

# Narratives of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom

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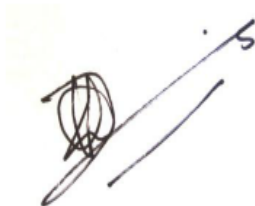
# STYLUS

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## LANGUAGE EDITING

I, Linton Davies, Full Member of the Professional Editors' Guild of South Africa, hereby declare that I have edited the language in the Master's dissertation entitled *Narratives of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom* by Marietjie Schoeman.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a circular scribble followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that ends in a small hook.

Date: 21 November 2016

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this narrative research study was to explore how educators and learners experience the teaching and learning of music in the Grade 7 classroom. By exploring these experiences, this study can contribute to a better understanding of how educators and learners experience the teaching and learning of music. By exploring these experiences, this study can contribute to a better understanding of how educators and learners experience the teaching and learning of music. School principals, school managements, music educators, the Department of Basic Education and policy makers will be able to facilitate the formulation of a more relevant curriculum. The method of inquiry was a qualitative, narrative study with unstructured interviews to better understand the experiences of educators and learners in teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. Sampling comprised seven purposefully chosen primary school music educators and seven Grade 7 learners who participate in compulsory music education in private primary schools in Gauteng. Six themes emerged from the data analysis of the interviews with the educators, namely educator philosophy, teaching approach, teaching activities, expected outcomes, Grade 7 learners as experienced by educators and relationship dynamics. For the Grade 7 learners five themes emerged. These were: active participation, class activities, cooperative learning, peer pressure and gender and wellbeing. The implications of this study is that music for Grade 7 needs to be revised in order for learners to optimise the learning process. Suggestions for further research include the exploration of the relationship between wellbeing and music classes for pre-adolescents<sup>1</sup>. Another avenue that can be explored is the effect of cooperative learning in the music class on the wellbeing of Grade 7 learners.

*Keywords:* Narrative research, Grade 7 learner, experiences, music teaching and learning, music philosophy, teaching approach, activities, expected outcomes, cooperative learning, peer pressure, wellbeing.

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<sup>1</sup> Pre-adolescent: – “The period of human development just preceding adolescence; the period between the approximate ages of 9 and 12” (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 28/08/2015).

## OPSOMMING

Die doel van die narratiewe navorsingstudie was om die ervaringe van musiekonderwysers en Graad 7 leerders in die onderrig en leer van musiek te ondersoek. Met die ondersoek van hierdie ondervindinge, kan die studie bydra tot 'n beter begrip van hoe onderwysers en leerders die onderrig en leer van musiek in die Graad 7 musiekklas ervaar. Skoolhoofde, skoolrade, musiekonderwysers, die Department van Basiese Onderrig en beleidbepalers kan by hierdie begrip baat vind, sodat hierdie studie in 'n meer toepaslike kurrikulum vir leerders gestalte kan gee. Die navorsingsontwerp was 'n kwalitatiewe, narratiewe studie met ongestruktureerde onderhoude. Die metode is gekies met die hoop dat dit sal bydra tot die begrip van die ervaringe van onderwysers en leerders in die onderrig en leer van musiek in die Graad 7 klaskamer. Die deelnemers aan die projek was sewe doelbewuste gekose privaat, laerskool musiekonderwysers en sewe Graad 7 leerders wat aan verpligte musiekonderrig in privaat laerskole in Gauteng deelneem. Ses temas het vanuit die data analise met die onderwysers na vore gekom, naamlik: onderwyserfilosofie, onderrigbenadering, klasaktiwiteite, verwagte uitkomst, die persepsie wat onderwysers van die Graad 7 leerders het en verhoudingsdinamika. Vanuit die analise van die onderhoude met die leerders het vyf temas te voorskyn gekom: aktiewe deelname, klasaktiwiteite, koöperatiewe leer, groepsdruk, geslag en welstand. Die implikasies van hierdie studie is om die Graad 7 musieksillabus te hersien sodat leerders die meeste voordeel uit die leerproses kan kry. Voorstelle vir verdere studie sluit die verkenning van die verhouding tussen welstand en die musiekklas vir die pre-adolesent in. 'n Ander moontlike ondersoek wat verken kan word, is die effek wat koöperatiewe samewerking in die musiekklas op die welstand van die Graad 7 leerder het.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Narratiewe ondersoek, Graad 7 leerder, ondervindinge, musiekonderrig en -leer, musiekfilosofie, onderrigsbenadering, musiekaktiwiteite, verwagte uitkomst, koöperatiewe leer, groepsdruk, welstand.

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# CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
OPSOMMING.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Purpose statement.....	5
1.3 Research questions .....	5
1.3.1 Central question.....	5
1.3.2 Secondary questions .....	5
1.4 Research method.....	6
1.5 Role of the researcher.....	7
1.6 Data collection procedures.....	7
1.7 Data analysis.....	7
1.8 Limitations of this study.....	8
1.9 Strategies for validating findings .....	8
1.10 Anticipated ethical issues.....	9
1.11 Content of the chapters.....	9
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW: EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC.....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	12
2.2 Internal factors that influence the educator's experience of teaching and learning music.....	12
2.2.1 Constructing a teaching identity.....	13
2.2.2 Educators' expectations of learners.....	17

2.2.3	Educator efficacy .....	18
2.3	External factors that influence the educator’s experience of teaching and learning music.....	22
2.3.1	School culture and climate.....	23
2.3.1.1	Organisational climate of the school .....	23
2.3.1.2	Classroom climate.....	29
2.3.2	Socio-economic status of the school .....	34
2.4	Summary.....	35

**CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW: GRADE 7 LEARNERS’ EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC..... 37**

3.1	Introduction .....	38
3.1.1	Previous research into learners’ experience .....	38
3.2	Internal factors that influence the Grade 7 learner’s experience of teaching and learning music.....	39
3.2.1	Musical factors.....	39
3.2.2	Identity .....	39
3.2.3	Other factors.....	45
3.2.3.1	Gender .....	45
3.2.3.2	Intrinsic motivation .....	47
3.2.3.3	Enculturation .....	48
3.3	External factors that influence the learner’s experience of teaching and learning music.....	48
3.3.1	Outside the school .....	49
3.3.1.1	Socio-economic status .....	49
3.3.1.2	Home musical environment.....	50
3.3.2	Inside the school.....	51
3.3.2.1	Learner–educator relationships.....	52
3.3.2.2	Music class activities.....	54
3.3.2.3	Psychological experiences of music class .....	57
3.4	Summary.....	58

<b>CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN, APPROACH AND METHOD.....</b>	<b>59</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	59
4.2 Research objectives and questions.....	60
4.3 Research paradigm: Interpretivism .....	61
4.4 Research design .....	61
4.4.1 The cyclical nature of the design .....	62
4.5 Research approach.....	63
4.5.1 Narrative construction.....	64
4.5.2 The central topic of this narrative .....	65
4.6 Context and settings .....	66
4.7 Participants .....	66
4.8 Role of the researcher.....	68
4.9 Data collection: the unstructured interview.....	68
4.10 Data analysis: Thematic.....	70
4.11 Validation .....	72
4.12 Ethics .....	73
 <b>CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS: EDUCATORS 'EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC .....</b>	 <b>76</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	76
5.2 Theme 1: Educator philosophy.....	82
5.2.1 Educator philosophy: Ethics of care.....	83
5.2.2 Educator philosophy: Music makes you a better person.....	84
5.2.3 Educator philosophy: Enough music students for high school .....	85
5.2.4 Educator philosophy: Discussion .....	85
5.3 Theme 2: Teaching approach .....	86
5.3.1 Teaching approach: Conducive teaching environment.....	86
5.3.2 Teaching approach: Appropriate difficulty level .....	88

5.3.3	Teaching approach: Facilitation .....	89
5.3.4	Teaching approach: Music as a tool for critical thinking.....	89
5.3.5	Teaching approach: Discussion.....	90
5.4	Theme 3: Teaching activities.....	91
5.4.1	Teaching activities: Variety of activities and content.....	91
5.4.2	Teaching activities: Graphic notation and music theory .....	94
5.4.3	Teaching activities: Instrumental play .....	95
5.4.4	Teaching activities: Improvisation and composition .....	96
5.4.5	Teaching activities: Co-curricular music.....	97
5.4.6	Teaching activities: Discussion .....	97
5.5	Theme 4: Expected outcomes.....	98
5.5.1	Expected outcomes: Apply basic concepts.....	99
5.5.2	Expected outcomes: Know the different instruments .....	99
5.5.3	Expected outcomes: Appreciate all music genres .....	99
5.5.4	Expected outcomes: Explore and experiment on their own .....	100
5.5.5	Expected outcomes: Enjoy music class .....	100
5.5.6	Expected outcomes: Success experience .....	101
5.5.7	Expected outcomes: Discussion .....	101
5.6	Theme 5: Educators' perception of Grade 7 learners.....	102
5.6.1	Grade 7 learners: Self-centred.....	102
5.6.2	Grade 7 learners: Lack confidence .....	103
5.6.3	Grade 7 learners: Don't like challenges .....	103
5.6.4	Grade 7 learners: Learners are easily intimidated .....	104
5.6.5	Grade 7 learners: Undisciplined.....	104
5.6.6	Grade 7 learners: Technology inclined .....	105
5.6.7	Grade 7 learners: Attitude.....	105
5.6.8	Grade 7 learners: Boys and girls behave differently .....	107

5.6.9	Grade 7 learners: Discussion.....	107
5.7.1	Relationship dynamics: Difficult developmental stage .....	108
5.7.2	Relationship dynamics: Good relationships with learners .....	110
5.7.3	Relationship dynamics: Complex relationships with parents.....	111
5.7.4	Relationship dynamics: Educators feel unappreciated .....	113
5.7.5	Relationship dynamics: Lack of understanding from stakeholders ...	113
5.7.6	Relationship dynamics: Support from the school and the Department ... .....	115
5.7.7	Relationship dynamics: Discussion.....	116

**CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS: LEARNERS' EXPERIENCE REGARDING TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC ..... 118**

6.1	Introduction .....	118
6.2	Theme 1: Active participation .....	122
6.2.1	Active participation: Actively involved in making music.....	122
6.2.2	Active participation: More space .....	124
6.2.3	Active participation: Playing instruments.....	124
6.2.4	Active participation: Discussion .....	125
6.3	Theme 2: Class activities .....	126
6.3.1	Class activities: Learning about music.....	126
6.3.2	Class activities: Variety of activities .....	127
6.3.3	Class activities: Being creative .....	128
6.3.4	Class activities: Different genres.....	129
6.3.5	Class activities: History of music.....	130
6.3.6	Class activities: Theory of music.....	130
6.3.7	Class activities: Discussion.....	131
6.4	Theme 3: Cooperative learning .....	131
6.4.1	Cooperative learning: Working with friends.....	131

6.4.2	Cooperative learning: Produce a better end-product .....	133
6.4.3	Cooperative learning: Summary .....	133
6.5	Theme 4: Peer pressure and gender .....	134
6.5.1	Peer pressure and gender: The influence of peers and friends .....	134
6.5.2	Peer pressure and gender: Want to be perceived as cool .....	135
6.5.3	Peer pressure and gender: Boys misbehave in class .....	135
6.5.4	Peer pressure and gender: Discussion .....	136
6.6	Theme 5: Wellbeing .....	136
6.6.1	Wellbeing: Music allows for relaxation and relieves stress .....	136
6.6.2	Wellbeing: Music class is an escape from school .....	138
6.6.3	Wellbeing: Music can make you a better person .....	138
6.6.4	Wellbeing: Grade 7 learners are under pressure .....	139
6.6.5	Wellbeing: More music lessons .....	139
6.6.6	Wellbeing: Discussion.....	140
<b>CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....</b>		<b>141</b>
7.1	Introduction .....	142
7.2	Thematic discussion: Educators' emergent themes related to the literature .....	142
7.2.1	Educator philosophy .....	145
7.2.2	Teaching approach .....	146
7.2.3	Teaching activities .....	147
7.2.4	Expected outcomes .....	148
7.2.5	Educators' perception of Grade 7 learners .....	150
7.2.6	Relationship dynamics .....	152
7.3	Thematic discussion: Learners' emergent themes related to the literature	154
7.3.1	Active participation.....	156
7.3.2	Class activities .....	156

7.3.3	Cooperative learning.....	158
7.3.4	Peer pressure and gender .....	159
7.3.5	Wellbeing .....	162
7.4	Contributions of this study .....	164
7.4.1	Music educators.....	164
7.4.2	Grade 7 learners.....	166
7.5	Synthesis of the literature and findings .....	168
7.6	Confessions and trumpets .....	170
7.7	Limitations and implications for different audiences and further research .	171
7.8	Final reflecting thoughts .....	173
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>		<b>174</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>		<b>200</b>
	APPENDIX A .....	200
	APPENDIX B .....	205
	APPENDIX C .....	207

## LIST OF FIGURES

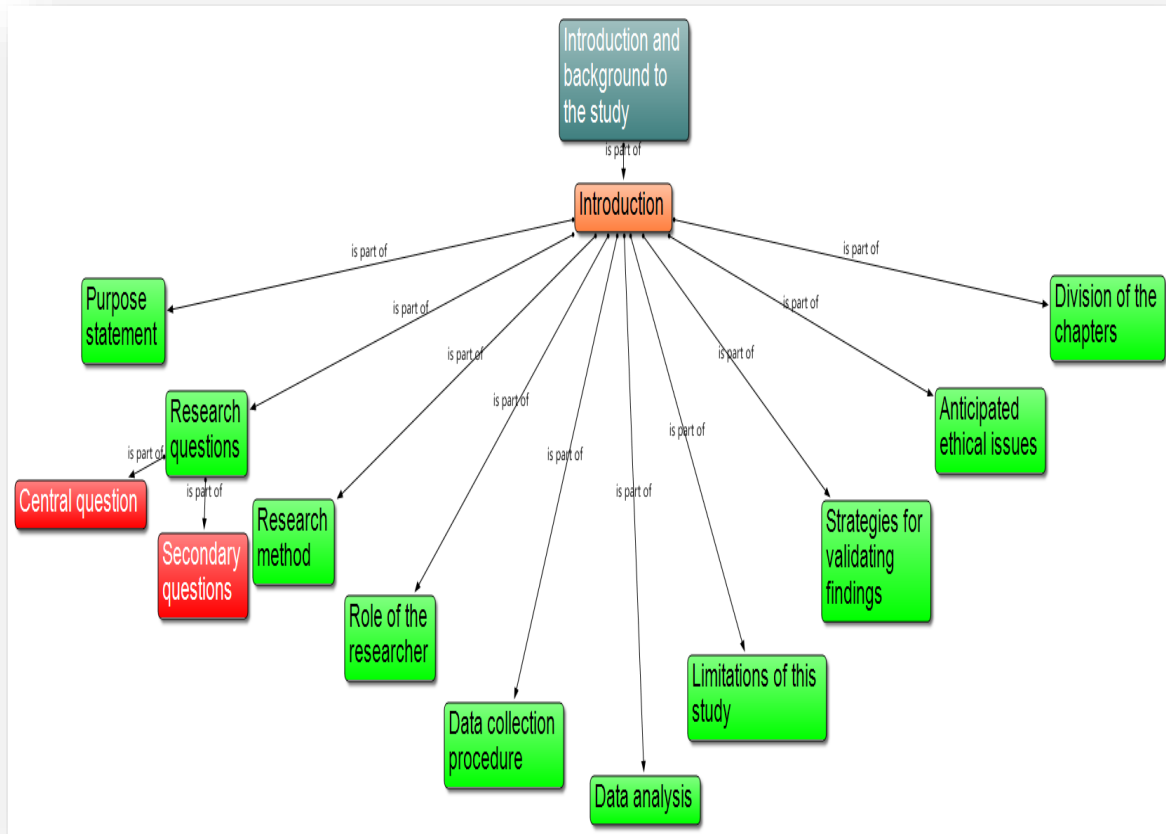
Figure 1: Structure of Chapter 1 .....	1
Figure 2: Structure of Chapter 2 .....	11
Figure 3: Salient role identities .....	15
Figure 4: Structure of Chapter 3 .....	37
Figure 5: Structure of Chapter 4 .....	59
Figure 6: The cyclical nature of the design .....	62
Figure 7: Participants* .....	66
Figure 8: Structure of Chapter 5 .....	76
Figure 9: Themes: Educators' experience of teaching and learning music.....	78
Figure 10: Theme 1: Educator philosophy.....	82
Figure 11: Theme 2: Teaching approach.....	86
Figure 12: Theme 3: Teaching activities.....	90
Figure 13: Theme 4: Expected outcomes.....	97
Figure 14: Theme 5: Educators' perception of Grade 7 learners.....	101
Figure 15: Theme 6: Relationship dynamics .....	108
Figure 16: Structure of Chapter 6 .....	118
Figure 17: Themes: Grade 7 learners' experience of teaching and learning music	120
Figure 18: Theme 1: Active participation .....	122
Figure 19: Theme 2: Class activities.....	126
Figure 20: Theme 3: Cooperative learning .....	131
Figure 21: Theme 4: Peer pressure and gender.....	134
Figure 22: Wellbeing.....	136
Figure 23: Structure of Chapter 7 .....	141
Figure 24: Synthesis: educators' experience.....	165
Figure 25: Synthesis: learners' experience .....	167
Figure 26: Synthesis: Educators' and learners' experience of teaching and learning music can assist in the holistic well-being of the person .....	169

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Educators: Emergent themes related to the literature .....	143
Table 2: Learners: Emergent themes related to the literature .....	154

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY



**Figure 1: Structure of Chapter 1**

### 1.1 Introduction

This narrative study explores the lived experiences of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. Grade 7 falls within the senior phase<sup>2</sup> in the subject Creative Arts<sup>3</sup>. In South Africa music teaching in private<sup>4</sup> primary schools is often conducted by specialist music educators, while in public<sup>5</sup> schools the generalist educator usually is

<sup>2</sup> Senior Phase: Grades 5 to 9 in South Africa.

<sup>3</sup> Creative Arts: "The study of a range of art forms including dance, drama, music and visual arts" (South Africa, 2011:8).

<sup>4</sup> Private schools: "Also known as independent schools are not administrated by local, state or the national government. They retain the right to select their students and are funded in whole or in part by charging their students tuition" ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) accessed 30/04/2017).

<sup>5</sup> Public schools: "A free, tax supported school controlled by a local governmental authority" (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 08/02/2017).

responsible for teaching music. This context is further informed by other school-specific conditions, such as socio-economic circumstances, which greatly influences the experiences of both educators and learners. I am interested in each individual educator's and learners' specific story, because of my view that this can help locate, inform and promote best practice.

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of South Africa, the senior phase extends over primary school and secondary school, with Grade 7 in the primary school and Grades 8 and 9 the first two grades in secondary school. The allocated instructional time for the subject Creative Arts in the senior phase is two hours per week. Creative Arts consists of dance, drama, visual art and music. Participating in *two* of these art forms is compulsory in the senior phase. One hour per week is allocated to the Creative Arts in the Senior Phase. The aim of the Creative Arts subject is to develop learners as creative and imaginative individuals who have an appreciation of the arts, gained through exposure to and experience of two of the four art forms catered for in the syllabus (South Africa, 2011:8). The teaching and learning in Grade 7 encompasses the following: music literacy, music listening as well as performing and creating music (South Africa, 2011:47).

This study will accordingly convey and analyse some of the stories that educators and learners have to tell about teaching and learning music in Grade 7. The stories that people tell can provide a platform from which their experiences can be explained and made meaningful to both the participants and the researcher (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006:477). Stories about the experiences of music educators in teaching music at primary schools level have noticeably been absent from published writings about music education (Abril & Gault, 2007:33).

Researchers, governing councils and the national government do not know nearly enough about how educators experience the teaching of music to Grade 7 learners or how Grade 7 learners experience compulsory music education in school. As a music educator I strive to better understand the needs, ideas and perspectives of these learners, whom I happen to teach, better. This I do by having weekly conversations with the learners. As most Grade 7 learners are in a difficult developmental stage and are reluctant to participate in music class, it is important to investigate this and to assess if

there is a way to convince them to participate. From my conversations with my colleagues, it has transpired that Grade 7 music educators are not keen on teaching this age group of learners either and it is imperative to understand the reasons behind this as well as how to change the situation. In order to meet the wishes and hopes of my learners, I continually rethink and reshape my teaching strategies and content as suggested by Bernard (2009:121) in *Uncovering pre-service music educators' assumptions of teaching, learning, and music*. This I have done by changing the content as well as the way was presented. Sometimes I taught the learners as a class and they just explored. It was important to me to examine the way in which I, the researcher, could create environments and opportunities for learners in which they could derive optimal enjoyment and value from their teaching.

Just as there is a gap in the South African academic literature on experiences of teaching and learning music in Grade 7, Bernard (2009:121) and Brand (2006:712) identify a similar gap in the equivalent North American literature. Previous South African research on this topic focuses mainly on implementation of the music curriculum (Klopper, 2004; Rijdsdijk, 2004; Vermeulen 2009 & Van Vreden, 2014).

Rijdsdijk (2004) investigates the state of music education in primary schools in the Western Cape. Her study focuses on the problems experienced by general class educators who are involved in the implementation of the music education curriculum in their schools. A similar study undertaken by Klopper (2004) highlights the variables that impact on the teaching of music education in South Africa. Vermeulen's (2009) study also focuses on the implementation of music, but specifically as part of the Arts and Culture curriculum in South African schools. Subsequently, Vermeulen, *et al.* (2011), conducted a comparative investigation in order to highlight comparisons between South Africa and Australia regarding the training of pre-service music educators. Lastly, Van Vreden (2014) conducted a study into the integration of music into the grade R syllabus. The focus of Van Vreden's study is the integration of music in Grade R, whereas Vermeulen *et al.* (2011:199 - 205), focus on the application of the syllabus for music in South African primary schools.

Other related topics in the available scholarly literature on music educators' teaching experiences are discussed. One such a topic refers to the success educators achieve

in terms of the opportunities that they are able to provide for their students (Bernard, 2010:1212). Another topic addressed in literature, is educators' concerns about the time constraints for implementing the curriculum and, in the case of generalist class educators teaching music, their lack of training and knowledge (Herbst *et al.*, 2012; Klopper, 2004; Rijdsdijk, 2004). The experience of learners who participate in compulsory music education in Grade 7 has not been documented in South Africa.

International research indicates that in pre-adolescence music plays a beneficial and valued role in the individual's social-emotional and intellectual-artistic domains (Campbell *et al.*, 2007:221). It in fact emerges that music is valued by pre-adolescents as a central aspect of their identity<sup>6</sup> (Campbell *et al.*, 2007:212).

My study is different from the above-mentioned South African and international studies, as it is a narrative inquiry that acknowledges and reflects on the complexity, depth and richness of the situation in South African schools, and attempts to find ways that describe and interpret the educational interactions that are taking place (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009:13).

One of the unique contributions of this study is that it engages with pre-adolescents' thought processes by way of their own storytelling, in an attempt to understand the complex reality of their musical experiences. Themes relating to music's role in school music programmes are discussed in this context. Furthermore, important observations from educators and learners on the content and learning of music in schools are analysed, since they illuminate the roles that music plays in pre-adolescents' lives.

This research would be of interest to music educators and subject advisors in the Department of Basic Education, as it focuses on how learners in Grade 7 learners and their educators experience compulsory music education. The expectations and needs of the various stakeholders could inform any revision of the current curriculum for Grade 7, considering that the expectations and needs of the Department of Basic Education and those of learners and their educators might not be the same. Because this narrative

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<sup>6</sup> Identity – “The qualities, beliefs, etc., that makes a particular person or group different from others” (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 14/04/2015).

inquiry can shed light on how music educators deal with everyday challenges in their teaching practices, they might be interested in this research, in order to learn from other educators who participated in this research project. Other interested parties include heads of schools, heads of music departments and management committees of schools, who would be looking to this research to inform best practice in their curriculum content and implementation.

## **1.2 Purpose statement**

The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to explore the lived experiences of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom for the music educators and learners at twelve primary schools in Gauteng (see Figure 1).

## **1.3 Research questions**

### ***1.3.1 Central question***



**WHAT DOES THIS NARRATIVE INQUIRY REVEAL ABOUT  
TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC IN THE GRADE 7 CLASSROOM?**

### ***1.3.2 Secondary questions***

- What is the nature of the lived experiences of educators and learners (ages twelve to thirteen years) in the Grade 7 music classroom according to the scholarly literature? (Literature review – Chapters 2 and 3)
- What are the music teaching and learning experiences of educators and learners in the Grade 7 music classrooms from 12 primary schools in Gauteng? (Findings – Chapters 5 and 6)
- How does the relevant literature relate to these stories about teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom? (Discussion – Chapter 7)

## 1.4 Research method

A compelling way in which people construct significance from the experiences they have, is by recalling it as stories (Bernard, 2009:113). By listening to these stories within the paradigm of narrative inquiry, researchers add new clarity, from a different point of view on the problems that music educators and learners experience daily. I will follow a qualitative, narrative approach. My interpretation is based on my own experiences and background (Creswell, 2013:212), while the views of the educators and learners also inform my conclusions. This study is constructed from the point of view that there is no single certainty or realism. Instead realities or truths are pieced together through the views, actions and the perceptions<sup>7</sup> of the educators and learners (Clandinin, 2006:44).

The participants in this study are seven Grade 7 learners and seven music educators, who together, hail from 12 private schools in Gauteng that are involved in compulsory music education. As the music educators at the 12 schools that initially were approached, all agreed to participate in the research. As narratives tell the stories of a single individual or a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2013: location 1610 of 9141), 12 participants seems to be a significant number of participants for this research. My endeavour is to include both specialist music educators as well as general class educators who teach music. Specialist music educators refers to those educators with a professional qualification in music such as a B.Mus. degree. General class educators refers to those educators with a general teaching qualification, including some or no music background, who are teaching music to Grade 7 learners.

One interview with each participant took place. These interviews lasted about one and a half hours to two and a half hours. The interviews with the learners took place at their various schools and the interviews with the educators took place after school, usually in coffee shops.

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<sup>7</sup> Perceptions – “The way you think about or understand someone or something” (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 16/09/2015).

## **1.5 Role of the researcher**

The starting point for this research was an exploration of my own narrative of my experiences. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000:70), the autobiographical account of one's own experiences is central to a narrative inquiry. The awareness of my own story and my ability to reflect on it influence the way I hear and evaluate the stories told by others. This process requires strong self-knowledge, and draws on my own narrative compass. This was a challenging process as well as an intellectual challenge. I was the main research instrument (Creswell, 2013:412), and visited the participating schools in order to gather information and experience the situation at first hand.

## **1.6 Data collection procedures**

Data has been collected by means of the intersection of the life worlds of both the researcher and the participants (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009:36). Data collection has been in the form of unstructured interviews with the Grade 7 learners, as well as individual, unstructured interviews with the educators during which they had an opportunity to tell their own stories. The experiences of both the educators and learners are documented by means of audio recordings. These recordings have been transcribed by myself in order to assess and analyse the interviews.

## **1.7 Data analysis**

The strategy for the data analysis comprises three types of analysis: content, dialogical and sequential. The strategy involves analysing the educators' and learners' narratives in four dimensions: their content (what the story was about), their genre (what type of story it was), the presentation of the narrative (how this person wished to be known) and the interactional aspects (how the different exchanges contributed to the story) (Bernard, 2009:113).

Narrative inquiry distinguishes between four forms of data analysis:

- Thematic analysis
- Structural analysis

- Dialogical/performance analysis
- Visual analysis (Riessman, 2008).

For the purpose of this dissertation, I focus on a thematic analysis of the data. This form of data analysis analyses the different themes that emerge from the data. For this form of data analysis to be successful, close attention needs to be paid to “what” is said, “how” it is said, what circumstances it was said in, who was present as well as the influence the researcher had on the dialogue that took place (Riessman, 2008:99). Each story has been analysed by adhering to the three interpretive levels of the narrative, namely:

- How the story was arranged and what was told and in what sequence.
- The contextualising of the participant’s life within a cultural, historical, social and music background.
- Analysis of the stories by identifying emerging themes and multiple meanings (Brand, 2006:77).

### **1.8 Limitations of this study**

The findings of this study are applicable to the Grade 7 learners who participated in this research. This study can furthermore be relevant to educators who teach compulsory music education at school. The findings might only be applicable to the specific participants in their specific situations and environment. There is no generalisation in this study, but each reader can decide on the transferability there-of. Participating schools have been due to their proximity and the time needed to travel to these schools. Other criteria for the selection of these schools are that the parents allowed the researcher to interview the Grade 7 learners, as well as the willingness of the music educators to participate. All the schools that were approached, gave consent for their learners to be interviewed individually.

### **1.9 Strategies for validating findings**

I endeavour to clarify my own position regarding the interpretation of the data by stating my own biases, previous experiences and assumptions that might have influenced the

interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2013:2121). For the narrative to be reliable, the researcher has to allow enough time for verification, and she has to anticipate various possibilities that can be construed. A benchmark implied in the verification of credibility in a narrative, is verisimilitude, or the life-likeness of a situation or experience. Together these benchmarks centre more on the recognisability than the generalisability of the study (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:22). The reader has to be able to place herself in that Grade 7 classroom and believe that both the experiences the educators and learners have, are conceivable and possible (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990:7; Pepper & Wildy, 2009:22).

### **1.10 Anticipated ethical issues**

Careful consideration has to be given to the ethical nature of the research undertaken (Barret & Stauffer, 2009:13). With this in mind, all participating learners and their parents have been given a consent form to sign. The procedure was explained and participants were reassured that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point. It was explained to the participants that all information is confidential and that their identities would remain anonymous.

Participants were encouraged to ask questions and were assured that the findings of the study would be shared with them should they be interested. As the Grade 7 learners participating in this study were a vulnerable<sup>8</sup>, under-age group, they were only interviewed with the consent of their parents. Consent forms have been with the guidelines suggested by Creswell (2013:1122). The researcher undertook to protect all the participants, and that no harm would be done to any community, school or individual. Participants can benefit from this research as they all can learn from each other's' experiences.

### **1.11 Content of the chapters**

The structure of the study is as follows:

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<sup>8</sup> Vulnerable – “Easily hurt or harmed physically, mentally or emotionally” (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 20/10/2016).

*Chapter 1:* Introduction

*Chapter 2:* Literature review: Educators' experience of teaching and learning music

*Chapter 3:* Literature review: Learners' experience of teaching and learning music

*Chapter 4:* Research design, approach and method

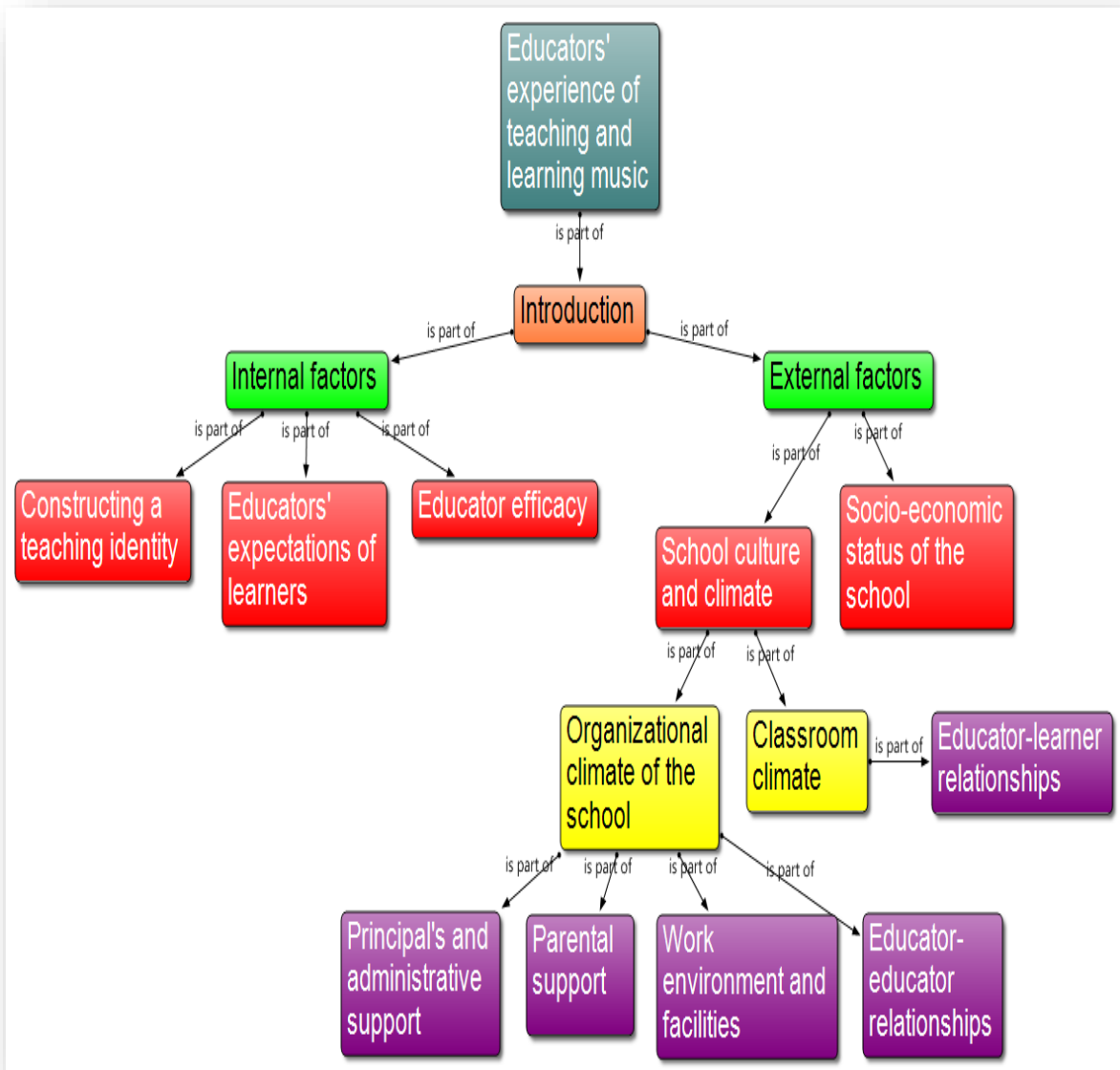
*Chapter 5:* Findings: Educators' experience of teaching and learning music

*Chapter 6:* Findings: Learners' experience of teaching and learning music

*Chapter 7:* Discussion and conclusion

# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW: EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC



**Figure 2: Structure of Chapter 2**

## **2.1 Introduction**

In this section of the literature review I examine the scholarly literature that illuminates factors influencing the music educator's experience of teaching and learning music (see Figure 2). Teaching is probably one of the most difficult activities (Harkind *et al.*, 2001:75) of which cultural enrichment, developed through conscious awareness and control of cultural knowledge, is arguably the ultimate goal (Yowell & Smylie, 1999:472). Three internal factors that emerged from the scholarly literature draw my attention: The first one that is examined, is the construction of a teaching identity since this informs the second internal factor which is music educators' expectations about teaching music. Thirdly, any expectations that music educators have for the learners and the teaching itself, influences the educator's efficacy, and educators' efficacy in turn influences the music educators' teaching experience.

The external factors that influence teaching can be divided into two categories: The first is the impact of the school culture and climate of the school on the educator's teaching experience. The organisational climate in the school includes factors such as the support of the principal and the administrative staff, parental support, the work environment and facilities and the relationships that music educators have with other educators. The second external factor I examine is the impact of the socio-economic status of the school on the educator's experience.

## **2.2 Internal factors that influence the educator's experience of teaching and learning music**

From the scholarly literature I have drawn two conclusions:

- Of the internal factors, the construction of a teaching identity seems to influence the way in which music educators' experiences are shaped.
- Experiences are not only shaped by the educator's identity, but also by the beliefs<sup>9</sup>, perceptions and expectations that are held by the educator.

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<sup>9</sup> Beliefs – “A feeling of being sure that someone or something exists or that something is true” (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 21/07/2015).

These in turn influence the educator's efficacy and the way in which the educator views her role.

### ***2.2.1 Constructing a teaching identity***

Most people have been exposed to music educators some time in their lives (Dolloff, 1999:191) and have mental pictures of some individual educators. The image music educators have about themselves also affects their behaviour (Dolloff, 1999:192; Knowles, 1992:131). Aspects such as identity are based not only on this, but are also influenced by the skills and knowledge music educators possess about the subject they teach and teaching techniques (Finney, 1999:237). In order to become a good educator, it is important for music educators to have a positive and clear identity of themselves (Knowles, 1992:152).

Identity can be defined as a socially composed view people have of themselves (Day & Hadfield, 1996:566). According to Merriam-Webster (2016), identity can be described as "the qualities and beliefs that make a particular person different from others". The educator's identity is formed at the intersection between intimate experiences and the social and cultural climate in which the educator functions daily (Day & Hadfield, 1996:566). According to Roberts (1991:32), the educator's professional identity comprises the character that the educator devises for himself as well as the role he sees himself playing in a particular social situation, in this case, at school. According to McClure (1993:320), identity is not as stable or coherent as might be implied by the literature on educators' identity.

In research conducted by Day and Hadfield (1996:149–166), the educators' identities are influenced by their own personal and professional values – their professional identities change over the course of their careers as well as according to circumstances. Research found that educators hold at least three identities simultaneously within their professional environment:

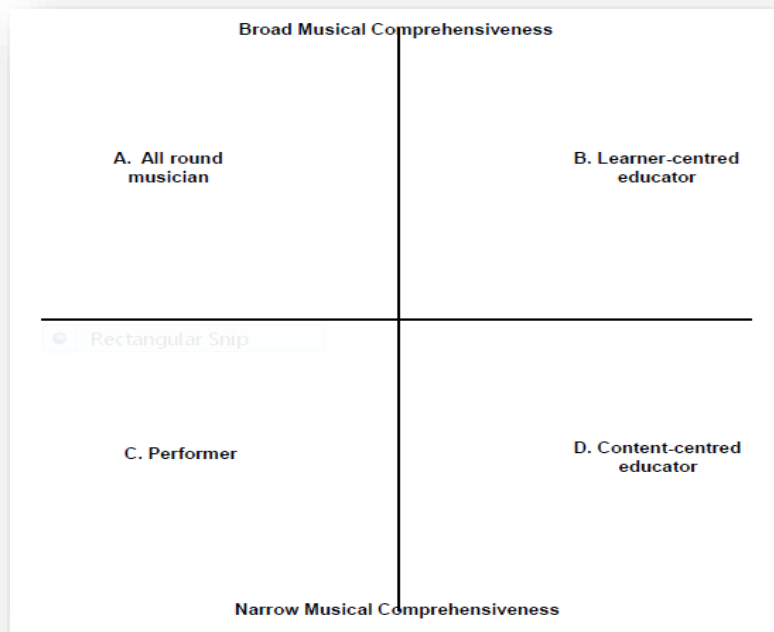
- Their actual identity, which is how working practice is shaped by current context
- The ideal identity, which is how it feels to them being an educator

- The transitional identity, which is arbitrated between the potentialities of the ideal and the actual reality (Day & Hadfield 1996:566).

The conflict that arises within music educators, between being the “ideal” music educator and the roles that music educators are supposed to play at school, specifically the roles school administrators expect them to play, was investigated by Frierson-Campbell (2004:21). This conflict compels music educators to construct an identity for themselves that does not support musicians (Roberts, 2000:65). Not only do music educators experience conflict between their own ideals as educators and the expectations of the school administrators, but they also experience conflict within themselves regarding their roles as musicians and educators (Roberts, 2000:73).

The conflict that music educators experience is amplified when musicians, who out of necessity decide to venture into music teaching, believe that their perception of identity comes from being a “real” musician and not being an educator (Kemp, 1996:217). The result is that these educators direct their energy towards extracurricular activities such as choirs, orchestras and performances in order to maintain a sense of “musical persona” (Saunders, 2009:68). According to Kemp (1996:217), a good musician, does not necessarily translate into being a good educator and vice versa.

Bouij (1998:25) also documents these conflicting situations. The construction of the educator’s identity takes place in the intersections between two “anticipatory dimensions”: musical comprehensiveness and being an educator (Bouij, 1998:25)



**Figure 3: Salient role identities**

*Source:* Bouij, 1998:25

Figure 3 explains what Bouij (1998:25) believes music educator students strive for during their training. Although music educators tend to identify with one of the identities in the figure, this does not imply that they have to occupy only one of the identities to the exclusion of the others, since most music educators tend to move between these identities (Bouij, 1998:25). According to Roberts (1990:312), most music educators prefer to learn a bit of everything in order to become a well-rounded musician and educator.

As an educator, the all-round musician is the educator who:

- Endeavours to stress the importance of music as a social function (Kemp, 1996:229)
- The communication aspect of music is the most important factor (Kemp, 1996:229).

