

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH OUTLINE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Western Classical music can be seen as a dying art with fewer and fewer people and audiences listening to it.

The mere thought of classical music conjures up intimidating images of serious grim-faced performers, dressed in tuxedos and playing music by fossilized composers who've been dead for 300 years. And then there's the common perception of the audience: a bunch of high-brows who sniff about Baroque performance practices and unresolved deceptive cadences (Pogue & Speck, 1997:xxv).

According to Van Dyke (2002:36), reports of diminishing percentages of adults of all age groups attending "high culture" performing arts events in recent years are very discouraging. Pop and rock music can be heard constantly on the majority of radio stations, broadcast to the general public in shopping centres, restaurants, public transport and so forth. The same cannot be said about Western Classical music. Classic FM at 102.7 is one of the few radio stations in South Africa that plays and promotes only Western Classical music. It is doubtful if the general public, who does not have a specific interest in, or any background knowledge of, Western Classical music, will tune in to listen to this local radio station just for entertainment, relaxation or background music. The question is: "Whose responsibility is it to foster appreciation of this art form amongst South African children?" Most parents were not exposed to it when they were young. This shifts the spotlight to the schools. Is enough presently being done in South African schools to expose learners to Classical music in order to insure the future vitality of this musical style? It became evident through this research study that this is, unfortunately, not the case.

This action research study, in which Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers were introduced to a fun-filled method of how to expose young learners to Western Classical Music through the integration of the arts, was implemented during a pilot study in Mauritius and during the main research in underprivileged areas in three provinces in South Africa. The study is directly related to the researcher's profession as a music teacher and trainer in early childhood. She is a Music Education

Specialist for ECD and a travelling music teacher at 21 pre- and primary schools in Centurion and Pretoria, South Africa. She was convinced that the music programme she had compiled during previous postgraduate studies (Nel 1995a; Nel 1997) could make a positive contribution to expose young learners in a fun-filled way to Western Classical music through the integration of the arts (music, drama, creative dance movements and the visual arts) in the Foundation Phase in South Africa. Before this could be done, she had to implement the programme with other race groups than Whites (of whom she had experience) in order to convince role-players in ECD and herself that the programme would be suitable for all ECD learners.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

According to Jean McNiff (2002:1), action research begins with values. McNiff suggests that a secure starting point for an action enquiry should be a clarification of “what you are doing and why you are doing it”. As a self-reflective practitioner the researcher will therefore begin with an overview of her confidence in the music programme that was implemented during this research. It will further be explained how it happened that a pilot project, prior to the main research, was done in Mauritius.

1.2.1 Taking up the challenge

Although the *Position Statement on Early Childhood Education* (MENC 1994) emphasizes the importance of music activities in ECD programmes, research has found that teachers in this phase have reported that they have limited musical knowledge as well as misconceptions regarding their musical ability. In addition, they mentioned that they had a lack of adequate resources. According to Shannon de l’Etoile (2001:7) from the State University of Colorado, it is shortcomings like these that affect the quality and frequency of musical experiences in ECD. There is, however, a suggestion from music educators that the situation could be remedied with a “modest amount of well-designed training” that should most likely provide ECD teachers with skills and knowledge to use music effectively (Hildebrandt 1998:70). The researcher interprets the term “modest amount of well-designed training” as training that makes use of a well-structured methodology to equip musically untrained generalist classroom teachers in a short period of time. This “short period of time” was tried out in the research as a one day practical hands-on workshop during which

ECD practitioners were equipped with the necessary skills to implement a proposed music programme effectively in their classrooms. This programme, which is the result of a well-trying practice over a period of more than 20 years, is a listening programme, based on Western Classical music. The essential aim of this programme is to develop the listening skills of young learners.

According to the *Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005* (2000:74), teachers are in need of textbooks and other learning support materials because they generally do not have the time, the resources and the skills to develop their own materials. Furthermore teachers need to be trained to use these books/manuals effectively. This need is especially applicable as far as the integration of the arts is concerned. With constant budget restrictions for the arts, there is a need for effective training for ECD teachers that can take place over a short period of time.

Before an attempt could be made to recommend the well-structured listening programme for all ECD learners in South Africa, it was necessary to find out to what extent ECD teachers would be able to implement the lessons in this music programme successfully - even those in the very poorest areas in the country. Although a detailed explanation of the proposed music programme appears in previous research (1995a; Nel 1997), a brief explanation of the programme will again be given in Chapter 3 to familiarize the reader with the methodology. The reason for this is that the previous research was written in Afrikaans, a language which is mostly only spoken and understood by South Africans. It is therefore assumed that not many researchers in other parts of the world are familiar with this language.

By equipping teachers of the Foundation Phase with this specific method that the researcher believed in, and with which she had many years of success in ECD, she hoped that larger audiences for Western Classical music could eventually be gained and developed at the same time. With her strong beliefs about the values of Western Classical music and the fact that it should still have a rightful place (even in this modern era) in the school curriculum, her intention was to share this easy methodology with ECD practitioners in an attempt to transform any negative attitude that may exist amongst them towards this musical style. Although the researcher initially doubted the influence that she could possibly have as an individual on the education system in South Africa, the previous successes she experienced with the programme amongst Whites in the past, inspired her to start the research.

Krishnamurti (1954:34) is of the opinion that to transform the world, we must begin with ourselves; and what is important in beginning with ourselves is the intention. Krishnamurti explains that:

The intention must be to understand ourselves and not to leave it to others to transform themselves. This is our responsibility, yours and mine; because, however small may be the world we live in, if we can bring about a radically different point of view in our daily existence, then perhaps we shall affect the world at large.

The researcher was not prepared to leave the decision of whether ECD teachers are going to expose their learners to Western Classical music or not for them to decide, because she knew from experience that most of them were not familiar with it and would therefore not attempt to teach it. She knew that she would be able to make a radical change in their attitudes towards Western Classical music once she had the opportunity to expose them in a fun-filled way to this style.

