Subject Music in rural South African schools: challenges and solutions within a comparative context

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

DMus

In the Department of Music at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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November 2010

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Prof Caroline van Niekerk for her unwavering support, guidance and endless patience. My husband Gerhard gave me his quiet support and endured many lonely hours. Thank you to my daughter Leandra for her support and assistance with deliveries between Vryheid and Pretoria and the artwork in my educators’ notes. I am grateful to my colleagues and friends for their support and encouragement. A big word of thank you goes to all the educators and music friends who assisted me with information.
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late mother with her beautiful singing voice who always encouraged me to do music.
Abstract

Music in the learning area Arts and Culture and the subject Music fight for survival in rural South Africa. Neither more experienced educators nor new generalist teachers were trained to teach the four art forms of Arts and Culture. Courses for Arts and Culture as learning area at universities are scarce and the courses that do exist mostly cater for students who already have a background in music. Other courses again only cover two or three art forms and do not follow the actual school curriculum for Arts and Culture. This then leaves the educator unprepared to deal with the realities of the learning area. Many principals and educators regard Arts and Culture as a filler subject for educators who do not have enough lessons on their timetables. The lack of knowledge amongst educators, a curriculum with no logical progression and scarcity of resources have resulted in learners who are inadequately prepared for and not interested to continue with Music as subject in grade 10 to 12 which in turn leads to fewer music students at universities and fewer music educators.

This thesis aimed to pinpoint some of the challenges in Music and suggest possible solutions to start a remedial process to get Music back into schools. Educators, principals and subject advisors were consulted regarding the challenges they are experiencing in music and suggestions and possible solutions were sought from literature and experts in the field of music. The finding has been that similar challenges are experienced throughout South Africa and these challenges are amplified in rural areas.

The present situation where untrained educators have to teach a specialist area like music as part of Arts and Culture can only be improved with an ongoing process of intensive workshops and mentoring programmes for in-service educators by subject advisors who are qualified in music and music experts who have an in-depth knowledge of the school curriculum. It will also be advisable for the Department of Basic Education to appoint more subject advisors and also appoint them according to their specialization area/s so that they are capable of assisting educators effectively.
List of tables

Table 1.1  Personal experience of researcher ................................................................. 6
Table 1.2  Variables affecting music education in rural South Africa ............................... 15
Table 2.1  Arts and Culture within B.Ed curricula in South African institutions .................. 31
Table 2.2  Arts training within B.Ed Intermediate curricula in Australia ......................... 36
Table 2.3  Arts training within B.Ed Intermediate curricula in the UK ......................... 38
Table 3.1  List of schools that offered Music in the past 5 years ................................. 82
Table 3.2  Data collection methods and types ............................................................... 83
Table 3.3  Advantages of data collection methods ......................................................... 84
Table 3.4  Disadvantages of data collection methods ..................................................... 87
Table 3.5  Pilot study: Table showing basic resources at schools offering Music ............... 94
Table 3.6  Pilot study: Content knowledge of music educators ........................................ 96
          (12 respondents) .................................................................................................. 96
Table 3.7  Pilot study: Qualifications of music educators teaching Music ...................... 103
Table 3.8  Pilot study: Arts and Culture basic knowledge needs ...................................... 106
          (334 respondents) ................................................................................................ 106
Table 3.9  Arts and Culture content questionnaire ......................................................... 109
Table 3.10 Prices of basic resources needed to teach Music as subject ......................... 114
Table 3.11 Resources available at school currently offering Music in the Vryheid District .............................................................................................................. 115
Table 3.12 Arts and Culture resources questionnaire ................................................... 116
Table 3.13 Qualifications of music educators currently teaching Music ...................... 119
Table 3.14 Ages and qualifications of Arts and Culture educators .................................. 120
          (30 respondents) .................................................................................................. 120
Table 4.1  Mentoring programme used by Arts and Culture Senior Education Specialists in the Vryheid district ................................................................. 147
Table 4.2  Venues for mentoring programme workshops ............................................. 150
Table 5.1  Answers to research questions ...................................................................... 159
# List of figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Zululand District Municipality map</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>Research facets affecting music in rural areas of South Africa</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Knowledge in different aspects of the music strand of Arts and Culture</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>Number of educators without confidence combined with educators who cannot teach certain aspects of the curriculum</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.3</td>
<td>Graph showing available resources for Arts and Culture in schools</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.4</td>
<td>Qualifications of Arts and Culture educators</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.5</td>
<td>Music qualifications of Arts and Culture educators</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>Influencing factors on music tuition</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................ ii
Dedication.......................................................................................................................... iii
Abstract............................................................................................................................... iv
List of tables......................................................................................................................... v
List of figures......................................................................................................................... vi