The learner-centred educator is the one who:

- Tries to meet the learners where they are (Bouiji, 1998:25)
- Works from a broad musical starting point (Bouij, 1998:25)
- Perceives education through music as the most important aspect of their teaching (Nielsen, 1994:65).

The performance orientated educator is the one who:

- Strives to cultivate a certain musical tradition in the school (Nielsen, 1994:65)
- Often focuses on performances of the learners to the exclusion of the other aspects of teaching (Nielsen, 1994:65).

The last type of educator, the content-centred educator, usually is the one who:

- Strives to teach at a higher level and not only expects the learners to be good musicians
- Strives to be a model to their learners (Bouij, 1998:26).

Music educators who are more or less balanced in all four quadrants find that the most important factor in their teaching is the education of music (Nielsen, 1994: 78). This internal struggle by music educators is not unlike the struggles experienced by actors and drama educators or artists and art educators (Saunders, 2009:68).

The struggle for identity by music educators is important as it impacts on the relationship that educators are trying to establish with their learners. Music educators in general wish to reflect to their learners the parts of their identity that are important for their teaching (Davis, 2006:213). The way music educators perceive their own identities can influence how they perform in class as well as how often they are absent. Educator identity also has an influence on learners' motivation, their general achievement in class as well as their attitude towards the music class (Firestone, 1996:216). According to Day and Hadfield (1996:565), the key to educators' commitment is their sense of identity.

A committed educator is one who strongly believes in the goals and purposes of music education, and they are willing to go to great lengths in order to achieve their educational goals (Firestone, 1996:215). Educators' identities are also influenced by the way in which they view their task as music educators, the way in which they perceive themselves to be representatives of music education and the role model they perceive themselves to be for their learners (Davis, 2006:212). Music educators' beliefs about the abilities of their learners and their expectations they have of these learners, as well as their own efficacy, have an influence on their teaching identities. These are explored next.

### ***2.2.2 Educators' expectations of learners***

Music educators bring to their classrooms their own beliefs about teaching and learning, and these beliefs can influence the way they teach, how involved they become with their learners, the instructional material they use in class and the expectations they have of their learners (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998: 791; Davis, 2003:207). What they believe about their learners' abilities, motivations and possible achievements (Cooper & Tom, 1984:76; Feldman & Theiss, 1982:14) can influence the educators' own lived classroom experience. The expectations educators have of their learners additionally influence learners' performance (Cooper & Tom, 1984:76).

Music educators' expectations can be defined in three ways:

- Expectations concerning learners' general competencies or how well they perform in certain activities
- Educators' expectations of improvement by their learners over a specific period of time
- Expectations that refer to how educators overestimate or underestimate learners' abilities (Cooper & Tom, 1984:78).

Brophy and Evertson (1977:86), postulate that music educators who maintain good order in their classes and have few but strict rules, usually have higher expectations of their learners. According to Davis (2006:210), educators' expectations of their learners influence the way they interact with the learners. Wubbles *et al.* (1991:156)

maintain that educators in general seem to have a better perception of themselves than their learners have of them. Although some extensive research has been conducted on educators' beliefs about themselves, their work environment, the learners they work with and their efficacy, the findings seem to be inconclusive (Minuchin & Shapiro, 1983:226) in as much as researchers are unsure about the extent the aforementioned factors influence one another. Educators' expectancy might have an influence on their efficacy in class.

### **2.2.3 Educator efficacy**

The theory of self-efficacy refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997:3). Bandura's theory states that individuals, through their experiences in life, develop certain expectations of the outcomes of certain actions as well as certain beliefs about their own abilities to cope successfully with a certain task. The ability to cope is referred to as self-efficacy. The conviction of one's own efficacy is associated with a specific domain of functioning, and educator self-efficacy is usually focused on the domain that influences learners' learning and is not so much focused on interpersonal functioning (Tschannen-Moran *et al.*, 1998:203).

According to Newmann *et al.* (1989:223), the definition of educator efficacy is the music educators' perception that their teaching is personally satisfying, worth the effort and that the effort they put into their teaching leads to the success their learners' experience. Ashton *et al.* (1984:36) are of the opinion that music educators' sense of efficacy consists of a hierarchically organised model of various dimensions, emphasising the importance of teaching efficacy and personal efficacy. Self-efficacy can fluctuate (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:174; Ashton *et al.*, 1984:7) and can vary according to experience (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:178). Experienced music educators tend to feel more confident and efficacious (Berg & Cornell, 2016:132; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007:188) than less experienced music educators. A greater sense of efficacy in the music educator can lead to more confidence in communicating with learners (Davis, 2006:197). Self-efficacy influences human behaviour through four processes:

- The goals individuals set for themselves and the strategies they employ to attain these goals
- The individual's perseverance in the face of adversity
- The way individuals feel about themselves when they try to achieve their goals
- The type of challenges individuals select for themselves (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:240).

Bandura (1977:191) theorised that an individual who scores high on both of the two variables, efficacy and outcome expectancy, will respond to the challenges of an activity with self-assurance. Individuals with low self-efficacy as well as low expectancy are unlikely to sustain their efforts and will give up readily if they feel that the outcomes might be undesirable (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:174). Past experiences and the interpretation of these experiences also influence the individuals' perceptions of how well they might be able to complete a similar task in the future and how much effort it might require to do so (Bandura, 1977:191). Building on the theory of Bandura (1977:191), educator efficacy was first described in the seminal work by Dembo & Gibson, (1985:173) of the Rand Corporation. These researchers found that educators' efficacy seem to be related to the goals they achieve in their classes, how their learners perform, how motivated their learners are as well as how long the educators stayed in their current positions. The aforementioned factors are important as they have an influence on how music educators experience their own efficacy, how this in turn influences the way learners perform in music class and how motivated the learners are to participate in activities in the music class.

Beliefs about one's own efficacy is the result of a learning process (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:6). Music educators' self-efficacy is mostly formed at the beginning of their careers and seems to become more firmly established the more experience they gain (Klassen & Chui, 2010:741). According to the literature, music educator efficacy seems to increase from 0 to 23 years of experience and then seems to gradually decrease after that until the age of retirement (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:178–179; Klassen & Chui, 2010:748). In a study conducted by De Vries (2013:388), it was implied that music educators' self-efficacy does have an influence on their teaching practice. The areas most affected are: educators' confidence in engaging with their

learners, their management of learners' behaviour and the use of effective teaching strategies (Klassen & Chui, 2010:748). If music educators believe that, despite their own efforts or that of other educators, a learner will fail, they can maintain their sense of self-efficacy and competence (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:179) in the belief that they have tried their best. In the same study the researchers also found that educators with little self-efficacy tend to exacerbate learners' low achievements and performance levels.

Music educator efficacy has been described as the belief that the music educator holds regarding the influence he has over his learners' learning and motivation, including learners who might be unmotivated, uninterested or difficult to teach (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:240). Dembo and Gibson (1985:173) seem to concur with this view. It also seems to be related to the willingness of music educators to implement new instructional innovations (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997:452). Music educators who are confident in their teaching and are positive that their learners are excelling, tend to focus more on their teaching than on themselves (Davis, 2006:197). According to Barfield and Burlingame (1974:10), music educators who do not have high self-efficacy prefer to favour a more custodial style of teaching in which they tend to be strict and rigid and where control is paramount. It has also been found that educators with an elevated sense of self-efficacy tend not to become angered or frustrated easily by misbehaving learners than educators with little sense of self-efficacy (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:177).

Music educator efficacy seems to impact on various important areas and, according to Brouwers and Tomic (2001:240), educators' efficacy has an influence on educators' innovativeness, professional commitment, their classroom management strategies, stress levels and their absenteeism from school. The enjoyment and satisfaction music educators find in teaching and their sense of community with other educators also seem to be influenced by their sense of efficacy (Battistich *et al.*, 1997:143).

Efficacy judgements result from the meeting point between the evaluation of the importance of factors that makes educating children a difficult career on the one hand and an evaluation of one's own teaching abilities on the other hand (Brouwers &

Tomic, 1998:241). In order to make efficacy judgements, music educators draw on four sources:

- Past experiences that have been mastered and give the educators a sense of their own capabilities
- The observation of other educators who have the same tasks that might alter the way educators perceive their own efficacy
- Being verbally persuaded by others of one's own efficacy
- Affective and physiological states can be indicative of the individual's vulnerability to dysfunctionality (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:6).

As music educators' sense of self-efficacy is based on how they perceive themselves in relation to other educators, it is important that reliable information be given to them so that they can make the correct assessment. As most educators work in isolation in their own classes, their success or failure does not seem to have an impact on other educators' behaviour (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:180).

Several studies (Louis, 1998:14; Raudenbush *et al.*, 1992:165) remarked that educator efficacy can be predicted by the support they perceive to obtain from their colleagues and the school principal, and furthermore can be influenced by educators' own evaluation of how well they think they perform their jobs. Music educators who perceive themselves to be performing badly in their jobs, might think that they cannot rely on the support of their colleagues or the principal (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:17). Educators who feel ineffective at work are less likely to commit themselves. The more effective individuals feel, the more committed they become and this in turn increases their sense of efficacy (Louis, 1998:5).

Brouwers and Tomic (2001:249) is of the opinion that there is a relationship between educators' personal accomplishments and their sense of efficacy. Music educators who feel that they have not accomplished much in their teaching career, are not in control of their classes, and are not able to control their learners' behaviour, are likely to give up on their teaching jobs than educators who feel more accomplished. Educators with spiritual wellbeing are resilient and able to transcend external

circumstances (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:249). They might not have control over the immediate factors affecting them but they choose more wisely how to respond to their situations.

### **2.3 External factors that influence the educator's experience of teaching and learning music**

From reading the scholarly literature, I have postulated that there are two main external factors that have an influence on the educator's teaching experience:

- The school culture and climate
- The socio-economic status of the school.

The literature indicates to me that the school culture and climate are influenced by two distinct factors:

- The organisational climate of the school
- The classroom climate.

After having read the literature, I realised that the organizational climate is in turn influenced by various factors such as:

- The support the educator perceives to receive from the principal and also from his or her colleagues
- Support from the parents which the educator needs to be effective in teaching
- A positive and stimulating learning environment and positive relationships with other educators add to a positive teaching experience of the educator.

Having examined the school culture and climate, I will now discuss the literature on the influence of the socio-economic status of the school on the educator's teaching experience.

### **2.3.1 School culture and climate**

A school's organisational structure and the way in which it operates can have a significant influence on the decision of educators either to remain at a school or to resign. Moreover, where educators perceive that there is no sense of community in the school they feel isolated and inconsequential and tend to leave (Faber & Miller, 1981:238). The organisational climate of the school will be assessed first. I start by assessing the support which the educator perceives to receive from the principal and colleagues.

#### **2.3.1.1 Organisational climate of the school**

According to Harkind *et al.* (2001:75), teaching is influenced by a myriad of factors such as:

- The subject being taught
- The learners in class
- The available time allocated to the subject
- The personality of the educator
- The available resources
- The prevailing climate in the school.

The climate of the school consists of a complex set of elements that refer to the quality and character of the school (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:182), but researches are not always in agreement as to what exactly school climate is (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:183). It reflects the goals, norms, values, teaching and learning values and interpersonal relationships of the school (Piscatelli & Lee, 2011:183). It is based on the sequence of people's experiences (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:282), and has been diagnosed as an important component of improving school policies and practices (Piscatelli & Lee, 2011:182). School climate:

- is created by certain behaviours and the implementation of certain values and attitudes that become characteristics of the school (Saunders, 2009:292)

- recognises the social, emotional, ethical, academic and environmental dimensions of the school (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:202)
- is not an individual experience but a group phenomenon
- is important for the development of productive adults that can contribute positively to a democratic society (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:282)
- is the larger organisational patterns as well as the spheres of school life such as relationships, safety, the environment and teaching and learning (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:282)
- is responsible for how educators' experience their sense of community and affects the quality of their relationships with both learners and other educators (Davis *et al.*, 2002:5).
- and community have a profound influence on learners' achievements and motivation (Osterman, 2000:359; Thapa *et al.*, 2013:369)
- and social support for educators have a positive impact on educators' satisfaction and motivation and their retention (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:184)
- influences educators' perception of the principal's competence, the support they receive from the school administration and parents, the learning environment and the relationships they have with their colleagues (Battistich *et al.*, 1997:143).

Schools, however, do not exist in isolation and therefore the school climate will also be influenced by the area in which the school is situated, and the country as well as the community in which it operates (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:282).

The school community can be described as a place where individuals care about one another and where they support one another. Members of this community feel a sense of belonging. They identify with the community and share common goals and values (Battistich *et al.*, 1997:137).

Music educators who experience aggression from learners are prime candidates for resignation and mental health problems, but a study conducted by Berg and Cornell (2016:122) found that a positive school climate can reduce stress significantly. A number of studies have shown that there may be a significant relationship between

music educator attrition and teaching conditions (Darling-Hammond, 2003:7–12; Hirsch & Emerick, 2007:1–55; Loeb *et al.*, 2005:44–70).

- **Principal's and administrative support**

One of the most important forces in a school is the leader (principal) as he sets the tone for people's behaviour (Maranto & Maranto, 2006:153), and "shapes" the school (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:187). The way in which a principal interacts with his staff and the opportunities he provides for them to participate in the deciding on policies of the school, influences the climate of the school (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:181). He is also responsible for setting the expectations of his educators as well as creating the working conditions of the school (Allensworth *et al.*, 2009:30). School principals who display strong leadership skills, where music educators feel that they have a say in their work environment, and where the principal encourages good relationships among his educators, tend to have a low staff turn-over (Allensworth *et al.*, 2009:230). The extent to which the principal recognises and honours his staff's teaching and the goals he shares with them (Cohen *et al.*, 2009:187) are also factors that influence music educators' teaching experience.

Not only does the principal have a significant influence over the teaching experience of his music educators, but so do the administrators. Administrative support is the support educators receive from the other leaders within the school which allows them to teach effectively and with relative ease. This support can assume a variety of forms, such as providing educators with teaching material, and in the case of music educators, instruments as well as opportunities for professional development (Hirsch & Emerick, 2007:20). Administrative support can have a significant influence on the teaching experience of music educators as it can influence working conditions such as safety (Boyd *et al.*, 2011:307) as well as the funding that is available for music education in the school (Frierson-Campbell, 2004:14).

In schools where music educators have the support of the administrators and where there are enough resources for effective teaching, staff turn-over tends to be minimal (Darling-Hammond, 2003:9). However, in schools where music educators perceive that their professional needs are in conflict with the needs of the school's administration, more educators tend to resign (Frierson-Campbell, 2003:14). Music

educators not only leave schools where their professional needs are not met, but they also leave when they feel that they have no say in the decisions that are made in the school.

One of the most important aspects of any organisation is the degree to which management allows the employees to be involved in the decision and policy making. Research has indicated that educators' participation in these matters has an influence on the productivity of the school (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:181). It might be good for schools to invest in the happiness of the music educators they employ (Boyd *et al.*, 2011:329) and that the problems that the educators experience are understood and dealt with constructively (Loeb *et al.*, 2005:47).

- **Parental support**

Educators rely on the support they receive from the learners' parents, especially at primary school level (Allensworth *et al.*, 2009:2, 27). The support music educators receive specifically from the parents of low-achieving learners can have a major influence on the way educators experience their teaching (Ashton *et al.*, 1984:10). When parents seem to be uninterested in their child's development or do not seem to appreciate the effort of the educator, the music educator becomes frustrated and may stop communicating with the parents altogether (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:181). In schools where music educators experience the parents to be supportive and involved with the school, and where parents regularly pick up reports, attend meetings with the educators, respect the music educator and volunteer to help out, educators are more likely to remain. In this regard, it is not only the support that music educators experience from parents that matters, but also the ways in which a school communicates with parents and provides opportunities for parents to be involved that influence educators (Allensworth *et al.*, 2009:27).

- **Work environment and facilities**

Most of the educator's job involves interacting with learners in a certain environment (Allensworth *et al.*, 2009:27). Music educators need adequate facilities and material to teach. Facilities refer to the physical environment that the music educator has to teach in as well as to the resources available to him, and therefore school budgets and the

availability of resources are closely associated with staff turn-over in a school (Allensworth *et al.*, 2009:6). Resources might include books, instruments and a CD player, which may have a significant influence on the educator's teaching experience. (Boyd *et al.*, 2011:308).

The availability of resources, technology and the physical environment the music educator has to work in can also have a significant influence on staff turn-over at the school (Loeb *et al.*, 2005:65). According to Darling-Hammond (2003:9), working conditions have an important influence on how educators experience their work. People, though, are not victims of their circumstances. They have a choice of how to react to their circumstances and some, who tend to be more resilient than others, will be happy under most circumstances, whereas less resilient people, regardless of their circumstances, will never be happy.

Schools with more but smaller classes tend to attract new music educators, and class size seems to be related to educators' sense of community. As music educators they seem to experience easier and better working conditions when they have smaller classes to teach (Loeb *et al.*, 2005:47). Larger schools also tend to have more educators per grade, which enhances the opportunities for cooperation between educators as well as providing opportunities for co-teaching (Battistich *et al.*, 1997:147). Regardless of class size, it is also true that music educators are sometimes viewed as a "time resource" since they are supposed to provide the classroom educators with "free" time to do their preparation and to mark learners' work, which has a negative effect on music educators' experience (Frierson-Campbell, 2003:7).

Class size seems to be significantly influenced by the socio-economic status of the school. Darling-Hammond (2003:10) found that music educators in low-income schools had fewer facilities available to them, significantly worse working conditions, felt less safe, had less access to resources such as books and technology, experienced the school's administration to be less supportive and had larger classes to teach, all of which contributed to a less positive teaching experience. A safe and supportive environment can lead to greater educator satisfaction, whereas music educators who experience the work place to be unsafe, seem to suffer more from burn-out and tend to resign more easily (Boyd *et al.*, 2011:328; Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:3;

Gottfredson *et al.*, 2005:436). The physical work environment and the availability of resources are not the only factors in the organisational structure of the school that might influence educators' experience. Music educators are also very much influenced by their relationships with their colleagues, which will be discussed next.

- **Educator-educator relationships**

The relationships of a school's staff members with one another refer to the professional and social relationships educators have with one another. Positive educator-educator relationships are marked by trust in one another, people feeling comfortable around one another and where educators feel they can discuss their work problems openly and can seek advice from their colleagues (Allensworth *et al.*, 2009:25). In research conducted by Frierson-Campbell (2003:7), it was found that music educators are not always accepted by other educators into the teaching culture and that school administrators sometimes perceived them as providers of some release time for the "real" educators, instead of viewing the music educators as real professionals. According to Brouwers and Tomic (2001:5), a perceived lack of emotional support and friendship from their colleagues might add to music educators' negative attitude.

Emotional support is one of the most important social support functions in a working environment. It refers to the degree to which educators' fundamental emotional needs are satisfied through their interactions with their colleagues (Thoits, 1982:145). Fundamental emotional needs will include the need for affection from colleagues, the need for encouragement when facing problems, reassurance and good advice from others facing the same problems or who have faced them in the past. Educators' emotional needs are met when they feel that they have meaningful interactions with their colleagues (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:5). According to Allensworth *et al.* (2009:27), educators seem to remain in schools where there is a "can do" attitude and where people are innovative and work together as a team in order to improve the school. The climate which the music educator creates in the classroom will influence the relationship between the educator and the learners. How this happens will be examined next.

### **2.3.1.2 Classroom climate**

The ability of music educators to control the learners in their class is a very important factor in teaching, as educators must be able to intervene when learners' behaviour is disruptive, which cause valuable teaching time to be lost. For music educators to reach their educational goals, they must be able to control the learners and maintain order in the music class (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:242). The achievement of academic goals is often the main motivation of educators, and in order to achieve this, music educators need discipline, structure and routine in their classes. Music educators who can balance their need for structure with their learners' need for autonomy (Thomas & Oldfather, 1997:117) will not only increase their learners' intrinsic motivation, but also the learners' feelings of competence, their sense of responsibility for their own learning and their use of various strategies to conceptual understanding (Reeve, 2006:225-236). By establishing a relaxed classroom structure and routine, music educators can play an important role in the development of the learners to form an integrated personality with the ability to self-regulate their behaviour (Davis, 2003:215). If learners are disciplined and seem to have the same learning goals as the educator, the task of the music educator becomes much easier (Deci *et al.*, 1991:337).

Discipline in the music class leads to a more positive affective classroom environment and, according to Wubbles *et al.* (1991:155), is associated with better academic performance, learners who are more motivated, learners who have a better self-concept and learners who are engaged in their task of learning. Music educators who are regarded as friendly and supportive, who facilitate learning with a task-orientated ethos in class, often have learners who display improved affective and cognitive outcomes (Baker, 1999:58). According to Battistich *et al.* (1997:148), a positive affective classroom climate also promotes positive social outcomes such as social competence, empathy with peers and learners who are more willing to seek help with problems (Ryan *et al.*, 2001:93–114). A positive affective classroom climate also appears to promote academic outcomes such as intrinsic motivation and reading comprehension (Battistich *et al.*, 1997:148). Affective classroom climate is also affected by the tone of voice used by the music educator (Patrick *et al.*, 2001:35–56; Turner *et al.*, 1998:735; Turner *et al.*, 2002:93), the non-verbal messages sent by the educator's body language (Neill, 1989:195–204), the learners' need for belonging

(Osterman, 2000:323–367) as well as the pressure to behave in a socially responsible way (Wentzel, 1998:202–209). All of these factors seem to have important consequences for both relationship as well as academic outcomes (Davis, 2006:211).

- **Educator-learner relationships**

Educators and learners spend most of their days in each other's company and the relationship between educator and learner has been considerably investigated over the last 20 years (Davis, 2003:207). The very nature of the interactions between music educator and learner make a unique contribution to the learner's general and intellectual development (Resnick *et al.*, 1997:828). Davis *et al.* (2002:2) are of the opinion that the initial perception the educator has of a learner can predict the quality of the relationship they develop afterwards. Music educators do realise the importance of developing good relationships with their learners as seen in a study conducted by Davis (2006:211), who argues that music educators find that learners are more positive in their attitude towards school and are more likely to make an effort for the educator if they have a positive relationship with that music educator. Music educators have to establish ways to connect with their learners' own understanding of academic and to foster adult-child relationships in order to be an effective guide for the learners on their journey to mastering intellectual and social knowledge (Davis, 2003:219). For the music educator, like the class educator, to build a positive relationship with a learner, the onus is on the educator to incorporate the learner as a "significant other" who, in social situations outside of the school, mediates these musical encounters (Saunders, 2009:292–293) In the classroom both music educator and learner take joint responsibility for the construction and maintenance of this academic and social relationship (Davis, 2003:219).

In joint responsibility both music educator and learner take responsibility to support one another, thus promoting an environment in which learners feel safe. In such an environment learners are more likely to be open to listen to the educator and to take intellectual risks. According to Davis (2006:194), learners tend to work harder at subjects where they like the educator, meaning that the music educator consequently has more opportunities to push learners' boundaries by encouraging them to take risks. In a positive relationship both the music educator and the learners engage in a process where they have to negotiate both the meaning of the various cognitive

activities that need to be executed as well as the social intellectual activities such as the use of humour in the class (Davis, 2003:219). According to Thomas and Oldfather (1997:115), relationships between educators and learners are negatively influenced when the educator sees himself or herself to be the keeper of all the knowledge, thereby simplifying the cognitive activities for the learners and stifling their growth. In contrast to this, educators who regard their learners as competent in co-constructing knowledge, tend to engage in teaching strategies that empower the learners, such as self-evaluation. By using a tool such as self-evaluation, the music educator may be instrumental in helping the learners to understand their own vulnerabilities and strengths, as well as helping them to discover their own potential (Davis, 2003:213).

The strategies selected by some music educators, though, are very often aimed at control over the class, and this can have a negative influence on the relationship between the music educator and the learners as it emphasises the difference in power between educator and learners. This seems to be particularly true when learners are not able to understand the evaluation process and do not understand what a good or bad grade should be attributed (Davis, 2003:213). According to educators in research conducted by Davis (2006:209), learners who are organised, honest, conscientious and show respect for other learners, themselves and their educator, are easier to have a relationship with than learners who tend to be shy or who misbehave in class. Having said that, it is important for music educators to have a class that gels and can come together to form a collective class identity. This provides social momentum to the class and encourages the shyer learners to interact with others. In classes where the learners find it difficult to gel, they can experience social as well as cognitive inertia and misbehaviour seems to occur more often (Davis, 2006:213).

Misbehaving learners often interfere with educators' teaching (Roberts *et al.*, 2015:6). Learners' misbehaviour can be an important source of educator burn-out and stress (Galand *et al.*, 2007:473; Hastings & Bham, 2003:123; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011:1032). A positive experience of good relationships between educators and learners leads to the former suffering less burn-out, and good relationships with learners can guard the educators against other stressors as well (Berg & Cornell, 2016:124; Galand *et al.*, 2007). Educators see a wide variety of learner behaviours as contributing to the quality of relationships (Davis, 2006:210). According to Allensworth

*et al.* (2009:27), educators tend to resign from their jobs at schools where learners do not engage in appropriate academic behaviour and where their continuous misbehaviour is not dealt with consistently (Boyd *et al.*, 2011:308). Music educators who believe themselves to be competent to teach learners with behavioural problems or who are unmotivated, are regarded as displaying internal control<sup>10</sup>, whereas educators who believe that their own teaching abilities are over-ruled by the environment, are regarded as displaying external control<sup>11</sup> (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:241). Many music educators struggle to deal with learners who are argumentative, do not obey instructions or who are defiant. They would rather deal with learners who listen, are cooperative and who are intelligent (Davis, 2006:210).

Music educators who believe that they are dealing with intelligent learners tend to create better and warmer socio-emotional relationships with them (Cooper & Tom, 1984:80). Babad (1995:362) reports that learners perceive low-achieving learners as receiving more support from educators, and that educators do not have high expectations of these learners, but also in the same vein, educators seem to give more warmth and emotional support to the more intelligent learners.

These findings are in contrast with later research conducted by Baker (1999:66), in which it was found that low-achieving learners and learners with low levels of school satisfaction have to ask the educator three times more for assistance than high-achieving, intelligent learners. Rothbart *et al.* (1971:53) agree that educators tend to give learners who they perceive to be more intelligent more time to answer questions, give them clues and rephrase questions more than they would do for learners who they perceive to be low-achieving or not very intelligent. This trend was confirmed by a similar study conducted by Cooper and Tom (1984:81).

Learners, on the other hand, tend to perceive high-performance learners to have a different relationship with the music educator than they themselves (low performance learners who do not achieve academically well), and say that educators seem to treat more intelligent, high-achieving learners with more respect. This leads to a negative

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<sup>10</sup> Internal control: "Control existing within the mind" (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed, 5/03/2017).

<sup>11</sup> External control: "Control exercised by the outside world" (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 5/03/2017).

classroom climate and a negative relationship with the music educator (Babad, 1995:372; Baker, 1999:65), which is aggravated by educators who tend to discuss new teaching material with the more intelligent learners (Cooper & Tom, 1984:80). Most educators find humour as a way to connect with their learners, and music educators and learners alike appreciate one another if they can be “funny in appropriate ways”. Many educators view humour as a tool to reach intellectual and social goals as well as a way to identify with their learners (Davis, 2006:209).

Although music plays an important role in the lives of very young children who engage in it without hesitation (Custodero, 2002:3), music in school seems to lose its appeal as children grow older and it is therefore important for pre-adolescents to be able to identify with their music educator in order for music in school to remain relevant for these learners (Saunders, 2009:292). A positive identification with the music educator is related to more learners identifying with class music (Lamont, 2002:54). In turn, in music classes where learners are able to achieve the expected outcomes, there seems to be a more positive relationship between the learners and the educator (Spence, 2006:51). Music educators who recognise individual learners' abilities, make time to listen to them, share a joke with them and share some personal information with them (Harkind *et al.*, 2001:83) and who are furthermore open to use learners' knowledge of music as a resource in their own music classes, tend to have better relationships with their learners (Saunders, 2009:293).

Research conducted by Davis (2006:207) on relationships between educators and learners showed that educators' and learners' motivations affect the quality of their relationships. For good relationships between music educators and learners to exist, according to motivation research, the relationship should support motivation and learning (Davis, 2003:211). Learners' motivation can be influenced by the instructional strategies (the methods employ by educators to teach) used by educators (Perry, 1998:725; Turner & Meyer, 2000:71). Music educators also offer emotional help to learners, and research on social-motivational support argues that good relationships between music educators and learners can be attributed to educators providing emotional help for learners as the intellectual development of learners is not the only goal of teaching in the classroom (Dodge *et al.*, 1989:127; Ford, 1996:126; Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998:169). The relationship between music educator and learner continues

to be important right through adolescence as it continues to influence learners' motivation (Roeser *et al.*, 2000:457; Wentzel, 1997:416; Ryan *et al.*, 1998:534). However, unfortunately all learners are not equally influenced by the same educator (Davis, 2003:215).

The involvement of educators with their learners not only influences the learners' motivation, but also the quality of their emotional involvement in school in general (Skinner & Belmont, 1993:577). In classes where the learners perceive the music educator to be involved, caring, supportive and friendly, they feel more comfortable interacting with the educator as well as with their peers. Also, if they need to ask for help, learners feel that they are less likely to be judged in a class where the educator and their peers know them beyond their academic abilities (Ryan *et al.*, 1998:529). According to Wentzel (1997:412), involved and caring educators display caring behaviour and they engage in conversations with their learners that lead to mutual understanding of each other's perspective. In class, music educators can demonstrate their caring by being organised and planning effectively for class, as well as through the use of modelling and promoting their learners' use of effective learning strategies. This seems to be particularly true in the case of high-efficacy educators (Moje, 1996:184).

### **2.3.2 Socio-economic status of the school**

The socio-economic<sup>12</sup> status of a school has a direct influence on music educators. The scarcity of instruments, textbooks and other resources and difficulties with classroom management (Bell-Robertson, 2014:432) are just a few of the issues that confront music educators working in low socio-economic status environments (Bernard, 2010:53). Many educators often work extended hours and the money they earn by doing so is often not enough, and they are thus forced to acquire extra employment in order to complement their income (Jorgensen, 2010:21). Educators believe that the geographical location of the school determines the type of community resources available to them and the ability of parents to participate in music activities (Costa-Giomi, 2008:25). According to Fitzpatrick (2011:236), educators feel that in

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<sup>12</sup> Socio-economic: "The interaction of social and economic factor" ([www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com), online, accessed 3/03/2017).

schools with low socio-economic status they have to concentrate on the basics, be creative with the limited resources at their disposal and spend their personal money on helping their learners to develop.

There is no significant differences in the experiences between high socio-economic status schools and low socio-economic status schools as far as educator preparation, intention to continue teaching, involvement in musical activities outside school and involvement in school and professional activities are concerned. Costa-Giomi (2008:20) is of the opinion that the best predictor of the availability of string programmes at the elementary school level is the socio-economic profile of the learners (Costa-Giomi, 2008:20). Music educators' programmes are affected by funding (Abril & Gault, 2005:65). Some educators are given a specific amount of money to spend each year; others are expected to ask their school-level administrator or district arts administrator for funds for wanted or needed purchases. The socio-economic status of the school will have an influence on the learner numbers in classes because classes in lower socio-economic status schools tend to have more learners, which impacts on music educators by negatively affecting the classroom climate (Abril & Gault, 2005:63; Bell-Robertson, 2014:432).

## **2.4 Summary**

This part of the literature review examined the scholarly literature on how music educators experience teaching music to Grade 7 learners. From the literature it appears that the factors influencing educators can be divided into internal and external factors. Internal factors include the educators' constructions of their identity that is the mental picture they have of themselves as educators. The educators' professional identities consist of the character they create for themselves as well as the role they see themselves playing at school. The educators' identity appears to be influenced by the internal conflict that some of them experience between being a musician and an educator. Music educators' experience of teaching is influenced not only by their own professional identities but also by the expectations they have of their learners, which may have an influence on how efficacious they feel in class.

The external factors influencing the teaching experience can be divided into the school culture and climate and the socio-economic status of the school. By experiencing the school as a positive learning environment, educators are more satisfied in their jobs and suffer less from stress. Support from the school principal, the school administration, parents and colleagues bring about a better teaching experience than that experienced by educators who do not have these support systems. The literature indicates that the working environment, including class size and the facilities available to the educator, forms part of the external factors that can influence the educator's teaching experience. The working environment includes the relationships of the educators with their colleagues, and it has been indicated that educators with positive relationships with their colleagues tend to experience greater job satisfaction. Positive relationships with learners tend to contribute to the educator's job satisfaction and to the learner's motivation. Furthermore, schools in more affluent areas attract educators more easily as the classes in these schools are smaller, tend to be more manageable and better equipped.

# CHAPTER 3

## LITERATURE REVIEW: GRADE 7 LEARNERS' EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC

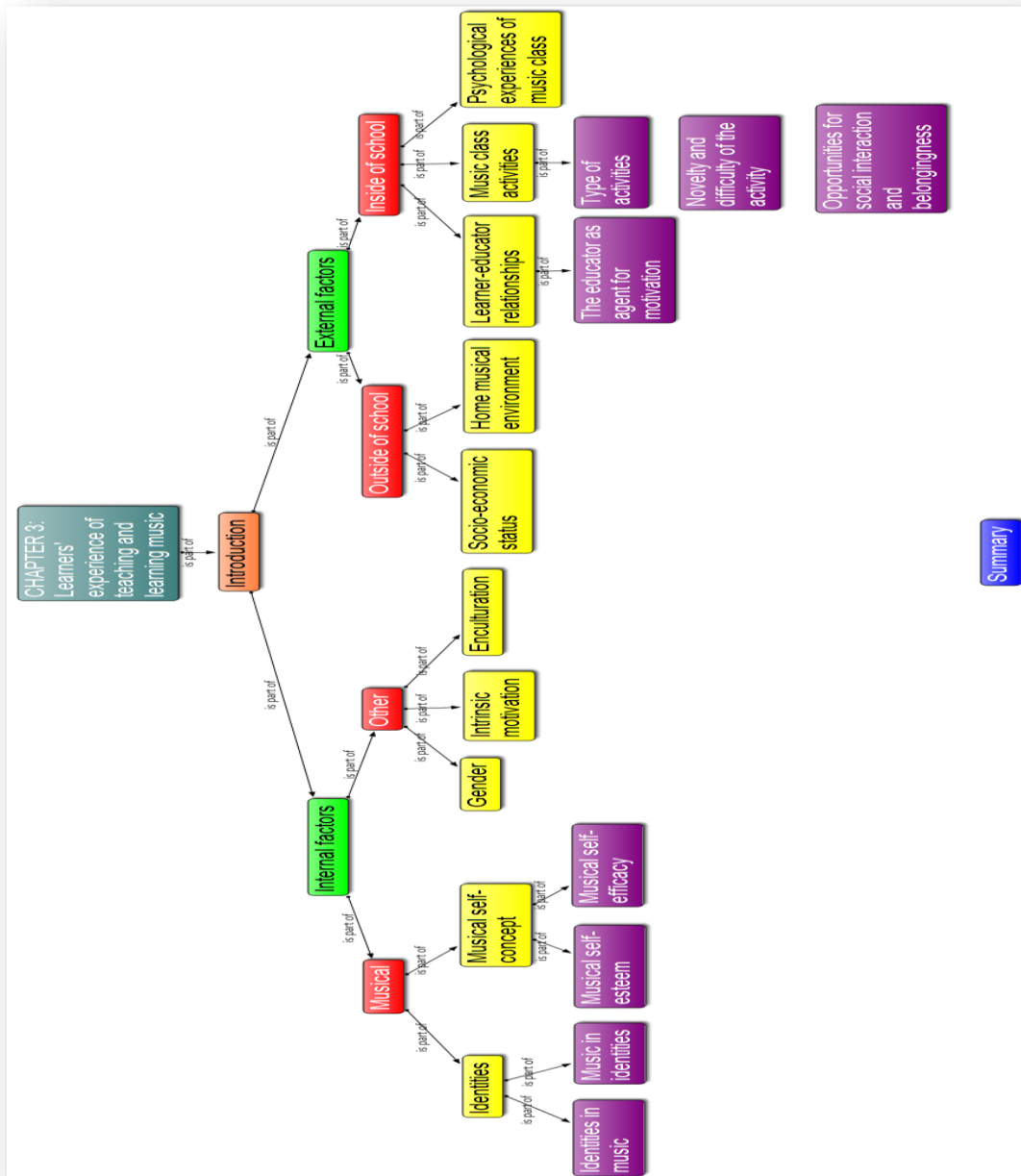


Figure 4: Structure of Chapter 3

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this section of the literature review, I analyse how the Grade 7 learner experiences learning music in school (see Figure 4). I first examine the literature pertaining to previous research into learners' experience of learning music. Although music forms an important part of most pre-adolescents' lives, music educators are concerned about the way learners view music education in school (Bowman, 1988:2). This may be due to the fact that learners' daily musical lives seem to have little in common with their musical experiences at school (Pendergast *et al.*, 2009:311). From examining the scholarly literature, I found that learners' experience of music in the Grade 7 classroom is influenced by a variety of internal and external factors. Before discussing these factors, I will examine previous research conducted into learners' experiences of teaching and learning music.

#### ***3.1.1 Previous research into learners' experience***

One of the first researchers to conduct a survey into Grade 6 and 7 music teaching in school was Glenn in 1929 (Glenn, 1929). Her dissertation *Ascertaining attitudes toward music* focused on the activities in music class, such as instrumental play, that learners enjoyed the most. Since then different researchers have investigated various aspects of music in primary school. Taylor (2002:31) researched the relationship between music attitude and selected factors in elementary music students. She emphasises that most learners in elementary school like to play instruments in class and that they enjoy producing sounds on instruments that sound good together. Phillips (2003:16) explored the music attitudes of middle school students in relation to home musical environment and self-concept in music, and found that low socio-economic status, poor home musical environment and low self-concept in music impact music attitudes negatively. Wayman (2005:97), in her research on the meaning of the music education experience for middle school general music learners, mentioned that learning music can be a meaningful and multi-faceted experience. Griffin (2007:19) researched the musical lives of children in elementary school, and focused on how primary school children of ages between 6 and 12 years of age, experience music inside and outside of school. Campbell (2009:20) investigated middle school students', ages 13 to 15 years, possible self-beliefs and their music participation. The most recent research was conducted by Rawlings (2015:8), who

examined the effect that middle school music ensembles have on the relatedness learners feel to school. None of these studies examined the experience the Grade 7 learner has of learning music in school. My investigation now turns to the literature about possible factors that influence the learners' classroom experience.

From the scholarly literature, I surmised that these factors can be divided into internal and external factors. I first examine the literature on the internal factors.

### **3.2 Internal factors that influence the Grade 7 learner's experience of teaching and learning music**

The internal factors (Bonneville-Roussy *et al.*, 2013:704) can be divided into musical factors and "other".

#### **3.2.1 Musical factors**

Musical factors that may influence the learner's experience can be their musical identities: Here I make a distinction between "identities in music" and "music in identities" (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2002:1). From a review of the existing scholarly literature, I have noted that a learner's musical self-concept is an overriding musical factor, in that it comprises of a learner's musical self-esteem and self-efficacy. The latter two facets form the pillars of musical self-concept (Frank, 2011).

#### **3.2.2 Identity**

Identity is the view we have of ourselves (Saunders, 2009:110–111) and is concerned with the things we have in common with and the ways we differ from other people (Weeks, 1990:88). In other words, it affects our sense of belonging and in the case of school music, the learners' musical identity will tell them (and others) where they fit in musically by the music that they identify with.

Music can assist learners in the formation of an identity in music, for example: A learner may think "I am a not a good musician" or the learner may use music to help him form an identity, for example: "I like country music, therefore I like other people

who listen to country music” (Saunders, 2009:120). According to Hargreaves *et al.* (2002:14), there is a difference between “identities in music” and “music in identities”.

- **Identities in music**

Identities in music are based on social categories and cultural musical practices (Saunders, 2009:120). The learner’s identity in music can play an important part in the formation of the self-identity (Lamont, 2002:47) as well as in the behaviour of the learner in the music classroom. During pre-adolescence and adolescence, the young learner is under intense pressure to conform and music plays an important part in helping learners explore who they are and assisting them with the formation of peer relationships (Delsing *et al.*, 2008:111).

The learners’ strong need for attachment at this age leads to them associating with a specific, valued group (Eccles & Wigfield, 1997:19). Thus learners tend to affiliate themselves with groups that are drawn to the same musical preferences (Selfhout *et al.*, 2009:106) and social characteristics close to their own identities (Tarrant *et al.*, 2002:138). This enables them to formulate a positive social identity (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2002:1). Studies also indicate that pre-adolescents, like adolescents, tend to listen to specific genres of music in order to boost their own popularity amongst their peers and to enhance affiliation to the group (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006:133).