It will be explained in detail in Chapter 3 that Western Classical music is not a popular musical style to the ordinary listener in South Africa. The researcher was curious to find out to what extent black ECD teachers and their learners in underprivileged areas, who are usually unfamiliar with Western Classical music, will accept the proposed listening programme and be able to implement it in their classrooms. She only had previous experience of the implementation of the programme with learners from “better off” white schools and the presentation of workshops to a majority of white teachers in South Africa who could afford the resource material. She wanted to gain first-hand knowledge of circumstances at pre- and primary schools in underprivileged areas in the country and collect data in these areas on which she could base her findings and recommendations. Johnson (1993:2) warns that teachers should make informed decisions that are “data driven” and suggests that they document and evaluate their efforts.

If it could be proved during the current research that the programme is suitable for all ECD teachers and learners in the Foundation Phase, extensive funding would be needed to implement the programme countrywide at all primary schools in South Africa. This programme integrates all four of the components of the learning area Arts and Culture, as required for *Curriculum 2005* (C2005), namely music, drama, dance and the visual arts. The implementation of the programme could be used to

enrich this learning area and develop the teaching skills of ECD teachers in this field. According to Land & Vaughan (1978:110) it is necessary that clear reasons should therefore be given why Music Education should be part of the curriculum - especially in schools with severe financial problems. Although Music Education is officially included in the South African curriculum, there are often not enough funds available to supply teachers with appropriate resources and to develop their music skills through in-service-training.

Land & Vaughan (1978:110) state further that policymakers and funding agencies are particularly interested in identifying indicators that can measure success so that it can be used as a basis for making investment decisions. There is a push from researchers and programme planners, and from practitioners and parents, to define the factors that constitute a high quality programme, to determine what constitutes “success” in a programme, and to identify those aspects of an intervention that make a difference in the development of young children. Jane Evans (1996:3), a member of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development in Washington, D.C., mentions in the *Coordinators’ Notebook Nr 18* that funders want the assurance that their funds will be supporting quality programmes and says that they are particularly interested in the issue of cost-effectiveness. Evans continues by saying that there is a need to understand what will happen to successful programmes “when they go to scale, that is when they are replicated for greater coverage”. She says that when the implementation of small-scale programmes is usually judged as highly successful, interest is always shown in making these programmes available to a greater number of people. According to Evans (1996:3), funders need to know what is required in order to create an effective large-scale programme that could be undertaken with the help of the government and substantial donor support. They are concerned to know how to put such a programme in place in a way that will achieve and maintain quality support; they therefore need some guidelines in order to do so. The above-mentioned statements by Land & Vaughan and Evans alerted the researcher to identify indicators during the research that could possibly measure the success of the programme.

Prof. Kadar Asmal, former Minister of Education in South Africa, was of the opinion that although budgets allocated for the teaching of music in South African schools are declining, “the value of music in the general learning experience of learners cannot, and dare not, be underestimated” (Asmal 2000:13). Based on her many

years of experience the researcher felt that the capability of children in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) was indeed underestimated. She was convinced that Music Education in the Foundation Phase should be something more than just the mere singing of songs and saying of rhymes as is done in the majority of South African schools. The excuse for not implementing a quality music programme in the Foundation Phase (which includes Western Classical music) was mostly attributed to the lack of trained teachers and funding for resources (see Chapter 4). Asmal warned South African teachers that they cannot afford to merely sit back and wait for resources to appear. The Minister appealed directly to role-players in Music Education to come forward with suggestions to see what contribution they could make in order to make Music Education accessible to all where resources were scarce (Asmal 2000:14). The researcher considered herself in a position to accept the Minister's challenge.

1.2.2 Role-players in ECD

The reform and improvement in Music Education that the researcher had in mind with the implementation of the proposed music programme through the integration of the arts in ECD had to involve change. This could unfortunately not happen in seclusion or isolation; the help of role-players in ECD, or "champions" as they are described by Patchen, were needed to make it a reality. Patchen (1996:26) states that:

To be effective, reform and improvement must have champions to create effective partnerships, to provide a means for debate and explanation, as well as opportunities for teachers, schools, and communities to try out ideas.

Seeing that the researcher had no real contact with teachers from underprivileged areas, a way had to be found to make contact with Early Childhood Development role-players from black communities in South Africa to organize training workshops at appropriate venues where the methodology could be implemented and tried out. Role-players were also needed to help observe the programme and eventually help with the distribution and collection of assessment forms. It will be explained in the following paragraphs how the researcher's involvement in the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development (SACECD), also known worldwide as OMEP, has led to her connection and partnership with role-players in ECD in Mauritius and South Africa. It was through the cooperation of these role-players that this research could become a reality.

1.2.2.1 The South African Congress for Early Childhood Development (SACECD)

At the beginning of 2002, the researcher joined the SACECD. According to the SACECD website (see below), this organization is a national mass-based NGO for ECD in South Africa. With its headquarters in Pretoria, it represents the interests of over 7 million young children (0-9 years old), ECD workers and the ECD sector in general. The organization was launched at a national conference during 23-25 March 1994 in Port Elizabeth and is represented by nine provincial executive committees in the different provinces in South Africa. Further information as well the aims and objectives of the organization can be accessed on line at: <http://www.sacecd.co.za>.

By joining the SACECD, the researcher was one step further in reaching her goal to make contact with ECD role-players from underprivileged areas in black communities. A way forward was imagined in the hope that membership of this organization would enable her to meet provincial leaders who could be approached to organize workshops for her in their areas to enable black ECD teachers to be exposed to the music programme. At the stage when the researcher joined the organization she had no knowledge of the capabilities of teachers and learners in underprivileged areas or what their attitude towards Western Classical music was, but was determined to find out to what extent they would be able to cope with the methodology. Although the majority of the SACECD members were black and from a culture which does not necessarily favour Classical music, the researcher was determined to tackle the research. Driven by her passion for Music Education and her belief that all young children should at least have the opportunity to be exposed to this musical style in a fun-filled way, she was convinced that she had the necessary knowledge and skills to help these teachers to implement the methodology successfully at their schools.

