

Understanding the challenges teachers in the
Western Cape face teaching the music
component of life skills in the
intermediate phase

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**LETTER OF CONFIRMATION:
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**To: The Dean, Humanities Faculty
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22.11.2022

I write to confirm that I was engaged as a professional text editor to perform the following editorial interventions on the Master's thesis of Ms RP Mouton titled 'Understanding the challenges teachers in the Western Cape face teaching the music component of Life Skills in the Intermediate Phase':

1. Copy-editing her text (comprising five chapters), which included language editing and imposing consistency of usage.
2. Formatting the text, including the chapter titles, the headings and the subheadings, by applying MS Word Styles according to the NWU template provided to me.
3. Styling the reference list to ensure consistency, completeness and correctness of citation; raising queries regarding missing, contradictory or incorrect details that came to my attention and receiving and styling the responses from the writer.

This dissertation being an examinable work, no structural or content editing was undertaken.

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ABSTRACT

Life Skills forms part of the curriculum according to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The purpose of this participatory action research study was to understand the challenges teachers face in the Life Skills classroom when teaching the music component. To understand the challenges teachers face in the Life Skills classroom, I needed to understand the literature regarding these challenges. Since teachers form the foundation of the education system, it is essential for them to be successful in the classroom.

My data were gathered through one face-to-face workshop and also through WhatsApp prompts, voice notes and text messages. The data from the face-to-face workshop and the WhatsApp prompts were transcribed and analysed through dramaturgical coding using *Atlas.ti 9*. The WhatsApp responses and those of the participants in the face-to-face workshop form the basis of my research.

The results are clear in that policymakers and the Education Department need to consider carefully the challenges teachers face in the classroom and respond to these challenges, at the same time suggesting solutions. The outcome of my analyses is that gaps in the education system need to be bridged and resolved.

Keywords: Life Skills, music education, transformation, policy change

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CA	Creative arts
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
LSEN	Learners with special education needs
NWU	North-West University
PAR	Participative action research
PE	Physical education
PSW	Personal and social well-being
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The life skills subject forms an integral part of the South African curriculum as per the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011:8–9). The purpose of this participatory action research (PAR) study was to understand teachers' challenges in the intermediate phase life skills classroom when teaching the music component. For the purposes of this study, music as a component in the life skills classroom will be defined as all musical activities that form part of the performing arts section of the life skills curriculum (Pietra *et al.*, 2010:2).

1.2 Research problem

The research problem in this study pertains to two real-life problems. First, this study acknowledges the complex macro-structures and social context of education in South African schools. The social circumstances give rise to the challenges that teachers face in the life skills classroom. Second, this study seeks to suggest solutions to the problems related explicitly to the subject life skills. These problems speak to the place of music in the subject and the skills that teachers possess to teach this complex subject.

In its mission statement, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) promotes equal education for all South African citizens and emphasises the well-being and thriving of communities (Mitas, 2015:8). Bridging the gap between the aim of well-being in schools and its actual practice in schools remains a challenge (Prinsloo, 2005:10). Life Skills was seen to overcome some challenges associated with well-being in schools (Jacobs, 2011:212).

Life Skills as a study sphere helps students to embrace life and the opportunities that are presented to them (DOE RNCS, 2002:26). Both teachers and learners acknowledge the importance of life skills as a subject (Rooth, 2005:13). Life Skills promotes skills with which children can learn to cope with issues and, in turn,

experience increased overall well-being and mental health (Rooth, 2005:12). The failure to effectively promote well-being through life skills may be ascribed to the macro-structures within which children in the intermediate phase find themselves; in particular, many children in the life skills classroom may be infected or affected by HIV and AIDS, poverty, and sexual and physical abuse (Richter & Dawes, 2008:79).

The effects of HIV and AIDS on the lives of children in South Africa are devastating (Chi & Li, 2013:1; Mogotlane *et al.*, 2010:24). These destructive effects have resulted in children having to leave school and become the caretakers of their younger siblings, which affects their right to an education (Mogotlane *et al.*, 2010:24). Owing to the stigma attached to HIV and AIDS, children may also experience the strain of destitution and shame (Chi & Li, 2013:1).

Poverty is a direct result of HIV-affected households (Mogotlane *et al.*, 2010:24). Poverty affects especially primary school learners (Van der Berg, 2008:18). The effects of living in poverty may affect both their performance at school and their futures (Barnes *et al.*, 2007:1). According to Hunter and May (2003:32), students who grow up in poor homes are more likely to leave school prematurely than those from affluent homes. These students face major obstacles in their familial surroundings which make them function below their optimal abilities (Hunter & May, 2003:32).

Sexual and physical abuse are almost daily occurrences in children living in poor socio-economic environments (Richter & Dawes, 2008:79). Programmes should commence by decreasing the interaction between the subjection to brutality and the welfare of children (Savahl *et al.*, 2013:11). Bullying in schools has been found to affect learners' self-respect and liberty and to result in solitude (De Wet, 2005:82). Bullying can be eradicated when teachers, children and their guardians acknowledge this as a pressing matter that must be dealt with (De Wet, 2005:87). Safety in schools and in children's immediate environments is essential as it minimises the occurrence of violence against children (Richter & Dawes, 2008:90).

School safety is imperative in South Africa in ensuring that educators and children experience corporal and mental well-being (Prinsloo, 2005:10). But the safety conditions in schools can change only when teachers endorse responsibility, morality, and executive behaviour to safeguard the well-being of children in the school environment (Prinsloo, 2005:10). These initiatives should include successful people in the communities creating positive self-assurance and providing the means for effective approaches to life skills (Savahl *et al.*, 2013:11). As a teacher who taught music and life skills at an urban school in South Africa, I am aware of the impact these larger social issues can have on the musicking in the classroom.

The second real-life problem pertains to the role that music plays in the intermediate phase and the challenges that result from music as a component in the curriculum. In South Africa, music is taught as a component of life skills in this phase. Therefore, a significant emphasis is placed on the instrumental value¹ of music in the life skills curriculum. However, Jansen van Vuuren and Van Niekerk (2015:1) found that teachers lack an in-depth understanding of the four art forms that must be integrated according to CAPS. There is therefore a great need for the correct implementation of life skills which consist of creative arts, physical education, and personal and social wellbeing as an integrated subject (Rooth, 2005:1). Teachers have trouble implementing life skills because they often do not have enough training in music and the performing arts, and so they might feel a need rather to teach other learning areas such as numeracy and literacy (Herbst *et al.*, 2005:261).

Since music is a component of the creative arts section of life skills according to Van Vreden (2016:9), all teachers should focus on music integration as an important aim in the Grade R classroom. Although Van Vreden's article is based on the foundation phase CAPS, I contend that arts integration should also form part of the intermediate phase of the CAPS, especially in the life skills subject area. The CAPS was developed as a curriculum that can be used and taught by

¹ Instrumental in this sentence refers to musicking to achieving other goals such as literacy or social goods. This is opposed to the intrinsic value of music.

educators with lower educational attainment to overcome the inequality in South African education (Harrop-Allin & Kros, 2014:71). However, the CAPS document presents various challenges, particularly relating to the Eurocentric nature of the learning outcomes in the life skills learning area (Harrop-Allin & Kros, 2014:71).

At times, teachers may focus on social outcomes in the life skills classroom using music (Van der Merwe, 2009:28). Van der Merwe's article focused particularly on Arts and Culture and bore relevance to the CAPS document. Teaching young people skills and knowledge of a higher standard will allow them to become functioning adults who are equipped to transform a broken society (Van der Merwe, 2009:29). Learners face difficult circumstances and challenges daily; therefore life skills can help these learners to cope with their challenges (Rooth, 2005:310). Life Skills as a subject is therefore essential for skills development, merit, and a prosperous life (Rooth, 2005:1). Life Skills is directed at producing accountable students (Jacobs, 2011:212). It also empowers learners to gain knowledge, grow to become better citizens and to make choices that will influence their lives positively (Rooth, 2005:1).

According to Jansen van Vuuren and Van Niekerk (2015:273), for the future of music education in the classroom it is important to dissect and understand the challenges that educators face. From a preliminary literature review, although life skills is an important subject area, the life skills classroom faces many challenges which have yet to be explored in greater detail. These challenges pertain to the discrepancies between educational policies and the classroom realities, training and education offered to teachers teaching life skills and the social challenges faced by many South Africans. This study therefore aims to understand the challenges that teachers face in the intermediate phase life skills classroom when teaching music as a component. My study differs from the studies mentioned above because of music as a component in the life skills classroom understanding a complex social issue: the challenges that teachers face in the intermediate phase life skills classroom.

The beneficiary of this study includes teachers, policymakers, music educators, students, and researchers. The most important aspect of this study is that it

communicates an accessible version of my findings. This study is important to me as I hope to distribute an accessible version of my findings to practitioners that will result in real-world change (Herr & Anderson, 2015:35). This research is suitable for teachers as the study is based on action and reflection theory (Creswell & Poth, 2018:13).

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this PAR study is to understand the challenges that teachers face in the intermediate phase life skills classroom when teaching the music component of life skills. For the purposes of this study, music as a component of life skills will be defined as all musical activities, processes and resultant products in the life skills classroom that form part of the performing arts section of life skills.

1.4 Research questions

In which ways can the challenges that teachers face when teaching music in the intermediate phase life skills classroom be understood? This primary research question will be supported by four sub-research questions:

- What does the relevant scholarly literature say about the challenges that teachers face when teaching music in the intermediate phase life skills classroom?
- What themes emerge from the data gathered in this study?
- How can these themes be understood through the lens of the relevant literature?
- What policy recommendations and actionable points result from understanding the challenges teachers face when teaching music in the life skills classroom?

1.5 Procedure

1.5.1 Research design

This study was informed by emerging practices in critical qualitative research (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2017:5). According to Creswell (2007:36), qualitative research attracts researchers who want to solve an issue or understand a complex

social phenomenon in a natural setting. My study, in particular, recognised a social problem – challenges that teachers face in the intermediate phase life skills classroom when teaching the music component that I sought to understand by gathering data in the natural social context. Contextual data was gathered about music as a component in the intermediate phase life skills classroom and hosted at a school in Cape Town in the Western Cape identified by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) (Creswell, 2007:36).

The chosen field was the school environment in which the participants were teachers who were experiencing the research problem (Creswell, 2007:37). According to Stake (2010:20), the qualitative researcher focuses on understanding social interactions and uses this understanding to shed light on complex situations. The objective is to understand the problems that participants face and to collaborate towards a solution through interaction with the participants (Merriam, 2009:4). Yin (2011:8) offers a different insight into the definition of qualitative research in that the outlook and viewpoint of the participants are imperative to the way the research will unfold. Hence, these participants bring a sense of reality to the study (Yin, 2011:8). Since this study is conceptualised as a PAR study, I aimed to work narrowly with the lived realities of my participants and gave voice to their experiences (Mertens, 2009:48).

1.5.2 Participatory action research as strategy of enquiry in this study

Merriam (2009:1) states that qualitative research can take on a multitude of forms. This study focused on a PAR approach as a sub-set of research practices informed by its action-based research counterpart (Herr & Anderson, 2015:19). The findings of this study related to my field of interest: music education and community music.

According to White *et al.* (2004:s3), PAR is an amalgamation between communal enquiry together with educative activity and movement or action. PAR is about gathering data about a social problem and finding possible solutions to that existing problem (White *et al.*, 2004:s3). This study is based on a problem that I identified as a mother of a girl in the intermediate phase life skills classroom, which

also prompted me to complete my honours mini-dissertation on this theme. During the data-collection process for that study, I realised that I had to work more closely with teachers to find possible solutions to the problems faced in the life skills classroom.

The process followed in PAR differs greatly from traditional qualitative research because the participants play a more active rather than passive role (Herr & Anderson, 2015:19). Whyte (1991:21) further suggests that many complex social problems cannot be solved through traditional research alone. I believe that this study is one such case since the problems teachers face in the life skills classroom have been investigated extensively, as evident in the previous literature overview.

Kemmis *et al* (2014:20) note that PAR is rooted in social interaction for the greater good of the community through involved collaboration and action that will lead to change. It is a practical process that involves engaging with real people and real issues (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:20). For this research, I have discovered that real issues in the life skills classroom must be understood. I believe that interaction with teachers to understand the challenges they face when teaching the music component of life skills in the intermediate phase may help researchers and policy makers create better solutions to these problems.

McIntyre (2008:2) states that PAR is about both the researcher and the participants' taking leadership in the success of the participatory research project. This study imposed leadership responsibilities not only on me as a researcher, but also on the participants during our interaction. I viewed my participants as experts in their fields. This study is informed by the guidelines for PAR provided by Herr and Anderson (2015:34–35) and Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:566). These guidelines include:

- a critical understanding of the macro-context in which the study takes place;
- integrating theory and practice;
- a change in the researcher–participant relationship to mutual subject status;
- a relationship between the processes of research and learning;

- a focus on self-examination, identity, and agency – for both the researcher and the participants; and
- setting emancipatory goals.

This study has been conceptualised with a thorough understanding of the macro-context in which the life skills classroom exists. The challenges that teachers face in the intermediate phase life skills classroom cannot be dealt with or overcome without considering the greater socio-historical context of South African education. This implies that this research is approached from an understanding that the individual challenges faced by teachers in the intermediate phase life skills classroom, cannot be disentangled from the greater social context.

As a researcher-practitioner, I used interaction with teachers to gather data about music as a component as a means of integrating theory and practice. This made a PAR approach entirely applicable. I was also mindful of the ways in which I facilitated participation in the research through this interactive process with the teachers. I hope that this reflexivity will contribute to a subject–subject relationship instead of the more traditional relationship that places the participant as the object. Therefore, the researcher and the participants have a reciprocal learning relationship. I learned as a researcher, while my participants shared their experiences while learning about music as a component that aided in the presentation of the life skills curriculum's creative and performing arts section. I hope that this process facilitated self-examination for my participants, in this way adhering to the PAR goal of creating greater agency and insight into individual and group identity. I also hope that this process enabled teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and to understand collaboratively the complex challenges they face. This process of reflection may attain the emancipatory goal of changing life skills classrooms in selected schools in the Western Cape.

1.5.3 Participants

The active participants were six teachers who were purposively selected to be involved in the project (White *et al.*, 2004:s3). Through a collaborative engagement

with the DBE in the Western Cape, I identified and invited six teachers to participate in this study. These teachers all taught life skills in the intermediate phase classroom in public schools in the Western Cape.

1.5.4 Role of researcher

As my research unfolded, I networked with my research peers, policymakers, community leaders, institutions, and other professional people from different organisations with a view to communicating my research. This networking process also allowed me to discover in-depth issues that I would not otherwise have encountered (Watters *et al.*, 2010:9). It was imperative to create understanding and leadership about my research. My team and I advocated this because they believed in my cause (Watters *et al.*, 2010:9). I played the role of the facilitator in the processes that unfolded in the WhatsApp workshops in implementing the PAR method correctly and managing the process daily (Watters *et al.*, 2010:20). As researcher, I monitored, had discussions about and scrutinised the data collected (Creswell, 2007:38). As organiser, I arranged meetings, which included the capturing of minutes at those meetings and important needs related to my research (Watters *et al.*, 2010:20).

As a researcher that comes from a disadvantaged background, I realised the importance of change through action early on. Being the youngest of a family of nine children, I constantly had to mediate between my older siblings, and I consequently understand the dynamics of this process and the success it brings. Being a single mother of a daughter who experienced the intermediate phase has emphasised the relevance of my study. The intermediate phase is the bridge between the foundation phase and the senior phase in the current educational dispensation in South Africa; therefore, I feel that more emphasis should be placed on emotional well-being and the life skills that can make this possible.

1.5.5 Data collection

1.4.5.1 Future-creating workshops

Future-creating workshops were added as part of my data-collection process. Future-creating workshops comprise of three phases: (1) understanding all the

challenges that stakeholders face; (2) imagining a utopian alternative; and (3) an action phase in which participants create a plan to deal with some of the challenges, in the process moving closer to the imagined utopia. Therefore, my participants participated actively in understanding and creating solutions to the problems they encounter in their life skills classrooms. This effort affected the outcomes of the project instead of allowing this process to be determined by future policymakers and members of the DBE (Lauttamäki, 2014:2). This approach was a means of finding solutions to compounded issues, especially in social situations (Lauttamäki, 2014:2). I followed the steps set out by Lauttamäki (2014:2) and reinterpreted these activities through WhatsApp correspondence by answering six questions. I had to resort to this process due to COVID-19 and its associated problems. These activities as per annexure B were used to elicit responses from my participants to: (1) explore participants' understanding of current practices, contexts, and their consequences; (2) explore critical questions about current practices, contexts, and possible consequences; and (3) engage in a process of 'communicative action' (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:66). During the WhatsApp group interactions, we created documents that were analysed in *Atlas.ti* 9, which included instant correspondence from my participants, and in turn assisting my participants if any obstacles should arise (Jailobaev *et al.*, 2021:79). Audios, texts, and photographs were shared in order to make the data-gathering process more visible and real for both the participants and the researcher offering a profound insight into the data-gathering process (Jailobaev *et al.*, 2021:79). I asked my participants to contribute to the co-reflection process in their own reflections.

1.5.6 Data analysis

The data I collected during the WhatsApp Group session with the teachers was organised using *Atlas.ti* 9 concisely (Bowen, 2005:217). *Atlas.ti* 9 was used to store all the documents, interviews, and recordings of this process (Frieze, 2012:10). The process of coding was followed in a clear and organised way to analyse my data (Frieze, 2012:10).

1.5.7 Ethics and trustworthiness

I gained permission from the DBE to work with 10 participants from schools of their choice. My study was reviewed by the ethics committee at the North-West University (NWU) please refer to annexures for the ethics number and complied with the guidelines set out by this committee (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:237). I made it my mission to ensure that my guidelines towards fulfilling my role as researcher was in place before proceeding with my research (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:56).

My participants were treated confidentially, and all places, people and institutions were given pseudonyms. My participants provided their written consent and were free to withdraw from this study at any point in time (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:244). The data gathered were handled confidentially and kept in safe storage by the researcher and supervisor only the researcher and study leader had access to the data. The data will be stored for five years in electronic format on a computer with password before being erased (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:244).

In summary, as a researcher working in the discipline of community-engaged research, I asked for my participants' input throughout the entire research process. They had the opportunity to revise my purpose and research questions during initial meetings, contributing to the generation of data, and helped with data analysis (McDonald, 2012:41). My participants were given the opportunity to share their input, and those not wanting to be involved were excused and their wishes respected. I was open to outside input, and my work will be available and open to recommendations (McDonald, 2012:45). Confidentiality was preserved throughout (McDonald, 2012:46).

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I briefly discussed the problem of the study which relates to the challenges teachers in the intermediate phase life skills classroom when teaching the music component. This chapter also followed all the procedures. The next chapter will review the literature in detail linked to the challenges teachers face, life skills in the classroom, creative arts in the life skills classroom, and arts integration.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

My research focuses on the challenges teachers face in the intermediate phase life skills classroom when teaching the music component. Before I can begin to understand the challenges, my participants face, I need to understand the literature relating to the problem. During an initial literature search it became clear that sources particularly focussed on teaching the music component of life skills in the intermediate phase were sparse. Due to the lack of sources, Consequently sources on life orientation, music education and life skills were used.

Educators form the backbone of the classroom (Elrayah, 2022:2); therefore, they must be encouraged to succeed in that environment. An action plan may enhance positive classroom experiences for teachers (Elrayah, 2022:2). Owing to the challenges in the classroom, teachers experience issues related to self-worth and self-awareness, causing them to experience high levels of anxiety (Prilleltensky *et al.*, 2016:105).

Students' behavioural challenges may compound these personal and psychological challenges, parents' unrealistic expectations and the overall challenges in the classroom (Prilleltensky *et al.*, 2016:107). In addition, the inundating administration work and a challenging curriculum often led to feelings of inadequacy (Prilleltensky *et al.*, 2016:108). Consequently, attending to the challenges teachers face in the classroom from a personal perspective to the management level is essential as this affects learners' development (Prilleltensky *et al.*, 2016:109).

From this introductory discussion, it is apparent that teachers face many challenges in the classroom; however, I assert that due to the multidisciplinary nature of life skills, the challenges teachers face in the life skills classroom are unique. I will unpack these challenges by examining the benefits music accrue to teaching life skills, in so doing making a case for preserving such a multi-

disciplinary learning area. This is followed by a focused discussion of teachers' challenges in the life skills classroom.

2.2 Life Skills in the intermediate phase classroom

According to Zulu (2016:19), the learning area life skills is about providing learners with the skills to confront issues they would experience as self-assured, accountable human beings. Life Skills promotes a sense of self-esteem that will help them to contribute positively to their peers, their families and society (Panday, 2007:4). The importance of life skills is imperative as it provides learners with the essential life skills required to be able to reside in an evolving community (Killoran, 2012:20). According to Mturi and Bechuke (2019:136), life skills plays a significant role in a learner's development. In this way, learners can become successful adults later in life (Mturi & Bechuke, 2019:136). Therefore, life skills classrooms can be seen as spaces in which to prepare students for the future societies they will form part of. Zulu (2016:19) states further that life skills is a subject through which learners can learn to face these obstacles in life. Panday (2007:4) suggests that life skills focuses on assisting learners to develop capabilities to master their world and its obstacles. While Theron and Dalzell (2006:399) suggest that life skills is an essential subject as it promotes skills to assist learners in dealing with obstacles in life.

