientation is to instil those skills, knowledge and values that learners need to ensure that as future citizens of South Africa's multi-cultural society they are prepared for the challenges of life and especially as *self-in-society* (Department of Education, 2011:7). Life Orientation should, therefore, guide and prepare learners for a meaningful and successful life in a changing and transforming society.

1.7.4 Dialogue and Dialogic space

Dialogue is a tool for cultural and pedagogical intervention in human development and learning (Du Preez, 2006:43; Rule, 2004:1). Dialogue mediates the cognitive and socio-conventional spaces between all relevant role-players and stakeholders in a musical production, as well as between what the learner (as participant in the musical production) knows and understands and what he or she has yet to learn, know and understand.

One of the principal functions of a secondary school musical production is to provide appropriate and adequate dialogic and educative space and to create interactive opportunities and encounters for all relevant role-players and stakeholders so that it becomes possible to obtain such negotiation (Du Preez, 2006:44).

1.8 Life skills potential of the Secondary School Musical Production

As teaching and learning takes place both implicitly and explicitly within the school environment, it becomes possible to explore whether secondary school musical productions may serve any particular function in setting and supporting the stage for additional life skills / Life Orientation education prospects. According to Fredricks (2011:2) participation in organised school-based extra-curricular activities provide unique opportunities for learning, positive growth, and development to learners.

The fact that these activities seem to develop skills more effectively in extra-curricular activities than in traditional teaching-learning spaces is also emphasised in the body of scholarship and learners reflected that they had learnt emotional, cognitive, physical, interpersonal, and social skills better through participation in organised out-of-school contexts (Wood, Larson, & Brown, 2009:297; Fredricks, 2011:2; Broh, 2002:69; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005:508). Participation in organised school activities also helps learners to develop life skills such as problem-solving, time management, goal setting, decision-making, and leadership skills.

1.9 Research Design and Method

The research that was done is qualitative in nature. Qualitative data, with the emphasis on participants' "lived experience" are fundamentally well-suited for locating the meaning that people ascribe to events, processes and structures in and of their lives, including their perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, presuppositions and for connecting these meanings to their social world (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10; Cresswell, 2012:14).

The study specifically investigates the secondary school musical production *The Green Crystal* as a unit of analysis. My research question therefore favours a case study method that allows for the investigation of real-life events (Cresswell, 2012:13; Marshall & Rossman, 2006:129). It also offers an integrated description of the participants' perceptions and understanding of how participation in a secondary school musical production may assist in equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society.

In particular, the design of this qualitative research project is based on an *ex post facto* case study (Bogdan, 2003:141) of the above-mentioned musical production, which was staged in 2004. Consequently, this research design allowed me as researcher to explore the personal, social and educative values and concomitant life skills that had been acquired by the participants.

1.10 Purpose and Significance of the Study

It is evident that there exists a need to establish how participation in a secondary school musical assist in equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a changing, transforming society. The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether the secondary school musical as hybrid genre serves as a vehicle for instilling life skills in participants by creating a practise ground for educative dialogue to take place within a secure, safe and controlled (dialogic) space. Furthermore, I considered the potential Life Orientation education value of secondary school musical productions for instilling and practising life skills. Towards this end, I investigated empirically, with specific reference to the musical production *The Green Crystal*, and reported on the experiences, perceptions and broad understanding of participating learners, educators and parents with regard to how secondary school learners' participation in a school musical production equipped them for meaningful and successful living in a changing and transforming society.

With reference to the implications of my findings, my study contributes to the body of scholarship by documenting a single secondary school experience in a developing country context and by highlighting the role of extra-mural secondary school musical productions not addressed elsewhere within a Life Orientation education context. It not only enhances research with regard to the ontological and epistemological limits of Life Orientation education but it also enhances our command of the relevant knowledge in such a manner that it assists in leading us towards a culture in which the proclaimed constitutional, democratic values of *human dignity, equality and freedom* (Department of Education, 1996:7) can be realised through the employment of extra-mural secondary school musical productions as an integral part of the subject Life Orientation.

The value of this research also lies in its contribution to the development of an emergent theory on the educative value of school musicals as dialogic spaces in which learners may practise life skills, as well as in the scholarly development of this field of knowledge creation, both nationally and internationally.

1.11 Chapter Layout

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter contextualises the study, identifies the research problem, research questions and research objectives.

Chapter Two presents the conceptual and theoretical framework and establishes the theoretical foundations of the research based on the literature review.

In Chapter Three I describe my research design and methodology and the methods I have used to generate and capture data, as well as the rationale for the choice of data analysis procedures that I have used.

Chapter Four discusses the findings of the empirical study. In this chapter I describe the main results and discuss the main themes and trends I recognized while assigning codes to the transcriptions of interviews.

Lastly, Chapter Five presents the discussion and interpretation of my main findings. It also presents the conclusions of my study, as well as links between the findings of the study and the existing body of knowledge as outlined in the body of scholarship reviewed in Chapter Two. In addition, recommendations and suggestions for further research to improve education practice are also provided. I also clarify the limitations of the study and present a summary of the research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE BODY OF SCHOLARSHIP

2.1 Introduction

Predominantly middle-class secondary schools in South Africa have incorporated the performance of secondary school musicals into their extracurricular programmes with increasing regularity in recent years. For the participating learners, their parents and their extended family members, as well as for their educators, the mere use of the term “musical” conjures up images of huge, exciting extravaganzas, complete with mass learner-participation scenes of fabulous singing and intricate yet immaculately choreographed dance-moves, interspaced by brilliant individual drama and music vignettes, breath-taking costumes, creative scenery, expensive sound, lighting and special effects and a show stopping, thought-provoking plot (Binnema, 1996:1). Given its very nature, the production of a secondary school musical is, therefore, almost always a particularly costly affair. Ironically, expenditure in terms of monetary costs often proves to be the least expensive item on the balance sheets. My own experience as past writer and producer of several secondary school musicals has taught me that the real cost in terms of mutually accepted responsibility and disciplined, collective commitment and sustained, equal and fair involvement of all stakeholders and role-players are invariably among the most difficult and the most costly items to calculate – not only during, but especially after the fact (Fredricks, 2011:2).

This begs the question: why would so many secondary schools willingly take on the enormous challenges that are usually associated with the staging of a secondary school musical? On the face of it, two possible motives seem to prevail. One has to do with the ubiquitous reality of fund-raising that most schools are continuously being confronted with. The other has to do with the rather dubious issue of community entertainment: to provide the broader school community a few moments of (often light-hearted, comical) collectively shared reprieve from their otherwise often depressing and discouraging social and domestic circumstances. Even if fund-raising and entertainment are perceived by some communities to be valid reasons for the annual or biennial staging of a secondary school musical production, the

question nevertheless remains: What is the place and role of secondary school musical productions in secondary schools?

The study by Arasi (2006:4) seems to document the obvious, namely that secondary school musical productions are inherently pedagogical and educational in nature because, amongst others, they purport to provide learners with an outlet for learning experiences after their formal education. She claims that by getting learners to participate, they are encouraged to make use of prior learning for lifelong enrichment. Binnema's study (1996:iii) arrives at the same conclusion. In her case, though, it lacks theoretical profundity. She avers that secondary school musicals are "valid forms of education" that "help foster school-spirit and co-operation". Be that as it may, there appears to be an inherent contradiction between what the profession frequently purports and what practice suggests about the place and role of secondary school musical productions in providing a foundation for the practise of life skills that are supposed to have a lifelong shelf-life (*ibid.*). On the one hand, studies by, for example, Michel (1982), Binnema (1996), Boyes (2003), Watkins (2005), Arasi (2006) and Fredricks (2011) all allude to the fact that the lifelong influence of, for example, participation in a secondary school musical production relate to multiple (social) life skills, including a sense of pride, achievement, critical thinking and self-confidence. On the other hand, as stated above and corroborated by the research of Fredricks (2011:2), participation in a secondary school musical production is necessary in order to raise funds for a particular school and / or to provide entertainment for the broader school community.

2.2 Towards a conceptual framework

From my introductory remarks above, it is easy to understand how secondary school musical productions may contribute to the accrual of the social capital of all individual participants, as well as of that particular school community as collective enterprise. As a pedagogical and educational event, the staging of a secondary school musical seems to fit, for example, neatly into Bourdieu's (1983: 249) argument that social capital may be understood as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. This suggests that *Social*

Capital could, possibly, be considered as the overarching conceptual and theoretical framework for this study.

This notion is reinforced when we study the work of Putnam (1993; 1995; 2000). *Social Capital*, he maintains, refers to connections amongst individuals, social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. Again: it is easy to see how and where the staging of secondary school musicals relates to Putnam's thinking. Read together with Fukuyama's (1996:23, 43, 61, 269-282, 349-354; 1999: *passim*) research with regard to social capital, it becomes difficult to comprehend how this particular study may be conceptualised without doing so from and within the *Social Capital Theory*. Fukuyama claims that the relationship between social capital, community (re)building and trust is mostly dependent on the presence of the social constructs of *sharing* and *cooperation* – which most producers, educators and scholars will tell you form an intrinsic part of the pedagogical and educational make-up of any secondary school musical production (see Wolhuter, Van der Walt, & Potgieter, 2009: 50). Finally, when Fukuyama (1996:23, 43, 61, 269-282, 349-354; 1999: *passim*) describes social capital as the existence of a specific set of informal values or norms shared amongst members of a group (such as the cast and producers of a secondary school musical) that permits cooperation amongst them, the conceptual and theoretical link between the staging of a secondary school musical and its anticipated pedagogical and educational benefits in terms of social capital accrual seems evident, as the following example demonstrates:

Based on a study of the theory of social capital, *connectedness* could, for example, be isolated as the overarching, inclusive norm for establishing the extent to which the relationship between all the different role-players and stakeholders who are usually involved in the production and staging of a secondary school musical may contribute to the accrual of social capital. *Connectedness* means, amongst other denotations, *to encounter*. According to the Dutch version of the infinitive form of the verb (***ONT-móét***) *to encounter* implies, *inter alia*, that a participant in a secondary school musical is exempted from all obligation, moral duty and social debt and is, therefore, free to be himself or herself. The production (and eventual staging) of a secondary

school musical therefore creates an intimate interactional space where the *educand* may totally be himself or herself and practise building his or her own social capital. In the process, the individual participants' cooperation adds to the steady accrual of the stock of social capital of the school and broader school community as collective enterprise.

From the body of scholarship, it is therefore academically justifiable to infer that the norm of connectedness may favour – in much the same way as Rousseau's psychological contract (Wolhuter *et al.* 2009:38-48) both an idiographic (personal, individual) as well as a nomothetic (social, societal, body politic) polarity in a secondary school musical setting, depending on its perceived role and function at any given juncture during its production cycle.

On an idiographic level connectedness may, for example, be accomplished through the manifestation of trustworthiness, belonging, communication, goodwill, dependence, neighbourliness, commitment, tolerance, sympathy, and empathy between individual members of the production team and individual members of the cast. On a nomothetic level, connectedness may, however, be accomplished through the manifestation of interconnection, sociability, social cohesion, interaction, social justice, social norms and values, conflict management, cooperation, fellowship, information exchange, interdependence, mutual acquisition, mutual recognition, neighbourliness, relationships, reciprocity, sharing, commitment, tolerance, and unity between all concerned on a mutually reciprocal and shared, collective level (Wolhuter *et al.*, 2009:40).

Once again, it is relatively easy to comprehend how these idiographic and nomothetic functions of *connectedness* (as one of the essential features of social capital) may be employed to help theorise the apparent lifelong influence that participation in a secondary school musical production may have on its participants – especially on the participating learners. Also: it is yet again easy to understand how immersing this study in Social Capital Theory as chosen conceptual and theoretical framework may contribute to the body of scholarship (Wolhuter *et al.*, 2009:40).

However, the more I reflected on this, the more I felt that something essential was missing from this equation. After having read Peter Rule's (2004) seminal article on the curricular provision of dialogic space, I happened upon the paper by Robin Alexander (2005) which talks to the role of culture, pedagogy and discourse. Taking a cue from their work, I then started surveying the work of earlier seminal figures, such as Buber (1964), Freire (1970), Habermas (1971), Bakhtin (1981; 1984), Freire and Shor (1987), Gadamer (1991) and Gadotti (1996). It then all started to make sense: fundamental to all the above-mentioned issues of social capital is the pedagogical and educational reality of dialogue. None of the idiographic or nomothetic functions of, for example, *connectedness*, would be possible without the ontic substratum of dialogue. It also seems ontically impossible to argue that any social capital may be accrued in the absence of dialogue.

Once I understood that the notion of dialogic space has generative possibilities for understanding the place and role of secondary school musicals productions in the extracurricular programme of the school, it became clear to me that it may just provide a scientifically and academically more justifiable conceptual and theoretical framework for this study than *Social Capital Theory*.

The following three key propositions consequently frame what follows and I list them as succinctly as possible:

Proposition 1. A secondary school musical is essentially a pedagogical event, because it represents a purposive socio-conventional and educational intervention in individual and communal, collective human development which is deeply saturated with the values and history of the particular society and community in which it is located and contextualised.

Proposition 2. Of all the tools for cultural and pedagogical intervention in human development and learning, dialogue is not only the most pervasive in its range of use, but also powerful in its pedagogical and educational possibilities. Be it through on-stage dialogue between characters in the script, between members of the cast and members of the production team, between members of the production team and

members of the audience, moments of interaction between the cast and the audience, dance, music or eclectic combinations of the above, dialogue mediates the cognitive and socio-conventional spaces between all relevant role-players and stakeholders, as well as between what the learner (as participant in the musical production) knows and understands and what he or she has yet to learn, know and understand.

Proposition 3. It follows that one of the principal functions of a secondary school musical production is to provide appropriate and adequate dialogic and educative space and to create interactive opportunities and encounters for all relevant role-players and stakeholders so that it becomes possible – directly and appropriately – to engineer such mediation.

2.3 Preamble towards the Discussion of the Body of Scholarship

In light of the above, I will now firstly endeavour to determine theoretically the nature of secondary school musicals as pedagogical activities. In order to accomplish this I will answer the following questions:

- Ontological question: What is the nature of secondary school musicals?
- Cosmological question: How are secondary school musicals (as pedagogical realities) structured?
- Anthropological question: Who are the role-players and stakeholders involved in the production of secondary school musicals as pedagogical activities?

The second part of this chapter focuses on life skills education within the Life Orientation subject area. Again I attempt to answer the following three questions:

- Ontological question: What is the history, nature and role of life skills education?

- Cosmological question: How is life skills education for secondary schools structured within the Life Orientation subject area?
- Anthropological question: Who are the role-players and stakeholders involved in implementing life skills education at secondary school level in South Africa?

The reason for asking the above-mentioned questions is to determine the extent to which participation in a secondary school musical production may have any curricular and pedagogical value within a life skills education programme.

As the chapter unfolds, the social, political, systemic and institutional determinants of a life skills programme will also be highlighted, especially as it relates to the nature, place and role of secondary school musical productions as pedagogical and curricular activities.

The chapter ends with an integrated perspective on how the nature, place and role of secondary school musical productions may be merged within the life skills education programme of the subject area Life Orientation.

2.4 Secondary School Musicals

2.4.1 The nature of secondary school musicals

There is a paucity of scholarly literature as far as secondary school musical productions as extra-mural pedagogical and educative activities are concerned. A search on GOOGLE Scholar, using key words and phrases such as secondary school musical, musical productions, secondary school productions, secondary school operettas, extra-mural cultural activities, musicals, history of musicals, educational, revealed a total of eight sources directly related to secondary school musicals, of which only three were set in the South African context, suggesting that this topic may not have received due scholarly attention in the past. What follows represents, therefore, a review of all relevant literature on the subject and not only of strictly “scholarly” sources, *per se*.

Secondary school musical productions originated from the musical as genre. Gänzl (1997:2) explains the variety of the musical form thus:

The description that followed a musical's title on the playbill was normally intended to give an audience a slightly specific idea of what they could expect from their evening's entertainment. So a musical wasn't just a 'musical', it was a 'musical comedy', a 'romantic musical play', a 'burlesque', a 'farical comedy with songs and dances', an 'operetta' or even occasionally more individual and flavourful. A musical-[theatre] bill or title page in nineteenth century France might have carried the mention 'opéra-bouffe' or opera-comique', 'vaudeville' or 'comédie mêlée d'ariettes, while the German-language [theatre] of the same ear proffered such categories as 'komische Oper' (comic opera ,i.e., music-based play with spoken text), 'Lebensbild' ('picture-from-life') or 'Posse' ('homely' musical play) 'mit Gesang und Tanz' (as an alternative to those Possen and Lebensbilder which had no Gesang und Tanz), 'Operette' (light or small-in-subject opera), 'Zauberspiele' (magical or fairy-tale play, fantasy), 'Volksmärchen' (folk-story) or 'singspiel' (musical play).

The musical, in all its various forms, evolved from Greek storytelling which incorporated music and dance in staged comedies and tragedies as early as the 5th Century B.C. (Kenrick, 2003:1; Russel, 2005:244). Musicals as they are structured today only started in the 1800s in France and Vienna with the musicals of Offenbach and Strauss which achieved international popularity (Kenrick, 2003:2). These musicals were called Minstrel Shows and established integrated musical theatre, hereby setting the cornerstones for those popularised musical forms called Vaudeville, burlesque and extravaganza (Knapp, 2005:24). The popularity of the musical as genre however, only came into its own with the staging of an American production in 1860-1866 namely *The Black Crook* (Baggett, 2007:277; Knapp, 2005:23) which incorporated a blend of music, dance, drama and spectacle, setting the stage for the work of Gilbert and Sullivan who were synonymous with musicals as of 1871 to 1896 (Everett & Laird, 2008:18). The legitimate music theatre of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was melodrama which featured stylised drama, music, dance and pantomime and contributed the *melos* to future musical theatre, a type of programmatic music that emphasises dialogue and enhances emotional effect (Walsh & Platt, 2003:31, Stokes, 2010:23).

The performance style and repertoire of the musical have been updated and recreated since the 1900 by various composers and producers. Rogers and Hammerstein first incorporated music, song and dance in a complex plot in the 1943 production of *Oklahoma!* (Rosenburg & Hamburg, 1992:156). Jerome Kern, Guy Boulton and P.G. Wodehouse provided a restructured style of the musical as introduced by Rogers and Hammerstein and by the 1930s the American musical reached unheard of popularity, with composers such as Rogers and Hart and Cole Porter dominating the era (Rosenburg & Hamburg, 1992:156; Kenrick, 2003:3). By the 1940s and 1950s some of the classic musicals in the modern era, including *Oklahoma*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *The King and I* and *My Fair Lady*, were staged (Rosenburg & Hamburg, 1992:155; Kenrick, 2003:3). These musicals are still produced all around the world on professional stages and by amateur groups, including schools, and many have been adapted for the movie industry.

The origins of South African theatre and also in essence musical theatre as such can be found in the rich and earliest oral tradition of indigenous South Africans - the folk tales around the fires, with their own dramatic storyline often accompanied by songs and music entertained an audience of family and tribesmen (Hutchison, 2008:313). South African theatre history dates back to 1838, when A.G. Bains's *Kaatje Kekkelbek* or *Life among the Hottentots* was performed by the Graham's Town Amateur Company. The marked influence of Calvinism introduced by Huguenot settlers meant that theatre was considered by many white South Africans to be intrinsically immoral (Orkin, 2001:6; Bouws, 1946:43). However, in the early twentieth century Christian missionaries made an important contribution to theatre tradition in South Africa when they used drama in education (Hutchison, 2008:314). Their themes were often didactic plays set in South Africa (Hutchison, 2008:315). Father Bernard Hess also encouraged the production of comedies and the dramatisation of IsiZulu narratives (Hutchison, 2008:315). Theatre began to flourish in previous black townships where performance arts became increasingly popular during the 1920s and 1930s as a form of blue-collar entertainment. *Methethwe Lucky Stars* was formed in 1929, staging productions thematically set in rural society and depicting its traditions (Anon., 2010; Angove, 2009:38). In 1932 came the Bantu

Dramatic Society, which aimed to encourage 'Bantu Playwrights' and to develop African dramatic and operatic art (Hutchison, 2008:318).

Herbert Dhlomo, an educator, journalist and musician, produced popular stage productions during the 1930s and especially his work *The Girl Who Killed to Save* was highly acclaimed (Wenzel, 2005:52; Steadman, 1990:215-216, 227). Apart from a few early productions - notably the ground-breaking musical *King Kong* in the late 1950s - theatre created in South Africa by South Africans only really began to make an impact with the opening of Johannesburg's Market Theatre in the mid-1970s (Angove, 1992:38; Orkin, 2001:26). During the 1940s the townships with their fusion of cultures produced imaginative musicians and writers who were responsible for an eclectic performance culture which drew upon American, English and African cultural traditions and included a mix of comic sketches as well as jazz music, singing and dancing. Years later the destruction of Sfiatown, in pursuit of segregation, was commemorated in an epic musical production created by the *Junction Avenue Theatre Company*, which won acclaim and awards locally and internationally (Davis & Fuchs, 1996:218). Taliep Peterson, a former resident of District Six, together with Afrikaans alternative performer, David Kramer, wrote *District Six - The Musical* which opened in 1986 at the Baxter Theatre (Blumberg & Walder, 2008:17; Davis & Fuchs, 1996:219). Another musical with the same setting created and produced by Peterson and Kramer, *Kat and the Kings*, had a successful season in London's West End and was awarded the Laurence Olivier prize for best new musical of 1999 while the cast jointly won the award for best performance (Dalglish, 2005:14; Anon., 2010).

The Afrikaans musical tradition initiated in 1652 with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape (Bouws, 1946:11). Music was closely connected to religion and education as Dutch and German psalms were used in both religious practices and as educative tool (Bouws, 1946:13). The colonists also had musicians who entertained audiences at dances and concerts. During the 1900's folk songs (*volksliedere*) were especially popular and soon the slaves and servants also became involved in performing these traditional songs accompanied by dancing. Light operas, song-and-dance productions (*sangspele*) as well as plays were performed by music companies and choirs (Bouws, 1946:33-35). In 1803 four French light operas were performed,

all light hearted and humorous followed by the very first melodrama to be performed in South Africa, Rousseau's *Pygmalion* (Bouws, 1982:26). It is the notorious Charles Boniface who produced the first musical *Paisiello óf Rossini (De onnutte voorzorg)* by Beaumarchais in 1824 which included dramatic dialogue, music and dance (Bouws, 1982:43). In September 1889 four Gilbert and Sullivan operettas were produced in the Globe Theatre in Johannesburg before it burnt down in October of the same year (Bouws, 1982:124).

Musical productions in South African schools during the Apartheid regime included operettas, revues and musical concerts. These productions were reserved for the more affluent schools whereas less privileged schools had neither the expertise nor the finances to stage large productions (Bobetsky, 2008:110, Blumberg & Walder, 2008:15). The cultural boycott which was implemented during the 1980s and only lifted after 1994, excluded schools from exposure to some of the most popular musical productions staged in America and England at the time (Orkin, 2001:26, Blumberg & Walder, 2008:18). When the ban was lifted the musical as genre became more popular as production of choice in especially secondary schools in South Africa. As the royalties and production costs were extremely expensive some schools created new authentic scripts and produced their own typically South African musicals (Spitzer & Muller, 2006:103).

The popularity of this musical genre under secondary school learners reached its pinnacle with the release of the American television film, *High School Musical* in 2006 (Schneider, 2008) which was viewed by 225 million viewers globally. The plot, setting and characters of this Disney Channel Original Movie production relates to the teenagers' world and interests (Surette, 2008:9), and therefore could also be used as a vehicle to instil certain values and life skills such as resisting peer pressure, dealing with social rivalry, leadership, loyalty and perseverance. As proposed earlier the secondary school musical production is fundamentally a pedagogical event, as it represents functional socio-conventional and educational involvement in individual and shared learner development which is deeply embedded in the values, life skills and history of the society and community in which it is to be found and contextualised. The Vygotskian principle of education as a planned and

guided acculturation rather than a facilitated natural development, and indeed that the educator seeks to outpace development rather than follow it is fundamentally part of the musical as pedagogical event (Alexander, 2005:6).

As a result publishing companies were asked by educators and producers to generate contemporary musical theatre scripts and scores especially written for young performers as educational resources to develop the creative potential of their learners (Stevens, 2011:1) In South Africa the production of the *High School Musical* was staged from January to March 2009 in the Teatro theatre at *Montecasino* by the Pieter Toerien theatre company. It was financed by MTN and proclaimed a huge success introducing many young people to the theatrical experience (Anon., 2009). Although not well documented, anecdotal records of various South African schools indicate that they followed this trend and also moved away from the Revue as preferred secondary school musical production and started writing scripts for the diverse South African context (Davis & Fuchs, 1996:235).

Oscar Hammerstein as quoted by Stanley Green in *The World of Musical Comedy* (1980:7), perhaps grasped the quintessence of musicals: "It is nonsense to say what a musical should or should not be. It should be anything it wants to be." Although the components of secondary school musicals may vary from one production to the other, they always revolve around a central plot or theme/s with extended dialogue and melodies designed for the popular taste of that era and incorporating choreographed dance moves (Kenrick, 2003:3). Musicals often provide a light-hearted observation of significant issues, *educating through enjoyment* (Steyn, 1999:12), thus becoming a vehicle for conveying life skills.

Scholars such as Weiße and Knauth (1997), Leganger-Krogstad (2003), Alexander (2005) and Roux (2006) reflect on the use of dialogue in educational contexts but there are also many other authors who took this concept beyond the context of education. Du Preez (2006:33) critiqued the conceptions about educational dialogue by arguing that dialogue should not be regarded as a commodity to be used to gain a predefined end or become a tool geared towards achieving a pre-conceptualised goal. It should be the aim of education to break the traditional mould of monologuing

("I, the educator, speak and you, the learner, sit still and absorb my wisdom...") in order to engage the "other" in deep-dialogue (Schafer, 2000; Alexander, 2005:3-4). The nature of the secondary school musical as specific genre is essentially geared towards breaking monologism⁵ and to promote dialogue by cultivating a coming together of ethical communities in order to understand and accept each other's life-worlds. It is a vehicle to use "the power of talk to shape children's thinking" and thus the societies they live in (Alexander, 2005:1). It should never be the aim of the secondary school musical to promote dialogue as a *quasi*-spiritual practice to solve the predicaments of society. This concurs with the approach of Weiße and Knauth (1997:39-42) that diverse experiences are prerequisites for dialogue and not knowledge *per se*. The secondary school musical production creates space for exploration about life where interlocutors from diverse backgrounds (e.g. educators, learners, parents) meet to compare and reflect on their differences. Although the musical production is essentially an extra-mural activity it remains pedagogical in nature as it is a purposive socio-conventional intervention in personal development, drenched with the societal values and history of the community it serves (see *Proposition 1* above, as well as Alexander, 2005:2). As such, it provides a safe space for dialogue about social conventions, norms, values and even religion where mutual understanding is empathetic rather than critical in nature (Du Preez, 2006:44).

It could be concluded from this discussion that the secondary school musical, as a descendant of musical theatre on the world's stages through the ages, is essentially an ontologically elusive phenomenon. In an attempt to define the secondary school musical production for the purposes of this study it seems, however, to include a book which contains the dramatic plot, carried by the dialogue, music and enhanced by choreographed dance and movement. The themes are either explicitly or implicitly incorporated in the dramatic text and are usually related to the questioning of socially accepted mores, ways of behaviour and beliefs. Humour is often used as the musical essentially endeavours firstly to entertain and, secondly, to educate. The choice of music is usually influenced by popular contemporary music trends and displays a

⁵ Monologism in this context refers to humans developing in a void through the perpetuation of cultural essentialism, cultural relativism and traditional communitarianism (Du Preez, 2006:35).

variety of musical forms. It essentially reflects reality as interpreted by the writers, production team and cast who all participate in creating this dramatic, staged version of lived life. As the secondary school musical production is, effectively, a hologram of reality, a kind of “Bonsai”-version of life, it provides a perfect stage and dialogic space for spontaneously acquiring and practising newly gained life skills. A constant danger for the secondary school musical production and its role-players, however, is to overemphasise dialogic skills development to the extent that it becomes spurious and artificial, rather than sincere, authentic and spontaneous.