Inge Arndt, honorary president of the SACECD, warned members of the organization in her letter (Arndt 2003:3) in *ECD Today* about success, and that they should not fear change and the unknown. She says that success is related to “go and do”. The more people you make successful the more successful you will be. With her own goals clearly in her mind, the researcher was ready to “go and do”, willing to take the risk and venture into a new learning experience with teachers from other cultures in an attempt to empower them to integrate the arts (music, drama, dance and the

visual arts) in a fun-filled way in the Foundation Phase curriculum via Western Classical music.

1.2.2.2 World Organization for Early Childhood Development (OMEP)

"OMEP" is an acronym for the World Organization for Early Childhood Development as it is written in French or Spanish:

Organization Mondiale pour l'Education Préscolaire (French)
Organización Mundial para la Educación Preescolar (Spanish).

OMEP is the only international NGO for Pre-School Education which focuses on the topic of ECD from 0-8 years. Its main focus is to work for the sake of children and to defend their rights. The organization was founded in 1948 as a consequence of the sequels of World War II, specifically for the thousands of orphaned children whom the war left behind. OMEP's objective is to fund and organize an international group capable of reminding governments and international organizations of the needs of early childhood, and to co-operate with intergovernmental entities such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the Council of Europe. OMEP's objective is to use every possible means to promote optimum conditions for the well-being of all children, their development and happiness within their families, institutions and society. OMEP assists any undertaking to improve Early Childhood Education, and supports scientific research that can influence these conditions. OMEP is currently active in 70 countries and co-operates with other international organizations with similar aims. South Africa and Mauritius are both affiliated to this world organization. More information about OMEP can be obtained at the following two websites: <http://www.omep-usnc.org/intro.html> and <http://www.omepaustralia.com.au/worldomep.html>.

1.2.2.3 The OMEP 2002 World Conference

The SACECD had the honour of hosting the OMEP World Conference at the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban from 7-11 October 2002. During February 2002 the researcher's proposal to present a music workshop at the conference was accepted.

Only a few white ECD teachers from South Africa attended the conference. The majority of the attendees were from black schools in underprivileged areas, as well as leaders from organizations that represented deprived areas in the country. The music workshop was scheduled for four o'clock in the afternoon and delegates were very tired by that time of the day. Fortunately the word quickly spread that something exciting was going to happen in room 206. Although it was the only Arts and Culture topic listed for the conference week, it was still a pleasant surprise to find that the workshop was attended by more than two hundred delegates. This one and a half hour practical workshop was based on an example lesson from the proposed music programme which the researcher had compiled for ECD teachers and learners during previous research studies (1995a; Nel 1997).

The presentation of the practical workshop was evaluated as one of the most outstanding presentations during the conference week. It was recommended in the 2002 *OMEP Report* (2002:174) that activities like these should be used as ice-breakers at the opening of future OMEP World Conferences. One of the foreign delegates who attended the music presentation at the 2002 conference, Mr Somoo Valayden, president of OMEP Mauritius, was impressed with the method and approached the researcher to present similar music workshops for ECD teachers and students at the OMEP Training Centre in Curepipe, on the island of Mauritius. The invitation from this important ECD role-player in Mauritius was gladly accepted. Seeing that the listening programme was entirely based on Western Classical music, it was seen as an excellent opportunity to launch a pilot study to determine to what extent the methodology of the music programme would be acceptable for Creole speaking Mauritians whose dominant music style was the Sega (see Chapter 5.2.1 for an explanation of this music style). The researcher imagined the same way forward to expose the Mauritian teachers at practical, hands-on workshops to Western Classical music as she visualized with black teachers from underprivileged areas in South Africa where the main research took place. This opportunity for a pilot study in Mauritius gave an extra powerful dimension to the research through which more experience of ECD teachers beyond the local situation in South Africa was gained.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As explained in the previous background to the research, the researcher knew from past experience that this programme could be successfully implemented with middle and upper-middle class teachers and children. Although she believed in the success of programme, she had to make sure whether it would be acceptable for teachers and children from groups who were unfamiliar with Western Classical music. She believed that an opportunity to train black African teachers from disadvantaged schools in South Africa would give her a good indication if it was feasible to recommend the listening programme for all learners in the Foundation Phase in South Africa. Although listening plays a critical role in effective communication, the development of listening skills is not a school subject like reading, writing or mathematics. With the development of the listening skills of young learners being one of the main objectives of the music programme, it had the potential to make a significant contribution to improve listening in general in Foundation Phase classrooms.

1.3.1 The main research question

In the light of the background to the study and the research problem that was briefly sketched, the main research question can be formulated as follows:

How can ECD practitioners be trained to expose young learners to Western Classical music through the integration of the arts in the ECD learning programme?

1.3.2 Sub-questions

This main research question can be broken up into the following eight sub-questions:

- What is the current position of ECD in South Africa and where does Grade R fit into this picture? (Chapter 2)
- To what extent is there still a place for Western Classical music in South African schools and how can it be successfully taught? (Chapter 3)
- How can the proposed music programme be integrated into the ECD learning area? (Chapter 4)

- How could an effective learning environment for the training of ECD practitioners be facilitated to empower them to implement the proposed music programme successfully at their schools? (Chapters 5 and 6)
- How could the programme be observed? (Chapters 5 and 6)
- What contribution can a Video Compact Disc (VCD¹) make towards the sustainability of the research? (Chapter 6)
- How could the researcher's own practice be improved to make it more effective and sustainable? (Chapter 7)
- How could the findings of the research be used to implement the music programme at all primary schools in South Africa and the rest of the Southern African Development Community countries (SADC)? (Chapter 7)

Answers to the last two sub-questions are suggested under Recommendations in Chapter 7, together with other recommendations related to the research.

1.4 TARGET GROUPS

The main target group for this research was ECD practitioners from the Foundation Phase. Participants included Grade R teachers from home- and community-based, multi-aged² centres, as well as Grade R-3 teachers from Government schools.

1.4.1 International target group

The international target group consisted of a mixed variety of participants who attended the many workshops that were presented during the pilot study in Mauritius (see Chapter 5). Although not all the attendees were teachers, the majority of them

¹ A VCD is a CD that contains moving pictures and sound. A VCD has the capacity to hold up to 74/80 minutes on 650MB/700MB CDs respectively of full-motion video along with quality stereo sound. A VCD can be played on almost all standalone DVD Players and of course on all computers with a DVD-ROM or CD-ROM drive with the help of software based decoder/player. It is also possible to use menus and chapters, similar to DVDs, on a VCD and also simple photo album/slide shows with background audio (Free Dictionary Encyclopedia, 2006).