Young people perceive music making and music listening as an integral part of their lives (Choate, 1968:139). According to research conducted by Saunders (2009:116), pre-adolescents and adolescents listen to music for up to six hours per day, and learners consider their music collections to be one of their most valuable possessions. North *et al.* (2000:269) observed that 13-to 14-year-olds listen to music mainly in order to impress their friends or to be considered “cool”. By choosing a certain genre of music, the learner tells his peers not only who he is but also who he wants to be (Saunders, 2009:117). According to Tarrant *et al.*, (2002:136), the learner balances peer relations by openly displaying his musical likes as well as dislikes. The creation of a certain social context by the peer group seems to be very important for the prediction of learners’ behaviour in music class (Saunders, 2009:117).

The social contexts in which learners listen to music are important for the purposes of this dissertation as music naturally lends itself to social functions (Crozier, 1997:67). Listening to music is an important and valued activity amongst Grade 7 learners (Davis, 2011:19), who are very passionate about it (Bonneville-Roussy *et al.*, 2013:706). Pre-adolescents and other young people listen to music in a wide variety of private and public settings (Bonneville-Roussy *et al.*, 2013:703; Hargreaves, 1986:83) including social and solitary settings (North *et al.*, 2004:41). For pre-adolescents listening to music is a form of social networking (North *et al.*, 2004:46), which brings me to the next section: “music in identities”.

- **Music in identities**

Music in identities refers to the way we use music to identify ourselves to others (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2002:1). Pre-adolescents and adolescents listen to music in order to express themselves (North *et al.*, 2004:71), to discover themselves and as a means of self-regulation (Bonneville-Roussy *et al.*, 2013:703). It also serves as a way to symbolically represent the pre-adolescent’s values and beliefs and is influenced by interpersonal and musical encounters that the learner confronts every day (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2002:7).

Musical interaction and participation in musical activities is experienced differently by boys and girls. Girls listen to music in order to address their emotional needs, whereas boys may listen to music in order to create a certain external impression (North *et al.*, 2000:6). Boys sometimes engage in musical activities when they see an adult male they admire participating in musical activities (Campbell, 2009:5). Learners’ musical identities consist of musical self-esteem and musical self-efficacy, that both inform the musical self-concept that forms the musical identity (Saunders, 2009:110–111).

- **Musical self-concept**

Musical self-concept is the description of what learners believe about their own musical abilities, for instance: “I am a musician” or “I am not musically talented”. The musical self-concept is derived from musical self-esteem and musical self-efficacy (Frank, 2011, online) and it can also be described as the evaluation that learners make of themselves with regard to their achievements and skills. Svengalis (1978:44) is of

the opinion that a good relationship should prevail between musical self-concept and attitude towards music class. Phillips (2003:9) concurs with this as his research points out that self-concept can contribute to learners' attitudes towards music on all grade levels. Taylor (2002:71) finds that self-concept is the single most important predictor of learners' attitudes towards learning music.

According to Phillips (2003:11) and Simpkins *et al.* (2012:1021), the musical self-concept that learners develop during the middle school years can be a strong indicator of participation in music performance. Furthermore, the amount of time learners spend on their musical activities can be accurately predicted from the musical self-concept of their abilities and values (Simpkins *et al.*, 2012:1027). Phillips (2003:117) maintains that learners' self-concept in music seems to decrease as they progress through school, and that girls' attitudes towards music seem to be more strongly influenced by their musical self-concept and their musical self-esteem than those of boys.

- **Musical self-esteem**

The regard people have for their musical abilities and how they view their own musical abilities and talent (Wayman, 2005:43), is referred to as musical self-esteem (Frank, 2011). It seems that musical self-esteem is strongly related to the feelings learners have towards music class (Wayman, 2005:43). Good musical self-esteem can improve the quality of social interactions for learners (Wayman, 2005:91) and improve their intrinsic motivation (Hallam, 2010:281–282). Not only does good musical self-esteem improve social interactions, but it also improves the learner's participation in a variety of musical activities according to Austin (1990:20). He postulates that learners with a good musical self-esteem are more involved in musical activities both in school as well as outside of school. Asmus (1986:74) concurs with this view, and Taylor (2002:14) is of the opinion that learners who perceive themselves to be musical seem to display a more positive attitude towards music in school. Learners who participate in music activities for a prolonged period of time seem to have greater musical self-esteem than learners who do not (Phillips & Weiss, 2016:54). Musical self-esteem also seems to be a predictor of learners' attitudes towards music in school (Vander Ark *et al.*, 1980:39; Wayman, 2005:50).

Musical self-esteem is not only informed by the home musical environment, but also by socio-economic status. In a study by Nolin and Vander Ark (1977:43) they observed that there is a connection between socio-economic status and musical self-esteem. They state that musical self-esteem is more positive amongst Grade 6 and 7 learners who attend a more affluent school than amongst Grade 6 and 7 learners at a less affluent school.

- **Musical self-efficacy**

Musical self-esteem is also informed by a learner's musical self-efficacy. Musical self-efficacy hints to the learners' belief in their ability to accomplish a specific goal (Bandura, 1977:32), and refers to their belief about the extent to which they think they can complete a given task in a specific situation (McPherson & McCormick, 2006:323). Musical self-efficacy can also be viewed as "the conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce a specific outcome" (Bandura, 1997:79). Self-efficacy is typically associated with music participation (Richmond *et al.*, 2015:4). It has been found to be a big predictor for success in an activity (Austin & Berg, 2006:541). If learners believe that they will not be successful at the activity, there is little chance that the activity will be pursued (Eccles, 1983:77).

According to Saunders (2009:82), learners' beliefs about their abilities to learn in music class seem to be indicative of their achievements in music. Roberts (2015:190) mentions that when learners anticipate that they will be successful at an activity, they also tend to show greater interest in the activity. Musical self-efficacy is developed by learners when they experience setbacks in the music programme as infrequent and experience the obstacles as not too daunting (Saunders, 2009:83). According to Roberts (2015:191), learners enjoy a challenge in music and tend to lose interest when the activity is perceived as being too easy. Hallam (2006:99) concurs with this view and argues that learners will pursue challenging tasks, but if the activity seems to present too great a challenge, they will cease to try. The problems that are encountered may be attributed to a lack of musical ability, which in turn can lead to a loss of self-esteem. Richmond *et al.* (2015:11) agree with this and add that learners thrive in a music programme where there is a balance between challenging tasks and tasks that the learners can complete successfully without too much effort.

Learners seem to find challenges in music that they perceive as being achievable and interesting (Roberts, 2015:191) and tend to spend more time on activities that they feel they are competent in (Eccles *et al.*, 1993:838). Learners feel that initial success in a new activity in the music class encourages interest in the activity (Chen & Darst 2001:251). A desire for challenge might be one of the reasons why learners engage in music activities (Barrett & Smigiel, 2007:39). Self-efficacy can also be increased with a music programme in which the difficulty of the task and the learner's abilities are well matched; in fact, it can increase intrinsic motivation (Richmond *et al.*, 2015:4).

When the opportunities for achievement are in balance with the learner's skills, "flow" occurs and optimal learning takes place, but if the challenges are too demanding for the learner's abilities, it causes anxiety and a loss of interest (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975:49). Wig and Boyle (1982:171, 172) relate that higher primary school learners who were taught to play the keyboard displayed a more positive musical self-efficacy in learning music as well as a more positive attitude towards their own creative abilities. Learners who believe that the music class is only for the "talented few" (Wayman, 2005:50) and that they lack musical abilities will not be motivated to participate in class (Austin *et al.*, 2006:222). It is therefore important for educators to present music programmes that will encourage their learners to develop positive perceptions of music participation and the achievement of goals set in class (Campbell, 2009:4). Anxiety and stress caused by tasks that are too demanding can have a negative effect on the learning process, whereas tasks that are perceived as being too easy may lead to boredom (Saunders, 2009:84).

Tasks that are perceived as too challenging can not only result in anxiety and stress, but can also cause learners to doubt their own competence. Competence refers to learners' beliefs of how well they can perform a specific assignment (McPherson 2009:142). Studies have shown that experiences in the music class appear to have certain emotional advantages that can assist learners' feelings of self-worth and competence (Wayman, 2005:89). According to Simpkins *et al.* (2012:1027–1028), learners with high competency levels find more pleasure in music activities, and perceive music more as a critical subject than those learners with low competency levels. That said, it appears from the literature that girls in general feel more competent about their musical abilities than boys (Phillips & Weiss, 2016:66).

Music educators should find activities in the music class that can boost boys' confidence, as feelings of success due to having completed a task successfully can boost boys' feelings of competence (Woody, 1998:41, 42). Learners tend to continue with an activity that they feel confident in doing (Eccles *et al.*, 1993:831; Simpkins *et al.*, 2012:1028). These learners also report higher task values and participation frequency. They tend to find these activities important and enjoyable and most are supported by their parents in their participation (Phillips & Weiss, 2016:67).

### **3.2.3 Other factors**

I will now discuss the literature on the other internal factors that may influence Grade 7 learners' experience of teaching and learning music. "Other" internal factors that can influence the learner's musical experience are gender, intrinsic motivation and enculturation.

#### **3.2.3.1 Gender**

The theme of differences in gender regarding achievement beliefs and behaviours (Phillips & Weiss, 2016:53) has emerged throughout the literature on music, sport, reading and mathematics (Simpkins *et al.*, 2012:1021). Due to learners' early exposure to mostly female primary school music educators, music has traditionally been perceived as a feminine domain (Eccles *et al.*, 1993:845), and the differences in musical performance between boys and girls starts at the young age of 5 to 7 years (Saunders, 2009:57). In contrast to these findings, Phillip and Weiss (2016:66) state that in their research group the boys had a more positive attitude towards music than the girls. This may be an indication that due to the popular culture expressed by television shows, male singers and music-based video games, the attitude of boys towards music is changing and is no longer seen as a female-dominated endeavour.

Phillips (2003:12) finds that in the literature he has studied, boys' attitudes are less positive than those of girls. Phillips (2003:9), Taylor (2002:70), Phillips and Aitchison (1998:40), Boswell (1991:55) and Pogonowski (1982:59) concluded that boys have significantly less positive attitudes towards music education than girls. Phillips (2003:111) says that attitudes towards music education seem to be more highly correlated with musical self-concept in girls than attitudes related to home musical

background. Girls not only have a more positive attitudes towards music classes than boys, but there also seems to be a difference in the type of activities that boys and girls prefer.

McGregor (1968:307) remarks that there is a difference in the listening preferences of boys and girls and that boys do not like rhythmic activities in class. Girls participate more in music activities outside of school and in general have greater musical self-esteem than boys (Eccles *et al.*, 1993:832–839; Simpkins *et al.*, 2012:1028).

The difference in self-esteem between boys and girls has been extensively researched in various subjects such as sports, reading and mathematics (Simpkins *et al.*, 2012:1029). Boys tend to have lower scores than girls on musical self-esteem (Philips, 2003:112). As Grade 7 girls are usually very concerned with self-image and insecurity, it stands to reason that it would impact on their musical self-esteem as well (Phillips, 2003:112). A study conducted by Philips (2003:112) stressed that there seems to be a strong correlation between self-concept in music and girls' attitudes to music. Boys on the other hand, were reported to be less self-confident about their musical abilities. Phillips (2003:113) points out that although boys might feel confident in their musical abilities, they would not necessarily report it as many boys perceive activities such as playing an instrument, singing and performing in front of peers to be socially unacceptable.

Saunders (2009;123) reports that boys between the ages of 11 and 14 years tend to create and succumb to heavy peer pressure and that they tend to "police" one another's male identities by avoiding boys they consider to be "sissy" or "gay" (Green, 1997:168). Conversely, in a study conducted by Simpkins *et al.* (2012:1027, 1028), the researchers found that mothers tend to support their daughters more than their sons in their musical ambitions. This tends to be consistent with traditional gender stereotypes and girls' higher musical self-esteem. These findings concur with those of other researchers such as Philips (2003:86–91), who suggests that girls not only have higher musical self-esteem than boys but they also have richer home musical environments. That being said, girls regard music as more useful and important than boys (McPherson, 2009:142) and are more motivated to participate in musical activities in class.

### **3.2.3.2 Intrinsic motivation**

In this dissertation an attempt was also made to establish why some learners engage in activities in musical class and are motivated to do so, while others prefer not to engage. Motivation can be considered a dynamic process in which the self-belief of learners and their abilities to carry out the specific tasks intersect with others in a specific social setting (the music class) and with the achievement of the outcomes as perceived. Motivation explains why learners engage in certain activities and sometimes, despite difficulties, persist (Austin & Berg, 2006:213; Helmrich, 2010:558). The more involved a learner is with an activity, the better the newly learned material is retained and the more likely sustained learning will occur. Musical engagement and preferences have a psychological basis and learners' participation and motivation to engage with music reflects and reinforces their psychological, biological and social needs (Bonneville-Roussy *et al.*, 2013:703).

Motivation theories are useful for trying to better understand learners' underlying reasons for participating in certain activities and persisting in their participation regardless of obstacles, as well as for explaining why learners do not participate in activities and continue to refuse to participate (McPherson 2009:91–105). Most of the motivational theories, including self-determination theory and achievement goal theory, explain motivation by relying on a cognitive framework and with affective response as an outcome of the cognitive process (Hidi & Renninger, 2006:112). Both affect and cognition are important contributors to a learner' level of interest in an activity. The affective component describes the positive emotions the learner experiences while being engaged in the activity.

Both of the above-mentioned motivation theories form part of intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the motivation to pursue an activity purely for the sake of the activity itself and not for some external reward that might be forthcoming. Intrinsic motivation has long been associated with learners' participation in music. The research that has been done in this area has mainly focused on comparisons with behaviour under the control of extrinsic motivations such as rewards. According to Richmond *et al.* (2015:3), there are two key ingredients that determine a learner's progress in learning music, and these are interest and motivation. Deci and Ryan

(2000:233, 234) remark that interest and motivation are determining factors for success. A learner does not always have to be motivated to learn – learning and experiencing music can also occur through the process of enculturation.

### **3.2.3.3 *Enculturation***

When adolescents choose to perform music both at both school and in the home, they seek to organise and define their own musical activity. Through this their own identities in music and musical identities surface. Recent research findings indicate that in order to satisfy the needs of an adolescent, a musical activity must be voluntary (Saunders, 2009:119).

Enculturation is the process whereby a shared set of capacities with which the child is born is combined with the exposure to the musical activities (Sloboda & Davidson 1996:172–178) provided by the culture in which the child grows up (Parncutt 2006:13–19). The learning process is marked by a lack of conscious effort on the part of the learner. The knowledge the learner already possesses has to be assimilated with new knowledge. This process takes place daily and the encultured learner possesses a set of musical capabilities and abilities (Saunders, 2009:61) that informs the learner's experiences in class.

Next my discussion examines the existing literature on the external factors that influence the Grade 7 learner's experience in the music class. I will discuss the influencing factors outside of school first.

## **3.3 External factors that influence the learner's experience of teaching and learning music**

The external factors that I have identified from the literature which may influence a learner's learning and experience of music in school can be divided into factors outside the school and factors in the school.

### **3.3.1 Outside the school**

The literature indicates that the factors outside the school may be the socio-economic status of the learner. The musical environment at home may also have an influence on how learners experience music at school. The socio-economic status of the learner will first be examined.

#### **3.3.1.1 Socio-economic status**

Social class is a very complex issue that can be defined as the “stratification of groups of people according to financial resources, cultural practices, and social networks” (Bates, 2012:33). Socio-economic status also refers to the place in the social hierarchy that people are given based on their access to money, power and wealth (Mueller & Parcel, 1981:14). According to Santos-Luiz *et al.* (2015:2–3), socio-economic status has a definite influence on learners’ academic achievement in school as well as on their participation in the arts. Various aspects of the relationship between learners’ musical experience and their socio-economic status have already been investigated, such as the relationship between:

- socio-economic status and attitude towards music learning
- gender and socio-economic status
- learners in suburban and rural schools and their socio-economic status
- the home musical environment and socio-economic status.

All of the aforementioned research focused on the learning experience of learners in relation to their socio-economic status.

Crawford (1972:130) claims that socio-economic status is a strong determinant of attitude and that learners with a lower socio-economic status have less favourable attitudes and experiences of music than learners with higher socio-economic status. This position accords with studies by Nolin and Vander Ark (1977:42) and Austin and Berg (2006:535) that learners with low socio-economic status tend to have less positive musical experiences in school and that their attitudes towards music seem to decline as they go through school. Conversely, McPherson (2009:142) found the

opposite. Taylor (2002:72) remarks that learners with higher socio-economic status have a less favourable attitude and less favourable experiences of music. Pogonowski (1985:59–61) and Nolin and Vander Ark (1977:43) observe that middle-class learners have far more favourable experiences of learning music in school than either learners with low socio-economic status or learners with high socio-economic status.

Shaw and Tomcala (1976:79) investigated the economic status in suburban and rural schools. In white suburban schools learners had more access to music experiences than learners in rural schools. These findings were confirmed by Miksza and Gault (2014:4). Primary school learners with low socio-economic status participate far less in musical activities than their counterparts with high socio-economic status. Shaw and Tomcala (1976:79) add that learners with low socio-economic status experience musical learning far more positively than learners from a higher-income environment. The researchers postulate that the reason for this could be that learners with low socio-economic status experience low academic achievements and that music may be one area where they feel they could get positive results for their efforts.

It is argued that a significant relationship exists between socio-economic status and the home music environment. Crawford (1972:115) says that learners from more affluent homes seem to have more positive experiences of their home musical environments as far as parents are concerned who show greater interest in their children's musical activities in school as well as out of school. Phillips (2003:117) argues that learners with higher socio-economic status experience richer musical environments at home than learners with low socio-economic status. Regardless of socio-economic status, learners' experience in music class in general can be influenced by their home musical environment.

### **3.3.1.2 *Home musical environment***

The home musical environment is the stimulus the learners receive at home, and according to Phillips (2003:9), learners' attitudes towards music in school is strongly related to the home musical environment. Learners' participation in musical activities in and out of school are, in part, determined by parents' verbal and non-verbal

behaviour regarding the appropriateness of the activity for the learner (Fredericks & Eccles, 2005:21).

Hargreaves (1986:102) is of the opinion that parents who value music participation by their children give their children access to recorded music, musical instruments and furthermore sing to their children, tend to have children that experience music in school more positively than children that grow up in homes where there is little or no appreciation for music. According to Freeman (2000:101), having instruments in the home is important as most accomplished musicians had access to instruments in the home while growing up. Learners' musical experiences, according to Custodero and Johnson-Green (2003:109), seem to be directly related to the experiences parents have of music, the perceptions parents have of their children's musical abilities and the parental support provided for musical activities (Fredericks & Eccles, 2005:21).

Brand (1986:118) comments that there is a significant relationship between the parents' attitude towards music and the support they give to their children's musical activities and their musical achievements. This agrees with a later study by Simpkins *et al.* (2012:1021) which found that many successful adult musicians reported that encouragement and support from their parents were crucial for their success, motivation and development. Phillips and Weiss (2016:67) agree that learners choose to continue with an activity if they find it enjoyable and feel that they are supported by their parents who have confidence in them (McPherson, 2009:96; Simpkins *et al.*, 2012:1027; Martin *et al.*, 2013:722). The external factors that influence learners' experience of music are not only outside the school, but obviously also inside the school, where the relationship the learner has with the music educator may be the most important factor.

### **3.3.2 Inside the school**

The possible factors inside of school that may have an influence on a learner's experience of music are overshadowed by the relationship between the educator and the learner. To examine this relationship, I specifically looked at the influence of the educator as an agent of motivation in music. Another external factor that may have an

influence on the learner's experience is the class activities. This factor is also discussed in detail.

### **3.3.2.1 Learner–educator relationships**

According to Miksza and Gault (2014:5) music participation is critical for a thriving society, and despite the fact that music is important to pre-adolescents, many learners withdraw from school musical activities as soon as they are given the opportunity in high school (Campbell, 2009:15). Richmond *et al.* (2015:1) are of the opinion that the low music participation rates in developed countries is partly due to the fact that school music fails to engage learners sufficiently to motivate them to continue their participation in music later in life. This trend seems to be prevalent only in Western countries. For most Westerners their first opportunity for full engagement with music is in elementary school (Miksza &Gault, 2014:5). By the time learners are in Grade 7, they already possess a set of musical skills, abilities and knowledge (Hargreaves, 1986:83) that influence their relationship with the music educator.

The relationship between educator and learners, together with how these relationships can influence the quality of motivation in the classroom, has been extensively researched over the past two decades (Davis, 2003:207). The relationship between educator and learner suggest that educators make a unique contribution to learners' development as well as their motivation during their late primary school and early high school years (Resnick *et al.*, 1997). According to Boswell (1991:53–56), educators influence learners' attitudes and motivations more than even grade or gender. Taylor (2002:33) remarks that learners with high attitude scores have had educators who were rated as having highly positive scores on teaching music. Apparently learners relate to educators who are animated, interested in their subject, supportive of their students and appreciative of their learners' efforts in the music class (Gerrity, 2009:43). In their efforts to try difficult tasks and to stay motivated, learners find these educators to be very encouraging.

- **The educator as an agent of motivation**

Learners derive enjoyment from their musical activities when educators appear to be supportive. Educators play a key role in motivating and supporting learners (Davidson

*et al.*, 1998:155), not only in relation to the educational outcomes, but also with regard to learners' attitudes towards their music learning and curriculum (Wayman, 2005:43). Educator support can be defined as the "... amount of help and caring a teacher shows towards students" (Hamman *et al.*, 1990:217).

Pitts *et al.* (2000:61) examine the difference between instrumental playing learners who maintained their motivation for their lessons and those learners who lost their motivation. The outcome of the research was that learners who maintained their motivation had an association with the music educator, whereas those who lost motivation did not have that relationship. This finding corresponds to the findings of Davidson *et al.* (1998) and Hamman *et al.* (1990). Davidson *et al.* (1998:74) established how the characteristics of educators influence learners' music learning. Educator support is essential for learners to become capable of sustaining their musical development and motivation. The music classroom environment will have an effect on a performing ensemble as shown by Hamman *et al.* (1990:223). The results indicate that when learners perceive the educator to be caring about their musical achievements, a positive relationship develops between them. Both these studies reiterate that learners can increase their musical achievements with the support of the educator.

Another study that investigated the effect of educator support on motivation was done by Power (2008:96), who found that the participation of boys in music class can depend on the perceived support they receive from the educator. Matthews and Kitsantas (2007:13) also investigated the role of educator support. Their interpretation of this is that in instrumental groups where there is strong group-cohesion, the learners tend to perceive their music educator as supportive. According to Lautzenheiser (1992:67), having supportive music educators may not be enough to motivate learners to participate in music programmes. Music programmes need to be designed to meet with learners' immediate and future needs and must help learners to develop a vision of their immediate and future musical involvement (Campbell, 2009:17). Learners' experience in music class is not only influenced by their educators, but also by the type of activities in which they are involved in music class.

### **3.3.2.2 Music class activities**

Learners' subjective task value (is the activity important, is it interesting, does it have any future value?) (McPherson, 2009:142,143) seems to be an important predictor of whether learners participate in class activities and whether they enjoy them. The understanding and attribution of learners' beliefs are important indications of the way in which they will engage in music (Saunders, 2009:81). Accordingly, the context in which the music is encountered, can determine the extent to which the learner will engage with the music activities (Saunders, 2009:109). Learners who are highly interested in music may participate in class activities with enthusiasm and discipline and continue to participate in music activities in the future because of their positive experiences, while others, with little or no interest in music, might come to the music class apathetically and be very disengaged in class (Roberts, 2015:182) because their experiences have been negative.

It is important for educators to focus on a curriculum that is based on experiences since experience offers opportunity for discovery. For the purpose of this dissertation, the term "liking" and "interest" are used interchangeably as primary school learners often use the terms with similar meanings in mind (Bowles, 1998:197). The experiences of learners in the music class can be influenced by a variety of factors such as the type of class activities, the challenge the activities present, how much autonomy and control the learner has over the activity, and the opportunities for social interaction with peers.

- **Type of activity**

Various studies investigated the experience learners have of the activities in the music class and singing seemed to be the most favoured activity (Bowles, 1998:196; Bowman, 1988:226; Vander Ark *et al.*, 1980:37; Wayman, 2005:46). Although learners appear to enjoy singing the most, the literature also suggests that their attitude towards singing declines with increasing grade level (Philips & Aichison, 1998:40; Wayman, 2005:46). According to Mizener (1993:242), learners' attitude towards singing not only declines with grade, but they also have less interest in participating in choir singing.

Singing is not the only favoured activity amongst learners. According to some researchers, playing an instrument is the learners' most favoured activity (Boswell, 1991; Bowles, 1998; Bowman, 1988; Cope, 1998; Nolin, 1973; Saunders 2009; Vander Ark *et al.*, 1980). One has to distinguish between "orchestral" playing and playing instruments in the general music class (Saunders, 2009:76). The type of musical ability and kinaesthetic ability that is required for playing an "orchestral" instrument is vastly more complex than playing an instrument in class such as a marimba (Cope, 1998:269). Learners seem to enjoy playing instruments as it is creative and they find improvising on the instruments enjoyable (Boswell, 1991:56). Many learners choose instrumental playing over singing as their favourite or most "liked" activity (Boswell, 1991:56; Bowles, 1998:199). This agrees with earlier findings by Nolin (1973:133), whose research confirmed that learners experience instrumental playing very positively. Bowles's (1998:194,204) research confirms Nolin's (1973:133) findings, and he adds that learners are willing to learn to read music notes, an activity they find the least "likeable", if the note reading will enable them to play an instrument. Wayman (2005:45) agrees with the above findings regarding instrumental playing, and adds that learners find playing an instrument in class a "meaningful" activity (Wayman, 2005:90). She postulates that the reason might be that it gives learners the opportunity to express themselves. According to Roberts (2015:190), learners experience instrumental playing more positively as it involves physical movement.

Instrumental playing and listening to music with singing appear to be the most favoured activities in music class (Nolin, 1973:132). Bowles (1998:132) confirms that learners in late primary school enjoy listening to music, provided that it is presented in a way that allows active involvement on the learners' part and that the music is experienced as being relevant (Davis, 2011:19; Vander Ark *et al.*, 1980:34; Bowles, 1998:186). Wayman (2005:90), is of the opinion that learners find listening to music appealing due to the music's aesthetic value. Activities which have not only aesthetic appeal, but also offers opportunities for creativity, are very popular amongst learners. Learners tend to engage more in these activities (Roberts, 2015:191) which leads to a heightened interest in the activity. Exploring the sounds that instruments make and inventing movements for a dance were positively experienced (Roberts, 2015:192).

Another favourite activity amongst learners is activities that involve movement or dancing and musical games (Bowles, 1998:198; Nolin, 1973:132; Wayman, 2005:45). Learners also enjoy activities which allow them the opportunity to work with a partner (Bowles, 1998:199; Davis, 2011:19) as it allows socialising. Activities that are the least favoured are those that involve note reading (Bowles, 1998:205; Nolin, 1973:132; Vander Ark *et al.*, 1980:39) and will only be tolerated by learners if it is accompanied by playing an instrument (Bowles, 1998:204). This does not mean that learners, even if they have the opportunity to play instruments on a regular basis, will not get bored.

- **The novelty and difficulty of the activity**

All educators, including music educators, are presented with the problem of pre-adolescent learners who perceive activities as “boring” (Gerrity, 2009:42). According to Roberts (2015:188), pre-adolescent boys and girls show a bigger interest in activities in class that were not repeated too often and activities that they were not familiar with. The problem of boredom can be counteracted by presenting old activities in a new way, which will re-ignite interest. Learners also relate to activities that hold an element of surprise or humour (Roberts, 2015:188). However, learners are not always interested in activities that are only “fun”, but are also willing to engage in activities that present a challenge. Learners are quite willing to engage in music activities in class that they might feel to be “difficult”. The reasons may be that they do not see the obstacles as overwhelming or they may feel that they are good at the activity. However, if the difficulty level is experienced as being too great, they will lose interest and stop trying (McPherson, 2009:143). Learners prefer to attempt challenging tasks, such as making up their own rhythmic patterns and songs, with friends or peers than on their own.

- **Opportunities for social interaction and belongingness**

For the pre-adolescent, school is not only an academic institution, it is also the place where they can socialise with friends (Wayman, 2005:91). The pre-adolescent’s yearning for social interaction is at times so strong that they risk being disciplined in order to meet that need (Wayman, 2005:86). A music class that is structured in such a way that it meets both the educational aims of the educator and the social needs of

the learner will lead to both educator and learners experiencing music education more positively.

Pre-adolescents seem to thrive academically in an environment where they have the opportunity to engage with other learners, not only for off-task socialisation, but also for the opportunities it gives learners to solve problems together. A supportive learning environment where group activities in the music class are encouraged, fosters learners' cooperative abilities as well as motivating them in academic achievement (Wayman, 2005:89). Group activities not only allow social interaction, but they present the learners with the opportunity for autonomy and control over their project (Renwick & McPherson (2002:184). Learners at this age not only wish to socialise with their friends, but they also have a strong need to fit in and feel that they belong to a group.

Most schools have an ethos, or a "feel" or "climate", which describes the school. This may be explicitly explained to the learners or only be communicated implicitly. When learners feel that they cannot ascribe to that ethos, or do not belong to the school, problems arise (Saunders, 2009:87). Music class can enhance learners' experience of belonging by structured group activities. According to Woody (1998:41), group activities that accommodate learners' interests and allow them to fit into the group, are necessary as they can also increase the learners' self-esteem (Wayman, 2005:92). Projects that allow learners to interact with their peers in a structured, on-task way, are ideal in cultivating a sense of belongingness while at the same time allowing creativity (Davis, 2011:21). Miksza (2010:22) states that there is a positive relationship between music participation and learners' sense of belonging. Working in groups not only fosters belongingness, but can also increase cooperation amongst learners and lead to prolonged learning enhancements (Richmond *et al.*, 2015:4).

### **3.3.2.3 *Psychological experiences of music class***

The sense of belonging that learners get from music class activities is not the only positive benefit that learners derive. In a study conducted by Wolff (2004:83), it was reported that music instruction improved academically low-achieving learners' behaviour and deterred learners from anti-social tendencies. Adderley *et al.* (2003:190-205) studied learners who participated in music ensembles. They state that

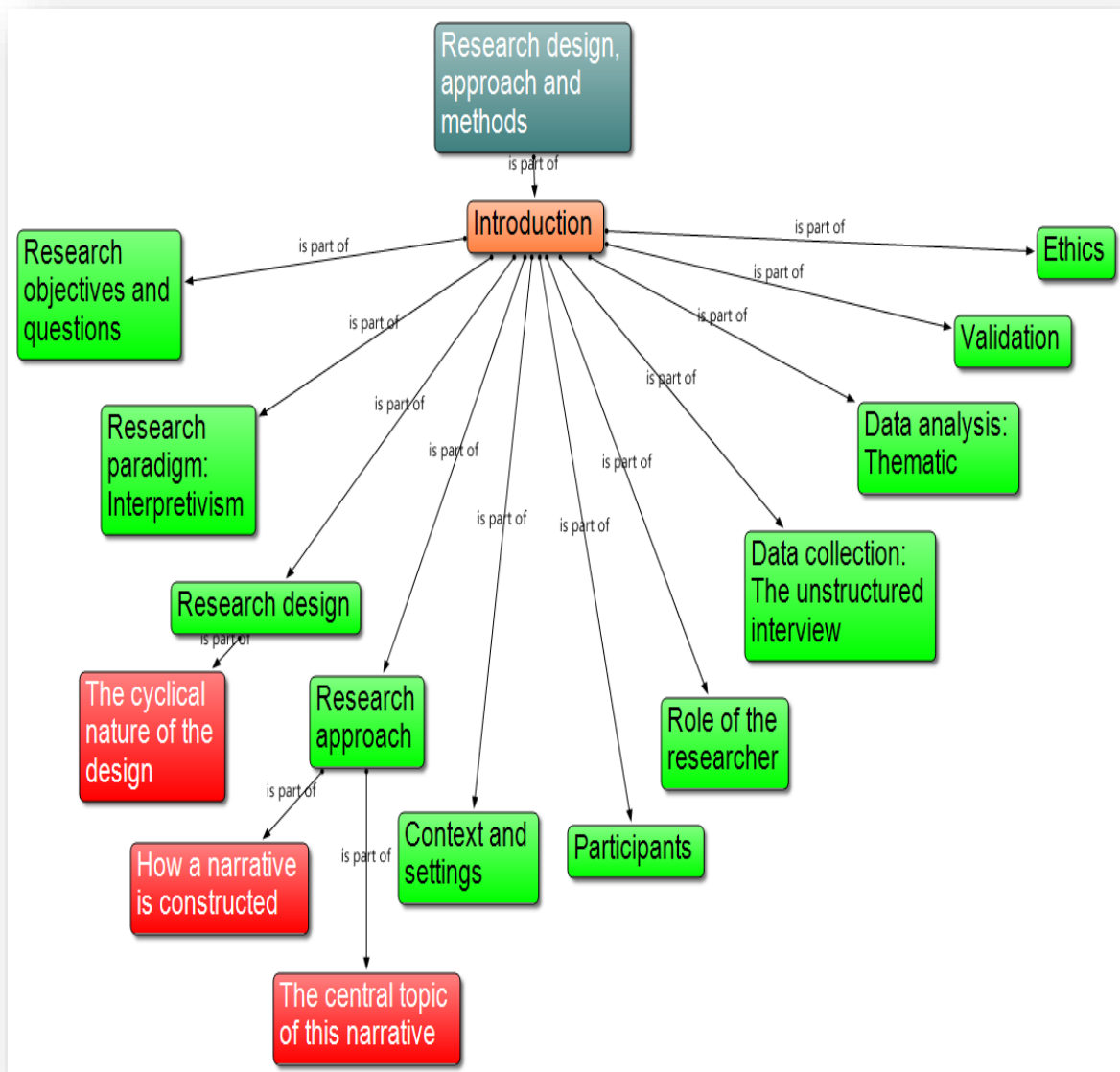
learners participate in these activities for a variety of reasons, such as friends' and families' influence, enjoyment and social benefits. They maintain that learners feel that music has psychological benefits for them as it enhances their self-esteem, increases their responsibility and self-discipline and allows them the opportunity to express themselves (Adderley *et al.*, 2003:204). Abril and Gault (2006:16, 17) agree with this and add that the music class is the ideal environment for the transfer of cultural ideas and to allow learners to develop a sensitivity towards and appreciation of the arts. According to these researchers, music class allows learners the opportunity to develop creativity and teamwork through their participation in music. Perhaps the most positive experience learners can have in the music class lies in the aesthetic element – music develops learners' sense of the aesthetic by allowing them to experience feelings and gives them the ability to empathise with someone or something outside of themselves (Woody, 1998:44).

### **3.4 Summary**

In this section of the literature review I examined the literature on the pre-adolescent's experience of music in school. According to my findings from the literature, I make a distinction between internal and external factors which influence the learners' experience. The internal factors are musical factors and other factors. The literature indicates that musical factors can be divided into identities and musical self-concept, the latter being formed by musical self-esteem and musical self-efficacy. I surmise from the literature that the other factors that have an influence on musical experience are the gender of the learner, intrinsic motivation and enculturation. The external factors can be divided into factors outside the school and those inside the school. The learner's socio-economic status and home musical environment are part of the factors outside the school. As indicated by the literature, factors inside the school that play a role are the relationship between the educator and the learner, the activities in the music class and the psychological experience of the music class. The literature indicates that perhaps the most positive experience learners can have in the music class is the aesthetic element, as music develops learners' sense of the aesthetic and allows them to experience feelings and the ability to empathise with someone or something outside of themselves. In Chapter 4 I discuss the research design, approach and method that were followed in this study.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESEARCH DESIGN, APPROACH AND METHOD



**Figure 5: Structure of Chapter 4**

### 4.1 Introduction


The design for this study is a qualitative analysis supported by a narrative research approach (see Figure 5). In this chapter I discuss the design, approach and methods that were employed in this research. The whole process is guided by the research question, as well as by the various methods selected to conduct the investigation.

In the first section of this chapter I discuss the research questions and design that inform this qualitative research study. Because qualitative requires the researcher to attempt and see the entire research situation through the “eyes of the participants” (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:23). I therefore attempt to determine the various experiences that educators and learners have in the Grade 7 music class.

I then discuss the research paradigm, which in this case is an interpretivism outlook, followed by a discussion of the research. I then discuss the research method, the narrative, and I state why my specific choice of research approach was deemed best for this study. The context and settings of this research study are discussed thereafter, as well as the nature of the participants who took part in the study and the process of their selection. Following that, I discuss the role of the researcher and explain how I, as the researcher, fit into the whole process. Thereafter the collection of the data is discussed. I will explain why I selected the specific methods of data collection and discuss how the data was analysed. Finally, the last two steps in the research process, the validation of the findings and the ethics involved, are discussed.

## **4.2 Research objectives and questions**

The overall objective of the study is to explore how educators and learners experience the teaching and learning of music in the Grade 7 classroom. The central research question for the study is:



**WHAT DOES THIS NARRATIVE INQUIRY REVEAL ABOUT TEACHING AND  
LEARNING MUSIC IN THE GRADE 7 CLASSROOM?**

The secondary research questions are:

- What is the nature of the lived experiences of educators and learners (ages twelve to thirteen years) in the music classroom according to the scholarly literature?
- What are the music teaching and learning experiences of educators and learners in the Grade 7 classroom at 12 primary schools in Gauteng?
- How does the literature relate to these stories about teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom?

The nature of the research questions is exploratory and deals with educators' and learners' stories about how they understand them. This implies that a qualitative research design supported by a narrative research approach best suits this study.

#### **4.3 Research paradigm: Interpretivism**

The research paradigm for this study is interpretivism, also known as social constructivism. Social constructivism defines how natural phenomena are socially and culturally built (Mercadal, 2016). Creswell (2013: location 759 of 9141) defines it as the individual's way of trying to understand the world in which he lives. Individuals develop various connotations about the struggles they experience. I have decided on the narrative as people construct meaning and significance by telling stories about their experiences. By listening to these stories, I can add new clarity from a different point of view on the problems that music educators and learners encounter on a daily basis. In this research study I examined the connotations that educators and Grade 7 learners attach to their experiences of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. The subjective significance of these actions is often informed by people's interaction with others as well as individuals' sense of the historical and cultural norms within their own society (Creswell, 2013: location 759 of 9141).

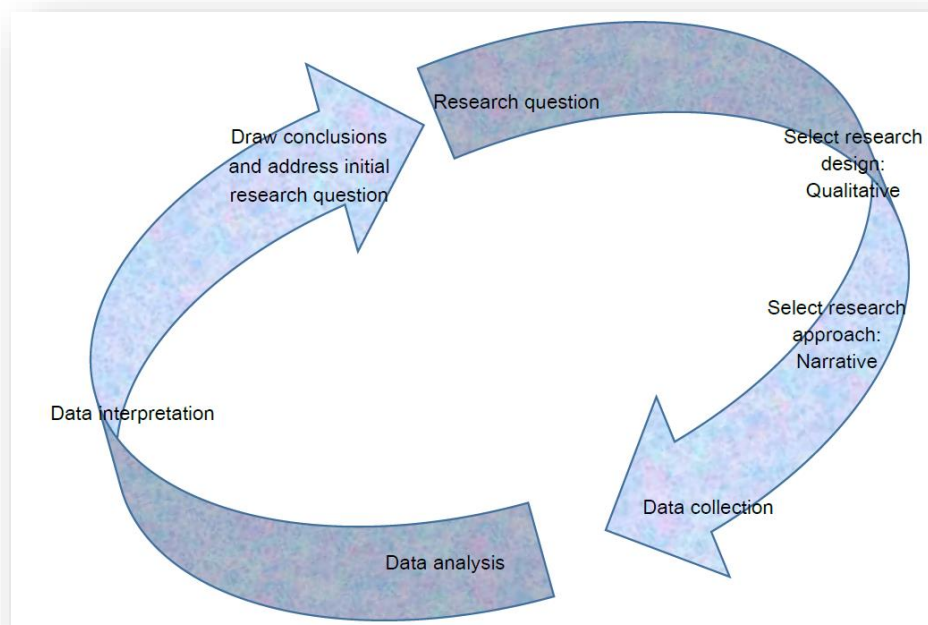
#### **4.4 Research design**

The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to explore the lived experiences of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom of the music educators and learners at

12 primary schools in Gauteng. For the findings to be robust, the most relevant manner of research had to be used (Mouton, 2002). As indicated above, the nature of the objective and research questions lends itself to a qualitative study with a narrative research approach to support it.

