

# CHAPTER 7

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The action research done in this study was true to its definition in that it pursued both action and research. Based on a literature study and driven by hands-on, practical research experience, it proved to be a very effective method which worked well in this particular study. The conclusions that the researcher came to were data-based and were drawn from multiple sources. Making use of action research was a process which enabled the researcher to put some of her assumptions on how children and ECD teachers could be exposed to Western Classical music to the test and become more critical and reflective in her own practice. True to what Newman (2000:par.7) predicts with action research, the researcher emerged from these experiences with an expanded appreciation of the complexity of learning, of teaching, and a stronger sense of how external realities affect what she can really do.

The research was designed, conducted and implemented to improve the researcher's own practice and to investigate training possibilities for ECD teachers in the field of Music Education. When the study was undertaken, the researcher commenced with the initial knowledge obtained from her many years of practical experience with young learners between the ages of 3 and 9 years and the workshops she had presented to largely white teachers from economically stable areas. She knew from firsthand experience that this particular method, which makes use of the integration of the arts, is an effective and pleasurable way to expose young learners to Western Classical music. The proposed music programme is not limited by stereotyped views about class, cultural background, gender or special needs, and thus the assumption was made that any ECD teacher from any cultural background will benefit and gain music skills and knowledge from the programme. The researcher's main objective was therefore to find out, through the practical implementation of workshops in Mauritius and South Africa, to what extent teachers from different races and language groups would be able to cope with the methodology, especially in areas where resources were scarce.

The researcher's initial dilemma was that she saw herself as an individual when she started the research, with no influence upon the education system. Although there was widespread pressure in the "new" South Africa to preserve traditional African music and move away from Western Classical music, the latter was the music style in which she was trained and which served as her own personal source of inspiration. She believed that every young child could and should be exposed to this music. She knew through experience that the methodology of the music programme she proposed was an easy, active and vibrant way that could be used effectively for the training of ECD practitioners to integrate the arts in a fun-filled manner in the ECD learning programme. Due to the fact that this music programme had never been formally executed in underprivileged schools and documented, she was determined to prove that the methodology could make Music Education accessible to many learners, even at grass-roots level where resources are difficult to obtain. A constant lack of funds slowed the progress of the research and made it at times feel never-ending. The main reason why the researcher managed to stay focused and persevered to finish the research was the success that ECD practitioners in the very poorest areas achieved with the implementation of the programme and the joy that it brought into hundreds of classrooms in Mauritius and South Africa.

The researcher was well prepared, keen and very interested to try the methodology out with ECD practitioners. She managed to turn the invitation to train ECD teachers in Mauritius into a successful pilot project during which she learned many lessons on how to improve her own practice. The pilot project equipped her with experience for the main research in South Africa and gave her insight into the extent to which the programme would be suitable for ECD teachers from various ethnic groups whose home language is not English. The main research focused only on ECD teachers from underprivileged areas in three out of the nine provinces in South Africa: Limpopo, Gauteng and Mpumalanga. Findings and recommendations can therefore not necessarily be generalized, although the data may well reflect the situation in other underprivileged areas in the rest of the country. Participants from Mauritius, on the other hand, were representatives from the country as a whole and the data that was collected there could be considered as a general view of conditions of ECD teachers on the island.

## 7.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question on which the thesis was based is:

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?

Although many different sources of data collection were used throughout the thesis, Chapters 2-4 were based on an extensive literature study. The research question was firstly answered by examining the historical and current position of ECD in South Africa to determine who was and is responsible for the provision of Grade R. Government documents that included ECD were studied in an effort to determine the new direction that was indicated for Arts and Culture in the Foundation Phase. Secondly there was a need to explain what Western Classical music entails and to find out if there is still a place for this musical style in the general classroom in South Africa. Thirdly a study was made of the ECD learning programme (Life Skills, Literacy and Numeracy) to point out how the proposed music programme can be integrated into this area.