The ontology of secondary school musical productions should, however, not be studied in isolation of its cosmological features (i.e. how this particular reality is structured). This issue is addressed in the following paragraph.

2.4.2 The structure of secondary school musicals

Musicals as they are structured nowadays take the format of the *book musical* where the music, song lyrics and dance are linked together in the *book* which refers to the detailed plot with character development and a central theme or themes which are also carried through by the dramatic action and spoken dialogue (Kenrick, 2003:1-4). The music and the lyrics form the score of the musical. Both music and lyrics are often light and based on popular musical trends, enhanced by choreography, including dance and movement (Kenrick, 2003:1-4). Musical scores may be original or popular songs of the day with lyrics rewritten to carry the plot of the musical (Kenrick, 2003:1-4; Bobetsky, 2008:119). The emotional content of the musical may include humour, pathos, love and anger. The plot is conveyed through the words, music, movement and technical aspects of the musical as an integrated whole (Ogden, 2008:67). Although musical theatre overlaps with other theatrical forms such as opera and operetta, it may be distinguished by the equal importance given to the music, the dialogue, movement and other elements of the works. Since the early 20th century, musical theatre productions have generally been referred to as *musicals* (Kenrick, 2003:1-4).

There is no fixed length for a musical; however, most musicals are presented in two acts, the first longer than the second, with a short intermission. In the first act the

characters are introduced and the plot and dramatic and musical themes established (Kenrick, 2003:3). The first act ends with a plot complication or dramatic conflict between characters. During the second act the theme/s and plot are developed and conflict or complications are resolved.

Themes are often related to social issues of the time with tolerance⁶ and reciprocal respect a recurrent theme in musical theatre. Participants in school musical productions also recounted that they felt that they were accepted in spite of their diversity and coined it as a positive reinforcement to their self-concept (Adderley, Kennedy & Berz, 2003:199; Watkins, 2005:21; Parker, 2007:28, 29). The secondary musical production can, therefore, become the stage to instil and practise life skills including reciprocal respect for self, others and otherness, diversity, kindness and fairness (Parker, 2007:29, 30; Campbell, 1995:39).

Although dramatic stories enhanced by extravagant effects became very popular during the 1980's and 1990s with the European *mega-musicals* such as *Phantom of the Opera*, *Evita* and *Les Misérables*, many writers broke from this mould to produce more modestly financed musicals of critical acclaim and varied topics, such as *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Blood Brothers* and *Rent* (Everett & Laird, 2008:28). Another modern musical trend is to create a less complicated plot to fit a particular collection of songs (Juke-box theatre), for example *Movin' Out*, based on the music of Billy Joel or popular groups such as ABBA (*Mamma Mia!*) and Queen (*We will Rock You*). South African productions such as *African Footprint* and *Umoja*, classified as *revues*, followed this modern musical trend and together with the typical book musicals, *Kat and the Kings* and *Sarafina!* toured internationally (Kruger, 2006:233; Steadman, 1990:228). These productions are representative of the success stories of musicals performed by local casts and produced and written by local production teams (Kruger, 2006:233)

⁶ In the current post-structuralist scholarly discourse on the nature, structure, content and intent of the performing arts, the use of notions such as *tolerance* is increasingly being frowned upon, as it invokes, among others, discursive situations where genuine, deep respect for diversity and otherness is not necessarily regarded as a prerequisite for scholarly debate as it could be perceived as being condescending rather than accepting, embracing and accommodating.

Extra-curricular musical productions, as performed in South African secondary schools, seem to follow the trends adapted by commercial theatre. However, as the copyright for existing musicals is very expensive and most public schools do not have the resources to afford the fees, scripts are often written or compiled by educators with some input from learners (Bobetsky, 2008:118). This creative process of writing and compiling the secondary school musical is claimed by some to be the most rewarding aspect of their job (Cox, 1999: 39) albeit time-consuming and labour-intensive. Secondary school musicals as genre within the South African context are known, however, to incorporate aspects of drama, existing songs which often are provided with original lyrics created by the writers to convey the plot or theme of the musical, as well as choreographed dance and movement suited to the abilities of the amateur secondary school performers (Bobetsky, 2008:87; Doyle, 2003:234). One of the primary responsibilities of the educator is to create interactive opportunities and encounters within the educationally sanctioned, dialogic space of the secondary school environment for the learners (Alexander, 2005:2).

The work of the philosophers Habermas, Gadamer and Derrida who all explored dialogue as facilitation strategy, represents the three basic traditions of post-positivist philosophy (cf. Badiou, 2003), namely practical, emancipatory and post-paradigmatic. (Du Preez, 2006: 47). Without going into too much detail, I deem it sufficient to state, at this juncture, that the epistemological underpinnings of dialogue and the creation (and maintenance) of dialogic space for the secondary school musical can be satisfactorily understood in terms of Habermas's (1989:286-293) premises with regard to – specifically – the practical interest of dialogue:

- Through their participation in the staging of a musical production, learners may acquire the skill of reasoning through interaction with their peers, as well as with their educators.
- In a musical production, the interaction of all the role-players is inherently interpretative and contextual.
- The musical production itself is essentially a subjective meaning-making process for all role-players and stakeholders.

- Consensus about all matters pertaining to their participation serves as a means of validating not only the learners' experiences and interpretations, but those of for example, the production team and parents as well.

Whether overtly or covertly, it would seem that the secondary school musical invariably endeavours to employ dialogic hermeneutics as methodological framework to foster empathetic understanding of others through the book or plot, as well as through the interaction between the learners and members of the production team, and among members of the production team themselves.

The ontology of secondary school musical productions and its cosmological features (i.e. how this particular reality is structured) are, because of the ontologically and epistemologically pivotal importance of dialogue, closely related to the role-players and stakeholders involved in the production of secondary school musicals as pedagogical activities. This anthropological attribute and quality is briefly addressed in the following paragraph.

2.4.3 The role-players and stakeholders involved in the production of secondary school musicals

Musicals in the secondary school setting cannot be produced successfully unless they are understood by all involved as essential pedagogical as well as educational features of the secondary school's curriculum and extra-mural activities. For this reason they are primarily undertaken by educators / educators, learners and parents. In order to put this into perspective, it is necessary to understand something of the contemporary thinking with regard to education.

Education is a dynamic occurrence, intended to bring about change in the child (*educand*) (Van Crombrugge, 2006:24-25,49). The educative event, through which the personalities of the next generation are formed, is always rooted in the philosophy of life of their educators. Whatever the educator's view of the *educand*, be it *zōon logon echon* - the living being who possesses the gift of speech (Cheung, 2010:368) ; *zōon politikon* - city beast, political beast, state-building man, statesman (Saliu, 2010); *imago Dei* - image of God (Richardson, 2004), *ego cogito* - the thinking

being (Vox Nova, 2010), a core notion of education has always been that of changing the *educand* for the sake of becoming a productive and functional individual within his / her social settings (Van der Walt & Potgieter 2011:80).

As alluded to above, a secondary school musical production is about lived life – protracted and condensed into a temporary space of usually not more than two to three hours. Life, how it should be lived; why it should be lived in a particular manner, as well as why we need to reflect on it in and through the genre of the musical, *per se*, therefore usually forms the pedagogical and educational undertones of any secondary school musical production. Learning is primarily a matter of knowing and understanding lived life, while education is the cultivation of the whole personality of the learner. It develops not only the intellect, memory and moral abilities of the learner but also the ability of practical action within a group or social setting (Pelcová, 2008:9-10).

From the conception phase to the final production all role-players and stakeholders involved are morally, pedagogically and educationally obliged to take responsibility for all the aspects incorporated in the musical production at a secondary school. Stakeholders involved may vary from school to school and are mostly responsible for support to the main role players (Pitts, 2008:11). These stakeholders include music, dance and drama experts collaborating with the educators responsible for these aspects of the production, the business communities who often contribute financially to musical productions and the community at large who might provide advice or assistance in specialised fields. This cross-involvement of school and community often leads to bonds being forged to benefit all the role-players and stakeholders (Pitts, 2008:11). A crucial step in the planning of the musical production is the compilation of the production team; precisely because of its obvious pedagogical and educational significance. I will briefly discuss this in the following paragraph.

When assembling the production team the producer/s will choose a number of team members from the teaching staff, learners or parents who have indicated that they are willing to take part in the staging of the musical. The role of producer/s is usually accepted by a staff member as the production is mostly initiated by an educator or

group of educators from the school (Bobetsky, 2008:1). Assistance is provided by a stage manager who deals with everything on-stage and back-stage and serves as the eyes and ears of the producers before, during and after the performance (Bobetsky, 2008:57). The musical director or musical producer/s will be in charge of the rehearsals of the choir, ensembles, soloists and orchestra (Bobetsky, 2008:52). A vital role is played by the choreographer/s who compose(s) all dance steps and movement. Very often schools make use of outside helpers such as dance specialists or may need the help of a specialist for a particular number such as a tap-dance or break-dance expert.

As the dramatic dialogue of the musical is pivotal to a successful production a performance specialist may also be included in the production team. The team will also include a sound-, lighting- and decor director, each with a team of helpers. A *garderobe* mistress takes responsibility for the costumes and props used during the production (Bobetsky, 2008:52). Other members of staff, learners and parents may be needed to assist with secretarial duties which may include typing or printing of tickets and programmes, production schedules, booking of seats for performances, dealing with press releases and finances. It is clear that a musical production is a complex endeavour which enlists a number of role-players, each with appropriate skills to enhance the production or add value to the smooth flow of all related aspects.

2.4.4 Conclusion

Although the educators and cast may be amateurs, productions have often been of a high standard and schools frequently make use of these productions to promote and add status to their schools within the community (Pitts, 2008:2). Social interaction between the community and secondary schools is an added by-product of the musical productions, focusing on community involvement and contribution (Bobetsky, 2008:107; Alexander, 2005:3). Local community newspapers can be enlisted to announce dates and times of rehearsals and productions, whereas parent volunteers could be involved with specific tasks related to the productions such as costumes, props, stage make-up, ticket sales, safety patrol, promotion and advertising (Bobetsky, 2008:108). A charity activity often used by secondary schools

in South Africa as a project for reaching out to the community at large is to treat senior citizens residing in the nearby area to a free performance of the musical. Cultivating relationships within the community creates a firm base for the positive response of the community towards future projects of the school (Bobetsky, 2008:110).

2.5 The Need for Life Skills Education

2.5.1 The history of life skills education

As educational concept the term *life skills* education or *Life Orientation* is fairly new, especially in the South African context where it was only coined as such during the process of developing the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) 2005 which started in 1995 (Department of Education, 2005:2). The idea of preparing learners for life both socially and morally is, however, not a novel idea. What has undergone substantial change is the terminology used to describe this aspect of education as well as its dominant conceptual and theoretical underpinnings, and its epistemological tenets (Algera & Sink, 2002:162; McCullough & Snyder, 2000:2).

Antecedents of life skills education are *character, moral* or *religious* education. In some instances the term *values* education is favoured (McCullough & Snyder, 2000:2). Other derivatives include *social-emotional learning, life coaching, moral intelligence* and *education for democracy* (Berkowitz & Brier, 2004:74, 78; Green, 2004:254). Although some of these aforementioned terms have fallen into disrepute, at the core of all these semantic variations is the idea of preparing, especially young people, for life. This involves not only the moral but also the psychosocial development of a person within his or her situatedness (Algera & Sink, 2002:163; Shepard Salls, 2007:1) and has evolved into a trend of lifelong learning to adapt to the rigours of life within a rapidly changing society.

Much of the research that has been generated was done in the United States of America (USA) which often sets the scene for global trends in life skills education (Berkowitz & Brier, 2002:71; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:4). Moral and character education in the earliest documented curriculums was grounded on Christian values and teaching was overtly Biblical, using narratives and themes from the Bible (Berkowitz

& Brier, 2004:72). From the independence of the USA in 1776 to the 19th century education was funded and therefore controlled by the state which led to a more secularised approach to education (Algera & Sink, 2002:163). The *common school movement* established by Horace Mann endeavoured to establish a political community separate from the church yet one that would still be able to focus on instilling morally sound values as the primary aim of education (Badolato, 2002). The ethnic and religious diversity of the USA and a greater focus on capitalism compelled a shift from religion as the basis of moral education towards a more inclusive morality intent on good citizenship as well as religious and cultural tolerance (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:10; Mulkey, 1997:35). In fact, moral education was considered to be of greater value than intellectual aspects of the curriculum (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:45). From the mid 19th century throughout the 20th century, as modernism and evolutionary theories made headway, morality was (although stalwartly opposed by religious groups) increasingly decided by discipline and family values (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:153-154). The stage was hereby set for the development of moral or character education in the 20th and 21st centuries.

During the 20th century three approaches to character and moral education can be identified. Firstly the *Children's Morality Code* initialised a sociologically founded movement towards character education based on students' code of conduct, emphasising such values as reliability, self-control, truth, duty, kindness, fairness, good sportsmanship and workmanship, teamwork and self-reliance (Shepard Salls, 2007:11; McKnown, 1935:76-78). During this phase behaviourists such as Dewey propagated *progressive education* where a sound social environment best served the American ideals (Mulkey, 1997:35). Secondly the following phase of moral and character education shifted focus from the sociological approach to a more rationalistic approach founded on discourses about moral quandaries and clarification of core values, called the Enlightenment model (Worthington & Berry, 2005:147ff). The rationalistic approach inspired a rule-based reasoning and problem-solving technique where educators used a moral dilemma discussion to teach norms and values to learners (Mulkey, 1997:36; Algera & Sink, 2002:146). In this values / decision-making approach learners are provided with the tools to formulate their own values rather than being prescribed certain norms and values (Hunter, 2000:75-77).

Thirdly the present practice of life skills education and Life Orientation identifies certain values learners need to acquire in order to fulfil their roles within the society where they live (Algera & Sink, 2002:165-166). The school has taken over the role of surrogate parent in order to nurture broadly accepted life skills, knowledge, values and morals in learners who need to come to terms with a society featuring declining morality and a diminishing reservoir of commonly respected, emulatable, pursuable, and achievable life skills (Kaestle, 1984:108). As diversity in social, religious and life views within the modern community varies substantially, the focus is on generically accepted skills such as respect, tolerance and candour as well as dignity, self-control, abstinence and reliability (Algera & Sink, 2002:166-167). Many currently favoured life skill programmes specifically endeavour to reduce sexual promiscuity and substance abuse, promoting those life skills associated with respect and self-control, thus serving the specific needs of the community. This trend is also prevalent in the South African Life Orientation learning area / subject and life skills education and the gist thereof will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.5.2 The nature and role of life skills education

Life skills education in South Africa is represented by various schools of thought on how best to teach life skills in order to prepare learners for life (Hunter, 2000:78; Bohlin, 2005:2). Bohlin (2005:2-6) classifies four major streams in character education which also seem to apply to the South African situation:

- logical problem-solving, moral reasoning, democracy in progress and caretaking and community building as progressive moral development;
- clarification of norms and values where learners themselves define their own moral values driving their actions;
- life skills development in order to empower learners to live productive and valuable lives; and
- developing sound ethical values through moral and intellectual habits.

As the focus of this study is mainly on life skills education in South Africa and a similar approach to that which is suggested by Bohlin (2005) is used extensively in the South African context, a brief discussion of this approach will follow.

According to Bohlin (2005:2 ff) the origin of life skills education lies in the social and emotional learning movement which aims to instil in learners those skills pertaining to personal happiness and the leading of a fulfilling and responsible life within a chosen community, referred to as *self-in-society* in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Education, 2011:7). Although those life skills deemed essential to one community may not be the same in another community, there nevertheless are life skills that seem to be more or less communal to all societies and which need to be identified by educators and policy makers (Rens, Van der Walt & Vreken, 2005:219; De Klerk, 2005:171; Swartz, 2006:557).

Life skills can be defined as those psychosocial and personal skills needed by a person in order to lead a worthwhile adult life within a social community (Cronin, 1996:54; Bohlin, 2005:3). These life skills often transcend moral and values clarification and follow a more holistic approach to leading a worthwhile life (Cronin, 1996:54; Plant & Plant, 1999:389). Life skills education does not aim only to lead a learner to be a successful and well-balanced adult but also to be resilient in dealing with the trials and tribulations of life such as, for example, drug abuse and inappropriate sexual behaviour, which may be detrimental to life itself (Plant & Plant, 1999:389; Eisen *et al.*, 2003:887).

According to The Pan-American Health Organisation (2001:6) and UNICEF (s.a.⁷) life skills can be categorised as those skills which could help people make informed decisions in order to live a healthy and productive life. The following areas are identified:

- Social skills which include negotiation skills, effective communication, assertiveness, cooperation and empathy.

⁷ *sine anno* (Latin for “without date-of-year”)

- Cognitive skills that would typically encompass problem-solving, facing consequences, making sound decisions, critical thinking and self-evaluation.
- Emotional coping skills comprising of managing stress and emotions, self-management and self-monitoring.

Authors vary slightly in their definitions of life skills but in general the following definition by Junge, *et al.* (2003:165) seems to set the benchmark for life skills definitions, namely that they include and refer to those “...*non-academic abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that must be learned for success in society...*”, when merged with the holistic view of Elias and Kress (1994:62) who included socio-cognitive, affective and critical thinking skills. The intention of life skills education seems to be to help young learners to develop those skills that will be crucial in developing healthy relationships with others and themselves, their environment and society, steering them away from the quagmire of risks associated with modern society. This view is echoed by Hunter (2000: *passim*) as well as Plant and Plant (1999:389) who believe that the aim of life skills education is to create a psychological regime where self-esteem, expressing emotions and positive attitude set the scene for a successful life experience. In addition to this view some authors view life skills education as an essential human right which needs to be taught to all youngsters in order to create a better community (Buthelezi, Michell, Moletsane, De Lange, Taylor & Stuart, 2007:454).

The life skills approaches mentioned in the previous paragraphs are either used in combination with each other to assist in educational programmes such as the AIDS and drug abuse campaigns, or aspects of one or more of these life skill approaches are used eclectically to accomplish the same objectives. The programme often used in South African secondary schools to approach substance abuse is the *Soul City Life skills Programme*. This programme has achieved some success in drug abuse campaigns, especially in secondary schools (Peltzer & Promtussananon, 2003:825ff).

It is important to note that life skills education and character education often differ only marginally, as the aim of both is the development of positive character values in young learners. These character traits generally feature the following values: integrity, compassion, cooperation, perseverance, citizenship, respect, caring, tolerance, honesty, confidence, loyalty, self-respect, diligence, punctuality, creativity, dignity, hope and trustworthiness (Hunter, 2000:77; Yu, 2004, 136; Hudd, 2005:29; Dovre, 2007:40-42; Freeks, 2007:97ff). Traditionally these values were taught by parents in an environment where appropriate role models and a positive value system were present, but in a modern society where children are not necessarily taught these values it has become the *de facto* task of the school system to instil such character traits / life skills in the learners (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003: 39). The dilemma, especially in a diverse community such as South Africa, is the choice of values / life skills to be taught as part of the curriculum within a diverse cultural setting. Hunt and Mullins, (2005:191) suggest that certain *core values / life skills* are universally accepted by all cultures and relate to social and community consensus and that these should be incorporated in life skill and character programmes.

In the South African context Life Orientation as learning area / subject is a variant of life skills education as discussed in the previous paragraphs. Although the body of scholarship on this topic is limited, a brief history will be provided to set the South African approach against the backdrop of the global approach to life skills and character education.

Even as far back as 1652 at the start of colonisation the Christian practice of moral education initiated the first steps towards character / life skills education. When schools were put under government administration in 1804 the Christian character of life skills education remained intact as part of *Christian National Education* until 1996 (Roux, 2006:152). Moral education, however, was not taught as a subject but formed part of the curriculum for Religious Studies and was implicitly taught in the other school subjects (Lawrence, 1982:189; Roux, 2006:155). Inevitably this approach to moral and character education was criticised widely, not only from within the South African community, but also from the international arena. Scholars typically proclaimed this programme to have been contrived by the Apartheid government to

indoctrinate the youth of the country (Lawrence, 1982:189; Roux, 2006:155). With the *National Education Policy Act* and the *South African Schools Act* implemented in 1996, a new dispensation was introduced; the driving force of which was to become known as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) (Horsthemke & Kissack, 2008:277). Religion was no longer the basis for moral or character education but rather a system of common values deemed appropriate for all South African citizens as formulated by the *Race and Values in Education* initiative (Swartz, 2006:557). These so-called common values were eventually incorporated in the learning area / subject Life Orientation within the Revised National Curriculum Statement in 2002 (RNCS) (Department of Education, 2002:3).

Life Orientation as learning area / subject was recorded in numerous documents issued by the Department of Education. As this study is primarily focussed on secondary schools (Senior phase and FET band) only documents related to the secondary school will be discussed. Although the learning area / subject related to life skills is called Life Skills Education in the Foundation phase, it is called Life Orientation in the documents pertaining to Grades 7 to 12 (Department of Education, 2002:3; Department of Education, 2010:2). Life Orientation has as its main sources the syllabi for subjects previously incorporated in the curriculum, such as Guidance, Vocational Guidance, Religious / Bible education, Civic Education, Health Education and Physical Education (Department of Education, 2008:7). Life Orientation comprises skills, knowledge, norms and values embedded in disciplines such as Psychology, Political Science, Sociology and Movement Science (Department of Education, 2002:8). This interdisciplinary approach aims at providing learners with all they need, called the *survival kit* for learners by Orsmond (2002:224), to function in an emerging democracy as well-educated individuals within their communities, living healthy, balanced lives and contributing towards building the new South Africa while dealing with the emerging problems (Department of Education 2008:8). Skills related to the individual's relationship with himself and others, coping within an often problematic and diverse political, social, psychological and economic climate while at the same time healing the divisions of the past to establish a democratic and united South Africa are at the core of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) of 2002 (Department of Education, 2002:1ff; 2003:1ff).

Since 1994 South African education and its structures have undergone major changes, particularly relating to the transformation and development of the National Curriculum. The basis for the transformation of the curriculum was provided in the Constitution of South Africa (South Africa, 1996), the aim as stated in the preamble a paradigm shift towards healing the divisions of the past and establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. Life skills education has been granted a pivotal role in bringing about this ideal of providing the youth with those skills, knowledge, norms and values that would ensure that South Africa would become a democratic and united country (Department of Education, 2010:2-4). These life skills as indicated by the CAPS document for Life Orientation Grades R-12 to be implemented in January 2012 include working effectively as individuals and as members of a team, organising and managing activities, responsibility, time management, analysing and critically evaluating information, effective communication, using science and technology, being a responsible citizen and taking part in physical activities (Department of Education, 2010:2-7). Learners should be guided in developing their full potential and making informed choices that will facilitate individual growth while creating a democratic society. Learners should also learn to be intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated and be able to apply goal setting, problem-solving and decision-making strategies (Department of Education, 2010:7-8).

In conclusion it can be argued that Life Orientation and life skills education in South Africa has followed the trend of the global life skills movement as discussed earlier in this section. The CAPS document to be implemented in January 2012 has indicated life skills education as integral part of the subject Life Orientation for Grades R-12. Although skills, knowledge and values are the main components to be considered in the Life Orientation curriculum for the secondary school, the main educational aim is that learners should be able to convey those life skills to their real life experiences and for that reason it is vital that those life skills should be practised in real life situations. The question remains whether educators are equipped to create such dialogic spaces for learners to be able to learn how to cope with occasions when

they are called upon as individuals or as part of a group (self-in-society) to make responsible choices, solve problems and work towards set goals.

To fully consider life skills education as integral component of the subject / learning area / subject Life Orientation it is necessary to investigate how life skills education for secondary schools is structured within the Life Orientation learning area / subject

2.5.3 Structure of life skills education

When discussing the structure of life skills education the cosmological question is approached: How is life skills education for secondary schools in South Africa structured within the Life Orientation subject / learning area? It is against the background and context of global life skills education and specifically life skills education within the South African educational system that I will endeavour to dissect the structure of life skills education in the following discussion. The focus will be on life skills education as part of Life Orientation, as it forms part of the newly released final draft of the CAPS document for the subject / learning area Life Orientation in Grades 7-12, which is scheduled for implementation in January 2012 starting with Grade 10 (Department of Education, 2011:2).

The amended and comprehensive CAPS document (Grades R-12) for each subject will replace the RNCS and Assessment Policy Statement documents for Grades R-12, namely the National Curriculum Statements Grade R-9 (2002) and the National Curriculum statements Grades 10-12 (2004) including the Subject statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines (Department of Education, 2011:2). The CAPS document incorporates the guidelines for learning and teaching in South African schools in all approved subjects as listed in the policy document. The curriculum is centred on the following key principles, according to the Department of Education (2010:3, 4):

- social transformation;
- active and critical learning;
- exceptional knowledge and skills;
- progression in complexity of content and context;

- human rights, inclusivity and environmental as well as social justice;
- valuing the heritage and history of all groups in South African society; and
- the credibility of education in South Africa regarding quality and efficacy within the international arena.

The learners ultimately should be able to work individually and communally towards the solving of problems, and being responsible and effective within a variety of situations reflecting the complexity of the world they live in and will be expected to live in as adults (Department of Education, 2010:3, 4). They should be able to communicate effectively while collecting, analysing and evaluating information critically within a team but also individually. During each of the phases, (Foundation phase, Intermediate phase and Senior phase (FET)), the teaching of these life skills as stipulated in the CAPS document forms part of the curriculum, albeit called life skills or Life Orientation (Department of Education, 2010:5,6).

Life Orientation, which includes life skills education, is essential to the holistic growth of learners and is therefore incorporated in all phases (Foundation phase, Intermediate phase and Senior phase (FET)) and includes such topics as development of self within society while respecting the rights of others and the environment and taking responsibility for their actions (Department of Education, 2010:7, 8). The individual's lifelong participation in physical activity and recreation is also endeavoured. The main aim of Life Orientation is, therefore, to instil those skills, knowledge, norms and values that learners need to ensure that as future citizens of South Africa's multi-cultural society they are prepared for the challenges of life and especially as *self-in-society* (Department of Education, 2011:7). The topics and issues as subsections of these topics dealt with in the subject Life Orientation (Grades 7-12) in the Intermediate phase (Grades 4-6) and Senior phase (Grades 7-9) and FET-band (Grades 10-12) are inter-related starting with the Foundation phase, and each phase serves as a basis for the subsequent phase (Department of Education, 2010:7).

Seen against the historic background (including its *ontic* background) and structure of life skills education it is therefore also necessary to explore the anthropological

question relating to who constitute the role-players and stakeholders involved in implementing life skills education at secondary school level in South Africa. This issue will be discussed in the following segment.

2.5.4 Who populates the landscape of life skills education?

The landscape of secondary school life skills education is populated by a number of role-players and stakeholders who are reciprocally responsible for educating and teaching those life skills stipulated in the CAPS document for Life Orientation Grades R-12 to be implemented in January 2012 (Department of Education, 2011: 2). In the following paragraphs the role-players will be named and their involvement with life skills education, *per se*, discussed. Firstly I will review the role of the learners, as the primary residents of the life skills landscape.

The landscape of life skills education is occupied by, amongst others, the secondary school learners as principal role-players as they are in need of educational guidance towards attaining those life skills as deemed pivotal to becoming functional citizens in South Africa's multi-cultural society (Department of Education, 2010:2). As primary educators the parents as role-players are obligated to teach their children those life skills such as goal setting, problem-solving and decision-making strategies that they need to function effectively as adults. Due to the growing dysfunctionality of many families, however, it cannot be taken for granted that learners will be adequately educated to become informed and responsible adults. Research has shown that secondary school learners who participate in organised extra-mural activities such as sport and cultural endeavours have gained emotional, cognitive, physical, interpersonal, and social skills as these activities provide a training ground which learners seem to lack in their family environments (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005:159). Especially learners who are in some way at risk seem to benefit greatly from extra-mural activities (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997: 241). Involvement in extra-mural activities also assist learners in developing life skills such as problem-solving, time management, goal setting, decision-making, and leadership skills (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005:159). As the definitive aim of Life Orientation is to enable the learner in developing holistically it stands to reason that participation in extra-mural activities as educative dialogic spaces are paramount in promoting this goal.