² A multi-age classroom is a learning community of children who represent two or more age groups or grade levels. It is a heterogeneous group of children representing the intellectual, cultural and economic profile of the school where the classroom exists. The goal is to use instructional practices and curriculum which maximize the potential benefits of interaction and cooperation among children who vary in experience, maturity and ability. Children with different experiences and stages of development are encouraged to offer or request support from each other for all aspects of classroom activity. As appropriate, large group, small flexible group and individual instruction are utilized. In some cases a group of children and a teacher will stay together for several years (MOEC 1999).

were OMEP (ECD) students, ECD practitioners and teachers from the Foundation Phase of the “ZEP” schools.³

The following groups were not planned to be part of the target groups of the pilot study, but they will be briefly referred to in Chapter 5, to point out the versatility and possibilities of the proposed music programme:

- mentally handicapped children
- abused mothers and children
- children from the rehabilitation centre at the Mauritius prison
- Grade R-6 learners from the International School in Mauritius
- Grade 1-6 learners from various government and private schools in Mauritius.

1.4.2 National target groups

- Safe and Sound Music Project (SSMP) in Gauteng Province

30 black African ECD trainees of the Safe and Sound Learning Centre who were studying towards a Level 4 National qualification were targeted.

- 2004 and 2006 Limpopo Music Projects (2004 LMP and 2006 LMP)

240 black ECD teachers from the areas around Mokopane (Potgietersrus), Polokwane (Pietersburg) and Lebowakgomo in the Limpopo province were targeted as participants of the 2004 Limpopo Music Project and 120 ECD teachers from the areas of Motetema, Polokwane and Steilloop for the 2006 Limpopo Music Project.

³ “ZEP” is an abbreviation used for under-performing schools in Mauritius, called “Zones d’Education Prioritaires”. According to the *Strategy Document on “Zones d’Education Prioritaires”*, issued by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Mauritius (Mauritius 2004:5) a school is classified as a “ZEP” school when it has had a CPE pass rate of less than 40% over the last 5 years.

- *Gert Sibande Music Project (GSMP)* in Mpumalanga Province

30 ECD teachers of 15 schools (two per school) between Grades R-3 from government schools and

30 ECD Curriculum Implementers (CIs) in Mpumalanga province were included in this target group.

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The main research outcome of this study will be:

To train ECD practitioners by equipping them with skills and knowledge to integrate the arts through the implementation of a music programme, based on Western Classical music.

Other outcomes will be:

- To find out by means of a literature review:
 - What the current position of ECD in the South African context is, with special reference to Grade R.
 - Why teachers shy away from exposing learners to Western Classical music in the school curriculum and what could be done to make this musical style acceptable and fun for ECD practitioners and their learners.
 - What role the music programme could play towards the holistic development of the young child when it is integrated in the ECD learning area.
- To create an effective environment for adult learning by exposing ECD practitioners to a modest amount of well-designed training by means of a play-based, practical, in-role workshop where they will be afforded the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge to expose young learners to Western Classical music through dramatization, creative dance movements, the visual arts and instrumental play.

- To observe/monitor the outcomes of the training in a broad sense at music training workshops and during field visits to schools.
- To make a creative, practical, visual contribution to the research study in the form of a VCD with sample lessons from the proposed music programme in action in one of the poorest areas in South Africa.
- To find ways through an action research study to improve the researcher's own practice in order to make it more effective and sustainable.
- To try to determine and define the factors that led to the successful implementation of the proposed music programme so that it could be available for future sponsors with the possibility in mind that the programme could be recommended for all learners in the Foundation Phase in South Africa and other SADC countries.

1.6 VALUE OF THE STUDY

The research makes a dual contribution to Music Education and ECD by providing a practical and workable method for the training of ECD students, practitioners and teachers on the implementation of a simple and fun-filled listening programme to expose Grade R-3 learners actively to Western Classical music through the integration of the arts. The educational importance of the study is clearly reflected in Chapters 5 and 6 in the descriptions and quotations on what teachers had to say about the quality of the programme. The time and effort that teachers have put in to implement the programme proved to be well worth it.

The study is extremely important because the findings could be used for the implementation of the proposed programme in all primary schools in South Africa, the SADC countries, or in any other interested country where the exposure of young children to Western Classical music is still considered a priority. This programme is the only one of its kind that the researcher knows of.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODS

The aim of this action research study was to contribute to addressing practical concerns of ECD teachers in Music Education and to further the goals of social science simultaneously. One of the main methodologies used in this study was therefore that of action research.

1.7.1 Action research

Dick (1997:1) is of the opinion that the dual aim of action and research should be taken into account in any research study that makes use of action research. It was certainly the case with this research which was done in the context of a focused effort to implement a particular music programme.

Johnson (1993:2) suggests that action research “could be used as an evaluative tool which can assist self-evaluation whether the ‘self’ be an individual or an institution”. It is clear that the use of action research, to deepen and develop classroom practice, has grown into a strong tradition of practice. It typically is designed and conducted by practitioners who analyze the data to improve their own practice. According to Ferrance (2000:9) a research plan can involve a single teacher investigating an issue in his or her classroom, a group of teachers working on a common problem, or a team of teachers and others focusing on a school- or district-wide issue.

Although the research study was undertaken and documented by the researcher as an individual, the implementation of the programme, conclusion and findings could not have been reached without the many ECD participants who contributed by trying out the methodology in the classroom. ECD role-players who were responsible for observation reports, assessment of the different music projects that were initiated and the organizing of the different venues where the workshops were presented, played a major role in the study. Without their help and dedication towards ECD training the researcher would not have been able to gather important information to document the research. The study should therefore be seen as a team effort to improve the current situation and needs in the training of ECD teachers in the integration of the arts in South Africa to expose learners more effectively and creatively to Western Classical music. According to Hauptfleisch (1997:165), action

research is precisely prompted by this question of “how to improve or change a situation or behaviour in a classroom or educational situation”.