The second part of the study is the researcher's practical contribution to the research. It forms the main focus of the study and is based on the implementation of the music programme in Mauritius and in South Africa. The Mauritius Music Project was a pilot study that was done prior to the three main music projects for ECD teachers from underprivileged areas in South Africa. Information was gathered through practical, hands-on, action research in the form of "in-role" demonstration workshops that were presented to ECD practitioners to introduce them to the simple and easy way to help them integrate the arts in the ECD learning programme and expose young learners to Western Classical music. If this methodology proved to be effective, the programme could be used as a model that could be implemented in all primary schools, pre-primary schools and ECD centres in South Africa and the resource material could be recommended for future ECD training in the country.

The third part of the research is based on the findings of the study which enabled the researcher to make appropriate recommendations. The answer to the posed question of the thesis can thus be condensed to the following summary:

The proposed music programme, based on Western Classical music, proves to offer a developmentally appropriate guideline for the integration of the arts in the ECD learning programme. It promotes the holistic development of young learners and active learning through the arts. This programme can be implemented effectively nationally and internationally in the training of pre-service or in-service ECD practitioners by means of practical “in-role” workshops. This goal can be reached on condition that teachers are in possession of the necessary resource material and if some kind of monitoring structure is in place for at least initial follow-up support visits to teachers.

The outcomes of the research were overwhelmingly positive and convinced the researcher, as well as the other ECD role-players who were directly involved with the four music projects that were launched for the research, that the music programme needs to be implemented throughout South Africa. The recommendation for the countrywide implementation of the music programme in South Africa is based on the data that was gathered during the pilot study in Mauritius and the main research that was undertaken at underprivileged schools in three South African provinces where the programme was used as a guideline for this purpose.

### **7.3 FINDINGS**

The following findings will be discussed under five headings, namely general findings, Western Classical music, workshops, methodology of the music programme, and resource material.

#### **7.3.1 General findings**

The inclusion of Mauritius in the research study enabled the researcher to gain insight into the needs of Music Education further afield than her own immediate surroundings in South Africa. The positive response that the Mauritian ECD teachers showed towards the music programme and the excellent results they have achieved with the implementation of it at several pre-schools on the island contributes to the claims of widespread relevance of the programme.

A partnership was established between the researcher and the ECD sector by bringing together funding sponsors, ECD practitioners, ECD Curriculum Implementers (CIs), Arts and Culture Specialists, ECD service providers and school principals in Mauritius and in three of the nine provinces in South Africa. It was found that all these role-players contributed to the successful implementation of the music programme. This finding is important for future expansion of the programme in South Africa or in any other interested country. It is only with the assistance of a network of role-players that maximum success can be achieved.

The video that was recorded in the Rose Acres Informal Settlement contains vibrant, truthful, living evidence of circumstances in one of the poorest areas where the music programme was implemented. The making of it was very worthwhile in the sense that it could be used most effectively for future marketing purposes.

Personal observation of the lessons in the classrooms proved to be the most reliable method of data collection. Although the research took a long time, a lot of energy, creativity and physically hard work, the researcher found it extremely worthwhile. The findings that were made in Mauritius and South Africa, that the programme could be implemented successfully with teachers and children from various different cultures and language groups, expanded the researcher's initial limited outlook, based on the implementation of the music programme at "better off" schools.

### **7.3.2 Western Classical music**

Recorded music, with the aim of exposing children to a broader spectrum of music (including Western Classical music), is a weak spot in the ECD learning programme (see Chapter 3.2). The music programme that was implemented during this research is entirely based on Western Classical music. It was found that Mauritian as well as black teachers of various ethnicities in South Africa that were involved in the research, were unfamiliar with this musical style.

Interviews and participants' stories revealed that they were seldom introduced to this musical style when they were young and had not had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with it. In spite of this, the sound of Western Classical music was well accepted by all the adult participants and their learners at the different centres. It was obvious that the reason for their unconditional acceptance of the music could be

attributed to the fact that they loved the fun-filled, easy methodology on which the programme was based. Although the majority of the participants who attended the workshops were unfamiliar with Western Classical music, they did not have any problem expressing themselves creatively through bodily movements while listening to this “unknown” music style. They did not show any negativity or dislike towards the music through their body language, or through verbal expressions, but accepted the new music style unconditionally. Although each Classical piece was carefully chosen, this finding demonstrated that it is possible to integrate any musical style meaningfully into the curriculum if it is presented in an active, fun-filled way. Positive findings at the majority of underprivileged schools proved that Western Classical music can transcend boundaries and is therefore not just meant for the elite or ageing Eurocentrics; it can be taught to and enjoyed by anyone from any walk of life.