Secondly, the school as extension of the family, given its accountability in terms of acting *in loco parentis* (on behalf of the parent), is obliged to accept its co-responsibility for educating these learners within the framework of the curriculum to acquire those life skills as stipulated by the curriculum for Life Orientation (Department of Education, 2010:3; Zirkel & Reichner, 1987:467). The aim of life skills education is to teach learners to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, norms and values, especially in local South African contexts, to be able to participate meaningfully in their own communities irrespective of their individual diversity (Griessel, Louw & Swart, 1990:50; Department of Education, 2010:3). Qualified and dedicated educators as educators should be responsible for choosing from the curriculum those life skills most applicable to the community they serve and teaching such life skills effectively to the learners (Department of Education, 2010:7; Sithole, 2009:2). As the family may not be able to provide enough opportunity for these secondary school learners to practise life skills on physical, intellectual, personal and social level, the onus rests on the school and educators to provide learners with space and opportunities to practise life skills (Department of Education, 2010:4; Fredricks, 2011:2; Zirkel & Reichner, 1987:467). To generate suitable opportunities in which learners are able to practise all, or at least the majority of life skills as stipulated by the CAPS document creates a real challenge for educators, especially as principles such as democratic and human rights, social justice, and reconciliation and equity should not only be taught explicitly but also implicitly (Department of Education, 2010:8; Sithole, 2009:2). It is against this background that I am proposing in this study that one such an option for secondary school learners to learn and practise life skills is by staging a musical production as part of the curriculum or / and as extra-mural activity.

Seen against the backdrop of the previous paragraph the third group of role players in the life skills education landscape is the community-at-large, as the aim of Life Orientation is essentially to enable learners to be competently *self-in-society* (Department of Education, 2011:7). After the negotiated political settlement in South Africa in 1994, schools and educators have been seen by the community as interpreters and moderators of the curriculum in order to promote national

development (Department of Education, 2002:3; Sithole, 2009:1). It is, therefore, imperative that the community not only takes an interest in the school and its activities but also provides input and support to the school and educators in the teaching of life skills to learners (Sithole, 2009:2).

Educators stated that with the implementation of the RNCS (2002) and NCS (2005) they did not have enough support systems, training or teaching resources and space to implement the curriculum, and that this contributed to the failure of Outcomes Based Education (Sithole, 2009:2). The community could be of great value by providing resources to facilitate efficient teaching and learning of the CAPS for Life Orientation and by creating spaces where learners may practise life skills (Department of Education, 2011:7). As the major formal assessment tasks of Life Orientation include a project, case study and assignment there is also ample opportunity for community involvement in providing the assessment contexts of the Life Orientation curriculum in order to provide support to learners to complete their assessment tasks (Department of Education, 2011:9). In order for a learner to reach his / her full potential as an individual within the society and contributing towards the community, it is critical that the community acknowledges its role, function and importance in the life skills education landscape.

The primary role players in life skills education as part of the learning area / subject Life Orientation are the parents, educators and the community who all have to provide content as well as teaching and learning opportunities to the secondary school learners who are working and developing towards becoming functioning individuals within a social setting. The school as part of the community and as annexe of the home is taking over much of the traditional role of the parents due to social and economical problems and should be innovative in providing dialogic spaces for life skills to be practised rather than merely reverting to spoon-feeding.

2.5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the outcomes of Life Orientation as envisioned by the CAPS document include the knowledge of life skills that will enable each individual citizen to take his / her rightful place in society. Respect for otherness and contributing to

the community imply the development of life skills that will develop functional, ethically sound and responsible individuals who will be able to function as self-in-society. This development of self also envisages citizens who are enthused to become lifelong learners in order to enhance individual and interpersonal life skills within a rapidly changing society. As the main focus of this study is to establish to what extent participation in a secondary school musical production can offer a dialogic educational environment for instilling life skills, I will forthwith discuss the secondary school musical as pedagogical driver for life skills education.

2.6 From Need to Fulfilment: The Secondary School Musical as Pedagogical Driver for Life Skills Education

As teaching and learning takes place both implicitly and explicitly within the school environment, it becomes possible to explore whether secondary school musical productions may serve any particular function in setting and supporting the stage for additional life skills / Life Orientation education prospects (see Fredricks, 2011:1). It is therefore pivotal to this research that the body of scholarship regarding the acquisition of life skills is thoroughly reported. There is, however, a noticeable paucity of scholarly literature as far as researched efforts to explore and understand the educative value of participation in a secondary school musical production (to equip learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society) are concerned. Such efforts are academically and scientifically especially anaemic when one attempts to appraise this topic from a typically South African perspective. Some poignant studies have, however, been undertaken in this bailiwick which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Firstly the body of scholarship related to this research supports the point of view that musical theatre productions are, in fact, conducive to personal and social growth of both the secondary school participants and the other role players involved in such a production. Studies conducted by scholars such as Robinson and Poole (1990), Walker and Hamann (1995), Binnema (1996), Coladarci and Cobb (1996), Hays (1996), Swanwick and Lawson (1999), Cox (1999), Kinney (1999), Conway and Borst (2001), Morrison (2001), Turton and Durrant (2002), Adderly, Kennedy and

Berz (2003), Boyes (2003), Williams (2003), Finney and Tymoczko (2003) and more recently Watkins (2005), Regelski (2006), Price (2006), Pitts (2007), Marshall and Hargreaves (2008), Barret and Smigiel (2007), Bresler (2008), Ogden (2008), Green (2008), Rusinek (2008), Wood, Larson and Brown (2009), and Stokes (2010) all report on aspects of personal and social life skills being developed when secondary school learners participate in some form of musical production, whether as part of the curriculum or as extra-curricular, cultural activity. The musical production itself reaches the participants on many more levels than merely the musical level and *...is connected with selfhood, expression, the unity of the human being, and the unity of the group engaged in a live enterprise and purpose* (Watkins, 1987:iii).

The available research furthermore confirms the extent to which participation in musical productions adds to participants' knowledge and practise of life skills such as personal and social identity, developing worthwhile relationships and regulation of emotions (Swanwick & Lawson, 1999; Hargreaves & North, 1999). The development of social awareness and social involvement is depicted in a study located in London, England. This study was undertaken by Keith Swanwick and Dorothy Lawson (1999:47-60) and involved five secondary schools. They report that participants felt that music itself had a socialising effect and that it established high levels of group homogeneity between participants. These findings are echoed by Eckel (1994) who found that students took part in secondary school musicals in order to satisfy personal and social needs such as being part of a group and having fun within a social group. It is particularly interesting that Eckel (1994:57) suggests that communities have their own unique character that influence their social needs and this is reflected in the expectations of secondary school students from the particular community who participate in school musical productions. People value themselves as individuals within a particular community who contribute together with others from their community towards achieving a collective goal. The particular knowledge, skills, norms, values and demands of propriety the specific community they belong to should be included and embedded in educational policy and should form part and parcel of the curriculum design and development (Haydon, 1997:29). A discussion of the social value and group dynamics of participation within a secondary school scenario as well as how participation adds to the growth of the individual

participants towards becoming mature adults will be addressed in the next paragraph.

The secondary school participants in musical productions who had taken part in the studies mentioned in the first paragraph of this section, all seem to feel that they are valued as part of the group while also maturing as individuals even though they only had what might seem a less significant role in the production. Eckel (1994:8) and Watkins (2005: 12) both report that secondary school learners who participate in a musical production express feelings of confidence, improved self-esteem, self-value and also of being valued by their peers as they all have to work together to achieve a collective goal through cooperation: namely, staging a successful production (Adderly *et al.* 2003:199-200; Morrison, 2001:26; Kennedy, 2002:30). These participants become more responsible and mature as they are confronted by successes and failures during the production, thus being part of a learning process shared by the whole group (Watkins, 2005:13).

These attributes mentioned by the participants and researchers are closely linked to those life skills mentioned in the CAPS document, namely: responsibility, problem-solving, working effectively with others, organising and managing a variety of activities (time-management), communicating effectively, being culturally and aesthetically sensitive and critical thinking (Department of Education, 2011:7, 8). The cast and production team, as co-workers working together towards a shared goal, provide a dialogic educative space, a *home away from home*, where they can acquire and practise those life skills necessary to cope in an ever changing social environment (Adderly *et al.* 2003: 199-200, Morrison, 2001: 26; Kennedy, 2002:30, Rule, 2004:1). The social group that was created by the cast of a musical production is representative of other social groups formed in other contexts of society. Some clarity as to the nature of the social group formed by the cast of a musical production will be discussed in the following paragraph.

The production team seems to be a very closely knit cohesive social group who value one another for various reasons; their skills (musical, technical, dancing, acting, leadership), shared goals and interests and mutual friendships within a social

sub-culture⁸ (Watkins, 2005:13; Adderly *et al*, 2003:190; Block, 2008:66). In the study done by Adderly *et al.* (2003:195) a student makes mention of the social barriers that are broken down during a production and thus enabling students to get to know one another much better than in other social surroundings. These sentiments are echoed by participants in several other studies and even learners who did not fit into the school social environment or who deemed themselves outcasts felt safe and valued as part of the cast of the musical production (Morrison, 2001:26; Kennedy, 2002:27).

Individual skills that are acquired by participants in a secondary school musical production are closely related to the life skills such as responsibility, commitment, perseverance, self-discipline, self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-knowledge that are referred to by Adderly *et al.* (2003), Kennedy (2002) and Morrison (2001) as personal psychological values. These psychological values are reported to be acquired by learners when participating in secondary school musical productions (Adderly *et al.* 2003:199-200; Morrison, 2001:25; Kennedy, 2002:30). It is within this *home away from home* (Adderly *et al.* 2003:203) that the secondary school musical production participant feels himself safe to hone those individual and social skills required to grow into a functioning adult in other social environments (Lamont, 2002:47). The general self-worth, academic self-concept and social self-concept of adolescents who take part in extra-mural activities as part of the implicit curriculum of schools are higher than that of learners who did not take part in any extra-mural activities (Blomfield & Barber, 2009:122). These activities provide a context which facilitates positive self-concept and social conscience in secondary school learners. The implication of the body of scholarship is therefore, that what has been learnt and practised by the participants, as part of the implicit curriculum, through participation in a secondary school musical can be exported to many other social contexts. It is also true that the life skills gained through the involvement of participants in musical productions continue bearing fruit in adult life.

⁸ The cast of a musical production seems to form a sub-culture with their own shared knowledge, skills, norms, values and demands of propriety (within a general secondary school culture) as they have the same frame of reference and experience, namely the musical production *per se*.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A research design entails a process where the researcher decides what approaches will be most effective for exploring the main research questions of the enquiry (LeCompte & Goetz, 1993:30). This chapter serves to elucidate the research design and justify the methods selected for data generation. I start by explaining the research approach after which I explain the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Thereafter the overall methodological position as well as the specific methods and processes that were derived from these approaches as elucidated in the research design are explained. The chapter concludes with a description of the methods used to enhance the validity of the study and to identify its limitations.

The preceding chapters established the research focus as trained on the intellectual conundrum, namely: to what extent can participation in a secondary school musical production contribute to equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society? For this purpose I have made use of the musical production *The Green Crystal* as case study which provided the contextual boundaries for this research report.

The first phase of this research, the non-empirical section, is presented as a review of the body of scholarship (cf. Chapter Two). As such, it served to answer the first two research questions, firstly, to understand the nature, structure and role of the secondary musical production theoretically from an ontological, cosmological and anthropological point of view (cf. Chapter Two) and secondly, to establish the history, nature and role of life skills education within the learning area / subject Life Orientation and how secondary school musical productions as essentially pedagogical activities may fit into this learning area / subject (cf. Chapter Two). I also provided an integrated perspective reflected against the body of scholarship, on the experiences, perceptions and broad understanding of participants / cast and the educators / production team on how the secondary school musical productions contribute to life skills education. In light of the discussion above it seems

academically sensible to explore, firstly, the intellectual puzzle of how participation in a secondary school musical production may contribute to equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society and, secondly, the role that Life Orientation education could play in this regard.

The research approach I used was qualitative research and it was embedded within a predominantly interpretivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009: 3; Creswell, 2012: xvii; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I furthermore specifically employed, within the epistemological boundaries of interpretivism, a hybrid epistemology, namely *constructivist hermeneutical phenomenology* for the purpose of this particular study (Onwuegbuzie, Johnson & Collins, 2009: 115). I will justify my decision in the following section.

3.2 Research Approach

A research approach involves *philosophical assumptions* and on a practical level *distinct methods* or *procedures* (Creswell, 2009:5). The positioning of a study varies according to the researcher's emphasis on quantitative and / or qualitative research methods. It is not my aim with this chapter, nor with this research, to report on the paradigm-battles, philosophical debates and inconsistencies of philosophical ideas (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009:16). Suffice it therefore to mention that a variety of scientific paradigms exist in the literature. Jürgen Habermas (dated 1971) proclaimed that there are three basic categories of human interest, i.e. prediction, understanding and emancipation (Van Deventer, 2011). These three categories of human interest are underscored by *knowledge claims*, and in turn each knowledge claim is underpinned by a specific *world-view* resulting in a preferred *methodology* (Van der Westhuizen & Potgieter, 2011).

These world-views represent a distinct method of investigation which offers a different approach to the generation and legitimation of knowledge:

- (a) *prediction* as knowledge claim, with as world-view positivism, uses mainly *quantitative* methodologies (Potgieter, 2011:8);

- (b) *understanding* as knowledge claim, with as world-view *interpretivism*, uses mainly *qualitative* methodologies brought about through communication, the use of language and inter-subjectivity (Maree & Pietersen, 2007:11; Potgieter, 2011:9), and
- (c) *emancipation* as knowledge claim, with as world-view *critical theory* uses mainly *qualitative* methodologies. Critical theorists claim that human society is organised along power-meridians. The adjectival qualifier *critical* in this paradigm aims to promote conscientisation, empowerment, capacitating and emancipation of the socially oppressed which may require that the status quo of power-relations is challenged and subverted (Potgieter, 2011: 9-10).

The research reported in this dissertation is not positioned within the *positivist* tradition because epistemologically it departs from the world-view that physical and social realities are independent from the person who is investigating any one of these realities (Van der Vyver, 2011: 120, Van Deventer, 2011). Instead, the interpretive tradition fits the research design of this study well as the purpose of the study was to access the meanings of the participants' lived experiences (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007:616). Constructivism (see overpage) and hermeneutics are conceptually closely linked to *interpretivism*, as both focus on understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who construct their worlds while living it (see Schwandt, 1994:118). *Interpretivism* considers knowledge as a social construct and therefore proposes that multiple realities / phenomena exist which could be changed by the participant in time and space (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007:617). Participants are thus incapable of being completely objective as they are situated within particular realities constructed by and through their own subjective, lived experiences (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007:622).

Qualitative data, with the emphasis on participants' "lived experience" are fundamentally well-suited for locating the meaning that people place on events, processes and structures of their lives: "their perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, presuppositions" and for connecting these meanings to their social world (Miles *et al.*, 1994:10). I am, consequently, of the opinion that my decision to opt for a more personalised experience obtained by means of qualitative data (e.g.

individual interviews as well as semi-structured, open-ended focus group discussions) helped to propose academically justifiable and educationally practicable explanations with regard to how participation in a secondary school musical may assist in equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a changing, transforming society. Although this approach involved self-reflection and interpretation on my part, as Gadamer (1976:389) suggests, interpretation is a dialectical interaction between the expectations of the interpreter and the meaning of the text. The interpretation of the participants, therefore, provided the voice and context of these interpretations (Lusenga, 2010:33).

For the purposes of my study it was imperative for me to be able to get close to my participants (Welland & Pugsley, 2002:1). It was also essential for me to be able to establish whether and to what extent the learning that the participants had undergone as a result of their participation in the secondary school musical *The Green Crystal* can be understood as part of a dynamic process in which they had learnt to construct new meaning, ideas or concepts on their existing knowledge and as a result of dialogic educative opportunities that were presented by and through their own participation in *The Green Crystal*. I believe that the only way to explore the participants' perceptions and broad understanding of how secondary school learners' participation in a secondary school musical equipped them for meaningful and successful living in a changing and transforming society was to have interacted with them directly and to have employed a research paradigm and concomitant design that is essentially anti-positivist.

These imperatives invoked (at least partially) a *constructivist* approach (see previous page). *Constructivism* emphasises the *building* (i.e. *constructing*) that occurs in people's minds when they learn (Karvelas, 2006:16; Patton, 2002:104). Knowledge, its nature and how we come to know, are essential considerations for *constructivists*. In the *constructivist* perspective, knowledge is constructed by the individual through his / her interactions with his / her environment (Von Glaserfeld, 1995: *passim*; Patton, 2002:96). *Constructivism* therefore implies the notion that learners do not passively absorb information but construct it themselves (<http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/lwf/doc/portfolio/definitions.htm>). The

way learners, for example, experience their world alters how they feel about it and how they subsequently choose to act. In other words, learners ordered themselves by ordering their thoughts and actions (Creswell, 2009: 6-8). By centring this study (at least partially) in *Constructivism*, it was possible for me to explore the subjective, context-specific, lived experiences of the learners who participated in the secondary school musical *The Green Crystal* (Patton, 2002: 104; Marshall & Rossman, 2006: 12). It also allowed me to gain an insider's perspective on how they attached meaning to the concept of secondary school musical productions (Cohen, Lawrence & Morrison, 2002: 20; Karvelas, 2006: 76).

The hermeneutic phenomenological approach to research presupposes a strategy where participants describe their experiences regarding a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2009:13). Phenomenology could therefore be seen as both a philosophy and a method of research. In this study a small number of participants were interviewed because of their particular knowledge and lived experience regarding the research topic and the musical *The Green Crystal* in order for me to establish patterns and relationships between meanings (Creswell, 2009:13). The role of the researcher, therefore, was to construct and interpret subjective reality as reported by the participants in the study and construct meaning within the particular social context.

It is for this reason that I employed a hybrid epistemology in this study. Not only could a *constructivist* and *hermeneutic phenomenological* approach as epistemological home for this study be considered to be a scientifically reasonable and valid preference because of its particular inquiry logic and attendant socio-political commitments (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2009: 115), but also because of the iterative, interactive and dynamic linkages it provides with the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research (cf. Chapter One). It also fits the nature and intent of the study academically and scientifically more accurately than either *constructivism* or a *hermeneutic phenomenological* approach (on their own). Moreover, because a research project's epistemological parameters co-determines its methodological coordinates (Smit, 2010), a *constructivist* and *hermeneutic phenomenological* approach as epistemological paradigm for the study constituted

an epistemological and methodological innovation as far as qualitative studies of secondary school musicals are concerned. This particular research design is, as far as could be ascertained, the first of its kind, as far as academic studies of secondary school musical productions – locally as well as internationally – are concerned.

The study specifically investigated the secondary school musical production *The Green Crystal* as a clearly defined unit of analysis. The formulation of my research question consequently favoured a case study method that allowed for the investigation of real-life events as mentioned above (Cresswell, 2009:13; Marshall & Rossman, 2006:129). It also offered a holistic description of the participants' perceptions and broad understanding of how participation in a secondary school musical production may assist in equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society.

In particular, the design of this qualitative research project was based on an *ex post facto* case study (Bogdan, 2003:141) of the above-mentioned musical production, which was staged in 2004. This research design, consequently, allowed me as researcher to explore the possible personal, social and educative values and concomitant life skills that may have been acquired by the participants. It is from this discussion of the research approach that I now focus my discussion on the conceptual and theoretical framework of the research project.

3.3 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

As discussed in Chapter Two, the conceptual and theoretical framework for this study is centred on the extent to which secondary school musical productions can provide curricular dialogic spaces in order to teach and practise life skills within the Life Orientation subject area (Rule, 2004; Alexander, 2005:4). A study of a cross-section of some of the recognised pioneers of dialogue-related research, such as Buber (1964), Freire (1970), Habermas (1971), Bakhtin (1981; 1984), Freire and Shor (1987), Gadamer (1991) and Gadotti (1996) provided the context of pedagogical and educational dialogue as vehicle for the teaching and learning of life skills. This review of the body of scholarship provided me with a foundation for developing a conceptual and theoretical framework of understanding, scientifically

and academically, the place and role of secondary school musicals productions as dialogic space in the curricular and extracurricular programme of the secondary school.

The following three key propositions consequently formed the combined starting-point of the development of the conceptual and theoretical framework that I have subsequently developed for this research:

Proposition 1. A secondary school musical is essentially a pedagogical event, because it represents a purposive socio-conventional and educational intervention in individual and communal, collective human development which is deeply saturated with the values and history of the particular society and community in which it is located and contextualised (Alexander, 2005:2).

Proposition 2. Of all the tools for cultural and pedagogical intervention in human development and learning, dialogue is not only the most pervasive in its range of use, but also powerful in its pedagogical and educational possibilities. Be it through on-stage dialogue between characters in the script, between members of the cast and members of the production team, between members of the production team and members of the audience, moments of interaction between the cast and the audience, dance, music or eclectic combinations of the above, dialogue mediates the cognitive and socio-conventional spaces between all relevant role-players and stakeholders, as well as between what the learner (as participant in the musical production) knows and understands and what he or she has yet to learn, know and understand.

Proposition 3. It follows that one of the principal functions of a secondary school musical production is to provide appropriate and adequate dialogic and educative space and to create interactive opportunities and encounters for all relevant role-players and stakeholders so that it becomes possible – directly and appropriately – to engineer such mediation.

I have, in light of the above, determined theoretically the nature of secondary school musicals as pedagogical activities by answering the following questions:

- Ontological question: What is the nature of secondary school musicals?
- Cosmological question: How are secondary school musicals (as pedagogical realities) structured?
- Anthropological question: Who are the role-players and stakeholders involved in the production of secondary school musicals as pedagogical activities?

Secondly I answered the following three questions about life skills education within the Life Orientation subject area:

- Ontological question: What constitutes the history, nature and role of life skills education?
- Cosmological question: How is life skills education for secondary schools structured within the Life Orientation subject area?
- Anthropological question: Who are the role-players and stakeholders involved in implementing life skills education at secondary school level in South Africa?

I subsequently endeavoured to determine whether participation in a secondary school musical production had curricular and pedagogical value as dialogic space within a life skills education programme, especially as it relates to the nature, place and role of secondary school musical productions. It is from this conceptual and theoretical design that I now explain the methodological process of my research.

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 A note on data generation

I share the widely held belief among qualitative researchers that reality is socially constructed, complex and ever-changing. In this research project, the participants have made their own meaning of the secondary school musical production *The Green Crystal* as historically situated event. As the researcher, I have interpreted the

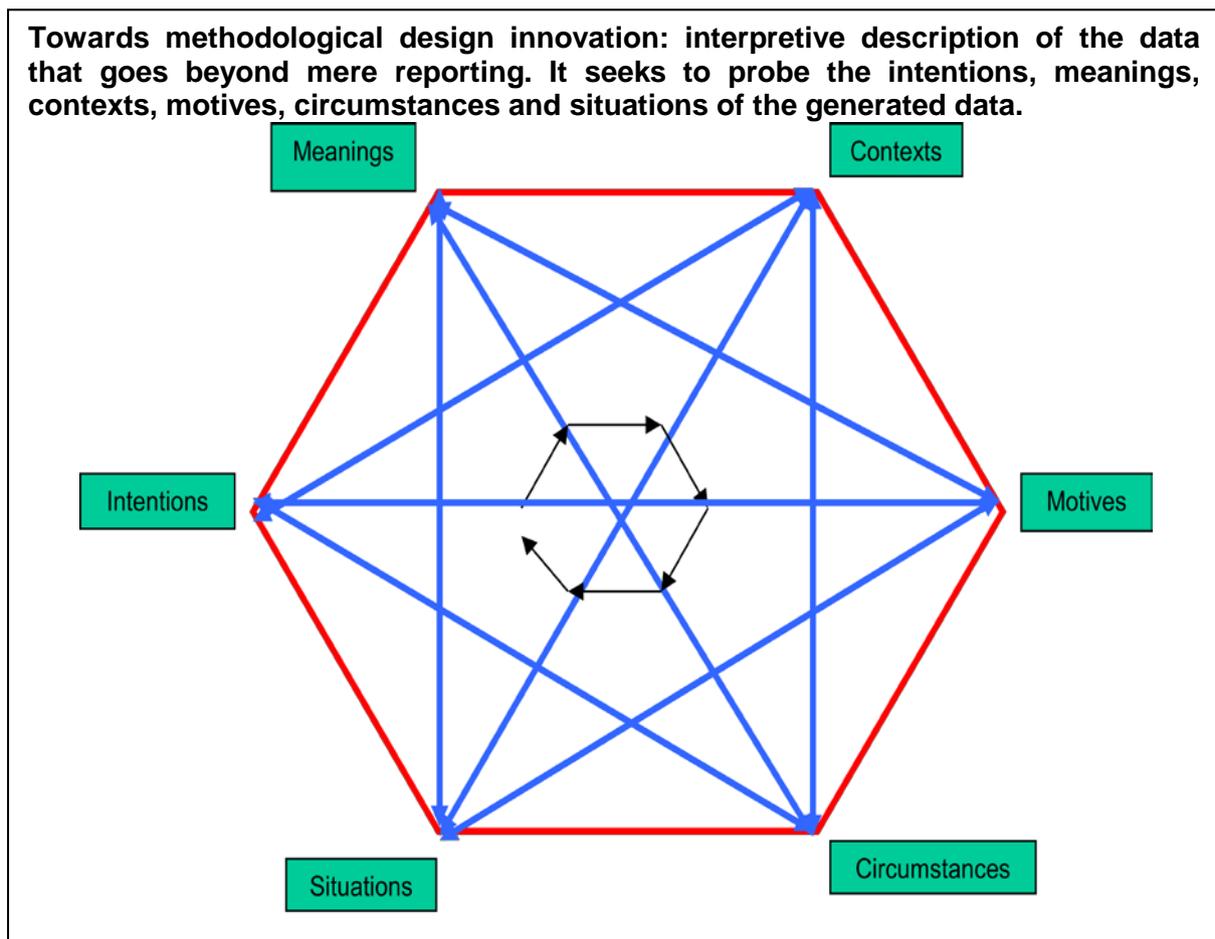
data that they generated, mainly using the interviews and focus group discussions for my interpretation. I realise that for me to speak of my participants as "generating data", and hence of "data generation", rather than "data collection", may be construed by some of my readers as a kind of maverick research ideological position which does not tally well with the more established view that data should, instead, be viewed as "something out there" that can be picked and chosen as if from a tree. This is, however, not a novel idea. Already in 2003, Gummesson explained it as follows:

I prefer the term data generation to data collection, as data in social settings are not objects that are ready for collection. Instead, data are generated, meaning that they are the creation of the researcher in interaction with, for example, a respondent in an interview. (Gummesson, 2003:486)

3.4.2 Methodological design innovation

For this reason, and also because qualitative research involves the production of knowledge and not its discovery (Maxwell, 2005:23), I have decided to introduce the methodological design innovation that is graphically captured in Figure 1 below. While it is true that this innovation borrows from the work of Glesne and Peshkin (2010:19), it is also true that it transcends their initial thinking. Not only is it possible to demonstrate that the six essential co-constituents of participants' data generation that are captured in the graphic below unfold in an ordered, sequential manner, but this heuristic also makes it possible to demonstrate how each of these six co-constituents compares to (and with) and interrelates hermeneutically as well as phenomenologically with each of the remaining five. This, in turn, makes it possible to interpret and theorise the described data as an applied, integrated, holistic process of interpretive, qualitative research. As far as could be ascertained, this is the first time that this kind of methodological thinking has ever been used to research the educative, lifelong learning value of secondary school musical productions.