Panday (2007:4) further suggests that learners must sink or swim in complicated and demanding conditions in society. Killoran (2012:21) agrees that life skills aim to create a well-rounded individual with high self-esteem who can contribute towards a prolific society. Life Skills therefore needs to take on the role of learner-oriented teaching for these learners to become well-rounded citizens (Zulu, 2016:31). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy statement (CAPS) focus on holistic education, especially within life skills as a subject (Killoran, 2012:20). Without competent teachers, life skills cannot be taught; it is therefore imperative to have teachers who can teach life skills in a way that is organised and well compiled (Zulu, 2016:19). Zulu argues (2016:31) that life skills is not only informative but is also applied interactively.

CAPS for intermediate phase learners recognises the integrated growth of a student (Spamer, 2017:36). Jacobs (2011:220) according to CAPS, life skills enables learners to obtain skills to become better citizens and at the same time to assist them to learn making better choices in their lives, especially with regard to recreational drugs. According to Spamer (2017:35), for a learner to flourish in the world, school, and society, they need life skills. Self-worth and being social form the basis of life skills (Spamer, 2017:35). These skills offer them understanding, enabling them to make the best choices for their future lives (Spamer, 2017:36).

It is imperative that the school system speaks to the psychological well-being of learners and that the school understands the negative factors that influence learner well-being (Theron & Dalzell, 2006:399). Life Skills also teaches learners to take their roles in society seriously and ensures that they are able to contribute towards the greater good of the financial well-being of the country (Panday, 2007:4). Modiba and Sefotho (2019: s1) advocate that life skills be implemented to fulfil a specific social purpose in society and that the subject enables learners in South Africa to live meaningful lives, in the South African context.

Life Skills promotes skills that prepare learners for maturity (Theron & Dalzell, 2006:399). Theron and Dalzell (2006:410) state that the curriculum should be relooked at and adjusted to the present-day obstacles South Africa faces. Nel (2020:4) suggests that life skills was instituted to offer learners a better future. It is apparent that wellness with regard to teachers is essential as this plays a role in learners' wellness in the classroom (Nel, 2020:48). More focus should therefore be placed on the life skills learning areas that will offer skills and that will empower them for their future (Theron & Dalzell, 2006:410). Jacobs (2011:212) further states that life skills have experienced challenges in being executed pragmatically, and teacher training is one reason life skills have not been reinforced effectively (Jacobs, 2011:213). The problem for most life skills teachers is that there is a lack of training (Modiba & Sefotho, 2019: s1).

Life Skills as a subject is focused on equipping learners to deal with social challenges, including the youth not being employed and not being taught skills that could benefit them (Modiba & Sefotho, 2019: s1). Another problem in the life skills

classroom, according to Nel (2020:45), is that teachers struggle immensely with challenges such as limited resources, too much administrative work and less teaching time, no assistance from management and teachers experiencing ill health. Gelderbloem (2014:1) states that brutality and aggressive behaviour have become the norm in schools. The two key factors causing these conditions for learners and the greater society are criminality and brutality (Panday, 2007:4). Schools in contexts influenced by criminality therefore have become places of fear and this influences their well-being (Gelderbloem, 2014:1). Gelderbloem (2014:2) suggests that schools with a constructive environment are less likely to experience brutality and aggressive behaviour, from learners residing in this type of environment which produces learners who will flourish.

2.3 Arts integration as a possible solution to curricular challenges in South Africa

The arts in the school system have been an area that had been very much neglected (Vermeulen, 2009:2–3). Creative Arts, which forms part of the life skills curriculum, does not only concentrate on the ‘physical, emotional and social’ progress of learners; it also focuses on creative ways of allowing for syllabus conclusions (Killoran, 2012:21); hence, the drive to motivate its existence in the curriculum (Vermeulen, 2009:2–3). Creative Arts may be beneficial to learners with learning difficulties as this subject area offers them the opportunity to express themselves through diverse means (Killoran, 2012:22). Therefore, creative arts may empower learners by giving them access to expression (Killoran, 2012:22). Vermeulen (2009:2–5) also stresses the importance of expression through the creative arts. The arts and music can encourage learners to face problems and find solutions (Vermeulen, 2009:2–5). Owing to the expressive possibilities of the creative arts, it is even more important to ensure that these subjects remain in the core curriculum (Vermeulen, 2009:2–6).

Therefore, it is good to see that the arts have been placed as part of the core curriculum in the intermediate phase through their integration into life skills (Vermeulen, 2009:2–4). Jansen van Vuuren (2018:10) argues that the arts should be amalgamated with other subjects, such as English. The subject areas of arts

and music need to remain as imperative subjects and not to be placed on the periphery of the curriculum (Vermeulen, 2009:2–3). However, the significance of music in the school syllabus, although it forms part of the core curriculum it is not enough (Kriger, 2020:18).

Arts integration, where the arts are integrated into other subject areas, is one way of ensuring the prevalence of arts and expression throughout the curriculum (Jansen van Vuuren, 2018:2). The approach one takes in integrating the arts in the core curriculum may have an impact on funding for the arts in public schools (Kriger, 2020:18). Arts integration will also necessitate a greater focus on team teaching and collaborative teaching (Jansen van Vuuren, 2018:2). Kriger (2020:20) states that arts integration or collaborative teaching with other subjects can secure the existence of the arts in teaching and learning. By maintaining a relationship between subjects, a path between these subjects can be created and established (Kriger, 2020:22). The integration of the arts offers learners the opportunity to learn other subject areas in a more exciting way (Kriger, 2020:23). According to Ollermann (2020:14), music integration may improve learners' acquisition of knowledge. Certain skills can be learned through arts integration in the classroom, such as critical thinking, governance, and collaboration (Kriger, 2020:23). For this process of art integration or collaborative teaching to be successful educators need to keep the coherence of each subject being exposed to arts integration (Kriger, 2020:23). It is therefore important for the growth of learners that the classroom exudes a sense of enthusiasm as this creates an optimistic consequence academically (Ollermann, 2020:14). Therefore, music can be used in collaboration with other core subjects such as life skills, literacy, and numeracy (Ollermann, 2020:14). Generalist educators need training in applying this way of teaching, however in our education system there is a dire need for the exploration of this kind of collaborative teaching (Jansen van Vuuren, 2018:1). With the implementation of this method of teaching not only will learners be assisted with skills in the arts, but it will also help them with learning other subjects (Jansen van Vuuren, 2018:1). Teacher training is therefore imperative to ensure that these student-teachers learn about collaboration between subjects and how to integrate subjects successfully (Jansen van Vuuren, 2018:6).

2.4 Music and personal wellbeing: The larger school context as supportive to personal wellbeing

By virtue of their social nature, classrooms have an impact on learners' behaviour (Heyworth, 2013:2). As learners become proficient in the ability to interact positively with one another, friction is overcome and a sense of belonging arises (Heyworth, 2013:2). Consequently, schools are communal gatherings where children need to be able to relate to those with whom they interact (Maury & Ricard, 2016:3). School attendance and progress can be improved when students feel connected and joyous while they are at school (Maury & Ricard, 2016:3).

Hebron (2015:13) describes student well-being as consisting of a combination of social, cultural, emotional, psychological, and cognitive aspects, and the way these elements are integrated. In schools, therefore, it is important to consider the complexity of student well-being when creating constructive and encouraging learning environments (Midford *et al.*, 2016:363). It is through their social and emotional states of being that children in the classroom find happiness in their environment (Maury & Ricard, 2016:3).

Therefore, it is important to encourage a sense of belonging through the classroom as a community (Whittington & McInnes, 2017:28). The concept of the classroom as a community facilitates healthy interactions between educators and students (Whittington & McInnes, 2017:28). Whittington and McInnes (2017:28) argue further that the effects of classroom community also manifest at home as parents witness their children's constructive feedback, allowing them to embrace their collective triumph.

Developing a child's inner and communal capabilities in school is beneficial. To facilitate learning, educators in the classroom must ignite children's emotional systems to help them retain and express information (Foran, 2009:57). Owing to the emotional responsiveness and pressure they experience, learners cannot always absorb information in the classroom (Foran, 2009:57). Children often detach themselves, especially when their interactions with others are hindered by

internal problems (Maury & Ricard, 2016:3). Children's emotions have an impact on their academic achievement (Foran, 2009:57).

Students should engage in more interactive participation in arts and culture, in line with the National Curriculum (Jansen van Vuuren, 2010:24). A sense of belonging and relatedness for children is crucial, since that affects the way, they encounter education in a positive way (Maury & Ricard, 2016:3). In addition, positive attitudes are crucial, and positive interchange in the classroom fosters feelings of relating to other students (Heyworth, 2013:2).

In a group, music is an essential social aspect (Crow, 2008:381). Musical interaction is the perfect way to enhance a learner's social skills (Gooding, 2009:35). In and outside of the school environment, teachers are aware of the importance of social and emotional proficiency (Beets, 2019:2). Children who are unsuccessful in both their schoolwork and in their conduct tend to lack social skills (Gooding, 2009:35).

Learning to develop social and emotional skills is the key to achieving a higher quality of life (Midford *et al.*, 2016:363). For this reason, it is imperative that social and emotional well-being is in place to achieve high-quality education (Beets, 2019:3). In such circumstances, children can function at a level where they can deal with their inner turmoil (Beets, 2019:3). Contributing to greater community, emotional and social accomplishments is one of the functions of community programmes (Whittington & McInnes, 2017:28).

In order to successfully thrive in the community, students need to acquire skills through life skills as a way for them to expand their horizons (Hebron, 2015:13). Promoting possibilities to experience a triumphant existence life skills assembles students for their future (Rooth, 2005:9). Social well-being is therefore how people see themselves and their peers (Midford *et al.*, 2016:363). Life Skills according to the United Nations (WHO, 1999), are imperative to children's emotional, physical, social, and personal well-being (Rooth, 2005:12), and children grow comprehensively through the application of life skills (Pillay, 2012:167).

Growth and happiness are two important aspects that result from positive interactions (Beets, 2019:2). Interaction with peers encourages social skills through innovative thinking (Crow, 2008:380). The purpose of music is therefore to promote both social and personal skills (Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2007:4).

2.5 The role of music in supporting personal wellbeing in schools

It has been found that music is a useful tool for implementing strategies that enhance emotional well-being, which in turn facilitates learning and the retention of information (Foran, 2009:58). Furthermore, teachers who provide students with an understanding of music will develop future innovators with musical skills (Malan, 2015:115). Self-awareness created through music leads to a positive outlook and in turn offers a successful existence (Heyworth, 2013:3).

Music promotes learning in the classroom (Lum, 2008:3) and enforces emotional expression, social standards, and information transmission (Lum, 2008:155). As a powerful teaching tool, music modifies the education system profoundly (Jucan & Simion, 2015:7). In fact, it is said that music teachers offer their students an opportunity to grasp the essence of music in the creative arts classroom (Malan, 2015:115). And it is also possible to impart social skills through the application of music – such as, imparting information, collaborating, and showing leadership and trustworthiness (Gooding, 2009:35).

Music in the classroom can teach children the importance of social exchange (Heyworth, 2013:2). But educators must also understand learners' feelings in the outside world (McGlone, 2020:287). Children with emotional difficulties especially need the use of creative arts in the classroom, especially those with emotional and learning difficulties (Obiozor, 2010:25). This is because arts in the classroom promote self-actualisation, self-management, and governance (Obiozor, 2010:25). Van der Merwe (2007: 173) argues that the arts play an important role in human development, in particular self-actualisation. It is essential that learners become one with their environment in the arts classroom by connecting with their awareness (Garvis, 2012:86). Creative Arts also play a significant role in expanding learners' learning capabilities, not only in this subject but also in many

areas of their lives (Stevens, 2010:47). Therefore, music must remain a part of the creative arts rather than be treated as separate (Mitas, 2014:68). For one thing, claim Auerbach and Delport, the use of musical sound in the classroom encourages students to engage in day-to-day classroom interaction (Auerbach & Delport, 2014:10). The creation of artwork is about creative perception, which resolves difficulties and creates harmony (Nompula, 2012:294).

Interactive music makes a group feel connected, gives them a sense of belonging and produces a confident unit (Thram, 2014:209). In other words, interactive musical expression is a way to connect with others through mutually interactive communication (Swart, 2013:116). Music can therefore be a way for individuals to exchange information with one another. Ensemble work communicates to the group socially, corresponding to others' feelings (Vougioukalou *et al.*, 2019:534). In addition, social well-being results from music's ability to promote interaction as a collective (Thram, 2014:209).

As a result, music builds self-respect and encourages interaction amongst peers (Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2007:4). Moreover, students can develop their self-esteem through the correlation between their body and their surroundings (Antilla, 2007:51). This is partly because the objective of art is to teach self-expression, a process of inner declaration (Veelman, 2017:8). Music and communication are fundamentally the ways in which these two skills are inculcated at an early age (Garvis, 2012:87), largely because music is a form of interpersonal communication that allows others to discern the reason behind an action (Trevvarthen & Malloch, 2000:4). Moreover, music stimulates a deep and beautiful reaction from the individual's connection with creation (Johnson-Green, 2018:5).

Taking part in arts projects significantly enhances emotional and mental well-being and ensures interaction between them (Burnard & Dragovic, 2014:373). Through musicking, children can experience holistic development (Auerbach & Delport, 2014:10). Hence, music is seen as a mechanism that helps learners access their emotional worlds (Swart, 2013:116).

2.6 Challenges teachers face in the life skills classroom

One of the largest systemic challenges teachers face in the life skills class is dealing with the legacy of apartheid. Pitt (2006:8) states that teacher education is an essential part of education. For policy to be implemented effectively, teachers need to be trained effectively (Pitt, 2006:8). However, in South Africa, there is a long history of disparities in teacher training; this is due to the legacy of apartheid (Pitt, 2006:16). During apartheid, teaching colleges were divided racially, causing syllabuses not to be properly implemented, which led to poor-quality education (Pitt, 2006:16). Especially black teachers lacked access to high-quality arts education (Pitt, 2006:16). The government refocused its efforts on fixing these issues because the system was deeply flawed (Pitt, 2006:16). And owing to the integration of previously segregated schools and changes in the curriculum, schools have had to make a number of major adjustments (Ramdass, 2009:115).

A challenge South Africa must face is its insufficient skill levels in diverse areas of the economy (Ramdass, 2009:113), but producing young adults equipped to operate in a competitive environment continues to be a challenge (Ramdass, 2009:117). The primary obstacle to the leadership of our country is the poor education that disadvantaged learners experienced before the dawn of our democracy (Ramdass, 2009:117). The government should therefore strive to improve the quality of the tuition at all educational institutions (Ramdass, 2009:114). Educational institutions must provide a safe learning environment for all learners (Ramdass, 2009:115), because they form the core of a learner's communal environment.

Much of the educational reform we have seen in South Africa has been focused on redressing the discriminatory legacy of apartheid (Hoffman, 2017:29). However, curriculum change cannot remain only at the level of policy. There needs to be practical change at the grassroots level (Hoffman, 2017:28). According to Hoffman (2017:28), curriculum change is a complex and dangerous journey because it involves several components which are hard to control, such as changing teachers' belief systems, teacher behaviours and teaching strategies.

According to Arendse and Smith (2019:1), the modification from segregation to a country free of separateness meant that a syllabus was instituted to match a free South Africa. This syllabus was constructed on racial inclusion, civil rights, and constitutional rights (Arendse & Smith, 2019:1). This meant that learners were offered skill sets that would enable them to operate as functional inhabitants (Arendse & Smith, 2019:1). Life Skills specifically is focused on skills such as being a social citizen, living a holistic life, the tools to create positive self-esteem, offering a sense of accountability at all levels of development and applying these skills (Arendse & Smith, 2019:2). It has, however, become clear that many difficulties with the life skills curriculum have been identified. The two main areas that have been acknowledged are the amalgamation of the life skills subjects and insufficient resources (Arendse & Smith, 2019:4).

The second major systemic challenge teachers face in the intermediate phase life skills class pertains to the social problems of violence, substance abuse and unemployment in South Africa. South African schools are plagued with acts of unlawful violence and brutality that threaten learners' welfare (Ramdass, 2009:114). Crime profoundly impacts educators and learners as it affects their inner and mental well-being, leading to a lack of self-confidence and despair (Ramdass, 2009:114).

According to Khuzwayo (2021:10), South Africa is ranked second worldwide in terms of gang brutality. Impoverishment and joblessness are the most important contributing factors to the formation of gangs (Khuzwayo, 2021:11). As a result of drug and alcohol abuse in schools, learners' behaviours tend to become aggressive, which leads to violence (Khuzwayo, 2021:11). This leads to violence in schools mirroring events in society in general (Khuzwayo, 2021:11). In addition to learners, teachers were also targeted by this violence (Khuzwayo, 2021:11).

In schools, ill-mannered learners are the products of a lack of discipline (Nhambura, 2020:31); and in addition to affecting learners and teachers negatively, such behaviour also negatively affects the school environment (Nhambura, 2020:31). There have been acts of violence not only between learners, but also between educators and learners in South Africa (Nhambura,

2020:31). A major concern, according to Nhambura (2020:31), is how easy it is for students to obtain alcohol, especially on school grounds.

Beyond these two major systemic problems, teachers in the intermediate phase life skills classroom also face challenges with implementing the curriculum. The focus has been on educators in South Africa as the key to improving learners' academic achievement (Mettler, 2016:12). There is an interchange between the syllabus and educators, and because teachers are often the face associated with the implementation of the curriculum, they are viewed as embodying a leadership role (Koopman, 2017:27). Educators have an immediate connection with learners, so they have a great deal of influence over how a subject is taught (Mettler, 2016:12). Our education system needs educators to fulfil the needs as per the Norms and Standards for Educators, yet teachers face extreme systemic problems which they are not equipped to deal with (Diale *et al.*, 2014:84). In this context, the actual role of the life skills teacher extends beyond what they were trained for, creating a strong belief that they can accomplish these roles (Diale *et al.*, 2014:84). Being a life skills teacher means that they take the well-being of their learners seriously (Diale *et al.*, 2014:84), therefore they require the support of the DBE in their quest to implement the curriculum (Diale *et al.*, 2014:84). It has been claimed that educators' lack of inspiration in the classroom is at least partly a result of the working syllabus, the school environment and the accomplishments and liabilities related to their workload (Iwu *et al.*, 2013:839). According to Iwu *et al.* (2013:839), the solution is to increase teachers' enthusiasm and inspiration, especially when they are expected to work within the challenges of the South African education system. Teachers may experience the curriculum more positively if given more autonomy and included more actively in quality control and curriculum renewal (Iwu *et al.*, 2013:839–840). However, for this to be the case, teachers need adequate training, and they must also be competent educators.

The fourth major challenge educators face when teaching the music component of life skills in the intermediate phase classroom pertains to their competence. Incompetence among educators contributes significantly to educator discontent (Iwu *et al.*, 2013:840): the teachers' competence and the educational materials available play a significant role in educator satisfaction (Iwu *et al.*, 2013:840). This

ultimately means that the improvement of educators' ability to execute material will depend on enhancing their teaching skills (Iwu *et al.*, 2013:840). It appears to be the government's ability to function as a means of being scrutinised through educational institutions (Koopman, 2017:27).

According to Jacobs, teachers experience difficulties with life skills because training is a major obstacle in the school system (Jacobs, 2011:213). Tertiary institutions have to contribute to producing well-equipped educators, propelling quality education into South African educational institutions (Van Deventer, 2009:143). And even though these educators believed their training was inadequate, they felt that students benefitted tremendously from their teaching (Jacobs, 2011:213). In addition, in-service teachers should become familiar with their subject-matter, which will help them introduce music in the classroom innovatively (Jansen van Vuuren & Van Niekerk, 2015:288). For example, the generalist teacher finds it difficult to teach music as part of life skills due to their lack of expertise in music (Jansen van Vuuren & Van Niekerk, 2015:287).

Teachers need tertiary-level knowledge of arts and culture to be able to teach it effectively (Herbst *et al.*, 2005:274). The CAPS document, according to Harrop-Allin and Kros (2014:70–71), was created to address the shortcomings of previous curricula. The life skills in CAPS are often described as too formulaic and prescriptive to assist ill-prepared educators to teach the performing arts (Harrop-Allin & Kros, 2014:71).

Van Deventer (2009:141) states that the subject life skills, requires educators to receive proper training in the form of workshops. This is important for the survival of life skills as a subject, due to the prospects and benefits it offers learners for a successful life, education, and welfare (Van Deventer, 2009:129).

The development of the educator's understanding, expertise and mentality is essential to the student's success (Mettler, 2016:12). As a result, educators are motivated by academic institutions to be better at their jobs (Mettler, 2016:12). The demand for uninterrupted executive expansion for educators is therefore pressing (Mettler, 2016:12). But, states Mettler, with the growth in teachers' academic

establishments, educators can promote academic objectives and improve student achievement (Mettler, 2016:12). Teachers and students are being monitored through understanding (Koopman, 2017:27).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter offered the setting out of life skills in the intermediate phase classroom. The following subheadings I dealt with in detail during my literature review, which are, life skills in the intermediate phase classroom, creative arts in the life skills classroom, arts integration in the life skills classroom, music and personal development, the role of music in the life skills classroom and challenges teachers face in the life skills classroom. It is my view that there is a great need for these issues in the education system to be scrutinised and dealt with on a managerial level and thus be implemented in the schooling system. My next chapter outlines the methods used during the data collection process.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design: qualitative research

Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding complex social phenomena within the naturalistic settings they occur (Merriam, 2009:2–5). In my study, qualitative research is appropriate because I identified a social problem in the intermediate phase life skills classroom and through the data-collection process I sought to understand this real-world problem better. My study also took place in the school where the teachers were teaching; therefore, it was within a naturalistic setting.