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Background......................................................................................... 1
1.2 Motivation for study......................................................................................................... 3
1.3 Physical area of research............................................................................................... 4
1.4 Deriving topic from personal experience....................................................................... 6
1.4.1 Lack of educator training ........................................................................................... 7
1.4.2 Lack of educator support ............................................................................................ 8
1.4.3 Lack of required knowledge....................................................................................... 8
1.4.4 Few schools offering Music........................................................................................ 9
1.4.5 The influence of Music as accredited subject........................................................... 9
1.4.6 Music curriculum in Arts and Culture.............................................................. 10
1.4.7 Music curriculum....................................................................................................... 11
1.4.7.1 African music........................................................................................................ 11
1.4.7.2 Music technology................................................................................................. 12
1.4.7.3 Music improvisation........................................................................................... 12
1.4.7.4 Music composition............................................................................................... 13
1.5 Research problem.......................................................................................................... 13
1.6 Research design and methodology.............................................................................. 14
1.6.1 Data collection strategies......................................................................................... 16
1.6.2 Data analysis............................................................................................................. 17
1.7 List of abbreviations, acronyms and terms..................................................................... 17
1.8 Limitations and strengths of study............................................................................... 20
Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction.................................................................................................................. 22
2.2 The lack of quality training for the music strand in the learning area Arts and Culture.......................................................... 29
  2.2.1 South Africa........................................................................................................... 29
  2.2.2 Australia................................................................................................................ 36
  2.2.3 United Kingdom................................................................................................... 38
2.3 The lack of educator support in Arts and Culture as well as Music.................. 39
  2.3.1 South Africa........................................................................................................... 40
  2.3.2 Australia................................................................................................................ 41
  2.3.3 United Kingdom................................................................................................... 41
2.4 The absence of required knowledge amongst Music and A & C educators.... 42
  2.4.1 South Africa........................................................................................................... 43
  2.4.2 Australia................................................................................................................ 43
  2.4.3 United Kingdom................................................................................................... 43
2.5 Few schools offering Music......................................................................................... 44
  2.5.1 South Africa........................................................................................................... 44
  2.5.2 Australia................................................................................................................ 45
  2.5.3 United Kingdom................................................................................................... 46
2.6 The influence of Music as accredited subject............................................................ 46
2.7 Arts and Culture curriculum...................................................................................... 48
2.8 Music curriculum........................................................................................................ 49
  2.8.1 African music......................................................................................................... 50
2.8.2 Music technology…………………………………………………………………… 51
2.8.3 Music improvisation……………………………………………………………… 52
2.8.4 Music composition……………………………………………………………….. 53

2.9 General challenges in the music strand of Arts and Culture in the nine provinces of South Africa…………………………………………………………. 54
2.9.1 Eastern Cape……………………………………………………………………….. 54
2.9.2 Northern Cape……………………………………………………………………. 54
2.9.3 Western Cape……………………………………………………………………. 55
2.9.4 Free State………………………………………………………………………… 55
2.9.5 Gauteng…………………………………………………………………………... 56
2.9.6 KwaZulu Natal…………………………………………………………………… 57
2.9.7 Limpopo………………………………………………………………………… 58
2.9.8 Mpumalanga…………………………………………………………………….. 59
2.9.9 North West……………………………………………………………………….. 59
2.9.10 General circumstances & challenges in music in primary schools in Aus…. 60
2.9.11 General circumstances & challenges in music in primary schools in the UK. 62