Figure 1: Methodological design innovation



The discussion in paragraph 3.2 concerned the research approach: a rationale for the qualitative research design and the ensuing qualitative methodology that I have chosen. The qualitative methodological process was informed by the *interpretivist* approach (cf. §3.2), and more specifically my choice of a hybrid *constructivist and hermeneutical phenomenological* design.

3.4.3 Construction of the interview protocol and schedule

The lacunae which I have identified in my review of the body of scholarship (cf. Chapter Two) formed the basis for the development of an interview schedule (cf. Addendum D). This interview schedule was subsequently used during the empirical part of my research to establish:

- what characteristics the secondary school musical as hybrid version of the musical *per se*, constitute?
- what knowledge could be accumulated regarding the shortcomings of the curriculum for the subject Life Orientation regarding life skills education?
- what do we know about social justice and social capital as outcomes of life skills education through participation in a secondary school musical?
- what is the Life Orientation potential of secondary school musical productions as dialogic educative spaces (and thus as practice grounds) for life skills acquisition?
- to what extent are life skills learnt and practised through participation in secondary school musical productions transported into adult life as part of lifelong learning?

I employed qualitative methods namely *open-ended focus group discussions* as well as individual *interviews* in those instances where participants were unable to attend focus group interviews. The interviews affirmed the social constructivist tradition that allowed for the pursuance and creation of knowledge which would inform the research findings which culminated in explaining the potential of secondary school musical productions as dialogic educative spaces for life skills praxis. As explained below, the interview protocol allowed both myself as moderator, as well as the participants with the opportunity to interrogate, develop and construct the knowledge regarding the life skills potential of secondary school musicals as vehicle and dialogic space for instilling and practising of life skills.

The interviews were regarded as dialogic transactions between research participants and the interviewer in order to allow for voicing their own, personal views with regard to the extent of life skills transference through their own involvement in this particular musical. The questions reflect the identified lacunae in the body of scholarship that was consulted on this topic (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:349-351). It is also closely related to the research question of this study namely to investigate and report on the experiences, perceptions and broad understanding of participating learners, educators and parents with regard to how secondary school learners' participation in a secondary school musical may equip secondary school learners for meaningful

and successful living in a changing and transforming society with specific reference to life skills education within the Life Orientation subject. Follow-up questions arising from the responses of the participants to these questions were asked during the interviews.

3.4.3.1 Interview protocol

Creswell (2009:181) advises qualitative researchers to plan their approach to data recording and the procedures to record the interview before entering the field. I was properly prepared in all instances to record information during the individual and focus group interviews (Creswell, 2012:225). I tested all equipment beforehand to ensure that it was in full working order before starting with the interviews to ensure that data were recorded for transcribing. Furthermore I was familiar with the interview questions (schedule) and therefore prepared for conducting the interview.

I compiled a file which contained the necessary information that I needed during the interviews. It contained the following components:

- Pseudonyms for participants were ascribed
- Description of the research
- Interviewee consent form
- Interview questions
- Concluding activities (cf. Interview Schedule , Addendum D)

3.4.3.2 Interview schedule

The *interview schedule* (cf. Addendum D) states the open-ended questions. The questions based on the review of the body of scholarship are brief open-ended questions. They all allowed maximum flexibility of expression for participants to respond to them.

These documents (interview schedule (Addendum D), informed consent forms (Addendum C), ethics clearance document (see enclosed DVD)) were also reviewed and accepted by the Ethics Committee of the North West University (Addendum A). Next, I discuss my chosen research methodology in more detail.

3.5 Research Methodology

3.5.1 Sampling

This study specifically investigated the secondary school musical production *The Green Crystal* as a unit of analysis. For this reason snowballing as purposive, convenience sampling method was used (Anderson & Arsenault, 2007:124). A selection of participants from the secondary school musical, *The Green Crystal*, written by Heinrich Hamm and myself and performed at a secondary school (Kempton Park, Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng) in 2004, were interviewed. Data were generated from the main educational stakeholder groupings who were involved in the production of the high-school musical *The Green Crystal* in 2004, namely cast members, educators involved with the production and parents of participants. During March and April 2011, as many learners as could be traced (during 2010 and the first few months of 2011) and who had been members of the original cast of the musical *The Green Crystal* were contacted (mainly by means of snowballing as purposeful, convenience sampling technique) via e-mail and popular web-based social discussion sites such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*. In the end, a total of ten former members indicated their willingness to take part in my research. They were subsequently invited to participate voluntarily in individual interviews that were held (depending on where they are domiciled) either online (April 2010) or on the Potchefstroom campus of the North- West University (August and September 2011) or in Birchleigh, a suburb located within the city boundaries of Kempton Park in the Ekurhuleni metropole on the East Rand of Gauteng in designated time-slots during October 2010 and 2011.

Semi-structured, open-ended focus group discussions (Ferreira & Smit, 2008) were subsequently conducted with participants from the three main educational stakeholder groupings, namely participants, educators and parents, who have been involved in and with the production of *The Green Crystal*. These interviews were conducted in August and September 2011 and consisted of (a) former learners who formed part of the original cast of the musical, (b) educators who were involved as choreographers, sub-group coaches, costume-designers, set-builders and (c) parents.

I have chosen not to involve any of the administrative and / or managerial staff (as stakeholder grouping), mainly because they have fulfilled a supportive rather than an active role in the production of *The Green Crystal* at the time.

This research design allowed me as researcher to explore the personal, social and educative values and concomitant life skills that had been acquired by the participants.

3.5.2 Data generation

Drawing on Miles and Huberman (1994:*passim*) I endorse the notion that data reduction, the choice and creation of systematic, inventive displays as well as the drawing of conclusions and the final verification of such, are all interwoven in the domain of qualitative data generation and analysis. As far as my research is concerned, data generation, *per se*, has in fact been an on-going process initiated informally in 2006, shortly after my arrival at North-West University. My data-generation instruments – with particular reference to the interview questions that I posed both to the individual participants and to the two focus groups – were refined as the research process unfolded.

The aim of both the personal interviews and the focus group discussions was to determine what specific Life Orientation related knowledge, skills and attitudes participants may have gained from their involvement in the musical production, *The Green Crystal*. All conversation strings were recorded electronically and saved in MS WORD-format to ensure compatibility with the qualitative analysis software programme *ATLAS.ti*TM. All personal, live interviews were either video-recorded or audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed manually.

I captured the data through individual interviews, as well as through semi-structured, open-ended focus group discussions. This allowed for in-depth information about the target group's perceptions, knowledge, experiences, opinions and beliefs (Anderson & Arsenault, 2004:109; Best & Kahn, 2003:255, 257), covering different forms of inquiry to understand and explain how participation in a secondary school musical assisted in equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a changing,

transforming society (Merriam, 2009:5; Mouton, 2001:87, 90). The voices of those who participated in and / or have been involved in and with the musical production *The Green Crystal* enriched the dialogue and helped to deepen the understanding of the factual and experiential foundations of this research (Prinsloo, 2009:23).

A limited text analysis (Van Dijk, 1998:*passim*) of the text and plot of the musical was done to ensure that the Life Orientation related knowledge, skills and attitudes that were written into the text of the musical were also interrogated during the interviews (cf. Chapter Four, Figure 2).

The semi-structured interview schedule and protocol (cf. Addendum D and DVD) were strictly adhered to before, during and after each interview session (Creswell, 2009:183). In addition indicators such as, for example, socio-economic circumstances, the attitude and cooperation of the interviewee, the setting in which the interview took place and other relevant indicators and / or comments relevant to the research were also noted as soon as I became aware of them (Huberman and Miles, 2002:92; Van Vuuren, 2008:206).

As researcher, I made sure that I:

- made brief notes on the interview protocol (cf. DVD);
- obtained written consent from all participants to partake in the interview and study (Addendum C);
- re-established assurance of the confidentiality of the entire procedure;
- remained courteous and professional prior to, during and after the interview;
- was sensitive to the specific circumstances of each participant.

3.5.2.1 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews display various advantages such as the increase of data through open ended questions which trigger comments from participants as well as quality control of responses as the participants talk to each other and stimulate conversation (Robson, 2003:284ff). Focus group interviews leave room for discussion and therefore suits the explorative nature of this study (Denzin & Lincoln,

2005:703; Karstens, 2010:138). As the participants in my research project know one another well they were open and forthright in their reflections on and discussions of the questions provided.

Patton (2002:385) states that the focus group interview will provide the researcher with a variety of perspectives on the same topic and assist in the reinforcement of emerging patterns. During the two semi-structured focus group interviews I had the task, as interviewer, of introducing the discussion by asking pertinent questions and then allowing the participants to develop and articulate ideas around these questions freely (Patton, 2002:384). I adopted the role of a moderator who had to probe by posing questions and observing interaction between participants. At the same time I had to re-direct discussions to remain focused on the topic of concern (Babbie & Mouton 2001, 292).

3.5.2.2 Individual interviews

Individual interviews were done due to logistical constraints as the participants are all adults who are scattered over the country and in many cases have emigrated. For this reason I had to conduct e-mail interviews with two individuals to gather the data (cf. Addendum F). I provided these participants with the questions that I would ask and they were encouraged to add personal reflections relevant to the research. These interviews were also transcribed and coded (cf. §3.5.3).

3.5.3 Data analysis

The coding of the data was done by means of the computer software programme, *ATLAS.ti*^{TM9}.

The analysis phase consisted of the following steps (Creswell, 2012:238-243; Angot & Milano, 2007:139):

- transcribing the interviews;
- organising the data;
- initially developing a general sense of the data;

⁹ *ATLAS.ti*TM is a registered trademark of ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH.

- coding and analysing descriptions and themes about the central phenomenon by using *ATLAS.ti*TM computer software.

Codes are names assigned to specific quotations or segments to identify related meaning (Henning, 2004:104). *Open coding* was used to identify themes, commonalities of themes or categories, whereafter the data were examined for *properties* – attributes and / or sub-categories – that characterised each category. The initial labelling of data was done to reduce the data to a small set of themes / codes that described how secondary school learners' participation in a secondary school musical equipped them for meaningful and successful living in a changing and transforming society (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 141).

Axial coding was then used to determine emergent ideas and / or themes which were organised into categories and sub-categories to ensure the capturing of data on the perceptions and understanding of how secondary school learners' participation in a secondary school musical equipped them for meaningful and successful living in a changing and transforming society (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:141; Angot & Milano, 2007:139). In so doing, I (as the researcher) immersed myself in the data and reflected on perceptions, understandings, causes and consequences, conditions and interactions suggested in the data.

Selective coding further enhanced understanding through the scanning of classified data to identify similarities and / or differences in and among the identified categories in order to develop a story line that described how secondary school learners' participation in a secondary school musical equipped them for meaningful and successful living in a changing and transforming society (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:141; Angot & Milano, 2007:139).

In Chapter Four my data analysis, as well as the interpretation of my data was furthermore, described in a logical sequence but integrated with my review of the body of scholarship as reviewed in Chapter Two of this study in order to provide substantiation / evidence for my arguments. Much time was spent ferreting out possible conclusions. On top of this my awareness of bias needed to be consciously

monitored. When reporting on my findings, I endeavoured to report this as objectively as possible. Several means of data representation were used depending on which data were compared e.g. direct quotes taken from personal and focus group discussions, e-mailed or electronically sent comments and quotes saved in MS WORD format, recorded video clips taken by the participants either during rehearsals, or during the actual on-stage performances of *The Green Crystal* in 2004. I believe that such data-displays simplify my explanations and also help to compact the information that I wish to communicate to my readers.

Chapter Four concludes with a summary of the findings of each section, shown in relationship to my main research question. Reflecting on what relevant evidence the research provided, certain recommendations for further investigation were made in Chapter Five. Overall, I stayed committed to reporting my analyses and interpretations as scientifically, i.e. as precisely and without prejudice, as possible.

The following procedural considerations were attended to prior to the actual data generation process:

- digital audio-recording of the interviews;
- a digital voice recorder was acquired which ensured clear recordings;
- a quiet suitable place was chosen for conducting the interviews.

Furthermore a well-ordered electronic filing system for the safe-keeping of the interview-tape recordings was computerised to safeguard the recordings until such time as it could be transcribed. After transcribing the data-tapes and having completed the analysis and reporting phases, the tapes and transcriptions were sent for safe-keeping in accordance with the NWU ethical requirements for a period of seven years.

The final stage of the qualitative data analysis was to report the identified thematic relationships and relevant patterns that emerged from the three data sets during the coding process. These findings are reflected in the ensuing Chapter Four of this study.

Considerations of credibility and trustworthiness are addressed next.

3.5.4 Trustworthiness and credibility

McMillan (2012: 302) states that in qualitative research, somewhat different criteria than those used in quantitative measurements, apply. Girod-Séville and Perret (2001: 25) link these criteria to the interpretivist worldview, stating that validity criteria are criteria of *trustworthiness*, identified as *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability* (see also Botha, 2006:35). These criteria determined the congruency of the findings and its specific constructed reality (Merriam, 2009:213; Van Vuuren, 2008:204). Credibility is equated with internal validity, transferability with external validity, dependability with reliability, and confirmability with objectivity.

As researcher, I have always understood that the data needed an interpreter who was able to observe the phenomenon being studied firsthand; someone who was intimately familiar with the unit of analysis. It entailed a holistic understanding that would ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data according to the research design (cf. §3.4) (McMillan, 2012: 302-305; Merriam, 2009: 213; Van Vuuren, 2008: 204). I ensured through the open-ended questions that my own perception and understanding of the concepts corresponded with those of the participants. As the transferability relies on the reader I ensured that sufficient detail was given at all times as to the time, place and context so that the reader of the study will be able to make a judgment based on the thick description that I provided. Furthermore, dependability was established through the coding and the making of logical links between the data. By generating, categorising, representing and interpreting the data in a transparent and logical way and by providing a chain of evidence of documentation I believe that confirmability was also ensured (Mertens, 1998:184).

I grant that my use of self-reporting measures and my reliance on historical recall during my interviews with the participants in this study may be perceived to be scientifically limiting in one key way: the results of the empirical part of my research are exclusively based upon self-reports or self-recollections about the participants' involvement in the secondary school musical *The Green Crystal*. The use of focus

group discussions, however, neutralised this particular limitation as participants were able to refresh or correct each other's memories.

3.5.4.1 Credibility

Prolonged engagement was possible during the data generation phase where I, as the researcher, was closely engaged with the participants and their contexts. Credibility (internal validity) was also established by checking the correctness of my understanding of a response where necessary during the interview to establish the correctness of a statement. The responses provided the details for the narrative presentation of the results (transcriptions). This process entailed intensive engagement with and immersion in the data (recordings, notes and transcripts) and was an iterative process to determine clear links amongst the three data sets¹⁰.

3.5.4.2 Member checking and auditing of data

Participants were asked to confirm the correctness of an interpretive summary made by the researcher at the end of each interview. This contributed to the credibility of the data generation process (Van Deventer, 2011). The credibility of the interview-related transcripts was ascertained by providing participants the opportunity to check and review the completed interpretations and conclusions. These were made available to them via e-mail.

Peer debriefing was acquired where colleagues were asked to review the study for credibility and to determine whether the results followed from the data. This required academics who were knowledgeable about life skills, secondary school musical productions and qualitative methods. The study leader and co-study leader, therefore, performed this particular duty. They were sufficiently detached from the study and they both reflected their own biases when giving feedback about the selection and meaning of categories, themes, patterns and study conclusions.

Where the peer debriefing requires pre-existing knowledge of the phenomenon and method, the external auditor should be unfamiliar with the project, since the purpose of using such a person is to provide a more objective review (Van Deventer, 2011).

¹⁰ Data sets here refer to the data generated by the individual interviews, the data generated from the focus group interviews, as well as the three sets of coding data as described in §3.5.3.

In this case a critical reader from Cape Town was selected to act as the external auditor. She examined all aspects of the study. In particular, she looked (and checked) for coherence, reasonableness, accuracy, data analysis, interpretation and conclusions, and pointed out weaknesses or threats to credibility.

The audit process ensured that the data and interpretations that were made with regard to the findings were implemented by working iteratively through the research process. The outcome of this process was that the findings were indeed deemed to be true, valid and confirmable.

3.5.4.3 Transferability / generalisability of findings

In qualitative research, the fundamental principle of data analysis (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2009:120; Christ, 2011: 2) requires that data analysis techniques be "...shaped by an attempt to analyse the data in a way that yields at least one type of generalisation" (*ibid.*). I am, therefore, acutely aware of the fact that some qualitative researchers still choose to disagree – sometimes vehemently so – on the topic of the so-called "generalisability" of qualitative data. After having had the privilege, though, of personally listening to and interrogating leading methodologists like Collins, Christ, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie during the 2011-conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) that was held in New Orleans, USA, I am convinced that the three claims that follow below, are aligned with current best academic and scientific thinking as far as this particular conundrum is concerned and, consequently, that it is not only fully justified, but also justifiable: My research design favours, firstly, *naturalistic* generalisation (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2009: *passim*; 117; Van der Westhuizen, Van der Walt & Wolhuter, 2010: 3; Christ, 2011: 2; Van der Walt & Potgieter, 2011: 7), i.e. rather than me (the researcher) generalising my findings, it should be my reader who generalises from his or her past experience (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2009:120; Van der Westhuizen, Van der Walt & Wolhuter, 2010: 3; Christ, 2011: 2; Van der Walt & Potgieter, 2011: 7). This is a form of "fuzzy generalisation", in the sense that "something (that) happened in one place ... might also happen elsewhere" (Ekiz, 2006: 73). Secondly, this study sought to generalise its findings to the population, i.e. *internal* generalisation (to the sample only) (see Van der Westhuizen, Van der Walt & Wolhuter, 2010: 3; Christ, 2011: 2; Van der

Walt & Potgieter, 2011: 7). Thirdly, *analytic* generalisation of my findings may also be possible under particular circumstances (because I worked specifically within an interpretivist paradigm, using a predominantly constructivist and hermeneutic phenomenological epistemological approach and concomitant methodology) (see Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2009:120-123; Van der Westhuizen, Van der Walt & Wolhuter, 2010: 3; Christ, 2011: 2; Van der Walt & Potgieter, 2011: 7).

Alternatively, *analytic* generalisation of my findings may also be possible (because the researcher worked specifically within an interpretivist paradigm, using a predominantly constructivist and hermeneutic phenomenological epistemological approach and concomitant methodology) (see Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2009:120-123).

3.5.4.4 Researcher reflection

This required that I critically self-reflect and explicated my own possible biases, background and values that may either have hindered or supported the credibility of my study (Mertens, 2009). As co-author and -producer / director of *The Green Crystal* I was closely involved with the entire process of the production. I know the participants fairly well as the cast and production team spent many hours in each other's company during casting sessions, and vocal, choreography and drama rehearsals. As a member of staff at the secondary school in Kempton Park (in the Ekurhuleni metropole on the East-Rand) where the musical was staged in 2004, I was also in contact with many of the participants during normal school hours. In many instances, therefore, I got to know these learners on a very personal level. Often they would confide in me regarding personal, emotional and academic matters. I have, however, since moved away from Kempton Park and therefore am not in contact with these participants anymore. Having been part of the production as writer and co-producer, and as I have been part of the participants' lives in the roles of teacher, educator, coach, counsellor and mentor, my own, personal perceptions and experiences are inextricably interwoven with those of the participants. Until early January 2006, when I joined the North-West University as a junior lecturer I could, therefore, have been considered an insider with regard to my close involvement with the management team of this secondary school (where I taught English as first additional language for 24 years), the teaching and administrative staff and the

learners. I therefore regard myself now a well-informed outsider in this research project (see also Evans, 2005:55).

My role as “insider” has, however, privileged me to the extent that – as far as this particular study is concerned – I could (single-handedly) be responsible for:

- designing and formulating all the open-ended questions;
- obtaining permission and adhering to ethical research principles;
- conducting the personal interviews and focus group discussions;
- facilitating (as moderator) the focus group discussions;
- transcribing the interviews; and
- analysing the videotaped and audio-taped interviews.

Ensuring that the research process was constantly checked to remain logical, traceable and clearly documented in a reflexive manner that gave a detailed account of the research process, further contributed to the credibility of the qualitative findings (cf. Chapter Four).

Credible qualitative studies use detailed, in-depth, thorough, and extensive descriptions, described as ‘thick’ or ‘rich’ (Mertens, 2009:186; Van Vuuren, 2008:183). In this regard the data analyses and the internal validity measures were testimony to the fact that I was extensively engaged with, and immersed in the data, and that I showed an appreciation of how all information was regarded as valuable. It allowed for an understanding of the complexity and realism of the site and participants.

The development of an interview schedule (cf. Addendum D) for the individual and focus group interviews ensured that the question items were derived from a conceptually and theoretically justifiable basis (cf. Chapter Two) related to the research topic. Lastly, a discussion of the qualitative data analysis phase was attended to.

3.6 Ethical considerations

I acknowledge that the phenomenon that I was researching is a socially constructed, ever-varying reality that is dependent on both the researcher and the participants. The participants did not merely provide passive data, but were instrumental in my ultimate understanding and interpretation of the data they provided. Ethical considerations, therefore, were of extreme importance (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:318; Mertens, 2009:186).

The participants in this study were not pressurised into taking part in the interviews; their decision whether to take part or not was entirely voluntary (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:318). The participants' involvement in this research was endorsed by the following factors:

- informed consent (cf. Addendum C);
- the right to withdraw at any stage or not to take part in the interview.

In addition to the already discussed qualitative ethical considerations, I recognised the relevant aspects of research as it is embodied in individual and professional codes of conduct of empirical research.

To conclude, the following ethical aspects were accounted for in this research in that I endeavoured to protect the participants from any harm. The participants were asked to confirm informed consent by completing a written consent form (cf. Addendum C). I subsequently confirmed their right to privacy and I acted in an honest and reasonable manner towards participants, colleagues and parents. I adhered to the North-West University's Code of Ethics, and obtained an Ethics clearance certificate (cf. Addendum A). I respected the rights and expectations of participants and guaranteed confidentiality. In all of these actions, I acted with candour and decorum and constantly kept the purpose of the research in mind in addition to communicating it to the participants, verbally and in writing (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:117-125, 338-339).

Qualitative researchers need to adhere to three main areas of ethicality: informed consent, confidentiality and the possible consequences of the interview (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007:382). These aspects were addressed in the letters and personal correspondence with the co-author of *The Green Crystal* and participants (cf. Addenda B & C); as well as in the NWU ethics application and the resultant ethics certificate number (cf. §Addendum A).

Other ethical aspects attended to were beneficence, respect and justice (Mertens, 2009:185). *Beneficence* implies that the outcomes of the research would benefit science as the study is, ultimately, presented to the academic sphere. It also served the participants and those who read the report with reflective and practical ideas on Life Orientation praxis. The participants were treated with *respect*, and were not exposed to any risk, harm or wrong. Risk entailed that the participants were treated with courtesy. The third ethical principle - *justice* - was fundamental in that I was particularly conscious of the environment, the background, the history and the current issues in education. I ensured that the procedures were reasonable, fair, non-exploitive, carefully considered and fairly administered.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter reflects the research design and the methodology of the study. The underlying research paradigm and the conceptual and theoretical framework have been elucidated. The qualitative research design was chosen and focus group interviews as well as individual interviews were conducted to gather the empirical data.

The preceding discussion also dealt with the practical execution of the empirical research phase. It entailed a rationale for the research approach substantiating the use of the *qualitative method*, as well as my choice of *constructivist hermeneutic phenomenology* as epistemological paradigm for this particular study. Furthermore, it elucidated the conceptual and theoretical framework which is focused on the extent to which the secondary school musical production can provide a curricular dialogic space for life skills education within the subject area Life Orientation.

This chapter is now followed by Chapter Four which presents, describes and interprets the findings of the empirical research.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Facebook entry¹¹, 20 October 2011: *“Ma’am, just to let you know: I am no longer Joker Fuzz! I have just heard that I am now Doctor Fuzz! Thank you for always believing in me.”*

4.1 Introduction

The above Facebook entry comes from a former participant in one of the musical productions I wrote and produced. It was e-mailed to me just after he had learnt the news that he has qualified as a medical practitioner (seven years after he has played the role of “Joker Fuzz”). As such, this Facebook posting, perhaps best reflects the lifelong (learning) impact that a musical production makes on those who are involved in it. It is not only an enjoyable repast during a time of academic stress and accompanied by the inevitable emotional and hormonal flux so prevalent in secondary school learners’ lives. It is also a nostalgic memory never forgotten, a practice ground for meeting and choosing friends, a safe dialogic space in which to learn how to agree and how to disagree; a secure environment for clarifying those norms, values and demands of propriety that will safely guide one’s life towards one’s own, individual future.

Often during the time Heinrich and I were writing and creating the musical, *The Green Crystal*, we also wanted to hide ourselves away within the (seemingly) safe parameters of the dreamland of escape we were creating for our main character, Miranda, against the hardships and catastrophes of the imperfect world we also live in. However, while coding the data received from the very same “characters” we had written dialogue for in *The Green Crystal*; they themselves suddenly seemed to clarify the purposes and aims we had so often created instinctively, and these insights led me from the dreamland straight back into reality. While enveloping

¹¹ Facebook-message received from the main character (called “Joker Fuzz”) in a secondary school musical production, dd 2004. Deconstruction of this message confirms the lifelong impact of participation in a secondary school musical. (In the case of this male ex-participant, his correspondence with me through the years proves beyond doubt that, amongst others, his participation in one of my secondary school musical productions gave him the self-confidence and perseverance to study Medicine. As his above-mentioned Facebook-message shows, he has just received the good news that he has qualified as a Doctor of Medicine.

myself in the data I have gained a deeper understanding of the potential of the secondary school musical as genre to generate a dialogic educational opportunity for instilling and practising those vital life skills needed for meaningful living in a society constantly in transit. This chapter, therefore, presents an interpretative account of the data.

In the preceding chapter, I described the research design used in this study and justified the methodology as well as the methods of data generation and data analysis. In Chapter One I stated that this study explored the potential of participation in a secondary school musical production in contributing to equip learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society by providing a dialogic educative space for instilling and practising life skills.

The first phase of this research, the non-empirical section, is presented as a review of the body of scholarship (cf. Chapter Two). An integrated perspective reflected against the body of scholarship, on the experiences, perceptions and broad understanding of participants as indicated by the empirical research is discussed in this chapter. It focused on the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data gathered through the individual interviews and focus group discussions conducted with the three groups, namely members of the cast of the musical, *The Green Crystal*; members of the production team as well as representatives of the parents of the participants. As the educators could contribute sensibly to questions relating to the Life Orientation potential of the secondary musical productions I included three additional questions in their interview schedule (questions 11-13).

The data captured from the participants (empirical data) are mirrored below against the data captured from the body of scholarship (non-empirical data) in order to establish their scholarly significance.

The following interview schedules were used during the focus group and individual interviews. The questions reflect the identified lacunae in the body of scholarship that I had consulted on this topic. They also relate to the research questions of this study.

Group A included participants who formed part of the cast of the musical, *The Green Crystal* (Afr. “Die Groen Kristal”). The following questions were posed to them:

1. Why did you decide to take part in the musical, *The Green Crystal*?
2. Which life skills, if any, would you say you have acquired while participating in the musical *The Green Crystal*?
3. How did your participation in the musical influence your confidence?
4. What did you learn about interpersonal relationships through your participation in this musical?
5. What did you have to do to ensure that you were socially accepted as a member of the cast (as a social group)?
6. What are the social benefits that you gained as a result of your involvement in this production?
7. Do you consider your responsibility and problem-solving skills to have been altered by participating in the musical? If so, how and to what extent?
8. Would you say that you have acquired any specific physical skills during the production? If so, could you elaborate, please?
9. What life-related themes used in the production, *The Green Crystal*, would you say might have been relevant to your everyday life?
10. To what extent have you been able to transfer some of the life skills that you have acquired during the production of *The Green Crystal* to your subsequent studies and choice of career?

Members of staff who formed part of the production team of the musical, *The Green Crystal* formed group B and were asked the following question. As educators could contribute sensibly to questions relating to the Life Orientation potential of the secondary musical productions I included three additional questions in their interview schedule (questions 11-13).