### **7.3.3 Workshops**

Although the treatment period was short, participants immediately grasped the method and benefited considerably from the practical “in-role” workshops through which ideas were shared on the integration of storytelling, music, drama, dance and the visual arts through play in the ECD curriculum. The practical demonstrations at the workshops equipped the teachers to implement the lessons successfully at their schools. The researcher’s assumption that the use of colourful fantasy costumes, masks, props and other accessories are an indispensable aid for the teaching of active listening through dramatization was indeed confirmed at the teacher training workshops. The dressing up of teachers in costumes for their different character roles contributed to the light-hearted and fun-filled atmosphere at the workshops. The teachers were fascinated by the costumes and were virtually “running” for an outfit whenever they got the opportunity – in exactly the same way as children do in a classroom situation.

As the research developed, it was found to be a good idea to give workshop attendees practical examples of home-made costumes and instruments. Although most of the attendees were very creative, others needed a slight hint, tip or idea to fire their imaginations.

The researcher found that, no matter how well a workshop is planned in advance, the possibility is always there that anything can go wrong during or before the

presentation. Nearly all the workshops that were presented during the research had to start later than initially scheduled. Transport problems seemed to be the main reason for the delays in both countries, especially in South Africa where there is a lack of public transport in the rural areas and the majority of workshop participants do not have private transport.

An overwhelming need was found amongst ECD teachers in South Africa and Mauritius for the presentation of more music workshops. It came to light during the literature review in Chapter 2 that if the history of ECD in South Africa is taken into account, it is important that opportunities for black African ECD practitioners be prioritized, especially amongst teachers from the rural areas where the need seems to be very high for effective training and more regular music workshops. Teachers from home and community centres, where some of the Grade R classes in South Africa are still based, do not have the financial means to pay for their own training and resource material. Sponsorship needs to be found for these teachers to enable them to implement the music programme in their classrooms. The research pointed out that this fun-filled method can uplift the low morale of teachers in poor areas, where resources are scarce, and virtually has the power to change them into high spirited, self-assured human beings. The attendance certificates that were handed out after each workshop were highly appreciated by the attendees. It was enlightening to observe the jolly and spontaneous way in which black attendees at all the venues in South Africa received their attendance certificates.

#### **7.3.4 Methodology of the music programme**

The easy and simple methodology was well accepted by the Mauritian as well as the South African participants. Demonstrable success helped them to overcome the constraints and challenges that are usually associated with the teaching of music. It could, on the one hand, be argued that the reason why the South African teachers found the methodology so much fun and straightforward, could be attributed to the fact that it was determined through a literature review that there is a remarkable resemblance between the pedagogical principles of the proposed music programme and musical play as it is known within the African context. Black African teachers from South Africa had the advantage of being familiar with the methodology of the integration of storytelling, music, drama, dance and the visual arts, but this was not the case with the Mauritian teachers who nevertheless found the methodology

equally simple, fun and understandable. Although it can be seen as a definite advantage that black Africans, with their background knowledge of the principles of the musical arts in the African context, should find the methodology easy to grasp and implement, the research proved that this background knowledge was not a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the music programme. The methodology empowered most of the participants to integrate the arts meaningfully and effectively in their classrooms. Their achievements accentuated the fact that they only needed a guideline with a workable method which was fun and understandable for them and their learners to implement. The relevance of the methodology is also mirrored in the positive feedback that the researcher received from Sally Chappell (see Chapter 6.2.13.3) who implemented the music programme at her school in Newbury, UK. This accentuates the relevance of the methodology for ECD in other countries.

Teachers left the workshops better equipped than before with new, practical ideas and resource material with clear guidelines to integrate the arts in the RNCS through a unique combination of storytelling, music, dramatization, creative dance movements and instrumental play. By means of this easy methodology, that they managed to grasp through a moderate amount of practical training, they were inspired to successfully expose their learners to a previously unknown musical style, like Western Classical music. After the workshops there were hardly any more of the usual excuses to be heard for not teaching music, such as limited facilities, large numbers of children and a lack of electricity and equipment. Most of these problems that were previously considered major obstacles became minor obstacles as the teachers who implemented the music programme achieved success with the programme.