In qualitative research the researcher is the primary tool for data collection (Merriam, 2009:15). This is applicable to my study because I used my own experience of interacting with the educators within their naturalistic environment to generate the data used in this study (Merriam, 2009:15).

Qualitative research is often inductive and emergent (Merriam, 2009:15). This statement means that the investigator collects data and from there constructs an idea, instead of sampling the idea (Merriam, 2009:15). This inductive process is applicable to my study because the concept, which is the action plan, which was constructed during and after data collection and analysis, will not get tested as in quantitative research (Merriam, 2009:15). I also had to make provision for a flexible design that allowed for changes, since my study was heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Qualitative researchers also often provide evocative descriptions of social phenomena (Merriam, 2009:16). Therefore, the researchers use narrative data to create rich findings (Merriam, 2009:16). This process also involves providing rich contextual details to allow the reader to determine transferability (Merriam, 2009:16). These criteria apply to my study because they are inductive and emergent.

3.2 Research paradigm: transformative design

The foundational assumptions of the transformative paradigm include the assumption that, research problems should be based in the real world and that the purpose of research, should be changing the status quo (Taylor & Cranton, 2012:42; Mertens, 2016:7). Therefore, researchers using the transformative paradigm do not take the status quo for granted, but rather use their research to question it (Taylor & Cranton, 2012:42; Mertens, 2016:10). Owing to this, transformative research is often community conceived and personal to the researcher (Taylor & Cranton, 2012:42; Mertens, 2016:10). Owing to the relational understanding of social change in the transformative paradigm, researchers working in this paradigm, place ethical action at the centre of their research practice (Mertens, 2016:12) This, also speaks to another assumption in the transformative paradigm – that knowledge is socially constructed (Taylor & Cranton, 2012:42).

The consequence of prolonged interaction with the communities is to bring to light the obstacles these societies encounter, the way they deal with these obstacles, and the execution of tactics, on how to improve these obstacles and therefore contribute to communal advancement (Mertens, 2016:6). A researcher who situates himself/herself in the transformative paradigm acknowledges his/her subjectivity and actively engages this through a reflexive process (Mertens, 2016:6) My study is transformative and reflective, as it is one that will transform a social problem, and in turn offer a practical solution. This transformation applies not only to the problem area being researched; the solution will also benefit the greater community in turn.

One of the core functions of research in the transformative paradigm, is to forge connections with collaborators within the community (Mertens, 2016:6). Researchers in this paradigm, assert that these forms of participatory and collaborative research will permit, the comprehension of the problems South Africa is facing (Mertens, 2016:6) Researchers within the transformative paradigm are informed by four domains: (1) ethics, (2) the nature of reality, (3) the nature of knowledge and (4) the methods we apply to understand the world around us

(Mertens, 2016:6). In my study, ethics played an essential role and guided the iterative structure of the study. The belief that reality is contested, and that power plays a role in constructing reality also played a role in my study. I viewed the experiences teachers shared as valid experiences, based on their intersectional positions, and tried to be critical of power's role in creating the structural challenges they shared with me. I also acknowledged their experiences as valid and incorporated, what they shared with me to produce this knowledge artifact – thereby disrupting the power imbalance in some forms of research. Choosing to design this study as a PAR study, was important since I viewed the participating teachers as collaborators, who not only represent the school; they also represent the greater community. Therefore, this study will speak of a greater problem in the South African context. And by forging these collaborations between myself as researcher and my participant and co-researchers, I hoped to better understand the challenges teachers face, when teaching the music component of life skills in the intermediate phase.

3.3 Strategy of enquiry: participatory action research

PAR focuses on combining communal examination, self-reflection, and cooperative self-enquiry with metamorphic outcomes (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:12). The PAR method has its roots in earlier forms of action research, which often took place in educational settings (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:12). In a setting where discontent is present, PAR seeks to bring about transformation (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:18). Method results must align, otherwise transformation is needed to circumvent an unfavourable result (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:68). As the researcher, my decision to undertake PAR was motivated by my desire, to bring about transformation to an area, I felt was neglected. I have personally experienced discontent within the classroom space, during my tenure as a teacher.

Participation is based on contributions in a collective space (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:48). Participants can experience transformation through their comprehension of methods used, and their performance and the quality of the methods applied (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:66). In PAR the process would be experienced, like that of a historian with the comprehension of how this process operates, the reason for the

state it is in and what the results of the action entail (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:68). In terms of PAR as a research methodology, the part that appealed to me as a researcher was that, as a collective, we could jointly manifest our action plan for the specific purpose – which was finding solutions to the challenges, the participants were experiencing in the classroom.

In education, PAR is an appealing choice for researchers, it offers a certain insight and awareness into educational issues, and finding solutions for those issues (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:4). Through PAR, educators have a better understanding of their instruction rooms, therefore resulting in there being better informed in the instruction process (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:4). By assigning people a sense of accountability, that is when PAR evolves (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:3). PAR proved to be a good choice because I witnessed the transformation in my participants. Through our many discussions, a sense of insight and awareness was displayed, and therefore their drive to find solutions, and from the final action plans we co-created, I could see that they developed a renewed sense of accountability and agency.

PAR is about observing the application and ensuring that the performance and results are in fact rational (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:86). Transformation in a communal space is a challenge because transforming a belief in the educational system cannot take place unless the educational system itself is transformed (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014:86). PAR provides the interaction needed, and the steps which secure a research strategy that takes place, in a collective justice, important for PAR (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:17). More notably, PAR accentuates confronting the matter being investigated, in contrast to other research methods proposing transformation without any action (Ngwenya, 2018:98).

There are different paths of collecting and assembling these data (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:38). Video recordings are one way of collecting data (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:38). There are dual benefits to the use of video recordings (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:39). First, it focuses on the group and communal participation and, second, it captures the discourse between the practitioner and the participant, which may be revisited (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:39). PAR, according to Kidwai *et al.* (2017:52), is not an

objective that can be forced; yet it is a procedure that will be given rise to. This procedure therefore becomes embryonic (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:52). It outlines a belief system of endorsement and contribution (Kidwai *et al.*, 2017:52). In my study, I made use only of voice recordings and WhatsApp data collection, which I found was as reliable as doing video recordings.

According to Ngwenya (2018:52), PAR is a recently developed research method focused on connecting applications and thoughts, creating growth in individuals. It is recognised as a strategy, which exposes the relevant empirical matters of a community (Ngwenya, 2018:96). Therefore, PAR requires the joining of researcher and participants, to analyse a matter and finding avenues towards solving it (Ngwenya, 2018:96). Relevant to my study, throughout my interaction with my participants, I have witnessed an incredible growth, not only at a personal level, but at a collective level as well. When I was introduced to them, the participants first seemed disheartened, yet then they turned into active participants excited, in formulating our action plan as a collective.

The foundation of PAR is based on 'social psychology' (Richter, 2016:107). Three important steps are identified which involve social exchange (Richter, 2016:107). These include: (1) the revelation of a problem that requires conversion; (2) identification of the situation while other methods of functioning are being explored and evaluated; and (3) the implementation and endorsement of developed practice (Richter, 2016:107). PAR is a new type of research that attempts to proceed towards proficiency through science, and simultaneously matters of specific significance (Richter, 2016:108). Operative engagement regarding social assignments usher the essence of PAR (Richter, 2016:108). Through my study, my participants and I, recognised that there was a problem. We explored the severity of the problem, and through the analysis, we found a solution.

3.4 Researcher's stance

According to Holmes (2020:1), the position of the researcher refers to that person's perspective, and her/his stance regarding the research phenomenon, and the communal and political frameworks she/he employs, to understand the

research phenomenon. My own position is about the process of research: the journey towards the end objective, and not the end objective alone. Being born in the 1970s and growing up in the 1980s, my life was a mix of interesting experiences as I was born into a mixed-race family. I never really felt a sense of belonging to any race. A person in the middle of two worlds, I had to form my own ideas about what life should look like and I had to learn to stand my own ground, as I was neither white nor black. I was always in between, whatever society projected towards me at the time. This led me to become a researcher who also questions the status quo.

It is important to reflect on the researcher's stance, as the positionality of the researcher towards her/his study, can affect the findings (Manohar *et al.*, 2017:3). This may include interrogating the communal experiences, the researcher shares with the participants, and the way these experiences can have an impact on the findings (Manohar *et al.*, 2017:2). The school I attended was good, and offered the best education it could. I left my hometown, Ceres, at a tender age of 17, to attend the University of the Western Cape in Bellville in the Western Cape. With no idea how to converse in English, I had to find my feet in a big city. I graduated with a BA Mus and an HDE in 1998 and went on to teach at a school in Athlone and a school in Hanover Park, over a period of four years. After a journey of being a sales representative for a catering equipment company, I became a guesthouse owner with my partner. I decided to return to university in 2017. All my decisions moulded me into who I am today. Being bullied in Grades 10 and 11, had a lot to do with the choice of career I eventually took, which is research, and in that wanting to change the status quo. That I think, was my greatest motivation. My position, therefore, as a researcher is that of wanting to bring solutions, to an area that I think has not received much attention. The intermediate phase is the bridge between the foundation and senior phases, an underestimated area with unlimited potential that is wrapped up in an unexplored world. My mission was to find a way, to this untapped space. I believe the teachers in this phase understand this potential; they are just overwhelmed with other issues they must deal with daily. It is my desire to give them a voice as a researcher. Having come from a similar

school, my participants are teaching at: I understand their frustration and their need for change.

Reflexively interrogating, the researcher's positionality is part of the process of building reciprocity into the research process (Manohor *et al.*, 2017:2). My participants reciprocated from the start, although at times, it was difficult due to the circumstances, which entailed collecting the data through a social media platform. Their participation is commendable. The researcher's stance affects three sectors of a research project: (1) the contributors; (2) the topic of research; and (3) the investigation conditions and course of action, the researcher is taking (Holmes, 2020:2).

It mirrors the investigator's stance, which she/he has endorsed, in terms of the area of investigation (Holmes, 2020:2). Investigators should be constantly conscious, that their stance is not established, but dependent on circumstances and determined by the subject at hand (Holmes, 2020:2).

3.5 Participant and site selection

Samples which are selected intentionally, are referred to as the product of purposive sampling (Yin, 2011:88). Researchers employ purposive sampling, to ensure that they can obtain rich data from participants, who have experience with the research phenomena (Yin, 2011:88). I used purpose sampling in my study, to select a school that I knew was facing challenges, the challenges they are facing in the life skills classroom and where the teachers would have the necessary life experiences, to explain these challenges to me (Yin, 2011:88).

The school I chose to work with was in the heart of a troubled community in Cape Town. It is a community with a tremendous number of socio-economic issues. The reason for my choosing a school riddled with these issues, is that I needed to bring the reality of these problems, through my research, to the attention of the reader and policymakers. My focus area is life skills, and I first started communicating with the school principal in February 2021, as I had then received dates for the commencement of my fieldwork at the school. The principal was extremely helpful.

I liaised with the principal several times when setting up my introduction session. The day of my introduction session and the signing of the consent forms happened a few weeks later. The teachers on the day I introduced myself, were very polite and interactive and willing to offer their full support. The second time we met was the day of the first musicking workshop. The principal was not present that day; we were exploring the problem statement and the concept of the utopian classroom. The session lasted almost two hours. We had a communication problem that day as the teachers finished school earlier. This information was not conveyed to me as the principal offered me a time at 14.30. I arrived earlier (at 13.00) to set up everything and they wanted to start as soon as possible, which we did. I started with six participants, but one dropped out of the process due to a death in the family. The workshop was one of first of the six to follow. Due to Covid-19, I was unable to do the rest. It was just an introductory session. The second teacher participated up to question 4 but had to stop, being part of the group, due to an operation she needed to undergo. Both offered their consent for their data to be used and implemented.

During the first workshop, I had six participants. My second workshop could not occur due to the reinstated Level 4 COVID-19 restrictions. I then had to resort to a WhatsApp group I created. By that time, I had only five participants. I sent the participants six questions related to the action plan. The action plan was the last section of my fieldwork, which is in fact was the practical application of the six questions, prior to the zoom meeting we had to have. I refer to the questions in Annexure C, where questions were asked within the group chat, as well as individual answers sent, or questions related to the questions asked. This collection happened over a period of 6 months.

3.5.1 My participants

To adhere to the principles of confidentiality, I assigned pseudonyms to each participant. The participants in this study all taught the music component of life skills in the intermediate phase, at a public primary school in the Western Cape. *Varity*: At first glance, I thought this participant was quiet. She was not! During our workshop, Varity was vocal about the problem statement and the utopian

classroom. Passionate and vibrant, she was an inspirational teacher who just wanted the best for the learners in her classroom.

Ennov: Ennov came across as a powerful character and vocal about the conditions in her classroom – especially during our discussions with regard to the problem statement.

Lisa: A young teacher. Quiet, yet strong.

Stacey: Stacey was vocal about learning disabilities. This seemed to be a topic she was passionate about. Despite speaking passionately about learning disabilities, she was usually quite reserved.

Gail: An animated participant with a bubbly personality. She volunteered to assist with writing on the problem chart and the utopian chart. She participated actively.

Allissa: A quiet participant. Although she contributed less often, her insights were valuable.

3.6 Data gathering

My proposal was submitted in 2019 and I was excited about it. The idea was to conduct face-to-face participatory workshops. The university granted ethical permission, and I was still applying for ethical permission from the DBE.

However, at the end of 2019, COVID-19 hit the world and in March 2020, South Africa went into a Level 5 lockdown. This lockdown lasted until July 2020. I only received my ethical permission to do my field work, from April until June. The original idea was, as previously mentioned, to conduct face-to-face workshops, but under the circumstances, I was able to have only one face-to-face workshop. When the second workshop was supposed to take place, Level 4 lockdown was reinstated. This transpired on 28 June 2021.

Owing to this study's participatory nature, I consulted with the participants to determine our way forward. We decided that we had to resort to WhatsApp communications, in the form of a WhatsApp group, and that I would change the

workshop activities to fit this format. Therefore, the data gathered in this study, consisted of transcriptions of the first face-to-face workshop, visual artifacts produced during that workshop, voice notes sent via WhatsApp, text messages sent via WhatsApp, and music artifacts shared via WhatsApp. In my case, I took screenshots of the questions I offered my participants, which involved WhatsApp communications, and these comprise my data sources (Frieze, 2012:10). Audio recordings were made, of a Zoom meeting discussing our action plan, which happened at the end of a six-week question-and-answer process. A workshop covering problems in the life skills classroom, and the utopian life skills classroom were all stored within one heuristic unit on *Atlas.ti 9* (Frieze, 2012:10).

As the fieldworker, I gathered my data in the form of audio recordings, and notes while interacting with the teachers. Through our WhatsApp group, I discussed six questions (refer to annexure C) with the teachers and obtained my data through that process (Miles *et al.*, 2014:78). Please refer to Annexure C.

Social media platforms offer a person the power to generate an introduction of themselves, by creating a visible blueprint, and a literal portrayal of who they really are (Reich, 2014:3). With COVID-19 causing havoc at all levels of society, qualitative investigators are confronted with possibilities and obstacles (Lobe *et al.*, 2020:1). While using social media (WhatsApp) was not initially part of my data-gathering strategy, it did prove useful, given the constraints of COVID-19. Therefore, researchers gathering data should embrace the new way of research (Lobe *et al.*, 2020:6). This method of data gathering provides endless possibilities to the researcher, meaning that, due to the possibility of not being able to collect data in person, such as what I experienced during Covid 19, this is a good way in collecting data (Lobe *et al.*, 2020:6). I decided to adapt my data gathering, to rework the in-person workshops into a participatory WhatsApp group.

Virtual means of data gathering cannot replace offline means of data gathering (Reich, 2014:4); therefore, it was important for me to consider how the change in data-gathering strategy impacted my research. Using WhatsApp allowed me to complete the data gathering, within the timeframe the DBE had allowed for. However, this also meant that I had fewer interactions with the participants and

that participation, did not happen synchronously. Furthermore, online data-gathering methods such as Zoom and social media platforms do pose unique ethical concerns being a media platform, especially for security purposes (Lobe *et al.*, 2020:6) and research ethics committees, still do not have all the procedures in place to fully consider best practice, when doing research online (Lobe *et al.*, 2020:6).

Despite these challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic also propelled individuals to become more familiar, with online technologies (Lobe *et al.*, 2020:2). Therefore, I believe that the change in data-gathering strategy, was in line with many other changes my participants experienced around them. Despite the developments in online qualitative research, many areas of social media data gathering still need to be considered and explored further (Lobe *et al.*, 2020:1).

3.7 Data analysis

3.7.1 *Atlas.ti 9*

For my analysis I utilise *Atlas.ti 9*. Atlas can be thought of as a vessel which holds the information gathered and assists the researcher in preparing data for analysis (Frieze, 2012:9). My data had been placed in a heuristic unit, which is what a project is called in *Atlas.ti.9* (Frieze, 2012:9).

The process of coding my data, was closely related to the research questions and the purpose statement of the study (Frieze, 2012:10). The coding stage included coding all the social media data, the data generated during our one in-person workshop and all the notes I had taken during the research process (Frieze, 2012:10). *Atlas.ti 9* allowed me to organise the data responsibly, and also allowed for easy retrieval (Frieze, 2012:10).

The first part of data analysis included the data-preparation cycle (Miles *et al.*, 2014:79): my data were transcribed, labelled, and compiled into a single heuristic unit in *Atlas.ti 9*. After my data-preparation cycle, I began coding the data (Miles *et al.*, 2014:79).

My first round of coding was then done, which was 'descriptive coding', where codes allocated markers to my data, which condensed them into words (Miles *et al.*, 2014:80). Descriptive coding included assigning labels to quotes (codes) that describe the content, in this way reducing the most important ideas in the data, to a few words. During the second coding cycle, I used dramaturgical coding.

Dramaturgical coding views participant and researcher interaction, as a social drama and is applicable to studies, in the arts and the social sciences (Saldaña, 2013:124). The researcher focuses on understanding the participants, as characters in a social drama by examining their actions, beliefs, emotional experience, the conflicts that arise and the strategies the participants use to deal with conflicts (Saldaña, 2013:124).

Dramaturgical coding fits rightfully into my framework because, when applying this coding method, the researcher views social action as a play (Saldaña, 2013:124). Therefore, dramaturgical coding involves identifying the actors and then exploring their objectives, the obstacles that lead to conflict in the setting, the emotions the actors are experiencing, and the tactics they use to overcome obstacles and reach their objectives (Saldaña, 2013:124).

3.8 Trustworthiness

One way for ensuring data trustworthiness is, that the data needs to reach saturation. In other words, the same information starts repeating itself (Merriam, 2009:219). In my study, I started noticing patterns that were repeating. By the end of the WhatsApp group prompts, I believe I had reached data saturation, as I was collecting new data, but no new insights were emerging anymore.

Prolonged engagement is another strategy that qualitative researchers use to ensure trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009:219). I actively engaged with the teachers for data collection for most of the academic year. I had also built a relationship with the school before I began active data collection. I believe that my familiarity with the context of the study, contributed to the trustworthiness of the study.

During the workshops (both in-person and online), I posed various prompts and questions designed to give me insight, into the lived experiences of my participants. My participants were experienced teachers, who could provide in-depth descriptions of the challenges they faced in the intermediate phase life skills classroom (Merriam, 2009:213). Therefore, I believe that my studies have provided sufficient details, for the reader to determine transferability, as I employed member checking.

3.9 Ethics

I adhered to the guidelines for ethical research, as set forth by the NWU Faculty of Humanities. The Faculty of the Arts Research Committee approved this study. According to the Belmont report, all participants should be protected while conducting research (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:240). My participants were protected, and they were offered anonymity and given pseudonyms throughout my research. The institution, school, principal, and teachers were protected and kept confidential. The first principle which I will bring forth, is respect for one's participants (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:240). The researcher should respect the wishes of the participants, and practice self-governance – in other words, freedom from external control of influence (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:240). As per my research, I have adhered to the above concept, as two of my participants withdrew from my research (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:240).

Consent was offered from the two participants to publish their contributions, as one of the participants had contributed a substantial amount of data, which would be beneficial to my study (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:240). I have also adhered to the principle of beneficence, as I have not harmed my participants during the process of data collection (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:241). My participants only interacted during one workshop, where they were always safe and at no risk (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:241). My participants were also not exposed to any inhumane treatment (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:242).

My participant selection process was fair and just (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:243). The school of my choice only offered female teachers as participants, and these were

teachers who signed the consent forms (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:243). The researcher always viewed the participants as equals (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:243). They were well informed about how the process would unfold (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:244). I was honest with my participants and did not employ any deception in this research. When adjustments needed to be made to the study, I consulted with my participants, and they chose to continue the workshops using a WhatsApp group (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:244).