1. Why did you decide to become involved in the musical, *The Green Crystal* as part of the production team?
2. Do you consider the cast members and staff involved in the production of the musical as your friends? Provide a reason for your answer.

3. Which life skills, if any, did you and the cast acquire or improve while participating in the musical *The Green Crystal*?
4. What influence do you think participation in the musical had on the self-esteem of cast members?
5. How, in your view, did the interpersonal relationships of the cast develop during the process of staging this musical?
6. To what extent did the cast members learn how to manage time as a result of their participation in the musical?
7. What life skills did cast members have to implement to be accepted as a part of the cast as a social group?
8. What would you say are the social skills that cast members may have acquired as a result of their involvement with this production?
9. Do you consider participants' responsibility and problem-solving skills to have been altered by participating in the musical? If so, how and to what extent?
10. Which physical skills may the cast have acquired during the production?
11. What themes used in the production, *The Green Crystal*, do you consider relevant to everyday life?
12. To what extent could musical themes be incorporated in a secondary school musical production to address issues such as HIV / AIDS-education, social problems, values education and transformation?
13. Which life skills could be taught through the staging of a musical as part of the Life Orientation curriculum?

Parents of participants and technical support members who formed part of the cast of the musical, *The Green Crystal* were included in group C and responded to the following questions.

1. Why did your child become involved in the musical, *The Green Crystal*?
2. To what extent do you think may participation in a secondary school musical production add to a child's orientation towards Life and why?
3. To what extent did your child benefit (or not) from his / her participation in the musical production and why?
4. How, in your view, did the interpersonal relationships of your child develop during the process of staging this musical?

5. To what extent did your child learn how to manage time as a result of his / her participation in the musical?
6. What life skills (if any), would you say, did cast members have to implement to be accepted as a part of the cast as a social group?
7. What would you say are the social skills that cast members have acquired as a result of their involvement in this production?
8. Do you consider your child's self-control and perseverance skills to have been altered by participating in the musical? If so, how and to what extent?
9. Did your child face any physical challenges during the rehearsals and performances of *The Green Crystal*? If so, what were they and how did the cast respond?
10. If asked by secondary school learners' parents whether they should encourage their children to take part in a school musical, how would you advise them and why?

To be able to interpret those questions pertaining to the themes of the musical *The Green Crystal*, I have made a basic analysis of the themes as they feature in the plot / book of the musical (cf. Table 1). The songs pertaining to the themes are also indicated.

Song and function in plot	Space and theme related to the scene / song
ACT 1 Scene 1	
<p>MONEY, MONEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted to indicate parents' involvement with business / jobs rather than attending to their family's psychological needs. • Workers feel they are not valued and management exploit them • Management only focused on making money 	<p>REALITY</p> <p>Work vs. family values</p> <p>Child vs. parents</p> <p>Wealth vs. poverty</p> <p>Management vs. workers</p>
<p>SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original lyrics expressing child's 	<p>REALITY</p> <p>Child vs. parents</p>

longing to be with her parents in a normal family environment	Group cohesion, connectivity, communalism vs. individual isolation, individualism
ACT 1 Scene 2	
<p>WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodies embrace love, care, goodness, well-being <p>CAN YOU FEEL IT MEDLEY (Goodies' theme song)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleasure in work (Whistle while you work) • Happiness (Joy to the world) • Change is possible (I believe in miracles)& (I'm gonna wash that man right out of my hair) • Overcoming fear (We're not afraid of the big bad wolf) • Enjoying life (Kitchen at parties, Lady in red) <p>HI-HO, HI-HO IT'S OFF TO WORK WE GO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding pleasure in work 	<p>SURREALITY</p> <p>Reality vs. dream</p> <p>Group cohesion, connectivity, communalism vs. individual isolation, individualism</p>
ACT 1 Scene 3	
<p>TREK JOU BOOTSIES AAN (Based on <i>Toemaar die donker man</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escape reality through the fantasy world 	<p>MOVING FROM REALITY TO SURREALITY</p> <p>Reality vs. dream</p> <p>Group cohesion, connectivity, communalism vs. individual isolation, individualism</p>
ACT 1 Scene 4	
<p>I'M BAD! MEDLEY (Baddies' theme song)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad things are to be found 	<p>SURREALITY</p> <p>Good vs. evil</p>

<p>everywhere (I'm bad!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad wants to destroy good (Yummy, yummy, yummy) • Love can be destructive (Wild thing) • Destruction of goodness (Ride Sally, ride!) • Destruction of good (Chantilly lace) 	
<p>YOU'RE PLAYING WITH THE BIG BOYS NOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partly adapted to express the power of evil 	<p>SURREALITY</p> <p>Good vs. evil</p>
ACT 1 Scene 5	
No song	REALITY
ACT 1 Scene 6	
<p>THE MASS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbols used to express manual work and dissatisfaction with conditions in the work place (Tap-dancing using and boots) <p>WELCOME TO THE MACHINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partly altered to express dissatisfaction of workers with the way they are treated <p>LE SHEBEEN</p> <p>No lyrics, anger voiced through rhythm and movement (Tins used to indicate confrontation between workers)</p>	<p>REALITY</p> <p>Management vs. workers</p> <p>Group cohesion, connectivity, communalism vs. individual isolation, individualism</p> <p>Wealth vs. Poverty</p> <p>Management vs. workers</p>
ACT 1 Scene 7	
No songs	MOVING FROM REALITY TO

	SURREALITY
ACT 1 Scene 8	
<p>GOOD MORNING MIRANDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New lyrics to welcome the child to the fantasy world of the Goodies <p>BE OUR GUEST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted to reassure child about new surroundings and her reality <p>BARE NECESSITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goodies provide perspective about the home life of the child <p>LADY MARMALADE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted lyrics to indicate that they are on the child's side 	<p>SURREALITY</p> <p>Reality vs. dream</p> <p>Group cohesion, connectivity, communalism vs. individual isolation, individualism</p> <p>Reality vs. dream</p> <p>Child vs. parents</p> <p>Group cohesion, connectivity, communalism vs. individual isolation, individualism</p>
ACT 1 Scene 9	
<p>DIE AAKLIGE DRIE (<i>The three nasties</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lyrics written to show how the managers are exploiting the workers for their own financial gain <p>DEVORE AMANTE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevating tension between workers and managers <p>FACTORY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing discontent of workers verging on a rebellion 	<p>REALITY</p> <p>Management vs. workers</p> <p>Management vs. workers</p> <p>Wealth vs. poverty</p> <p>Group cohesion, connectivity, communalism vs. individual isolation, individualism</p>
INTERMISSION	
ACT 2 Scene 1	
<p>MA BAKER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New lyrics to elevate the tension 	<p>SURREALITY</p> <p>Good vs. evil</p>

transported to the world of fantasy	
ACT 2 Scene 6	
<p>HI COCOLORUM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merlin's theme song as he explains to father that the child was kidnapped by the Baddies and only father can free her so that the Green Crystal may be safe and secure the existence of the dream world 	<p>SURREALITY</p> <p>Good vs. evil</p> <p>Group cohesion, connectivity, communalism vs. individual isolation, individualism</p>
ACT 2 Scene 7	
No songs	SURREALITY
ACT 2 Scene 8	
<p>HI COCOLORUM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Song to celebrate the victory of good over evil and that the child is free. The dream world has been saved by an innocent child despite her hardships in reality. She liberates The Green Crystal <p>IT'S A JOLLY HOLIDAY WITH MIRANDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Father apologises to child and sets family life to rights 	<p>SURREALITY</p> <p>Good vs. evil</p> <p>Work vs. family values</p>
ACT 2 Scene 9	
<p>NKOSI SIKELEL' IAFRIKA (Le Shebeen version)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management apologises to workers and offers a deal benefitting both parties Finale of musical to indicate the restoration of peace and social justice on all fronts 	<p>REALITY</p> <p>Management vs. workers</p> <p>Group cohesion, connectivity, communalism vs. individual isolation, individualism</p>

Table 1: The Green Crystal: plot and theme analysis

Below, I present the findings as well as the interpretation of the data pertaining to the empirical part of my research. Against the conceptual and theoretical framework of this study, which is centred on the extent to which secondary school musical productions can provide educational, curricular as well as pedagogic-dialogic spaces in order to teach and practise life skills within the Life Orientation subject area (Rule, 2004:2; Alexander, 2005:3) and the CAPS document (Department of Education, 2010) I account for findings concerning *personal self-actualisation*, *self-in-society* and how the *transference of life skills into adulthood* may be linked to participation in a secondary school musical production. I therefore purposefully opted to deviate from the traditional and conventional approach to reporting qualitative findings by not adhering strictly to the order of the interview protocol, *per se*.

The themes relating to personal self-actualisation, self-in-society and transference of life skills into adulthood are all prevalent in the CAPS document (Life Orientation) (Department of Education, 2010) and during the process of coding the data it became clear that there were codes that related to two or more of the themes. I therefore opted for a thematic discussion rather than one following the order of the questions in the interview schedule.

In the following section I engage with the data provided by the interviews in order to generate findings germane to my research question (cf. §1.4). Figure 2 is a network display of generated data-coding from ATLAS.ti™ and underpins the discussion of the data.

Figure 2: Network display of generated data-coding

4.2 Self-actualisation

The ability to use and expand their particular skills as well as the joy they experienced as a result of their involvement in the musical production were reported in the body of scholarship as some of the major reasons why learners opted to take part in a secondary school musical production (Watkins, 1987:iii; Eckel, 1994:23; Watkins, 2005:12). Data gleaned from my interviews substantiated the need for participants to take part in cultural activities in order to expand, not only skills such as acting, singing, dancing, movement and rhythm, but also their interpersonal skills. Furthermore, they also indicated that it provided an escape from the harsh reality of academic pressures, family- and personal hardships and to overcome personal limitations.

The response from one participant perhaps best reflects the responses of all participants to the question: Why did you decide to take part in the musical, *The Green Crystal*? He responded as follows:

“I can honestly say that I sometimes thought that I was making too much of the musical, I caught myself counting the hours until the next rehearsal or practise as this was the best part of my day.” (P7:R06)¹²

The responses to this question reveal that participants became involved in the musical production because they enjoyed cultural activities and also because they had observed how their peers had enjoyed previous musical productions. This encouraged them to experience it for themselves.

“I have always been interested in cultural activities and I've always taken part in cultural activities and also because I wanted to be involved with these cultural activities, yes, the love of cultural activities, especially musicals and music productions.” (P1: R08)

¹² Quotations are taken from the eight primary transcription documents (data sets) I analysed and the reference for each is done according to the document referred to (P1-P8) and the number allotted to the response e.g. (R1). The coded transcriptions are included in the enclosed DVD.

“I saw how participants enjoyed it, the previous productions, so it was a peer thing; friends spoke about it and said how they had enjoyed it. It looked like a lot of fun,”
(4A: R06)

Parents echoed these responses of the learner-participants by indicating that it was the love of music and drama (cultural activities) that inspired their children to take part in the musical production. One parent stressed that the musical provided a dialogic space for her child to overcome her fear of singing in front of an audience as she had the perception that she could not sing. The musical, therefore, provided a life-changing opportunity as educational (and not only pedagogical) corrective space.

“...she wanted to take up the arts as a career at one stage, and she changed totally negative towards it as she couldn't sing. I think it made a very positive contribution to her life because she lived for it, she absolutely lived for it.” (P6: R18)

Members of staff who were part of the production team answered a similar question: Why did you decide to become involved in the musical, *The Green Crystal* as part of the production team? Their responses corresponded with those provided by the cast members as they also indicated that their love of the arts and creativity advancement were best served by being part of the musical production.

“First of all my own talents, writing and, and the drama section, and then there is drama and acting the music, musical arrangement acting choreography...” (P5: R07)

Another educator who was not a staff member of the school at that stage and who became involved voluntarily also reflected that she had become involved with the production because of her interest in cultural activities.

“...I have a real love for cultural activities” (P4: R08)

“It was absolutely for the love of the matter.” (P4: R14)

Concurring with responses of educators involved in the case studies reported in the body of scholarship (cf. Chapter Two), the data from my own research also indicated

that the educators felt the need to provide a secure, safe, yet challenging dialogic educative space where learner-participants could practice various life skills.

“...I think if you are in the teaching profession you aim to provide children with opportunities to grow, especially outside the academic skills that they need to learn in class and therefore I decided, chose to use my talents on the cultural side to provide the opportunity for children to experience the joy and challenge of a musical production.” (P5: R07)

Participants commented on the life skills that they acquired during their participation in a musical as addressed in the question: *Which life skills, if any, would you say you have acquired while participating in the musical The Green Crystal?* on two levels, namely individual and interpersonal skills. Although these skills are often interrelated I will discuss the individual skills in this paragraph while focussing on the interpersonal skills in par. 4.3 which follows this section.

The researchers who had done similar research confirmed that secondary school learners who participated in a musical production expressed instances of growth in confidence, self-esteem and self-value while participating in secondary school musical productions (Adderly *et al.* 2003:199-200, Morrison, 2001:26; Kennedy, 2002:30). The responses of the participants to the question: *How did your participation in the musical influence your confidence?* confirmed the development of confidence, self-esteem and self-value as they all revealed that they had gained self-confidence during the production. One participant reported that his participation had changed him entirely and that it helped him to glean who he really is.

“Yes, okay, but in my case, self-confidence: a lot! Before this particular musical I wasn't really anywhere. I was very shy and everything and this forced me to work with people to get along in a social situation where you are dumped for instance, I was this quiet, shy, good little boy who suddenly had to cope with this busy interpersonal environment. I was forced to get along with people and also got to know a lot about myself. I really changed a lot, it changes you.” (P1: R33)

Another more confident participant voiced the perspective of the other participants, namely that she also felt that she had gained more confidence as a result of her participation in the musical production.

“...to perform in front of audiences for five or more times a week does teach you self-confidence...” (P5: R20)

The educators involved reported that students had to have confidence to be able to act and sing and do choreography simultaneously during the production. Some of the learner-participants attested to facing and overcoming personal challenges such as timidity, sensitivity, as well as the lack of a singing voice, physical strength or rhythm necessary to participate in the musical production, *The Green Crystal*. The parents and educators confirmed that participants were challenged by their own abilities, or lack thereof. Physically participants had to learn skills many of them had never before acquired and the choreography, therefore, was often also very challenging.

“Now, I think it takes guts to stand on a stage and in the period of a week or however long it takes, to stand in front of thousands of people and to, goodness, to produce...” (P1: R33)

A learner-participant indicated that she had to conquer her sensitivity for criticism and self-consciousness.

“I am quite a sensitive person, I am sometimes very self-conscious and then when critique comes from all over then it is sometimes taken up much more personal than another person would have experienced it and then you have to hide your emotions because you can't burst into tears in the middle of a rehearsal and run off the stage.” (P1: R56)

The responses of the participants indicated that they acquired or honed their communication skills, learnt to persist even when circumstances became extremely difficult or tiring because they were focussed on achieving a goal.

“...dedication, it teaches you dedication.” (P1: R19)

“... and, commitment...” (PP1: R18)

An educator felt strongly that nowadays learners lacked the life skills of commitment and perseverance. He reiterated the conviction of fellow-colleagues that these skills may, amongst others, best be taught through participation in a musical production as learner-participants would feel obligated to see the production through to completion.

“And I think in our modern times, as I experience it especially with the children that we work with today, it is something that children really lack. They can't persevere, they give up when the difficult times come, when the serious practising starts they just give up, or there is a problem, or the parents decide to stop the child from participating.” (P5: R19)

Furthermore, participants reported that life skills such as problem-solving and effective time-management were also acquired by the participants in the musical. One of the issues that participants in a musical production is forced to deal with is the effective management of their available time as it is presented as an extra-curricular activity and therefore has to be rehearsed after school hours and during holidays. The respondents all reported that it was a problem that they had to deal with as they could not use the rehearsals and performances as excuses for not performing well academically. They also indicated that the life skill of effective time-management aided them in their general utilisation of time after the musical's completion.

“...it taught her that there are ways to do something even if there are things that stop you, there is a way to overcome it if you really wanted to do it.” (P6: R19)

One participant indicated that the time-management skill was also transported to his future activities.

“...but with a musical it forces you to do your work in the two hours that you have available. I have never been a person who would have assigned two specific hours to do my homework, I would do it when I feel like it or when I have concentration, or whatever, but now with the musical it teaches you to use the time you have to do your homework, but then when the musical has finished, you see, you still do it and that helps...” (P1: R38)

Other problems that they had to contend with were jealousy from other learners, disparagement and failure. They revealed that although it was difficult they built tolerance and become skilled at countering prejudice. They felt they had achieved emotional maturity by avoiding emotional outbursts or quitting the production as they had a shared goal to stage an excellent production and did not want to fail their fellow participants.¹³ This gave them courage to persevere in the face of adversity.

“It helps you to accept criticism.” (P1: R24)

Furthermore, they felt that it improved their problem-solving skills as they had to learn how to solve interpersonal conflict.

“Even something like problem-solving...” (P5: R19)

Dealing with conflict gave them courage to manage other problems they might encounter in their future lives.

“...it makes you tough.” (P1: R26)

Self-discipline is closely related to problem-solving and time-management skills. The participants confirmed that they had to apply self-discipline to manage difficult situations. Personal feelings had to take second place in order to achieve a shared goal.

“...self-discipline..., it takes a lot of self-discipline not to scream back at the producers who’s screaming at you, and you’re standing there and you think, I have done

¹³ As many of these life skills pertaining to self-actualisation are interrelated with interpersonal life skills they will also be discussed in par. 4.3.

nothing wrong, to just think, okay they are also stressing, but you also stress so it takes a lot of perseverance. (P1: R55)

The musical production as educational, curricular as well as pedagogic-dialogic space created a life-altering opportunity for participants to acquire the life skills required to be able to lead a meaningful and successful life as balanced individual in a rapidly changing and transforming society. It is therefore also imperative to report the findings focussed on the individual as self-in-society.

4.3 Self-in-Society

The purpose of life skills education is to teach learners to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, norms, values and demands of propriety in order to participate meaningfully in their own communities irrespective of their individual diversity (Griessel, Louw & Swart, 1990:50; Department of Education, 2010:3). Interpersonal skills, therefore, are at the core of life skills education. In the interview protocol for this study I have therefore also focussed on the participant as self-in-society. From the review of the body of scholarship as reported on in Chapter Two of this study, it was clearly established that interpersonal skills such as forming worthwhile friendships and learning to work together as a team were well-documented. Studies done by Finney and Tymoczko (2003) as well as Turton and Durrant (2002) confirmed that learners gained skills, such as clear communication, decision making and managing conflict in order to solve problems within a group as they were working towards a shared goal. The empirical data that I gathered confirmed that these interpersonal life skills were gained when learners took part in a secondary school musical production. An aspect that was not reported on in the body of scholarship, however, was how learner-participants had to learn how to accept the differences inherent to “otherness” and even to become friends with people whom they would never have befriended within the normal school situation. The findings confirm that the secondary school musical as specific genre is essentially geared towards promoting a dialogic practise space by cultivating a coming together of individuals from diverse backgrounds in order to understand and accept each other’s life-worlds, as envisaged by Alexander (2005:1).

When asked what they had learnt about interpersonal relationships through their participation in this musical the participants all reported that they had formed positive relationships with diverse people as they were obliged to get along with the rest of the group. A sub-culture within the school environment was created including diverse personality types. The ages of participant-learners ranged from 14 to 18 years of age (grade eight to twelve) and the group included both male and female participants. In each of the three character groups namely the worker group, goodies group and baddies group as well as the main characters as a grouping, individuals were clustered together irrespective of age or gender. Although they often worked together as a cast, the groups spent much of their rehearsals together (as a character group and on their own) and had to learn how to co-operate and resolve conflict among themselves.

“...it's a really good platform to build friendships, with people you would normally not have been friends with or on a different level because you have a shared goal. (P1: R19)

“...in that situation you had to get along but that teaches you another skill and that is to get along, to work together.” (P1:R53)

The responses of parents indicated that their children had to learn to acknowledge and accept the diversity of other members of the cast.

“...not only the good kids but also some of those kids that were not really acceptable (laugh) learners also took part in the musical and she had to learn within the social groups to get along with them, they had a lot of time to share, free time, she had to learn how to accept them.” (P6: R52)

The educators shared this point of view, not only applicable to the relationships among learner-participants but also to their own interpersonal relationships with each other and with the cast.

“...one has to learn how to work together with others...” (P5: R17)

The participants declared that it was because they shared a mutual goal, producing – what they perceived to have been – an excellent musical, which bound them together, that they had to accept different individuals, often from diverse social backgrounds, within the group. Sharing a mutual goal resulted in the participants having to trust their fellow-participants and to believe entirely in their mutual trustworthiness. The participants declared that within this subculture created by the musical production as dialogic space the participants practised their interpersonal skills and learnt how to get along with and accept dissimilar people. Respect for others is one of the aims envisaged for secondary school learners as stipulated by the CAPS document (Department of Education, 2011:7) and incorporates acceptance of diversity within a complex South African society.

“It creates a space where learners can form friendships with people that they would normally never have been friends with, trusting one another.” (P7: R55)

When asked what they had to do to ensure that they were socially accepted as a member of the cast and their respective character groups, the participants responded that they had to solve problems together. They also had to communicate effectively and unambiguously to avoid misunderstandings. A core skill they had to learn was that there were instances where they had to put their own self second in order to serve the goals of the group. Moreover, it was important that they adapted to the group by restraining themselves from forcing their opinions and ideas on the others. This, participants reported, enhanced their self-discipline and restraint. The positive interpersonal relationships they were able to form resulted in social benefits such as sharing, friendship and encouragement that the participants gained as a result of their involvement in this production. They learnt how to share in the hardships and in happiness of one another. They also learnt that they could differ in opinion within a secure, safe space without hurting one another and applaud one another for successes achieved.

“...some of the groups they were fighting or didn't really like one another outside of the musical but in the musical itself they danced next to one another and worked

together and that helped to get along with one another. That forced you to bring those individuals together...” (P1: R51)

Another participant concurred that they learnt how to share the trials and tribulations of their friends in addition to showing empathy when necessary.

“...how your friends can encourage and be there for you, how they can be truly happy for your achievements.” (P6: R15)

It was important that the participants sometimes had to put their own emotions second for the benefit of the group.

“...you are part of the production and if you are tired and irritated you have to keep it to yourself because everybody is tired and irritated.” (P1: R56)

“She had to keep in her emotions and not fight about it, she had to keep on reminding herself that she had made the decision to be part of this, was in now and she knew she had to keep on going. I am not alone in this, if I drop out it would not only influence myself but I would also drop the rest of the group, because I am not alone.” (P6: R64)

It is notable that learner-participants and educators involved with the production learnt from each others' opinions and ideas, not only regarding the aspects directly related to the musical but also about life-related issues. This broadened their horizons as they were confronted with a range of interpretations of social-, political- and religious views as well as diverse value systems. The themes covered in the plot / book of the musical relate closely to the life-related issues referred to by the learner-participants (cf. Table 2). The participants reported that they had often discussed issues in a much more mature manner than was usually expected from their age group, not only during rehearsals but also when small groups who had become friends, gathered socially.

“You learn a lot from the learners’ points of view and they from your points of view.”
(P5: R23)

One reply best reflects the responses of the learner-participants:

“...you say these things that you don't really think about at that age, it's not really things that children of our age thought about, I mean we thought and discussed these grown up issues that were very intense, life issues that we spoke about when we sat the in the staff room,...” (P1: R95)

The participants also reported that the life-related topics incorporated in the plot and themes of the musical, *The Green Crystal*, were often very intricate and triggered thoughts and discussions about problems that usually do not form part of secondary school learners’ conversations. Although the musical was set in the context of an imaginary surrealist world on the one hand, the themes of the real world were always prevalent as undercurrents and as part of the “reality” of Miranda’s world. Themes such as personal relationships within a family, children’s rights and parental responsibility as well as the place and role of relationships within the workplace were topical issues in society that were dealt with in the musical. The battle between good and evil, both in the real and dream world was one of the major themes in the text. Escapism as a way of dealing with reality also featured prominently in the play. Participants reported that they were confronted by these issues during the musical rehearsals and performances and still remember and apply the lessons learnt from the musical at present.

“...there are moments when you are standing at the back of the stage behind the curtains, when you're looking at the characters playing their parts, especially when the music starts, because it becomes more emotional, and then you suddenly start thinking about the words of the song or the storyline or something, then it triggers your thoughts and these thoughts stay with you for a long time, even today you still think about that. It evolves your thoughts and ideas about intricate things, as she said, about relationships and the escape from reality and....” (P1: R101)

“...it's such a simple children's story and it's part of a school production so it's not supposed to be that serious but it stays in your subconscious mind and you keep thinking about it.” (P1: R103)

It is evident from the findings reported in the previous paragraphs that participants believed that they had acquired life skills on individual and interpersonal level through their participation in the musical production. The life skills enabled them to deal with social situations where they had to set their own feelings and perceptions aside in order to serve the social community of the musical. They were, however, provided with a dialogic and dialogic safe space in which to practise the skills needed to function successfully within a diverse group of people. Diversity in this context reflects a large variety of human differences such as sexual orientation¹⁴, ethnicity, emotional and physical dissimilarity, differences in age and a spectrum of socio-economic statuses. It is, nevertheless, also pertinent to establish whether these life skills were transported into their adult lives. These life skills are especially instilled for the purpose of self-realisation and meaningful participation in society and to help with the transition of learners into the world of adults.

4.4 Transporting Life skills into Adult Life

As envisaged in the CAPS document, learners ultimately should be able to work individually and communally towards the solving of problems and being responsible and valuable citizens within the multiplicity of situations they will be confronted with in the adult world (Department of Education, 2010:3, 4). As averred in Chapter Two, the body of scholarship revealed several lacunae as far as reporting on the transference of life skills into adulthood was concerned. It was, consequently, imperative that I established from the empirical part of this study whether there was any evidence of the transference of life skills into the participants' adult lives.

A reservation posed by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education Sciences at the time when this study was still in its research proposal stage, was whether the participants would still (be able to) remember the production and be able to pinpoint those skills they gained as a result of their participation in this musical, this question

¹⁴ All these aspects of diversity were discussed by various participants in the study. Refer to the CD included in this dissertation containing the full transcriptions of all interviews.

proved to be crucial. The response of the interviewee called Mr Merlin, echoes the responses of the participants and emphatically refutes this reservation:

Interviewer: ... do you still remember what the musical was about, more or less?

Mr Merlin: Vividly! (ML & S¹⁵ laugh) (P1: R86 & 87)

His conviction was confirmed by another interviewee who felt that the memories of the musical overshadowed his memories of secondary school academic events.

“But everything is engraved in my memory! In fact, I remember much more about the musical productions than of the academic part of secondary school.” (P7: R12)

The transference to adult life of knowledge learnt, shared and practised within a pedagogically secure and safe dialogic educative space is an indispensable characteristic of lifelong learning. All the participants indicated that they still thought, conversed and reminisced about the musical at times. They still watched the DVD of the production with friends; even with friends that they had made after they had left school. Although certain aspects of the musical production may hold particular nostalgic value for individual participants, a collective knowledge regarding the musical was shared by participants.

“Yes, especially that specific solo that I did, Vier seisoene kind, I still have goose bumps when I hear it.” (P1: R 122).

Parents confirmed that their children still mused over the musical and even showed the DVD to their new friends.

“Yes, she looked at it with them. So her group of friends expanded and she is very proud to say, it comes back to the self-confidence, look I took part in a musical and I can’t even sing.” (P6:R26)

¹⁵ As indicated in the transcription records (cf. enclosed DVD) the abbreviations ML and S refer to the names assigned to the participants, Mr Merlin and Ms Snow-white.

At the end of the interview I asked participants whether they wanted to add anything and they responded with nostalgic yearning for the times they had recalled during the interview.

“Now I want to watch the DVD again.” (P1: R 150) and “... but now I want to do it again.” (P1: R 143).