The costumes made the listening activity a fun-filled experience which ensured its success. This visual support played a major role in the overall interest which ECD practitioners and learners showed. It was found in both Mauritius and South Africa that these costumes do not have to be expensive and elaborate outfits. Inexpensive home-made costumes can serve the purpose and were just as much enjoyed and appreciated by the learners. It was found that even a small piece of coloured paper, a plastic bag or a page from a newspaper can be used effectively to trigger the imagination of the learners during the dramatization of the stories. Teachers made it their responsibility to look for, find or fabricate resources for costumes that they could



not afford. Learners were extremely proud of the visual aids at schools where they designed their own accessories to enhance and visually support the acting out of the stories. The success that the teachers experienced through the implementation of the proposed programme made them realize that the integration of the arts in the ECD learning programme could involve much more than the usual telling of stories, the singing of songs and the saying of rhymes. It was agreed that the capabilities of young children (as well as those of teachers) are too often underestimated as regards Music Education.

The programme was found developmentally appropriate for learners in the Foundation Phase and could be described as a quality programme. Its implementation caters for the holistic development of young children and fosters sound relationships of the child with self, others and the environment. It was found that all the life skills the researcher had in mind for ECD teachers and learners, namely personal, social, physical, emotional, aesthetic and intellectual development, as well as the ability to work in a group and develop creativity, were all achieved through the implementation of the programme. The individual successes experienced by the teachers contributed a great deal to their personal development in the sense that it gave their self-esteem a well-deserved boost. It is precisely this sense of achievement and experiencing of success that Atmore (2001:22) highly recommends in the *Assessment of Training Needs of Practitioners in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Sector*. It was interesting to find that the same life skills that were developed amongst ECD teachers and learners were simultaneously developed prominently in the researcher's own life as well. As a Music Education Specialist for ECD who previously focused only on music, she gained decisive new knowledge about ECD in general and the requirements for the implementation of the ECD learning programme.

By implementing the music programme effectively in the ECD curriculum, the teachers were able to respond to diverse needs of their pupils. They created an effective learning environment in their classrooms in which the contributions of all the pupils are valued. They provided balance in teaching approaches and it was noticed that pupils felt secure and were able to contribute appropriately. Stereotypical views were challenged and pupils learnt to appreciate and view positively differences in others, whether arising from race, gender, ability or disability or other factors. The teachers were also able to secure the learners' motivation.

### 7.3.5 Resource material

The guidelines offered served as an appropriate support mechanism to integrate the arts in the ECD learning programme and expose teachers and learners to Western Classical music. The manual with worked-out lessons proved to be a valuable resource and reference for teachers in the Foundation Phase. The DoE (2003:7) states that teachers must be sensitive to the limitations of learners who experience barriers to learning and warns that their progress may be affected by the availability of resources. Participants who attended the workshops, but were not in possession of the resource material, could not implement the programme at their schools. It was found, however, that where the resource material, consisting of worked-out lessons, graphic notation charts, VCD with video material and a CD were supplied, they were empowered to implement the lessons successfully in their classrooms. Many learners benefited directly where resource material was made available for the teachers.

Although the example lessons in the teacher's manual were pre-structured, it did not restrict the creativity of the participating ECD practitioners, but served as a guideline to assist them to integrate the arts in the curriculum. It was interesting to find to what a large extent the methodology enabled teachers to use their imagination and creativity, especially in the underprivileged areas in South Africa where resources are extremely limited.

Teachers and learners who were exposed to the resource material had a chance to succeed, whatever their individual needs and the potential barriers to their learning might have been. The material and training were free from discrimination and stereotyping in any form and were found to be suitable for learners in the Foundation Phase. The stories in the resource material provided opportunities for boys and girls to take part in the dramatization in the classroom. The material has not only been found suitable for the training of ECD teachers, but also for children and young people with special needs. This includes children from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils with disabilities.

Although all the participants were from language groups different from that of the researcher, they were still able to communicate with her and follow the instructions at the workshops without any difficulty. The simple and straightforward English in which the sample lessons in the manual are written was easy enough for the Mauritian and

South African participants to understand and implement convincingly at the schools where they tried the lessons out.