My participants offered their informed consent to participate in my study, according to three ethical components, being capable, intentional, and non-compulsory – all of which I adhered to (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:246). Moreover, the following applies within the framework of the participants being capable of participating (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:247): in the case of this study, I did not include any vulnerable participants (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:247); with regard to being intentional, my participants were given all the facts of the research and I received their full consent and participation (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:248); in addition, my participants were made aware of the fact that their participation was voluntary and they were informed, that they could exit participation in my study at any point in time, which two participants did (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005:251). The benefits my participants will receive, will be the contribution they offered in the form of their knowledge, and the positive consequences of having done so. My participants encountered minor discomfort, due to a miscommunication regarding the start time of the first workshop; this miscommunication happened due to the principal's miscommunication, with his teachers. The institution, school, principal, and teachers were protected, and kept confidential use of names.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter supplied an extensive explanation of the procedures to conduct this participatory action research, including research design, research paradigm and research approach. Data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations and trustworthiness are also explained extensively. Chapter 4 will follow, which outlines the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of reports on the participants interacting through musicking workshops, and WhatsApp groups through which, data were gathered. The musicking workshop and the WhatsApp data gathering have been coded into five categories, forming part of dramaturgical coding. These categories are objectives, tactics, conflict, emotions, attitudes, and sub-texts. Understanding what the teachers are experiencing in the life skills classroom, was an imperative driving factor in finding a solution to the greater problem, the challenges teachers face in the intermediate phase life skills classroom when teaching the music component. Through the musicking workshops and the WhatsApp data-gathering process, it was clear that there was a problem in the life skills classroom, and together we produced an action plan which the teachers implemented in their classrooms.

4.2 Objectives

My participants believe that empowering others, is something we should all strive for in our daily lives. How much more so in education. Education is about empowering – empowering the learners as well as the teachers. Yet how can this empowering be realised? It can be realised only when management is aware of their role in performing their duties. Evolution in any system is necessary for growth. But growth in education has been stagnant. Development at all levels is needed for progress to be made in education. There is a scarcity of this holistic process and top management is not listening to the voices of the teachers. The teachers are the ones at ground level. They are the reporters, investigators, problem-solvers, and hands-on people who bring the remedy to the table. They form the very core of the education system, which is failing, and no attempt is being made to remedy this process. This category deals with just that, wanting to bring top management to a round table to discuss what is really needed for an education system that will work at ground level.

4.2.1 Creating awareness

While a high school learner, Allissa knew she wanted to become a life skills teacher. She clearly states that a life skills teacher plays an important role in the education system. Teaching skills that will influence the way learners think and the way they do things when they leave school.

Allissa: My story behind becoming a life skills teacher is ever since high school, I knew I wanted to study further and somehow make a difference and or contribute to a difference being made in society.

Our current society needs a new breed of people thinking differently. Therefore, life skills as a subject should remain in schools, as it is imperative not only for the learners but the greater good of the society, they reside in.

In my opinion music is one way of teaching social skills. Social skills being imperative in society and its success stories within our greater communities. We must work together to create a successful society at large.

A society benefits not only within the walls of its dwelling place but also universally. Stacey feels that this part of building a society begins in the classroom and then it expands to the immediate society and from there universally.

Stacey explains that: "What I love about Life's skills is that it is multifaceted. It truly aids learners to grow universally."

It indeed adds to the expansion of learners in a greater world. The challenging questions life skills brings to the learners makes it a subject area that encourages them to question the world around them, connected to their reality which differs from child to child. We cannot bring forth learners that only receive knowledge and never questions the status quo.

Therefore, it is important to teach learners in a way where they are always curious about the world around them, through this expansive manner so that they can question their society, and what it stands for. This process starts in the life skills

classroom, and music aids this process, because music is an interactive subject with worthy exchanges that will happen during these lessons.

Social constructs regarding abuse and allowing the awareness of abuse must infiltrate the classroom. It is also about bringing the same awareness regarding abuse. This is one area which needs exposure as it is rife in our schools, and the greater community.

Varity: It can also be a vehicle to navigate social constructs and create awareness around abuse. The learning area creates an opportunity to humanise differences in learners and help them to embrace their sameness. Gender equality and respect for sexual orientation is crucial.

Life Skills offers this opportunity in the classroom as it deals with abuse, gender equality and sexual orientation. My participants believe that this is crucial as we live in a society that is, in their view, accepting of abuse and inequality. In the life skills classroom, learners need to learn and understand the consequences of abuse and that gender equality should be promoted.

As these can be two very sensitive topics to deal with, music will bring lightness. The participants in this study shared that music can be used to bridge these sensitive issues. It will allow learners to be more open concerning these topics, which allows for free and open discussion. Life Skills is the vehicle and music becomes the application.

4.2.2 Helping learners develop at all levels

The participants described music as an art form that develops a person at all levels. They emphasised that music helps to develop participants emotionally, psychologically, and mentally. They stated that music goes to levels where words cannot reach. To the life skills teachers participating in this study, music is a non-verbal activity that does not need to be reasoned other than listening to it, whether with words or just instrumental.

Varity: Music is an art form I appreciate. I gravitate towards Latin music as well as jazz, soul, opera, or just old school to remind me of my parents and brother.

Varity expresses how she gravitates towards music. It reaches her at a deep level. Looking at the music she specifically gravitates towards, one can establish that it has supported her throughout the stages of her life – through her joyous moments and through her not-so-joyous moments. Yet it anchored her in her times she needed to be anchored.

The participants find that music is the foundation of what is needed to move onto the different levels of our lives. Varity experienced this firsthand. When she needed to be comforted, she played soul music and then just old school soul music and then just old school, blues, and rock to remind her of her brother and parents. Music was a powerful and profound way of keeping them present in her life.

In the life skills classroom, music can be used as a tool to heal. The participants described musicking as a powerful tool as it would enable children to reach their full potential. Many of the children the participants see in their classrooms have difficult circumstances at home. They can reach their full learning potential only when they are freed from the daily burdens they bring from home. Allissa made the statement that music heals, music has the potential to do just that.

Allissa: Music for me heals the soul. I normally listen to music that inspires me in the moment.

Allissa recognises the power of music in her own life. As she reminisces, she realises at what deep level music has not only healed her, but developed her senses, her emotional world, and many other aspects of her life.

Music brings her into the moment, which creates a space of joy in her life. It brought awareness to her life in the most profound way. Music can be used exactly like this within the life skills classroom.

Adapting to change also gives a person a chance to grow. Through growth we learn something new about ourselves, bringing forth a being that has been developed at many unseen levels. This is the experience Stacey had as a life skills teacher.

Stacey: This is my first-year teaching life skills at Grade 4 level. As with everything new, it comes with challenges, and one must adapt to the change. What I love about the learning area is how much it has taught me.

Her experience as a new teacher in a different grade has brought many challenges. Yet Stacey feels that even through the challenges she has developed into a person who adapted easily to her new role. Her new role as a Grade 4 teacher has also taught her to embrace the change in ways that would be manageable. This is an ability that is not easily acquired.

The participants believe that music in the life skills classroom is one subject that would have made this process manageable because it reduces stress for both the teacher and the learners. The participant's love for this learning area is evident in the way she faced her challenges and while she was open to the lessons it has brought her.

4.2.3 Teaching holistically

A holistic approach in the life skills classroom is imperative. Music can be used as that tool in terms of learner expression. Through expression certain parts of a child develops self-esteem which is important for their wellbeing. Allissa found that, by offering the learners an opportunity to express themselves, it freed them in their expression.

Allissa: For me the high point of using music in the life skills class is giving the learners the opportunity to be creative in the physical movement and allowing them to express themselves freely.

According to this participant's observations, the way to approach education is holistic: Education should not be approached in a fragmented way. Being creative through free expression currently does not feature in the education system. A difference in learning will be experienced by learners when they are allowed to express themselves freely. Music can assist with that freedom of expression, creating a space to release and a calm atmosphere where stress can be handled.

In this instance, music can be the weave that ties each subject in the life skills classroom, making it holistic. Allissa states that “expression through creativity is important as it is strongly linked to a holistic approach”. The idea of a holistic approach should be part of the round-table discussion at management level.

According to the life skills teachers who participated in this study, music, as part of the performing arts in the life skills curriculum, plays an important role in the holistic development of their learners.

Varity: Creative Arts is the creative experience that holistically contributes to all areas of development.

Varity concluded that it is imperative to have a holistic approach as this contributes greatly towards a child's development. In the life skills classroom, too, much pressure is placed on timeframes when work must be done as well as administrative work. Instead, more focus should be placed on looking at the child from an emotional, psychological, and academic perspective.

Through musicking, they can reach learners in a manner that they cannot without musicking.

4.2.4 Collaborative teaching

The participants indicated that they had heard of talk in the education world regarding collaborative learning. With collaborative learning they saw collaboration as extending beyond learners collaborating to subject areas also collaborating with each other.

Varity: Using music and art to ignite all areas of development to help the mind work together. Bridge gap approach with life skills, math and sequence logic, analysis, muscle control in art and music. Which is referred to the collaboration of subjects. Logic Bridge gap approaches life skills, math and sequence Logic, analysis, muscle control in art and music. All the components in life skills are used in collaboration with other learning areas.

According to Varity, through my interpretation, collaborative teaching is a great way to teach. Finding the common ground in each subject which is used in this

way creates the magic in the classroom. More magic should be created as this motivates children to stay focused and wanting to learn, especially regarding subjects such as maths and other subjects that learners find harder to understand.

I believe that Varity has made an important point as this creates more of an interactive way of teaching. Collaborative teaching should be considered. Bridging the gap with music and art, especially with subjects such as maths, is a worthy concept. Children with emotional issues find it more difficult to learn than those who do not, and collaborative teaching is a good way to bridge this space.

But collaborative teaching is not only about bridging a gap. It is about teachers knowing their roles then applying their roles in their subject areas well. They must have a thorough understanding of their subject area to be able to perform well in collaborative teaching.

Allissa: Teachers as individuals will certainly have to take charge of their own roles where it is possible to do so.

The process of collaborative teaching needs to be followed and implemented and the process needs to be thoroughly assessed. The role of the teacher in the way the teacher engages with the pupils, in this instance is imperative: learners need to receive all the support they can from the teachers as this is a new concept.

As a new concept, learners will likely enjoy collaborative teaching as a new way of teaching and learning. Teachers need to be creative in their execution of the lesson and music can play a substantial role in terms of the 'how' in this instance. 'How' the lesson will unfold is an important part of the creation of this new way of teaching.

'Inclusive' education is a buzzword that has been around for a very long time. Varity again states that 'immersion' is the way forward regarding teaching collaboratively because this way of teaching will only open other ways of creative thinking in learners.

Varity: Learning through immersion is in my opinion what inclusive education means. Immersion being in a state of being engaged through the process of collaborative teaching.

The participants indicated that music in the life skills classroom could afford the possibility of integration among different subject areas, in this way making the life skills they are learning come to life.

4.3 Tactics

A utopian classroom is the ultimate space every teacher would want to operate in. It is not a pipe-dream space but a space of great potential – the vision for this reality to take shape is there. The teachers want to see their hard work in teaching their learners bear fruit and transform them into adults who are well adjusted at every level of their development. That is a utopian classroom. Yet we need vehicles to get to that destination. We need, as teachers, to encourage, motivate and support our learners for this transformation to take place.

4.3.1 *Effecting change in young people*

Varity, in her experience, observed the power of music as a form of expression. For her, the power of music lies in shaping the learner into believing in its power, a phenomenon Varity had experienced many times in her classroom.

Varity: What resonates with me is how learners begin to respect the power of music as a vehicle of expression.

Not only has she experienced the power of music through her learners: she has experienced its impact in a practical way in the form of the way it changes learners when they use it to express themselves. It transforms them in profound ways, and she realises how learners start to respect what it is doing to their inner world.

For this reason alone, music should become part of the classroom again as a subject standing alone yet being used with other subjects under the life skills umbrella. The power that music has and the impact it generates is certainly worth exploring in the classroom.

With our previous backdrop of oppression under apartheid, music played a big role in the oppressed communities. This has not only happened in our country but in many countries around the world. This, for Varity, has left her with an 'impression', as she calls it. During the apartheid era, the government at the time saw the importance of music in the classroom and the 'reward' it offered to learners and educators had been omitted.

Varity: The impression the music brings to the narrative of the oppression suffered by so many, is an enriching and rewarding experience for both learner and educator.

Varity, as a life skills teacher, knows very much what music offers, healing which in this case was related to the past and how music played a role in uplifting the oppressed. It heals, as becomes evident in her statement. Music is transformative in its approach not only mentally but emotionally too. Oppression is a debilitating experience and for Varity witnessing the consequences of music and how it assisted the oppressed in their healing journey has left a positive impression on her life.

Music should be a subject on its own as well as a vehicle for collaborating with another subject, it still needs to be highly prized. Our children on the Cape Flats are experiencing a type of oppression due to the gross unfairness that is happening in the CAPS classroom. Our children on the Cape Flats are experiencing a type of oppression due to the gross unfairness. The Cape Flats is an area where people of color were displaced due to the Group Areas Act in 1950. The consequences through generations accentuated this displacement in how things are currently and the economic situation that shouts poverty. In response, the call from our teachers is to consider bringing back music to the life skills classroom. We need it to heal and experience the beauty and joy music brings into one's life.

4.3.2 Using music to create a positive learning environment

Acquiring knowledge is important in life. However, learners cannot focus on acquiring this life skill in an environment that is not safe for them. For the life skills

teachers who participated in this study it was important to use music in their life skills classes to create a space to grow. In the life skills classroom, it is important to ask how one can create the space for growth through acquiring knowledge.

Allissa: When a learning environment is conducive to learning and is enhanced by music then learning becomes an exploratory experience for learners.

Allissa believes that a flourishing environment is imperative for learning to take place. Not only does it create learners who become inquisitive and desire to acquire more knowledge; it also offers a space for learners wanting to expand their horizons through their imaginations which music is a catalyst. The purpose of a teacher is to produce learners that see beyond what is given to them during a lesson. Learners' purpose is to want to acquire more knowledge beyond the lesson, leading to individuals who will become self-sufficient and forward-thinking.

At times, learners also need to be reminded that they can meet the academic demands of the classroom. The participants in this study pointed out that this may be particularly true for learners who are shy or more introverted. When learners find the demands placed on them too stressful, the teachers who participated in this study introduced musicking as part of their assessment.

Lisa: I have used music that they need to use for their assessments, and I must say that using the music made a huge difference in the quality of their performance. I let them practice without music at first and when added the music their performances improved.

Lisa observed this process in her classroom. As a teacher only starting out in her career, she discovered that music made a great difference in their assessments. Practising without the music when it was added improved their performances related to the assignment giving. Because music enhanced their capacity to acquire more knowledge, their performances during their assessments increased tremendously. The quality of the way they did their assessments was noticeably enhanced. The music was needed for an assignment which was for dance in creative arts which they practiced at home and during break and how the enthusiasm positively influenced them and their quality of work.

Assessments come with the territory in education, but ways should be found to make this process less stressful for learners. Music, in this case, is one solution, yet at a subliminal level, because it enhanced the learners' performance during their assessments; growth was also possible due to their performance enhancement.

Despite musicking's important role in assessment activities in the life skills classroom, the teachers also acknowledged that personal growth and a thirst for knowledge are more important than formal assessments. In this regard, they consider music as a 'vehicle' in learning.

Alissa: Music is soothing and is an effective tool when used as a vehicle in learning. The life skills classroom would certainly be enhanced.

Allissa's assessment of music being used in the life skills classroom is largely due to how she experienced music in her own life, that is, the way music is soothing not only to the soul but to the mind and body. It encourages growth psychologically as a human being and in turn stimulates the need to want to expand one's knowledge, even if it is only to find out who the singer of a certain band is and what the band is all about.

The knowledge in this case expanded as the person was searching for more information about the band that was playing. During that process, the person's understanding of the band increased and as a result that person was able to walk away with more knowledge than before.

The teachers also indicated that they used music to calm and soothe themselves, in this way using music to create a calming environment. Stacey explains how music's role in her life has helped her see music's potential to create a safe learning environment.

Stacey: Music is a vital part of my life. I use music to help with expression and to process both emotions and thoughts. I also listen to music for the soul purpose of relaxation. I use music to solve problems as it helps me to process. There are times when I play calm/classical music in class while learners are busy with a writing task.

This calms them and it helps the brain to absorb and interpret new information more easily.

According to Stacey, she appreciates the frame of mind music can produce, it can transport a human being from one space to the next; it works on the soul and the emotions. When one's emotions are intact, learning can take place, Stacey recognises this, as she used the study to determine the way mood music can play a role in the classroom while the learners are performing a task. It helped them to receive information and she found they could understand it better than when doing so without music.

4.3.3 Using music as a learning support tool in the life skills classroom

The participants in this study all shared concerns about the number of learners in their class who had special learning needs. In the traditional education the context, how teachers used to teach and the difference in teaching methods and curriculum today.

Varity: Music in the classroom is used to stimulate learning and concentration. to stimulate learning and concentration Used creatively, music can break down learning barriers.

Many problems in the classroom are related to performance: one of the biggest is levels of concentration. In such circumstances, music can be applied as a tool to overcome this issue and to help with breaking down these barriers.

Varity knows the value music brings to her life, how it touches her, and she feels that music can do the same in the classroom. To Varity musicking in the intermediate phase life skills classroom serves to break down learning barriers and brings children closer to their authentic selves.

Gail described her life skills class as 'hyperactive'. As a remedy, she uses music as a tool to help them concentrate and stay on task.

Gail: Music from the past I usually play when they are busy writing. It influences them to be calm and focused. They become more relaxed and quieter.

In the classroom, it is important for children to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and creates a soothing atmosphere that promotes learning. Music helps with creating a soothing atmosphere. Gail noted that the children responded very positively when she began playing music ('golden oldies'). The environment became conducive to teaching and learning and, she says, learning could take place.

Music, the catalyst for learning in Gail's classroom, showed that children related to it positively. For that short period in the classroom, they could also relate to the music and just feeling happy.

4.3.4 Using music as a way to inspire

In the experiences the participants shared with me, it became clear that inspiration stems from a deep love for the profession and seeing these children evolving themselves. The participants also shared that music is one component in life skills. Skills that are used to ignite this inspiration in the classroom for both teacher and learners.

Allissa: From teaching First Additional Language to high school learners to lecturing English to female students in Saudi and years later finding myself in a primary school classroom, I was inspired to teach life orientation to Grade 7 learners and having a keen interest in the topics that were explored and covered with the learners.

Allissa found herself in the space of transitioning from first language teacher to life orientation teacher and the subjects which form part of this curriculum had inspired her, creative arts being one of them. Her motivation is clear in her statement as she began to explore the subjects and topics which gave a deeper meaning to life skills. For her, music is one activity that creates this inspiration.

Music indeed ignites inspiration and using it during her activities in the life skills classroom promoted this sense. Teaching languages is totally different from teaching life skills. The idea, therefore, is to bring this inspiration and excitement back into the classroom. Music is such a subject to promote this inspiration in teachers and learners.

When there are time constraints in the classroom while teachers are bogged down with much endless administrative work, creative arts in the life skills classroom can be used to distract and preoccupy the learners positively. Learners cannot only focus on academic work but also find that escape, as it will transport them into their creative spaces.

Lisa: And teaching them that art, dance, drama, music can be used as a release or can be used as constructive down time where we break away from the academic a bit but still use the time constructively.

Lisa, being a life skills teacher, has noted what a difference it made using all art forms in her classroom. These art forms were a constructive way of being away from the academic mundane these learners experienced. Having limited time for lessons, this constructive time away from their books made a difference in their overall academic performance, which inspired them to work even harder. Using the four art forms creates a positive experience that the children will remember.

The outcome of using all four art forms in creative arts had a positive effect on the learners, which in turn created a positive attitude. This would inspire them to go back happily to their academic mundanity, being satisfied with what they had experienced during their session with the four art forms workload.

Music is one subject which encourages participation. Participation is imperative in every school subject, whether with peers or with one's teacher. It is an important part of the process of growth, learning and being inspired. Music should be used as such a tool in the classroom, as it promotes learning especially. The main objective in the classroom is that learners evolve from what they didn't understand to what they now understand, and music needs to become the conduit for this process

Alissa: I imagine the best future for music in my classroom is that the learners would be enjoying classroom lessons and participation much more with the aid of music or having music being part of the curriculum. Music is soothing and is an effective tool when used as a vehicle in learning. The life skills classroom would certainly be enhanced.

Allissa made this profound statement regarding music as that is what she imagines her learners would enjoy: music being part of their everyday learning. Life Skills should be promoted through music as part of the learning process as this will help them with learning and retaining information. It inspires and through this process of inspiration the learners become motivated to want to do better at their academic work. Participation is imperative in the classroom and music can be that vehicle which encourages learners to participate – introverted learners.

In conclusion, music connects the world of academics to the world of creativity: the combination brings out potential in learners never previously realised. Music creates a happy atmosphere, an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Music promotes overall well-being in learners, especially those learners who have a hard time in the classroom.

4.3.5 Using music as a way to empower the oppressed

The participants in this study indicated that music has a powerful effect on human beings. For Varity, sport also has the same effect on human beings. She describes these two activities as being a way to bring people together.

Varity: Music has a tendency, like sport, to connect people, heal people and comfort people.

Varity also emphasises the role music can play in healing and comforting people. This is seen as important in a country such as South Africa that is still struggling with a long history of oppression and needs healing.

To the participants in this study, music in the life skills classroom was also a way to teach the country's history and empower learners to be proud of their cultural roots. Lisa, in her life skills classroom, used music to teach her learners about Heritage Day.

Lisa: I incorporate music from the past during heritage month every year in drama and visual arts. This is to teach the learners how music was used in the era of slavery and apartheid. Music was used as a means of emancipation and upliftment for the oppressed in these epochs.

During the apartheid era, music was used to keep people apart. At the same time, music was also used to set people free in the world and within themselves. Varity sees music as a form of 'memory'. She considers working through these musical memories as musical acts that are an instrument of 'inclusion'. She describes musicking as creating a space where everyone can express themselves, in the process taking back some power they may have been denied.