#### **4.4.1 The cyclical nature of the design**

This research design is cyclical in essence (see Figure 6) as the data gathered at each phase of the research were used to advise the next phase of the process. The compilation of the information and the analysis were therefore “interwoven” (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001:40) as the different aspects examined in this study were interactive and inductive. I found that I had to go back and forth various times instead of stepping forward, and new themes or questions emerged in the process (Saldana, 2014:170). To decide whether any new liaisons had emerged, I used the cyclical approach and had to decide if there was a correlation between the new experiences and previous experiences (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981:58). I used the cyclical approach to measure the data from the interviews against the conclusions from the other interviews. This helped me to measure the main concerns that were raised by the educators and learners. It also assisted me with the highlighting of recurring themes.



**Figure 6: The cyclical nature of the design**

*Source:* Adapted from Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004:23

#### **4.5 Research approach**

I used a narrative research approach because I considered it the best process to collect qualitative data from the stories about the educators' and learners' experiences in music teaching and learning. This research method is best for accurately capturing the stories and experiences of single individuals (Creswell, 2013: location 1614 of 9141), in this case the educators and learners.

Narrative research has its origin in the social and human sciences (Creswell, 2013: location 1545 of 9141). The aim of this narrative was to produce an accurate account and analysis of the interviews that I conducted with the educators and learners while bearing the context of the Grade 7 classroom in mind. The circumstances in which these experiences took place is important for understanding any experiences or events (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:20). By telling stories both the educators and learners construct significance from their lived experiences of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom.

I decided on narrative research as a procedure of inquiry for this study as this form of research seemed most suitable for securing the complicated accounts or experiences of single individuals, in this case the educators and learners (Creswell, 2013: location 1614 of 9141). Narrative inquiry can disclose certainties about individuals that in other circumstances would not be revealed (Riessman, 2008:17). Narratives are also sometimes called "vignettes or creative non-fictional accounts of individuals' experiences" (Saldana, 2014:169).

Through the telling of their stories, both the educators and learners constructed significance from their lived experiences of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. The narrative facilitates life-like accounts of the experiences of the educators and learners in the Grade 7 classroom. These narratives gave me the chance to dissect, consider and examine these experiences, and in the process to try and make sense of these experiences and share the significance composed from the

experience with others by writing it down (Creswell, 2013: location 1545 of 9141; Pepper & Wildy, 2009:20).

#### **4.5.1 Narrative construction**

One of the most powerful steps in the formation of this narrative was to recognise and select important information that was revealed during the interviews rather than immaterial, superficial reminiscences of experiences (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:21). The formation of a narrative research study can be described as the “artistic reconstruction” (Eisner, 1985:229) of what I detected in the educators and learners in such a way that the reader experiences it in a life-like manner (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:21). I therefore chose to create spaces, namely the tearoom for the educators and the playground for the learners, where their ideas interact with each other’s’. I selected only relevant experiences, thus making other experiences less visible to the reader.

Bearing in mind that the memories of the educators and the learners and the way they recall experiences can impact on the facts as relayed to me, I had to be cautious of certainties and myths being mixed in the conveying of the stories (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:22). It is important to highlight the experiences of educators and learners in a given set of circumstances, in this case the school environment (Saunders, 2009:144). The narrative is exclusive in as much as it has the capacity to capture the closeness of a certain situation (the Grade 7 classroom) that can be noticed by many. Moreover, I could, where relevant, capture the educators’ and learners’ voices via direct quotes (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:21).


With the reporting of the stories of the educators and learners, I became an advocate for them: I did not argue my point or try to convince my audience of its validity as each educator’s and learner’s experience is valid in and of itself in their own set of circumstances and no justification is needed. I told the stories of the educators and learners in a convincing way. I reported the stories of the educators and learners, which can be a catalyst for social change (Riessman, 2008:17).

Not only did the educators and learners tell their stories, but I also composed my own description from their experiences (Riessman, 2008:12). By telling their stories, the

educators and learners engaged in social communication with me and by doing so manufactured their personal identity (Riessman, 2008:16). This narrative is critical and appropriate as it, in its conveyance, highlights abstract ideas through its definition of how educators and learners experience teaching and learning music (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:21). The educator and learner use the narrative to recall his experiences of teaching or learning music or to make sense of past teaching and learning experiences.

By listening to the stories of the educators and learners, I cast a fresh new light, from a contrasting point of view, on the emotions both educators and learners experience in teaching and learning music. In order to create a narrative and not just tell a “story”, I presented the data in such a way that it provided credible factual data about the educators and learners. I built up an accomplished, three-dimensional view from the interviews, the focus of which was on detailed episodes and events. All these experiences and incidents put together create a strong impact (Creswell, 2015:261). The narrative has to be grounded in the particular (Radley & Chamberlain, 2001:321). In the case of this research study, the educators and learners had to convey details about their experiences of teaching and learning music (Creswell, 2015:260). It can be portrayed as the figurative representation of a person’s experiences (Saldana, 2014:169).

#### ***4.5.2 The central topic of this narrative***



### **NARRATIVES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC IN THE GRADE 7 CLASSROOM.**

The topic of my research is:

The study was a personalised and inductive course which allowed the emergence of themes (Saldana, 2014:3) as it recounted in detail the stories of the educators and learners of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom (Creswell, 2015:16). The qualitative design allowed my own personality to show in the composition, application and conveyance of the study (Saldana, 2014:3). I recognise that all the

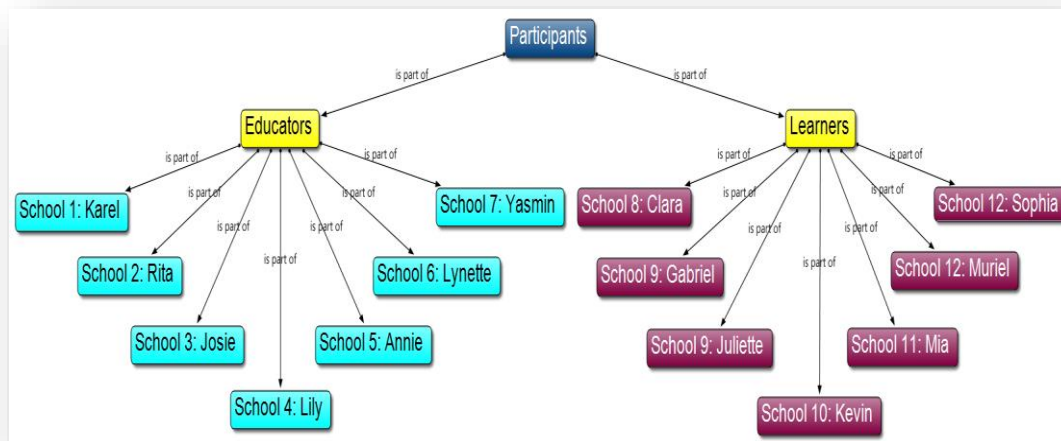
stories of the educators and learners alike varied as each individual experienced the same situation in unique ways. Each individual's experience is credible in its own right. The stories told conveyed the message of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. The experiences of the educators and Grade 7 learners take place in a specific context and setting which is discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.6 Context and settings**

These stories and experiences took place in a specific context or setting (Riessman, 2008:16). In the case of my study it was the Grade 7 classroom. This context is of great importance (Creswell, 2015:6) as it places the experiences in a life-like environment. Furthermore, the reader, when the data is presented, must be able to clearly envisage the context and the people who participated. To this end I included details about the educators and learners who teach and learn music in the Grade 7 classroom (Creswell, 2015:13).

#### **4.7 Participants**

The participants in this research study were from twelve private primary schools in Gauteng. The seven educators were all from different schools, whereas the seven learners were from five different private primary schools, not related to the school the educators were from. None of the educators or learners were from the same school. The reason why educators and learners were not from the same school is that the educators who participated, indicated that they would prefer me not to interview their Grade 7 learners. I thus interviewed learners from other schools.



**Figure 7: Participants\***

\* All participants were given pseudonyms

The music educators at the schools which the learners attended approached their learners to participate in the study. The selection of the learners (see Figure 7) was the decision of the relevant educators. I did ask the educators to include as wide a variety of learners as possible in order to represent a multiplicity of experiences and cultural backgrounds (Creswell, 2015:109). This was purposeful sampling in as much as the learners who participated had to be in Grade 7 because they had to be able to tell me of their experience of learning music in Grade 7 (Creswell, 2015:108).

I focused on a limited number of educators and learners who were intriguing (Creswell, 2015:6). In my study the educators and learners were the most important characters (Saldana, 2014:171) as the study lends itself to the investigation of marginalised groups or groups that are not often investigated (Creswell, 2015:7). Through this narrative study I gave a voice to the individuals through citations on how they expressed themselves (Creswell, 2015:13), collaborated with each other and recalled experiences during the interviews. I documented conversations as well as monologues in this way (Saldana, 2014:171).

I had to be mindful when interviewing young learners (Saldana, 2014:147) of the fact that they are considered to be a vulnerable group. However, one has to recognise that the individuals, in this case the learners, had the best awareness of their experiences

of learning music, and it was worth engaging with them in the course of their learning (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000:75). It is imperative that educators should listen to what their learners say about how they experience their teaching and learning. With this information, educators are better able to grasp the encounters of these learners (Bray, 2000:18). Although learners do not have exhaustive judgement of the curriculum (Lloyd-Smith & Tarr, 2002:61), this research is not about the curriculum, but about the experiences of the learners and educators. Learners participating in such a study might feel that their views and assessments are relevant, which might be an empowering experience in itself (Saunders, 2009:149). The interviews were not conducted with a homogeneous group of learners, but rather a mixed group of people with various identities (Sinclair-Taylor, 2002:22).

#### **4.8 Role of the researcher**

I have been a Grade 7 music educator for the past 15 years at a private primary school in Gauteng. I have been teaching Music to Grade 4, 5, 6 and 7 learners for the last 10 years. I believe that all learners in school should have the opportunity to learn about music, regardless if they intend to pursue in high school or as a profession or not at all later in life. I can therefore identify with the stories told by the learners and educators, and am also able to interpret these stories and create a new meta-narrative. In the case of narrative research, the role of the researcher cannot be discounted or discarded and therefore needs to be taken into account (Saunders, 2009:152). Denscombe (1998:208) says that the researcher becomes a “fundamental strand” in the narrative process. It was my duty as the researcher to consider my own biases, opinions and views (Creswell, 2015:8), listen attentively and form the narrative with caution. However, by considering and rewriting the data, my analysis of the information might be fragmented and limited (Riessman, 2008:53).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000:70) are of the opinion that the autobiographical account of one’s own story is paramount in a narrative study. The cognisance of my own experiences and my capacity to think critically about them impacts on the way I hear and disseminate the stories told by other people, which might also impact on the results of the study. This course required solid self-awareness and a focus on my own narrative realm, and I had to acknowledge my own cultural and social reality. I

conducted the interviews myself so that I could give my own view of how I perceived the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2015:13).

#### **4.9 Data collection: the unstructured interview**

The data collection process that I used for this research was through unstructured interviews (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000:5). I collected the data by listening attentively and recording the participants' experiences of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. Unstructured interviews can reflect people's experience of teaching and learning music (Saldana, 2014:2).

The unstructured interviews consisted of four phases:

1. Initiation                      Formulating the initial topic for the narrative  
    Using visual aids
2. Main narration                No interruptions  
    Only non-verbal encouragement to continue the  
    storytelling  
    Wait for the coda
3. Questioning phase          Only "What happened then?"  
    No opinion and attitude questions  
    No arguing or contradictions  
    No "why" questions  
    Exmanent into immanent questions
4. Concluding talk               Stop recording  
    "Why" questions allowed  
    Memory protocol immediately after the interview  
    (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000:5)

The interviews of the learners were conducted at their schools as I wanted to gather information in a natural setting. Natural environments tend to help participants to recall experiences which can aid them in telling their stories and conveying their experiences about teaching and learning music. The interviews with the educators were conducted after school hours at coffee shops or in their classrooms, whatever was convenient for them. The collected experiences and stories were chronologically ordered. The data

were then organised into themes. As with any novel, the narrative about teaching and learning music had to be placed in a certain time and setting (context) in order to make the stories and experiences of the educators and learners appear more believable to the reader (Creswell, 2013: location 1636 of 9141).

In order to ensure good quality interviews, I had to actively involve both the educators and learners in the interviews and make them feel part of the process (Creswell, 2013: location 1648 of 9141). I achieved this by using unstructured interviews because this allows more flexibility of explanation on the part of the participants (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:18), and the educator, the learner and I can communicate on a more equal footing (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:17). The narratives were jointly composed by myself, the learners and the educators. I aimed to gather detailed responses from the participants instead of short, one-word replies. The normal rules of a conversation applied in these interviews as well. I spoke and then the educator or learner responded (Riessman, 2009:29). I allowed the participants to express their own unique views of teaching and learning music or to articulate their own experiences of the Grade 7 music classroom. However, one has to bear in mind that the specific questions that I asked were less significant than my sensitivity and alertness and the way I engaged in the conversations (Riessman, 2008:30).

#### **4.10 Data analysis: Thematic**

According to Butler-Kisber (2010:53) and Merriam (2009:14), the processes of data collection, analysis and reporting are interrelated and often take place simultaneously. For this research study the data analysis was thematic. The reason for this was that I wanted to highlight the various themes that emerged from the interviews with the participants. There are four ways for the researcher to analyse the narrative. These are: dialogical analysis (analysing of the dialogue between the participants), structural analysis (analysis of the structure of the interview), visual analysis (Analysis of what is seen) and thematic analysis (analysis of the different emerging themes) (Creswell, 2013: location 1577 of 9141). In thematic analysis, the focus is on the content. When using thematic analysis I focused on “what” was said and not really to whomever it was said or for what reason (Riessman, 2008:54). I focused on the participants, the context in which their teaching and learning experiences took place and the common

times in which these experiences were taking place (Abbott, 1992:428). I scrutinised the stories of both the educators and the learners in great detail, paying careful attention in order to convey a multi-faceted representation (Creswell, 2015:6) of how these two groups experience music teaching and learning.

When analysing the data there are a few items that need careful consideration. First: why is this experience highlighted and what is its function? Second: what is the cultural realm of this experience which the learner or educator is drawing on? Third: does this experience achieve anything? Fourth: Are there any disparities in the experience that might show that some data have been left out or amended? If so, why? (Riessman, 2008:19).

I used ATLAS.ti 7, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software program to organise the text and data files. These were organised with the codes, memos and outcomes into a heuristic unit (Creswell, 2013:203). The unstructured interviews with the educators and learners were included in the heuristic unit. Links were built in ATLAS, which allowed the researcher to construct new diagrams, linking the quotes, codes and memos (Creswell, 2013:203). For this research study the notice collect think (NCT) model of qualitative data analysis was used. The approach of this model is:

- To notice things (quotes)
- To collect things (codes)
- To think about these things (subcategories, categories, themes, memos and links between the above quotes and codes (Friese, 2012:92)

As stated in Section 4.3.1, the process of analysis between the above items is not linear and may move back and forth. These three concepts aided me in preparing the data, creating a project file, coding the data and using the software to sort and structure it with the aim of revealing patterns and relations (Friese, 2012:100–101).

All the interviews were read with great attention, together with the notes that I took during the interviews. The interviews and field notes were transcribed by myself and

loaded onto ATLAS.ti 7 for data organisation and to begin the process of managing the data. I examined the interviews and paid great attention to the transcripts of the interviews in order to notice statements that might illuminate the significance of the written word as a whole. This was done in order to gain a better insight into the whole text (Fleming *et al.*, 2003:118) before fragmenting it (Butler-Kieber, 2010:53).

From the data I identified plots and storylines. I then searched for persistent motifs such as the recurrence of how educators feel isolated in their own schools, by dissecting the real understanding of the words, not only by examining what was said, but also how and why it was said (Riessman, 2008:19). This allowed me to construct the analysis from each sentence, then each paragraph until the whole of the interview was analysed (Creswell, 2015:13), as the reappearance of selected issues led to the formation of themes<sup>13</sup>. By using a course of inductive reasoning, I expected that themes would emerge that would give a broader picture of the complex situation of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom (Creswell, 2015:16). The themes that emerged from the data were not obvious at first glance (Creswell, 2015:16). As I researched the experiences that the educators and learners had of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom, I did not endeavour to explain or justify these experiences. I only reported these experiences in the context of the school as to when and where they took place (Creswell, 2015:6).

In reporting the data, I disclosed all the themes and multiplicity of factors that emerged. I not only reported what I wanted to find, but also had to report all the issues that I did not anticipate. Creswell (2015:7) is of the opinion that one should report “the good, the bad and the ugly” (Creswell, 2015:7). The findings were not presented per theme but a new narrative was composed as Juntunen (2002) did in her ISME paper on how master Dalcroze teachers articulate their pedagogical content knowledge.

#### **4.11 Validation**

The truth in narrative research is always fragmented as it can never be exhaustive and validity in qualitative research has a variety of angles (Creswell, 2015:191). As with any other form of research, one cannot always attain validity and reliability that are

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<sup>13</sup> Theme: “A subject or topic of discourse” (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed on 30/04/2017).

unconditionally credible (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982:55), and for that reason the narrative depends on other forms of credibility and validity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990:13). For narrative research to be credible, the researcher has to allow enough time for testing and has to visualise various possibilities that can be interpreted. A criterion used in the formulation of credibility in narrative research is verisimilitude, or the life-likeness of a situation or experience. This criterion focuses more on the recognisability than the generalisability of the study (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:22). The reader has to be able to place himself in that Grade 7 classroom and believe that the experiences the educators and learners have are both possible and plausible (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990:7; Pepper & Wildy, 2009:22).

In the case of narratives, two levels of validity exist. The first level is the experience as told by the participant and the second level is the experience as told by the researcher in his or her analysis of the data (Riessman, 2008:172). However, the reader can ask the question: Why should we believe anything you say? It is my duty as the researcher to convey my arguments in such a way that the reader believes the credibility and the analysis of the data. The reader has to be convinced that the narrative has not been made up (Creswell, 2015:192; Riessman, 2008:173). One has to remember that each experience and story is valid in its own right as it is being told to the researcher. It thus needs to be credible from within the context in which it was conveyed (Riessman, 2008:173).

The findings of this research are by no means intended to be generalised. They will only be applicable to the seven educators and seven learners who were involved but they can be useful to those who find their employment suitable in their own situations (Saunders, 2009:142). With the narrative, the transmission of the study is not decided by the researcher, but rather by the reader (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:22; Riessman, 2009:16). I kept generalisation to the minimum and with this project I endeavoured only to generalise with regard to three domains: what is, what may be and what could be (Schofield, 2000:74). The fact that narrative analysis targets limited samples of the population does not mean that the findings cannot be applicable to other contexts. However, the reader has to make the decision as to what extent the findings are applicable to his own context (Radley & Chamberlain, 2001:324).

## 4.12 Ethics

As I was working with minors, I needed informed consent from the parents (Appendix A) as well as the learners (Appendix B). I was aware that I had to give careful consideration to the ethical nature of this research (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009:13). Very specific documents (Appendix A & B) are needed for informed consent (Greeff, 2016(a):3). I had to be mindful that the consent required was properly understood by the learners and their parents (Lindsay, 2002:12).

I did not want the learners to feel distressed or fearful about the situation, so I explained to them the aims of my study and to what extent they would be involved beforehand. I told them that they could withdraw from the research during any stage, even after they had given consent. I encouraged them to ask questions and to query anything they were unsure of in order to clear up any misconceptions about the research. By following these steps, I believed that I gained their confidence and cooperation and gave them the chance to make some crucial additions to my research (Greeff, 2016(b):36). I had to make sure that I explained the course of the study as the participants were in general uninformed and ignorant of research (Greeff, 2016(a):4). I had to remember that although the Grade 7 learners may have been willing to participate and say that they understood what they were about to do, it was not always clear if they really comprehended their commitment to the research (Masson, 2002:39). The interview process with the educators was slightly different.

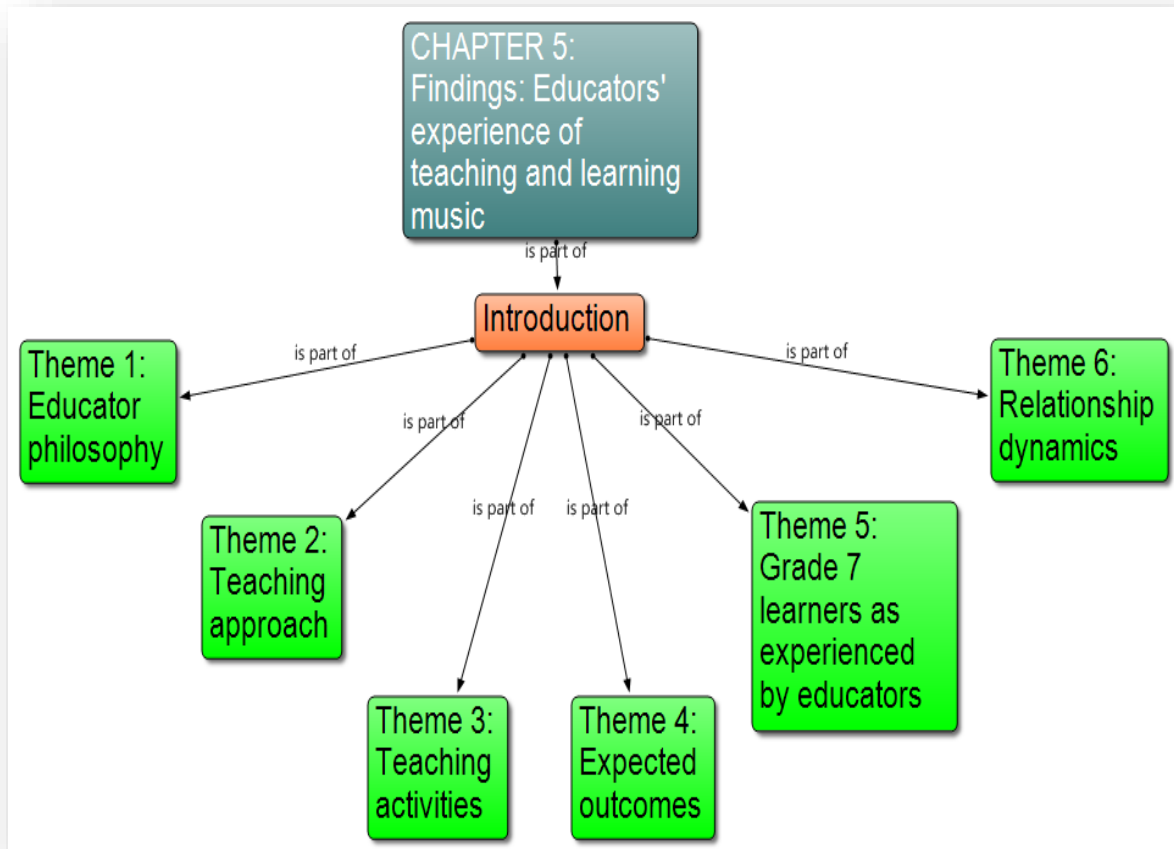
I interviewed the music educators once I had received their written consent (Appendix C). The consent forms were drawn up within the guidelines suggested by Creswell (2013:152). I undertook to protect all the participants and ensure that no harm would be done to any learner or educator. As the researcher, I had to tell all the participants that their participation would be anonymous. Each learner and educator was given a pseudonym to identify them.

Careful consideration was given to the ethical nature of this research and informed consent was obtained from the parents of the learners as well as from the learners themselves. Informed consent was also obtained from the educators. Truthful information was given to all the participants. All participation was anonymous.

One has to remember that the truth in narrative research is always fragmented and never exhaustive. In Chapters 5 and 6 I discuss the findings of this research study. In Chapter 5 I address the findings regarding the educators' experiences of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 music classroom, and in Chapter 6 I discuss the findings regarding the experiences of the learners of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 music classroom.

# CHAPTER 5


## FINDINGS: EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC



**Figure 8: Structure of Chapter 5**

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter (see Figure 8) the findings which resulted from the data analysis are presented. Evidence from the data is provided to support the findings and by doing so the following research sub-question is answered in part:

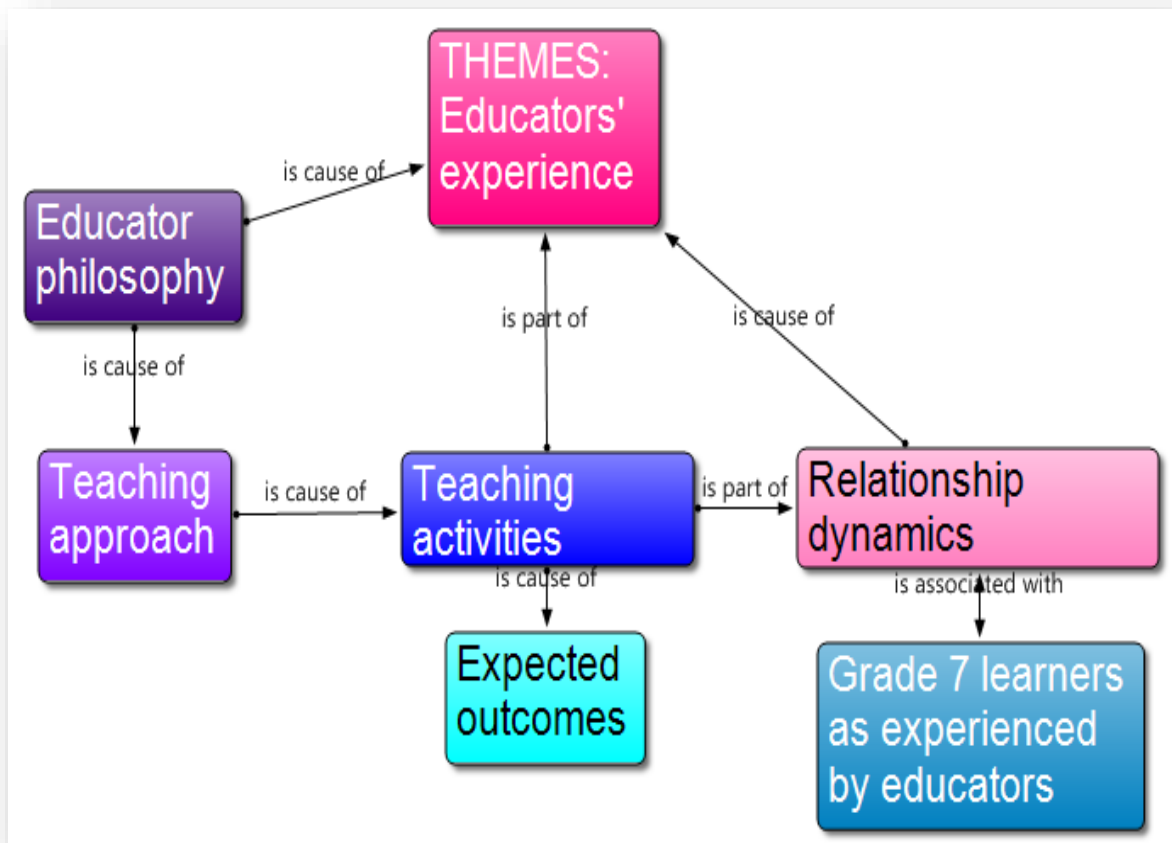


**WHAT ARE THE MUSIC TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF  
EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS IN THE GRADE 7 MUSIC CLASSROOM  
FROM 12 PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG?**

From the themes and categories codes were conceived into themes and categories, links were manufactured and patterns were identified. These patterns, links, themes and categories are illustrated in Figure 9. The interview transcripts were added to ATLAS.ti 7 as primary documents and formed one heuristic unit. These themes supplied a framework for organising the results and revealing the narratives of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. Six themes emerged from the data:

1. Educators have a certain philosophy regarding their teaching
2. Teaching approach
3. Teaching activities
4. Expected outcomes
5. The Grade 7 learner as experienced by the music educators
6. Relationship dynamics.

Figure 9 illustrates the links between the themes that emerged from the data analysis. **Educators' philosophy** regarding music will influence their **teaching approach**. The way educators approach the teaching of music will in turn influence the **teaching activities** they select for their learners. From these chosen activities there are certain **expected outcomes**. The experiences educators have of teaching and learning music will be influenced by **the way in which educators perceive Grade 7 learners**. All the aforementioned themes will, in turn, influence the **relationship dynamics** between the music educators and other stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning of music in the Grade 7 classroom.



**Figure 9: Themes: Educators' experiences of teaching and learning music**

The narrative was used as the research approach of interpretation and presentation of this chapter. The first conversation is a fictional conversation between seven Grade 7 music educators from 7 private primary schools in Gauteng. Their pseudonyms are: Karel, Rita, Josie, Lily, Annie, Lynette and Yasmin. The conversations between the educators have been constructed from significant statements from the interviews that I conducted with the music educators.

Most of the conversations are directly quoted from the interviews and appear within quotation marks. The numbers behind the quotes are ATLAS.ti 7 references and indicate the primary document and the place in the document where the quote can be found. The topics discussed are the themes (Figure 8) that emerged from the data analysis of the interviews with the educators.

After the analysis of the data, I came to the realisation that most of the educators expressed very similar views regarding teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom and most of them had the same concerns. As the educators who were interviewed were different in character, it is not possible to construct a single character type of a “typical” music educator. Rather the opposite is highlighted here – that music educators are human and one is different from the other. The following direct quotes in the fictional conversation between the research participants were selected to highlight the various themes, to contrast and complement one another. By using the narrative, I try to give a voice to Grade 7 music educators – educators who are not often heard.

The following fictional conversation is set during tea-time at a music workshop where it would be realistic for seven Grade 7 music educators to be present at the same time. The following introductions serve to introduce the seven educators who participated in this research. Although these are not direct quotes, it is my interpretation and synthesis of the data where it describes the teacher.

## **Educators’ experience of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom**

### TEATIME AT A MUSIC WORKSHOP

#### INTRODUCTIONS

*Karel: I am 54 years old and am quite a strict and conservative person. I have been at my present school for more than 10 years. We are a private primary school in a city in Gauteng. I used to teach music to Grade 7s, but the music period has been taken away by management to use for the more “important” academic subjects. I am still involved with the Grade 7s as I still see them for choir practice and I teach individual piano lessons to some of them. I still teach music to the rest of the primary school though. I am responsible for the school’s concert every year. At the moment I am thinking about pursuing a PhD degree in choral music, but I am not quite sure yet if I want to do it. I am still*

*thinking about it as the school is keeping me very busy. My wife says I am married to the school!*

*Rita: I am 28 years old and am quite a conservative and shy person. I have been teaching music for five years at the same school. It is a Catholic girls' school in a city in Gauteng, both a primary and high school, and the nuns at our school have a very big say in what happens at the school and in the curriculum content. We share the campus with the high school and we share assembly in the same hall with the high school. We are only ladies on the staff. There is one male teacher in the high school though. I have a BMus degree but that did not prepare me to teach music to Grade 7 learners! I had to find my own way and method to teach them. The university did not prepare me for teaching music to groups of children.*

*Josie: I am also 28 years old and I am a bit of a rebel and I do not like to follow conventional rules. I taught Grade 7 music for two years at a private school in a city in Gauteng. The school is a girls' school only and it is a combined primary school and high school on the same premises. We had a large music department of 21 music teachers. I found the school very restrictive as the school's management was very controlling. I cannot see myself teaching primary school learners again. I prefer high school learners. I have a Master's degree in music and am currently pursuing my PhD at a university in the United States. Once I'm finished with my PhD, I would like to teach at a university as one has more freedom there to do your own thing. That would suit my personality better.*

*Lily: I am 23 years old and still inexperienced. I am quite out-going and friendly. I only started teaching this year and this is my first school. I teach music to the whole primary school. We are also a private primary and high school combined. We are the only school in the area that teaches music to the learners. Our school is situated in a town in Gauteng and we have a strong cultural programme at school. We*

*advertise ourselves as a cheaper school, religion being the first strong pillar, then sport in the second pillar and cultural the next. I have a BMus degree and I am busy with my Master's degree in music education.*

*Annie: I am 36 years old. I have a no-nonsense and demanding personality. I have been teaching music for more than 15 years, but this is my first year at RH school. We are also a private combined primary and high school in a city in Gauteng. Recently we were told that we are one of the most expensive private schools in the city! I'm working across the preparatory and high school so I take classes from Grade 3 all the way up to matric. I am currently busy with my PhD in music education at a university in France.*

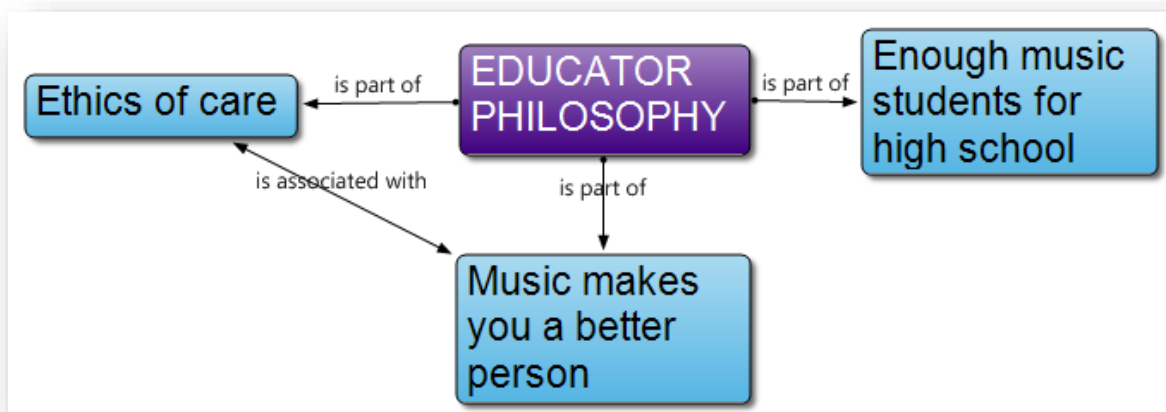
*Lynette: I am 45 years old. I would describe myself as a private and not easily pleased person. I taught class music between 2005 and 2008. I was teaching at a private boys' only primary school in a city in Gauteng. The school was very music orientated and the boys had all the resources they needed for music. The boys had a wide choice of instruments they could choose to learn to play. At the moment I am deputy head of a brand new private school in Gauteng and we only have classes from Grade 1 to Grade 5. In two years' time I will have my first Grade 7 group at this school. I started with my Master's degree in music education, but building up a new school is extremely time consuming and I had to stop my studies for the time being.*

*Yasmin: I am 32 years old. I am very conservative and old-fashioned in my thinking and ways. It is my first year that I am teaching music. I have been teaching Arts and Culture at another school and currently I am teaching at a private combined primary and high school outside a big city in Gauteng. I was appointed at the beginning of this year. We have a very relaxed atmosphere here at school. The school management has been talking about combining music, art and drama*

*into one subject for next year. I do not have a BMus degree, but I did music as a subject until matric.*

From the above introductions of the educators, the indication is that Grade 7 music educators hold a variety of qualifications. Three of the 7 music educators, Josie, Lily and Annie, are currently pursuing postgraduate degrees in music. This might be an indication of their commitment to teaching, or alternatively it may be an indication of their commitment to their own professional development. The common thread here is that all the educators are teaching at private schools of which many are a combination of primary and high school. I will now continue to examine the educators' philosophy regarding their own teaching of music.

## 5.2 Theme 1: Educator philosophy



**Figure 10: Theme 1: Educator philosophy**

From the data analysis, three categories emerged from the educators' philosophy of teaching (see Figure 10). The first category was where the educators adhered to an ethics of care. The second category that emerged was that the educators had the philosophy that music makes their learners better people. The last category that emerged was that the educators believed that all the learners in their class should be able to play an instrument. The following fictitious conversation takes place in the tea room of a school during a conference for music educators. The educators are all teaching, or have taught, Grade 7 learners.

### **5.2.1 Educator philosophy: Ethics of care**

#### TEATIME AT A MUSIC WORKSHOP

Lily: *“We [the learners and the educator] started the first day awkwardly, we had to get to know each other, know each other’s names. They didn’t know any musical instruments and I tended to make things too complex. I made it too difficult ... I agree that teaching them is definitely a journey” (15:51).*

Rita: *I agree. “What I have noticed is that my learners open up to me. I will talk to them and say something and they respond by saying that I am different from the other educators ... They tell me about all the work they have and that they cannot cope with it all ... They enjoy coming to my class, just to come and sit there and “chill”. I like that they open up to me” (10:54).*

Lily: *“The same thing is starting to happen to me, where the Grade 7s will come to me and tell me what happened in their lives. It is never anything music related ... They will come crying to me and tell me about what happened at home or what happened to a friend ... They come to me because they are feeling bad and thought that I would understand” (15:55).*

Lily: *It might be because they are comfortable with you. “With the Grade 7s they are very comfortable [with me] now. I know that they are at that awkward stage but I am aware of that awkwardness – because it is a wall between us (15:43). I try to be really aware of where they are and we will go through it” (15:44).*

Rita: *I will miss my Grade 7s when they leave. “I love my learners. I treat them completely differently than I treat the other grades. I am not buddy-buddy with them, but I make jokes with them. They understand certain humour” (10:53).*

Josie: *Yes, I think humour can add to a positive teaching atmosphere. “It was a challenge for me to create an atmosphere of caring where it is OK for the learners to make a mistake because it doesn’t matter if you make a mistake” (11:83).*

Yasmin: *Yes, I agree about the mistakes! “I am the one who will go and find the lost little sheep and explain a concept to him while the rest of the class already understands it ... It is a challenge to make sure they do not get lost but at the same time to ensure that the rest of the class does not get bored” (16:10).*

Rita: *Getting bored easily seems to be a problem for Grade 7s. “I understand that everything we do in class can’t always be enjoyable, but I want them to hang onto every word I say for the half hour that they are in my class. For half an hour they have to be able to participate. If I can’t do that, I have failed as an educator” (10:61).*

Karel: *I do not agree with that. “I think one can accommodate the learners’ needs in a way. One has to be careful though that they do not manipulate you into only doing activities that they like! Then the whole learning process is gone!” (14:10).*

### **5.2.2 Educator philosophy: Music makes you a better person**

Rita: *I have to agree with you about trying to accommodate the learners, and although “they might not use music in their lives, it makes you a better person and it gives you something to talk about when you are in company” (10:68).*

Annie: *I agree. “My research that I’m busy working on at the moment is that I’m looking at 21st century competencies through blended learning platforms in the music classroom and so I’m looking at, you know, music is a wonderful gift” (12:17). So I’m using project-based learning philosophy ... where they are getting the most out of music*

*that they can, not just in terms of learning music for music's sake. Learning music because it makes you a better human being" (12:24).*

### **5.2.3 Educator philosophy: Enough music students for high school**

*Lily: "I [also] want to make music fun for them, especially I want them to have fun in my class so when they reach their high school phase they can go to school and say I want to learn music and music can be brought in as an academic subject in their high school years" (15:26).*

*Josie: That is exactly what I do! "My focus with the primary school is not on anything formal. It is mostly to ensure, because I see Grade 7, because the school, primary and high school are together, Grades 7, 8 and 9 as the years to ensure that you have a Grade 10 music class. What I do in Grades 7, 8 and 9, is to ensure that there are learners who would be interested in taking music in Grade 10 as a subject" (11:11).*

### **5.2.4 Educator philosophy: Discussion**

From the above conversations one can surmise that most music educators, teaching philosophy include ethics of caring about their learners and their emotional wellbeing. In many circumstances learners perceive music educators as caring and understanding. Most music educators do realise that, although most learners will probably not pursue music professionally, music education is a worth-while endeavour as it allows the learner to become a well-rounded and better person. Some educators seem to find the Grade 7 year the time to lay the groundwork for learners to consider music as an academic subject in high school. It may indicate that these educators are concerned about the future of music in their own schools, or it may indicate a general concern for the wellbeing of music education in high school. The philosophy that music educators have informs their teaching approach. In Section 5.3 I discuss the various teaching approaches of music educators to their subject (see Figure 11).