They all responded that their love for cultural activities was set for life. They yearned for the songs they had sung, dances they had learnt and still recalled the anticipation before a performance and the thrill of a successful performance. All indicated enthusiastically that they would participate in a musical again if the opportunity ever arose. They also agreed that they would encourage secondary school learners to participate in a musical production even though it is time consuming and involves a personal challenge to balance all aspects of a secondary school learner’s life.

“I agree, definitely. Even though you are at school, in matric, between all the academic work it is like a breather, to do something that you really enjoy, to move away from the school work for a while, as I said, we only now really realise how much it has meant to us, how much we have learnt from it, so I will definitely advise everybody to take part in a musical.” (P1: R132)

Parents were adamant that they would encourage secondary school learners to participate in a musical production as this brings balance into their lives, and prevents them from taking part in activities that may prove to be detrimental to them.

“Absolutely yes. I think the most important thing around this is as a parent you also know, if a child has too much free time, for the beginning has too much free time in today’s society the chances are so much bigger that your children will become involved in the wrong things. So from a parent’s perspective, it is to me important that your child takes part in as many activities as possible and especially the cultural activities as well, to help your child to have balance in life, to do the right thing. It is just so, yes, I will definitely tell a parent to let the children take part.” (P6: R84)

Another parent added that it is essential for learners to practise within a secure and safe dialogic educative space how to deal with problems in adult life as part of lifelong learning.

“I agree. I think that in such a production many life skills and things can be built into the text which can help children to cope with problems in normal life, when it is built into the text and they can see this in a different way. This can help to teach children how to deal with things.” (P6: R85)

The following question from the interview schedule in particular relates to the transference of life skills to adult life: *To what extent have you been able to transfer some of the life skills that you have acquired during the production of The Green Crystal to your subsequent studies and choice of career?* Participants reported that various strands of their adult life had been influenced by their experiences during the production of *The Green Crystal*. They also reported that participation in the musical had not only taught them new skills but had a corrective effect on existing problems they experienced at the time. These adversities they referred to were experienced on both a personal and an interpersonal level.

One participant who had a particularly difficult home environment reported that it had changed him as a person from an introverted individual who could hardly communicate effectively with others to an outgoing, spontaneous person.

“Before this particular musical I wasn't really anywhere. I was very shy and everything and this forced me to work with people to get along in a social situation where you are dumped for instance, I was this quiet, shy, good little boy who suddenly had to cope with this busy interpersonal environment. I was forced to get along with people and also got to know a lot about myself. I really changed a lot, it changes you.” (P1: R33)

He pointed out that he thought of himself as not being anywhere, an outsider in school society, and through his involvement in the musical becoming somebody

accepted by his peers and thus accepting himself. This acceptance also pertained to his acceptance of his sexuality.

"...I came out of the closet. (laugh) No but really it did, it really did, it changed my life, after the musical I was never the same again. I know it sounds very corny but it is really like they (sic), it's really true." (P1: R35)

Not only did the participant become accepted in society but he was able to transport the physical and creative skills acquired and honed by participation in the musical to his adult life when he participated in a cultural competition at university. He therefore voluntarily became involved in positive community activities without fear of rejection but with self-confidence.

"My friend and I took part in the Campus Talent Festival and we danced and did one of those moves that we did in the musical and I actually had to sing, and where you had to swing your partner, a person of 65 kg around in the air with one arm and look at this little arm..." (P1: R85)

Another participant was able to overcome her fear of singing in public because of her participation in the musical. Her parents related her willingness to sing in church with the congregation where in the past she would mime when she had to sing socially. Accepting herself assisted her in venturing out into unknown territories (mainly socially) and gave her self-confidence to deal with difficult situations. This relates closely to positive self image and overcoming personal fears and phobias as part of the educative corrective.

"I do have a place, I may sing in church, it doesn't matter, nobody will tell me that I do not sing, I may sing, yes I think it made her see that she had a place. I think that everything she did at school and now especially the musical did help her in her process of growing up which helped her in her going overseas for a year after school, not that it was always easy overseas." (P6: R67)

One of the principle characters indicated that although she did not choose a career in the performing arts it had a definite influence on the way she approaches her profession.

“It confirmed my beliefs that you can achieve anything if you put your mind to it and that you should do the things that you love and which inspire you and you will reap benefits.” (P8:R36)

Another interviewee stated that although he did not opt for the arts as a career it was simply because of monetary and job security reasons that he chose another profession.

“The musical did not directly influence my career choice as I decided to study B.Com. I would, however, have studied in the arts if more lucrative opportunities have existed.” (P7: R34)

Participants also felt that it was a valuable addition to their Curriculum Vitae (CV) as employers were impressed by a person who displayed balance in his / her life. The musical production was a communal effort to produce a performance that would bring enjoyment and happiness to an audience while simultaneously educating them about social issues. However, they felt that the stress and competitive nature of sports activities were not prevalent in a cultural activity such as a musical production. Another aspect that they mentioned which distinguished the musical from competitive activities was that sports required specialised skills whereas in a secondary school musical there is place for everybody, even those who are not as rhythmic as others or who do not possess a good singing voice.

“It was an opportunity to do something new / different and of course to take part in something that is not inherently as competitive as sport and not as stressful as academic work.” (P7: R28)

Parents also referred to how cultural activities provide balance to their child's life even though their child did not have singing talent. A role was specifically created for

her and her theme song was electronically deliberately distorted (on her back-track) to fit in with her character in order to provide a chance for her to participate.

“...for her who wanted so much to take part in something like this in her life except the sport that she tried and then this, it gave her self-confidence that she..., was normally blocked, because she can’t sing, she can’t take part in a musical and this stopped her to add a little culture, and remember she wanted to take up the arts as a career at one stage, and she changed totally negative towards it as she couldn’t sing. I think it made a very positive contribution to her life...” (P6: R18)

“And these were learners that in the end made a success of the musical, but who also made a success academically and also made a success of sport.” (P4: R41)

The comment above made by an educator represents the view of the participants that those who have balance will succeed in life.

The secondary school musical, *The Green Crystal*, as a case study for this research proved to be an agogical (and not merely a “pedagogical”) event, because it represented a purposive socio-conventional and educational intervention in individual and collective human development. Participants related that they had developed norms, values and demands of propriety from the themes used in the text as these related to communal and contextualised societal values such as functional domestic and family relationships, children’s’ rights and parental responsibility. Escapism as a method of avoiding problematic situations and coping with reality was another issue that was incorporated in the plot of the musical (cf. Figure 2). From the data it is clear that these theme-related issues eventually became increasingly important in the participants’ adult lives.

One of the values singled out by the participants was intra-family relationships. The plot specifically featured a theme reflecting a fragile relationship between parents and children. The theme supported the concept of parents spending time with their children and having a balance between work and family time.

“Yes, so parents need to listen to the children and pay attention to the children, and should adapt to the children’s world and parents seem not to care enough to try to understand the children, but also that parents should pay attention to the children’s point of view and the rights, because children may think that parents don’t care about the children’s point of view and ignore it. I think that still has importance in today’s life. And I think basically, especially girls, the whole thing about the dream world still plays a part even in adulthood.” (P1: R94)

Closely related to the theme of family values is another theme which deals with the world of work. In the plot of the musical, *The Green Crystal*, (cf. Figure 2) the worker group presents a view of the workers versus management. The issues incorporated in the theme deals with poverty versus wealth, abuse of workers’ human rights and greed. The value and importance of work in fulfilling personal needs and potential, together with the effective inter-relationships between all workers and management is stressed.

Parents related that there was a definite correlation between what participants had learnt in the musical and how they approached their careers.

“I think that especially in the type of work that she is doing today where she works sometimes with people from the arts, involved in the arts, she understands things better.” (P6: R31)

They also stressed that self-restraint and working together in a group with diverse people, were contributing factors to effective work-place relationships.

“I am sure that the musical had a big, big influence, other things as well but especially the musical and it also helps with the type of work that she is doing at the moment. She had to learn how to work with people, get along with people in a group and today as she has to work with people in a group, this helps her a lot.” (P6: R31)

Another value incorporated in the plot / book of the musical was the battle between good and evil. Making appropriate choices was closely related to this theme.

However, it was not only through the plot of the musical that this value was instilled, since parents related scenarios that occurred during the repetitions where participants were confronted with moral and value related choices. The musical production, therefore, also provided a dialogic educative practise ground for making choices. As the educators were always at hand to provide support to learners if needed, the musical was perceived by everyone involved to be a constant, secure and safe dialogic space within which to practise these moral choices.

*“She had to make choices with things I know that wasn't right; she had to make the choice not to take part in those things that I know was not really acceptable. Yes, she had to learn how to make choices, but **she** had to make the choices, and the good choices that she made.”* (P6:R54)

An educator also felt that making good moral choices is a transferable skill that has lifelong application value for participants.

“...the major theme of the musical, good versus bad (evil), that theme, I think the thing is ... we all struggle with this in our lives: good , bad (evil) – I have to make choices, and how do I make them, how will I solve these problems.” (P4: R69)

She stipulates that the themes could be designed specifically within the musical as genre to incorporate and address any social issues related to norms, values and demands of propriety. The community and problems they are faced with at the time a production is staged could be incorporated in the plot / book of the musical when it is written.

“I think in musicals these issues (HIV / AIDS, education, social problems) should be addressed with music and dance, it becomes a reality, on stage. I now see what happens, hear what happens, I experience it, and suddenly it is more than just a story on paper...” (P4: R73)

However, according to the participants it was especially participation, *per se*, in the musical production that paid the largest moral dividends in learners' future lives. It

was specifically their *participation* in the musical, in and of itself, that enabled them to make sound moral choices. From this, I infer that the skills that learner-participants have learnt while making these choices within the protective dialogic space provided by the musical, were beneficial when they were faced with moral dilemmas in the reality of their subsequent adult lives.

“...norms and values can be set by the musical, because if it is not there learners will not cope with adult life... And in the themes you can focus on it. And the people who participate, it makes them mature and stronger.” (P4: R87)

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the findings of the empirical part of this study which was designed to determine the extent to which musical productions can be used to instil and practise life skills in a secure and safe dialogic educative space. As such the musical also added lifelong value as a pedagogical corrective.

The main aims of the CAPS document were used as primary points of discussion, namely actualisation of the individual and self-in-society. I furthermore investigated the knowledge, skills and value transportation into adult life through the themes prevalent in the plot / book and participation in the musical, *The Green Crystal*. The results indicated that learners acquired and practised new life skills as well as honing existing skills not only as individuals, but also within interpersonal contexts. There seems to be sufficient proof in the data that these life skills were, indeed, transported (and transportable) into adult life and into adult contexts.

In the next chapter I will endeavour to discuss and interpret my main findings against the decor of the national and international body of scholarship on the topic which I had covered in Chapter Two. I will also draw conclusions from the empirical research and I will endeavour to link all conclusions with the existing body of scholarship. In addition I will point out some of the main limitations of this study. Finally I will make recommendations and suggestions for further research to improve education practice.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

My involvement with the musical production as co-writer and co-producer afforded me an insider view into the mechanics of the production. The production process started with the choice of themes for the musical, writing of the text / book of *The Green Crystal*, choosing songs and writing lyrics to carry the plot, working out choreography as well as finding sponsors and generating projects to fund the production.

When the initial preparation had been completed the auditions followed, rehearsing all aspects of the musical performance (drama, singing, movement and coherence of all aspects to constitute a performance) as well as the eventual performances. The technical aspects such as lighting, sound, decor, costumes and props had to be planned and co-ordinated. There were also administrative tasks that had to be done such as designing and printing of the programmes, financial aspects, advertising of the performances, ticket sales and dealing with correspondence and queries from all role-players as well as the public concerning the production. Although the musical production was an all-encompassing and time-consuming process during which we were often more focussed on the production rather than on the possible dialogic educative impact that their participation may have had on the participants, educators (ourselves included) and the parents, we could not help but be aware of the development of interpersonal skills and self-actualisation apparent in all the role-players. It is against this backdrop that I decided to study this phenomenon, the secondary school musical production as dialogic space for life skills acquisition.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an interpretation and analysis of the findings of the empirical study (Chapter Four) reflected against the body of scholarship (Chapter Two). I also suggest some recommendations for the implementation of a secondary school musical production as secure and safe dialogic educative space in which learners can learn, share and practise knowledge,

skills, norms, values and demands of propriety pertaining to life skills within the learning area / subject Life Orientation. By means of my interpretation of the findings I endeavour to offer a better understanding of the attainment and transference of life skills to the adult lives of participants when acquired and practised within a dialogic educative space.

During the process of recording and analysing the data generated by the participants I had interviewed in this study, it became increasingly apparent that the secondary school musical performance was a life-altering experience on individual level. Furthermore the secondary school musical as dialogic space provided a secure and safe dialogic educative practise ground for learners where they could develop and hone their interpersonal life skills towards becoming more mature role-players within a variety of social contexts (self-in-society). The secondary school musical production also served as a lifelong corrective (as an element of lifelong learning) for, inter alia, individual, intra-relational, as well as inter-relational derailments.

I will now endeavour to interpret the research findings reflected against the body of scholarship, pointing out the lacunae I identified in the body of scholarship, so as to understand to what extent participation in a secondary school musical production, as secure and safe educative-dialogic space, can be utilised to teach and practise life skills towards meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society.

5.2 Interpretation of Research Findings

I have interpreted the data that had been generated by probing the intentions, meanings, contexts, circumstances and situations reflected in the data (cf. figure 1). An analysis of the plot of the musical *The Green Crystal* and a comparison of it with the characteristics of the musical as popular music genre as defined in the body of scholarly literature indicated that the secondary school musical production is a new hybrid genre with a different nature than the existing musical as genre. Data generated and analysed in Chapter Four also revealed that participants had acquired a variety of life skills through their participation in a secondary musical production pertaining to individual growth as well as to interpersonal relationships. The

secondary school musical production, furthermore, has provided a dialogic space for practising life skills (cf. §4.3).

5.2.1 The Secondary School Musical Production as Hybrid Genre

As indicated in paragraph 2.3.1, there is a paucity of scholarly literature with regard to the secondary school musical production. However, the musical *per se*, as popular theatre is well-documented. The musical genre as defined by Gänzl (1997:2) displays many mutations but is essentially focussed on entertainment. Although it often has a theme relating to social struggles and inequalities within society, it has never been written merely to educate but rather for the enjoyment of audiences, and in recent years increasingly for financial gain (Kenrick, 2003:3). The *High School Musical* as cult-musical has revolutionised the audience of music theatre and has rejuvenated the musical genre for its youthful followers (Surette, 2008:9). In South African secondary schools the trend in musical productions followed suit and productions have become increasingly larger and more elaborate. The secondary school musical as hybrid genre is, however, ontologically different from the musical *per se*.

The data that were generated, coded and interpreted validate the notion that the secondary school musical production as hybrid genre is essentially a practise ground for life skills attainment through the media of music, movement and drama. The plot / book should never be distorted to “teach lessons” to its audience; its primary characteristic should always remain seated within the performing arts or it will lose much of its appeal for both the participants and the audience. As the secondary school musical production as an art form has embedded in its nature an educative character, it should not be manipulated by overloading it with social issues in order to “teach”. My co-author of *The Green Crystal* (cf. enclosed DVD for full audio version and comprehensive transcription of my interview with him) attested to the notion that art in itself educates through music, drama and movement but he also agreed that it can be manipulated to introduce a relevant social theme. The writer/s and producers have much power and this power should be used responsibly when writing the plot / book of the musical.

“You have so much power, you can, I mean the arts are known for that, the entertainment business is known for it, that you can manipulate, you can in a good way “brainwash” in brackets people to think in a certain way, yes, you are quite right the themes could be manipulated and, and, it places quite a responsibility on the producer to look at all aspects when he puts together a production...” (P5:R57)

In order to clarify the nature of the secondary school musical production as hybrid genre, I have attempted to define its cosmological features:

The secondary school musical production endeavours, firstly, to entertain and, secondly, to educate. As an educative tool the secondary school musical production provides a dialogic space for spontaneously acquiring and practising life skills. The theme of the musical relates to the world of the secondary school learner but also moves beyond that into the adult realm. Its plot is a hologram of reality as interpreted by the writers, production team and the cast providing a dramatic, staged version of life. The music used in the plot / book is contemporary and includes as many musical styles as possible. Aspects of drama, song and movement (choreography) are present in the production and enhance the plot / book. Technical aspects such as lighting, décor and sound should bring the whole production together as a cohesive performance.

Cosmologically the secondary school musical creates a controlled, secure and safe space where learners could discover and exercise their different talents within the production. According to the data there is opportunity for all learners to participate in a secondary musical production. Musical ability is not necessarily a prerequisite for participation in the production. I envisage a musical production that provides opportunity for all secondary school learners to participate. Learners should become involved with and be co-responsible for all aspects of the musical production with educators as moderators and mentors. Learners who excel at or are interested in writing could participate in writing the plot / book of the musical. Those learners interested or proficient in dancing and other aspects of movement such as gymnastics could assist in working out the movements and choreography. However,

even for those learners who do not want to perform on stage, a variety of opportunities present themselves in the production process (cf. §5.1).

As a means of instilling life skills as part of the Life Orientation curriculum, the secondary school musical could be part of *the project* and *case study* as suggested assessment assignments in the CAPS document (Department of Education, 2011:7). The data indicated that all the learner-participants, those that I interviewed and other participants mentioned by the educators and parents I interviewed, believed that although life skills should be taught conventionally, they should preferably be practised in an implied, integrated and spontaneous manner and in a secure and safe dialogic educative space in order for these life skills to be transported into adult life. However, the educators and parents themselves attested to having honed their own life skills as a result of their involvement with the musical. This is also in line with Habermas's (1998:293) premise with regard to the practical interest of dialogue, as the secondary school musical itself is essentially a subjective meaning-making process for all role-players and stakeholders. Life skills attainment and perfecting are, therefore, closely related to lifelong learning. The musical production could consequently be a useful project and case study where the outcomes of the subject Life Orientation could not only be taught and practised but also be studied and assessed (if necessary) by, amongst others, educators, learners and parents.

Throughout the process of data generation, one aspect that was abundantly clear was the enthusiasm of all the participants. The educators were excited and enthusiastic about the musical production but even more so about the learners and their achievements. A core notion of education has always been that of changing the *educand* for the sake of becoming a productive and functioning individual within his / her social environments (Van der Walt & Potgieter, 2011:86-87) The secondary school musical presents a continuum of the demands of the outside world; however the educators still heavily mediate the complexity and range of adult experiences in order to create a secure and safe dialogic space for the participants (Higgins, 2010:1-18). The success or failure of an educative endeavour such as a secondary school musical production is often reliant on the approach and enthusiasm of the educators who are involved.

The notion of creating a secondary school musical production involving all learners may seem daunting to educators but a creative approach and innovative thinking will provide an opportunity to devise a workable solution for each particular school. The success of the secondary school musical production within the theoretical parameters of Life Orientation should not be measured by its perfection as performance but by the educative value it adds to learners' lives. Economic restraints, performing space and any other problems should, therefore, be regarded as opportunities for innovative thinking rather than mere obstacles. From the conception to the final production all role-players and stakeholders are fully responsible for the production and they set the scene for a successful enterprise with their personal and collective approach towards the production.

5.2.2 The Secondary School Musical Production sets the stage for Life

Skills Attainment

A secondary school musical production is the convergence of individuals, ideas, movement, language and the arts. Musical productions combine music, dramatic dialogue, dance, and technical aspects (props, lighting, sound) as an integrated whole. When a secondary school presents a musical, the production is planned, rehearsed, and performed by students of a particular school, and in most cases is organised by the staff and parents of that school. Community collaboration is therefore essential. I have witnessed the development of self-esteem, self-discipline, character building, cooperative skills, and motivation in the learners as they advance and improve the diverse skills necessary to create a musical theatre production.

Just as actors must act in front of an audience, so do learners require the presence of others to become productive and functional selves-in-society (Higgins, 2010: 10). Life skills are learnt and practised through participation in secondary school musical productions and these skills are transported into adult life. The life skills learnt are embedded in the memory of the participants and the lessons learnt through their participation in the musical production purify and decontaminate over time. The participants as adults relate that they have a better perspective of why events happened and can evaluate the way they dealt with issues as adolescents.

Responses from the participants indicate that they believe their participation in the production/s at secondary school to have been truly life-changing events. This is confirmed by the available body of scholarship. Watkins (1987:iii) emphasises that participation in a musical production reaches participants on the level of selfhood and that it matures them. Kennedy (2002:27) provides evidence that learners who were outcasts in society were able to feel secure and valued as participants in a secondary school musical production.

The body of scholarship, however, does not answer the question relating to the transference of the knowledge, skills, norms, values and demands of propriety into adult life. It was, therefore, my particular goal to find evidence to answer this salient question. Evidence from the data that were generated unequivocally supported the notion that these life skills were transferred into adulthood. Not only did the participants report on their acquisition of life skills during their participation in the musical production but they attested to the fact that they still rely heavily on these skills in their present lives. One of the participants commented on the transference of life skills into his adult life (he is 22 years old now) by saying that when he hears a song that he remembers from the musical production it still triggers memories and that those nostalgic memories rekindle insights into intricate matters that he may be confronted with in his adult life.

“...especially when the music starts, because it becomes more emotional, and then you suddenly start thinking about the words of the song or the storyline or something, then it triggers your thoughts and these thoughts stay with you for a long time, even today you still think about that. It evolves your thoughts and ideas about intricate things.” (P1: R101)

The confirmation from the data that life skills learnt and practised during the musical production are transported into adult life is a notable contribution to the main argument of this study, namely that participation in a secondary school musical production contributes towards learners' leading a meaningful and successful life in a rapidly changing and transforming society. The questions raised by the NWU Ethics Committee at the start of my studies (as to whether learners would still be able to

remember the contexts, meanings, circumstances, intentions and motives prevalent during their involvement in the musical production) were irrevocably refuted by the data. Participants indicated that the nostalgic memories, life skills learnt as well as norms, values and demands of propriety shaped during their participation in the musical production were vividly remembered. The data clearly demonstrate that the transference of the knowledge, skills, norms, values and demands of propriety that participants gained as a result of their involvement in the musical production contributes to their ability to function as valuable citizens within the community where they work and live.

Bohlin (2005: *passim*) contextualises life skills as those psychosocial and individual skills a person needs to adapt in society as a functional and contributing adult (self-in-society). The attainment of three types of life skills, according to the data, was attributed to participation in the musical production:

- Social skills which included the ability to negotiate, effective communication, cooperation, identifying shared goals and working together to attain these goals, commitment, empathy, learning from others, trusting and relying on others, acceptance of differences and getting along with different people.
- Intra-personal skills included problem-solving (individually and within a social group), taking responsibility for their actions, affirmation of self-confidence, positive self-concept, trustworthiness, leading a balanced life, stimulating creative thinking and self-actualisation.
- Emotional and physical coping skills comprise time-management, managing emotions, enhancing self-discipline, overcoming personal challenges, perseverance despite personal difficulties and coping with pressure.

In accordance with the CAPS document these life skills will abet the key principles forming the bedrock of the curriculum such as social justice, critical learning and learners with exceptional knowledge, skills, norms, values and demands of propriety and values (Department of Education, 2011:1).

The life skills attainment through participation in a secondary school musical production according to the data and the body of scholarship (cf. §2.5), however, extends further than merely learning how to cope as individual in a variety of social contexts. It serves a pedagogically, as well as an educatively corrective purpose for those social contexts where things may have gone astray in the lives of these participants. The secure and safe dialogic space provided by the secondary school musical production affords learners the opportunity to face and align those impediments prevalent in their personal lives. As there are educators at hand as mentors, and peers within the cast who have become friends (almost like family) whom they can trust, the adolescents and young adults often feel more secure in dealing with personal and interpersonal difficulties within this secure and safe environment. The following responses from two participants (Mr Merlin and Ms Snow-white) show how the musical environment provided a pedagogic and educative corrective space in which Mr Merlin could conquer his fears about his sexuality and fulfil his true potential as an individual.

“ML: I was forced to get along with people and also got to know a lot about myself. I really changed a lot, it changes you.

S: It really changed you a lot, made you get out of your little box, yes.

ML: It made me get out of my box ,no, I came out of the closet (laugh) No but really it did, it really did, it changed my life, after the musical I was never the same again. I know it sounds very corny but it is really like that, it is really true.” (P1: R33-35)

The potential of the secondary school musical production for the transportation of life skills learnt and practised in the secure and safe environment it creates for young adults is unique. Dealing with life issues on all personal and interpersonal levels in an environment where the participants feel secure seems to be an ontic, as well as a cosmological feature of the secondary school musical production. The lessons learnt and problems faced, and in some cases cleared up, elevate the experience to a dialogic educative corrective towards the participants becoming functional and contributing adults in society (self-in-society).

5.2.3 The Secondary School Musical as Rehearsal for Social Interaction

The secondary school musical production also provides a space in which to rehearse social interaction. This secure and safe dialogic educative space offers a practise ground in which social justice can be learnt and understood. Connectedness, as one of the essential features of social capital, among role-players in the musical production, was accomplished through trustworthiness, effective communication, dependence on one another, commitment to achieve a mutual goal, acceptance, sympathy and empathy between individual members of the production team and individual members of the cast. On a nomothetic level, as stipulated by Wolhuter, *et al.* (2009:40), connectedness was, however, accomplished within the secondary musical production by providing a space for life skills such as sociability, social cohesion, interaction, social justice, social norms and values, conflict management, cooperation, information exchange, interdependence, acquisition of skills, recognition of the success of fellow participants, positive relationships, sharing, commitment, broadmindedness, and unity between all concerned to be instilled and rehearsed on a mutually reciprocal and shared, collective level.

A study similar to this was done by Adderly *et al.* (2003) and was aptly called “*A Home away from Home. World of the High School Music Classroom.*” Adderly *et al.* (2003: *passim*) reported that learners involved in music activities had formed a very close-knit, cohesive social group because they shared goals and contexts. I asked the participants whether the cast could be defined as a subculture within the school environment. The answers provided by the participants I interviewed confirmed the argument that the musical context became learner-participants’ *Home away from Home*. Two of the participants provided the following reasons for the close relationship between participants in the musical production:

“Mr Merlin: Yes definitely, you are (a subculture) because you share so much together that you can't help it.” P1: R136

“Ms Snow-white: Yes, I agree. You see (laugh) the musical participants on the school grounds together. And it is not strange, you share so many things and as he

says, you spend so much time together, the next day when you get to school you are excited about the same things. So I would say yes, you do form a group.” P1: R137

Swanwick and Lawson (1999:47-60) reported that participants in a musical production felt that music had a socialising effect and that it created high levels of group homogeneity between participants. The data that were generated, during this (my) study support this claim. The secondary school musical production provided the participants with the opportunity to learn how to adapt and fit into a group. The character groups consisted of a variety of learners which provided participants the opportunity to learn how to work together with different people. As a mutual goal was shared by the groups they had to learn to accept one another irrespective of their differences. Mutual respect for each other, true acceptance of diversities (cultural, religious, historical and personal differences) and valuing the contexts and heritage shared were skills the participants gained.

As a secure and safe social space the musical production allowed and even encouraged (dialectic) confrontation between the participants. The nature of the secondary school musical is essentially focussed on dismantling monologism and encouraging authentic dialogue. In accordance with Alexander (2005:1) the musical proved to be a vehicle for shaping learners' critical thinking skills and thus cultivating an understanding of the life-worlds of others. However, the musical is not a space where miraculous transformation of social predicaments occurs. This agrees with the point of view of Weiße and Knauth (1997:39-42) that diverse experiences are prerequisites for dialogue and not knowledge *per se*. The secondary school musical production generates space for exploration about life where interlocutors from diverse backgrounds (e.g. educators, learners, parents) meet to compare and reflect on their differences. The secondary school musical production therefore proves to be pedagogical in nature as it is a purposive socio-conventional intervention in personal development, drenched with the societal values and history of the community it serves (cf. §2.2 *Proposition, 1*). In concurrence with the arguments advanced by Du Preez (2006:44) the data indicated that the musical production provides a safe space for dialogue about socio-conventions, norms, values and

demands of propriety and even religion (and related spiritual issues) where mutual understanding is empathetic rather than heartless and unsympathetic in nature.