Action research seems to have many definitions. The concept can, according to Johnson (1993:1), be traced back to the early works of John Dewey in the 1920s and Kurt Lewin in the 1940s. Literally it “is about learning by doing” (McTaggart 1991:86). Beneze (1998:1) is of the opinion, however, that it is more complex than that. He points out that with action research’s “emphasis on participation, action researchers are enabled to do as much as possible in matters pertaining to their thoughts and actions”. The definition that Carr and Kemmis (1986:162) provide seems therefore more appropriate:

Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out.

Kemmis (1993:178) says that a “self-reflective spiral of planning, acting (implementation), observing and reflecting is essential to action research”. This is why, according to Davidoff (1990:28), a systematic planning of action is thus required, with ideas that could be implemented in practice, followed by observation and reflection. This process is called the action research cycle. Dick (1997:4) notes that the reflection at the end of each cycle will feed into the planning of the next cycle. Dick (2000:2) is of the opinion that the best known cycle in Australia is probably that of Stephen Kemmis and his colleagues at Deakin University. The steps they suggest are:

plan – act – observe – reflect (and then – plan, etc.)

Dick (2000:2) continues by saying that the planning is embedded in the action and reflection. It should therefore not be seen as a separate and prior step. Dick suggests that the use of short multiple cycles will “allow greater rigour to be achieved”.

The **plan of action**, or intervention that was planned for this study, was to try out a music programme called *Active Listening to Classical Music through Dramatization and Instrumental Play* with ECD teachers from disadvantaged areas in South Africa through practical workshops. The aim was to induce change that would, hopefully,

lead to an improved situation. The change that the researcher had in mind was that teachers, who have never used Western Classical music in the classroom before, would be able to expose their learners to it in a fun-filled way by bringing it vibrantly to life through storytelling, dramatization, creative dance movements and instrumental play. Reliable information had to be gathered on which recommendations could be based to enhance the current ECD learning programme through the integration of the arts. Although the different music projects that were planned for the research formed the framework of the main research cycles, many smaller cycles evolved as the research progressed.

The **implementation** of the music programme was presented by means of a series of one day workshops at various venues in South Africa and Mauritius where ECD teachers were practically introduced to example lessons from the listening programme. Equipped with the initial training and the resource material for the implementation of the programme in their individual classrooms, the participants (and the researcher) were able to make appropriate personal **observations** of the effectiveness of the proposed music programme at different ECD sites. This information enabled the researcher to **reflect** critically on the outcomes of the workshops and the assessment of the resource material which was done by the participants. After each cycle the researcher critiqued what she had done and how she had done it. This balance between critical reflection and flexibility allowed for adequate rigour to be achieved, even where the cycles overlapped.

With the outcomes of all the workshops to hand, the last cycle of the research was to make data-based recommendations for the expanded use of the listening programme.

1.7.2 Methods of data collecting

A multi-method approach of data-collection was followed in this study. The main approaches that were used to gather the data were document analysis, teacher assessment forms, observation, informal interviews, a video recording, and photographs.

1.7.2.1 Document analysis

The document analysis commenced with the study of academic manuals on ECD teaching, government policies on ECD training and provision in South Africa and abroad and Music Education in ECD. Although the research included a pilot study in Mauritius, it was only possible to obtain one official document from this country, namely the Strategy Document (2003) on “Zones d’Education Prioritaires”, issued by die Ministry of Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Mauritius (Mauritius 2004).

1.7.2.2 Teacher assessment forms

Teacher assessment forms were completed by participants who obtained the resource material for the practical implementation of the training they received at the workshops. They had to evaluate the resource material on a teacher assessment form (see Appendix D) after they had implemented the lessons in practice. Valuable information on the effectiveness of the music programme was gathered in this way. Forms which the researcher did not collect on her personal visits to the schools were supposed to be collected by the organizers and mailed back to the researcher. This method of data collecting did not work so well and the researcher fully agrees with Joseph (1999:10) who warns that any type of form or questionnaire that needs to be mailed back to a researcher does not seem to be a reliable method of data collection.

1.7.2.3 Observation

The *Free Dictionary Encyclopedia* (2006) gives the following explanations for the term *observation* - “watching attentively”, “taking a patient look”, “looking at” in the sense of “directing the eyes toward something and perceiving it visually”, “monitoring”. It seems, according to the *Ministry of Forests and Range* (2006), that there is a close relationship between the words “observation” and “monitoring”. This last mentioned source defines “monitoring” broadly as: “to watch or check on”, “checking the status of something,” “observing trends over time,” or “obtaining feedback”. A more restrictive definition is given by the same source that states that: “monitoring is checking an expectation (or assumption) by comparing it to observations”.

Personal observation was done at different schools in Mauritius and at informal settlements and townships in the Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces in South Africa. The aim throughout was to observe the teaching and learning process at different ECD sites. These once-off visits to the schools where the resource material was tried out by the participants gave the researcher a good idea of the extent to which the teachers were able to implement their newly gained skills and knowledge in places where resources were scarce.

McNiff & Whitehead (2005:62) are of the opinion that “monitoring is about keeping track of what is happening”. They remind the action researcher that “the focus of the action is you, so the aim is to monitor what you are doing”. This led to the researcher not simply registering what was happening during the observation, but drawing conclusions from the situation, and forming personal views of the presentations and how to handle similar situations in future. Observations that were made for the research were regularly written down in a diary in the form of descriptive field notes. As the data collection progressed, these notes were supplemented with reflective field notes. The diary that was kept from 8 July 2003 to 13 October 2006 when the researcher had to bring the study to a closure was an invaluable part of the data collection process. Quotations from this diary will be presented in Chapters 5 and 6 as a personal, narrative account, written in the first person, of what the researcher experienced, observed and thought during the practical implementation of the music programme during the above-mentioned time period.