Varity: Personally, I see it as a 'pedagogy of memory' that stays in the spirit/body, and heals, stimulates the senses, revives that which was lost, hurt, displaced, or just offers learning and it removes the 'other' and promote inclusion, that is powerful and relevant.

Varity states it so well that there should not be the 'other' that separates us from one another – the exact purpose apartheid was created for. In this light, she views music as a bridge that has transformative potential in South Africa. The participants in this study indicated that they needed to use music in this way not only in our society, in our classrooms, but also as a place where the healing and unification of the 'other' starts.

4.3.6 No Utopia, but a system that will work, not only on paper

A curriculum that will work and be implemented successfully, life skills is one of the most important subjects in the CAPS curriculum and the realisation of the importance of its application. Varity's statement, knowing the worth of life skills in the classroom, is powerful and carries immense weight.

Varity: Management and colleagues who use life skills as an elective and not core is eroding the fabric of quality education. A paradigm shift is needed to develop and respect all the components of life skills.

One should not take the above statement Varity made too lightly. A paradigm shift does not talk about change: it is something of a rebirth in the education world that is needed, a total shift, a change in direction and a relooking at the fundamentals of its content. And those fundamentals are essential to the transformation of the education system, CAPS.

The education world needs to bring back substance to the teaching world, substance that has been missing. Music should form part of this substance, as this subject has proved essential to the growth of learners.

A new plan of action must be considered, one that will work not only practically but on paper too. There are too many weaknesses in our current CAPS system, weaknesses in a system that has proven to be failing the children and teachers of South Africa.

Allissa: Working together means agreeing on what goals are achievable, it means putting forward a plan of action to work to those goals we think are attainable and then implementing that proposed plan of action.

According to Allissa, the only way that will work in the current education system is that of 'working together' collectively in finding a solution to a system that has been part of the South African backdrop for many years, yet which has not been successful. The 'goal' is to create an 'attainable' action plan that will benefit both teachers and learners.

Allissa feels strongly about a new action plan. Teachers can find a workable plan with the DBE. This plan should include music as a subject, it forms part of the subjects offered under life skills. It should be made easy for any teacher to teach, especially a teacher without a background in music. This proposal to create this action plan should be implemented without further contemplation or delay.

The challenges as a life skills teacher that Lisa is referring to are relevant. The question remains, though: How do we deal with these challenges Lisa feels that this platform, in terms of the challenges, should be explored as this would place our learners on a different map: the map of the world.

Lisa: Being a life skills teacher comes with challenges but also gives you a good platform to help holistically develop young minds to become productive citizens of this country and even a broader international community.

Having an education system in a country and applying it must bear the fruits of what has been implemented. The CAPS are currently bearing hardly any fruit. And

even if there is fruit, they are few and far between. On the contrary, the end goal of any education system is to create ripe and abundant fruit in the form of learners who will develop holistically and be ready to face the world at large.

4.4 Conflict

The participants in this study agree that conflict exists in our lives. It is a reality we cannot get away from. The secret to dealing with conflict is how one can resolve it and what strategies are being put in place to do so.

Miscommunication is an area the participants feel very strongly about. Miscommunication comes in different forms, in the classroom as well as with the policymakers. My participants often feel that they are not heard. Owing to this important fact, a lack of resources and a lack of training become an accentuated reality for them. This in turn creates a question of quality versus quantity education, which influences the integrity of education. Most schools in the Western Cape are largely riddled with systemic problems. In this section we unpack the different issues the participants are experiencing in the life skills classroom.

4.4.1 Conflict caused through miscommunication

Ennov feels strongly about the situation in education. She states that politics precedes what is happening in the classroom. In her opinion, role-players in politics should stay out of education. Education is already an area where most infighting is happening, and no attention is truly placed on education or the teachers and learners. She believes that when politicians enter education, misunderstandings happen. These misunderstandings should be clear, and they should be dealt with.

Ennov: Because of how I feel, they must take politics away and put education first. Because politics means that there are role-players and the role-players are, I would say, they not moved by our reality.

Ennov believes that the politicians do not understand the realities teachers face in the life skills classroom. Therefore, they are unable to communicate clearly.

Understanding is an important factor. This creates a life of ease, which should be the case. This miscommunication runs deep within the veins of an apartheid society, an injured society. This should be linked to understanding and embracing.

Varity: Because if you are not going to work from the bottom up and understand that concept, then you're going to have cross-communication, miscommunication. It's missed. If you look at where we're sitting in a venue that we're not supposed to be in, waiting. Miscommunication is a frustration.

This frustration Varity voices. It is bubbling over in her speech as she addresses the teachers at the workshop. It is more than enough that the teachers must deal with their limited realities in the classroom. They must also accommodate other worlds which do not always recognise her empathy. The participants in this study identified miscommunication and a lack of empathy and compassion as sources of conflict.

4.4.2 Conflict – teachers feel that they are not heard

The sad reality is that teachers in our current education system are not heard. Varity states her disdain in this instance. She declares that her reality is not the same as other teachers' and that all teachers must not be treated the same; it must not be thought that teachers are all going through the same experiences.

Varity: And I'm talking about the school, I'm talking about, coming from the WCED. With three quarters gone, in the first term, especially with the art, we had to pull it back. And we had to assess something else. Others don't understand it when they call it into question, they don't understand your lived reality. And your reality differs from, it cannot be generalised. It cannot be. Every learning area has its own challenges.

According to Varity, the department wants certain things to happen. The teachers are present in the classroom and must do their utmost to prepare learners and get

them on a par with the specific subject area. Teachers must carry out assessments and other administrative obligations due to the pressure from above.

Varity feels that this should change as her and many others' lived reality differs from that of so many teachers. Every subject area has its challenges, yet the one subject area that appears to suffer the most is life skills.

The route CAPS has taken for Ennov is difficult for her to witness as she is one of the older teachers who has been in the game for a long time. For Ennov, like many others, it's not about herself: it is about the well-being of the learners. It is about what will happen to the learners at the end of the day.

Ennov: Because what is going to happen with what I know and what I hear from others and what I know from others. It will end here, because nobody is willing to – you know what this is going to – and it's not only in life skills, but I also think it's in all the other subjects. No one is coming and making a round table.

Ennov's concern is evident in her statement. She wants something done regarding what is currently happening in life skills and other subjects. The fact that the DBE is not interested in a round-table discussion regarding CAPS is concerning.

Gail feels that politics plays a big role in the greater scheme of things. There is a sense of frustration present in Gail's statement. Training plays a role, yet for her it is politics that gets in the way of teaching.

Gail: You're not put in the learning area that you are trained in. You constantly come up against the politics of the day. That is our biggest stumble. So, I will say no politics.

Politics is a vast concept. In this statement Gail made, we can only assume that she refers to the politics surrounding the DBE and what teachers must implement in the classroom. And, secondly, politics could also mean the sense of frustration teachers feel when they know these implementations are not working due to time constraints, too much administration and just not enough teaching time or training.

Teachers will only be heard through round-table discussions with the DBE. Teachers need to voice their constraints, and their opinions regarding CAPS. At the end of the day, the purpose is for learners to do well and be well in all they do.

4.4.3 Conflict – quality versus quantity

The responsibility of a community is of utmost importance. In this case, the school community has a much bigger responsibility towards the learners and teachers. Lisa feels that this responsibility should be taken seriously and that discussions should be held about their responsibility. Quality education is about offering the learners the right quality through the learning process.

Lisa: We as a school community need to put heads together to find a workable strategy regarding changing the curriculum as we know it.

Lisa, being a teacher who has just started out in the DBE, feels that more focus should be placed on the school community: the solution lies within this important area of a school. Lisa feels that the school community should sit around a table to discuss ways of replacing the current curriculum. It is clear in her statement that quantity has overtaken education quality, a lopsided balance. Quality education also means both proper, adequate resources and specialised teaching.

There is a sense of frustration and desperation in Lisa's statement. Lisa knows only too well what she deals with daily. She believes that there is no foundation in this current education system. It has become an empty shell for her, a daily battle between doing what is right and letting the status quo be. Lisa's plea is for a round-table discussion, a responsibility of the school community that should not be taken lightly. Having more time to teach learners instead of the overwhelming administrative work adds to the quality of education.

Varity makes a profound statement. Coming from the old education system, Varity knows all too well why she made this statement: more time was given to the subject areas and less time to the administration side of things.

Varity: The integrity of life skills as a learning area has been undermined when Outcomes Based education system replaced the old educational system.

She believes life skills is one of the learning areas that needs a lot of attention. This statement Varity made as a direct consequence of her experience in the life skills classroom. Life Skills is seen as a less important subject, yet it is a profound subject area as it teaches children skills for life outside of school. The participants believe that the new CAPS curriculum was devised to create a more interactive way of teaching, yet it became stale and non-interactive. This may be directly due to the administrative load which was placed on teachers.

Life Skills at the school where this research is based has become a lesson where other teaching areas are used as a 'make-up lesson', as a time to complete teaching the 'more important' lessons had become a play between the clock and the teachers trying to finish the lesson on time. This is frustrating to the participants, but they are not sure how to deal with these frustrations. Music should be brought back as a tool to assist with this relevant nagging issue. The issue of keeping it as part of life skills. The participants shared these insights in the group workshops.

Ennov knows all too well what happens currently in the life skills classroom. As a teacher who was part of the old education system, she knows about the 'lack' she is referring to. Quality education is imperative and what is happening currently in the education system has almost nothing to do with quality.

Ennov: Now it comes to like art and PE, and they say okay just go run around, just go make a drawing. You can tell a child these things, but we know, especially when you are teaching for so many years, you know exactly where there's a lack. Who's suffering at the end of the day?

The current education system focuses on quantity education, which is failing because of that focus. Quantity should be less important. In Ennov's statement, children are the ones suffering as a result.

4.4.4 Conflict caused by systemic problems

Ennov feels that we cannot simply start to resolve problems in the life skills classroom. She believes that the problems impacting musicking in the life skills classroom are larger than we can deal with in isolation. According to her observations, large systemic problems have direct impacts on the children in her classroom.

Ennov: You cannot just start here, for example, what about our school, what about our community?

I believe that, at the community and school level, music can play a large role as a mediator. Social problems are a big sore in education, one that is difficult to surmount and heal. These social problems are hard bent, and the roots run deep within the immediate communities. The question is how schools can help to overcome them.

Varity: You see, that would be our utopia right there. That having people or different stakeholders on board to make this thing called education work. Because we're sitting with gross social problems. You know, poverty, abuse and whatever. All of that comes in.

With poverty comes a string of other relevant problems. The roots of these issues are realities to many households in the local communities. When children come to school, many of them arrive hungry. We all know that a child who is hungry cannot learn. Varity is aware of this as she had to face many of these problems. Children need to have a place where they feel safety, safety against abuse, against not having something to eat and of just being able to learn, play and just be themselves.

Varity, in her statement, suggests that the stakeholders need to take responsibility in ensuring that schools have the infrastructure to deal with these problems and to equip the teachers to handle these situations. She believes one cannot bury one's head in the sand and hopes these problems will disappear. They will be solved only once these issues are resolved. Especially when it concerns abuse, music can be used successfully to assist these children to speak about their abuse and

help learners to deal with it. The stakeholders need to discuss solutions for the other issues as these children depend on them.

In Ennov's statement there is a sense of desperation as well as a plea. Ennov, as per her statement, has children who sleep the whole day in her classroom. With laws beyond her control, she can only attempt to obey them, which is not always possible.

Ennov: They just tell us, like that doctor told me, but ma'am what did you do? You know what you must do, what must you do? We are not trying. We don't know but they are asking me what I must do. What must I do if that child sleeps the whole day? What can I do to help that child?

Ennov's priority is her learners in the classroom. Her drive is to make sure that all feel equal. Yet she knows that when a child sleeps the whole day in her classroom, there are deep-rooted issues beyond her ability to deal with or resolve. She wants to assist yet it is in no way doable for her. She knows that the child suffers in some way. So, the emotional side of the child is compromised, which in turn creates an attitude where the child will sleep rather than learn.

The question is: How can we bring music into this situation? We need to because it is a familiar source of stimulus for a child to express themselves, especially in this situation. Rap, in particular, is a good way of assisting, as rap is current, and children can relate to this genre. This keeps them interested in being part of the lesson that is being presented.

4.4.5 Conflict caused by a lack of specialist training

Teaching institutions need to accommodate better training for teachers, music teachers specifically. Teachers who enter teaching have no idea what really happens in the real-time classroom. The practical classroom has nothing in the real-time classroom as in reality there are lots more systemic problems compared to learning disabilities that teachers need to deal with. Music as a subject to assist and support in primary education is a must, and it needs to become part of the curriculum at this level as a vehicle with which to teach all the life skills subjects.

Varity: Millions are spent on teacher training, yet the institutions who provided good, skilled professional teachers were replaced by theory-laden degree courses not equipped to prepare young people for the realities of the classroom.

I believe the classroom should be a place of learning for both learners and teachers. It should be a place where teachers grow with their learners. Instead, not enough focus has been placed on proper training for teachers in these institutions. This does not benefit the learner; it simply adds to the pressure cooker already created by CAPS. In such a situation, music would greatly assist the life skills teacher.

Teachers should receive adequate training to be able to add value to the learners' lives. The WCED needs to use the millions on adequate training, not only on theory. This concept should be placed under the looking glass for the DBE so that they can change direction to meet the needs of schools and learners such as ours.

Ennov states that specialist training has been replaced with general teacher training, resulting in teachers streaming into the school system with no specialisation. They know little about every subject, but that is not enough. It is not enough to sustain an already broken education system.

Ennov: And as she also wrote down specialist teachers, that's why I said their knowledge of the subject lack of training that goes together. That is also very important. Because especially the young teachers, they come into education. For example, I have no knowledge of teaching art, okay PSW is always there. In the olden days you used to say '*Gesondheids Lewenshaal*', "Health Education".

Ennoy states that specialised teaching should be brought back as the foundation of our education system because this would strengthen the education system at so many levels. For instance, an art teacher should not be required to teach physical education (PE). Passion immediately disappears when they are required to do things in a certain way without an interest or formal training in the subject area. And the teacher teaches the lesson with an attitude of 'I have to teach PE'.

So, with this attitude of not wanting to teach the subject they have not specialised in, comes the cycle of obligation. I call this 'half-hearted teaching', and this applies

to other subjects, not only the subjects in life skills. There is then no real focus, which also affects the teacher's self-esteem. That then permeates the classroom and affects the learners.

As mentioned in a previous discussion, chapter 4, the teachers in this research believe that all the life skills components should be introduced as compulsory in the teacher institutions. This should, as Varity states, be the 'Core' of the teacher institution's curriculum. Music should also form part of that curriculum.

Varity: Management and colleagues who use life skills as an elective and not the core is eroding the fabric of quality education. A paradigm shift is needed to develop and respect all the components of life skills.

Learners understand music, as it communicates with them at levels beyond verbal communication.

Varity, in her statement, has a good point: music celebrates the existence of these components, and it weaves between these subject areas, connecting them to one another. Music can and should play an important role in establishing this process, a process which should start at teacher training institutions.

4.4.6 Conflict caused by a lack of resources

The study participants state that in underprivileged schools' inadequate resources are a problem these teachers must face. Most of the schools in the Western Cape have that problem, a problem addressed and not rectified. What makes one school stand out more from the others is the resources as well as the facilities offered at that school. The participants confirm that their school is too poor to improve or increase their resources as this problem exists largely because of the poor communities the school serves.

Lisa: Schools need to be equipped with facilities that offer learners more specialized attention outside of their academics.

Academics are not everything. Learning in a classroom is not what life as a learner should be all about: learners should be exposed to proper and adequate facilities

and resources. It is every learner's right in our country to experience this, that is, a right to a holistic education; and with holistic education we would include music as part of the education system as this subject offers exactly that.

The question is this, though: What is a holistic education? In our South African context, a holistic education is access to good facilities and resources as well as excellent teaching methods. Our focus in education is to bring forth learners who will flourish in every area of their lives, and with resources and good facilities in place the battle is more than half won.

Having specialist teachers, specifically music teachers, at a school is part of having proper resources in place. Without this specialization, the school becomes a poorer institution as this is part of having resources, means that the teachers must do something they are not trained to do. So, the basis of this statement should start at these institutions but also at the higher level of education.

Ennov: That is why I'm saying that is like almost every day, we use to do health education. But the other factors, you must do physical, okay physical not that but there's others, like she said, you must get a specialist. Now I do it, then you do it, then she does it, but we don't get it. You must get one person who is more specialised in that and has more knowledge of that.

Gail, as a specialised PE teacher, agrees that resources do not only mean facilities: they also mean specialisation. Being a PE teacher, Gail understands the impact specialised teaching has at a school. And there are many things a PE teacher needs to know and receive in their training. A teacher receiving general teaching training cannot know the fundamentals of this subject.

Gail: Now you ask, for example, physical education, you must know there are certain things that are important in physical education. Children can't just run around, the way they run, the way they jump or whatever. All those things. Now, teachers are cohered into doing PE and they have no clue that the child gets hurt during a PE lesson. At the end it's your problem, you, see?

PE is one of the very important subjects to be a part of life skills. It is a subject area that focuses on the body. It forms part of the holistic education I referred to earlier.

As I stated earlier, all life skills subjects should form part of the core subjects in the education curriculum. The resources need to be looked at as well as the facilities, especially in the poorer communities where these are needed most. Most importantly, resources to support specialised teaching are both essential and important.

4.4.7 Conflict caused by a lack of trust in the curriculum

Adapting to change can be difficult, but introducing different ways of teaching for teachers to embrace the present is yet another major challenge. It is clear from Gail's statement that this is how she felt when she had to adjust to yet another policy: CAPS.

Gail: I struggle to adapt to this new method of teaching. OBE focused only on exposing the learners to the different areas of PE. Learners can see how to do, for example, a forward roll but it's not important to know the techniques. Marks were also allocated for PE. Then the education system changed again to CAPS. Life Skills was now divided into 3 sections, creative arts, PE and PSW. As a PE specialist it was extremely difficult to adapt to these changes. My passion for PE was crushed.

CAPS is geared to general teaching, but it should be stressed that room must be made for specialist teachers. The passion that she has for PE is evident in Gail's statement; yet, as a teacher, she must teach all three areas under life skills. Her statement doesn't refer to not having life skills as a subject area and to removing it. She is referring to the fact that she couldn't be that specialised teacher in PE. CAPS should allow specialised teachers to teach beyond their passions. The solution, I would say, is to employ more teachers. The DBE should bring back specialized teachers in addition to generalist teachers. Teachers are overworked and not able to live their passion in many cases. Have both sides of the coin. Why

change or discard a winning formula that worked? We need passionate teachers, and that is something that is lacking with CAPS.

Allissa offers a statement of hope, though. She refers to the teachers as the beacons of that hope. If a system cannot be rectified, that system needs to be changed by the role-players at ground level: the teachers in the classroom, face to face with the learners. As she says, in theory CAPS is supposed to work, yet in practice, at grassroots level, it is a different ball game.

Allissa: In practice it may be different though. The end goal is to reach the learner and support the learner as best we can in every process. As to what the concrete steps may be, I think it cannot be written in stone.

The focus should be on the learner, for the learner to come out well on top. And so, to have a system like CAPS implemented in our education system, this concept and its practical implementation should be relooked at.

The learners are being reared to end up with no jobs because the fundamentals of CAPS are lacking. And so radical changes need to be implemented, that is in the best interests of the learners. We cannot sit with learners contributing towards our already high unemployment rate. This is all due to a system that needs to change.

Varity states that a lack of 'exercise, knowledge, and skills in teachers, have compromised the development of learners. As a result, our learners have been compromised, their lives dabbled with rather than enriched. A learner starting out in Grade 1 starts out in the form of their pure potentiality, but this pure potentiality is effectively taken away through a system that is failing both them and the teachers.

Varity: During the last five years the barriers to learning increased to a great extent. The lack of exercise for learners coupled with the lack of knowledge and skills in teachers compromised the developmental process of learners. CAPS pre- or post-COVID-19 pandemic is a failed system.

Their daily focus is on their learners' upliftment and progression, yet their hands are tied. They can only do so much. Overwhelming as this situation is every day in

and out, they still strive to bring out the best in their learners. Yet that is not enough. More must be done, and this can only come from the decision-makers above.

CAPS is supposed to be a progressive system. Varity's statement speaks of the opposite. It is a system that leaves the underprivileged learners vulnerable. Policymakers need to pay attention to this outcry from teachers, our field workers.

4.5 Emotions

The participants expressed feelings of anger and frustration. These emotions were direct consequences of their perceived voicelessness. These kinds of emotions are powerful, they are founded and relevant.

4.5.1 Anger

As Gail, a Grade 4 life skills teacher, makes the following utterance, the anger is clear in her voice:

Gail: Do you know there's learners in Grade 4 who still don't know what left from right is. They don't know what left and right are.

The anger in Gail's statement is clear, yet this is also a cry for help. She feels that she has expressed a need before, but this need has not been met. Teachers' anger at the challenges they face when teaching music in the life skills classroom has been compounded by COVID-19.

Varity makes her statement referring to COVID-19 and the lack of resources in her school. Having an enormous class also makes it difficult to teach. And due to this fact COVID-19 being a threat to health made things even worse.