### 5.3 Theme 2: Teaching approach

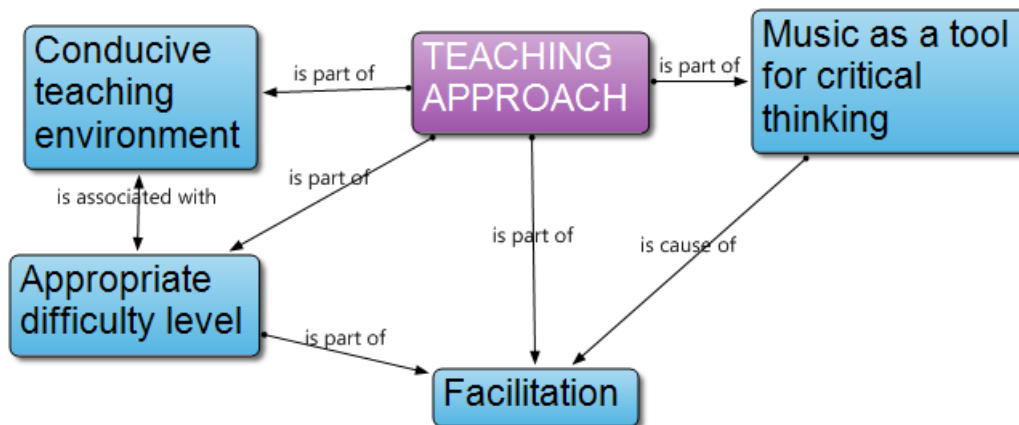


Figure 11: Theme 2: Teaching approach

#### 5.3.1 Teaching approach: Conducive teaching environment

##### TEATIME AT A MUSIC WORKSHOP

Lily: *"I want to make music fun for them [the Grade 7 learners.] I want them to have fun in my class so when they reach their high school phase they can go to school and say I want to learn music"* (15:19).

Rita: *I agree with the fun part. "I am the clown in the class. I am an entertainer, I am not someone who just walks in [and just starts teaching.] In the beginning I am like that in order to establish discipline, because it is difficult" to create the perfect teaching circumstances* (10:62).

Annie: *It is difficult! "I am [also] trying. I don't know if I'm succeeding but I'm certainly trying, like the flipped classroom idea. They like that idea of taking responsibility for their own learning"* (12:5).

Josie: *It is not easy teaching Grade 7s. "The balance between freedom and still having a conducive teaching atmosphere where progress is still possible [to me] was also a challenge* (11:84). *I think it is a challenge for children who are so used to being evaluated and*

*assessed ... when you put them in an environment where they have freedom, they do not know what to do with it (11:81). It was a challenge to create an atmosphere of care where it is OK to make a mistake” (1:83).*

*Karel: I agree. “One has to see what is going to work with the learners, it is a fine line to negotiate between what they would like and what not ... You have to be able to adjust at a moment’s notice the moment you realise something is not working” (14:28).*

*Annie: “If you can capture their attention and get them engaged they are wonderful but you know you’ve got to be so on the ball and give 9 000% for every second of the lesson just to keep them engaged” otherwise they lose interest (12:6).*

*Rita: Absolutely! That affects the teaching atmosphere in the class [when they lose interest.] “I can understand that everything [we do in class] can’t always be enjoyable, but for half an hour they have to be able to hang onto every word I say” (10:61).*

*Annie: That is a tall order. “I’m using a whole lot of different philosophies ... I just find that trying to teach the Grade 7s theory content they are not really open to that. I’m trying to put that theory content where it’s available and hopefully they will use it and try to do really fun, creative lessons in class that make them need to learn the theory content online” (12:23).*

*Karel: Online teaching is not an option if you have to do instrumental play with the learners. “Instrumental play [only] works if you are geared for it ... What I used to do was to take some xylophones and let the learners each play a note from something simple ... They sit in rows of five behind one another in order to see when they have to play. This prepares them to play and to focus” (14:13).*

Lily: *I do not have a problem with my Grade 7 learners. “They are easy to talk to. I ask them, are you comfortable with this, do you like this, you don’t mind this, and they give me direct feedback. I know what they want and what I want and I know I can find a balance between the two spectrums” (15:42).*

### **5.3.2 Teaching approach: Appropriate difficulty level**

Josie: *“It is difficult to find the right balance between too easy and too difficult” (11:74).*

Yasmin: *Yes, especially if you do not know the children well enough to know what they actually know. “I have to explain things time and time again, explaining in various ways. Eventually one would say: Oh! Now I understand it for the first time” (16:13).*

Annie: *Added to that, “I always find the trouble with these classes are, I mean I’ve got kids in my Grade 7 class that don’t know what a treble clef is ... and then I’ve got kids who are doing Grade 3, 4, or 5 theory ... so my aim is to get the less experienced ones up to speed without boring the more advanced ones because I’ve seen that happen where kids are just bored and loose interest and those are the kids that you want to hang onto” (12:7).*

Lily: *I find the ones who do not play an instrument lose interest very quickly. “The biggest challenge [for me] was discovering what they know and what they do not know ... I had to quickly figure out next – how I am going to teach them the knowledge that they lack (15:13). On the first day they didn’t know any musical instruments and I tended to make things too complex (15:51). At other times I underestimated their intelligence and I forgot they are Grade sevens (15:2). I [also] find it difficult to find material to teach that age (15:7). [What makes it even worse, is that] what they want to learn in music is to play the guitar and they want to learn how to DJ – that’s not how you learn music. It’s the*

*predicament of finding a golden mean between what they want and what we have to teach them” (15:29).*

### **5.3.3 Teaching approach: Facilitation**

*Josie: “With the [marimba] bands, we have a lot of bands and each has a captain, a marimba captain in each band and the ideal is for them to run it by themselves once you have taught them the parts (11:99). The last part of the term we mostly composed [music]. So they wrote the music and I just facilitated (11:52). I followed the same approach with their repertoire. The repertoire they learned for the competitions were pieces they selected themselves (11:54). With the older girls we got to a point where I just watch what they do and only make sure nobody makes mistakes. But they work out their own transcriptions and arrangements and they organise everything themselves (11:100). I noticed that the older girls enjoyed it more to work [on the arrangements of the music] by themselves and to do it collaboratively. (11:60). You work up to the point where they [the learners] can carry on by themselves and you are not needed in the class. It is a very hands-off approach” (11:98).*

*Lily: “I definitely am [more of a facilitator than a teacher] as I am the only music teacher at the school and it is a non-academic subject, I have the liberty to be a facilitator instead of a teacher” (15:18).*

### **5.3.4 Teaching approach: Music as a tool for critical thinking**

*Annie: “We can also look at it [teaching music to Grade 7 learners] as a tool to assist with the development of creative thinking, of critical thinking (12:19). I don’t think that Grade 7s should still be doing the Orff stuff ... but if they are doing stuff that is a bit more demanding and that can really develop their critical thinking but we’ve just got to find a way to convince them of it (12:46). It’s basically asking the children to think and debate. ... And it is just about making them think about their ideas, question their ideas, communicate them, defend them and be*

*willing to accept someone else's idea as different to theirs and incorporate somebody else's thinking into my frame of reference before making a final decision" (12:47).*

### **5.3.5 Teaching approach: Discussion**

From the above data analysis the indications are that educators in their philosophy of music education are serious about creating an atmosphere in their classes that is conducive to music teaching. Most of the educators agree that teaching Grade 7 is a challenging task, but they try to create a conducive teaching atmosphere in class in various ways, such as presenting classes in a fun and entertaining way and ensuring that the learners take responsibility for their own learning.

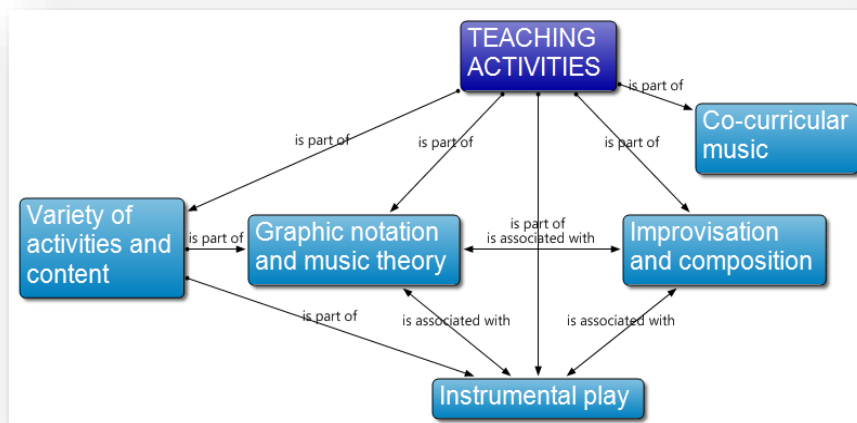
The South African education system has led to a school system in which the learners are constantly assessed, and one of the reasons why learners find it difficult to function in a music class where there is a lot of freedom may be that they are so used to the boundaries set by the system for them, that they struggle to function outside these boundaries and consequently misbehave at times. Some of the educators indicated that they did not find it challenging to establish a conducive teaching atmosphere in their classes as they asked the Grade 7 learners for their input into the content of the curriculum. It may be that learners who feel included in the decision-making process of the curriculum feel that their opinions are valued, and they therefore consider themselves "stakeholders" in the learning process and thus might be more willing to participate.

Due to the fact that in most Grade 7 classes there will be learners who are also instrumental players as well as learners who have never been exposed to music outside the school, educators find it difficult to establish an appropriate level of difficulty for their teaching. Josie and Yasmin perceive themselves to be informal educators with a more "hands-off" approach to their teaching. Indications are that older educators tend to be more formal and structured in their teaching than younger educators.

One of the music educators, Annie, in her philosophy, approaches her teaching philosophy in a very different way from that of the other educators. Where most of the educators who were interviewed were of the opinion that music should be taught for

music's sake, Annie believes that music can be used as a valuable tool for developing learners' critical thinking skills. If educators can adopt this approach of making learners think about their thinking, encouraging them to debate and be willing to accept others' points of view, music in school and specifically music as a subject for Grade 7 learners might gain greater prominence in the school curriculum and the way it is perceived by both management and parents.

#### 5.4 Theme 3: Teaching activities



**Figure 12: Theme 3: Teaching activities**

##### 5.4.1 Teaching activities: Variety of activities and content

###### TEATIME AT A MUSIC WORKSHOP

Rita: *“There are so many other factors that you teach a child in music. It is not only singing or note names. There are so many other things involved (10:45). Sometimes I think I have to do some aural training with them ... I also have to do music appreciation. As I think back retrospectively, I think about what I would like to teach them and what skills I have and then I will focus on that” (10:60).*

Lily: *The scope is huge. My Grade 7s have done a lot of activities this year. “We learnt a couple of music notes, we learnt a musical structure, a little bit of music history and now we are at the stage where we have written lyrics and we are busy writing a melody for our lyrics” (15:15).*

Yasmin: *There is a lot to teach, I agree. “We have three terms – one term they [the learners] do drama, the next term music and the last term art. [The school wants the Grade 7s] to rotate like that ... There is a lot less one can then teach them. [As it is now], I can teach them one term instrumental play<sup>14</sup>, one term notation and one term music history” (16:31).*

Lynette: *We also have three terms. The school “divided the terms between us teachers. I basically had them one term for music education for class music and then I had them one term to do a play ... and then they went to another teacher for the other term to do djembe (13:2). So we worked on the elements of music and they did graphic scores around that, they did listen and do appreciation, they did analysis of music, listening, analysing and interpreting music ... And we also did some composing where they would have their djembes, or steel drums, or marimbas and work around a pentatonic scale or a jazz scale and they would improvise and they would do something. We also worked on dramatic expression where I would give them a piece of music and they needed to express themselves in terms of music” (13:3).*

Annie: *I do a lot of activities in class. “In the first term we did a whole lot of bucket drumming<sup>15</sup> ... Then in the second term, we used a little thing called a “makey-makey”, it’s a little circuit board. And they are looking at how to sample sound and then build instruments which trigger electronic sounds (12:12). The Grade 7s have done a variety of things. Last year they had sort of, a group would do music just for a term and the next group would come and I know it didn’t work very well at all, so what we’ve managed this year is to get them for one lesson per cycle” (12:1).*

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<sup>14</sup> Instrumental play: Playing on marimbas.

<sup>15</sup> Bucket drumming: Drumming on plastic buckets.

Lynette: *"I apply the theme effect [using different themes, such as Music around the world], so in Term 1 we do something, in Term 2 we do drumming or an instrument ... And with the Grade 7s, I will definitely do Garage Band<sup>16</sup> and the I-band and more technologically involved applications" (13:14).*

Karel: *I use computer-assisted teaching. "We have the Sibelius programme [as well as] Groovy City and Groovy Jungle ... These are programs on the interactive white board. The children can then participate. I give each one a chance to go to the board and select an instrument or a time signature ... You have to keep on changing it and make it as interesting as possible" (14:14).*

Annie: *Keeping it interesting is a challenge. That is why "I've been doing a few philosophical enquiries with them as well, where we kind of look at the concept of music, what is music? ... They come up with really interesting things" (12:6).*

Josie: *I don't think people always realise how much is involved in teaching music. "Each year we recorded a CD, not only the marimbas, but all the ensembles in the music department (11:6). We prepared for the prize giving at the end of the year ... but we also did things on our own like the eisteddfod that the bands prepared for (11:7). Each year we had a music competition within the school. Each class ensemble competed against the other class ensembles in the same grade" (11:16).*

Rita: *Teaching music is much more than participating in competitions. "I have to teach the children a love for music. I have to teach them some musical knowledge. (10:60). They [the Grade 7 learners] want to know about modern music. They do not want to learn about or listen to classical music (10:3). The Grade 7s, at the stage when Pitch*

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<sup>16</sup> Garage Band: A software program allowing the user to create their own music.

*Perfect was released [in the cinemas], they all wanted to do a Capella<sup>17</sup> (10:1).*

#### **5.4.2 Teaching activities: Graphic notation and music theory<sup>18</sup>**

*Josie: I did a lot of singing with my learners but also theory. “I did not teach them conventional note reading, we worked with symbols (graphic notation) (11:39). In Grades 6 and 7 they play African instruments and I felt that the written part [of theory] did not correspond with the traditional music we were doing (11:40). We used all sorts of notation such as tubs and graphic notation (11:43). We worked in the keys of C and G major and a minor [on the marimbas] and they should have enough confidence to improvise in those keys and should be able to write down notation in their own way ... As they worked things out, they wrote it down so they could play it again next week (11:110). We did not do a lot of theory (11:36). They were used to formal notation as I did it with them in my first year that I was teaching at the school” (11:47).*

*Yasmin: In teaching theory, “I took it from the bottom up. Music notation and the rhythm triangle and I explained the technical names. [I explained] where music notation<sup>19</sup> comes from, about graphic notation until where we are today. So yes, they [learned] to read [graphic] notation” (16:15).*

*Rita: [I teach my learners formal theory.] “The Grade 8 teacher said that she wanted the children to be able to write the Grade 1 theory exam at the end of Grade 8. So I decided to teach them the basic stuff (10:6). I made a music stave with masking tape on the floor. I told them to spell a word with their bodies ... Spell me the word B-E-D ... Once we were finished, I gave them paper and told them to find the notes ...*

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<sup>17</sup> A Capella – Without instrumental accompaniment (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 02/03/2017).

<sup>18</sup> Music theory is about staff notation and the basic rules to write and interpret music.

<sup>19</sup> Music notation – A system used to visually represent aurally music played ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) accessed 03/04/2017).

*They really did well and studied hard and they were very excited about this test because, at last, they knew where the notes were” (10:8)*

*Karel: My learners “did not like it [theory]. The children who do music [co-curricular] do enjoy it. But the children who, for instance, play rugby, can’t even make a G clef. I think it is about interest ... But it is very advanced and I do not think to try and teach them to read notes or to show them where middle C is, works for them” (14:17).*

*Yasmin: “For me to teach the children the concept of F A C E and that, I don’t know. I really struggle to explain something that for me is an easy concept, to explain that to them. They struggle to understand it. I do find that the girls do not struggle as much as the boy ... Too much theory, if they are not interested in it, one has to be careful” (16:5).*

*Annie: My “first module [for music theory] is music parameters, then treble clef, the next module is bass clef, then note values ... So for each of those topics there are five videos and then there’s an online assignment that they do after each module (12:10). So the idea with the flipped classroom is that they can work at their own pace. So I’ll do a module ... and each of my videos is about five minutes and they are just expected to watch a video or two for the next lesson and then we do work on that. Some of them went through all the videos in the first week ... So it does allow the driven students to progress at a much fast rate (12:8). I just find that trying to teach the Grade 7s theory content they are not really open to that. I’m trying to put that theory content where it’s available and hopefully they will use it and try to do really fun, creative lessons” (12:23).*

#### **5.4.3 Teaching activities: Instrumental play**

*Yasmin: I don’t want the kids to do too much theory. “I want them to be able to play an instrument, to be able to make music together. It sounds very idyllic, I know, even if it is Orff instruments such as*

xylophones ... I want to use it [the Orff instruments] with the boomwackers. They have to be able to notate the notes and be able to swap parts" (16:43).

Josie: *My kids do not do notation. "I teach marimbas (11:41) and I do it through call and response and imitation (11:48). The Grade 4s and 5s played recorder and the Grade 7s played marimbas (11:1). Each week we had a marimba lesson and the other lesson depended on what we were busy with [at school]" (11:3).*

Yasmin: *Fortunately I can do what I want. "We had this drumming circle ... It takes the focus off the academic [side of school] (16:34). They have never played drums before. They really enjoyed it" (16:18).*

Karel: *"At school... the Grade 5s and 6s they do drumming .... The only thing I [still] have to do with the Grade 7s is in the marimba [bands] and choir" (14:2).*

Yasmin: *That is a shame that you don't teach them anymore! "I have ordered boomwackers" for my learners (16:36).*

#### **5.4.4 Teaching activities: Improvisation and composition**

Josie: *"In the improvisation of the first term it was mainly exploration ... without any technique (11:62). [I mostly] focused on improvisation and composition with the Grade 7s (11:14). I used the marimba for improvisation and composition (11:15). All we did when we improvised was to use the keys of C and G, nothing chromatic [as the marimbas do not have many chromatic notes] (11:49). Once we decided which key to work in, we wrote down the chords (11:50). The last part of the term we mostly composed (11:51). So they wrote the stuff themselves (11:52). I expect them to be able to use the rhythmic patterns and keys that they learned to compose" (11:105).*

#### **5.4.5 Teaching activities: Co-curricular music<sup>20</sup>**

Lily: *“I am very proud of the first attempts of my Grade 7s to compose, but I’m more proud of the strong culture programme [we have] ... we have junior, senior choirs, we have [clubs] for writing, for art, for drama, we have music competitions, everything that you would expect to be in a school it is just extra-curricular” (15:10).*

Josie: *“We have a senior choir on a Monday, from Grade 4 to 7. On a Tuesday we have percussion band. We have the little ones who also do a bit of instruments. On a Wednesday we have junior choir. On a Thursday we have the reception choir, with the Grade Rs. The Grade 1s also have a choir as there are too many Grade 1s to put with the Grade 2s and 3s in a choir (10:15). I was teaching a lot of marimba bands. It was five bands in the one school (11:58). We have the Grade 6 and 7 marimba bands that form part of the school’s co-curricular activities” (11:5).*

Karel: *“I am [also] involved with the choir and the marimba bands [at my school] (14:1). Because the Grade 7s [at our school] do not have music anymore, we try and accommodate them. When there is a function, the Grade 7 marimba band is expected to perform and the choir is expected to sing (14:34). The marimbas and djembes all perform” (14:31).*

#### **5.4.6 Teaching activities: Discussion**

The data analysis indicated that most the music educators regarded their work as important, which in turn influences the activities they select for their learners, while taking the curriculum into account as well. Most of the educators cited a variety of activities in a variety of contexts they are supposed to teach. In order to ensure that the Grade 7 learners are exposed to as many music activities as possible, most music

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<sup>20</sup> Co-curricular music: Music activities such as choir and marimba band practises that take place outside of school hours.

educators perceive teaching music theory as an important part of their teaching activities. The data analysis indicated that educators used a variety of different approaches to teach music theory, such as computer-assisted learning, conventional teaching and more active and visual learning by taping the musical stave to the floor in order to teach and to keep their learners engaged in the activity. Indications from the data analysis are that none of these approaches seemed to be completely successful in keeping Grade 7 learners engaged. Most of the educators indicated that instrumental play formed an integral part of their teaching activities, and they teach a variety of instruments, such as Orff instruments, boomwackers, recorders and marimbas to the learners. For many of the educators, improvisation and composition forms an important part of playing instruments. They also indicated that the schools' managements were performance orientated and expected orchestras, bands and choirs to perform regularly. It appears that the music educators were responsible for a variety of co-curricular music activities across the grades as part of their teaching activities.

As music educators decide on the activities they want to teach in class, they have certain expectations of their learners regarding these activities. In Section 5.5 of the data analysis I examine these expectations (see Figure 13).

### 5.5 Theme 4: Expected outcomes

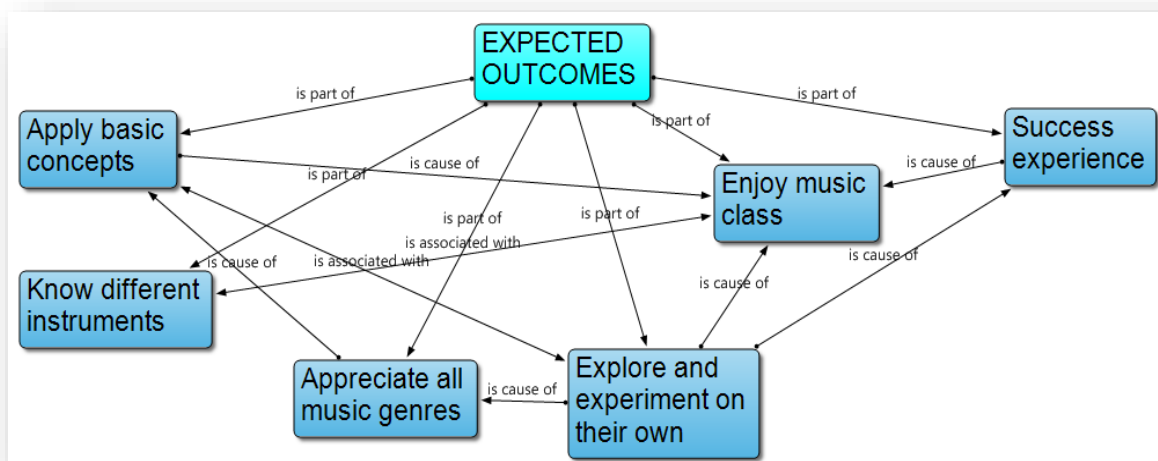


Figure 13: Theme 4: Expected outcomes

### **5.5.1 Expected outcomes: Apply basic concepts as ascribe by CAPS**

#### TEATIME AT A MUSIC WORKSHOP

Rita: *Having a basic knowledge of music is not enough. The learners also need to be able to apply this knowledge. In theory “I first taught them the rhymes [for the line and space notes.] Then I gave them some music, just the music with the notes of Row, Row, Row Your Boat and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, but I did not put the titles on. So they had to figure it out. They knew the note values, they knew the note names. They had to figure it out and play it on the glockenspiel” (10:11).*

Josie: *Being able to apply the basic knowledge they acquire is important. “I expect them to use the basic building blocks that I taught them, things like basic tonal ideas, basic chord progressions, etc.” (11:103).*

### **5.5.2 Expected outcomes: Know the different instruments**

Lily: *I agree with you, they have to be able to apply what they have learned, but “I am very specific that they achieve certain goals. I want them to know the difference between certain instruments. I want them to learn about all the instruments. If you do learn a music instrument, either piano or guitar or recorder and those are the instruments that are available in this town – e.g. I brought my cello from X with me and they called it a guitar because they hadn’t seen or heard of this instrument” (15:50).*

### **5.5.3 Expected outcomes: Appreciate all music genres**

Rita: *That is really shocking! They were clearly not exposed to music education before. “I know they are not going to turn into musicians all of a sudden. What I can give them, however, is an appreciation of*

*music. I can open their eyes and tell them that the music they listen to is not the only music. There are so many genres and so many things to listen to ... I don't want them to have tunnel vision with music" (10:65).*

*Lily: You are so right. "I wanted [my learners] to learn different music in the sense that they know about Mozart they know Beethoven but that's all they know. Obviously they know pop music which they listen to and I wanted them to learn a wider variety of music and we are working on it" (15:22).*

*Yasmin: I want to teach them "a wide spectrum of music, not only the music of today, like who sang this song, but a wide variety and I want them to dissect a song ... Then I explain to them: did you hear that rhythm, here it is repeated, etc. I think one can teach them to listen more attentively" (16:38).*

#### **5.5.4 Expected outcomes: Explore and experiment on their own**

*Josie: I agree with the learners being able to listen better, but "to me it was important that there is an atmosphere of exploration in which they are prepared to explore (11:106). In the first three months, it was only exploration without any technique ... They learn things informally, like the role of each instrument ... Those things I felt they do not have to learn in any other way. They can figure it out for themselves (11:65). [In my class I wanted the learners] to have experimented enough to figure things out for themselves, to figure out which chord progressions work ... only in a few keys and to be familiar with those tone environments so they can improvise" (11:101).*

#### **5.5.5 Expected outcomes: Enjoy music class**

*Yasmin: I think if they can experiment by themselves, they will enjoy music more. "I do not want it [music class] to be a boring academic class. I want them to experience it (16:36). I want the children to be*

*interested in the subject. I do not want to tell them: Here is the music history, learn it. I want to make it interesting. It has to be nice and memorable” (16:37). “I want them to say that this was the best music year ever.” (16:33).*

*Karel: I also try and make it as interesting as possible. “We have Sibelius [a computer program that generates scores and music] ... But one can’t only do that the whole time, you know. You have to change it to make it as interesting as possible” (14:14).*

#### **5.5.6 Expected outcomes: Success experience**

*Rita: Music class has to be interesting, but the learners also need to experience success in the class to encourage them. Once I gave my kids a song without a title and they had to play it by themselves. “They surprised themselves. They could not believe they could do it. They played it and there was a song!” (10:11).*

*Josie: It is not easy to achieve that. “I did find it very overwhelming to think how little time I had during the week and to me it was important that the little bit that they could do they do well” (11:111).*

*Lynette: That is how I see my music teaching. “With encouragement and with, you know, experiencing success we might just be able to get it [the lack of confidence] out of the way quickly” (13:19).*

#### **5.5.7 Expected outcomes: Discussion**

The expectations music educators have of their Grade 7 learners are varied and multiple. Most educators expect the learners to leave primary school with the ability to apply the basics skill sets they have been taught. The data analysis indicated that most the music educators expected that their learners had a basic knowledge of a variety of instruments. Another expectation of music educators was that they wanted their learners to appreciate all music genres and that the children, after having been taught the basic building blocks of music, would be able to experiment and explore on

their own. For most music educators, the expectation is that the learners should enjoy their music class and experience success in music class. Having discussed the activities that the educators selected for the learners and the expectations that the educators had of their Grade 7 classes, I next examine the data regarding how the music educators perceived the learners in their class (see Figure 14).

## 5.6 Theme 5: Educators' perception of Grade 7 learners

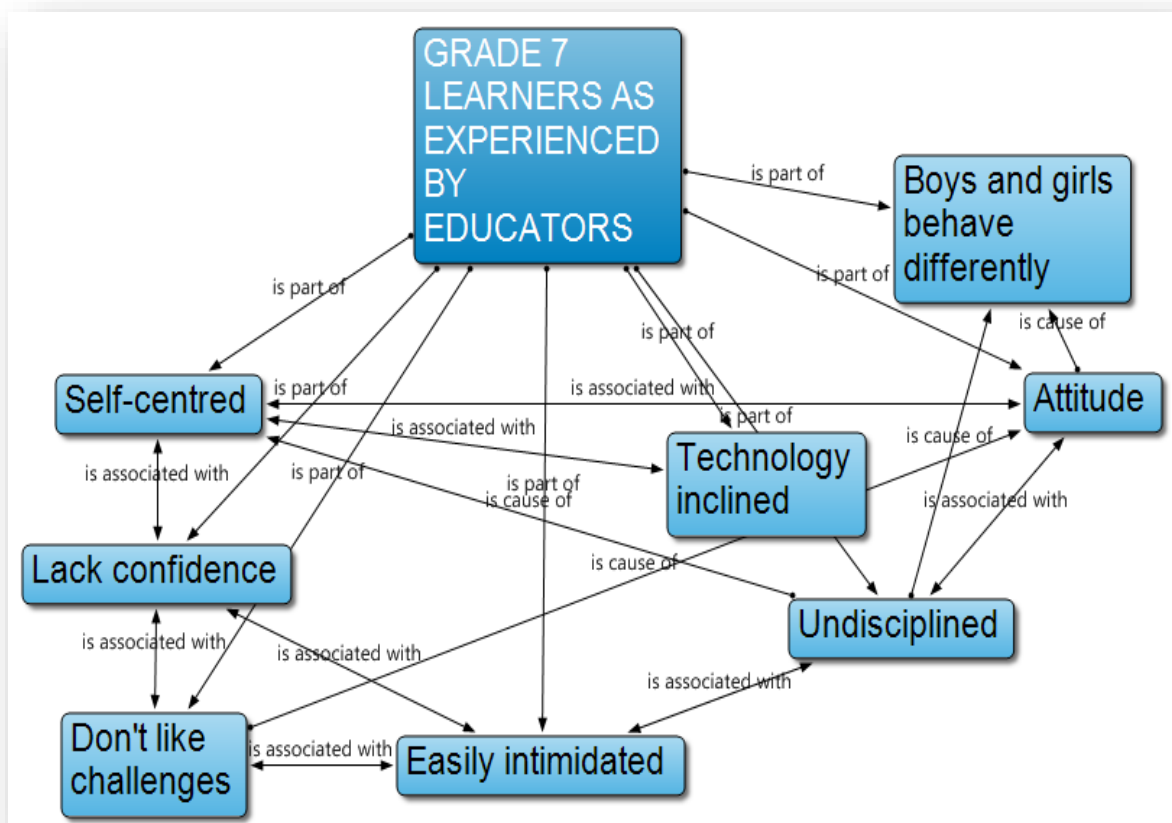


Figure 14: Theme 5: Grade 7 learners as experienced by educators

### 5.6.1 Grade 7 learners: Self-centred

#### TEATIME AT A MUSIC WORKSHOP

Josie: "When I arrived there I was quite surprised to see how self-centred they were. I suppose one can expect it, but it was on a surprising level" (11:20).

Annie: *I agree with you. We were doing an “enquiry talking about music, two of the pieces were “Baby Baby” ... They couldn’t imagine a world in which Liszt is better than Bieber – very depressing (12:32). I think, certainly we’ve recently made it into the top 10 most expensive schools and I think that does influence the kind of child we have and I think to some extent mommy and daddy have been saying you are right, and you are perfect and you are amazing for 13-odd years now and it is now ingrained and anybody who questions that has a very hard time of it” (12:34).*

### **5.6.2 Grade 7 learners: Lack confidence**

Josie: *I sometimes think it is a charade on their side. “I saw that my Grade 7’s were very inhibited, they were so scared to make a mistake, when they had to do something, they were very quick to say that they can’t do it (11:26). What I do think is a challenge, is that the children were so used to being evaluated and assessed ... that when you put them in an environment where there is freedom, they have no idea what to do with it (11:81) [because] everyone was very strict. The focus was on perfection so the kids were very inhibited. They did not want to try new things” (11:29).*

Lynette: *“You know that lack of confidence thing, speaking behind the hand that you have to draw them out. That affects cooperation and the smooth running of a lesson” (13:18).*

Karel: *“It is a very unsure (children are not considered as “little” anymore” and yet they are not grown up either) time for a child. I often think they think they will not be able to do something” (14:42).*

### **5.6.3 Grade 7 learners: Don’t like challenges**

Josie: *I agree that it is part of the problem. That often is why “they don’t like to try something if it is difficult” (11:71). It was a challenge [for my*

Grade 7's], through all the activities, for them to sing on the letter names. They had never done it before. It was terrible for them" (11:75). Karel: They are very unsure and "very impressionable ... but they won't admit it ... they [pretend to be] cool but [in real life] they are unsure" (14:47).

#### **5.6.4 Grade 7 learners: Learners are easily intimidated**

Josie: It is because they are unsure that they "are easiest intimidated by something that is a challenge (11:72). It was difficult to get them to sing (11:73) [and I think] singing is very intimidating (11:76). They do not like it when something is difficult. I find the Grade 7s specifically the Grade 6s and 7s were the groups that were easily intimidated by a challenge" (11:118).

Karel: I have to agree with you. The Grade 7s are very unsure about the activity of "singing. Often they decide they are not going to do it" (14:45).

#### **5.6.5 Grade 7 learners: Undisciplined**

Annie: My experience of the Grade 7s is that they can be an incredibly challenging grade to teach ... The Grade 7s are wild and can just be incredibly difficult to teach (12:4). [The problem is that when we start a lesson] then we only see them the next "day 5" or "day 6" of the cycle then they forget to bring all their stuff ... They seem to have quite a short memory span in terms of what they do from week to week (12:13). What we've managed to do this year is to get them for one lesson per cycle ... Already I'm feeling it's not enough. By the time we see them again they've forgotten everything we've taught them in the previous lesson" (12:14). Once I've just come out of a Grade 7 class now and I was a bit flustered because we were having this really lovely discussion and then you have this complete delinquent that was just shouting odd answers (12:25). I think that comes from the bottom up ... It is not just the chance to mess around and sing songs but I think

*you might lose something by making it so rigid for little kids ... I think that by Grade 7 they've learned to take advantage of that freedom" (12:26).*

*Karel: I agree with you about discipline and freedom. I have the same problem. "It is terrible if you say today we play instruments because everyone wants to play on everything at the same time ... For half the period you try to discipline them (14:13). [The worst thing about teaching a Grade 7 learner is] "when they tell you they won't do something" (14:52). [I experience the Grade 7s as very undisciplined.] "It really is a problem" (14:55).*

#### **5.6.6 Grade 7 learners: Technology inclined**

*Lily: The kids do not realise what they are missing by not paying attention. All my kids are interested in, is "they want to learn how to DJ" (15:27).*

*Annie: I agree with you on that. "In general, I find if they're not staring at a screen they really don't care about it (12:30). "Or being Grade 7s, maybe they'd still just want to play on their cell phones! (12:22). Just yesterday I had to confiscate two cell phones in the class because I shouted at them not to speak to each other so they started WhatsApping each other. So I just took their cell phones away. They are so committed to their screens" (12:31).*

*Karel: Technology seems to be all they are interested in. "We have the Sibelius program and Groovy City and Groovy Jungle and they liked it" (14:14).*

#### **5.6.7 Grade 7 learners: Attitude**

*Karel: What bothers me more than their love for technology, is their attitude. "They [do] have an attitude. I am not sure if it is a way of self-preservation (14:3). [I experience the Grade 7s] as rebels who try to*

*intimidate the rest. It usually is the good kid that they try to intimidate and all of a sudden this kid now also has an attitude (14:4) ... Unless you do cool things [in class], like the music they like..... You will get children who ... will refuse to do it" (14:46).*

*Annie: I find it very frustrating that "I am required to be this crazy lady who screams, that I don't even recognize. I'm quite a gentle person. I don't even recognize myself in a Grade 7 class because I'm screaming so much. I'm like this monster and I don't want to be that person" (12:28). Discipline and attitude are the main contenders. I think to some extent it's this "I'm now the big fish in the small pond" attitude" (12:44).*

*Lynette: I have to agree with you on that point. "I think they are more challenging because of their position in school. Because I think the elevated position that they have in terms of being Grade 7 ... They kind of have a typical entitlement to them (13:9). You get your leaders and your monitors amongst those children and they are even more elevated ... So there is a magnitude of little leaders within the Grade 7 learner community. I think that that really gives them that entitlement and that thought that they have accomplished something" (13:10).*

*Lily: I also have that in my class. What frustrates me more is that "as soon as I make a mistake, a silly mistake ... they will easily tell you that the lesson that you are giving is really boring and you should really add this to make it more interesting" (15:4).*

*Karel: The kids' attitude comes from the home. "Rich parents have an attitude. The rich child too and he is very self-entitled. I do not have to do certain things because my parents are rich (14:59). The moment you try and reprimand a child, the parents will defend the child. [They do not believe anything wrong about their children.] My child is the best, the cleverest and these are children that do not participate in*

*class at all (14:58). The rich child is very self-entitled. I do not have to do certain things because my parents are rich” (14:59).*

#### **5.6.8 Grade 7 learners: Boys and girls behave differently**

*Lynette: Fortunately we do not have that, but I am starting to have problems with the boys and the girls in so much as they are very aware of one another. “We are already experiencing some challenging issues in terms of boys looking at girls and girls flirting with boys (13:15). I think the boys will still be OK to perform but I do think, and I’ve seen it with the girls starting now this year, when we are supposed to perform in front of friends, the girls start giggling and become shy” (13:17).*

*Yasmin: I find there to be a big difference between the boys and girls. For instance, in the theory class, “to explain to the children the concept of F A C E, I don’t know ... I do find that the girls struggle less than the boys to understand it. The boys are very busy (16:3). So I brought in the drums for them (16:14). The boys do not really pay attention and suffer from attention deficit syndrome (16:6). They are less mature than the girls and they do not participate in class so much. They also do not understand music the way the girls do” (16:7).*

#### **5.6.9 Grade 7 learners: Discussion**

The data indicated that the way in which the educators perceive Grade 7 learners is varied. The educators found the learners to be self-centred and only interested in their own world and activities. Most of the educators were in agreement that the Grade 7 learner lacks self-confidence. Grade 7 learners’ lack of discipline seemed to frustrate the educators. The learners are forgetful, have a short attention span and want to be entertained the whole time. Most of the educators felt that the Grade 7 learners take advantage of the freedom in a music class and that they have no self-control when playing instruments.

The data indicated that Grade 7 learners seemed to be so committed to technology that anything that does not involve technology receives little attention. The attitude

learners have in class makes it difficult for music educators to teach them. The data indicated that the learners tend to be entitled and that they think of themselves as “elevated” above the rest of the primary school. There seems to be a difference between the behaviour of boys and girls in class as indicated by the data. The two genders at this age seem to become more aware of one another, and this influences the teaching taking place in the class. The data indicated that boys are more active in class whereas girls tend to be more focused and quicker to learn new material. In Section 5.7 of the data analysis I assess the data regarding the relationship dynamics (see Figure 15) that educators experience in school.

## 5.7 Theme 6: Relationship dynamics

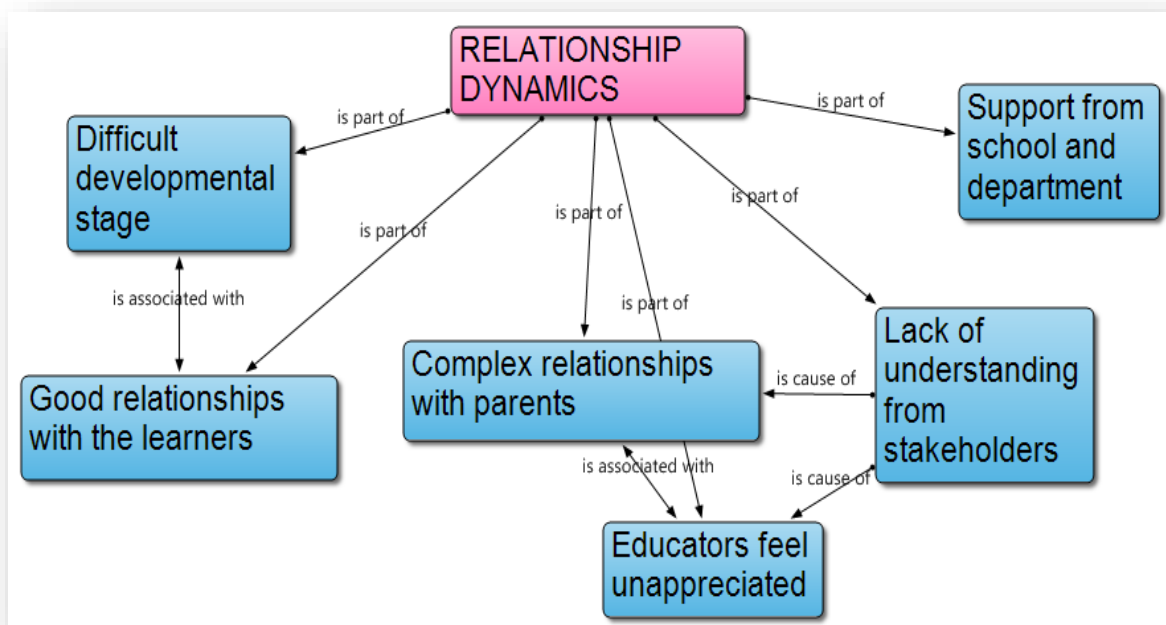


Figure 15: Theme 6: Relationship dynamics

### 5.7.1 Relationship dynamics: Difficult developmental stage

#### TEATIME AT A MUSIC WORKSHOP

Rita: *“It is a challenge ... because the girls are not like the younger groups where they still dance and jump around and play (10:2). In Grade 6 they are wonderful and then they get to Grade 7 and I do not*

*know what to do with them ... It is like something happens to them during December ... They come back as different people (10:56). The Grade 7s were probably the group I enjoyed the least (11:19). They are an interesting group to work with but it is a challenge (11:77). The thing about them is, they will call you out if there is a moment of hesitation” (11:85).*

*Josie: “For me the Grade 7s were in the middle. They do not realise that they are in the middle [of their school education.] They think they are at the end, but they are actually slap bang in the middle (11:101). [But I have to agree with Rita, I do not like teaching them.] I prefer the FET<sup>21</sup> phase because I find the interaction more stimulating than the Grade 7s” (11:116).*

*Annie: My experience of teaching Grade 7s is that “they can be an incredibly challenging grade to teach....The Grade 7s are wild and can be just incredibly difficult to teach (12:4). I’ve come out of a Grade 7 class and I was a bit flustered because we were having this really lovely discussion and then you have this complete delinquent that was just shouting odd answers” (12:25).*

*Lynette: I have to agree with you on the children being unbearable at times. “It’s quite easy to teach a younger child but it was challenging for me [as well] to work with the older boys (13:1). It’s just challenging that when they are in a school environment with a teacher ... that they would challenge you. Not because they necessarily disrespect you but because they really have this air and flair about them (13:11). What I dislike most about them could be that sometimes they have a negative attitude towards music ... I think of all, being demotivated/unmotivated to do music might be a huge challenge for me within the Grade 7 environment” (13:21).*

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<sup>21</sup> FET Phase: Further Education and Training Phase (South Africa, 2011:18).