Due to the fact that the researcher teaches exactly the same music programme as the one she has introduced at the workshops, and has observed on field trips at the different schools she visited, she was not able to distance herself completely from the research. Lubbe (2005:xiv) explains that although reflexivity is required through the whole process of action research, “it is unavoidable that the research mirrors the researcher and all her connections”. Although the researcher was personally involved with the presentation of the practical workshops, she tried to observe each presentation in an unbiased manner and give a description by means of a critical reflection on each of these different events.

1.7.2.4 Informal interviews

Where time allowed, informal interviews were held with some of the ECD teachers in Mauritius after personal observations at their schools. Conversations like the one with Marie-France Adam, owner of Mickey House Pre-School in Port Louis, who drove the researcher around to some of the schools that were visited in Mauritius, are also regarded as an informal interview through which a lot of information on ECD in Mauritius was gained.

Informal interviews were also held with a few of the participants in the music projects in South Africa. The teachers shared feelings with the researcher about the way they have implemented the music programme at their different schools. Two of these interviews, namely those with Colleen Walter from the Safe and Sound Training Centre and Elizabeth Nkoana from the Rose Acres Informal Settlement in Germiston (see Appendix A), can be viewed on VCD-1 (see Appendix C). Attendees of the Safe and Sound Music Project, who attended a follow-up workshop, had to give feedback of the worth of the workshops. It was expected from all attendees to write their own stories on a blank paper. These stories will be dealt with in Chapter 6.2.14. Discussion and planning sessions with Colleen Walter from the Safe and Sound Training Centre are also considered as informal interviews. All these different types of interviews were regarded as an important and valuable method of direct data collection.

1.7.2.5 Video recording (VCD)

A video recording (VCD) was made of the way the music programme was implemented at a pre-school in an informal settlement (squatter camp) near Germiston in South Africa and is presented as a supplement to the thesis. This live footage serves as a powerful form of expression which helped the researcher to lend greater weight in establishing the validity of claims to knowledge than words alone could do. It is not always easy for a reader to visualize a specific situation explained in a text. It was hoped that this VCD would give the reader a better idea of circumstances at a pre-school in a squatter camp and to see how four Western Classical pieces from the music programme were implemented and brought to life through dramatization and instrumental play. Although there was limited space for the cameraman and insufficient light in the shack, important data was captured which

could be viewed as many times as the researcher wanted to at a later stage. Another advantage of the video is that a shortened (edited) version of the recording could be made which could be used as living evidence in a funding proposal to sponsors, or at ECD or Music conferences and workshops world-wide.

1.7.2.6 Photographs

The *Free Dictionary Encyclopedia* (2006) warns that personal observations gathered without the aid of instruments are often unreliable. A camera was used to improve the accuracy, quality and utility of the information that was obtained during personal observations of the music programme. A wide selection of photographs that were taken during the practical implementation and observation of the research (see Chapters 5 and 6) can be viewed on the included VCD, marked VCD-2 Photos of the music projects (see Appendix C). These images were part of the data collection for the pilot study in Mauritius, as well as the main research in South Africa and are considered to be important and valuable pieces of evidence. They should not be seen as merely “nice examples” and “simply illustrations” of the research study. Each photograph is accompanied by a caption in which its significance to the research is described. Donaldson (2001:2) mentions that the use of photographs could enhance studies of the physical settings where services were provided and facilitate the issue of “client-provider interaction”.

The purpose of the inclusion of the photos was to record and demonstrate, through visual images, the important interaction that took place between the researcher (provider) and the participants (who could be seen as the clients) at the different workshops, and interaction between children at the schools that were visited. These selected photographs should be seen as an objective representation of the most crucial aspects of the current research that best represents the whole. It points out how the researcher undertook the project in order to try to live her educational values in Music Education. The production of the validated evidence shows that the high standards she had for the training of teachers at practical workshops on how to expose their learners to Western Classical music in a fun-filled way were met. The photographs can assist the reader to judge the “realness” of what the researcher observed during the study. Donaldson (2001:13) states: “Seeing that the camera cannot lie, it is capable of two capacities at the same time: it can objectify reality *and* subjectify it”. According to Donaldson, important social processes could be explained

when photographs are added to a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data collection. He feels that the photographer should therefore not only be seen as a mere objective recorder, but also as a subjective evaluator.

Donaldson (2001:13) notes further that it is difficult – perhaps impossible – to use photographs as an exclusive source of data. He therefore suggests that they should rather be used as part of a multiple-method research strategy. The images that were used in this thesis – which did indeed make use of the multiple data collection strategy – were interpreted in their social and historical context by the researcher. She was able to use other data and her personal knowledge to describe the specific context of each of these photos.

1.7.3 Other sources

An extensive library and internet research was integrated with the data collection and its interpretation. The literature study done for this thesis is largely reflected throughout Chapters 2-4. The data collection and its interpretation form the basis of Chapters 5-7.

1.7.3.1 Books and educational journals

The literature study, which tried to answer and clarify the research questions, came from books and articles in educational journals from both the fields of Music Education and ECD. The reading that was done helped the researcher to contextualize the study within bigger issues.

1.7.3.2 Internet websites

Extensive use of the internet was made to gain relevant information from websites based on the research topic. The reason for the large number of internet sources that were accessed from the beginning of 2005, is that the researcher was in the privileged position to have 24 hour internet access via a home ADSL connection since that time.

1.7.3.3 E-mails, faxes, correspondence and telephone calls

Although not all the e-mails and faxes that the researcher has sent and received as well as the correspondence and telephone calls that were made and received during the research are explicitly referred to in the study, they all played an important role to facilitate communication between the organizers of the different music projects, sponsors, and role-players that made a contribution to the research.

1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The attendees of the music workshops in Mauritius were not supplied with sample lessons. Only 20 of the 400 ECD students, teachers, practitioners and trainers who attended the training obtained the available resource material and therefore only their lessons could eventually be personally observed by the researcher. The reason for this small number was the fact that a baggage weight of only 20kg was allowed on the flight to Mauritius without excess payment. OMEP Mauritius was prepared to pay the excess fee for twenty of the teachers' manuals, videos and CDs. Although the sample was limited, it still gave the researcher a fair indication of the way the Mauritian Creole-speaking participants were able to cope with the resource material in practice.