5.2.4 The Secondary School Musical Production as Dialogic Educative Rehearsal Space for Adult Life

After I had interpreted the data sets, the epistemological underpinnings of dialogue for the secondary school musical (in terms of Habermas's (1998:286-293) premises with regard to the practical interest of dialogue (cf. §2.3.2)) reflected the following characteristics:

- By participating in the staging of a musical production, learners acquired the skill of reasoning through interaction with their peers, as well as with their educators.
- The interaction of all the role-players was intrinsically interpretative and contextual.
- The musical production itself was essentially a subjective meaning-making and meaning-mediating process for all role-players and stakeholders.
- Agreement on matters regarding their participation served as a justification of learners', the production team and parents' experiences and interpretations of the event.

The secondary school musical production, whether overtly or covertly, utilise dialogic hermeneutics as methodological driver to encourage empathy for and understanding of others through the book or plot, as well as through the interaction between the learners and the production team, and between members of the production team themselves.

The ontology of secondary school musical productions and its cosmological features are, because of the ontic and epistemic importance of dialogue, closely related to the role-players and stakeholders involved in the production of secondary school musicals as pedagogical activities. Although the participants are provided the opportunity of participation in the musical production it is essentially their choice

whether or not (and how) they participate. Participants reported that they had to commit themselves to the production as they did not want to let the other cast members down. Those participants, who did not commit to the production as fully as they were morally obliged to, were confronted by their peers. Within the secure and safe dialogic space provided, with educators as mentors at hand, confrontations could take place without detrimental consequences. Effective dialogue, therefore, resulted in life skills such as commitment, problem-solving, trusting others, enhanced self-discipline, time-management, honing of norms, values and demands of propriety being instilled in participants. These life skills, among others, were also put immediate into practice by the participants.

5.2.5 Shortcomings of the existing Life Orientation Curriculum

According to the Department of Education (2010:3, 4) the amended and comprehensive CAPS document incorporates the guidelines for learning and teaching in South African schools in all approved subjects as listed in the policy document. The curriculum for Life Orientation is centred on the principle that learners should be able to work individually and communally towards the solving of problems, and being responsible and effective within a variety of situations reflecting the complexity of the world they live in, and will be expected to live in as adults (Department of Education, 2010:3, 4). Life skills education forms an integral part of the curriculum and should also be taught implicitly in other subjects. However, it is within the Life Orientation curriculum that it finds its essence.

As life skills education is important to the holistic development of learners it is the internalisation of these skills that proves to be problematic for the educators of Life Orientation. Although the Department of Education started a re-training programme for educators during September 2011, experience gained from the previous curriculum's perceived "failure" indicates that it is the implementation and practical application of life skills education that prove problematic for educators (Sitole, 2009:2). The CAPS document merely provides the themes and knowledge that should be included for the different learning phases but it does not suggest contexts in which these life skills could be effectively taught. It is for this reason that I support

the staging of the secondary school musical as a dialogic space for the teaching and practising of life skills.

As the data suggested that life skills are instilled and practiced through participation in a musical production without the competitive element of sports and the stress connected with academics at school, it provides a secure and safe dialogic space for learners to evolve (educatively) in. It was also reported by the participants that they actually remembered more about the musical production than from their own academic classes taken at the time.

“In fact, I remember much more about the musical productions than of the academic part of secondary school.” (P7: R12)

Life Orientation, and in particular teaching, honing and practising life skills as main theme within the curriculum, is the one subject where all learners need to flourish in order to be able to become functioning adults within society, leading meaningful and successful lives in a rapidly changing and transforming society. If educators do not approach this very important educational task properly, learners will forfeit not only the opportunity to realise their potential as individuals and self-in-society, but also will have lost the chance to practise those skills within a secure and safe dialogic educative pace. The secondary school musical production provides such an educative opportunity and context for teaching and learning, and furthermore provides an educative corrective opportunity within a nurturing environment.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

One concern related to the amount of time that had lapsed since the production *The Green Crystal* was staged. In August 2011 it had been seven years since this musical was last staged. I was, consequently, aware of the possibility that during the individual interviews and focus group discussions some of the participants could have experienced difficulty in remembering all the relevant details of their personal participation in this musical production. I was, therefore, alert to the fact that some of them might have been tempted to fabricate some of the details that would be difficult for them to recall in order to please me as interviewer and researcher or to tell me

what they might think I would like to hear. (I remain fully aware of the fact that for many of my qualitatively schooled readers, this may still constitute a major limitation of this study, despite the fact that I have tried to indicate in as much detail as possible in this dissertation how I tried to compensate for it.)

A second concern was the fact that the majority of the participants are no longer domiciled in the greater Kempton Park metropolitan area. This made it difficult for me, as researcher, to trace as many members of the original cast of this musical as possible. From my *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *e-mail*-communication with those members of the original cast that I had managed to track down, it was clear that many of them had, over the past seven years, moved abroad. This meant that I could not visit them personally due to the cost and distance involved. Even though I did manage to track down most of them and all agreed to participate voluntarily, the fact that I had no option but to interview them using Internet technology carried the risk that our Internet-discussions may be perceived (by some) to be impersonal and emotionally cold and distant, in which case the data that I generated could eventually prove to be contaminated. However, by establishing high levels of trust and acceptance between the participants and myself (Ferreira & Smit, 2008:7) I always endeavoured to express myself as clearly as possible (so as to minimise the possibility of any misunderstanding arising) and I continuously displayed a genuine interest in the participants, their Internet-related behaviour and their communicated emotions (*ibid.*). I, furthermore, accepted and respected all participants, applied effective comprehension skills regarding their written messages and regarding what they had inferred in writing (*ibid.*).

A third concern was the future of secondary school musicals as an extra-mural cultural and educative activity. The viability of having the parent and learner community of secondary schools (who cater mainly for those coming from the lower and middle-low income groups in South Africa) paying for an annual school musical production remains a salient bone of contention. The result is that cheaper and financially more creative (yet challenging) ways of staging an annual musical production had to be contemplated and implemented. This implied a time constraint in that sufficient, valid data pertaining to the possible future educative value of

secondary school musicals needed to be generated as soon as possible. The future of this kind of educative endeavour – given the current public schooling environment in South Africa – seems to be in the balance.

Since relocating to the Faculty of Arts at North-West University I am no longer involved in the extra-mural production of secondary school musicals. I was thus constrained, by what could otherwise have been a fruitful action research opportunity, to focus exclusively on attempting to understand and explain how secondary school learners' participation in a musical production equipped them for meaningful and successful living in a changing and transforming society, rather than improving Life Orientation practice for secondary schools *per se*. My final research design and concomitant methodology had thus been planned accordingly.

Other obstacles included financial constraints as only limited funding was available in the form of personal finances and a limited bursary. I managed to assail this limitation, however, as my research sample of participants was, in fact, small and not dependent on the whole cast (as study population) of *The Green Crystal* participating.

In conclusion: a tension existed in trying to bring together at least two interrelated matters, namely ICT (in this case telephone, cell-phone, e-mail and Internet technology) and language issues (for the majority of the learners, all of whom are Afrikaans-speaking, I am still their ex-English teacher). I asked all questions in the interview schedule (cf. Addendum D) in English but encouraged participants to answer in the language they felt comfortable in. I then translated all interviews, except one, myself and verified the correctness of my translations by providing the interviews (both the original recorded interview and the transcription) to participants to ascertain the correctness thereof. All transcriptions were accepted as correct and valid by the participants. Despite these constraints, I am confident that with effective management and monitoring of these possible obstacles, I have been able to produce a dissertation acceptable to the contemporary academic community.

5.4 Concluding Comments

I conclude this discussion by making a few salient recommendations for the educators who may endeavour, as true educators, to stage a secondary musical production as part of the Life Orientation curriculum. I also suggest opportunities for further research.

As I have been involved with so many secondary school musical productions and have been reminded by the participants about the effort, the hardships, time consuming nature and personal sacrifices needed from everybody involved, I am aware that many educators will find it difficult to immediately become enthusiastic about staging a musical production. However, I find it morally compelling for educators, especially as they have to acknowledge their *in loco parentis* role as becoming so much more important in the complex South African society, to approach their profession in a creative and effective manner. The secondary school musical has been proven to be a valuable dialogic educative opportunity to teach and practise life skills within (and even despite) the curricular requirements. It should form part of the two hours per week allotted for Life Orientation but could also include an extra-curricular component. All learners should be included as part of the cast and / or the production team in whatever aspect of the production they feel most comfortable with. It is true that all learners are not actors but the musical production provides a niche for everybody.

It is, furthermore, important that the choice of music, movement and plot should be learner-centred but also include a variety of styles to embrace and celebrate not only cultural diversity but also the arts *per se*. The production should aspire to be entertaining to both participants and audience. The main aim of the production should not be perfection, but high standards should be upheld for the secondary school musical production to ensure that it is a worthwhile educative yet entertaining event. Although creative efforts to generate funding should be employed, if necessary, making the most of the resources available, no matter how limited, should add to, rather than distract, from the production. Planning the event is, therefore, the crux for staging a successful production and this should be the first priority of educators and learners. Educators should always remember that the production provides educative opportunity for dialogue and should never become a

series of autocratic monologues where they speak and learners merely follow instructions.

I suggest that further research should be done on the dialogic nature of the secondary school learning and teaching environment in South African context. Perhaps the problems experienced in our current education system have their roots (of evil?) in the essentially monologic nature of our curricula and classroom practices. Further investigation as to the nature of the proposed secondary school musical production and its implementation in schools; the inclusion of such productions to approach contentious social problems and restoring social justice within our diverse communities and exploring other possibilities for creating dialogic educative spaces for effective knowledge, skills, norms, values and demands of propriety teaching should be researched.

I conclude with the following quotations from participants as a summation of this study:

“Yes, because you are afraid that you're going to miss out on something if you don't participate, the reason why you feel unsure about doing it again is, it does take a lot of time, and parents are afraid that you won't have enough time for your studies but one doesn't want to take the chance of missing the opportunity, later to feel that you have missed out on something special, so if you have done it once you can't help but doing it every time you have the opportunity.” (P1: R137)

“...try something new. If you don't try you will never know what you can achieve.” (P8: R 38)

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Addendum A: Ethics committee clearance certificate



ETHICS APPROVAL OF PROJECT

This is to certify that the next project was approved by the NWU Ethics Committee:

Project title : Exploring the Life Orientation potential of secondary school musical productions: the case of The Green Crystal.

Student : Ms AS Potgieter

Project leader: Prof Hetta Potgieter

Ethics number:

NWU-00068-10-A2

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Expiry date: 2015/06/23

Addendum B: Letter of consent from co-author and co-producer of *The Green Crystal*



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS

To whom it may concern

I, JOHANN HEINRICH ERNST HAMM, as co-author and producer consent to the text and related material of the musical production *Die Groen Kristal* (The Green Crystal) being used in the study done by Amanda Salomina Potgieter towards the degree MEd in the focus area Teaching-learning in the faculty of Education Sciences of the Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University.

I understand that a text analysis will be done on the text to ascertain the life-skills potential of a musical as part of the Life Orientation syllabus. Nobody will gain financially from this text or related material.

SIGNED at KEMPTON PARK on this day 17 of AUGUST
2010.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JHE', written over a horizontal line.

Addendum C: Informed consent form

Letter of consent.

Exploring the life orientation potential of secondary school musical productions: the case of *The Green Crystal*.

Dear participant

You are invited to participate in a study looking at the potential of secondary school musical productions to be used in the life orientation curriculum. To participate, you had to have participated in the musical production *The Green Crystal* (Die Groen Kristal) produced at Hoërskool Birchleigh in 2004 as a cast member, member of the technical team or as part of the staff who formed the production team. You may contact Ms Amanda Potgieter at any time for further information. Her number is (084) 418-9117.

What you will be asked to do:

The study will involve a focus group interview with five individuals:

You will meet the researcher, Amanda Potgieter and participate with four of the cast members, technical team or staff members who were also involved in the production. You will be asked to answer questions related to your participation in the musical production of *The Green Crystal* (Die Groen Kristal). You will be asked to talk and reflect in detail about your experiences and emotions regarding the musical production and how this has impacted on your life so far. You may speak freely and express your own feelings and experiences. This will take about 1 hour 30 minutes. The interview will be taped.

Possible risks and benefits:

Your participation in the focus group interview will take a maximum of an hour and 30 minutes of your time. You will not be compensated for your time. By participating, you will help to ascertain which life-skills could be gained through participation in a secondary school musical production. In this way, you may be contributing towards a restructuring of the subject, Life Orientation for secondary school learners.

We will keep your identity confidential. Participation is completely voluntary and you can opt out of the study at any time, without consequences. If you become concerned about anything you said, you may let us know, and we will revise your comments. You may ask any questions you have before, during, and after the study.

Only members of the research team will know your full name. The interview tapes and transcripts will be used by myself and my study supervisors to understand the influence of participation in a secondary school musical on the participants. The research data and recordings will be kept for the foreseeable future (five years) in a secure location at North-West University. We will also ask you if you are interested in being contacted again in the future should the research continue.

We intend to publish information from the study in books and journals, as well as share parts of the videotape we make with people in educational settings and at conferences around the world so they can learn about the impact of participation in a school musical on the lives of participants. I will make a copy of the final dissertation available to all participants when the study is complete.

Questions/ Problems:

If you have any questions or concerns before, during or after the study, please contact the researcher or the supervisor, using the contact information below.

Researcher	Study supervisors
Ms Amanda S. Potgieter (084) 418-9117 (018) 299-1040	Prof. Hetta M. Potgieter (018) 299-1700 Dr Johan Botha (018) 299-4741

Thank you for your participation in this project.

Full name

Signature

Addendum D: Interview schedule

Focus group interviews: basic questions.

The following basic questions will be asked during the focus group interviews. The questions reflect the identified lacunae in the body of scholarship that I had consulted on this topic. It also relates to the research questions of this study. Depending on the feedback received from participants, further (follow-up) questions arising from the responses to these questions may be asked during the interviews.

Group A: Participants who formed part of the cast of the musical, *The Green Crystal*.

1. Why did you decide to take part in the musical, *The Green Crystal*?
2. Which life skills, if any, would you say you have acquired while participating in the musical *The Green Crystal*?
3. How did your participation in the musical influence your confidence?
4. What did you learn about interpersonal relationships through your participation in this musical?
5. What did you have to do to ensure that you were socially accepted as a member of the cast (as a social group)?
6. What are the social benefits that you gained as a result of your involvement in this production?
7. Do you consider your responsibility and problem-solving skills to have been altered by participating in the musical? If so, how and to what extent?

8. Would you say that you have acquired any specific physical skills during the production? If so, could you elaborate, please?
9. What life-related themes used in the production, *The Green Crystal*, would you say might have been relevant to your everyday life?
10. To what extent have you been able to transfer some of the life skills that you have acquired during the production of *The Green Crystal* to your subsequent studies and choice of career?

Group B: Members of staff who formed part of the production team of the musical, *The Green Crystal*.

1. Why did you decide to become involved in the musical, *The Green Crystal* as part of the production team?
2. Do you consider the cast members and staff involved in the production of the musical as your friends? Provide a reason for your answer.
3. Which life skills, if any, did you and the cast acquire or improve while participating in the musical *The Green Crystal*?
4. What influence do you think participation in the musical had on the self-esteem of cast members?
5. How, in your view, did the interpersonal relationships of the cast develop during the process of staging this musical?
6. To what extent did the cast members learn how to manage time as a result of their participation in the musical?

7. What life skills did cast members have to implement to be accepted as a part of the cast as a social group?
8. What would you say are the social skills that cast members may have acquired as a result of their involvement with this production?
9. Do you consider participants' responsibility and problem-solving skills to have been altered by participating in the musical? If so, how and to what extent?
10. Which physical skills may the cast have acquired during the production?
11. What themes used in the production, *The Green Crystal*, do you consider relevant to everyday life?
12. To what extent could musical themes be incorporated in a high school musical production to address issues such as HIV/AIDS-education, social problems, values education and transformation?
13. Which life skills could be taught through the staging of a musical as part of the Life Orientation curriculum?

Group C: Parents of participants and technical support members who formed part of the cast of the musical, *The Green Crystal*.

1. Why did your child become involved in the musical, *The Green Crystal*?
2. To what extent do you think may participation in a high school musical production add to a child's orientation towards Life and why?
3. To what extent did your child benefit (or not) from his/her participation in the musical production and why?

4. How, in your view, did the interpersonal relationships of your child develop during the process of staging this musical?
5. To what extent did your child learn how to manage time as a result of his/her participation in the musical?
6. What life skills (if any), would you say, did cast members have to implement to be accepted as a part of the cast as a social group?
7. What would you say are the social skills that cast members have acquired as a result of their involvement in this production?
8. Do you consider your child's self-control and perseverance skills to have been altered by participating in the musical? If so, how and to what extent?
9. Did your child face any physical challenges during the rehearsals and performances of *The Green Crystal*? If so, what were they and how did the cast respond?
10. If asked by secondary school learners' parents whether they should encourage their children to take part in a school musical, how would you advise them and why?

Addendum E: Example of transcription

TRANSCRIPTION 1: Interview with Parents of participants. Group 3

Participant 1: Mr Rugby (R)

Participant 2: Ms Intelligent (I)

Interviewer: Int.

Int.: Thank you very much for participating in the study. This is part of my research project for my Masters degree that I am currently busy with. And, mm, I have decided that because I have been so closely involved with The Green Crystal and know the people so well. I am nearing the end and I need to do my empirical study. We are going to use Afrikaans and English.

Both: That's fine.

Int.: I have chosen the ex post facto case study because of my involvement with the musical. You as parents were so involved with this musical. I am going to call you Mr Rugby and Ms Intelligent (both laugh) to keep your identity private. I know this might seem strange to you but the NWU requires this as part of the ethical considerations to protect participants. I will transcribe this interview and make it available to you to ensure it is correct. You are welcome to use either Afrikaans. or English to answer although the questions are in English. So thank you once again. Let's start.

I: Mmm.

Int.: Ok, the first question I would like to ask is: why did your child become involved with the musical?

I: She really wants to sing but she can't sing (laughs).She became involved because she has always been very interested in drama, and all these things, yes and therefore she saw this as an opportunity to become involved, so ja. Yes she became involved, she went to do it.

R: One of the reasons that she took part is that at school she wanted to take part in everything, she wanted to explore everything and keep what was good. Therefore

she became involved and they could even for a woman, or a girl who couldn't sing they could give her a voice to sing and this was to her...

I: Amazing, ja.

R: Ja...

Int.: So, a positive experience?

R&I: Ja. Ja.

In.: Good. Ok. The second question asks: to what extent do you think may participation in a high school musical production add to a child's orientation to her life. In other words, to what extent did it add to the way she currently lives her life?

R: As I said before, for her who wanted so much to take part in something like this in her life except the sport that she tried and then this, it gave her self-confidence that she..., was normally blocked, because she can't sing, she can't take part in a musical and this stopped her to add a little culture, and remember she wanted to take up the arts as a career at one stage, and she changed totally negative towards it as she couldn't sing. I think it made a very positive contribution to her life because she lived for it, she absolutely lived for it.

I: And it taught her that there are ways to do something even if there are things that stop you, there is a way to overcome it if you really wanted to do it.

Int.: So problem-solving, would you say?

I: Yes. And in such a thing, what is important is to be part of a group.

R: I think something I would like to add. Acting is something she could always do, I would say, that she can do, acting she can do but the musical, in secondary school setup, that blocked her to take part but here she could put the two together to live out this thing.

Int.: Fantastic. Remember you are always welcome to come back to a question and add something. To what extent did you child benefit from his or her participation in the musical production? I know you have already referred to some aspects but anything else you can think of? Perhaps the social aspect, personal development?

R: I think if you look back to how she had to live with a group of children she would not normally have befriended gave her the opportunity to add to her social group of

friends. You know only the other day she and some of her friends, *The Green Crystal* lay there, and she and some of her friends, I know just a while ago they looked at it again.., yes not long ago, yes she told me, because it is on the sideboard.

I: Yes, it is in her book case...

R: Yes, she looked at it with them. So her group of friends expanded and she is very proud to say, it comes back to the self-confidence, look I took part in a musical and I can't even sing.

Int.: So she tells, tells new friends about it?

I: Yes, yes. And I think it is a thing that comes back to the thing of self confidence , that she saw that she could do it and what she wanted to do she saw she could do.

Int.: And, and you are sure that this really is specifically related to the musical? It was not only part of a process?

I: I am sure that the musical had a big, big influence, other things as well but especially the musical and it also helps with the type of work that she is doing at the moment. She had to learn how to work with people, get along with people in a group and today as she has to work with people in a group, this helps her a lot.

R: I think that especially in the type of work that she is doing today where she works sometimes with people from the arts, involved in the arts, she understands things better.

I: She understands better.

R: Yes, she copes, understands better.

Int.: Good, question four. How in your view did the interpersonal relationships of your child develop during this process of staging this musical? I know you have told me that she improved her relationships with her friends but which skills did she develop that helped her to get along with people as you indicated?

R: Gee, I think she is, she is a child, a person with a very strong personality which sometimes makes it difficult for her to relate to other people and here she had to learn how to relate to people and had to learn how to temper the very strong

personality that she has, being in this situation they were forced to get along, I'm just part of a group on the stage.

Int.: So she positioned herself in this setup to be able to survive?

I: Because, you know, at school she wasn't one of those kids who were part of the group because of her father's involvement with the school, it had a big influence, at school she was never invited to parties because of her father's position but I'm..., she had to learn how to get along with a new group of people, make new friends with people that she would not normally have made friends with, people that you would normally not have made friends with.

Int.: So people with shared values and shared goals?

I: Yes, like people that you would have seen in a normal setup but normally would not have made friends with as such but she had to learn to get to know other people, get to know people on a different level, seen in a different way. And also for her as a person it meant a lot because she played one of the main roles and this gave her more self-esteem because she, at that stage did not have much self-esteem and she learnt that, I could do something because she really didn't think a lot of herself and now she saw that I could do something myself.

Int.: Self-worth?

R: You see because on the sports field she tried everything – she could do it but she, wasn't really a sportsperson and she knew that within the mainstream of a musical or something in that line, she would not have been chosen to play a part and really, it really added to her self-value to learn how to get along and work together with others.

Int.: It is great to hear. To what extent did your child learn how to manage their time during the production? We know that time was very limited for them.

R: We have a very disciplined child who always managed her time very well, it has always been like that, it sometimes irritated her parents especially her father because if an assignment had to be in, in two weeks' time she had to have everything that afternoon and finish it by tomorrow to be able to hand it in, so when it comes to the time management, that has never been a problem. We have never had to say to her, listen do not let your academics lag behind and she never

missed a practise. What helped a lot was that she was not seriously involved in a sport at that time; she did help out when somebody needed her, but she had time.

I: Yes, but time has always been something that she planned well but the musical did add to this, but it is something that she feels very strongly about. Yes, it's a thing with her; she is very serious about it. (Laugh)

R: It is about the things that you have planned, the more you must do, you can do in the available time. I think that is something that she really has taught herself; well I didn't teach her that.

Int.: What life skills, if any, would you say the cast members had to implement to be accepted as part of the group socially? Here it is more about what they had to do to be accepted socially within the group.

R: What I think she had to learn was how to temper her very strong personality to a more easily adaptable style to be able to fit into the group. I think that is definitely it.

Int.: Would you like to add something?

I: Yes, it also goes with her personality. She functions well on her own, she's quite fine with being alone, she doesn't need other people, so she had to keep in mind that she had to allow for other people's needs, as well, she knew that she could not take into consideration only her own needs but also had to keep in mind those of others.

R: I think she really learnt a lot of group dynamics, she was forced to do so.

Int.: Good. What would you say are the social skills that cast members had acquired because of their involvement with the musical? You child was a quite an individual but in a group as a whole you said that you had known quite a few of the kids who took part in this musical?

R: Yes, not only the good kids but also some of those kids that were not really acceptable (laugh) learners also took part in the musical and she had to learn within the social groups to get along with them, they had a lot of time to share, free time, she had to learn how to accept them.

I: She had to learn acceptance of different types of people?

R: She had to make choices with things I know that wasn't right; she had to make the choice not to take part in those things that I know was not really acceptable. Yes, she had to learn how to make choices but she had to make choices, and the good choices that she made.

Int.: So you were happy with the choices that she had made?

R: Yes, yes.

I: Mmm.

Int.: Do you consider your child's self-control and perseverance to have been altered by participation in the musical? To what extent and why?

R: I think it taught her a lot about being socially acceptable within a group that is not normally my group

I: And also, when I start with something even if along the way it does not go as well as I expected that I have to keep on going also, should keep on going even along the way when it is not as easy as I thought it would be, to keep on not only for myself but for the group as well, but accepted that in that it was well worth to keep on.

R: She cried a lot, yes she says that...

I: Yes, she became very despondent...

R: Yes, because of being despondent, when things didn't go as it should, as she wanted them to go.

I: Yes and she had to keep in her emotions and not fight about it, she had to keep on reminding herself that she had made the decision to be part of this, was in now and she knew she had to keep on going. I am not alone in this, if I drop out it would not only influence myself but I would also drop the rest of the group, because I am not alone.

Int.: Would one be able to link this with the concept of self-in-society, in other words I am here but I am also part of society?

I: Yes, I think so.

R: Yes, I have a place I think the whole thing could also further show that she had a place even somewhere where I would normally not have a place, I do have a place I may sing in church, it doesn't matter, nobody will tell me that I do not sing, I may

sing, yes I think it made her see that she had a place. I think that everything she did at school and now especially the musical did help her in her process of growing up which helped her in her going overseas for a year after school, not that it was always easy overseas. I even think she took The Green Crystal DVD with overseas, didn't she? I'm not sure?

I: I don't know, I can't remember.

I: I can't remember, no, I don't think she did.

I: She did put something in her portfolio to show the people that she had done it.

R: She did put something in a portfolio, yes, I remember it rang a bell somewhere, yes; she put it in the portfolio. Wow, it's quite a few years ago.

I: She did.

Int.: She went overseas directly after school, didn't she?

R: Yes, yes.

Int.: Right, we are nearly at the end. Did your child face any physical challenges and how did she respond?

I: She is a person who likes to sleep, she easily gets tired so she had to learn that even though I am tired I have to go on, I have to go on, I mean this was just one of those things.

Int.: Getting back to this singing issue. Do you think the fact that she really wanted to sing but "couldn't sing" I'm putting this in brackets, was it a big issue to her?

I: Yes, but she has accepted it now and I am sure that the musical helped her to accept it, that she could do it because she did; the people listened to her and didn't, and didn't know that it was done in that way because she couldn't really sing. Now she easily tells people: oh, I can't sing, because she sings false, she can't hear the notes but it was overcome. Now she's fine with it.

R: I don't know whether it really was an issue because her mother sings beautifully...

I: You also sing quite nicely.

R: And the fact that I also sing, whether this had an influence on this self-image about her singing but accepting it afterwards was just much easier, it was really much better.

I: I think so, I think so too.

Int.: Last one. If asked by secondary school learners, and especially the parents, would you encourage them to let their children take part in a school musical? How would you advise them and why?

R: Absolutely yes. I think the most important thing around this is as a parent you also know, if a child has too much free time, for the beginning has too much free time in today's society the chances are so much bigger that your children will become involved in the wrong things. So from a parent's perspective, it is to me important that your child takes part in as many activities as possible and especially the cultural activities as well, to help your child to have balance in life, to do the right thing. It is just so, yes, I will definitely tell a parent to let the children take part.

I: I agree. I think that in such a production many life skills and things can be built into the text which can help children to cope with problems in normal life, when it is built into the text and they can see this in a different way. This can help to teach children how to deal with things.

Int.: Because a person could also work thematically to deal with problematic social issues that the school suffers with, such as HIV /AIDS?

I: And abuse, yes.