Karel: *“I prefer not to work with them [the Grade 7s] (14:8). You will find your rebels and it is as if they do not really want to participate as it is not cool enough to do so ... It is boring for us (14:7). Sometimes you think a lesson is going to work and then it doesn’t ... I think one tries to accommodate their frame of reference (14:12) [but then] when they tell you they won’t do what you told them to do (14:52), [I get really frustrated]. I find the discipline to be a problem, they get completely out of hand and do not listen ... I think it is because they see music as a free period where they do not have to concentrate ... there is this feeling of I don’t care, it doesn’t matter” (14:55).*

Lily: *I have the same problem. “I find that Grade 7s are right in that difficult teen stage ... so teaching them is a challenge (15:1). I know that they are at that awkward stage but I am aware of that awkwardness – because it is a wall between us (15:46). [But having said that] I am just lucky in the sense that the Grade 7s share ... you do get those grade groups who are just impossibly difficult ... They are adorable kids but they do push my buttons!” (15:47).*

### **5.7.2 Relationship dynamics: Good relationships with learners**

Rita: *“I love them [the Grade 7s]. So I treat them differently than the others ... I am not buddy-buddy with them and I’m not too friendly but I do joke with them (10:53). They open up to me ... They like the music teacher” (10:54).*

Annie: *“You know, there are these little moments where they just do wonderful things ... that’s incredibly satisfying. I do have some really lovely kids in the class as well ... There are three in particular who all have music scholarships for next year ... Those that really care about music” (12:29).*

Lynette: *Most the boys I taught cared about music. “Because most boys there have music as an extracurricular most of them play in the*

orchestra in school. The culture in WHPS is extremely influenced by the music department ... And that's the culture in which they grow up (13:5). What I enjoyed about the Grade 7s was that they were young adults. That they understood. I didn't need to spoon-feed them" (13:7). Karel: My relationship with the Grade 7s "is good. We come a long way. We trust each other (14:30). With your one-on-one instrumental students you have a completely different relationship" (14:22).

Lily: I find my Grade 7s to be "very honest, they are very open, I don't find it difficult to make a connection with them and they are very easily befriended to say the least (15:6). They will easily tell you that the lesson that you are giving is really boring and you should really add this to make it more interesting, so I can always count on them ... I don't know what they want to learn. I can really trust them with that (15:5). Education-wise they help me – I should say if it wasn't for them I would be left without any confidence because we have a good relationship, so it's much easier (15:45). I taught the Grade 8s just for fun for a month ... They really like to act out whereas the Grade 7s are fantastic (15:48). From the first day and now we have reached the stage where we have coffee and cookies during break time (15:51). [Now] the Grade 7s come to me and say here this and this happened – what must I do and it is nothing music related ... it was just like – here I feel bad today because I really thought I come to you so you will understand (15:55). They just randomly come into my class, this girl doesn't like me, what do I do, it's usually nothing to do with music ... It is just personal and social so they sure need guidance ... I think that their connotation with music is their outlet so my music teacher will understand my outlet – that's why I go to her basically" (15:56).

### **5.7.3 Relationship dynamics: Complex relationships with parents**

Rita: I wish we had the same relationship with the parents! "I see the parents very seldom. We have parents' afternoons, but they never come to see me. They are not really interested ... they do not know

who I am (10:42). [I do not think parents perceive music to be important.] I will often tell them, there is a concert. Take your child to it ... They do not do it. They do not have the time (10:43). There are so many other things involved and I do not think parents always realise it (10:45). My children that I teach piano to, are different ... I have regular contact with the mother as I see them when they come to fetch the child ... Those parents will walk the extra mile (10:47). [Some parent perceive me to be a babysitter.] Their kids come to me for half an hour. If the child does not practise, it is fine. She is so busy, she does come to her lesson. There are these two poles" (10:48).

Josie: I hear what you say. "In general, we have very little interaction with the parents because they do not think music to be that important. When we have a parents' evening, they won't be there (11:129). I think in the music department there were a small number of parents that were involved" (11:128).

Karel: The parents have an attitude of "we are here to pay your salary (14:56). The moment you want to talk about a child, the parents take the child's side ... Parents expect me to teach for free when the kid did not pay attention in class, now I have to teach extra lessons ... Rich parents have an attitude. They do not understand that if their child can acquire those skills, it is more worth than money (14:59). [That said, you] do get the nicest children with the nicest parents. They never give you problems ... but it can be very different" (14:57).

Lily: At our school "the parents are very positive about music but once again because it is a non-academic subject they don't care. If a kid doesn't bring their homework back that I sent out – they don't care (15:37). All the parents are glad that I am there to teach their children (15:38). [But] most of the parents think that because music is a non-academic subject, you are not going to put in much effort as with a curriculum subject (15:39). They are very positive, very happy with my

*employment at the school, they did not have music at the school, they employed me to start music at the school” (15:40).*

*Yasmin: “Some [of the] parents [at my school] are positive about music (16:27). [But] some parents question what I do ... They are very antagonistic. It is never the child [that is wrong], it is always the teacher” (16:28).*

#### **5.7.4 Relationship dynamics: Educators feel unappreciated**

*Rita: I find the parents as self-absorbed as the children. “I will often tell them, there is a concert. Take your child to it ... They do not do it. They do not have the time. It makes me feel so inferior and bad (10:44). [You are not really a teacher. You are not really part of the staff and they do not know what you are doing there] All I do is, I play. I do not work, work is not important to me. It is the same at school – when they want a free period – they expect me to take their children but when they write a test, or a child needs to catch up on something, they do it during music (10:46). [Some parents perceive me to be a babysitter.] Their kids come to me for half an hour. If the child does not practise, it is fine (10:48). You can try and talk to them, but you can only talk so much. They do not really care what I do ... They only see me as the teacher that teaches music” (10:50).*

#### **5.7.5 Relationship dynamics: Lack of understanding from stakeholders**

*Rita: We are not always perceived as real teachers. You are not really part of the staff and they do not know what you are doing there “All I do is, I play. I do not work, work is not important to me (10:46). They expect you to be able to do everything they do ... but it does not really justify what you do. You do not really fit in ... What really bugs me is that they want me to teach other subjects ... Why would I want to do that?” (10:52).*

Josie: *I agree. We are music teachers. Why would we want to do something else? "There are not a lot of art people [at the school]. So they do not really know what it takes and what discipline is involved. They are not really educated themselves ... I wanted to start a teachers' marimba group ... so the teachers can experience it themselves (11:127). The thing about the administration is ... to claim the fame when you do something well but to shift the blame when something goes wrong (11:124). If the parents say how good we were then the headmaster takes the glory and supports us and says what a wonderful department it is. But they have no idea what music education involves, what is needed, what time commitment it takes" (11:125).*

Annie: *That is why I left my previous school. "Last year, I truly could not handle it because music was the ugly stepchild that nobody cared about and I fought and I lost and after many years of trying to kill myself I realised I wasn't going to win (12:38). I came from a sort of religious school so I find that where music was more part of the school life, it was kind of given a little bit more time and importance by the staff whereas here it's just that fun thing that they do once a cycle and if they miss it it's not the end of the world" (12:41).*

Karel: *I do not think many people "understand the seriousness of music education. For many of them there is this perception that music is a period in which the children do nothing and they can do whatever they please. They do not understand the value of it (14:37). Parents are indifferent regarding music education (14:38). At least the choir is there [for the Grade 7s.] They get exposed to many performances. One tries to make up for it [the lack of music during school]. It covers it partly, but it's not really music education" (14:39).*

Lily: *At least we have music for our Grade 7s. "They are very happy there is a music teacher, but they are also very happy to come into the classroom and use the classroom as their extra class time or take*

*these kids to remedial therapy ... They don't understand what happens in the music class. They think it is just a sing and dance class (15:35). Most of the teachers learned music as an extra-curriculum subject when they were learners themselves, so they know themselves that they have to put effort into it ... but then they feel that their subject is more important than your subject because you are an art subject and not a science subject, whatever. It's so annoying!" (15:36).*

*Yasmin: It is annoying! "It is the school culture, It has changed and they see music as a waste of time" (16:41).*

#### **5.7.6 Relationship dynamics: Support from the school and the Department<sup>22</sup>**

*Rita: At our school we have support for music. "Our deputy-head is all for music (10:37). The headmaster is also positive regarding choir ... When we perform, they go with. They come to listen and they will tell the girls they sang beautifully (10:38). I want to do a Master's in piano accompaniment ... I have to go during the mornings as I have to teach in the afternoons and the girl who is going to teach me is only available during the mornings. The headmaster said it is in order for me to go" (10:40).*

*Josie: It is nice when the school is supportive. "Within our music department there was wonderful support for one another (11:122). I was protected from the criticism against the Department and financial problems of the Department because our head of music was so dynamic" (11:123).*

*Annie: It is nice to work in such a department. "One of the conditions of coming here was just as a teacher and I was not dealing with the parents or anything like that (12:36). Coming into RH, I've never had so much support as a music teacher before from our administration, in terms of what we need, in terms of resources ... now I do feel that this*

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<sup>22</sup> Department – The school's own music department, not the Department of Education.

*principal that I'm working for now really understands the value of art" (12:39).*

*Lynette: That is so good. I was at such a school. "Everything was there ... If you needed anything you just asked and you received ... It's quite unusual. It's an old school with such a tradition in music that there is a lot of support for that (13:6). The parents supported, the teachers supported, the outside community supported. They have an old boys' club that does so much for the school and they really put a lot of trust and money and effort into the music department" (13:22).*

*Karel: Our school's attitude towards music "is positive. That is nice ... We can take the children in the lower grades out of class for their instrumental lessons (14:32). When the children do not have an examination subject we can take them from these classes [for instrumental lessons.] They are very accommodating as far as that is concerned (14:33). Because the Grade 7s do not have music any more, they accommodate us when there is a function the marimbas and choirs have to perform at ... Before a competition they grant us extra rehearsal time. So as far as management is concerned, there is support" (14:34).*

### **5.7.7 Relationship dynamics: Discussion**

Most of the music educators acknowledged that Grade 7 learners were in a difficult developmental stage and that this can have an impact on the relationship dynamics between educator and learner. Most of the educators indicated that they preferred not to teach Grade 7 learners as it is a challenging age to teach. I, on the other hand, prefer to teach this age as I find the learners to be able to understand what I say and they are capable of more complex thinking. However, the relationship that the educators maintain with their learners is of the utmost importance to them. The relationship that the educators have with the learners seems to be ambivalent – some of the educators are fond of their learners while others prefer not to teach them at all. It seems from the data that younger educators such as Lily seem to have better

relationships with their learners than the older educators. It might be that younger educators want to be seen as a “friend” to their learners, whereas the older educators do not care much for that.

The most complex relationship that the educators seemed to have is with the parents of the learners. The data indicate that the educators’ experience of parents was mostly negative as the parents perceived music not to be an important subject, and by implication the music educators were not important either. However, there seems to be a better relationship between the educators and the parents of their instrumental learners. It seems that even in schools where parents are positive about music teaching, they still do not perceive it as important as other academic subjects. I have to agree with all of the above. I find the parents in my own school to perceive Music as “frivolous” and “not important”. I have very little contact with the parents of the learners in general. However, my relationship with the parents of my piano students, are positive.

Music educators, in their relationships with the people around them at school, often feel unappreciated. This might stem from the parents and the school’s management not perceiving music education as being important. Music educators seem to experience the relationships they have with the various stakeholders as stressful – many of them indicated that the stakeholders (school management, other educators and parents) do not understand what exactly music education involves, and the music educators feel that they are treated as a “stepchild” by most people. I have to agree with this. Despite this, most of the music educators felt that they were supported in their work by their schools and the school management. In the next chapter I discuss the findings regarding the experience learners have of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom.

# CHAPTER 6

## FINDINGS: LEARNERS' EXPERIENCE REGARDING TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC

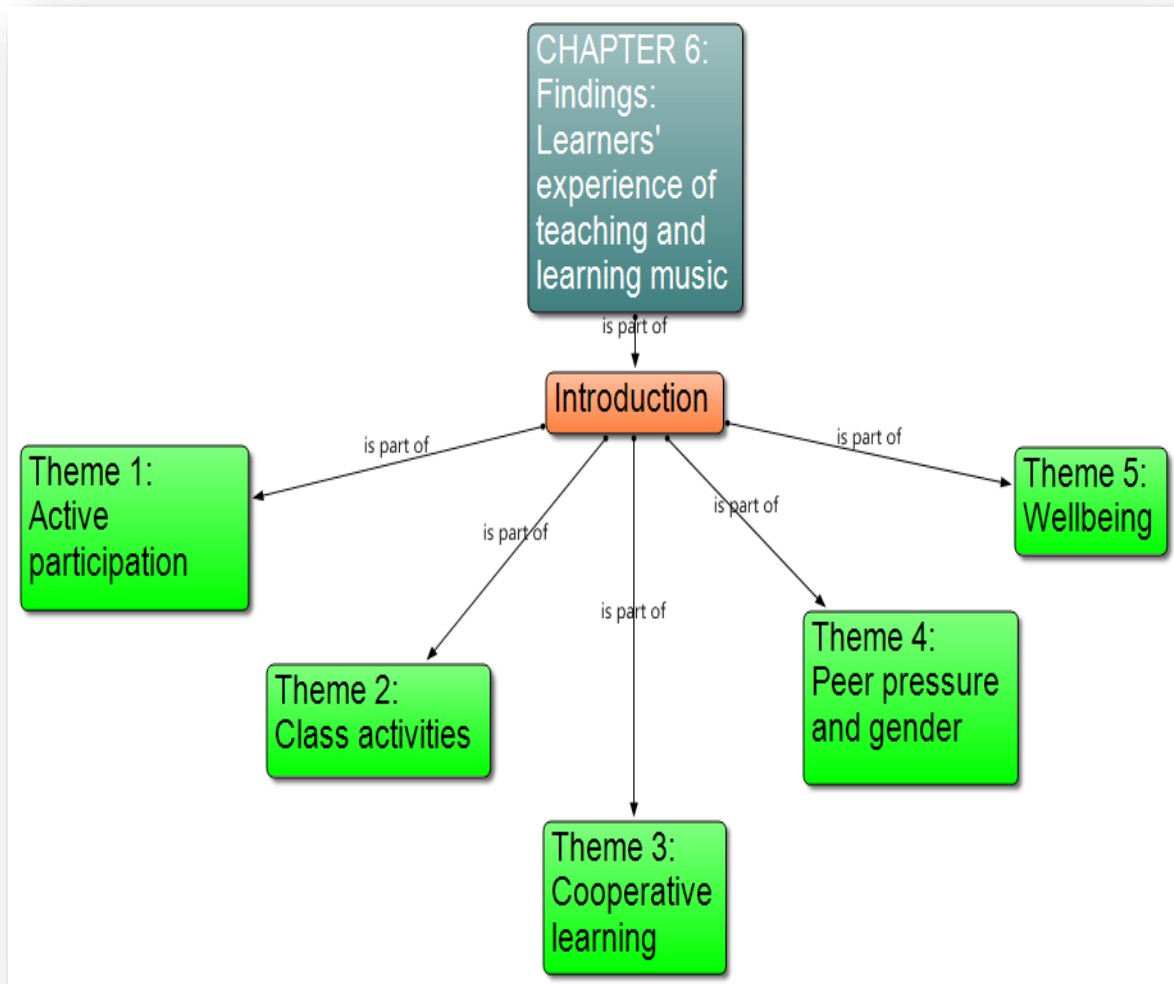



Figure 16: Structure of Chapter 6

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings (see Figure 16) from the data analysis regarding the experiences of learners is presented. Evidence from the data is provided to support the findings and, by doing so, the following research sub-question will be answered in part:

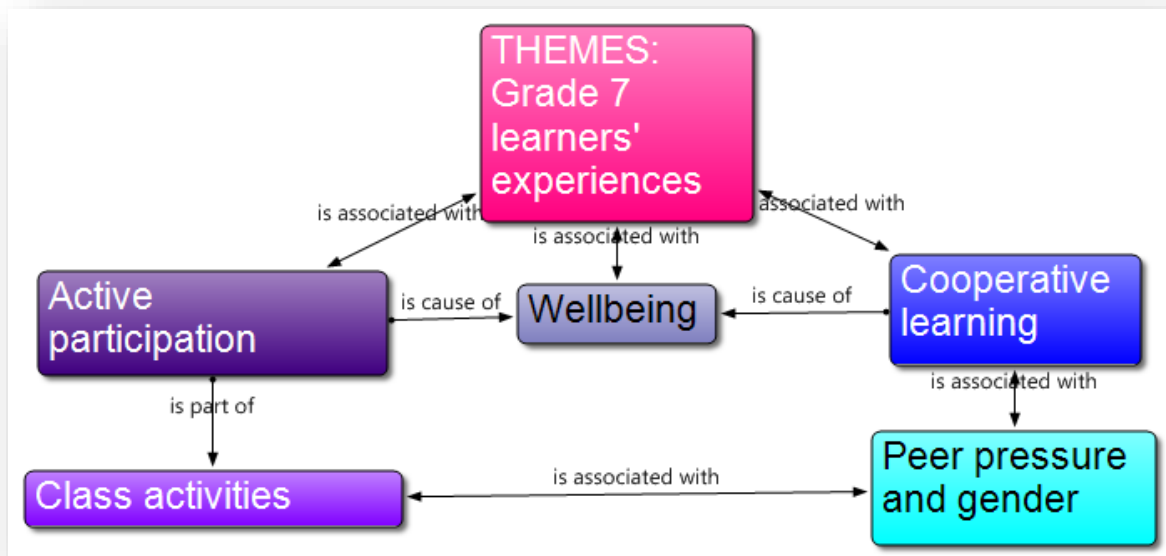


**WHAT ARE THE MUSIC TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF  
EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS IN THE GRADE 7 MUSIC CLASSROOMS  
FROM 12 DIFFERENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG?**

From the themes and categories, codes were conceived, links were constructed and repeating patterns were established. These are illustrated in Figure 14 in Chapter 5. The transcriptions of the interviews were added to ATLAS.ti 7. These transcriptions are the primary documents and formed one heuristic unit. A framework was supplied by these themes for the organisation of the results and the revealing of the narratives of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. Five themes emerge from the data:

1. Grade 7 learners want to participate actively in music class
2. Preferred class activities in the music classroom
3. Grade 7 learners enjoy and prefer cooperative learning
4. Peer pressure as experienced by Grade 7 learners and gender-specific similarities and differences
5. Wellbeing promoted by music in Grade 7.

Figure 17 illustrates the links between the themes that emerged from the data analysis. Learners want **active participation** in their class activities. Their participation is influenced by the **class activities** the educator decides on and this in turn may influence the **cooperative learning** that takes place. How and when learners participate in the class activities depends on the amount of **peer pressure** that learners perceive. Lastly, learners' experience of music might influence their **wellbeing**.



**Figure 17: Themes: Learners' experience of teaching and learning music**

This conversation is a fictional conversation between seven Grade 7 music learners from five private primary schools in Gauteng. Their pseudonyms are: Clara, Gabriel, Juliette, Kevin, Mia, Muriel and Sophia. The conversations between the learners were constructed from significant statements from the interviews that I conducted with the Grade 7 learners.

Most of the conversation is directly quoted from the interviews and appear within quotation marks. The numbers behind the quotes are ATLAS.ti 7 references and indicate the primary document and the place in the document where the quote can be found. The topics discussed are the themes (Figure 17) that emerged from the data analysis of the interviews with the learners.

Most of the learners voiced similar opinions regarding teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. In this discussion I highlight the fact that Grade 7 learners, although at the same developmental stage, have different perspectives and personalities. The direct quotes in the fictional conversation between the research participants were selected to highlight the various themes, and to contrast and complement one another. By using the narrative, I try to give a voice to Grade 7 learners, who are not often heard.

The following fictional conversation is set on a playground, during a sports event between various schools where it would be more realistic for seven Grade 7 learners from more than one school to be present at the same time. The following introductions serve to introduce the seven learners who participated in this research. Although these are not direct quotes, it is my interpretation, based on my observations of the participants and synthesis of the data where it describes the learner.

### **Learners' experience of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom:**

#### ON A SCHOOL PLAYGROUND DURING A SPORT DAY

##### INTRODUCTIONS

*Clara: I am 12 years old. I play piano. I am busy preparing for the Grade 4 piano exam<sup>23</sup> and Grade 5 exam for music theory. I am also in the marimba band. I have a very outgoing personality and I like spending time with my friends.*

*Gabriel: I am 13 years old. I play cricket, hockey and soccer and take part in swimming. For music I do marimba, choir and piano – the things that I really enjoy. My dad is the headmaster of our school so I am under a lot of pressure to perform well in school. I am quite shy around people I do not know and I am not academically very strong.*

*Juliette: I'm 13 years old. I play the piano and I am preparing for the Grade 4 piano exam at the moment, but I'm doing Grade 5 theory. I am a leader at school and one of the top five academic performers in Grade 7. I have very high expectations of myself academically.*

*Kevin: I am 12 years old and I play in the marimba band. I'm in the choir as well and in Grade 5 I played a lead role in the musical. I used to play the guitar but I don't have any time any more to do that but I*

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<sup>23</sup> Exams – In this study, “exams” refer to the ABRSM examinations.

would love to carry on with that if could. I am also shy although not around my friends.

Mia: I am 13 years old and originally from Poland. I am in the choir and the marimba band at school. I play piano Grade 5 and wrote the Grade 5 theory exam this year. People think I'm old-fashioned in my views. My parents have very high hopes for my future.

Muriel: I am 12 years old. I am doing Grade 3 piano and Grade 3 theory. I am also in choir and marimba band and for fun in music I enjoy singing in church or playing the piano for the worship team. I am an only child and my parents are quite strict. I love spending time with my friends.

Sophia: I am 13 years old. I do choir at my school. I have a very "out-there" and outgoing personality and I spend all my time with my friends.

## 6.2 Theme 1: Active participation

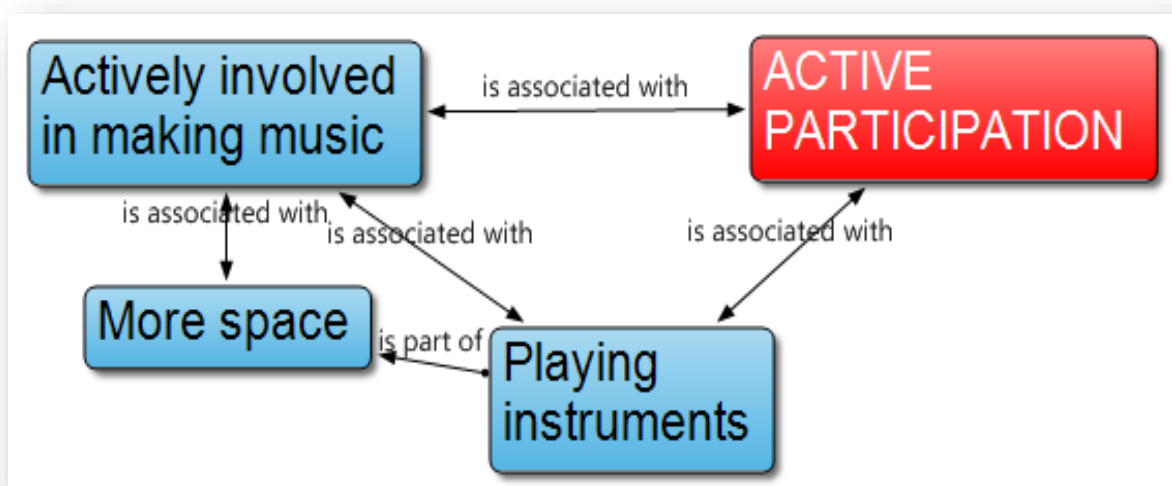


Figure 18: Theme 1: Active participation

### **6.2.1 Active participation: Actively involved in making music**

#### ON A SCHOOL PLAYGROUND DURING A SPORT DAY

Clara: *"I didn't enjoy music history because I don't find history very interesting. 'Cause I just don't really enjoy sitting in one spot during history. I'd rather be playing the marimbas and making a melody with people (17:3). I would just sit there ... and then I would be fiddling with something (17:11). [I would rather play any instrument, even the triangle, than] like sitting down. I like doing something all the time. So 'cause when we did music history, I had to like sit and listen to it. I don't really enjoy just sitting down. When I play an instrument, something is moving or I have to talk to people to get it right" (17:8).*

Gabriel: *I don't like sitting down either. "No kid really wants to be sitting down after a long day at school ... You want to be trying it [instruments] out, seeing what it does (18:38). Because [then] you're doing something. You're quite focused if you're actually doing it (46:48). [We sit in class the whole day and we come to music and we've got to sit down again]. It's not very music ... [We] would prefer something where [we] are more physically active. If you watch [us] playing marimbas [we are] insanely well behaved" (18:24).*

Kevin: *I agree with you. We all "feel like cooped up in a classroom all day ... like if we could move now then I'd actually enjoy it but they're thinking argh, we have to sing, we have to sit down again (20:28). [The perfect music class would be one in which we could run around as well.] That would be amazing" (20:43).*

Sophia: *That would be! I hate it "when we watch videos about how to make a violin or how to make instruments ... in music I like to be very productive so I just don't like sitting around and watching something. I like to be very productive and produce stuff – like playing the drums, or singing or doing something (24:7). Like music is very different to*

*other subjects in our school because it's something we do productively" (24:27).*

*Sophia: Yes! "Music is just extremely different because of the sound and the physical – like when you're playing a drum you kind of feel it" (24:28).*

*Clara: It is just a pity that the boys "always tend to fool around ... They can't sit down in one place. They always have to be jumpy everywhere" (17:31).*

*Gabriel: Us boys would enjoy music class more if there's a lot more physical activity "because we don't like just listening and learning about things, you want to be doing it" [18:23].*

### **6.2.2 Active participation: More space**

*Kevin: We need to be doing outside. The boys "would love that. If we did music outside. I remember we used to do recorders – we used to go outside and do the recorder and I used to love that" (20:29).*

*Mia: That would be so cool! "We should have bigger music classrooms or more music classrooms because it's all kind of cramped"(21:29).*

### **6.2.3 Active participation: Playing instruments**

*Kevin: The classrooms are small and us boys cannot sit still. "At the beginning of the year when we used to play the songs on the marimba and it sounded really cool ... I really liked it. I like playing songs on the marimbas with everyone when everything coordinates. [All the boys enjoy playing the marimbas] "because it's like if you're angry with someone you can just hit the marimba ... as hard as you like ... it definitely relieves stress" (20:40).*

Juliette: *I agree. "I do find it a great stress releaser [too]. And sometimes I can play songs that we play on the marimbas, on the piano because it's the same notes (19:42). [Most of the Grade 7's] "probably [enjoy] playing on the marimbas" [the most] (19:4).*

Clara: *"I [also] like to play marimbas in class, and having, getting to make your own rhythms (17:2). [That would be my most memorable thing about Grade 7 music]. It has always been my favorite thing to do" (17:4).*

Kevin: *"At the beginning of the year when we used to play the songs on the marimba and it sounded really really cool – I really liked it. I like playing songs on the marimbas with everyone when everything coordinates" (20:39).*

Clara: *There's more to music than just playing marimbas. "I also like playing on the recorders. Recorders are fun. It has anything to do with musical instruments ... And playing with the different instruments like the tambourines and the triangle and the rhythms sticks" (17:7).*

#### **6.2.4 Active participation: Discussion**

The findings indicate that Grade 7 learners prefer active participation in music class. They prefer to move around during a music class and they find it hard to sit still. They want and need to be physically actively involved in the learning process and therefore would prefer music class to be outside on the playground. This of course, has logistical implications which will not be discussed here. The physical activity of playing the marimbas seems to be a favourite activity amongst the Grade 7 learners. Any type of instrument seems to be popular as long as the learners can be actively involved in the process. In Section 6.3 I discuss the findings on the learners' experiences of the various class activities

### 6.3 Class activities

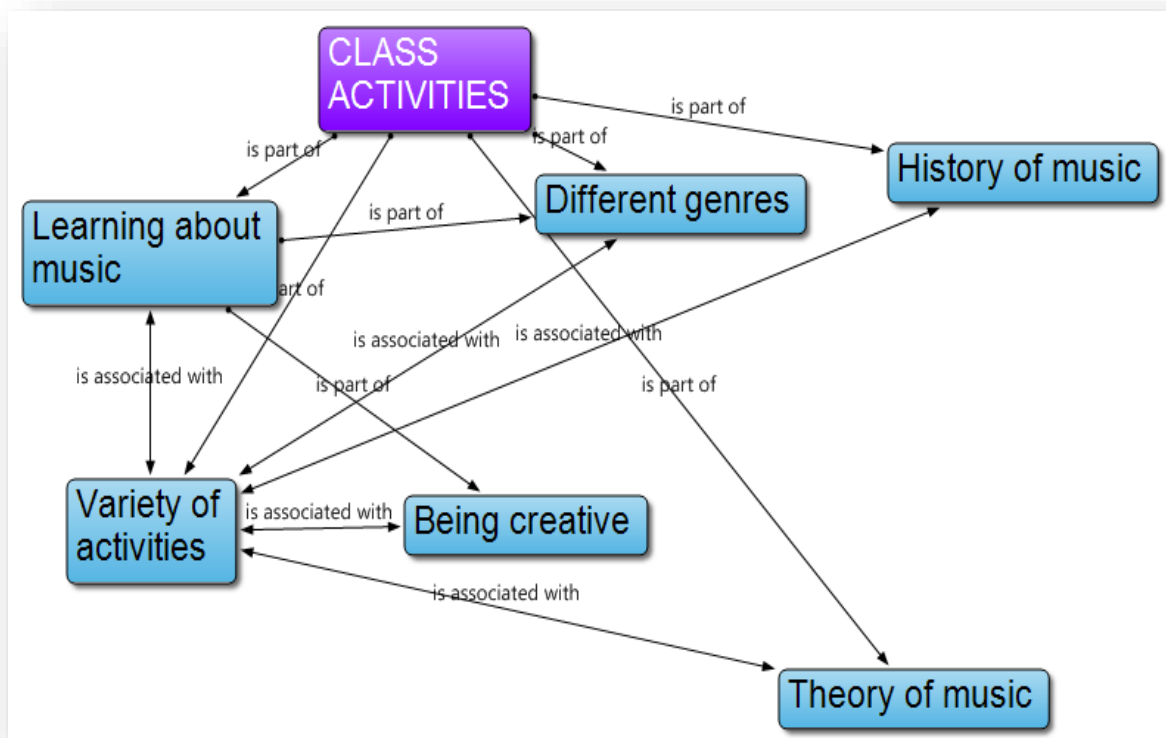


Figure 19: Theme 2: Class activities

#### 6.3.1 Class activities: Learning about music

##### ON A SCHOOL PLAYGROUND DURING A SPORT DAY

Mia: *I enjoy learning music in school. “My English speech is actually about how music is really similar to reading and how both help the brain in more or less the same way: increases concentration, reading and language skills” (21:7).*

Sophia: *“It’s an extraordinary thing to learn music ... if you want to do a certain instrument you know who has played it and what kind of background it comes from (24:9). The rest of the Grade 7s love class music” (24:16).*

Clara: *I don't think that is true. "Not all the boys [enjoy music class]. 'Cause they always tend to fool around (17:3) [For me] it's nice to learn 'cause, maybe in another time people will be asking you about something and then you're like, ja I learnt that from music in the music class (17:20). It doesn't make a difference to some people because they just find it as another subject that they find annoying ... but to me it makes a difference" (17:23).*

Kevin: *I have to agree with that. "My best friend – he hates music ... he listens to music and he thinks music should just be listening to music and not anything else" (20:18).*

### **6.3.2 Class activities: Variety of activities**

Mia: *That is so sad! He is missing out on a lot! "I really enjoy how this year we do more fun things in music ... we get to create our own songs ... and we also learn some theory work like the circle of 5ths" 21:2).*

Sophia: *We also do fun things in class. "I really liked learning the raps ... I love the way it's very different (24:2). I don't know how to explain it but it's [having different activities in class] extremely exciting and it's something very different that some other schools don't really learn in music (24:6). I love it because ... we've learned very different perspectives in music. I also remember doing so much in music like playing the drums and learning music and doing the rain tapping on the drums and playing marimba and getting to join choir and singing" (24:29).*

Clara: *At our school the Grade 7s also love music "cause usually when I go to music most of my friends are like yes we have music! We might be playing on the marimbas ... Even a long music history lesson is better than to do real school work" (17:15).*

Juliette: *Most of the Grade 7s at our school will choose to do music given the chance “because it is relaxing and just because they enjoy music” (19:36).*

Muriel: *Going to high school “I would remember all the songs we did and all the instrument playing we did” (25:38).*

### **6.3.3 Class activities: Being creative**

Clara: *“It [playing the marimbas] has always been my favourite thing to do. And I like doing new things” (17:5).*

Gabriel: *I also enjoy being creative, like when “we’ve got to come up with our own ideas (18:8). [like] you come up with rhyming words and most of our class is pretty good at that kind of stuff (18:11). [I also like the rhythmic patterns with the clapping] because we created songs with it ... we created [a] rap and we used our hands ... you can create different sounds with it” (18:27).*

Mia: *I also like the creative part of music class. “We made our own melodies, we made our own raps, our own songs, our own rhythms (21:10). All of the activities we do are kind of around the same things, either creating songs or our own melodies and rhythms (21:3) [and music is] like a chilled class and you get your creative juices flowing” (21:10).*

Muriel: *Being creative is fun. The best part of music “would be creating like rhythms, and playing them on the marimba ... we create different beats to the rest of the class ... it’s just really different as compared to the general stuff everyone else would do (25:8). [I like to] create a cool beat. When you leave the class you’re still doing the beat and you’ll teach it to your other friends and then they would add more things and it just becomes this cool dance ... it would be ‘our dance’ or ‘our song’” (25:19).*

#### 6.3.4 *Class activities: Different genres*<sup>24</sup>

Clara: *I enjoy learning about new genres more. “I like knowing about new things, ‘cause I feel out into the world ... So not just stuck to one genre of music. It’s not like a bad thing, knowing about more genres (17:41). I feel interested in it [different genres]. I don’t exactly have time to find out more about it ‘cause I have a lot of homework. So like music is a good time to find out more about different genres” (17:44).*

Gabriel: *I enjoy it when we learn about the different genres. “Getting to learn about the blues [was the best]. That was very cool because of all the instruments and the singers of it (18:3). You’re learning something interesting ... It’s not that you don’t learn like Math or History, this is actually something pretty cool you can actually listen to the music ... You can listen to the music (18:7). [But in my class,] most of my class listens to rap music (18:10). [I have to say that I don’t] like the Celtic music we’re learning now. Some of the boys aren’t very interested in it, they find it quite boring” (18:22). Boys listen to music like rap (18:30). [We like] rock or kind of angry music, like Maroon 5, Coldplay, kind of like those musicians ... It’s that kind of music that we enjoy” (18:31).*

Juliette: *I do not agree. “I like learning about other types of music, that you are exposed to other types of music. Well I enjoy all types of music and if I wasn’t exposed to it, then I would probably also be like others where I’d just enjoy pop music (19:20). I like songs that are pop music, but I also enjoy songs that are different like ... and the blues” (19:25).*

Kevin: *“I like that [learning about different genres] because then it gives you a different sort of music that you can think about. You’re like “wait, actually I like that music, I’ll listen to that now”. Because if you’re only exposed to pop or anything like that you won’t ever hear other music types and you might love the other music types” (20:15).*

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<sup>24</sup> Different genres; It seems that most learners who participated, listen to Hip-Hop and Pop music.

Sophia: *I also enjoy learning about different genres. "It expands our knowledge" [and horizons] (24:25).*

Muriel: *That is true. "I think a teacher should expose the children to everything so that they know what they want to do (25:27). So I also listen to quite a lot of hip-hop, not a lot of hip-hop but a lot of gospel songs" (25:37).*

### **6.3.5 Class activities: History of music**

Muriel: *I don't only like learning about the different genres. The thing that will always stay with me is "how much music relates to the history of the world. [I find it very interesting] because I wouldn't have thought that. [It reflects the times we live in] and the emotions people experience" (19:29).*

Clara: *You cannot be serious! If I have to think back on all we learned in Grade 7, "I mainly think about history ... I really didn't like it" (17:42).*

Muriel: *"Although I wasn't that happy about the history, I still liked some of the general information that came up like the cannibalism and stuff, 'cause, sometimes I would just take an interest in random stuff (21:9). So even, like music history, I also enjoy as well. Because just like seeing how they used it in different situations, happy or sad, bad or good, it just interests me" (25:6).*

### **6.3.6 Class activities: Theory of music**

Kevin: *There is something worse than music history and that is music theory. "The worst thing ... I really didn't like when we did theory" (20:41).*

Gabriel: *I don't mind learning theory "because since if you play an instrument it comes quite naturally to you" (18:6).*

### 6.3.7 Class activities: Discussion

The findings regarding the different activities in music class were inconclusive. From the conversations with the learners it emerged that the girls find learning about music more enjoyable than the boys. It also indicated that the learners, especially the girls, enjoy the variety of activities that are offered in class. The most were mostly interested in playing marimbas. The most appealing aspect of music class seems to be the creative part of it. The findings are inconclusive regarding learning about different genres. Some learners enjoy being exposed to different genres in school, but it was interesting to note that the boys indicated that they preferred to listen (and learn) only about rock and rap music. Some of the Grade 7 learners indicated that they had ambivalent feelings about the history of music while most had no interest in it.

## 6.4 Cooperative learning

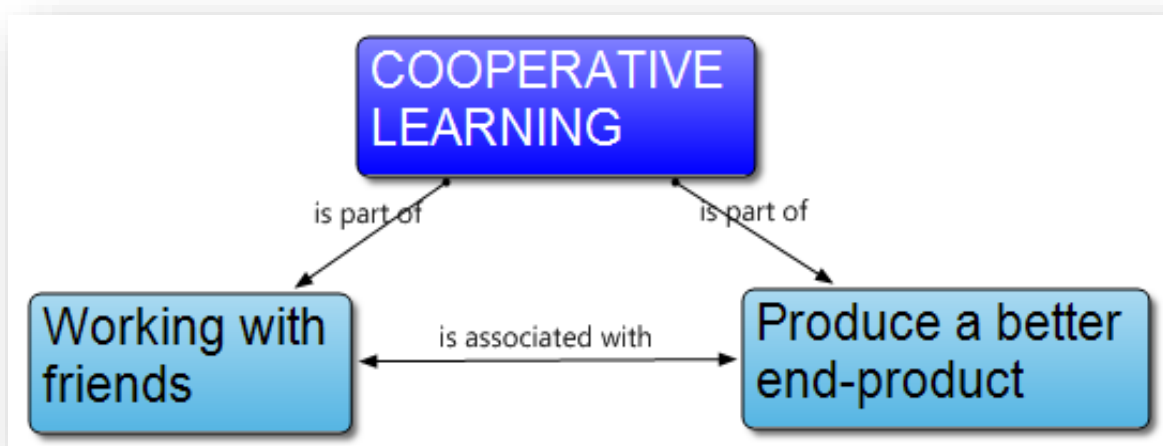


Figure 20: Theme 3: Cooperative learning

### 6.4.1 Cooperative learning: Working with friends

#### ON A SCHOOL PLAYGROUND DURING A SPORT DAY

Kevin: *I enjoy working with my friends. "It's a lot more enjoyable because you feel like things actually get done because if it's just you then you have to think – you have more brain power if you have more*

people so they all think, they all come with different things and you can actually make a really good musical piece (20:44). [I also liked] when we got to play on the marimba and rap ... because we got to interact with our friends and show them, well I like this and you like that – let's put it together and it actually worked out really, really nicely" (20:3).