2.10 General circumstances & challenges in FET Music in the nine provinces of South Africa……………………………………………………………………….. 62
2.10.1 Eastern Cape……………………………………………………………………….. 62
2.10.2 Northern Cape……………………………………………………………………. 64
2.10.3 Western Cape……………………………………………………………………. 64
2.10.4 Free State………………………………………………………………………… 67
2.10.5 Gauteng…………………………………………………………………………... 69
2.10.6 KwaZulu Natal…………………………………………………………………… 70
2.10.7 Limpopo………………………………………………………………………… 71
2.10.8 Mpumalanga…………………………………………………………………….. 72
2.10.9 North West……………………………………………………………………….. 75

2.11 Summary…………………………………………………………………………….. 75
Chapter 3: Research design, methodology and results

3.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 77
3.2 Paradigm, research design and methodology ............................................................ 77
3.3 Determining area of investigation .............................................................................. 79
3.4 Sampling strategy and respondents ........................................................................... 80
3.5 Data collection and data collection methods .............................................................. 82
3.5.1 Interviews .................................................................................................................. 89
3.5.1.1 Interviews – structured questionnaires ............................................................... 90
3.5.1.2 Interviews – unstructured informal interviewing ............................................... 90
3.5.1.3 Interviews – structured internet correspondence .............................................. 91
3.5.1.4 Interviews – unstructured interviewing via internet correspondence .......... 91
3.5.1.5 Questionnaires ................................................................................................... 91
3.6 Data analysis ................................................................................................................ 91
3.7 Ethical considerations .................................................................................................. 92
3.8 Validity and reliability ................................................................................................ 92
3.9 Pilot studies .................................................................................................................. 94
3.9.1 Needs analysis with Music educators ................................................................. 94
3.9.2 Needs analysis with Arts and Culture educators ................................................ 106
3.10 Background of learners taking Music ...................................................................... 107
3.11 Curriculum ................................................................................................................ 107
3.12 In-service training .................................................................................................... 111
3.13 Resources – monetary, physical .............................................................................. 112
3.14 Support systems ........................................................................................................ 118
3.15 Qualifications and teaching experience of educators ............................................ 119
3.16 Principals’ input ...................................................................................................... 124
3.17 Subject advisors’ input ............................................................................................ 125
3.18 Principals’ input from schools that offered Music in the recent past ..................... 125
3.19 Summary ..................................................................................................................... 126
# Chapter 4: Possible solutions

4.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 127  
4.2 Background of learners ....................................................................................... 127  
4.3 Curriculum ........................................................................................................... 129  
4.4 Training of in-service educators ........................................................................ 132  
4.5 Resources ............................................................................................................ 135  
4.6 Support system .................................................................................................... 136  
4.7 Qualifications of educators ................................................................................ 138  
4.8 All encompassing solution as found in literature .............................................. 139  
4.9 Possible solutions for challenges as experienced by the researcher ............... 141  
4.9.1 Educator support ............................................................................................. 141  
4.9.2 Curriculum ...................................................................................................... 141  
4.9.3 In-service educator training .......................................................................... 142  
4.9.4 Motivation for a mentoring programme ....................................................... 142  
4.9.4.1 Purpose of mentoring programme ............................................................ 143  
4.9.4.2 Stakeholders and their roles in the mentoring programme ....................... 143  
4.9.4.3 Outcomes/goals .......................................................................................... 144  
4.9.4.4 Model used .................................................................................................. 144  
4.9.4.5 Key principles of the mentoring programme ........................................... 145  
4.9.4.6 Structure of programme ............................................................................ 147  
4.9.4.7 Content for mentoring programme ............................................................ 148  
4.9.4.8 Locations ..................................................................................................... 150  
4.9.4.9 Time frame .................................................................................................. 151  
4.9.4.10 Resources .................................................................................................. 152  
4.9.4.11 Course material ......................................................................................... 152  
4.10 Summary ............................................................................................................ 154

# Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................... 155  
5.2 Findings of the research ....................................................................................... 156  
5.3 Addressing the research problem ....................................................................... 159
5.4 Suggestions for further research and investigation…………………………………… 163
5.5 Conclusions…………………………………………………………………………………………… 163

References and further reading……………………………………………………………………… 165

Appendix: Letters of informed consent and questionnaires