The music programme does not require a music specialist with years of training in Music Education for successful implementation. It was found that, equipped with the basic skills on how to implement the music programme and the resource material, musically untrained ECD teachers can teach the proposed music lessons effectively to their own classes. With the integrated approach that is required in ECD where the learning areas Life Skills, Numeracy and Literacy do not have clear divisions, the class teacher is the one who is responsible for the planning and preparation for all the learning that is going to take place in the classroom and who knows the content of the lessons. These teachers know best when and where the arts can be integrated effectively into the daily programme.

It was claimed that the CD that was included in the resource material could not be used by some participants. The fact that some ECD sites in South Africa have no electricity or did not have a CD player was used as an excuse for not trying out the resource material that was supplied to the South African participants via the different sponsors. Elizabeth Nkoana, from the English Literacy Pre-School in the Rose Acres Informal Settlement in Germiston, South Africa, is living proof of what can be done where resources are really scarce. Elizabeth had the will-power, motivation, initiative and creativity to make the music programme work in her cramped tin shack school where there is no electricity or access to a CD player. With a car cassette player connected to a big 12 volt car battery, this teacher demonstrated that the implementation of the music programme was realizable and within anyone's reach.

Not many teachers who received the resource material had access to a computer to view the VCD. It was found that teachers who did manage to view it before they attempted the music lessons in the classroom had a better idea of the structural divisions and changes in the music. Some of the teachers who watched the VCD were even confident enough to choose and present a different story during the observation from those that were demonstrated and practically tried out at the training workshops.

It was found that there is a lack of instruments at the majority of schools in underprivileged areas in South Africa, as well as in Mauritius, although a few of the

schools managed to make their own instruments. Teachers need ideas and practical examples on how to make their own instruments. It was demonstrated by Elizabeth Nkoana that if percussion instruments could be provided to schools, the teachers will be able to use them effectively provided they follow the guidelines in the proposed music programme. Observation at her school revealed that she managed to use the notation charts in the teacher's manual with great success. The instruments that were provided at the researcher's own expense to this particular school were well played, highly appreciated and well looked after.

This research not only enabled the researcher to enrich the lives of hundreds of ECD teachers and literally thousands of young children in Mauritius and underprivileged areas in South Africa, but also had an impact on her own life and attitude towards people from other race and cultural groups. She gained a great deal of experience with the organization of larger scale projects. These new skills are particularly attributed to the requirements that the Flemish Government has put on her to prove that their grant for the LMP was spent appropriately.

## **7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings that the researcher made, as well as the experiences that she encountered during the implementation of the programme in both Mauritius and South Africa, enable her to make the following recommendations.

### **7.4.1 Improvement of own practice**

Based on her own professional judgement, the researcher decided that the following aspects (listed in no specific priority order) need to be addressed to improve her own practice:

- More follow-up workshops are needed because they are very important for feedback and the sharing of ideas with fellow teachers.
- Workshops over weekends are sometimes problematic, for a variety of reasons, but at least have to start later than has been tried to date.

- It is advisable to have an assistant who can speak the home language of the majority of participants, and help with training and translation at the workshops.
- The possibility should be investigated of translating the teacher's manual in the resource material into more of the official languages of South Africa.
- Regular support visits to schools are of the utmost importance. Appropriate and clear feedback to teachers after such observation visits must be given to aid further learning and training.
- Home-made instruments must also be used at future workshops. This will give participants a good idea of how they can construct their own.
- An assortment of practical ideas for the fantasy clothes, masks and props must be shared with the participants to stimulate their creativity.
- The subtle advocacy of the importance of Western Classical music in the education of young children must be continued.
- The search for national and international sponsors has to proceed.
- It is important to involve ECD CIs, Advisors and Specialists from the DoE more at future workshops.
- Ways must be found to close the gap between ECD (Grades R-3) and Arts and Culture (Grades 4-9) in the DoE.
- Teachers in Special Needs Education, e.g. children's homes, mothers and children in prisons, youth in rehabilitation centres, mentally and physically disabled children, and deaf and blind children, should be included in future workshops.