Mia: Music is "a very social subject. There are more ideas, more opinions because with music you can do so much and it's overwhelming sometimes to have to do all of that by yourself but in a group it's much easier, I think" (21:6).

Muriel: "It also depends on how I'm feeling because sometimes when I'm not feeling great ... I feel like I should work alone, but usually it doesn't happen in music because in music I prefer working with my friends (25:21) because I work better [when I'm] with [them] (25:10). I've experienced when I'm a bit upset, and then, like friends work together and I am alone, I feel left out (25:22). [Working with friends makes me feel like I belong]. My friends are kind of like the closest sisters I have despite family" (25:23).

Clara: I definitely prefer to work with my friends "even though you fool around in a group, you still get things done. If I'm alone, then I tend to loose thought, I'd think of something else. Or I'd maybe get too stressed and I'm like, you have to do everything, like now to finish everything" (17:28).

Sophia: That is true – there is less stress when you work in a group. "I prefer to work with friends ... I find working with other people is very productive ... I get to learn what other people think (24:12). It's very interesting listening to other people's opinions because you find how they work (24:13). [Working in a group] we all kind of give our opinions which I love ... and I love it when we throw all our opinions in because it's productive" (24:14).

Juliette: *“I [also] prefer working with others ... working on my own is not so much fun as working in a group” (19:10).*

#### **6.4.2 Cooperative learning: Produce a better end-product**

Kevin: *“It’s a lot more enjoyable [to work in a group] because you feel like things actually get done because if it’s just you then you have to think – you have more brain power if you have more people so they all think, they all come with different things and you can actually make a really good musical piece with all these people thinking of different ideas joining into one” (20:45).*

Gabriel: *Joining ideas makes for a better result “because you have the two different thoughts – like you’ll have two different sides to it” (18:18).*

Mia: *I agree! “In other subjects I can definitely say I work better by myself but music is different ... I do also think I work better [in a group] (21:6). If I did it just by myself it would have my views and my opinions only and even if I tried it wouldn’t be as good” (21:14).*

Muriel: *“My creative juices start flowing, because their [my friends’] ideas mixed with my idea could make something completely new (25:9). Because we’re so different, it adds different perspectives to different things. And sometimes I would be like, with a beat or something, we’ll come at break or be like doing the beat, everyone would be oh cool I want to do that and then it just becomes this big thing with more things in it” (25:25).*

#### **6.4.3 Cooperative learning: Discussion**

The findings of this research indicated that all the Grade 7 learners who participated in this study preferred to work with their friends. This might be due to the fact that learners this age have a strong need to “belong” and working in groups, creates a short term sense of belongingness. Working with friends produces a better end-

product and divides the responsibility as well as diminishes the stress that is created by working on your own.

## 6.5 Peer pressure and gender

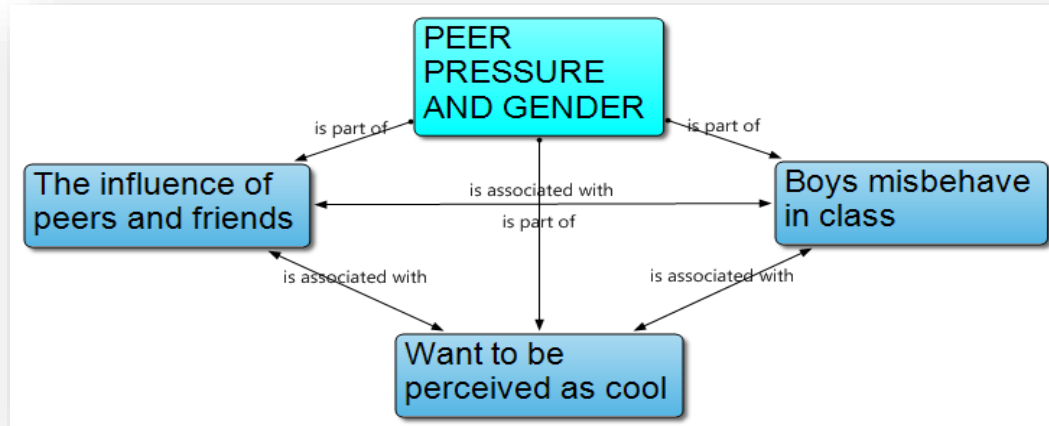


Figure 21: Theme 4: Peer pressure and gender

### 6.5.1 Peer pressure and gender: The influence of peers and friends

#### ON A SCHOOL PLAYGROUND DURING A SPORT DAY

Mia: *"I know we have groups of sporty people, of people that are musically talented ... if you're in one of those groups and for example if it's the music group then like you are pressured to be musical ... It's not like big pressure but it's there (21:25). It's difficult [for the boys] to be different (21:22). The stigma and the peer group that you are in also affects how you perceive and enjoy class music" (21:24).*

Kevin: *I agree. "It is also who your peers are. Because I think it would change if all the popular boys do choir or all the popular boys do marimba" (20:33).*

Juliette: *It is so sad that people are "so stereotypical or discriminative against different types of music (19:24). [Some of the Grade 7s] just*

*listens to it [rap] because their friends do (19:32), some of them just follow the group (19:33). [Some of the boys enjoy music class but] they may be keeping it to themselves that they really enjoy it because they are just scared of what their friends might say” (19:23).*

### **6.5.2 Peer pressure and gender: Want to be perceived as cool**

Kevin: *You are right. “Boys are very self-conscious. They always try to be cool but they are very self-conscious (20:25). Boys also think if you do music, you’re not cool, you’re a nerd (20:30). I don’t feel that pressure if you want to be cool you don’t do music. I don’t believe in anything like that – if you do what you love it is right (20:31). I’ve been called a goody two-shoes ... everyone wants to be a cool person and if all the cool dudes are doing choir and marimba it would bring the rest to it as well” (20:34).*

Juliette: *“I’d also say it depends on your personality ... some people like to keep it to themselves that they enjoy music so the people don’t think them weird or anything” (19:13). They [the Grade 7s] think that rock or rapping is like a cool thing, but then classical music is just, almost, stupid. I don’t think that, but some people do” (19:15).*

Mia: *“There is kind of a stigma around music that like if you like music then you’re kind of a nerd or a dork or a goody two-shoes” (21:21).*

### **6.5.3 Peer pressure and gender: Boys misbehave in class**

Clara: *Maybe that is why some of the boys do not behave in class. “Most of the boys ... dread going to music ... they don’t like music in general or they always get shouted at, because it’s their fault [because they do not listen] (17:35). [They do not understand why] they get shouted at they’re like but the teacher did that to me. I didn’t do anything” (17:37).*

Sophia: *“Yes! ... The boys seem to play around a lot” (24:18).*

Kevin: “They [just] act like they don’t really care [by playing around] but they do care – they do actually all care ...” (20:36).

#### 6.5.4 Peer pressure and gender: Discussion

Findings from the data analysis indicated that the Grade 7 learners experienced some peer pressure at school regarding the teaching and learning of music. Boys seem to perpetuate the idea that only “nerds” participate in music class and that enjoying teaching and learning music is not “cool”. It is not clear from the findings if the boys’ bad behavior in class is due to their developmental stage or peer pressure. The findings indicated that boys tend to be insecure and self-conscious.

### 6.6 Wellbeing

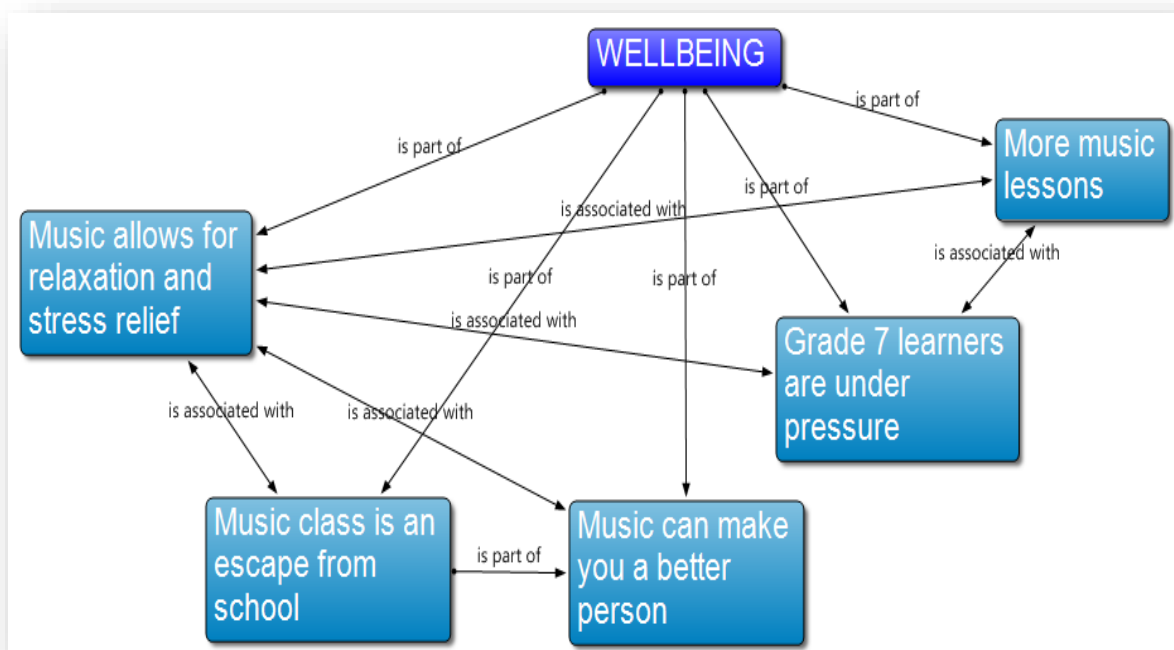


Figure 22: Wellbeing

#### 6.6.1 Wellbeing: Music allows relaxation and relieves stress

##### ON A SCHOOL PLAYGROUND DURING A SPORT DAY

Clara: “I’m usually excited [to go to music] ... Cause it’s kind of relaxing in a way (17:6). When I go to music most of my friends are like yes we

*have music! ... Even a long music history lesson is better than to do real school work (17:15). It's a lot more relaxing than other subjects (17:17). [I enjoy having music early in the morning because] it makes me ... a lot more relaxed for the day. And I don't have to, like, be pressured whenever I have music 'cause there's not much I have to do in music other than participate" (17:24).*

*Gabriel: I have to agree. Music is "quite nice because it's not stressful. It's a place where you can just ease off and not have to worry (18:4). [It is a] place where you can just listen to music, you can enjoy yourself wherein you don't have to write exams or cycle tests. Music's a very relaxed kind of subject (18:5). It's an easier place to learn from" [the music class] (18:19). [We need that mental break during the day] where we can just have music and you can relax and not have to worry about the rest of school and academics (18:20). [It is nice to go to music at the end of a hard day] because we're all quite tired from having to learn stuff and then music we create our own music, we can have fun doing it (18:21). It's a place where kids can relax and chill out" (18:34).*

*Juliette: That is so true! "Music is a subject that you can relax in and enjoy whereas other subjects you have to be studying all the time and in Music you can just let go and feel yourself in music (19:6). [The Grade 7s enjoy playing marimbas because] just the sounds – you can let your feelings out on them. [The physical activity of hitting something] relieves stress (19:40). [I will always remember Grade 7 music] as something enjoyable and relaxing" (19:44).*

*Kevin: "Music is like a fun relaxing [subject]. It doesn't have the same intensity and the same stress levels as the other subjects (20:4). Music gives you a chance to just chill (20:5).*

*Mia: I expected "that we would do fun stuff (21:18) especially if we have it [music] at the end of the day because it ends the day on a] very*

*fun note and happy note because I've sweated with my friends and music is excellent and it's just very right" (24:10).*

### **6.6.2 Wellbeing: Music class is an escape from school**

*Juliette: Yes! School can get "too much during the day and it is nice just to have music, to relax (19:7).*

*Gabriel: I agree. "It is a place where we can get away from school" (18:48).*

*Kevin: "It's actually nice to have a lesson that we can clear our heads and just sing and dance and do whatever we want with music (20:7). [Music is not like the rest of school]. I want to relax and sing and dance and play on the instruments, preferably outside" (20:42).*

*Muriel: "I feel music is just a place where you can get away from other subjects and stuff (25:5). If you're stressed about something, you can just listen to music, or play music (25:12). Music is an escape because it's just where you get to have fun and play beats and sing songs and stuff" (25:16).*

### **6.6.3 Wellbeing: Music can make you a better person**

*Lara: I enjoy music class because it "makes you a happier person ... you'd be a happier person" (17:21).*

*Juliette: I agree with you. Music "can grow your character. It's good for you" (19:28).*

*Kevin: "I definitely believe that [music can make you a better person]. Music can make you happier, friendlier" (20:20).*

#### **6.6.4 Wellbeing: Grade 7 learners are under pressure**

Clara: *Music can make you happier? True. But we are also under a lot of pressure at school. "They [the school] give us a lot of homework in the other subjects (17:17). My parents want me to get A's and everything and I know that's not possible. It's just a lot of pressure" (17:25).*

Gabriel: *"Most kids nowadays in our grade only get to finish homework at 9 o'clock/8 o'clock in the evening. That's because we have sports until like 5" (18:49).*

Kevin: *It really is hectic. "All of us ... are so busy, we have so much on our plate (20:7). Everyone is like there is a history assignment, there is a geography assignment all these things ... their heads are crammed with all these things (20:48). For me Grade 7 is very pressurized especially in the last year at GR (25:15).*

#### **6.6.5 Wellbeing: More music lessons**

Gabriel: *"It would be nice if we could have more music classes a week. Like if we had music maybe three times a week – it's a nice area that for three days we know that we don't have to fuss for nine subjects throughout the whole day" (18:46).*

Juliette: *I would also like more music classes. "I'd probably have it maybe every second day as either the first lesson of the day or the last lesson of the day, so you can calm yourself for the rest of the day. If it's at the end of the day, you can relax after a hard day" (19:46).*

Kevin: *Having more music "will [make us] less stressed, there won't be all these people panicking because that's another period where you are given more work, you're not given to overflow. There is a point where you can't do more (20:49). I think if we have more music I think everyone will become more relaxed, better" (20:50).*

### **6.6.6 Wellbeing: Discussion**

The indications from the findings are that Grade 7 learners perceive music to be part of their emotional wellbeing. There seems to be a positive inter-dependence between Grade 7 learners' emotional wellbeing and working with their friends in music class. They want music in their lives as it relieves the amount of stress they experience on a daily basis at school. The findings indicated that the Grade 7 learners preferred to start or end their school day with a music class and that they would prefer more music lessons in a week than just one.

# CHAPTER 7

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

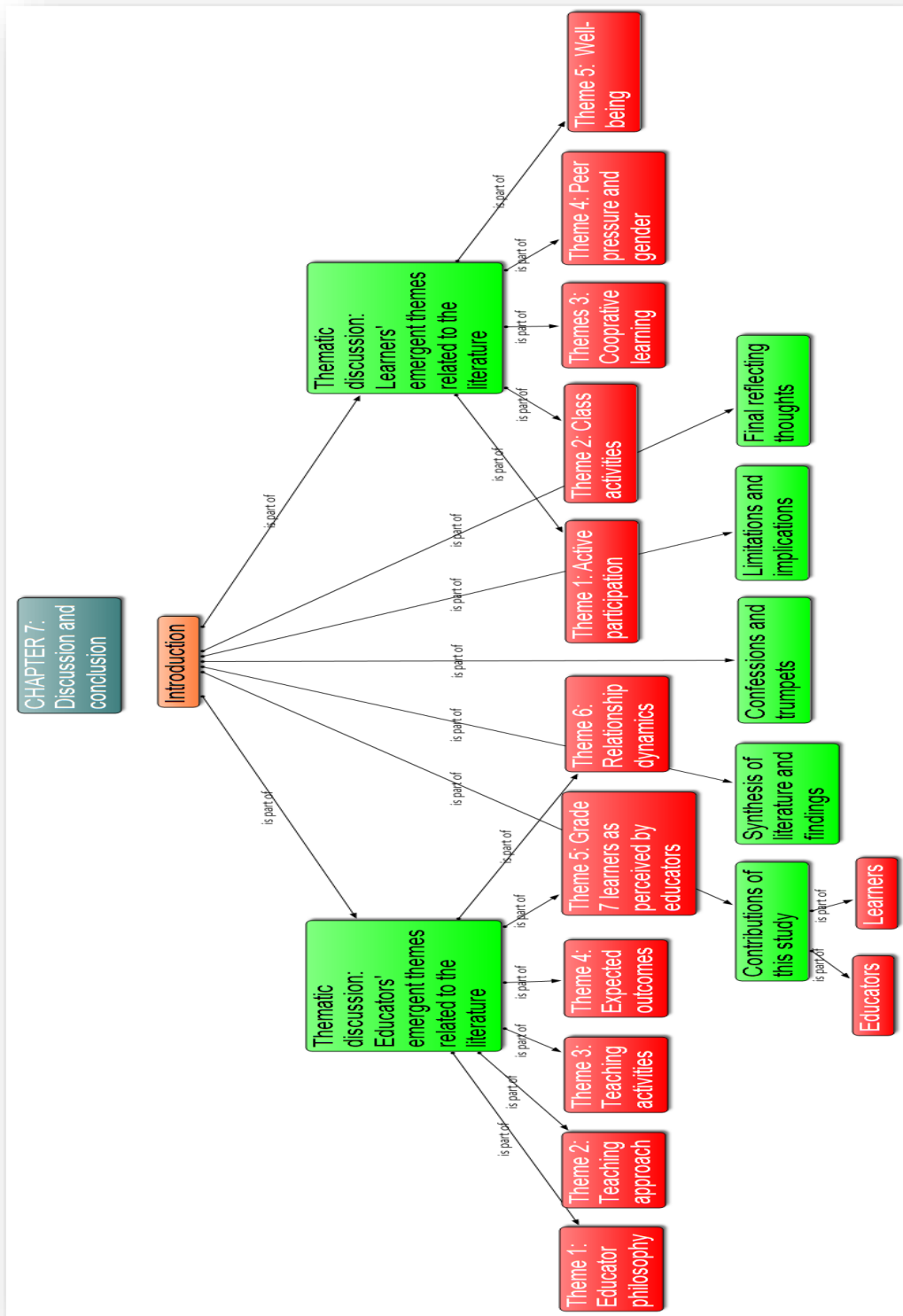


Figure 23: Structure of Chapter 7

## **7.1 Introduction**

This research study found that music educators and Grade 7 learners have both positive and negative experiences of teaching and learning music. In this final chapter I consider the themes that emerged and link these back to the literature review and new literature related to the emergent themes. Subsequently the findings are considered in relation to the main research question and sub-questions. The limitations of this study are addressed and the implications for different audiences considered. In the concluding remarks possible avenues of future research are discussed.

The approach for this chapter will be a critical view of the overall implications of this research study. Theoretical linkages and opinions will be given and an extensive point of view will be presented that relate to deeper issues. Some theoretical ideas about the social processes that have relevance beyond this study will be revealed (Silverman, 2013:377).

## **7.2 Thematic discussion: Educators' emergent themes related to the literature**

With this research I endeavoured to establish how educators and learners experience music in the Grade 7 classroom. People act according to the knowledge they have of a specific situation and their cultural knowledge of the settings (Nayar & Stanley, 2015:116). The research paradigm of this research is interpretivism.

By interpreting experiences, people make various links based on their previous experiences of a similar situation (Nayar & Stanley, 2015:116). By doing this, they try to establish what the possible outcomes of their actions in their current situation will be (Nayar & Stanley, 2015:118). This concurs with Bandura's theory, which states that individuals, through their experiences, develop certain expectations of the outcomes of their actions in a certain situation (Bandura, 1997:3) (see Section 2.2.3).

However, the reader has to remember that the experiences of both the educators and learners were analysed based on the contexts in which they were taking place (Nayar

& Stanley, 2015:120). Table 1 displays the emergent themes for the educators and the literature related to the themes.

**Table 1: Educators: Emergent themes related to the literature**

Themes	Categories	Literature related to the theme
<b>Theme 1: Educator philosophy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethics of care</li> </ul>	<p>Wentzel (1997:412) – caring educators motivate learners            Davis (2006:211) – educators realise the need for good relationships with learners            Baker (1999:58) – caring educators motivate learners</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Music makes you a better person</li> </ul>	<p>Wolff (2004:83) – music deters learners from anti-social behaviour which makes them better people            Adderley <i>et al.</i> (2003:190) – music improves self-discipline            Woody (1998:44) – aesthetic exposure makes learners better people</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enough music students for high school</li> </ul>	<p>North <i>et al.</i> (2000:257) – music is an unpopular subject in high school</p>
<b>Theme 2: Teaching approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducive teaching environment</li> </ul>	<p>Dolloff (1999:192); Knowles (1992:131) – educators’ teaching is influenced by their self-image as image impacts the environment educators create in their class rooms</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate difficulty level</li> </ul>	<p>Richmond <i>et al.</i>, (2015:11) – learners thrive on activities in which there is a balance between challenging activities and activities learners can complete without too much difficulty            Roberts (2015:191) – learners find challenging activities that are achievable interesting</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitation</li> </ul>	<p>Thomas and Oldfather (1997:115) – negative relationship between educator and learners if educators perceive themselves “keepers of knowledge”</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Music as a tool for critical thinking</li> </ul>	<p>Woodford (1996:27) – development of critical thinking in learners allows them to develop their musical growth*</p>
<b>Theme 3: Teaching activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of activities and content</li> </ul>	<p>Gerrity (2009:42) – pre-adolescents are quick to perceive an activity as boring            Roberts (2015:188) – learners enjoy activities that hold an element of surprise</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graphic notation and music theory</li> </ul>	<p>Bowles (1998:194:204) - learners will learn notes if they can play instruments</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instrumental play</li> </ul>	Boswell (1991:56); Bowles (1998:199) – learners enjoy playing instruments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvisation and composition</li> </ul>	Boswell (1991:56) – learners enjoy playing instruments and improvising
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-curricular music</li> </ul>	
<b>Theme 4: Expected outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply basic concepts</li> </ul>	Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998:791) – educators’ expectations are influenced by their own beliefs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know different instruments</li> </ul>	North <i>et al.</i> (2000:258) – learners are only interested in instruments they perceive as gender appropriate*
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciate all genres of music</li> </ul>	North <i>et al.</i> (2000:258) – learners dislike styles they perceive not to be relevant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore and experiment on their own</li> </ul>	North <i>et al.</i> (2000:257) – learners will only explore music activities on a “uses and gratification <sup>25</sup> ” basis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enjoy music class</li> </ul>	Cooper & Tom (1984:76;78) – educators want their learners to enjoy music class
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Success experience</li> </ul>	Feldman & Theiss (1982:14) – educators’ expectations are influenced by what they believe their learners can achieve and thus influence the success learners can experience
<b>Theme 5: Grade 7 learners as perceived by educators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-centred</li> </ul>	Elkind (1967:1025) – learners fail to distinguish between the needs of others and self
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack confidence</li> </ul>	Thomas & Oldfather (1997:117) – educators who meet their learners’ need for autonomy, increase their learners’ sense of responsibility and participation which leads to more self-confidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don’t like challenges</li> </ul>	Roberts (2015:190) – won’t attempt activities they think they won’t be successful in
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easily intimidated</li> </ul>	Saunders (2009:83) – learners not keen to try activities they feel are too difficult; they are intimidated by them
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undisciplined</li> </ul>	Brouwers & Tomic (2001:242) – educators are responsible for discipline in their classes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology inclined</li> </ul>	

<sup>25</sup> Uses and gratification: Use for their own gratification and then disband it afterwards.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude</li> </ul>	<p>Firestone (1996:216) – educators’ own identity has an influence on learners’ attitude towards music class  Phillips (2003:9) – learners’ attitude in class is influenced by their self- concept  Taylor (2002:71) – learner’s musical self-image is the biggest predictor of attitude in class  Vander Ark <i>et al.</i> (1980:39) – attitude towards music is influenced by learners’ musical self-esteem</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys and girls behave differently</li> </ul>	<p>North <i>et al.</i> (2000:6) – boys and girls experience music class differently</p>
<b>Theme 6: Relationship dynamics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult developmental stage</li> </ul>	<p>Thomas &amp; Oldfather (1997:117) – educators who meet their learners’ need for autonomy increase their learners’ sense of responsibility and participation</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good relationships with the learners</li> </ul>	<p>Saunders (2009:293) – learners have a positive relationship with educators who are warm and open  Davis (2006:211) – educators with positive relationships with their learners have positive learners</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex relationships with parents</li> </ul>	<p>Ashton <i>et al.</i> (1984:10) – relationships between educators and parents are vital</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators feel unappreciated</li> </ul>	<p>Dolloff (1998:192) – educators’ self-image influences their behaviour and might make them feel unappreciated if they do not feel good about themselves</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of understanding by stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>Knowles (1992:131) – educators’ self-image influences their behaviour and makes them feel misunderstood  Faber &amp; Miller (1981:238) - educators who feel misunderstood leave their teaching positions</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from school and department</li> </ul>	<p>Maranto and Maranto (2006:153) – school principal plays an important part in how educators experience their work environment  Darling-Hammond (2003:9) – educators experience a school positively when they feel supported.</p>

\* New literature (Added after the literature review was conducted)

### **7.2.1 Educator philosophy**

The findings of my research study indicate that the philosophy that music educators have, implies that they care about their learners and the learners’ experience of the music class. Wentzel (1997:412) says that caring educators have the ability to motivate their learners to do their best. My own experience indicates the same. I have found that as I focus more on the learners and less on the syllabus, I have happier

and more responsive learners in class. This implies that I do not always follow the CAPS curriculum in class, but adapt my teaching to the needs and interest of the learners I have at that moment.

The educators who participated in this study feel that Grade 7 learners are comfortable around their music educators, and that the learners trust the educators enough to trust them with their (the learners') personal problems. In a discussion by Davis (2006:211), she indicates that educators realise the importance of a good relationship between themselves and their Grade 7 learners in order for teaching and learning to take place. My own view is that this holds true. Educators will achieve very little by not making an effort to get to know their learners or not trying to build a good relationship with them. Baker (1999:58) remarks that educators who are perceived as friendly and supportive by learners tend to contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere, and this in turn can affect the cognitive outcomes in class.

The participants in the research stated that they believe that music makes better people of their learners. Researchers seem to agree with this point. Wolff (2004:83) found that music class activities have the potential to deter learners from anti-social behaviour. Adderley *et al.* (2003:190) are of the opinion that music class activities enhance self-discipline. Woody (1998:44) concurs with this and adds that the most positive experience learners can have in their music class lies in the aesthetic element of music. I have always believed that music has the ability to transform people for the better if they are continuously exposed to the aesthetic elements of music, for example, I found that boys who previously tend to misbehave at school in general, started behaving better and treated their peers more respectful, since they have joined the marimba band.

Some of the educators who participated in the research study indicated that they used the Grade 7 year to ensure that the learners maintained their interest in music enough to continue with music as a high school subject. North *et al.* (2000:257) are of the opinion that music as a school subject is very unpopular among high school learners. Unfortunately I have to agree with this. From my own teaching I have noticed that the majority of learners, given the opportunity, will not choose to continue with music in high school.

### **7.2.2 Teaching approach**

The approach of educators to their teaching is influenced by their philosophy of teaching. The participants in the study mentioned that it was important for them to create a conducive teaching environment for their learners. Dolloff (1999:192) and Knowles (1992:131) are of the opinion that educators' approach to their teaching and the environment they create in their classes are influenced by the image they have of themselves, which can influence their behaviour and in turn have an influence on how both educators and learners experience the teaching and learning of music. From my own experience I have to acknowledge that this is true. I have often observed how especially young inexperienced educators do not always display a lot of self-confidence, which influences the way they approach their teaching. I observed this when young, inexperienced teacher star teaching with me, they tend to ask for guidance on a daily basis, especially regarding to what to teach.

The participants in this research study claimed that they achieved a conducive teaching environment by ensuring that the teaching material they chose was of an appropriate level of difficulty. Richmond *et al.* (2015:11) found that learners thrive in music programmes in which there is a fine balance between challenging activities and activities that the learners can complete without too much difficulty. In the same vein, Roberts (2015:191) is of the opinion that learners find activities interesting that are challenging but achievable. From my own experience I have to agree with this view. The Grade 7 learners in my class are not willing to participate in activities they perceive to be beyond their capabilities. However, in my experience, learners who do take private music lessons are keener to participate in the class activities. This is evident from observations in class.

The educators in this research study pointed out that they used music teaching as a tool for critical thinking. Woodford (1996:27) maintains that educators can use music to develop critical thinking skills in their learners, which enables them to facilitate musical growth. My research points out that some educators perceive that their role is more as a facilitator than a traditional teacher. The role that the educator assumes is discussed in a study by Thomas and Oldfather (1997:115), who postulate that a negative relationship develops between educators and learners in cases where

educators perceive themselves to be “the keepers of knowledge” instead of acting as facilitators in the teaching and learning process. I agree with this as I have found in my own teaching that Grade 7 learners best respond to facilitation instead of being instructed all the time.

### **7.2.3 Teaching activities**

The activities that music educators select for their learners are determined by their approach to their teaching. From the research findings, the indications are that educators are mindful of choosing a variety of activities for their learners. The participants indicate that, in selecting activities, they choose activities that will not “bore” the learners or that are too difficult. This is a problem for educators as indicated by the research conducted by Gerrity (2009:42), in which he says that pre-adolescents are quick to perceive an activity as boring. In fact, learners enjoy activities that hold an element of surprise or activities that are humorous (Roberts, 2015:188). My own view is that this is true to a large extent. Grade 7 learners have a short attention span and need to be challenged or entertained all the time, otherwise they lose interest and are quick to show it. This can be exhausting for educators, who have to be able to think on their feet all the time and come up with new ideas quickly should an activity not work out the way they had anticipated.

Participants in this research study felt that the learners in their classes enjoyed playing instruments. This concurs with the findings in Section 6.2.1 of Chapter 6 and in Section 7.3.1 of this Chapter. Boswell (1991:56) adds that learners enjoy improvising on the instruments. The participants in the research observed that they did teach improvisation as part of their teaching activities. However, they were not clear as to whether the learners enjoyed it. I agree as well as disagree about learners enjoying improvisation. My own experience is that Grade 7 learners do enjoy playing instruments. However, they are not always keen to participate in improvisation. Learners who take private instrumental lessons are more willing to participate in improvisation than learners who are not exposed to music on a daily basis. Boswell (1991:56) and Bowles (1998:199) claim that learners cite instrumental play as their most favourite activity. Bowles (1998:194:204) states that learners are willing to learn to read music notes if it will enable them to play an instrument. Note reading, according

to the educators who participated in the research study, is taught in various ways. They use graphic notation as well as music theory to teach the learners to read notes. Although I concede that Bowles' findings may be true, I have to disagree because it is not true in my own experience. The Grade 7 learners I teach are not at all interested in learning to read music notes, even if it will allow them to play an instrument. The only approach I have found to be successful is graphic notation. The reason for this, I suspect, is that they perceive it as yet another thing to learn on top of all the other academic demands being placed on them.

#### **7.2.4 Expected outcomes**

The indications are that educators' expectations of their learners are influenced by their own beliefs (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998:791; Feldman & Theiss, 1982:14). The findings from my research indicate that educators expect their learners to be able to apply the basic concepts they are taught in class. It is not clear from my study how educators' beliefs influence their teaching. However, from my own experience I can state that this is true. I do expect my learners to apply the basic concepts they were taught, and I have high expectations of them, just as I have high expectations of myself as an educator.

The music educators in this research study expected their learners to know different instruments<sup>26</sup>. North *et al.*, (2000:258) postulates that 9–11 year old learners are only interested in learning about instruments they deem gender appropriate. This stereotypical perception is perpetuated by parents. I do not agree with this as we have learners of both genders participating in instrumental lessons of all instruments. Perhaps we are lucky to have a parent body which in general is open minded. North *et al.* (2000: 258,261) state that pre-adolescents “use music as a badge” as they tell other people and their peers who they are by the music they listen to and that the music they listen to is either pop music or dance music. The participating educators in this research study said that they would like their learners to have an appreciation of all music genres. I am not sure if I agree with North's findings. I have found that the learners are willing to learn about genres outside their own interest, but I did also find

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<sup>26</sup> Different instruments: Educators expect learners to know by visual identifications all the instruments of the classic orchestra.

that boys are more likely to voice their displeasure at learning about another genre than girls.

One of the things educators expect from their learners is to experiment and explore on their own. North *et al.* (2000:257) are of the opinion that learners will only explore musical activities on the basis of “use and gratify”, in other words, they will only explore if they feel that it fills a need in them and not for the purpose of personal growth. The educators indicated that they wanted their learners to enjoy their music classes. This concurs with the findings in the literature (2.2.2) as indicated by Cooper and Tom (1984:76) and Feldman and Theiss (1982:14), who found that learners’ enjoyment is influenced by what educators believe their learners can achieve. It is not clear from my own research study to what extent this is true. Cooper and Tom (1984:78) are of the opinion that educators’ expectations of learners is based on how educators over-estimate or under-estimate the learners’ abilities. The findings from my research study indicate that the problem still persists. Educators struggle to find a way to ensure that the chosen teaching material is not too easy or too difficult. I have to agree that this might be a problem. I cannot see how, after many years of teaching the same age group, educators can still struggle with finding appropriate teaching material. However, one has to bear in mind that some of the educators who participated in this research were inexperienced and will no doubt have some trouble finding appropriate teaching material.

### ***7.2.5 Grade 7 learners as perceived by educators***

Due to the difficult developmental stage that Grade 7 learners are in, the participants in the research perceived the learners to be self-centred. Elkind (1967:1025). They remarked that the pre-adolescent does not have the ability to distinguish between his own needs and those of others, or prefer to ignore them. My study points out that the educators believed that Grade 7 learners lack confidence. I believe that this perceived lack of confidence may be the reason why learners do not like challenges. The literature suggests that learners’ lack of confidence may stem from activities they think they are not successful at (Roberts, 2015:190) or when activities are regarded as too difficult (Saunders, 2009:83) and the obstacles are too overwhelming.

I have to agree with this. My own experience indicates that Grade 7 learners, perhaps due to a lack of self-confidence, are not keen to participate in activities that they perceive are beyond their capabilities. However, I must add that learners who participate in private instrumental tuition are more willing to participate in activities that are thought to be difficult than those who do not have instrumental music lessons. The educators complained about Grade 7 learners' lack of discipline. My belief is that learners alone are not to blame for their lack of discipline. The educator, after all, is the adult who is responsible for discipline in the class. My view concurs with the literature, and implies that the responsibility for control and discipline of the class ultimately lies with the educator (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001:242).

The educators who participated in my research study believe that Grade 7 learners have an "attitude". However, the literature study indicates that educators' own identities have an influence on learners' attitudes towards music class (Firestone, 1996:216). From my own experience I know that Grade 7 learners respond well to positive encouragement if their needs for autonomy are met. This is confirmed in the literature. Thomas and Oldfather (1997:117) point out that educators who meet their learners need for autonomy increase their learners' sense of responsibility and their participation. However, one has to bear in mind that learners' attitudes in class are also influenced by their self- concept<sup>27</sup> of their own musical abilities (Phillips, 2003:9). In fact, in a study conducted by Taylor (2002:71), the researcher remarks that the learner's musical self-concept is the biggest predictor of attitude in class. Attitude towards music is also influenced by learners' musical self-esteem<sup>28</sup> (Vander Ark *et al.*, 1980:39). My own experience has proven this to be true: learners with good musical self-esteem are more positive towards music class than those who perceive themselves to be "unmusical."

From my research findings I maintain that educators perceive boys and girls to behave differently. North *et al.* (2000:6) indicate that the musical interaction that takes place in class is experienced differently by boys and girls. Girls want their emotional needs

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<sup>27</sup> Musical self-concept: "The mental image one has of your own musical capabilities" (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 7/03/2017).

<sup>28</sup> Musical self-esteem: "The confidence one has in your own musical abilities" (Merriam-Webster, online, accessed 7/03/2017).

to be met through music, whereas boys want to create a certain external impression on their peers by their participation in music. I have found this to be true as the girls I am teaching, enjoy music class when it allows them the opportunity to express themselves whereas the boys enjoy it when they can show their friends how clever they are.

### **7.2.6 Relationship dynamics**

As already stated (Section 7.2.5), educators perceive Grade 7 learners to be in a very difficult developmental stage, but regardless of this, educators try to establish good relationships with their learners (see Section 7.2.1). Saunders (2009:293) remarks that learners tend to have positive relationships with educators whom they perceive to be open and who listen to them. The findings from my study confirms that educators are mindful of establishing good relationships with their learners. Educators do realise that it is important for them to have good relationships with their learners (see Section 5.7.2). Davis (2006:211) postulates that educators with positive relationships with their learners tend to have more positive learners in their classes. These findings have important implications for the broader domain of music teaching as positive relationships between learners and educators may impact on both parties' emotional wellbeing. I believe that by nurturing these relationships, music educators can make a significant contribution to the overall positive experience Grade 7 learners have of their last year in primary school.

The literature stresses that the relationship between educators and parents is vital (Ashton *et al.*, 1984:10). This concurs with the findings of my study as I observe that educators experience the teaching and learning in the Grade 7 music class as more positive when parents are supportive and communicate properly with the educator. However, my study also indicates that educators' relationships with the parents of their learners seem to be more complicated as some of the parents perceive the educators "beneath" them and do not value the role educators play in their children's education. This aspect was not addressed in the literature review. My own view is that the aforementioned is true. My experience at an affluent private school is that wealthy parents are of the opinion that educators are "hired help" and treat them as such.

However, I have to concede that this may be a problem specifically encountered in affluent private schools in Johannesburg.

I believe that the negative treatment of educators can explain why educators feel unappreciated. However, the literature indicates that the image educators have of themselves (Dolloff, 1998:192; Knowles, 1992:131) also has an influence on how music educators behave and how they perceive themselves to be treated by others. Being unappreciated is not only due to the complex relationships the educators have with the parents, but also to the lack of understanding from other educators and stakeholders. Faber and Miller (1981:238) remark that educators who feel isolated, misunderstood and not supported, consequently tend to leave the schools they are teaching at. In my study, I found that the educators perceived their schools and the school's management to be supportive. Maranto and Maranto (2006:153) maintain that the school principal plays a major role in how educators experience their work environment. My study emphasises that educators perceive the school's administrators to be supportive. In this regard the literature review indicates (Darling-Hammond, 2003:9) that educators have a positive experience of teaching at schools where their need for support is met.

I next discuss the relationships between the emergent themes and the literature regarding the learners (see Table 2).