A lot of time and energy was spent finding funding for the different projects in South Africa. The ideal would have been to include ECD teachers from underprivileged areas in each of the nine provinces in this country in the research, but the study had to be brought to a close at a certain point. This leaves an excellent opportunity for students who wish to take the research further in South Africa and the rest of the world (see recommendation for further research in Chapter 7.5). Finding appropriate sponsors for the different projects and then organizing them could be seen as a major time-consuming setback during the study.

Although the researcher firmly believes that ECD learners should be exposed to different music styles, this study is based on the integration of the arts in the ECD learning programme through the use of Western Classical music only. The reason for this is that Western Classical music is often neglected in the general classroom, because most teachers do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to expose their learners to it.

The researcher could at least share the fun-filled, simplistic methodology, with which she had experienced success for many years as a music educator in South Africa, with ECD practitioners. Once teachers were equipped with the basic skills of appreciating a piece of Western Classical music through storytelling, dramatization, creative dance movements and the visual arts, they would, hopefully, be able to apply these skills to other musical styles to which they want to expose their learners. It is not meant to be a prescribed curriculum for the teaching of Western Classical music in ECD, but it should be seen as a guideline or a model that can be used to develop the listening skills of young learners and to assist ECD teachers to integrate the arts meaningfully in the learning programme. The implementation of this programme will also hopefully broaden the scope of their knowledge of Western Classical music.

This proposed music programme is a listening programme and does therefore not include singing. This does, however, not mean that singing, which is considered one of the major components of Music Education, should not be included in the ECD learning programme.

1.9 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

This section is divided into two parts; the first section will give a brief description of the content of the different chapters, followed by a timeline layout to guide the reader.

1.9.1 Chapter layout

The first chapter describes the researcher's personal beliefs of exposing young learners to Western Classical music and the implementation of the music programme. She also describes in this chapter how her membership of the SACECD and presentation at the 2002 OMEP world conference led to a pilot study in Mauritius and the establishment of a partnership with Mr. Somoo Valayden, president of OMEP Mauritius. The chapter gives an outline of the research problems, the aims of the research, a discussion of the methodology and the different methods that were used for the data collection.

Chapter 2 provides information on ECD in South Africa and consists of a literature review of government documents and policies. This was done to gather background

on ECD and to find out which department was responsible for the provision of Grade R in the country. Seeing that Grade R was part of the target group (Grades R-3) for this research, it was important to find out how this Grade was catered for in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), especially as far as Arts and Culture was concerned.

In the first half of Chapter 3 a detailed discussion is found why Western Classical music is neglected and why it is important that it should be included in the school curriculum. An active approach is investigated that could possibly make this music style become more popular and acceptable to the ordinary listener. The second half of the chapter gives a description of the proposed music programme that the researcher has compiled during previous studies to expose young learners to Western Classical music through storytelling, dramatization, creative dance movements and instrumental play. This is necessary in order to understand the practical implementation of the programme in Chapters 5 and 6. The methodology of the proposed programme is then compared with the principles of musical play in the African context.

Chapter 4 is an extensive literature study on the three learning areas of the ECD curriculum, namely Life Skills, Numeracy and Literacy. This information is necessary to form a clear picture of how the arts (music, drama, dance and the visual arts) could be integrated in the ECD learning programme. It will be mentioned throughout this chapter how the proposed music programme could be used for this purpose.

Chapter 5 gives a detailed description of the implementation of the proposed music programme where the methodology was tried out with Creole speaking ECD practitioners during the pilot study that was done in Mauritius. It can be seen as a straightforward story of the research in which the researcher tells what happened and what she has learnt from the experience.

Chapter 6 forms the main contribution of the thesis and is a continuation of the research story. A detailed description is given of three music projects during which the music programme was implemented with black ECD practitioners from underprivileged areas in three of the nine provinces in South Africa. Firstly, the Safe and Sound Music Project (SSMP) for underprivileged ECD teachers in the Gauteng Province will be described, followed by the Limpopo Music Project (LMP) for ECD

teachers from underprivileged areas in the Limpopo province. The third and last project that will be placed under the spotlight in this chapter is the Gert Sibande Music Project (GSMP), aimed at 15 schools under the Department of Education in Mpumalanga province. The chapter ends with a discussion of the combined information of the results that were gathered in Mauritius and South Africa via the teacher assessment forms.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions reached in terms of the multifaceted action research that was undertaken to investigate the effectiveness and viability of the proposed active music programme in South Africa and Mauritius. Based on the findings of the research, recommendations are firstly made for different ways in which the researcher could improve her own practice in future. Recommendations are also made of how the results of the research could be used to implement the music programme on a large scale in South Africa, followed by recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with final words from the researcher and motivation from an outstanding participant.

1.9.2 Timeline layout

Due to the overlapping of some of the research cycles, the following timeline layout was used as a guide to keep on track during this action research study. The use of a different colour for each music project makes it easier for the reader to see the four projects in perspective.

Table 1: Timeline of projects

Month	Date	Happening
23 March	2002	Researcher joined the SACECD
10 October	2002	OMEP World Conference in Durban
15 September	2003	First trip to Mauritius – workshops (start of the MMP)
10 October	2003	Request for funding the LMP (Flemish Government)
12 February	2004	Funding granted for the Limpopo Music Project
21 March	2004	Second trip to Mauritius – workshops
8 July	2004	Start of the Safe and Sound Music Project (first workshop)
19 September	2004	Third trip to Mauritius – observation at 12 schools