Varity: Our historic schools are the ones who are supposed to be more resourced. Where is activism. 'Here we get sick' (*Hier raak ons siek*) We can't socially distance. 'I have the biggest class' (*Ek het die grootste klas.*)

Activism in certain instances is needed. This is Varity's outcry. She feels that activism should be ignited as all their complaints are just falling on deaf ears. The

pandemic has compounded the challenges that existed in the school previously. Varity's anger is founded in her lived experiences of trying to teach during a global pandemic despite a lack of resources and the impossibilities of social distancing in an over-crowded school.

The participants in this study expressed anger when they reflected on the inequality and lack of equity schools faced during the pandemic. They believe that the rules were created with only the most privileged schools in mind and that schools such as theirs simply had to deal with it.

During our communications it became clear that these realities were taking an emotional toll on the teachers. However, the realities learners faced were also taking a toll. The participants expressed not being able to digest these realities, and these feelings of hopelessness left them angry. This is exactly how Ennov is feeling. It is not a case of not wanting to know or understanding; it is a case of not being able to digest it.

Ennov: Because the moment you start asking one child, and the other start telling you their history, you go crazy and lose your sanity. Because that's reality and that is what that child is really going through and you opening a can of worms.

What the learners are going through at home has an impact on them and this in turn affects their schoolwork. For teachers in the life skills classroom, it is a situation where they do want to assist. Yet they are not only dealing with one learner in that situation. These are issues that also prohibit teachers from not always being able to move forward in the classroom, issues that hamper progress.

The anger is real for these teachers. They want to do what they can, yet they cannot. They become cold towards the realities of their learners to protect their own 'sanity', as Ennov puts it. Yet these teachers are still motivated to change what needs to change, that is, to work towards a better future for the learners of South Africa.

4.5.2 Frustration

A sense of powerlessness is apparent in Varity's statement. She is referring to the DBE that has not taken their responsibilities seriously and, in this way, creates no 'reciprocity'.

Varity: There's no reciprocity. You, see? There's no reciprocity. We are rendered powerless, and you disabled.

When no reciprocation is offered, this creates an imbalance in any equation. Varity feels this strongly. She and other teachers find themselves alone in the battle to keep this ship the DBE has built afloat. And the consequences of the lack of reciprocation lead to a sense of powerlessness.

The term 'disabled' in her statement is one that haunts the empty school corridors. The only reason why teachers come to school is to create powerful learners who one day can stand on their own two feet and who will be respected citizens. I understand Varity's plea to be heard, which would eradicate the frustration she and other teachers are constantly feeling.

Ennov mentions training, as this has been a sore point for her – especially specialised training. This is one area that creates frustration for teachers as they end up being placed in teaching areas which they are not trained for.

Ennov: And what about training? Does training count in there by specialisation?

Ennov, being an 'old-school' teacher, makes it clear that she is unhappy with what is happening. Training should not just be training, it is a vast area, yet specialised. Specialised teachers are the education system's foundation; education becomes empty without specialised teaching.

Specialised training is about the teacher's in-depth knowledge and how knowledge gets transferred. This process will not only affect the learners' lives but the school as a whole and the education system as a collective.

The reality for Gail is frustration. Sitting with classrooms of up to 50 children per class is not conducive to learning, and never will be. As learning in these

classrooms is consumed by other issues, the teachers must first deal with such issues before continuing with the task at hand. Gail states that issues such as a huge amount of administrative work leave little time for teaching.

Gail: And what about our classroom totals. Smaller groups we have asked for years. Less learners, more work done.

This is a relevant statement as this very practice of having these large classes is detrimental to a child's development, cognitively, emotionally, and psychologically. We as a collective need to make sure that our learners grow at all levels. Having these overlarge classes is taking away from that exact goal.

In this respect, the DBE needs to pay attention to the call of their teachers. The frustration lies in these realities every day of their lives. Working in these circumstances is detrimental to both the learners and their teachers. It causes a domino effect, leaving the once fruitful field barren.

4.5.3 Contentment

Contentment is an important aspect of our lives. For Varity, a relaxing moment does that, especially after a cup of tea at the end of the day. This moment brings forth an experience of creativity.

Varity: After enjoying a cup of tea I normally experience a relaxing warmth that spreads throughout my body. My creativity and cognitive responses are enhanced.

Creativity is an important process, one which 'enhances', as she puts it, a lot of other processes. Music is one of those processes that can be used to express creativity; it is a powerful tool to express one's contentment and anger. Music in the life skills classroom should be used as a tool for creativity and expression.

Varity understands the power music has on human cognition, its potential, the way it promotes potential, and how it can be used to enhance the creative part of the brain. Many learners in the life skills classroom have cognitive problems. But stimulating the brain's cognitive side through music can lead to contentment and creative expression.

Contentment can present itself in different forms. For Allissa, this is having her coffee after a long day at school. The sensations when having her coffee create a sense of pleasure and a sense of freedom in her soul.

Allissa: This moment always soothes my soul after a long day and helps me relax. In this moment I enjoy the freedom of touch (holding a warm cup and spreading warmth through my fingertips to my hands), smell (the aroma of coffee filling the air and prompting pleasant memories).

This freedom in her soul transports her to a world where her memories are kept safe. Such is the power of taste and smell. Music has the same power, if not more. Music transports the soul to worlds of safety, contentment, and comfort. We can use music in the classroom in the same way to transport our learners to places where they feel safe and content.

Music can be a powerful instrument in transporting human beings to other worlds and it can create exactly that for learners. Due to this fact, music can change how people think about life. It transports them from feeling sad to experiencing happiness. It transports them from feeling stuck to a sense of freedom.

Varity feels that music provides contentment and is a form of 'structure and predictability'. Structure and predictability are two vital components in a child's life. A child without structure is a child who has no ground to stand on. So, structure and predictability are important to a child's development overall.

Varity: Music can provide structure and predictability and can be integrated and that is what a child needs.

When a child experiences structure and predictability, that child flourishes. This shapes their self-esteem, their life, and their future experiences.

For these cogent reasons, we need to bring music back into the classroom to offer this foundation for learners, especially those learners who experience systemic problems in society. They are the ones who need it most; however, all children need to experience this as it creates contentment.

4.5.4 Happiness

Stacey still has hope in her heart, a hope that takes her on her journey through every day. Some days are better than others, yet she has hope. Hope is a positive virtue. Stacey wants to bring this hope to her classroom and into the lives of her learners.

Stacey: It lifts my spirits and fills me with hope. Hope that I might just be able to complete all my tasks for the day.

For Stacey, she can still bring hope with her to school. As she sees her learners, she wants them to greet that hope that is captured in her heart. She wants them to experience happiness – perhaps only for a fleeting moment – yet it will be a moment that will light up their lives.

Music has the same effect on people's minds, hearts, and souls. This is exactly what Stacey wants her learners to experience. Music lifts the spirits and when one's spirits are lifted, one can conquer the world, even if that world is bittersweet. You know you can conquer it because hope lives here.

The freedom to express oneself is a freedom. And through that freedom one is set free from the rules that confine one to a certain way of thinking. Varity expresses that this is what art and music offer to learners in the classroom. When free, happiness happens.

Varity: Art grants them freedom to express a certain topic the way they want to. They are not held captive by stringent rules. In turn it boosts morale.

Music, like art, possesses the same quality: it offers the listener or the performer the freedom to express themselves in any way they want to. It 'boosts morale', as Varity states it.

Music can create happiness for learners. For them to be free from their existing problems, just for that moment. Using music in the classroom should become a guide for them on their journey to freedom and happiness.

In this respect, Lisa makes a statement. She says that 'music is a transcending teaching tool'. As she states it, this teaching tool should be used across all life skills subjects. Transcendence is a word: to transcend is to have an experience 'beyond the normal'. Music, in her experience, has created this.

Lisa: In my limited classroom experience teaching life skills, I believe that music is a transcending teaching tool across CA, PE and PSW (and other learning areas).

Lisa knows how music can transport one from one reality to the next, hence her profound statement. The learners will only benefit when applying this powerful tool, music.

We cannot go beyond the norm if we don't understand the importance of music and its important role in our learners' lives. Music profoundly affects learners and should be advocated to stay in their lives and remain active participants within our education system. It should become the medium through which all the other areas of life skills should be taught. When music is used as a transcending tool, the positive that will emerge is that it will change the lives of our learners and teachers.

4.6 Attitude

Having a positive attitude is essential to a person's quality of life. A positive attitude creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom, which benefits both teacher and learners. Growth in teachers and learners takes place even when teachers need to overcome challenges. But growth is not possible without passion. Teachers in the life skills classroom have this knowledge and apply passion to their subject area, which drives them to be even better teachers.

4.6.1 Having a positive attitude

Lisa, a life skills teacher, described an activity she had done with her Intermediate phase learners. The activity was to make a fruit salad and a sandwich. Her experience of seeing some children not being able to peel some fruit was shocking to her. This was a harsh reminder to Lisa that even the simplest practical activities are lacking in the curriculum. It's important, she states, that children know how to

peel a fruit or change a light bulb. This is part of building a positive attitude for that child. She has no doubt that music can assist in this instance.

Lisa: It was alarming to see how many of them could not peel some fruit. Or even teach them how to change a light bulb.

Music in the classroom is a powerful tool. Schools have been experiencing endless problems with learning disabilities as those disabilities in many cases are not dealt with due to a shortage of schools for learners with special education needs (LSEN).

Allissa: I have noticed an improved level of concentration and work ethic in learners who struggle to do so when I have played music in the background. In my limited classroom experience teaching life skills, I believe that music is a transcending teaching tool across CA, PE and PSW (and other learning areas).

Allissa has concluded that exposure to music helped to produce a level of concentration and a work ethic in learners. These are the types of positive effect that music has had on learners.

It is evident that Allissa, despite not being a music teacher, found that music positively contributed to the children's experience in the classroom. It not only improved their concentration levels, but also encouraged a high work ethic. This is something important to expand on in the life skills classroom – making music one of the foundation subjects to expand on teaching other life skills subjects.

Art, like music, is an activity in action and the two can easily be used together. Self-esteem is one of the pillars that build a positive attitude and music is a key tool for creating that self-esteem. There is also a sense that when art is used together with music it becomes even more powerful. How important is it for children to listen? As listening is part of music, we gain knowledge of the subject area and of ourselves. Listening becomes the skill in this instance, too.

Varity: When I walk out, that's why I immerse myself in art because you get a learner who cannot do much to produce beautiful art to build up that self-esteem and I get them to listen.

Varity, speaking from the voice of an art teacher experienced art producing the same positivity as music, both art forms being an active form of expression. Learners especially having learning problems found it easier to express themselves when art was involved as it also uplifted their self-esteem.

As teachers such as in Varity's case, we need to keep emphasising the importance of self-esteem as this encourages the children to develop a more positive attitude to life. Music indeed contributes positively to the end goal in this instance in the art classroom. As art is fully about self-expression and Varity mentioned it created a space where her learners were listening to instruction, a very important skill which can be enhanced by using music together with art.

4.6.2 Attitude of growth in teachers

Teachers grow when their learners grow in the classroom. Growth is a necessity in life and even more so in a learning environment. During the workshops as well as during the WhatsApp interactions. She is an advocate of growth at all levels of teaching.

Varity: I use music as a means of relaxation, communication, and expression. I also feel inspired to achieve different levels of creativity. Music as problem-solver, yes, it is critical to moral barriers, it can also improve self-esteem and sleeping disorders. Music in the classroom is used to stimulate learning and concentration. Used creatively, music can break down learning barriers. Music solves many things. I find it unlocks the emotional key, a link between the subconscious and the conscious. It also strengthens sensory stimulation and motor skill development.

Varity's passion comes strongly to the fore. She had indeed expressed it thoroughly through the words she had written during the WhatsApp conversations. Music breaks barriers and can be used as a means of self-expression. It builds self-esteem. Varity has witnessed these moments many times in her classrooms, especially as an art teacher. They would be able to become the citizens of every teacher's dream.

Another general learning disability is a lack of concentration, and music can serve to enhance learners' levels of concentration. It can be used to solve problems at

many levels, not only emotionally, but also by bridging the two worlds: the conscious and subconscious mind. More emphasis should be placed on the emotional well-being of children – and music can be the key to unlocking this world.

Varity's drive to save her learners from an inevitable future is evident in her speech. This process is not only about the growth of the teacher; it's about the growth in every respect of the learner. It is evident that music is a possible force to be applied in accomplishing this goal, which is creating better, emotionally stable, and well-rounded learners.

Even during times of hardship in the classrooms, teachers must dig deep into finding the strength to cope with everyday circumstances in the classroom. This ability, too, is a way of teachers undergoing growth in the process of finding creative ways to deal with these issues. As a first-year life skills teacher, Allissa had to face some of these obstacles.

Allissa: I feel like I cannot make a conclusive comparison in terms of life skills since this is the first year, I'm really teaching life skills to Grade 4 learners and do not have 5 years of experience teaching the learning area to compare it to. What I can speak of is the way we have to manage teaching in the classroom given the circumstances we are faced with today in the classroom. From the perspective of PE, learners cannot play contact sports or have contact activity exercises. PE lessons must be well planned to allow for social distancing and individual activities to sustain COVID-19 protocols.

PE is one subject in life skills currently (i.e., 2020–2021) that can be a problem teaching, owing to the COVID-19 protocols. Yet this is a way of extending teachers and assuring their growth. There are many similar kinds of issues, especially in the life skills classroom where creative new ways should be administered. Music is one way, as it will create a stress-free atmosphere for both teacher and learners. This is because music has a way of bringing excitement to the classroom and stimulates enthusiasm. It is therefore suggested that a focus should be placed on enhancing the PE classroom through accompanying activities with music.

PE can become a subject that can be enlivened again through music, both pursuits being active in their expression. In this combination, the physical meets the creative world and that experience for a child can be priceless. One effect will be that the exercises will be remembered, which should lead to learners looking forward to the further PE lessons.

What makes a good teacher? The sense of wanting to expand is within every teacher at school, yet they face a broken system resisting their natural bent. Another question would be: How do we fix this situation? Growth occurs only when individuals, including teachers, are happy in what they must produce. Varity's battle is clear in her statement, as she is comparing the current and previous teaching methodologies, which do not match; for her, the old way of learning in colleges and teaching needs to return.

Varity: There are some good teachers out there that know a method better than anyone. The methodologies are lacking. They are lacking and bringing back that, it's more where you do injustice to them, your field of choice. Do justice to it, that's it. Because that is often lacking. Those who make decisions up there, go back, not everything was gutted in education like this is.

According to Varity, the lack of methodologies in teaching contributes to the current state CAPS finds itself in. She refers to this as an 'injustice' because the previous way of teaching was focused on a more specialised level. Currently this is not the case. There is hardly any specialisation, and this has created problems. A teacher chooses a specific field of specialisation for a reason, as they are passionate about that specific area. That passion then gets transferred into how they teach, creating positive learning and growth.

Stagnation as a teacher is not an option, as room should always be made for newer ways or newer methodologies. This is essential for CAPS as it will lead to growth for teachers as well as learners. Specialised teaching and training should be reintroduced as it enlivens the passion in teachers – one of the foremost reasons teachers have chosen this field as their career.

4.6.3 Passion and drive despite challenges

Embracing one's destiny is a big step into a direction where sometimes one does not see the results immediately. Yet taking such a step in this positive direction means the battle is halfway won. For Varity this is exactly what is happening. Even though she is not a life skills teacher. She made a choice to embrace this opportunity.

Varity: I embraced every opportunity to develop the skills to become an authentic life skills educator.

Opportunities come in different guises. Varity, a historian, embraced her role as a life skills teacher. She states that not only does she want to be a life skills teacher, but she also wants to become an authentic one.

This statement speaks of passion and drive. She strives to serve her learners to the best of her ability, to see them grow from strength to strength. Music can be a good medium through which to live her authenticity to her new expression as a life skills teacher.

For Stacey, life skills have developed her skills as a life skills teacher. It is about growth not only for the teacher but for learners too. Challenges, especially in the teaching world, can be used as steppingstones. Using the challenges in this way can be a life-changing experience for both teacher and learner.

Stacey: As with everything new it comes with challenges, and one must adapt to the change. What I love about the learning area is how much it has taught me. Seeing how learners interpret the information and develop.

As a new teacher, Stacey has mastered the skill of turning challenges into positives. Life Skills in the classroom has benefited both the learners and the teacher. It is a subject that has an expansive effect on the teacher – how much more so on the learners.

Music in the life skills classroom can be used to adapt to change. Music can be a medium for learners to be able to understand information. And while information

can be complex, using music to decipher a complex concept can be a positive in the life skills classroom.

Growth in the life skills classroom is not only about understanding the academic side of this subject but about the tangible side of life skills. Life Skills is a much more tangible subject than most of the other abstract subjects. Music is used in conjunction with life skills, especially as a core subject and as the medium between the three subjects under life skills.

Varity: What resonates with me is how learners begin to respect the power of music as a vehicle of expression.

Varity understands this concept as she states that it 'resonates' with her. Being the observer in her classroom, she has experienced the power of music and how it can be used. The purpose of a vehicle is to transport one from one destination to another, and that can be the effect of music in the classroom.

Using music in this way benefits her learners, as it is a way for them to experience a different world. Expression is an important way for humans to show the world their feelings. In other words, it is a way for the teacher to understand the learner in ways they have never understood. Music is indeed a powerful vehicle through which to express that which exists in the unseen world.

4.7 Sub-text

Teachers in the life skills classroom experience different emotions in a sub-textual way. These experiences are not always visible, hence the difficulty in being always able to voice their internal struggles. These internal conflicts mostly have to do with their experiences in the classroom. They don't always feel they have the power to express their nuances as they feel it has become a repetitive cycle which has never been answered or changed. Change is important, yet the change they need to experience has become something of an elephant in the room.

4.7.1 Sub-text: a sense of powerlessness

The purpose of learning is to become a successful citizen. The responsibility for learning lies in the hands of a country's education system. The main drive should be to produce successful citizens in every sphere of society.

Gail: Whether it is primary, secondary, or tertiary. We are not equipping them enough to be a successful citizen of this country.

In her statement, it is evident that she is taking this responsibility upon herself. There is a sense of personal guilt that breathes through the words of her statement: How can teachers be held accountable for promises made by a government that is not keeping its promises, promises to create people who are progressive and forward-thinking?

Teachers can do only what they can. Yet the DBE needs to come alongside them to discuss and prepare a new, workable system that will be a practical and doable product at the end of the day. And this product will have to work especially in the less advantaged schools as that is where the major problem exists. The problem is bigger than anticipated, and a solution should be found and applied as this will not only uplift the learners towards becoming better citizens, but it will uplift the greater community of South Africa.

Poverty in our schools exists largely because of politics. Politics in terms of schools that are situated in disadvantages communities which are directly linked to the displacement of these communities in turn. Poverty runs deep through our schools' veins, poverty from being unable to learn, acquire knowledge and skills and be free of learning disabilities. In a previous statement, Varity said: "Bring back the mat" "mat" in other words, bring back the way teachers used to teach in the previous curriculum prior to OBE. The previous curriculum was based on being more about teaching, more teacher and student time than currently which is more admin time than teaching. All the teachers concurred.

Ennov: The politics took all the money. They say there's no money but there's money to give away to people who did not even work. But the thing is here, we have got to look at the ideal world. What if.

They agreed because the 'mat' was a prevalent concept within the previous education system. Every learner knew that when you were called to the mat, you were going to learn something.

The balance is incorrect in the world: schools struggle to exist because the money, as Ennov puts it, is going to areas where it is not needed. The question is: What is the 'ideal' world that Ennov is talking about? The ideal world would be where learning occurs both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers cannot do this alone. They need the stakeholders and the parents to come alongside them and rebuild the ruins of our system.

The term 'mass production' makes one think of a cold, distant, soulless factory where people with no soul produce products. Without any vision and purpose, they simply get the work finished. Varity believes this mass production happened when the current government took teacher training colleges away.

Varity: In terms of activism, I would say the college educator, when they took the colleges away, teacher training, they created mass production.

Colleges, also described as specialised institutions, worked as they produced specialised teachers that were enthusiastic and had a vision of what they wanted to create. They had strong sensations of who they were and the impact they wanted to have on their learners. They did not think of teaching as a job for one minute: it was part of their lives. They breathed, lived, and walked this walk as it was who they were.

What is being experienced is the opposite of what was in the previous education system. A thread is flowing from the top down, and it is infiltrating our schools. This is a sense of powerlessness teachers feel due to being part of a mass-production system. And this in turn creates a sense of frustration for the teachers having been part of a system where colleges were still the core topic of conversation.

4.8 Policy recommendations

Introduction

According to Stroebel *et al* (2018:124), life skills teachers are key DBE members in implementing the syllabus. The life skills educators were placed in a situation where management never contemplated the impact of the new system and what effect it would have on them, as the space for them to learn the system was limited (Stroebel *et al.*, 2018:24). Therefore, the gap between the theoretical and the practical application of CAPS would lead to the negative consequences educators and learners are facing currently (Stroebel *et al.*, 2018:124). Many obstacles affect the current curriculum and therefore influence the quality output of education (Stroebel *et al.*, 2018:124). Among these examples are that educators are poorly trained, lack resources and unqualified teachers (Stroebel *et al.*, 2018:124).

Abuse in schools has become frequent (Mabunda & Mkay, 2020:505). A lot of blame had been placed on the community, learners, and parents (Mabunda & Mkay, 2020:506). Even though there is much violence against learners, the same is happening against educators (Mabunda & Mkay, 2020:507). This occurrence has led to a drop in the number of teachers wanting to teach in South Africa as their lives are at risk every day (Mabunda & Mkay, 2020:507). Substance abuse, another systemic issue, is rife in schools and a problem schools must deal with (Mabunda & Mkay, 2020:508). A solution Mabunda and Mkay (2020:511) suggest is that society, the school, management, and learners should devise a collective approach to eradicating violence in schools.