### 7.3 Thematic discussion: Learners' emergent themes related to the literature

**Table 2: Learners: Emergent themes related to the literature**

Themes	Categories	Literature related to the theme
<b>Theme 1: Active participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively involved in making music</li> </ul>	<p>McPherson (2009:142–143) – level of interest in a task, plays a role in determining to what extent learners will participate</p> <p>Osterman (2000:359); Thapa <i>et al.</i> (2013:369) – school climate plays a part in learners' motivation for participation</p> <p>Chen &amp; Darst (2001:251) – learners' success in an activity influences their willingness to participate</p> <p>Boswell (1991:53–56) – learners' motivation for participation is influenced by the educator</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More space</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playing instruments</li> </ul>	<p>Phillips and Weiss (2016:66) – girls feel more competent in their abilities than boys in playing instruments</p>
<b>Theme 2: Class activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning about music</li> </ul>	<p>Choate (1968:139) – music-making and listening are integral parts of pre-adolescents' lives</p> <p>Davis (2011:19) – learners value listening to music</p> <p>McPherson (2009:143) – learners will engage in difficult and different activities if the obstacles are not impossible</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of activities</li> </ul>	<p>Austin (1990:20) – learners with good musical self-esteem participate in more music activities</p> <p>Phillips (2003:111) – difference in the type of activities boys and girls enjoy</p> <p>Bowles (1998:196); Bowman (1988:226); Vander Ark <i>et al.</i> (1980:37); Wayman (2005:46); Boswell (1991); Bowman (1988); Cope (1998); Nolin (1973); Saunders (2009) – singing is a favourite activity</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being creative</li> </ul>	<p>Wig and Boyle (1982:171–172) – learners engage in activities that offer opportunities for creativity and promote musical self-efficacy</p> <p>Roberts (2015:191) – learners enjoy activities that allows them to be creative</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different genres</li> </ul>	<p>Bowles (1998:132) – music genres have to be relevant</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History of music</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory of music</li> </ul>	Bowles (1998:194;204) – learners will read notes if they can play an instrument, Bowles (1998:205); Nolin (1973:132); Vander Ark <i>et al.</i> (1980:39) – theory is the least enjoyable activity
<b>Theme 3: Cooperative learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with friends</li> </ul>	Lamont (2002:47) – learners’ behaviour in class depends on their identity in music and this influences their participation in activities North <i>et al.</i> (2004:46) – music as a means of social networking Bowles (1998:199); Davis (2011:19) – learners prefer to work with their friends in groups Renwick & McPherson, (2002:184) – group work allows autonomy and control Richmond <i>et al.</i> (2015:4) – group work increases cooperation among learners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce a better end-product</li> </ul>	McPherson (2009:143) – learners would rather work with friends on difficult tasks as it will ensure a better end-product Wayman (2005:89) – group activities encourage cooperative learning and encourage achievement in the activity
<b>Theme 4: Peer pressure and gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The influence of peers and friends</li> </ul>	Wayman (2005:89;91) – learners’ need for socialising is stronger than their fear of punishment Ryan <i>et al.</i> (1998:529) – learners are willing to participate in group activities with friends who understand them Delsing <i>et al.</i> (2008:111) – learners are under a lot of pressure to conform Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006:133) – under pressure from peers to listen to certain genres of music in order to be accepted North <i>et al.</i> (2000:269) – under pressure to listen to certain music to be cool
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to be perceived as cool</li> </ul>	Tarrant <i>et al.</i> (2002:136) – misbehaviour a way to balance peer pressure and to be perceived as cool
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys misbehave in class</li> </ul>	Phillips (2003:113) – boys find singing and playing instruments socially unacceptable and not cool Roberts <i>et al.</i> (2015:6) – misbehaving learners interfere with the teaching process Saunders (2009:113;117) – learners behave in a certain way to be accepted by peers, boys “police” one another’s male identities
<b>Theme 5: Wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music allows for relaxation and stress relief</li> </ul>	Saunders (2009:84;327) – activities that are too stressful cause anxiety Wig & Boyle (1982:171–172) – relaxation in music allows positive self-efficacy Roberts (2015:90) – playing instruments relieves stress

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music class is an escape from school</li> </ul>	Saunders (2009:327) – music class allows learners a change of pace during the day
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music can make you a better person</li> </ul>	Wayman (2005:89) – music activities have a positive influence on self-worth and competence Adderley <i>et al.</i> (2003:204) – music participation allows learners to become better people and enhances self-esteem Abril and Gault (2006:16 - 17) – music class develops a sensitivity and appreciation for the arts Woody (1998:44) – music activities allow learners to be empathetic Wig and Boyle (1982:171–172) – learners who are exposed to music possess a positive musical self-efficacy Abril and Gault (2006:16–17); Adderley <i>et al.</i> (2003:204) – music activities enhance self-esteem
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 7 learners are under pressure</li> </ul>	North <i>et al.</i> (2000:257) – learners participate in music activities to alleviate the pressure they experience
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More music lessons</li> </ul>	Phillips and Weiss (2016:67) – learners with supportive parents value music higher and would like more music lessons.

### 7.3.1 Active participation

This research study postulates that learners enjoy being actively involved in making music in the music class. They prefer activities in which they can be fully engaged and which are enjoyable and interesting. McPherson (2009:142–143) maintain that learners’ subjective task value play an important part in the decision learners make about their participation in activities. The Grade 7 learners I teach are reluctant to participate in activities they find to be “pointless”. Osterman (2000:359) and Thapa *et al.* (2013:369) argue that the climate of the school and the sense of community that learners experience at school also have a profound influence on the learners’ achievements and motivation to participate in class activities. Learners are more willing to participate in a variety of activities and spend more time on them once they have achieved some success in those activities (Chen & Darst, 2001:251). I agree with this as in my experience Grade 7 learners are more willing to participate in activities in which they have previously achieved success. Observations from the literature indicate that learners’ motivation to participate is influenced more by the educator than grade or gender (Boswell, 1991:53–56). This finding was not addressed in my research study and therefore there is no clear answer to that.

The participants in the research said that they would like to have more space in order to move around more freely or would prefer to have their music lesson outside the four walls of the classroom. I could not find anything in the literature that supports this finding. I believe that the good South African weather may play a role in the participants' wish to have music outside.

The girls who participated in this research study expressed the opinion that they were more willing to actively participate in class activities than boys. This might be due to the fact that the girls who were interviewed all participated in music activities inside as well as outside the school and thus may have perceived themselves as being competent, whereas the boys in this research study did not strike me as confident as the girls. Phillips and Weiss (2016:66) found in their research that girls feel more competent about their abilities than boys. I have to agree with this. Grade 7 girls in my experience are keen participants in class, whereas the boys tend to drag their feet when called upon to participate. This has some serious implications for music education. If educators want the Grade 7 boys to participate in class activities, they have to re-assess the contents of their teaching in order to find appropriate material that will spark the interest and participation of the boys. The boys are missing out on some wonderful experiences in music class, which in my opinion is a shame.

### **7.3.2 Class activities**

According to my research, Grade 7 learners enjoy learning about music in school. This is supported by the literature in the findings of Choate (1968:139), who states that music making and listening to music seem to be an integral part of pre-adolescents' lives. Davis (2011:19) remarks that Grade 7 learners value listening to music as an important activity. From my discussions with the Grade 7 learners, I determined that they not only enjoy "fun" activities, but also enjoy being challenged. McPherson (2009:143) finds that learners are willing to engage in more difficult activities provided that they do not encounter obstacles to successfully complete the activities. Although I agree with this, I still have to say that it is not always true. I have found that the Grade 7 classes I teach at the end of the day are less willing to participate in activities that are perceived as slightly difficult, regardless of what the outcome might be. I am of the

opinion that, after a long day of concentrating on academically demanding subjects, Grade 7 learners cannot cope with another demanding activity. This may have some serious implications for music at school as it may indicate that the time of day that Grade 7 learners have music class could have a significant influence on their participation.

The participants in my research study all professed to enjoy participating in various activities in music class. Austin (1990:20) indicates that music class activities and participation are strongly influenced by musical self-esteem. Following this argument, one could deduce that the participants in this research study all had good musical self-esteem as they all enjoyed music class. Phillips (2003:111) is of the opinion that there is a difference in the type of activities boys and girls enjoy. My own findings also lead to this conclusion. The girls enjoy activities in which they can be creative and sing and dance, whereas the boys enjoy playing the marimbas because they “can hit it hard”. I believe that this is true as I find the Grade 7 boys reluctant to participate in singing and dancing but keen to play the marimbas. I have always been of the opinion that playing the marimbas is a positive outlet for their frustrations. This aids in the learners’ emotional wellbeing.

It was interesting to note that none of the participants in this research study mentioned singing as an activity. The literature indicates that singing is a favourite activity (Bowles, 1998:196; Bowman, 1988:226; Vander Ark *et al.*, 1980:37; Wayman, 2005:46). On the other hand, my research found that the playing of instruments, and specifically marimbas, is enjoyed by all participants. The literature supports these findings (Boswell, 1991; Bowles, 1998; Bowman, 1988; Cope, 1998; Nolin, 1973; Saunders 2009; Vander Ark *et al.*, 1980). Also see Section 7.2.3.

The participants in my research mentioned that they enjoyed activities in which they could be creative. Wig and Boyle (1982:171 Rita: *Getting bored easily seems to be a problem for Grade 7s. “I understand that everything we do in class can’t always be enjoyable, but I want them to hang onto every word I say for the half hour that they are in my class. For half an hour they have to be able to participate. If I can’t do that, I have failed as an educator” (10:61).*

172) maintain that class activities that foster creativity encourage positive musical self-efficacy. Roberts (2015:191) postulates that learners engage more in activities that offer them the opportunity to be creative. From my own experience I can testify this to be true. Activities which allow them to be creative are very popular.

Bowles (1998:132) finds that learners enjoy listening to music provided that they experience it as being relevant. I found the same thing in my research study. Learners enjoy learning about different music genres as long as they think they are relevant to their lives. However, there are learners who indicate that they do not mind learning about different genres as they believe it enhances their perspective of music. I am not sure if I agree with this. Once again, in my own experience, I find girls more willing to learn about genres that they have little in common with, whereas boys openly display their boredom with genres they feel are irrelevant to them.

The research from my study is inconclusive regarding the learners' enjoyment pertaining to learning about the history of music or music theory. Some indicated that they did not enjoy learning about the history of music or music theory while others indicate that they did enjoy these activities. Bowles (1998:194,204) implies that learners are prepared to learn to read music notes if it will enable them to play an instrument. I do not agree with this at all. After 15 years of teaching Grade 7 learners, and observing my own classes, I have come to the conclusion that very little can entice them to learn to read music notes. I have to add that the school I am teaching at is academically driven and that competition for academic excellence among the Grade 7 learners is rife. I think that perhaps the learners regard learning to read notes as an irrelevant and unnecessarily demanding activity. However, this is my own observation and I may be wrong in my assumption as I have never asked them. Bowles (1998:205); Nolin (1973:132) and Vander Ark *et al.* (1980:39) are all of the opinion that learning about the theory of music seems to be the least enjoyable activity for learners.

### **7.3.3 Cooperative learning**

Lamont (2002:47) maintains that the way learners behave in music class and cooperate depends on their identity in music. Grade 7 learners perceive listening to music with friends and working with peers as a means of social networking (North *et*

*al.*, 2004:46). I agree with this. From personal experience I can say that Grade 7 learners, even the usually reluctant ones, are more willing to participate in activities if they can work in groups with their friends.

The findings from the research study indicates that learners have a positive attitude towards working in groups. Bowles (1998:199) and Davis (2011:19) say that Grade 7 learners prefer to work with their friends in groups as it offers them the opportunity to socialise. McPherson (2009:143) maintain that learners would rather attempt difficult tasks with their friends than working on their own on such tasks. Working in groups also gives the learners control and autonomy over their project (Renwick & McPherson, 2002:184). By allowing learners to work in groups, educators can increase cooperation among the class as well as enhance the learners' sense of belonging (Richmond *et al.*, 2015:4). I have always believed this to be true as the Grade 7 learners I teach tend to be better friends with one another and support each other better than learners in the lower grades where there is less group work. However, learners' desire to socialise in groups can be so strong that they would rather risk being punished for misbehaviour than relinquish their socialising (Wayman, 2005:91). I fully agree with this statement. I have often noticed that Grade 7 learners will ignore repeated calls for obedience if they really want to talk to each another.

Group activities seem to encourage learners' cooperative abilities as well as motivate them to achieve (Wayman, 2005:89). This emphasises the findings from my own study. The participants indicated that working in groups allows them to produce a better product in the end. From my own teaching I can say that this might be true. Personal experience has taught me that some groups will produce a better product, while others, especially groups where the children decide for themselves who they want to work with, usually produce a product that is consistently sub-standard because they choose to work with learners with little musical self-efficacy or little interest.

#### ***7.3.4 Peer pressure and gender***

The learners who participated in my research study were strongly influenced by peers and friends. Studies from the literature stress the view that learners are more willing to participate in group activities with peers and friends when they feel that they are

understood and known by their friends (Ryan *et al.*, 1998:529) (see Section 2.3.1.2, last paragraph).

Grade 7 learners are under a lot of pressure from their friends and peers to conform (Delsing *et al.*, 2008:111), and music seems to be important in as much as it can assist the learner to form relationships with peers. This is described in my research as well. None of the participants in my research study indicated that they preferred to work on their own. They all indicated that working with friends and peers, although friends and peers can put the learners under pressure, is preferable to working by themselves. I agree with this. Grade 7 learners in my class are more confident and keen to participate in activities where they can work with friends.

Learners, especially boys, want to be perceived as cool by peers and friends as indicated by my own research. This correlates with findings in the literature (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006:133), in which the researchers relate that the pre-adolescent tends to listen to certain music genres in order to be perceived as cool and be accepted by a certain group and to boost their popularity. According to North *et al.* (2000:269), pre-adolescents mainly listen to a specific genre of music in order to be perceived as cool by their friends. The boys who participated in this study said that they believed that more boys enjoy music class than is generally believed. Their reason was that music is not perceived as being a cool activity to participate in. This strongly agrees with the literature. Singing and playing an instrument seem to be socially unacceptable behaviour by boys (Phillips, 2003:113). My own view is that this is true. Grade 7 boys have told me that they enjoy music class, but they would never admit it to their friends and in class they act as if they do not really want to be there. It may be worth further investigating this problem to ensure that Grade 7 boys get the most from their music education.

Studies in the literature demonstrate that misbehaving learners interfere with the teaching process (Roberts *et al.*, 2015:6). This is in accordance with the findings of my study as the learners indicated that some children, especially boys, tend to misbehave in class, which results in educators having to reprimand them, and that in turn interferes with the teaching process. The behaviour of misbehaving boys runs deeper than just an attempt to be cool. According to Tarrant *et al.* (2002:136), an open

display of misbehaviour seems to be a way for the learner to balance his peer relationships. This is confirmed by Saunders (2009:117), who remarks that learners behave in a certain way in order to be accepted by their peer groups. My opinion is that boys experience more peer pressure than girls. Saunders (2009:113) finds that boys between the ages of 11 to 14 years seem to “police” one another’s male identities. These findings agree with what I believe to be true. I have often noticed that Grade 7 boys will misbehave in class if they think that this will make their friends laugh or think they are “brave” or “cool” for doing so. The issue of boys not participating in class and misbehaving, has important implications for music education. However, I am not certain whether changes in the syllabus would be enough to entice boys to participate. I think this problem runs deeper and is related to the way boys are being raised by their parents, especially fathers.

### **7.3.5 Wellbeing**

Grade 7 learners who participated in this research study indicated that they found music class to be relaxing and described it as an opportunity for stress relief. This is quite a significant finding as the literature indicates that learners who find activities in music class too stressful may experience anxiety and stress which can have a negative influence on the learning process (Saunders, 2009:84). Following that argument, one can, from my study, conclude that the participants all experienced the class activities as being of an appropriate level of difficulty. This in turn might be seen as the participants in this research all possessing positive musical self-efficacy (Wig & Boyle, 1982:171–172).

The participants in the research maintained that they experienced the physical activity of “hitting the marimba hard” as enjoyable as it releases stress. A study conducted by Roberts (2015:90) has found the same. Roberts indicates that learners enjoy instrument playing precisely because it involves physical movement which may relieve stress. I allow the Grade 7s to play the marimbas for a few minutes when they come to my class, especially after a maths lesson. It is surprising to see how agitated and frustrated some of them are. I have noticed that if I allow them this opportunity for a few minutes they calm down, become more settled and ready to learn and listen to me. However, I do not imply that this will work with all Grade 7’s. As I said before, our

school is academically demanding on the learners, and this quick form of stress relief may only be applicable to my own learners. Saunders (2009:327) says that learners welcome the change of pace that music allows them during an often very busy and demanding school day.

The learners in this research felt that music could make them better people. This seems to be in line with findings in the literature. Wayman (2005:89) found that the experiences in music class can have a positive effect on learners' feelings of self-worth and competence. In a study conducted by Adderley *et al.* (2003:204), the researchers observed that learners' participation in music class made them more responsible and enhanced their self-esteem. Abril and Gault (2006:16–17) add that the music class is the ideal environment for the learner to develop sensitivity towards and appreciation for the arts. Woody (1998:44) is of the opinion that one of the most positive effects of teaching and learning music is that it allows the learner to experience feelings and to foster the ability to empathise with other people. The findings of Abril and Gault (2006) and Woody (1998) was not substantiated by my findings.

The learners who participated in the research study indicated that they experienced a lot of pressure from the school and their parents. North *et al.* (2000:257) suggest that learners participate in music activities to alleviate the pressure they experience at school and at home. I have to agree with this, especially at the end of the school day when I have the learners for music class, how they struggle to cope with the pressure of tests, assignments, sport and other cultural activities. The learners I have won over have told me that they see the music class as a place where they can wind down and escape from the pressure “out there”.

Several of the participants in my research indicated that they would like to have more than one music class per week. One music class per week seemed to be the norm in the private primary schools that participated in this study. Phillips and Weiss (2016:67) maintain that learners who feel confident of their musical abilities, and who are supported in their musical endeavours by their parents, tend to place a higher value on the music class. From discussions with my own Grade 7 learners I know that this is true. Many of them have requested more music periods in the week. Unfortunately,

the school places greater value on the academic subjects and would rather increase teaching periods for these subjects than for music.

#### **7.4 Contributions of this study**

The main contribution of this study is the development of 11 themes with sub-categories that describe the nature of the music teaching and learning experience of educators and learners in Grade 7.

### 7.4.1. Music educators:



**Figure 24: Synthesis: educators' experience**

This study indicates that music educators' teaching philosophy<sup>29</sup> informs the identity that they take on and vice versa (Figure 23). Their philosophy determines their approach to teaching, which in turn determines the class activities they selected.

<sup>29</sup> Teaching philosophy: The fundamental beliefs educators hold regarding their teaching.

These activities will have certain outcomes which, if negative, can have a negative influence on the educator's self-efficacy.

Grade 7 learners respond in a certain way in class towards the activities that are selected as well as to how the educator behaves towards them. The relationship dynamics that educators experience is influenced by the overall organisational climate of the school. Educators' relationships include those they have with their learners, the parents and the school management. How healthy these relationships are impacts on how educators perceive themselves (self-efficacy), the sense of isolation they experience, and how appreciated they feel. This impacts on their emotional wellbeing.

Their own emotional wellbeing was not addressed by the educators who participated in this research. This is a pity as my experience of music educators is that, due to the limited time allocated to music in Grade 7, the inappropriate curriculum set by the Department of Basic Education and the unrealistic expectations from school managements and parents, the burden on music educators has become too great. This impacts negatively on the service delivery to the Grade 7s who, in the end, are ones who suffer. Croom (2012:1) supports Seligman's positivist theory of human wellbeing (PERMA) which consists of five elements. These are: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment.

This study and the supporting literature indicate that educators experience negative emotions in as far as their relationships with parents and the expectations by the schools are concerned. However, educators are fully engaged in their teaching and they do experience it as meaningful. How accomplished they feel with the negative feedback they receive, remains to be seen. This problem of educators' experience needs some more investigation on all of these levels.

7.4.2 Grade 7 learners:

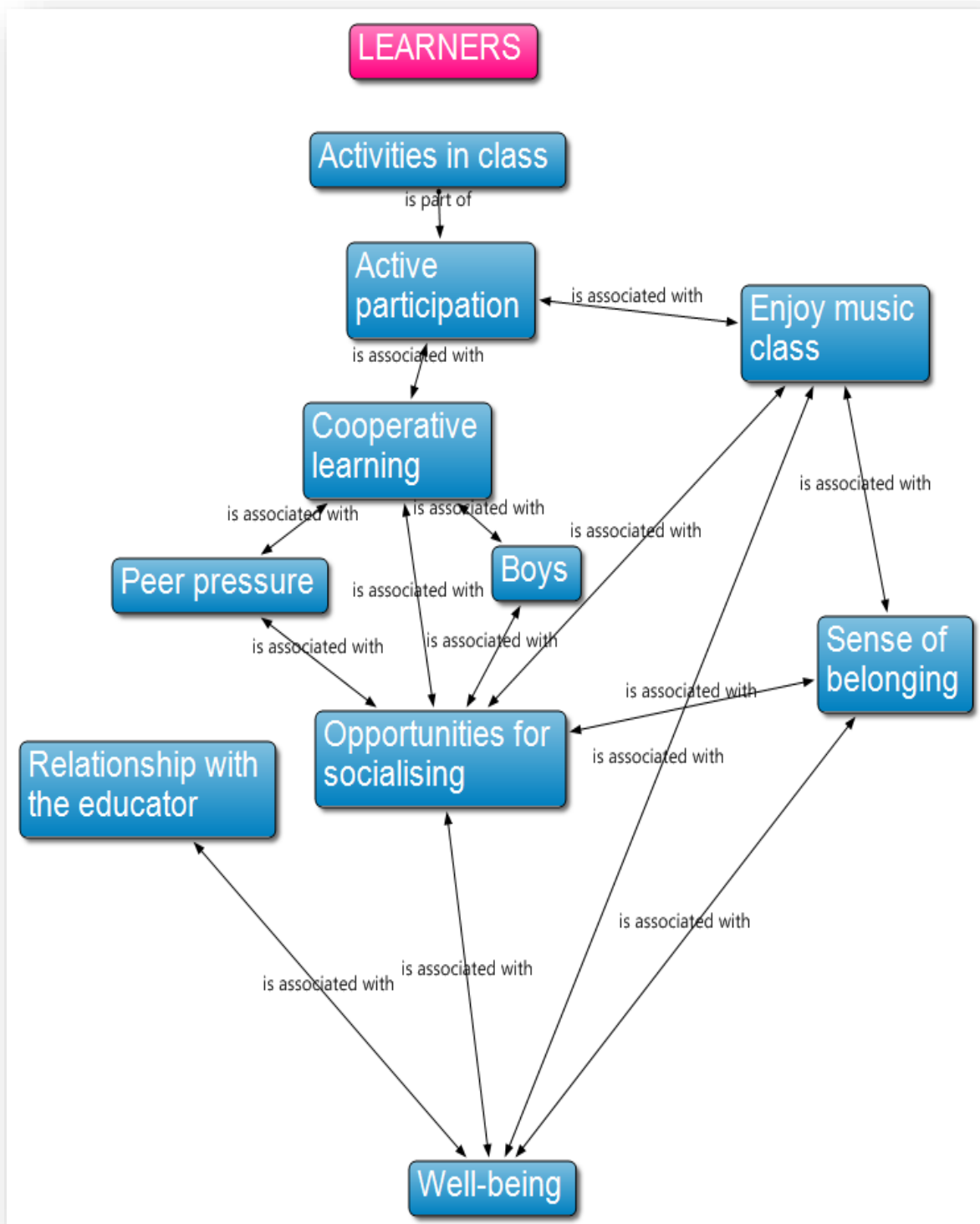
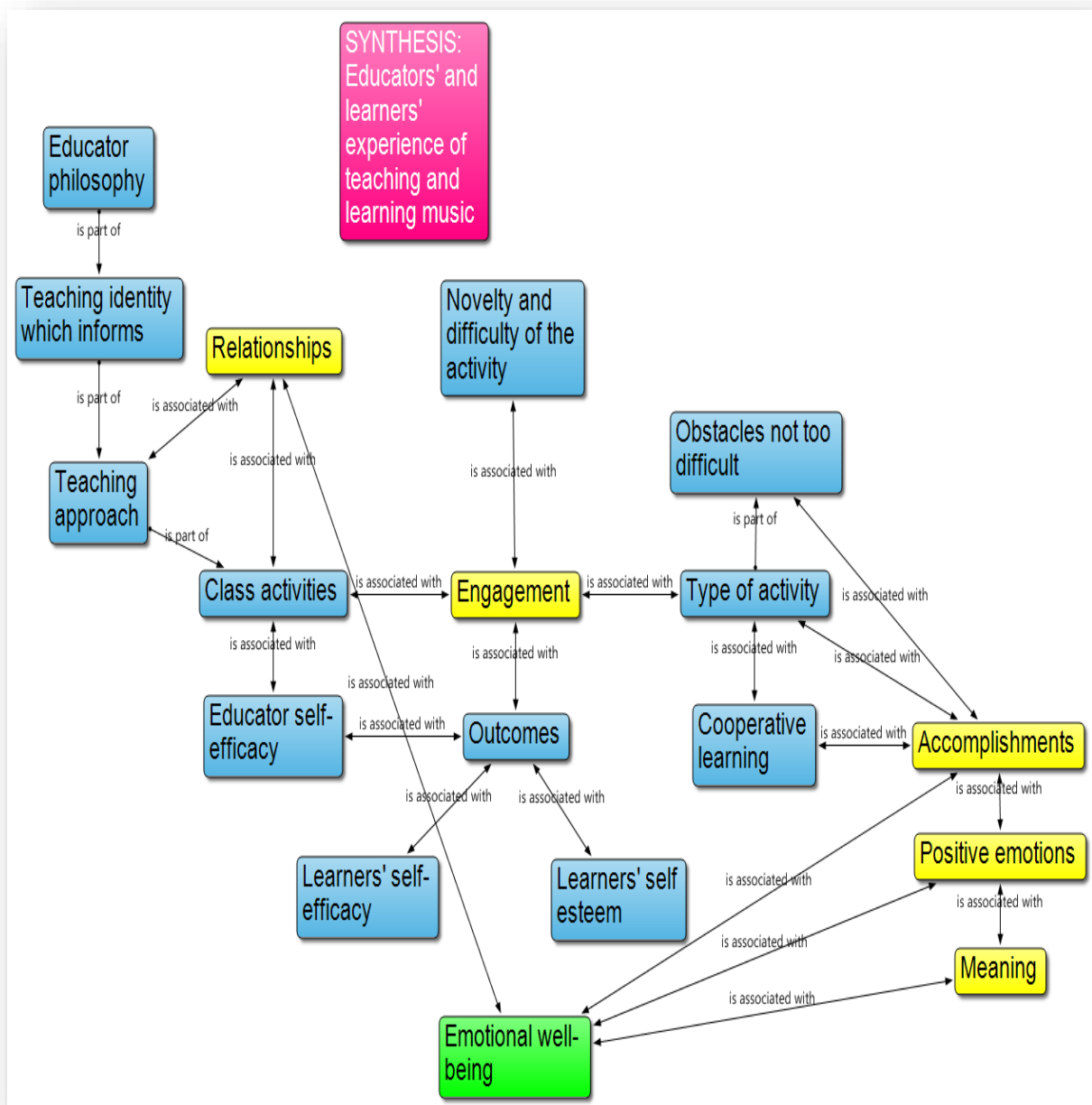


Figure 25: Synthesis: learners' experience

In general Grade 7 learners enjoy music class. They prefer to actively participate in the class activities (see Figure 24). The relationship that learners have with the educator also influences the learners' participation. A great deal of this enjoyment depends on the type of activities that are done in class. The over-arching finding is that learners prefer to work in groups with friends. They enjoy this as it creates opportunities for social interaction. This is important as social interaction allows the learners to strengthen their sense of belonging to the group. However, group work has its own problems as learners in groups experience a variety of relationship dynamics due to peer pressure, their relationship with their educator, and disagreeing on how to advance with the activity. Boys are especially vulnerable to succumbing to peer pressure and pretend that they do not like music. Opportunities for socialising impact on the learners' enjoyment of music class. The enjoyment of music class and the opportunities for socialising lead to the emotional wellbeing of the learner.

## 7.5 Synthesis of literature and findings



**Figure 26: Synthesis: Educators' and learners' experience of teaching and learning music can assist in the holistic well-being of the person**

After having completed this research study, I have come to realise that Seligman's PERMA model of human wellbeing (Croom, 2012:1) and Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977:191) seems to have an over-arching effect on how educators and Grade 7 learners experience the teaching and learning of music. Seligman's

model and Bandura's theory seems to permeate all aspects of teaching and learning in music:

Educators' approach to their teaching influences the relationships they develop with their learners which in turn affects learners' engagement in the activities. Learners' engagement influences the activities the educator choose for the class which affects the outcomes of the activities. Negative outcomes may lead to educators' perception that they are not good at teaching (Bandura's self-efficacy). Negative or unsuccessful experiences in class for learners, will have the same effect. Successful engagement in activities may lead to a sense of accomplishment for the educators as well as the learners. Learners that experience success at activities of which they perceive the obstacles as not too overwhelming, find their self-esteem improved and their emotions to be positive. Educators who experience success in their teaching activities, also find their self-esteem to improve and their emotions to be positive. This adds meaning to the experiences and ultimately leads to emotional wellbeing for both the educators and Grade 7 learners.

## **7.6 Confessions and trumpets<sup>30</sup>**

The Grade 7 learners who participated in this research study were keen to voice their experiences and talk about their views. It was a positive experience for me to see how open and trusting these learners were. I expected them to be reserved or shy as some of them did not know me at all. The opposite was true – I found them keen, eager to please and not at all intimidated by the “researcher”. In fact, they seemed to appreciate that someone was interested in their experiences and were excited to contribute to the study. However, it was a challenge to get the learners to answer their questions with more than just a “yes” or “no” response. This may have been due to the fact that they were used to answering educators in school in this way.

Another interesting thing about the study is that it showed me that both educators and learners are so overwhelmed with the daily demands of school, that they had to think quite a while before they could respond to the questions in a purposeful manner. The

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<sup>30</sup> Confessions and trumpets – as suggested by Silverman (2013:376), used as a broad disclaimer to acknowledge the limitations of the study and that limited generalisation is warranted.

educators seem to be weighed down by all the administration required by the school and the curriculum they had to teach that I got the impression that significant interaction takes place in class between educators and Grade 7 learners. Even so, this interaction is important to both parties.

I got the same impressions from the Grade 7 learners. As all the learners who were interviewed only had one music class per week or per cycle (a cycle being a 6 or 7 day time table), learning music did not feature in their lives. The impression I got was that music class for the learners was something that came along once a week or once a cycle, which gave them some breathing space. I do not think that this bodes well for either educators' and learners' relationships or their mental wellbeing.

School administrations and management need to take a hard look at what they are actually achieving by the teaching and learning of music in Grade 7 and assess whether the whole process has become counterproductive. It might be worth their while to invest in more and longer music classes for Grade 7 learners in order for both parties, learners and educators, to derive more value from the teaching and learning of music.

## **7.7 Limitations and implications for different audiences and further research**

*The study of experiential knowledge, students' lived experiences reflecting this perspective of those who undergo them, and as reported in their own words, is almost non-existent in the music education literature (Bresler, 1995:16).*

By conducting a narrative research study, I have given voice to those who are not often heard, namely music educators and Grade 7 learners. By listening to their stories, we hear directly from them how they experienced the teaching and learning of music. However, the Grade 7 learners were not always able to express themselves clearly and logically as they were still very young. They sometimes repeated the same answer when they did not understand a question or did not know how to answer it. It was difficult at times to derive significance from what they said, as they sometimes

left questions half answered and at other times it was not clear what they meant. The findings of this study only apply to the participants, but readers can decide for themselves the extent to which the findings may be applicable to their own situations. This study is important for a variety of audiences which include but are not limited to:

- Grade 7 music educators: It is important for Grade 7 music educators to understand how Grade 7 learners experience the teaching and learning of music.
- School principals: The person in charge of the school should understand how Grade 7 educators perceive the Grade 7 learners in the music class in order to support them better. Also, as it is the principal who is responsible for the timetable of the school, it stands to reason that he should consider allowing more time for music classes for Grade 7 learners because, as the study indicates, learners feel that they will benefit.
- School boards and management: School boards are responsible for allocating money to the different areas of teaching, and if they understand the importance of music teaching and learning, they might allocate more resources and funds to it.
- The Department of Basic Education: As the body responsible for the curriculum, the Department may find this study interesting as learners were clear about the activities they would prefer to participate in. Educators were clear on what activities they thought were best suited for learners of this age.
- Universities: The younger educators indicated that they were not sure what to teach learners of this age. Music education departments may find it useful as their teaching programmes for pre-service teachers might need some adjustments.

Each of the eleven themes (Fig.23, p.139) that emerged from this study are worth further exploration as each is worth a study in its own right. Only a few studies deal with the experiences of learners, and those are mostly focused on either very young learners (junior phase) or older learners (university students and high school learners). There is therefore a need for more research in the area of Grade 7 music experiences. As concluded from this study, music fosters wellbeing in Grade 7 learners. Further research might include the exploration of the relationship between wellbeing and music class for pre-adolescents. As indicated by the learners who participated in this research, they found that working in groups fosters independence

as well as inter-dependence and aids them to work independently. Thus another avenue that can be explored is the effect of cooperative learning in the music class on the wellbeing of the Grade 7 learner.

## **7.8 Final reflections**

When I was a little girl of about four years of age growing up in Namibia, I remember sitting on my dad's lap in the evenings, listening to classical music and my dad telling me about the music and the composers. There was music in our school too. I remember singing in the school choir and doing piano lessons. I remember running down to the music rooms, arriving out of breath, always being excited about my lessons. When I was in Grade 3 I remember pretending that I was a music teacher. I would gather up my reluctant siblings and force them to attend music lessons. It was fun. I then already knew what I wanted to do one day. It was always easy for me to express myself through some musical means. Music opened up a different world to me. It gave me life. It made me who I am today. This research study has combined my three loves: music, children and teaching. I want to end, after having completed this dissertation, by saying that I hope that we as music educators will remember the following in our teaching:

*To encourage and to guide learners*

*To allow our learners to have meaningful experiences in music*

*To encourage educators to be creative and competent*

*To nurture the aesthetic spirit of young learners*

*To encourage music as an active part of everyday life*

*To encourage our learners to enjoy meaningful musical lives*

*To use music education as a means of well-being for all.*

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A



Privaat sak X05, Noordbrug  
Suid-Afrika 2522

Tel: 018 299-2000  
Faks: 018 299-2999  
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**Skool vir Musiek**  
Tel: 018 2991689  
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E-pos: [Liesl.vandermerwe@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Liesl.vandermerwe@nwu.ac.za)

2 June 2016

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM**

#### **TITLE OF THE RESERACH PROJECT:**

Narratives of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom

**REFERENCE NUMBER: NWU-00217-16-A7**

#### **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**

Marietjie Schoeman

#### **ADDRESS:**

North-West University  
Faculty of Music  
Private Bag X05  
Noordburg  
2522

**CONTACT NUMBER: 082 414 4916**

Dear Parents

Your child is being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of the project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. Your child's participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decide not to let your child participate. If you say no, this will not affect your child negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw your child from the study at any point, even if you do agree to let him/her take part.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts of North-West University.

**What is this research study all about?**

- This study will be conducted at five different, independent primary schools in and around Johannesburg and Pretoria and will involve open-ended interviews with Grade 7 learners.
- The objectives of this research are: To explore, interpret and describe the experiences Grade 7 learners have of learning music in Grade 7.

**Why have you been invited to participate?**

- Your child has been invited to participate because he/she is currently in Grade 7.

**What will your responsibilities be?**

- You will be invited to voluntarily participate in a group interview and share your story and experiences of learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. The interview will be between 45 – 60 minutes long. The interview will take place during school time.

**Will your child benefit from taking part in this research?**

- The direct benefits for your child as a participant will be the opportunity to share his/her experiences of learning music in Grade 7 with other children and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences on the same topic. The bigger benefit

will be to the research community in gaining a better understanding of the experiences Grade 7 learners have of learning music.

**Are there risks involved in your child taking part in this research?**

- The risks in this study are minimal due to the topic being more of an intellectual nature. I will try my best to limit participants being uncomfortable or difficult situations not being managed.

**Who will have access to the data?**

- Anonymity is guaranteed. During transcription, data will be coded to ensure that no link can be made to a specific participant. Confidentiality will be ensured by the way data will be captured, changing identifying data during transcription and deleting the digital recordings once the data have been transcribed. Only the researcher and the person transcribing the group interviews will have access to the data. A confidentiality agreement will be signed with the person doing the transcriptions. Data will be kept safe and secure by locking hard copies in lockable cupboards in the researcher's office, and electronic data will be password protected. Reporting of findings will be anonymous.

**What will happen in the unlikely event of some form of discomfort occurring as a direct result of your child taking part in this research study?**

- Should your child have the need for further discussions after the group interviews due to possible discomfort, an opportunity will be arranged for him/her.

**Will your child be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?**

- No, your child will not be paid to take part in the study and there will be no costs involved for you if he/she does take part.

**Is there anything else you should know or do?**

- You can contact Marietjie Schoeman at 082 414 4916 if you have any further queries or encounter any problems, or my supervisor Dr Liesl van der Merwe (018 299 1689).

- You can contact Dr Willie van Wyk at the Faculty Research Ethics Committee on 018 299 1751 if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

**Declaration by participant**

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to allow my child \_\_\_\_\_ (name) to take part in a research study entitled: Narratives of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom.

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to let my child take part.
- I may choose to let my child leave the study at any time and he/she will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- My child may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the researcher feels it is in his/her best interests, or if he/she does not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) \_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_\_  
2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of witness

**Declaration by investigator**

I (name) \_\_\_\_\_ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to \_\_\_\_\_

- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above.
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (place) \_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_\_  
2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of witness

Dr Liesl van der Merwe – Research supervisor

*Liesl van der Merwe*

## APPENDIX B



Privaat sak X05, Noordbrug  
Suid-Afrika 2522

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**Skool vir Musiek**  
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2 June 2016

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM**

#### **TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:**

Narratives of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** NWU-00217-16-A7

#### **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**

Marietjie Schoeman

#### **ADDRESS:**

North-West University  
Faculty of Music  
Private Bag X05  
Noordburg  
2522

Dear Grade 7 learner

In my research I want to hear your stories about your experiences of learning music in the Grade 7 classroom. I would like to interview you but it is your choice whether you

want to participate, and even if you decide to participate you can change your mind later. The only inconvenience I foresee is the time that you will be called out of class to talk to me. Your comments to me will be 100% confidential and anonymous. You will benefit from this research because you will get the opportunity to make your voice heard and to hear your peers' experiences. These stories might help your music teacher to understand your experiences better and make the music class better for you.

---

Signature of participant

---

Date

---

Marietjie Schoeman - Researcher

  
Dr Liesl van der Merwe – Research supervisor

## APPENDIX C



Privaat sak X05, Noordbrug  
Suid-Afrika 2522

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2 June 2016

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM**

#### **TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:**

Narratives of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom

**REFERENCE NUMBER: NWU-00217-16-A7**

#### **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**

Marietjie Schoeman

#### **ADDRESS:**

North-West University  
Faculty of Music  
Private Bag X05  
Noordburg  
2522

#### **CONTACT NUMBER:**

082 414 4916

Dear Music Educator

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of the project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decide not to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts at North-West University.

### **What is this research study all about?**

- This study will be conducted at five different, independent primary schools in and around Johannesburg and Pretoria and will involve open-ended interviews with Grade 7 music educators and learners.
- The objectives of this research are: To explore, interpret and describe the experiences Grade 7 music educators and learners have of teaching and learning music in Grade 7.

### **Why have you been invited to participate?**

- You have been invited to participate because you are currently teaching music to Grade 7 learners.

### **What will your responsibilities be?**

- You will be invited to voluntarily participate in a one-on-one open-ended interview and share your story and experiences of teaching music in the Grade 7 classroom. The interview will be between 45–60 minutes long. The interview will take place during a time that is convenient for you.

### **Will you benefit from taking part in this research?**

- The direct benefits for you as a participant will be the opportunity to share your experiences of teaching music in Grade 7 with other music educators and gain a

deeper understanding of their experiences on the same topic. The bigger benefit will be to the research community in gaining a better understanding of the experiences music educators have of teaching music to Grade 7 learners.

**Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?**

- The risks in this study are minimal due to the topic being more of an intellectual nature. I will try my best to limit participants being uncomfortable or difficult situations not being managed.

**Who will have access to the data?**

- Anonymity is guaranteed. During transcription, data will be coded to ensure that no link can be made to a specific participant. Confidentiality will be ensured by the way data will be captured, changing identifying data during transcription and deleting the digital recordings once the data have been transcribed. Only the researcher and the person transcribing the group interviews will have access to the data. A confidentiality agreement will be signed with the person doing the transcriptions. Data will be kept safe and secure by locking hard copies in lockable cupboards in the researcher's office, and electronic data will be password protected. Reporting of findings will be anonymous.

**What will happen in the unlikely event of some form of discomfort occurring as a direct result of your taking part in this research study?**

- Should you have the need for further discussions after the group interviews due to possible discomfort, an opportunity will be arranged.

**Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?**

- No, you will not be paid to take part in the study and there will be no costs involved for you if you do take part.

**Is there anything else you should know or do?**

- You can contact Marietjie Schoeman at 082 414 4916 if you have any further queries or encounter any problems or my supervisor Dr Liesl van der Merwe (018 299 1689).

- You can contact Dr Willie van Wyk at the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at 018 299 1751 if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

**Declaration by participant**

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to take part in a research study entitled: Narratives of teaching and learning music in the Grade 7 classroom

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) \_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_\_  
2016.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of witness

**Declaration by investigator**

I (name) \_\_\_\_\_ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to \_\_\_\_\_
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research as discussed above.
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (place) \_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_\_  
2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of investigator

Dr. Liesl van der Merwe – Research supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of witness

*Liesl Merwe*