#### **7.4.2 Large scale implementation of the music programme**

The overwhelming interest of ECD practitioners shown during the training workshops proved that the present political, educational, social and cultural climate in both South Africa and Mauritius is favourable for the implementation of the proposed programme on a large scale. The criteria that were given throughout the thesis to define the success of the music programme can be used as a template to provide suitable guidelines for such wide-scale implementation. This will give ECD practitioners a unique opportunity to integrate the arts meaningfully into the learning programme so that Music Education can become an integral part of the general education of all learners.

### 7.4.3 Funding

Should the programme be implemented on a large scale, enough funds for training and resources would be needed for a venture of this magnitude. It is therefore recommended that in South Africa the DoE and the ETDP-Seta should take note of the research. With the co-operation of the researcher and these two bodies it will be easier to generate appropriate funding for the implementation of further music training workshops in South Africa. It is important that sponsors should be found to make funds available for training and resource material for ECD teachers to implement the proposed music programme effectively, especially in underprivileged areas in the country.

It is not only in South Africa where there is a need for the successful implementation of tried and tested music programmes for underprivileged children. It was interesting to note that June Hinkley (1999:5), then American president of MENC, states that her organization is always on the lookout for school programmes that are making effective use of music with disadvantaged children to determine what they are doing, how it has led to their success, and how these programmes can be replicated. It is recommended that organizations and funders world-wide can take note of the following reasons that led to the favourable implementation of the proposed music programme that was tried out during the main research in underprivileged areas in South Africa:

- It is a fun and easy way to train ECD teachers to expose their learners to Western Classical music and integrate the arts in the ECD learning programme.
- Its simple and easy-to-follow methodology is developmentally appropriate for ECD learners.
- It promotes the holistic development of ECD learners.
- It caters for many different learning styles, especially those that are often neglected in Education, namely the musical, kinesthetic and spatial learners.
- The fantasy stories, carefully worked out according to the structure of the music, scaffold the concentration and motivation of the learners throughout this listening programme.

- The well-designed structure of the lessons makes them easy to comprehend and implement.
- It establishes learning through play.
- It follows the concept of learning by doing.
- The active involvement of teachers and learners ensures that maximum learning is taking place.
- Teachers can be trained in a short period of time through practical in-role workshops which give them the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of some of the lessons in the resource material.
- The dressing up in fantasy costumes during training sessions and in the classroom creates a playful atmosphere that enhances the learning experience and ensures interest in the lessons.
- Resource material in the form of an in-service training package with a teacher's manual, VCD and sound CD is available to make the training of ECD teachers sustainable in the classroom.

It is recommended that, should the proposed music programme be implemented on a large scale in South Africa, funds should also be made available for further research to evaluate the implementation of the music programme in a more long-term, systematic way to see whether there is any noticeable improvement in the subsequent academic achievement of ECD learners.

#### **7.4.4 Resource material**

It is highly recommended that each teacher responsible for the teaching of Grade R-3 learners should be in possession of the resource material (teacher's manual, VCD and CD). It would be an even greater advantage if the manual with the worked-out lessons could be in the teacher's home language. This material would enable the teacher to expose the learners in that specific grade to at least 15 of the example lessons from the teacher's manual per year. The usual story of the day could be replaced by one of the music stories chosen from the examples in the resource material on the day the teacher wants to introduce the Western Classical music to the learners. This could take place at any appropriate time during the school day.

It is recommended that schools that receive the resource material should be in possession of a CD player. If only a cassette player is available at the school, the sound tracks on the CD can be taped onto cassettes for classroom purposes. In areas where schools do not have electricity, it is recommended that teachers make use of battery operated devices.

#### **7.4.5 Instruments**

Percussion instruments should be provided by the DoE in both Mauritius and in South Africa to schools who have managed to implement the dramatization. This will be a fair method of distribution and reward and teachers will be encouraged to implement their newly gained music skills and knowledge which they have received through their training, irrespective of whether this training was pre-service or in-service. Receiving a full set<sup>18</sup> of instruments from the DoE will serve as a method of motivation and encouragement for ECD teachers to expand the integration of the arts to instrumental play. Any percussion instruments that might still be lying unused in schools in South Africa, or even at the South African Defence Force or other similar bodies, should be donated to pre- and primary schools in underprivileged areas who could put them to good use.