This leaves us with the burning desire for a policy change. Hence my five key policy recommendations on overcoming the challenges teachers are facing in the life skills classroom.

Issue:

For music and art to ignite all development areas to help the mind and body work together. To help learners use sound and the meaning of words to express themselves, assist memory and enhance critical thinking. To build self-esteem by allowing for creative play with discipline and reinforcement.

Rationale:

Bridge the gap approach with life skills, maths and sequence, logic, analysis, muscle control in art and music. All the components in life skills are used in collaboration with other learning areas. Capacity-building from management to build and foster a collaborative learning community can be used to assist and guide towards building a new paradigm of the value of the arts to strengthen the poor to non-existent literacy and numeracy levels. Collaborative learning should be employed as a 'bridge the gap' approach. A collaboration between life skills and other subjects such as maths, as these subjects have synergies. Therefore, this collaborative approach receives the attention from management and stakeholders to be successfully implemented at the ground level.

Recommendations:

Pre-service teachers should be taught how to work in collaborative settings, where single subject specialists can support generalist teachers and the arts can be integrated into the other components of life skills more seamlessly.

Resources should be shared more equitably between low-income and high-income schools. The department could investigate the formation of music or performance arts hubs where multiple schools could use the same set of resources.

Issue:

Specialised teachers: teachers should be trained and teach specific subjects and do so adequately. The participants in this study believed that this applied to both the creative arts and physical education.

4.9 Conclusion

The findings illustrate the challenges that teachers face when teaching the music component of life skills in the intermediate phase classroom. It is important for policymakers and the DBE to consider these challenges carefully. These challenges need to be faced and solutions need to be considered. The participants constantly referred to the negative effects of these challenges on the learners in their classrooms. It is the children who are suffering. The outcomes of my analysis show that a plethora of gaps in the current CAPS education system need to be considered and remedied.

The social uses of music in the intermediate phase life skills classroom need to be considered more closely too. According to my participants' experiences, music helps learners to develop as it operates at a non-verbal level. Therefore, music can penetrate the emotional being of the learner. Holistic teaching is essential as it is important for learners to express themselves holistically through music. Collaborative teaching is another avenue that should be explored as it bridges the gap between essential subjects.

According to the participants in this study, music can effect positive change in learners. Music therefore needs to be an integral part of the classroom. The power of music is through expression and music creates a positive environment in which learners can learn and flourish. It can be used as a learning support tool in life skills and can help learners to overcome the many challenges they face. Music is

evolutionary. Music can empower those who are suffering, as we have discovered. These teachers therefore are advocating a system that works well and with no Utopia.

From the findings in this study, it is clear that teachers need more assistance and that they need to be supported as they interrogate the problems they face when teaching the music component of life skills. As one teacher stated: 'It is like opening a can of worms.' Teachers sometimes feel content, especially when teaching music in the life skills classroom. These teachers strongly advocate music as a subject because it creates a feeling of happiness, especially in the classroom.

Learning difficulties are a problem in schools and it has been shown that music can be used to help deal with these problems. Music also helps to improve concentration levels. Self-esteem is one of the pillars underlying a positive attitude, and music can support this. Growth is essential in education; teachers themselves find it difficult to grow as they must face dire circumstances in the classroom. And while stagnation is not an option as a teacher, the 'newer' ways CAPS offers create frustration as teachers are not trained to specialize in their field.

The teachers feel that support from the DBE is non-existent. The participants in this study believe that politics has received more attention and politicians do not understand the realities that teachers are facing daily. A roundtable discussion is needed so that teachers can have their voices heard. According to the teachers who participated in this study, there is a definite lack of quality in the education system. The systemic problems are beyond the teachers' capacity to deal with them, creating frustration and hopelessness in them. These problems run deep within the system and need radical attention. In the current system, specialist teaching is a great challenge as teachers are not specialized to teach certain subjects, which causes conflict. Resources, or a lack of them, is another challenge teachers face, especially those teaching in disadvantaged schools. The curriculum therefore needs to be reviewed and revised as it does not serve the teacher's or the learners' well-being.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The framework of the challenges teachers face in the life skills intermediate phase classroom has been analysed. The findings indicate the gaps in the education system teachers are dealing with daily.

In my discussion I dissect these challenges which derived from my dramaturgical coding and were substantiated through a literature discourse. This literature discourse affirmed the experiences my participants shared with me. My transcripts and one face-to-face workshop revealed much about the conditions my participants found themselves in. Each participant voiced the objectives, tactics, conflict, attitudes, and sub-texts they experienced in the classroom. These were discussed in my findings chapter. My vision for this chapter is to accentuate these through my literature discourse.

5.2 Objectives

5.2.1 Creating awareness

The participants in this study emphasised a need to create awareness to foster self-awareness among the learners in their life skills classrooms and to create a general awareness of social problems throughout society. Research shows that the consequences of 2020 on teachers were devastating (Joy, 2021:29). Coping with the pressure teachers face due to the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates a high level of self-awareness. This aligns with the experiences my participants shared. However, teachers are expected not only to practise self-awareness, but also to cultivate awareness in their learners. According to Joy (2021:33), being an educator means leading and remaining strong in one's personal belief systems. This requires good self-esteem (Joy, 2021:33). From my findings it is clear that the teachers were aware of the role their personal well-being played in ensuring that they were able to influence their learners positively. In turn, educators create the same awareness for our learners. Awareness in terms of the teacher's wellbeing. As Alissa's statement about being a teacher, regarding the influence we have on

learners, it is imperative. It is therefore important that teachers' wellbeing influence the wellbeing of the learners. Self-awareness is not only based on knowing ourselves: it forms the basis of allowing our learners to discover themselves (Joy, 2021:33). Concentrating on our strengths as teachers, we offer a different way to harness our responsibility as leaders and in this way ignite the same process within our learners. This process creates in learners a positive attitude to the greater society (Joy, 2021:33).

A large part of teaching self-awareness was teaching social skills. Allissa confirms that music is one way of teaching social skills. Baker (2021:4) agrees with this statement and elaborates further that social skill is important in a community as it serves as a form of warding off socio-economic problems. Enhancing social skills promises a type of upliftment so that learners may interact with the society outside the school walls (Baker, 2021:381). Allissa further states that in wanting to become a life skills teacher, she knew she wanted to contribute to society and make a difference.

Varity mentions in her statement that social awareness should be brought to light as there is an increase in abuse. Bullying is one form of abuse many learners are affected by (Mogro-Wilson & Tredinnick, 2020:111). Social and emotional learning can make a difference in the lives of learners, especially in dealing with violence (Mogro-Wilson & Tredinnick, 2020:111). The combination of music and social and emotional learning can contribute to social concepts curbing the negative effects of abuse on a learner's well-being (Mogro-Wilson & Tredinnick, 2020:112). Varity agrees with the above as she states that music can be a vehicle to navigate social constructs and create the awareness needed of abuse. Mogro- Wilson & Trednick's, research aligns with the experiences shared by my participants. According to Edgar (2021:29), life skills learned through music education are imperative for learners to attain, especially in finding their way into the world outside the classroom. Music can offer learners a sense of safety and well-being (Edgar, 2021:31). The participants in my study also viewed musicking in the life skills classroom as creating a safe educational environment.

5.2.2 Helping learners to develop

According to Athola and Juvoven (2021:22), new ways of teaching music education need to be found. Allissa agrees with this statement as she feels that music is inspirational. Space needs to be made for a different approach in the classroom as music can become the conduit for growth in learners through various creative ways, be it through groupwork or individually (Athola & Juvoven, 2012:24). Varity confirms this statement, because music has been an anchor in her life and has offered growth, especially during difficult moments in her life. Learning should be transformative (Joy, 2021:12) and musicking may offer opportunities for such transformation by allowing learners to experience different cultures (Joy, 2021:12). Allissa states that music is healing, and they concur that music is an art form.

It is often found that learners enjoy being in the music classroom more than having to attend to their academic curriculum (Guhn *et al.*, 2020:309). Allissa recognises the impact of music on learners' full potential and how it can influence them academically. Music not only heals; it promotes wellness at all levels, and wellness at all levels in the classroom is imperative for growth (Wilson *et al.*, 2020:474). Stacey indicated that despite the challenges they faced in the intermediate phase life skills classroom, they still saw musicking as an important way in which they could support the learners' growth.

According to Varity, music heals. This statement is supported by Peters *et al* (2021:22), who state that interactive music has positive benefits for a person's wellness. Therefore, interactive music might be the connection to a positive life of expansion, growth, and wellness (Peters *et al.*, 2021:32).

5.2.3 Teaching holistically and collaboratively

Continuous and professional development is important when practising holistic teaching (West & Bautista, 2020:54). Varity indicated that the educators faced many challenges regarding professional development, especially related to their own musicking skills. To some extent, Allissa responds to these challenges by advocating arts integration. Arts Integration necessitates the employment of a

music teacher who can understand the societal influences that change all the time and the impact they have on learners (Polzonetti & Youngblood, 2019:19). This approach promotes a sense of the learners' feeling empowered as they connect the dots with other subjects through music as a medium (Polzonetti & Youngblood, 2019:12). Therefore, the participants in this study believed that teaching collaboratively with a music subject specialist would improve the quality-of-life skills education in the intermediate phase.

Collaborative teaching may further support making connections with other subjects (Cuervo, 2018:464). Varity states that finding common ground is a great way of teaching as this creates magic in the classroom. More magic should therefore be created as this offers a sense of anticipation. Combining music with science, literacy and numeracy in collaborative teaching offers a peek into how the brain can operate at those multiple levels (Cuervo, 2018:465). Varity agrees with Cuervo (2018:465) that the bridging the gap approach with life skills, maths, sequence, and logic in art and music should be considered. Allissa confirms that it is important to understand your role as a teacher and to be great in your subject area – in this way collaborative teaching can be successful. Collaborative teaching should therefore be motivated and implemented as a teaching method (Cuervo, 2018:477). Allissa also mentions that collaborative teaching opens various avenues of creative thinking. According to Rivas *et al.*, (2021:181), collaborative learning nurtures creativity and compassion. Varity agrees that learning through immersion is what inclusive education should be about. This process has offered various approaches to teaching such as the learners teaching the educators creating empathy in learners naturally (Rivas *et al.*, 2021:181). Varity states that art is the creative experience that holistically contributes to all areas of development. A sense of belonging and acceptance of the other's culture is triggered when learners interact with music (Delgado, 2021:48).

According to Orzolek (2018:125), collaborative teaching is about interacting with other teachers and in turn finding a way to reach the goal set for that purpose. Music teachers know the skill needed for collaboration to occur as they have been exposed to the performing arts and know what is required (Orzolek, 2018:125). Varity agrees that all life skills components should be used in collaboration with

other areas. The only important rules are those towards a common ground, respecting each other's spaces and having the knowledge of the other person's role in the process (Orzolek, 2018:125). In doing what Orzolek suggests, my participants agree that one way in which collaborative teaching can be successful would be that teachers take charge of their own roles as individuals.

5.3 Tactics

5.3.1 Effecting change in young people

According to Jorgensen and Yob (2019:21), educators are instruments of social exchange because they can teach literacy, numeracy and especially how to create music as a revolutionary experience (Jorgensen & Yob, 2019:21). Gail agrees about the way music begins to resonate with learners and can be used as a tool of expression. Owing to this fact, this will offer a snowball effect and will influence the world of the learner and of their immediate society. (Jorgensen & Yob, 2019:21). Varity agrees that music profoundly impacts learners in a way that speaks to their inner world. Music's effect on the oppressed has encouraged my participants to advocate that music be returned to the classroom. Gail recognises how music as a collaborative vehicle can be used to teach PSW.

5.3.2 Using music to create a positive learning environment

The literature indicates that music is beneficial in the classroom (Hallam *et al.*, 2018:227). According to Hallam *et al.*, the learners who participated in their study believe that music helped to develop a positive outlook regarding school (2018:227).

Similarly, Stacey underscored the use of background music as an important strategy to respond to some of the behavioural and disciplinary challenges they faced in the intermediate phase life skills classroom. Background music may help learners to concentrate and promote emotional well-being (de la Mora Velasco & Hirumi, 2020:2917). There is a connection between music and learning as it proposes that experiencing music increased sound characteristics in literacy and through this process music offers comprehension in learning literacy (Jaschke *et*

al., 2018:11; de la Mora Velasco & Hirumi, 2020:2817). Therefore, playing background music while learning creates a pathway which has to do with language learning, which increases mental capacity (Jaschke *et al.*, 2018:11). This finding aligns with Stacey's comments in this study's experiences that when she plays music in her class while learners are busy with a task, this calms them, and they are able to absorb and interpret new information easily. Besides assisting learners academically, music may also be employed to enhance creativity, in this way adding to the learners' positive experiences in the performing arts section of the life skills subject (Pereverzeva *et al.*, 2021:2741). Expressing oneself creatively through music may also promote positive behaviour expressed in the form of creativity (Pereverzeva *et al.*, 2021:27–41). This aligns with the experiences of Allissa in the present study: the positive role musicking played in creating a positive learning environment motivated the participants to continue pursuing musicking in their life skills classroom despite the various structural and personal challenges they faced.

However, despite teachers' best efforts, Allissa indicated that they also needed community support – in particular, support from learners' parents – to ensure that the learning environment remained positive. Allissa further highlighted the relationship between challenges they faced in creating a positive learning environment when musicking in the life skills classroom and the lack of stability and support the learners received from home. Parents could be encouraged and educated to use music in everyday life in such a way as to have a nurturing effect on the child (Varvarigou *et al.*, 2021:86).

5.3.3 Using music as a learning support tool in the Life Skills classroom

Varity highlighted academic literacy as a key challenge they faced in teaching the music component of the life skills subject in the intermediate phase. However, the literature indicates that literacy, especially reading skills, is often overlooked in the music classroom (Beresford, 2020:6). The findings from this study also show further that music literacy may further be hampered by under-prepared generalist teachers who do not feel comfortable teaching the aspects of music literacy in the curriculum.

Despite their unfamiliarity with basic music literacy, Varsity indicated that she saw musicking as a learning support tool to support general academic literacy in their life skills classrooms. This was an important tactic they employed to respond to the challenges posed by learners who had not yet mastered the academic literacy skills required of their grade. The literature indicates that musicking may play an important role in supporting learners emotionally and intellectually (Fan, 2019:3281-3282). Learning an instrument may also support learners in learning skills that can be applied outside of the music context (Marnauza & Gžibovskis, 2018:69). Learning takes place while musicking happens and therefore parts of the brain are activated at the same time (Marnauza & Gžibovskis, 2018:70). The literature supports the tactic of using musicking as a learning support tool, which the participants in this study did.

5.3.4 Using music as a way to inspire

Musicking forms the core of many communities (MacGregor, 2020:229). Inclusive participation in musicking is a way to enhance individuals and to inspire them to thrive (MacGregor, 2020:229). Allissa indicated that participation is imperative as it offers the students opportunities for growth and inspiration in their intermediate life skills classes. Lisa agrees that teaching art, drama and music can be used as a release and can be used as a constructive break from their academic schedule.

Another form to inspire learners is the method of transformative teaching. Transformative teaching is about learners becoming independent and accountable thinkers (Carey *et al.*, 2018:399). Allissa agrees that for one-way transformative teaching to take place, music should be used in the classroom and that learners enjoying lessons such as these are likely to be more participatory. The enhancement of learners' independence is evident in transformative learning, where for teachers it is not about control in the classroom (Carey, *et al.*, 2018:400). Allissa states that bringing excitement back into the classroom via music suggests that music is the tool to let that control go. Inspiration is needed and literacy cannot be taught in the same way as life skills, yet music can bring back excitement about the subject.

Making music is one way of creating a strong sense of belonging (Hanson, 2020:1). Furthermore, music offers an astuteness and an arousal of certain emotions (Hanson, 2020:1). Allissa agrees that a sense of belonging can be created according to Hanson (2020:1). Learning is recognised and immersed in social connectedness and interaction (Viigg, 2020:134). Allissa states that music can be used effectively as a tool of learning in the life skills classroom. Through the collaborative process the learner becomes part of the social community, which has an impact on their lives (Viigg, 2020:134). Lisa found that music transports learners from a mundane existence, challenging them to think more creatively, improving their academic performance and creating a positive attitude.

5.3.5 Using music as a way to empower the oppressed

The participants in this study displayed a keen social awareness. This awareness enabled them to identify the systemic causes of many of the challenges they faced in teaching the music component of the life skills subject. Therefore, they viewed musicking in the life skills subject as a way to empower oppressed and marginalised learners. Living in a world of being excluded can be a problem as this creates boundaries where limitations are present in our thinking processes (Bylica, 2020:331). But states Litt, music education may be key to countering this exclusion and marginalisation (Litt, 2020:15). The foundation of this kind of music education is embedded in social interaction, inclusive and collaborative teaching and has the potential to uplift and empower each learner (Litt, 2020:15). Interaction is important as it has a positive impact on learners at a social level which creates a sense of inclusivity, especially in the music classroom (Bylica, 2020:331). The learner is therefore encouraged to become more conscious through interactions and most profoundly to become aware of the other's cultural disposition and having an understanding of it (Bylica, 2020:342).

The literature indicates that teachers who wish to have a transformative impact on their learners must be aware of their learners' musical worlds. Especially in a school setting, Hip Hop provides a sense of togetherness for participants (Evans, 2018:6). Hip Hop is a powerful tool in the development of learners, and, in turn, these learners discover their place in their environment (Evans, 2018:6). Music –

especially group music – serves as a form of communication (Ford, 2020:290). Therefore, learning manifests within the bounds of communication, the vehicle being collaborative learning (Ford, 2020:290). This collaborative-learning process enhances the learners' ability to be better human beings, create joy in their lives, and uplift the learners in the general sense (Ford, 2020:290).

Music is recognised as a catalyst in terms of interaction between people of different backgrounds and cultures. Collaborative interaction can be seen as the centre of this interaction as it provokes critical thinking about equality (Müller, 2019:276). Varity states that music, like sport, connects people. In the classroom, diversity can be discussed as it also promotes a home for social interaction (Müller, 2019:276). Varity also agrees that music heals and comforts people. Collaborative interaction happens by considering the framework and production of the music in the classroom (Müller, 2019:276). Varity sees music as a form of inclusion and is a way of empowering learners. Lisa agrees that music – especially in the life skills classroom- teaches learners about their cultural roots and how important it is for learners to know their roots. Music therefore empowers and unites at the same time.

5.3.6 No Utopia, but a system that will work, not only on paper

Varity agreed that a clear system should be created as CAPS is not an ideal system. A total shift is needed, and music should be part of this shift. In line with this, Varity asserted that the policies could not contribute solely to a positive change in teaching music in the intermediate phase life skills classroom. True change would require taking action and ground-up transformation.

As stated by Wright (2019:222), the utopian classroom and its definition is not about a fantasy of the ideal community – it is preferably about sculpting areas for the refusal to accept compliance and remodelling in the present. This is where music education should revive its lustre (Wright, 2019:222). There is hope that the utopian music classroom can exist both inside the school and in the community at the same time because these community role players can work together hand in hand with the educators (Wright, 2019:223). Lisa agrees with this statement and

points out that an action plan should be realistic and possible to implement must be created.

Teaching, according to Lehman (2019:186), is one of the most paramount career choices (Lehman, 2019:186); and the positive side-effect of this career choice is that it shapes learners into their greatest potential selves; it also shapes the world (Lehman, 2019:186). Lisa, states that the greatest goal for any system is to mould learners holistically. It is beneficial in education that the growth of learners is to reach their fullest potential so that they might one day enjoy a good standard or quality of life (Lehman, 2019:187). The one medium that can be used to teach a variety of useful skills is music (Lehman, 2018:187).

5.4 Conflict

5.4.1 Conflict caused through miscommunication

Educators play an essential role in the education system as they stimulate the minds of their students (Mohammed & Abdulai, 2022:211). However, despite occupying such an important position, educators are not satisfied at work (Mohammed & Abdulai, 2022:211). Varity indicated that the teachers experienced the pressures of managerialism from the DBE. Happiness in the work environment is imperative especially for educators in the classroom (Kruger, 2019:3): a happy working environment may offer teachers a sense of well-being and improve their self-esteem (Kruger, 2019:3). In turn, these positive conditions also improve the quality of work teachers deliver (Kruger, 2019:2). Ennov agrees that managerialism happens as she feels that politics are taking over education. She also does not experience a sense of good self-esteem as she had been placed in learning areas for which she was not trained.

5.4.2 Quality versus quantity

The curriculum serves as the foundation for what happens in musicking in the classroom (Saarelainen & Juvonen, 2017:8). The strong foundation of a good

curriculum will ensure a strong basis for development, progress, and knowledge acquisition in the classroom (Saarelainen & Juvonen, 2017:8). One of the major challenges the participants faced when teaching the music component of life skills was that the curriculum, in their view, is poorly constructed and focuses on quantity over quality.

As mentioned previously, the participants in this study also highlighted the need to allow for arts integration. Arts integration may be a means to enhance the quality of learning and teaching as music has a great impact on performance academically (Scripp & Gillbert, 2016:187). However, integrating the arts requires that qualified music teachers collaboratively teach across the curriculum, with music as a vehicle (Scripp & Gillbert, 2016:187). Lisa highlighted the quality of teacher education as a major challenge when teaching music in the life skills classroom. To realise the potential of a quality arts integrated curriculum, we need to equip teachers to act and to raise the standards rather than simply to focus on the quantity of educational opportunities (Kos, 2018:213).