R: A bit off the record, I remember for example a few years back when I took, although this was not a musical, but I became involved with a group of children, people were angry with me about this, but I became involved with the life skill problem, HIV/AIDS, you know, and I know how much it meant to them and to myself as a producer and even my wife and child who were part of it . In today's life you have to encourage a child to become part of many things, not only sport or only that, to become more balanced. It becomes more and more of a problem in today's life, education, that which we knew as recreation is not so any more. It becomes more and more of a problem, if you look at today's children the normal things are not important anymore, the recreation that they have nowadays isn't what we knew as recreation it really becomes a problem, it is wrong.

Int.: So the practise ground stays the school's responsibility, am I interpreting it correctly? At least in combination with the parents?

R: What this involves, yes, yes.

Int.: Mmm...

R: I know that I have, as a parent gone to the headmaster of the school where my child was, there are small productions and small things but we must make a plan and it must happen, it must happen again. There are people who have decided not to participate in cultural events anymore who are now returning, so next year we should do a big production again, so I hope the headmaster will drive it. There are excellent educators with skills that can make this thing happen.

Int.: I hope so too.

R: (Laugh)

Int.: Anything you would like to add?

R: May I, for you who were closely involved with this production, in general and when one listens to these things in particular and you answer these questions, when you listen to these questions you see what you have meant to our child.

Int.: Thank you very much once again.

Addendum F: Correspondence from participants

A) E-mail correspondence from Mr Twin

From: Werner du Preez <werner.dupreez@hotmail.com>
To: <amanda.potgieter@nwu.ac.za>
Date: 2009/04/21 05:44 PM
Subject: Die Groen Kristal

Hi Juffrou!

Eerstens moet ek net om verskoning vra dat ek nou eers op juffrou se e-mail reageer. 'n Uitputtende toetsreeks het maar meeste van my tyd geneem, maar dis darem nou weer vir 'n rukkie relatief rustig met die studies.

Ek vertrou dat juffrou se Meestersgraad goed vorder en hoop my inset sal darem ook waarde tot die einddoel toevoeg.

Hierna volg my antwoorde op die vraelys, so volledig as moontlik:

1. Wat het my deelname aan Die Goen Kristal en ander musiekblyspele vir my beteken?

Ek kan eerlik sê dat ek soms gedink het dat ek te veel van die musiekblyspele gemaak het. Ek het gevind dat ek elke dag net gewag het dat die volgende oefening of byeenkoms sou plaasvind, want dit was die lekkerste tyd van my dag gewees. Ek vind tot vandag toe dat ek soms steeds wens dat ek net weer daardie tye kan beleef wanneer skoolwerk en ander verpligtinge vir 'n rukkie eenkant kon wag.

2. Sou ek sê dat my deelname 'n invloed op my lewe en dit wat ek besluit het om te swot 'n invloed gehad het?

Die invloed op my lewe in die langtermyn is seker maar redelik beperk tot die

uitstekende vriendskappe wat ek ontwikkel het en my menseverhoudings wat dalk ook verbetering en groei ondergaan het. Ek dink egter nie daar was enige invloed van die musiekblyspele op my besluit van studierigting nie, aangesien ek besluit het om 'n B.Com te doen. Ek dink egter dit sou fantasties gewees het as daar meer geleenthede vir sukses (in die kunste) was sodat ek die kunste kon studeer.

3. Het my verhoudings met ander mense verbeter deur my deelname?

Soos bo genoem, dink ek dit was beslis die geval. Die musiekblyspel gee leerlinge die kans om as groep saam te werk tot 'n doel wat baie tyd en harde werk gaan verg. Dit is soortgelyk aan 'n sportspan wat elke speler benodig om suksesvol te wees en so op die ou end van mekaar afhanklik raak en op mekaar moet vertrou om hul kant te bring.

4. Sou ek ander leerlinge aanmoedig om aan 'n soortgelyke produksie deel te neem?

Sonder twyfel. Dit gee leerlinge die kans om vriendskappe te ontwikkel wat hul dalk nooit sou nie, te leer om ander te vertrou, iets nuut en dalk uitdagend te probeer, en natuurlik net om iets te doen wat nie kompetierend soos sport is nie en ook nie so spannend soos akademiese werk nie.

5. Een ding, gebeurtenis of storie wat ek van Die Groen Kristal sal onthou.

Om eerlik te wees is dit moeilik om hierdie vraag te beantwoord. Daar is bitter min wat ek nie onthou nie! Ek onthou minder van die akademiese kant van die jaar as van die musiekblyspel.

Iets wat natuurlik altyd sal uitstaan is die openingsaand van opvoerings, want al ons harde werk het dan uiteindelik vrugte afgewerp.

6. Wat was vir my sleg of negatief van my deelname aan Die Groen Kristal?

Bitter min!

Wat my wel altyd gepla het was dat daar altyd 'n paar leerlinge was wat nie hul kant gebring het nie. Natuurlik kan 100% harde werk nie altyd van alle leerlinge verwag word nie, maar dit is altyd sleg om te sien hoe ander net nie so passievol en energiek oor 'n saak soos die meerderheid is nie. Selfs slegs een negatiewe persoon kan baie ander se spoed breek. Gelukkig was ek altyd deel van 'n groep wat mekaar probeer aanmoedig het om net hul beste te gee of om mekaar se persoonlike laste ligter te maak.

Ek hoop my antwoorde op juffrou se vrae is voldoende vir juffrou se navorsing en dat die Meestersgraad sommer maklik kafgedraf word!

Baie Groete

Mr Twin

B) E-mail correspondence from Ms Miranda

1. Wat het die deelname aan Groen Kristal (en ander musiekblyspele vir jou beteken terwyl jy daaraan deelgeneem het?

Aangesien musiek en en musiekblyspele een van my passies is in die lewe het ek deelgeneem vir die blote genot wat ek daaruit sal put. Dit was dus 'n afleiding van alledaagse bekommernisse. Die Groen Kristal het my ook baie geleer hoe om toneel te speel deur jousef in 'n karakter te verander en op so natuurlike wyse as moontlike uit te beeld sodat die gehoor die karakter kan glo.

2. Sou jy sê dat jou deelname 'n invloed op jou lewe en dit wat jy besluit het om te swot gehad het?

Dit het nie 'n invloed gehad t.o.v. my besluit wat om te swot nie, maar dit het wel my in my lewe 'n invloed gehad op die volgende wyses:

- My selfvertroue het toegeneem om voor publiek te praat.

- Ander mense op skool hanteer jou anderste as jy 'n hoofrol vertolk van 'n musiekblyspel, bv. hul hanteer jou met meer respek, maar soms is daar ook gevalle van jaloesie onderling leerders.
- Die ervaring het die volgende bevestig:
-“You can achieve anything if you put your mind to it”.
-“Do the things that you love and inspires you and you will reap from the benefits”.

3. Het jou verhoudings met ander mense ,social skills, verbeter deur jou deelname?

- Ek sou sê my sosiale vermoë om voor mense te kommunikeer het beslis verbeter, aangesien die deelname my selfvertroue 'n hupstootjie gegee het
- Die ervaring wat ek opgedoen het toe ons na die verskillende laerskole gegaan het vir bemarking van die musiekblyspel het my ook geleer hoe om met kinders interaktief te wees en om hul te laat lag.
- Dit het my ook geleer of meer oplettend gemaak van hoe verskillend mense optree afhangende van die tipe gehoor wat jy kry onder verskillende omstandighede. (Bv. Eregaste aand is mense baie meer styf en voel meer hul moet formeel optree, waar 'n Vrydagaand is mense ontspanne en geniet hul makliker 'n vertoning).
- Die ervaring het ook vir my gewys hoe vriende jou ondersteun en bly kan wees vir jou vir die verkryging van 'n hoofrol. Dus jy leer jou ware vriende ken.

4. Sou jy leerders aanmoedig om deel te neem aan 'n musiekblyspel of 'n soortgelyke produksie by hulle skool?

Beslis. Nie net verkry die leerder die geleentheid om sy talente en vaardighede te ontwikkel nie, maar bou hy/sy ook nuwe vriendskappe. Dit lyk ook goed in die toekoms op die leerder se CV deurdat die onderhoudsvoerder kan sien jy neem graag deel aan kulturele skoolaktiwiteite en nie net bloot aan sport nie. Dit was een van die aspekte waarop hul my uitgevra het tydens my werksonderhoud. Dit toon dat jy jou potensiaal

ten volle benut en als uit probeer. Soos hul sê, as jy nie probeer nie sal jy nooit weet waartoe jy instaat is.

5. Noem een ding, gebeurtenis of storie wat jy altyd oor groen Kristal sal onthou?

Al die “tantrums” wat ek moes gooi op die verhoog. (Die Du Preez tweeling wat saam my swot terg my nou nog daaroor, en oor my rooi bootsies). ☺

Meer ernstig, ek onthou meer die ervaring en nuwe vriende wat ek daardeur ontmoet het, bv. die musiekopnames in die ateljee, die harde oefeninge, die opwinding van voor 'n gehoor optree, die dansery, die feit dat ek nogsteeds nie weet hoe ek al daardie woorde onthou het nie.

6. Wat was vir jou sleg, negatief oor jou deelname aan Groen Kristal?

- Baie mense is jaloers op jou wanneer jy 'n hoofrol kry en dan is hul ongeskik met jou en terg jou onnodiglik oor dinge wat nie eens van belang is.
- Wanneer mede-deelnemers nie hul samewerking wou gee in oefeninge en dan almal anders rondom jou negatief maak.

Die produksie insigself was dus net positief vir my, maar soos altyd is dit maar die mense in die produksie wat bepaal of jy van iets gaan hou of nie. Gelukkig was dit in die minderheid waar mense negatief was

B) E-mail to co-writer

From: Amanda Potgieter
To: heinrichhamm@yahoo.com
Date: 2009/03/24 08:43 AM
Subject: Dankie!

Hi daar Heinrich!

Nogmaals baie dankie vir jou moeite met die DVD, ek was 'n stressbal toe ek uitvind die DVD is kapoet maar ek het geweet my trawante sal my help!!

Ek wil groot asseblief nog 'n guns(ies?) vra! Ek wonder of jy nie nog 'n kopie van die teks op jou rekenaar het nie? Ek het 'n karde kopie wat baie bekrap is met notas maar voor ek dit oortik met my besonder stadige tikspoed vra ek liever maar vir jou of jy dit sal e-mail. Ek behoort so teen Junie/Julie te kom onderhoude voer daar by julle en dan sal ek my "medewerkers" uitneem vir ete en drinke om dankie te sê. Wanneer (as) ek die graad MEd behaal/ oorleef en ek kry graad sal ek jou ook uitnooi as gas en vir die party daarna! , waarvoor ek nou-al vir my gedrag verskoning vra!

Enigiets rakende die musical is welkom! Gee als asb vir Zhandre dan kry ek dit as ek daarna toe kom.

Lekker vakansie hou (sic!)

Lovies
Amanda

Lektor in Akademiese Geletterdheid
Sentrum vir Akademiese en Professionele Taalpraktyk
018 299 1040

Addendum G: Extract from text of *The Green Crystal* (Die Groen Kristal) with anecdotal notes by co-producer

1

MUSIEKBLYSPEL 2004

Anti

Dekor

BEDRYF 1 TONEEL 1

(Pa, Ma & kind in kamer - Hulle gee nie aandag aan Miranda nie - sy stap verveeld rond van objek tot objek, vat hier, druk daar ens.)

Verteller: *(Sagte musiek in agtergrond (Voice over)*
Eendag lank, lank gelede het daar 'n kind saam met ^{haar} pappa en mamma in 'n gerieflike voorstedelike huisie gebly. Hulle het 'n mooi grootskerm TV, 'n DVD en 'n uitgebreide veiligheidsstelsel met Armed Response gehad. Hulle was baie baie gelukkig en.....

(As sy eindelijk aandag kry steur sy Pa in lees van Sake-Beeld. Die oomblik as Pa begin praat dan stop musiek soos wanneer 'n plaat krap of tape trek)

Pa: *(Kortaf.)* Ag demmit man, ek sê dan nou vir jou ek het nie tyd nie! Gaan speel met jou Sony Play Station in.....
(Kyk na vrou wat kop skud) Ek, ek hmm
Ma: *(Verskonend)* Pappa het 'n baie belangrike vergadering, my skat.
Pa: *(Probeer homself verontskuldig)* Ja, my sukses hang daarvan af en onthou tog - dis t.w.v. ons droomvakansie....
Miranda: *(Draai om en stap met hangskouers weg)* Pa sê altyd dis vir ons kastige droomvakansie, maar dis net altyd werk, werk, werk....*(Intro van Money begin)*
(Ruk haarself op en gaan na kamer - ouers kyk haar onbegrypend agterna en trek skouers op asof hulle nie haar gedrag kan verstaan nie.)

(3 x ruimtes Miranda + ouers + werkers. Elke groep word apart belig om 'n ruimte te skep.)

MONEY MONEY (3:20) (Bertus, Elyn, Pricilla en werkers)

Miranda: Work, work, work, work.....
Pa: I work all night, I work all day
to pay the bills I have to pay
(ain't, ain't), ain't it sad!
Ma: But still there never seems to be
a single penny left for me
(that's too, that's too) that's too bad!
Ouers saam: In my dreams, I have a plan,
how to be a wealthy man
I would ^{id} not have to work at all
fool around and have a ball
(fool around and have a ball,
(Terwyl die gedeelte gesing word, trek ouers hulle baadjies + dinge aan, vat 1 aktetas, selfone ens. en vertrek werk toe)

fool around and have a ball)

Almal: Money, Money, Money, (wha whow) *(Ligte doof stadig in op werkers)*
 must be funny (wha whow)
 in a rich man's world .

Werkers: I work all night, I work all day for

Almal: Money, Money, Money, (wha whow)
 always sunny (wha whow)
 in a rich man's world

Werkers: If I were a rich man *(Ligte doof stadig uit op ouers)*
 Aa, ha, Aa ha the things that I ^{could} ~~can~~ do
 if I had a little money in the rich man's world

Miranda en werkers: Summer loving, had me a blast.
 Summer loving, happened so fast.
 Had some luck, paid this for me.
 (Your joking) all on a summer night . *(Ligte doof stadig uit op Miranda)*

Werkers: Whella, Whella , Whella,
 Tell me more, tell me more
 won the lotto that night .
 Tell me more, tell me more
 what a wonderful sight
 summer heat, drifting our way
 a ha ha those summer nights
 They just want me for my
 Money, Money, Money,
 Money, Money, Money,

Pa: A man like me is hard to find *(Pa stap in by werk)*
 success can't get it off my mind

Werkers: (ain't, ain't), ain't it sad
 And if I happened to be free
 I'm gone for sure – believe you me
 (I'm so, I'm so) I'm so glad
 Now my dreams are coming true
 I 've got far more money than you

Pa: The only problem on my back
 is how to pay the income tax

Almal saam: how to pay the income tax.....
 Let's abolish income tax

Money, Money, Money, (wha whow)
 must be funny (wha whow)
 in a rich man's world
 I work all night, I work all day for
 Money, Money, Money, (wha whow)

always sunny (wha whouw)
 in a rich man's world
 now I am a rich man
 Aa, ha, Aa ha the things that I can do
 now I have a lot of money
 it's the rich man's

Miranda, ouers, werkers: Summer loving, just as before
 even better, there will be more
 (more) summer heat, big spenders meet
 so good are these summer nights
 Tell me more, there's no more !

(Ligte op werkers en Miranda)

(Fokus bly by Miranda - res van verhoog donker.)

Miranda: Niks is meer soos dit eers was nie! Pa^{hulle} is nooit meer hier nie!
(Intro van Somewhere over begin)
 Ek is so alleen. Ek wens ek kan wegkom hieruit.

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW (5:00) (Pricilla)

Somewhere, over the rainbow, way up high
 In a land that I heard of once, once in a lullaby
 Somewhere, over the rainbow, skies are blue
 and the dreams that you dare to dream
 really do come true

Someday I'll wish upon a star
 and wake up where the clouds are far behind me
 where troubles melt like lemondrops
 away above the chimneypops
 that's where you'll find me

(Gaan staan by venter en kyk uit draai om en leun teen venster.)

(Terwyl die tussenspel speel maak Miranda reg om te gaan slaap. Bv. Trek gordyne toe, sit die bedliggie aan en die ander ligte doof effens, sê gebedjie op, terwyl op knieë sing.)

Someday I'll wish upon a star
 and wake up where the clouds are far behind me
 where troubles melt like lemondrops
 away above the chimneypops
 that's where you'll find me
 Somewhere, over the rainbow, skies are blue
 and the dreams that you dare to dream
 really do come true

(Staan op, trek kamerjas uit, en trek lakens oop)

(Gaan sit dan op kant van bed.)

Live happy, little blue birds
fly above the rainbow
why, o, why can't I?

(Sy klim in bed, trek lakens op,
sit bedliggie af.
ligte doof stadig tot dowwe blou)

BEDRYF 1 TONEEL 2

'n Oorgang na die sprokieswêreld. (Ligte doof in - hulle kyk almal na die groot spieël waarin Miranda se slapende gestalte nog is. Terselfdertyd doof die ligte op Miranda uit.)

(Sprokieskarakters skud hul koppe in simpatie.)

Karakters: (Ad lib.) Ag siestog, die arme kind. Shame. Foei, wat gaan van haar word ens.

(Intro van "When you wish upon a star" begin terwyl hulle praat)

Sprokieskarakters sing. (Een se stem kan op die hoë note breek en dan moet hy eers keel skoonmaak.)

WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR (Lisemarie)

When you wish upon a star
makes no difference who you are
anything your heart desires
will come to you.
If your heart is in your dream
no request is too extreme
when you wish upon a star
Your dreams come true

Fairy Godmother: (Praat met Aspoestertjie) Ai, die arme kind! Nog so jonk en onskuldig en al so baie probleme, nê Aspoestertjie?!

Aspoestertjie: Nog twee probleem-ouers (Ek sê altyd daar is geen probleem-kinders nie, net probleemouers!)

Fairy Godmother: (Klap hande vinnig twee keer) Snip-snap, van snik en rondstaan kom niks gedaan. Kom, daar's werk om te doen!

Goodies ^{ka} ^{sp} cariokie

CAN YOU FEEL IT

(Op intro word die kristal afgestof en blink gepoets - dit begin gloei.)
Can you feel it. (x3)

WISTLE WHILE YOU WORK. (Mariska, almal fluit)

Sneeuwitjie: Just wistle while you work (Fluit)
and cheerfully, together,

we can tidy up the place (Fluit)

JOY TO THE WORLD (Feetjies)

(Sing) Joy to the world, all the boys and girls, (now)
joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea, joy to you and me

WAKE ME UP BEFORE YOU GO (Sleeping Beauty + prins)

(Op intro) Wake up (x4)
Wake me up before you go go
don't leave me hanging like a yo-yo
Wake me up before you go go
I don't wanna miss it when you open your eyes
Wake me up before you go go
'cause I'm not planning on going solo
Wake me up before you go go
take me dancing tonight .

I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES (Prins)

I believe in miracles, where are you from,
you sleepy thing,
I believe in miracles, since she came along,
you sleepy thing,

I'M GONNA WASH THAT MAN RIGHT OUT OF MY HAIR

(Raponsie)
I'm gonna wash that man right out of my hair (x3)
And send him on his way
I'm gonna wave that man right out of my arms
And send him on his way

LOVE HURTS (Dom prins)

WE'RE NOT AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD WOLF (Drie varkies)

We're not afraid of the big bad wolf,
big bad wolf, big bad wolf,
We're not afraid of the big bad wolf, (Fluit)

KITCHEN AT PARTIES (Aspoestertjie) *Marie*

But you will always find her in the kitchen at parties
you will always find me in the kitchen at parties (x2)

LADY IN RED (Rooikappie)

CAN YOU FEEL IT

Dom Prins: Gaan ons haar help? *Bokkie kee-Ann Murr.*
 Fairy Godmother: Natuurlik, hoe't jy gedink? *Michael*
 Dom Prins: *(Dink eers 'n rukkje)* Ek weet, Raponsie se hare. *Geshard Goldwee*
(Fairy Godmother wil nog keer maar te laat) Raponsie, Raponsie
 laat val jou hare. *(Uit die dak val 'n groot klomp hare die prins*
onderstebo.) *Nandi - Noubisches.*
 Raponsie: *(Off stage)* Ag sorrie.... *J. Pierre*
 Fairy Godmother: *(Klik met tong)* Ai foei, hy sal ook nooit leer nie. *Kawa Brooks*
 Kabouter: You are the weakest link. Good bye !! *Brooks*

(Bokkiefeetjie kom ingehardloop - half histories)

Bokkiefeetjie: Fairy Godmother, Fairy Godmother !! Drie van ons feetjies is weg !
 Fairy Godmother: Weg, hoe bedoel jy, weg ?
 Bokkiefeetjie: Weg, soos *(Maak die geluid van 'n ballon wat afblaas en beduie*
terselfdertyd met een hft.) Weg!
 Fairy Godmother: *(Ontsteld)* Maar hoe's dit moontlik - het julle orals gesoek ?
 Ander Goodies: *(Gee luidkeels hulle skok en verslaentheid weer.)* Dis nie moontlik
 nie. Niemand het nog ooit weggeraak nie ens.....
 Fairy Godmother: *(Maak hulle stil.)* Sjuut.....
 Bokkiefeetjie: Jaaaa, maar ^{Doupe} het gesê hy't Captain Hook se spore daar naby
 gesien.....

(Daar volg 'n geskokte stilte)

Fairy Godmother: Captain Hook Badies Hekse Mama Medusa.....
 Dan het die orakel waar geword. So.....Dit is nou die tyd vir "The
 Chosen One"....
 Fairy Godmother: *(Klap hande vinnig twee keer en sê dan.)* Snip-snap, Merlin ?
 Merlin: Dink jy ook sy - uh - Miranda-kind is "The Chosen One" ?
 Fairy Godmother: Moontlik, ja.... ek hoop so.... maar wat sê "Die Groot Ensiklopedie
 Van Sprokies, Spreuke, Wense en ander Onwaarhede ?"
 Kabouter: Wat van www. fairydust .com
 Sneeuwitjie: Sjuut....
 Merlin: *(Boek kom uit dak uit as Merlin sy vingers klap)*

Byklank

(Maak keel skoon) hmm, hmm.... nou waar is dit nou weer... laat
 ons sien.... Hoofstuk 1: Inleidende oorsig tot die historiese
 sprokiesmilieu. *(Skud sy kop)*
 Appendix A: Die psige van die moderne wolf in skaapsklere.
(Blaai verder) Slaggate vir sprokieskarakters. (nee...)
 Hoofstuk 17: "Griet skryf 'n sprokie" Oho, nou't ons te ver
 gegaan....
 Aaaa, hier is dit. Hoofstuk 3: Die sewe stappe om fantasieland te
 red.

(Alle karakters moet nou bang rondkyk en naderskuif vir beskerming)

Merlin:

*Simbool
Skaal
Balaans*

(Lees) Die orakel van die eerste Merlin, die grootste van alle groot towenaars:

Libra se balaans is versteur! Niemand glo meer in sprokies nie!
Daar sal 'n tyd kom dat die sprokieshelde van Fantasieland deur die hekse en slange gevang en verban sal word totdat niemand meer van hulle sal onthou nie, en selfs nie eens meer in hul verbeelding daarvan sal kan droom nie. Selfs die Groot Groen Kristal – die ewige bron van sprokieslewe sal verlore raak in die vergetelheid. (Almal kyk bang na die kristal wat begin gloei)
Alle mensekinders sal dan vergeet van..... (Hy lees verder) Blaa Blaaah.....Aaa, hier is dit.....
En dan eendag sal daar 'n dogtertjie kom met rooi skoene en 'n verbeelding wat die Groot Groen Kristal - die ewige bron van sprokieslewe en al die sprokieskarakters sal red. (Tersyde maar opgewonde) Hi coclorum!
En die skaal... (Wys met sy hande dat dit in balaans kom)

Simbool

Simbool

(Alle karakters luister asof hulle dit vir die eerste keer hoor en sug dan van verligting. Bv. aa en ooh)

Almal: (Uitroep van vreugde) Hi coclorum!
Merlin: (Dink eers) Bring my paar rooi towerbooties.

Musiek begin (Hi-Ho - Snow White) ^{Vier} ~~Sewe~~ dwergies kom in met skoene. Naderhand dans en sing almal saam.

HI-HO

- Hi-ho, 2x
- Hi-ho 3x
- Hi-ho, Hi-ho, it's on to work we go
- Hi-ho x5, it's on to work we go Hi-ho x2
- Hi-ho x 7 humm

BEDRYF 1 TONEEL 3

Simbool

Dogtertjie se kamer.
(n Paar rooi booties sak uit die dak neer op Miranda waar sy lê en slaap.)

Jacqueline / Joline?

Spieël: Miranda, Miranda (Gesig druk uit die spieël.)
 Miranda: (Word wakker en kyk verdwaas rond)
 Wie roep my? Waar's jy?
 Spieël: Dis ek, jou spieël..... (Gesig uit en as Miranda begin soek, trek terug)
 Miranda: (Vryf oor oë) Ek moet nog droom – 'n spieël kan mos nie praat nie?
 (Knyp haarself om seker te maak sy's wakker en gee klein gilletjie)
 (Voel aan spieël – gesig is weg) Ma' waar's jy?
 Spieël: (Gesig kom uit)

Addendum H: Solemn Declaration



SOLEMN DECLARATION

Solemn declaration by student

I, Amanda Salomina Potgieter, declare herewith that the mini-dissertation/dissertation/thesis entitled, **EXPLORING THE LIFE ORIENTATION POTENTIAL OF SECONDARY SCHOOL MUSICAL PRODUCTIONS: THE CASE OF THE GREEN CRYSTAL**

which I herewith submit to the North-West University Potchefstroom Campus, in compliance / partial compliance with the requirements set for the M Ed degree, is my own work, has been text edited and has not already been submitted to any other university.

I understand and accept that the copies that are submitted for examination are the property of the University.

Signature of student  University number 13274597

Signed at Potchefstroom this 7 day of November

Declared before me on this 10 day of November

Commissioner of Oaths: 

Ek sertifiseer dat hierdie dokument 'n ware afskrif is en dat, volgens my waarnemings, die oorspronklike nie op enige wyse gewysig is nie.
<u>Albert Rabe</u> 10/11/2011.
2011.... MNR. ALBERT RABE Kommissaris van Ede Skool vir Voorgesette Onderwysersopleiding Noordwes-Universiteit Privaatsak 86001, Potchefstroom 2620

PLEASE NOTE: If a mini-dissertation/dissertation/thesis of a student is submitted after the deadline for submission, the period available for examination is limited. No guarantee can therefore be given that (should the examiners' reports be positive) the degree will be conferred at the current graduation ceremony. It may also imply that the student would have to re-register for the following academic year.

Declaration by supervisor / promoter / research director / dean

The undersigned declares:

that the student attended an approved module of study for the relevant qualification and that the work for the course has been completed or that work approved by the Senate has been done;

1.2 that the student has complied with the minimum duration of study as stated in the yearbook;

- 1.3 the student is hereby granted permission to submit his/her mini-dissertation/dissertation or thesis;
- 1.4 that registration/change of the title has been approved;
- 1.5 that the appointment/change of examiners has been finalised and
- 1.6 that all the procedures have been followed according to the Manual for Postgraduate Studies.

Signature of Supervisor/Promoter: Shu Potgieter Date: 7 November 2011

Signature of Research Director: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Dean: _____ Date: _____

Addendum : Declaration of language practitioner

H C Sieberhagen

Translator and Editor

SATI no 1001489

082 3359846

Certificate issued on 14 November 2011

I hereby declare that I have edited the language of the
following dissertation:

**EXPLORING THE LIFE ORIENTATION POTENTIAL OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL MUSICAL PRODUCTIONS: THE CASE
OF *THE GREEN CRYSTAL***

A S Potgieter
(13274597)

Dissertation submitted for the degree Master of Education in Teaching and
Learning Organisations
In the Faculty of Education Sciences, North-West University
(Potchefstroom Campus)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. C. Sieberhagen'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'H' being particularly large and stylized.

H C Sieberhagen

SATI number *1001489*

ID 4504190077088

14 November 2011