#### **7.4.6 Cross-field cooperation**

It is recommended that more cooperation across the different fields of Music Education, ECD, Arts and Culture, and Experimental and Clinical Psychology (see par. 7.5, Further Research) is needed to integrate the arts meaningfully into the ECD learning programme, as well as for logical continuity in Arts and Culture up to the FET Phase from where Music can be taken as an individual subject.

#### **7.4.7 Involvement of principals and government officials**

It is recommended that principals of pre- and primary schools, as well as regional government ECD and Arts and Culture officials of the DoE, should attend future music training workshops from time to time to gain insight into the importance of the

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<sup>18</sup> “A full set of instruments” consists of an equal number of the following percussion instruments, depending on the number of children in the largest class: hand drums, tambourines, two-tone blocks, sleigh bells, triangles, egg shakers and finger cymbals.



integration of the arts and learning through the arts. If teachers and principals could attend these workshops together, principals might be able to develop a better understanding of Music Education and the arts, especially when they see for themselves how easily the fun-filled methodology can be grasped and what positive influence it can have on learning in general in their schools.

#### **7.4.8 Teacher training**

The successful integration of the arts in the RNCS, curriculum development, and instruction will be dependent on teacher involvement, initiative, motivation, preparation and on long-term professional development. It is therefore recommended that ongoing music workshops for the professional development of ECD teachers in the integration of the arts should be planned for all ECD teachers in South Africa. This training should take place locally and regularly and should strive to increase teachers' knowledge of how the arts can be integrated effectively with other learning areas in the ECD learning programme. If the racially based inequalities in the history of ECD in South Africa are taken into account, it is important that opportunities for black African ECD practitioners be created and prioritized, especially amongst teachers from the rural areas where the needs seem to be particularly high for effective training and more regular music workshops.

#### **7.4.9 Additional elective for ECD**

While success has been achieved in producing highly talented music educators in South Africa, there is still much to be done before claims can be made of having a well informed, knowledgeable and sophisticated community who value music as an essential component of a balanced education that is accessible to all. It is therefore important that the training of ECD teachers should include a firm base in the arts that extends beyond the mere learning of songs, games and rhymes. It is recommended that the results of the study could be used for the compilation of a new unit standard for the training of ECD teachers, namely: *Active Listening to music through the integration of the arts*. This unit standard could serve as an additional elective in the training of ECD practitioners who are studying towards a Level 4, 5 or 6 National Diploma. It could equip candidates with the knowledge and skills to familiarize young learners with a variety of chosen music styles through storytelling, dramatization and instrumental play. This unit standard could be based on the same concept that was

used in the pilot study in Mauritius where workshop participants had to narrate their own stories according to a chosen piece of music.

#### **7.4.10 Follow-up visits**

It is highly recommended that onsite observation visits should be done to ensure that teachers who have attended skills development music training workshops stay motivated and informed.

#### **7.4.11 New VCD**

The VCD that was recorded in the Rose Acres Informal Settlement could be used as living evidence during future workshop training sessions to inspire attendees that the appreciation of Western Classical music can transcend cultural boundaries, be highly entertaining, educational and fun. It will provide evidence and motivation that the programme can be successfully implemented, even where resources are limited. The VCD could be edited to a shortened version and used for future marketing strategies to persuade donors to sponsor similar training workshops in South Africa, Mauritius, or anywhere else.

#### **7.4.12 Future vision**

After the implementation of the proposed music programme to familiarize learners with Western Classical music in a fun-filled way through fantasy and play in the Foundation Phase, the listening and rhythmic skills of these learners will be well developed and they will be ready for a more formal approach in Music Education. It is recommended that these learners could be afforded the opportunity to learn how to play a melodic instrument as from Grade 4 onwards. If this could be made possible through local and international sponsorship for Music Education (music books and recorders, for example) in South Africa, it would be a major step forward to prepare learners to become musically literate in the country. Such an achievement of learners, who are able to read staff notation, could hopefully channel thousands in the direction of taking Music as a subject in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. To reach this ultimate goal, it is important that the early beginnings of listening to music in ECD must not be a struggle for teachers and learners through the learning of fragmented concepts, a battle through complicated theory or just

talking/lecturing about music, often without sound, but it must preferably be an active and fun-filled experience that makes use of the integration of the arts.