5.4.3 Conflict caused by systemic problems

In the South African education system teachers and learners are confronted with systemic problems every day (Pooley, 2016:641). Examples of these problems for learners could include a lack of employment opportunities, poor living conditions and few opportunities for growth (Pooley, 2016:641). These problematic issues are part of learners' lived realities and affect their learning directly (Pooley, 2016:641). Therefore, inequality has become the order of the day and learners from these working-class homes must accept that they have to go to poorly resourced schools (Pooley, 2016:641). Teachers must then deal with a limited choice of textbooks, classrooms packed to full capacity and a syllabus that is impossible to execute, especially in public schools (Pooley, 2016:641). Ennov illustrated an awareness of systemic problems' impact on their ability to effectively teach the music component of the life skills curriculum.

Sheffield (2017:52) argues that the arts should be placed at the education system's core. To some extent, the systemic problems learners deal with also

relate to a lack of understanding of their culture and their identity (Sheffield, 2017 :52). According to Väkevä *et al* (2017:130), not all learners acquire the same cultural education at home. Children from disadvantaged homes especially do not interact with cultures that uphold higher social capital at home to the same extent as their wealthier peers. This is mirrored in the unequal education system in which the study participants were working. Varity emphasised the need to work against systemic oppression and towards inclusion in the music component of the life skills curriculum. This focus on a battle against exclusion is also echoed in the literature (Väkevä *et al.*, 2017:130). Ennov believed that, through music, it is possible to counter the systemic oppression they see around them. The literature about the El Sistema programme points to similar social justice aims (Osborne *et al.*, 2016:172). This programme provides music educational opportunities to learners in impoverished communities and through them it positively improved both their wellness and their academic performance, in addition to honing other skills, such as their analytical skills.

The possibility of musicking to improve learners' well-being stands in stark contrast to the reality faced by the participants when teaching the music component of the life skills subject in the intermediate phase. Varity described their challenges due to the trauma learners experienced inside and outside school. Despite the literature advocating the use of music when working with traumatised learners, Hess and Bradley (2020:431) caution that music may possibly trigger traumatic experiences. This possibility highlights the need for teachers to understand the socio-economic and cultural context they are working in so as to be able to deal with traumatic experiences if they arise during musicking.

The systemic challenges that the participants in this study highlighted were not unique. Mannathoko and Mamvuto (2018:152) emphasise that the challenges expressed by the participants in the present study which supports my study are systemic challenges experienced in many arts classrooms across the African continent. These challenges can be summarised as overcrowding, unrealistic or poorly organised school timetables and management not being interested in well-being of their teachers. Another important systemic problem echoed in the

literature is the lack of specialist teachers in schools across Africa (Mannathoko & Mamvuto, 2018:153).

5.4.4 Conflict caused by a lack of specialist training

The literature on teacher education highlights generalist teachers' challenges when teaching arts subjects (Collins, 2016:1). This may be one of the most pertinent challenges highlighted in this study. It is not enough to know a little about every area of teaching, hence the need and advocacy for specialisation (Collins, 2016:17). Varity indicated that they could not function optimally and yearned for collaborative teaching partnerships, which could make up for their lack of previous knowledge of music. Collaborations to overcome the lack of specialist training may help to support teacher well-being (Bautista *et al.*, 2021:42). Therefore, this action point, highlighted continuously in the data gathered in this study, should not be overlooked.

Despite the importance of collaboration, the opposite is happening in reality. Music or arts teachers work in isolation, and this can result in a sense of not coping well (Bautista *et al.*, 2021:43). The literature also indicates that peer collaboration is lacking for teachers in schools (Bautista *et al.*, 2021:43) and that this lack of collaboration may lead to feelings of isolation, especially for specialist teachers (Bautista *et al.*, 2021:44).

According to Webb (2016:9), there is a definite gap between the teaching in the classroom and policy, especially for the generalist teacher. Teachers who start out in the education system in the arts find it difficult because they tend to underestimate the amount of work they need to prepare and that leaves them with very little confidence (Webb, 2016:9). Ennov agrees with this statement, as she believes adequate preparation for generalist teaching is essential for the future well-being of teaching.

5.4.5 Conflict caused by a lack of resources

In order to realise the curriculum fully, schools need access to sufficient resources (McFerran *et al.*, 2018:344). Unfortunately, the arts are not well funded; on the

contrary, they are under-resourced. But they should be, as they present a strong sense of foundation of the education system (McFerran *et al.*, 2018:357). This leads to a destructive result, not only for the teachers but also for the learners (McFerran *et al.*, 2018:357).

The reality in South Africa is that the previous National Party hugely influenced the country's youth (Roy *et al.*, 2015:466). The worst aspect of this is that resources were unequally distributed, especially to black schools (Roy *et al.*, 2015:466). This led to black schools suffering without any resources and music being absent from their syllabus (Roy *et al.*, 2015:466). South Africa is still in a similar situation, with schools being riddled with socio-economic problems (Roy *et al.*, 2015:466). The participants in this study stressed that a lack of resources contributed to the socio-economic challenges they faced in the life skills classroom and led to conflict between different role-players in the education system.

5.4.6 Conflict caused by a lack of trust in the curriculum

The curriculum is sometimes viewed as merely a policy document, yet it is a complex network that educators need to unravel and translate in their classrooms (Dwyer, 2020:3). The curriculum needs to speak to the cultural identities of both teachers and learners (Dwyer, 2020:3); however, when government specialists passed on the curriculum for implementation, the consequences were dire for teachers and learners, especially those in under resourced schools (Dwyer, 2020:3). The lack of appropriate training, highlighted by Varity in this study, has meant that teachers are left to their own devices to make sense of how the music component of the life skills curriculum can be brought to life in their classrooms. Varity's experiences align with Dwyer's (2020:3) findings: policymakers do not appreciate the impact of their policies as they affect learners and educators directly (Dwyer, 2020:3). These policies do not only affect teachers at a superficial level, they also affect their identities and in extreme cases this can lead to teachers experiencing a lack of wellness, which in turn affects the learners (Dwyer, 2020:4).

Sorenson (2020:12) highlights teacher retention as a major problem many education systems face. This problem is created because of the lack of support from management, learners being able to do as they want in the classroom and teachers having little or no say at the school at which they are teaching (Sorenson, 2020:12) The participants in this study expressed similar sentiments. It is also worth noting that three of the participants left the school towards the end of the 2021 academic year, illustrating the level of teacher turnaround and the impact that has on primary schools. Gail attributed many challenges they faced when teaching the music component to a lack of trust in the curriculum and the accompanying resource deficits.

5.5 Attitude

5.5.1 Having a positive attitude

The participants in this study believed that musicking could help reverse the negative attitudes they were seeing around them. The literature supports this belief. Learners have reported their music engagements as positively impacting their lives, especially their behaviour and level of confidence (Parker *et al.*, 2018:1073). Creativity in the teaching space is imperative as this encourages learners to think creatively (Huang, 2022:1). This type of teaching also encourages learners to use problem-solving skills, as it offers them a sense of inspiration and accomplishment (Huang, 2022:1). Creativity also induces positivity in teachers and this attitude becomes transferred to learners (Huang, 2022:1).

5.5.2 Attitude of growth in teacher

Despite the many challenges the participants in the present study faced when teaching the music component of the life skills subject in the intermediate phase, they demonstrated an attitude of growth or a growth mindset. The literature suggests that teachers need to be supported to sustain such a growth mindset which is not about teachers' teaching skills being acknowledged by learners. But knowing their own ability as such (Henninger, 2018:48), the participants also

highlighted the need for more content-specific skills when teaching the music component. Johnson *et al* (2019:208) agree that professional development is important, especially when the focus is on collective growth, as this will ignite growth in teachers and lead to self-reflection, which can only benefit the school and learners. As a teacher, it is not only about producing policies but also about being self-sufficient in your thinking while implementing these policies (Johnson *et al.*, 2019:208).

5.5.3 Passion and drive despite challenges

Change happens whether we like it or not; this is the same in education (Kriščiūaitė & Strašienė, 2016:78). Owing to the changing times, teachers must adjust their way of teaching to suit the learners in order to keep the learners captivated and attracted to the subject-matter (Kriščiūaitė & Strašienė, 2016:78). Varity agrees that music resonates with her in terms of how much learners begin to respect the power of music and how this can be used as a vehicle of expression in the classroom. Having music while teaching in the classroom offers learners a sense of bliss while being immersed in musical activities, this directly stemming from a sense of passion on the part of the teachers (Hellman, 2021:47). The importance of offering learners this involvement is that it builds flexibility, which sets them on a path of development (Hellman, 2021:47). According to Stacey, change is inevitable, and with change comes challenges. However, she sees change as a positive way of becoming more flexible. Stacey believes that music can be used as an instrument with which to ease the adaptation to change.

Varity adds that it is important that life skills be used as a subject to help learners interpret information and develop this skill at the same time. In other words, her passion speaks for itself and her motivation in her life as a teacher is to see her learners grow and evolve.

5.6 Sub-texts

5.6.1 A sense of powerlessness

Music is not always about freedom as it is often riddled with politics (Sone, 2021:106). This was clear from the sub-text of powerlessness that I identified in my analysis of the participants' responses. Bates (2017:18), in his discussion about equity in music education, asserts that a sense of powerlessness comes through in poverty and the question is whether access to music is even possible among the poor (Bates, 2017:18). From the findings of (Bates, 2017:18), Bates concluded that the teachers struggle to answer this question too. Providing equitable access to music education was hindered greatly due to systemic problems in the school and the community, a lack of support for the special learning needs learners had, a lack of specialist training opportunities for teachers, and mistrust and miscommunication between the teachers and authorities. These challenges led to constant negotiation between a sense of powerlessness, an embrace of collective action (through collaborative teaching) and a growth mindset.

5.7 Limitations

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, I could conduct only one in-person workshop with the participants in this study. After consultation with them, we had to resort to a WhatsApp group. This procedure took six months to complete. The richness of data gathered was also affected when two of the participants withdrew from the study. Because WhatsApp does not accommodate synchronous participation, I faced many delays in this study. I believe that this also affected the action plans we created, because by the end of the data-gathering process, some of the participants had moved to other schools.

5.8 Delimitations

This study was not about evaluating teachers but about understanding teachers' challenges when teaching music in the intermediate phase life skills classroom. This study's findings should not be generalised to the experience of all teachers

who teach the music component of life skills in the intermediate phase, whether in this school or elsewhere. Rather, this study presents rich descriptions of these six teachers' challenges in a particular school. The reader should use these rich descriptions to determine the transferability of these findings to their own context.

5.9 Recommendations

The participants in this study highlighted the importance of collaborative teaching and arts integration. This area of study could be explored fruitfully in future research. Furthermore, we need to understand the professional development needs of generalist educators teaching the music component of the life skills subject in the intermediate phase classroom in much more detail. Future action research projects could investigate these needs and suggest possible solutions for dealing with the lack of specialised training offered to these teachers. Furthermore, we need to better understand the communication breakdown between various stakeholders in the education system. This was highlighted as a major concern of the teachers involved in this study. Future studies could therefore conduct institutional ethnographies to better understand the communication culture in the DBE and how (s) this affects the messaging received by teachers who teach the music component of the life skills subject in the intermediate phase. There were also concerns regarding the curriculum itself. Accordingly, there is a need for curriculum developers to revisit and study the music component of the life skills subject to address these concerns.

5.10 Conclusion

This PAR study aimed to explore the challenges teachers face when teaching the music component of life skills in the intermediate phase and create an action plan to respond positively to these challenges. Importantly, my focus was on understanding the challenges that the teachers are facing every day in the life skills classroom when teaching music and in turn to co-create solutions to their challenges. By exploring their challenges through PAR collaboratively we explored the causes of the many issues they were currently dealing with. Furthermore, through the collaborative nature of this research, I aimed to offer these teachers a

voice. During my fieldwork, it became clear that the teachers were desperate to speak up and express their grievances.

Researchers agree that there are challenges in the life skills classroom that need to be addressed and solved. Some of these challenges are associated with CAPS, specifically with respect to time – teachers do not have enough time to teach in the classroom. Other issues speak to the lack of, or inadequate, training and a need to employ specialist teachers in schools. Specialised teaching should be reinstated.

Other issues that were raised were systemic. These issues are reflective of the unequal society within which the South African education system is situated. Insufficient resources and inadequate teacher training are clearly evident. There is also an urgent need to pay greater attention to learners with learning disabilities, as they can create an enormous problem in the life skills classroom.

Through my research, I discovered that collaborative teaching or artistic integration is viewed as a conducive method of teaching life skills in the classroom. This method of teaching should be mediated by music: from the data collected, a common theme emerged regarding collaborative learning and the use of music to teach not only life skills subjects, but also literacy and numeracy. Through the literature, it became evident that music is a connective medium and that using music as a teaching tool can be an effective method to teach in the life skills classroom. As a result, music became not only the answer to the challenges teachers are facing, but also a method by which they can teach other subjects.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Consent form

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Understanding the challenges that teachers in the Western Cape face in the Intermediate Phase Life Skills classroom through participatory musicking workshops.

REFERENCE NUMBERS:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Rechallda Joeleyette Mouton

ADDRESS: 44 Geneva Drive, Glenwaters, Camps Bay, Cape Town

CONTACT NUMBER: 082 474 5367

You are invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my MMus degree. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please do not hesitate to ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied and that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Your participation is **entirely voluntary**, and you are free to decline to participate at any time, and your decision 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. Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data that you generate.

This study has been approved by the **Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)**, the **Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts (REC)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National

Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to ensure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

- *The purpose of this participatory action research case study is to understand the challenges that teachers face in the Intermediate Phase Life Skills classroom through participatory musicking workshops.*
- *Approximately 10 participants will be included in this study.*
- *The objectives of this research are: In which ways can we understand the challenges that teachers face in the Intermediate Phase Life Skills classroom through participatory musicking workshops? What does the relevant scholarly literature say about the challenges that teachers face in the Intermediate Phase Life Skills classroom?*
- *Which musical and research approaches are conducive to creating collaborative and participatory spaces for musicking?*
- *What themes emerge from the data gathered during the participatory musicking workshops?*
- *How can these themes be understood through the lens of the relevant literature?*

Why have you been invited to participate?

- *You have been invited to participate because you are an Intermediate Phase Life Skills teacher residing in the Western Cape.*

What will your responsibilities be?

- *You will be expected to answer the researchers' questions to the best of your ability and to relate as much information as you can regarding the subject of the study and your experience during the participatory musicking*

workshops and new ideas to help bring change in the Intermediate Phase Life Skills classroom.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

- *The direct benefits for you as a participant will be to make use of the findings of this study.*

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

- *I do not foresee any possible risks for any of the participants.*

Who will have access to the data?

- *If you choose to stay anonymous, in no way will your results be linked to your identity. The data will be handled as confidentially as possible (that is, I assure you that we will protect the information we have about you). Confidentiality will be ensured by the safekeeping of the data on my personal and back-up devices. Reporting of anonymous findings will be made possible by using pseudonyms.*
- *Only the researchers and study leaders will have access to the data. Data will be kept safe and secure by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and electronic data will be password protected.*
- *Data will be stored for five years in electronic format on a computer before being erased.*

What will happen to the data?

The data from this study will be reported in the following way: in article form as part of my MMus degree requirements. In all of this reporting, you will not be personally identified if you choose to stay anonymous. This means that the

reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated.

This is a once-off study, so the data will not be re-used.

Will you be paid/compensated for taking part in this study and are there any costs involved?

You will not be paid/compensated for taking part in the study, but refreshments will be available while attending the participatory workshops. If participating in the research means that you have to travel especially to participate, then your travel costs will be paid. There will therefore be no costs involved due to your participation.

How will you know about the findings?

- The general findings of the research will be shared with you by sending you the results via email.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Rechalda Joeleyette Mouton on 082 474 5367 if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- 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:

I declare that:

- I have read and understood 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 to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), 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 understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publicly and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- 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*)
20....

.....

.....

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| • You may contact me again | Yes |
| No | |
| • I would like a summary of the findings of this research | Yes No |

The best way to reach me is:

Name & surname: _____

Postal address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone number: _____

Cellphone number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & surname:

Phone/cellphone number/email:

Declaration by researcher

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 they adequately understand all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*)
20.....

Signature of researcher

.....

Signature of witness

.....

Annexure B

Participatory Workshop 1

Agenda

Date: 15 June 2021

Time: 13.30

Facilitator: Rechallda Mouton

Teachers

Varity | Lisa| Ennov | Allissa |Stacey| Gail

Time	Activity
Day 1	Welcome

Activity 1: (WhatsApp Group)

Day 2	<u>Sensory Exercise:</u> each teacher to have a cup of tea at home. Teachers to experience the sensation of that tea. They then need to recall the taste and experience while not having tea. They need to send message on group about their experience. This exercise is about experiencing what they tasted 'from memory'. This activity is to bring teachers to mindfulness and focus.
-------	--

Time	Activity
------	----------

Problem Question: What are the challenges you as teachers face teaching Life Skills in the Intermediate Phase classroom?

Activity:

- Day 3
- 1) Create symbols and denote the sounds they mean. For example, a star symbol means, clap a circle, stomp your feet a triangle means little desk a square means snap your fingers.
 - 2) Put these instructions on the board and get everyone to compose their own music using only the symbols.
 - 3)
 - 4) Then let everyone display their music on the board while the others follow “notes’ to create the music.

Utopian:

Question: If there were no boundaries in the Life Skills classroom? What would be your ideal Life Skills classroom?

Day 4

Activity:

How does the guitar sound? What is sound of the cello? Teachers to identify and learn how different instruments sound.

Time	Activity
	Music links of different instrumental music. 1) Play the sounds of different instruments first. 2) Then play a simple song with distinct sounds of the instruments and ask the teachers to identify the instruments.
	<u>Action Plan:</u> <u>Page 1:</u> Discuss the three top challenges – dissect. Teachers to name realistic changes to be made during this session. Use A3 again to record these for the first section. <u>Activity:</u> Props such as hats, balloons, ribbons, wigs, flowers, teddy bears. Space to dance.
Day 5	1) Make space to dance. 2) Place all props on a table or side of the room. 3) As soon as the music plays you will have to run to the table and pick up a prop. 4) Then dance in any way you want using the prop, as necessary. 5) Once in the middle of the song drop the prop and use another prop. Three quarters into the song use the last prop.
	<u>Activity:</u> 1) Choose two songs one happy one sad (with

Time	Activity
	other emotions too) 2) Then the teachers need to listen to the happy song first. Expressing that emotion first videoing it and doing it in any way fitting (eg jumping). 3) For the sad song you may just be moving like swaying etc. or in any other way expressing the emotions of the music.
Day 6	
	Activity: 1) Teachers to send a link of a song. 2) After listening to the full song. On a piece of paper which will be posted as a video a single word that comes to mind.
Day 7	3) Next after listening again to the same song write down the tempo how fast the song is (eg fast, medium or slow). 4) Finally, write down the genre of the song.
	Closing time
	Thank you to all the teachers for their efforts.

Annexure C

Prompts for WhatsApp data collection

Prompt 1

Sensory exercise: Each to have a cup of coffee or tea at home. Experience the sensation of the beverage you are having. After having the beverage, recall the sensation, taste and experience. Please send your experience to this group.

This exercise is about mindfulness and focus.

Prompt 2

1. How do you use music in your everyday life?
2. Do you use music to solve any problems?
3. How do you use music in your Life Skills classroom?
4. Do you use music to solve problems or does music cause problems?

Prompt 3

What songs do you listen to when you are sad or happy and why?

Question 1 (around an Action Plan)

What is the story behind becoming a Life Skills educator?

Question 2

What is the high point in my Life Skills classroom involving music from the past?

Question 3

1. What are the things I value in the Life Skills curriculum for PSW?
2. What are the things I value in the Life Skills curriculum for Creative Arts?
3. What are the things I value in the Life Skills curriculum for Physical Education?

Question 4

What has changed in the Life Skills classroom – reflecting on the past five years?

Question 5

What is the best future I can imagine for music in the classroom?

Question 6

What are the concrete steps we as a school community, teachers, need to take get there?

Annexure D



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South Africa 2520

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Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Research Ethics Regulatory Committee
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

12 June 2020

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Arts Research Ethics Committee (AREC)** on 12/06/2020, the Arts Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-RERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Understanding the challenges that teachers in the Western Cape face in the intermediate phase life skills classroom through participatory musicing workshops																														
Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Dr J. Morelli																														
Student: R.P. Mouton																														
Ethics number:	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Institution</td><td></td><td colspan="5">Study Number</td><td></td><td colspan="2">Year</td><td colspan="2">Status</td></tr></table> Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation	N	W	U	-	0	1	0	2	4	-	2	0	-	A	7	Institution				Study Number						Year		Status	
N	W	U	-	0	1	0	2	4	-	2	0	-	A	7																
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Application Type: Single Study	Risk Category: <table border="1"><tr><td>Low</td></tr></table>	Low																												
Low																														
Commencement date: 12/06/2020																														
Expiry date: 12/06/2021																														
Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.																														

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the AREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the AREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the AREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the AREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-RERC and AREC reserves the right to:

- request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the AREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- AREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via 13128388@nwu.ac.za or 018 285 2301.

The AREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the AREC or the NWU-RERC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof L. M. Fourie
Acting Chairperson NWU Arts Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2