7-9 October	2004	Workshops for LMP (Mokopane, Polokwane + Lebowakgomo)
22 March	2005	Request for funding for the Gert Sibande Music Project (GSMP)
4 April	2005	Funding granted from AVBOB for the resource material (GSMP)
15 April	2005	First two field trips to observe SSMP (Rose Acres + Reiger Park)
22 April	2005	Third field trip to observe SSMP (Soweto)
20 May	2005	Second visit to Rose Acres Informal Settlement
3 June	2005	Mini follow-up workshop and interviews with attendees (SSMP)
10 June	2005	Video recording and interviews (Rose Acres Informal Settlement)
6 July	2005	First fieldtrip to observe the LMP (Mokopane)
30 July	2005	GSMP Music Workshop in Ermelo
24 September	2005	Second grant was announced for LMP (Flemish Government)
28 September	2005	Follow-up Music Workshop for SSMP (Ellerines Com. Centre)
11 November	2005	First fieldtrip to observe GSMP (2 schools in Standerton)
18 November	2005	Second fieldtrip to observe GSMP (2 schools in Leandra)
17 February	2006	Mini workshop for 6 new schools in the Leandra region (GSMP)
4 March	2006	Workshop for second LMP at Motetema
10-11 March	2006	Workshops for second LMP at Polokwane and Steilloop
21 April	2006	First fieldtrip to observe second LMP (2 schools near Motetema)
26 May	2006	Mini workshop for 6 new schools in the Secunda region (GSMP)
7-8 Aug	2006	Conference for ECD CIs in Waterval-Boven (GSMP)
13 Oct	2006	Second fieldtrip to observe second LMP (2 schools near Steilloop)

1.10 NOTES TO THE READER

- Although it is mentioned that the research was done in underprivileged areas in South Africa, it is important to note that this was not the case in Mauritius. Only the participants from the “ZEP” schools were teaching in deprived areas. The other participants were from all parts of the island.
- Capital letters are used when referring to Music Education. In some of the references that were used, spelling was in lower case and will therefore be used as such where it appears in a direct quotation.
- Lower case will be used throughout the thesis for the words “learning area”.

- The question of race is a very difficult issue in South Africa. Capital letters will be used when the word “Blacks” or “Whites” are used as nouns referring to a specific race. Lower case will be used for the words “black” and “white” when it may appear as adjectives, e.g. teachers from black schools, black teachers, white schools, etc.
- For the sake of brevity the word “implement” and variations thereof e.g. “implemented, implementing” and “implementation” should be interpreted throughout the thesis as being followed by the words “observe/monitor”: in other words, “implementing and observing/monitoring” or the “implementation and observation/monitoring” of the music programme, etc. The same is applicable to the title of the thesis.
- Various forms of the term “Western Classical music” were found in the research. These words included Western Art music, Classical music, Western music (which could include more styles than Western Classical music) and Art music. For the purpose of the study the term “Western Classical music” will be used throughout, inter alia because of the many participants in Mauritius who are from an Asian background and are familiar with Eastern Classical music.
- It is important that the reader take note of the different writing styles that the researcher used in this thesis. Chapters 1-4 as well as Chapter 7 were written in the third person and a more formal, academic writing style was used. Chapters 5-6, however, are more informal and mostly written in the first person, because they were based on personal experiences during the practical implementation of the music programme in Mauritius and South Africa.
- The photographs that were referred to in Chapter 1.7.2.6 are presented on VCD-2 (see Appendix C). The ideal might have been to present the photos as part of the text in Chapters 5 and 6, but this was not done, due to the length of the thesis.

- When the researcher refers to “the story” of a piece that are mentioned in the theses, e.g. Hungarian Dance No 5 by Brahms, it is not a story that the composer had in mind when the music was written, but one that was narrated by the researcher in an effort to expose young learners (even adults) to Western Classical music in a fun-filled way.
- The terms “ECD teachers, practitioners, students, trainees, trainers, participants, attendants” should be interpreted as follows:

“ECD teachers” and “practitioners” refer to persons teaching at a school or ECD site.

“ECD students/OMEP students” either refer to those busy studying towards an ECD qualification who are not teaching at a school, or to those studying towards an ECD qualification but who are teaching at a school.

“Trainees” refer to ECD teachers studying towards an ECD qualification.

“Trainers” refer to persons responsible for the training of ECD students and trainees.

“Participants” and “attendants” refer to any of the above-mentioned persons who took part in the researcher’s workshops.

- The inclusion of different Appendices to the thesis was necessary and is explained as follows:

Appendix A: Maps of Mauritius and South Africa

Two maps are included here to enable the reader to locate the places that were visited for the different music projects, as described in Chapters 5 and 6. The first map is a map of Mauritius. A small map, below the main Mauritius map, indicates the proximity of Mauritius to South Africa, Madagascar and the rest of the SADC countries.

The second map is a map of South Africa on which six of the nine provinces are indicated, as well as three bordering countries, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The two smaller countries, Swaziland and Lesotho, appear to be part of South Africa, but are both independent countries with their own government. The three provinces, in which the main research took place, appear in the following colours on the map:

Gauteng – grey

Limpopo – pink

Mpumalanga – yellow.

The researcher's home in Centurion, from where all the music projects for the research were undertaken and coordinated, is indicated with a small red block in the middle of Gauteng province.

Appendix B: Example lesson and graphic notation

This Appendix contains the written text and layout of one of the four example lessons which are demonstrated on VCD-1 (see Appendix C below) by the Grade R learners at the Rose Acres Informal Settlement in Germiston. It was necessary to include the text of one of these stories (Hungarian Dance No 5 by Brahms) because the learners dramatize the stories on the VCD through miming. Without the written text and explanation, the reader will find it difficult to follow the story which the learners are depicting. Although the story could be read at any stage during the research, it is advised that it is read before the visual interpretation of it is viewed on VCD-1. Graphic notation for this example lesson appears at the end of the story. This picture "map" should be used as a guide to lead the reader through the instrumental play section that appears on VCD-1 for *Hungarian Dance No 5*.

Appendix C: VCDs of the music projects

There are two VCDs included in this thesis, namely VCD-1 (Western Classical music through integrated arts in ECD) and VCD-2 (Photos of the music projects). These VCDs form an important part of the data collection. It is necessary that Chapters 5 and 6 should be read with the assistance of a computer to enable the reader to view these VCDs. Although the VCDs are

listed under Appendix C, they are placed in a special protective sleeve on the inside of the back cover of the thesis.

Appendix D: Examples of teacher assessment forms

Here are two examples of the teacher assessment forms that were used to evaluate the music projects in Mauritius and South Africa. Although the forms had different names to accommodate the different music projects, the contents of the form were the same and the reactions to the assessment proved to be similar in all situations.