The music programme is very versatile. The researcher is still, after many years of implementing it at many schools and workshops over the years, discovering new opportunities where it could be used. She was invited during the September 2006 school holidays to “entertain” a group of teenagers who were attending a church camp at Hartebeespoortdam in Northwest province. Although she was aware of teenagers’ negative attitude towards Western Classical music, she decided to introduce them to the *Hungarian Dance No 5* by Brahms. This was done through storytelling, dramatization in fantasy clothes and creative dance movements. Thereafter she concluded with a drumming session on her coloured cardboard pipes. The teenagers spontaneously took part in both activities at this one and a half hour presentation. This made the researcher realize that the method can be used for a wide variety of purposes and age groups.

## **7.5 RECOMMENDED FURTHER RESEARCH**

The more schools that were observed where the music programme was successfully implemented after the initial teacher training, the more the researcher became interested in possibilities and interesting ways of integrating the music programme into the ECD learning programme. This total involvement in the different projects that were undertaken to implement the music programme often led to the feeling that the research cycles were never-ending. The ideal would have been to include ECD teachers from underprivileged areas in each of the nine provinces in South Africa in this research, but due to time limits and lack of sponsorship, this has not been possible to date. This leaves an excellent opportunity for students who wish to take this research further in South Africa, preferably in rural areas where the need for Music Education and training is particularly high. It will also be of use to conduct similar studies on Western Classical music in other parts of the world with other ethnic groups.

Gromko & Smith Poorman (2000:50) state that research in Music Education has traditionally been concerned with school-age children. The researcher agrees with these authors who recommend that research collaborations have to be constructed across fields of inquiry to improve the early education of preschoolers. It is therefore

necessary that further research be conducted with larger and more diverse groups of children to determine the effect of early music training on their sensory motor coordination, and duration, and accuracy of spatial and musical memory.

Based on the findings of Hernandez-Gilbert (2005:1) who wrote an article on the improvement that her Grade 2 learners showed in their writing skills for ESL (English Second Language) after she had introduced drama as a powerful learning tool in the classroom, a new research study could be done to see if there is even more of an improvement if music is added to the dramatic experience. It would be interesting to find out whether there is a correlation between dramatization as it is proposed in this thesis (through the integration of the arts) and increased productivity in specific written genres (poetry, retellings, descriptive passages, etc.).

## **7.6 FINAL WORDS**

The study found that the large-scale implementation of this well-tested music programme, based on the development of the listening skills of children in the Foundation Phase (Grade R-3), will be well worth the investment. The programme can be seen as central, not peripheral, to the status of Western Classical music in South Africa, or in whichever country it might be implemented, and to the development of the teachers exposed to it. In the harsh reality of limited time and funding, it is hoped that the inclusion of this listening programme, as material for the integration of the arts in ECD, will not remain a distant wish, but that it will become an exciting reality for every ECD teacher and student.

Kris Tucker (2003:1), Executive Director of the Washington State Arts Commission, notes that the presence and quality of Arts Education in public schools today requires an exceptional degree of involvement by influential segments of the community which value the arts in the total affairs of the school district: in governance, funding and programme delivery. The promotion of Music Education in South Africa is not the sole responsibility of the education sector, but it requires the support of all who care about the development of the arts in the country.

This action research study proved to the researcher that, although she started off as an individual outside the formal education system in South Africa, her firm belief that all learners should have the opportunity to be familiarized with Western Classical

music in a fun-filled way at a young age, made it possible that many ECD teachers and learners were exposed to this musical style for the first time. Even those in the poorest areas where one would never have expected the sounds of Western Classical music, were afforded the opportunity, through this research, to get acquainted with this style and appreciate it. ECD teachers wishing to implement the programme in their classrooms should take note of the wise words of Elizabeth Nkoana, the most outstanding participant of the research, who said: "...if you feel lazy, I don't think you will do that. It is up to everybody to stand and say: 'I must do this' and then I think to everybody it will be easy."