VIVID MOMENTS LONG REMEMBERED: THE LIFETIME

IMPACT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATRE

by

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study examined the long-term significance of participation in elementary school musical theatre productions. The research aimed to explore the common and unique themes that emerged from adults recalling their childhood experiences, and how these experiences affected the development of musical and life-related skills. A questionnaire was used as the initial exploratory tool. It was distributed to a diverse group of 134 individuals, in retail, business and education settings, representing a stratified sample in two Ontario communities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six participants to elicit further memories of significant experiences related to their participation in elementary school musical theatre. The data analysis revealed five core themes and qualities related to the elementary school musical theatre experience including community and gender roles. The most significant meaning of school musical experiences for the participants had little to do with the skills developed in the arts, but rather focused on an increased sense of community and growth in self-awareness and confidence. Suggestions for future research on other salient aspects of elementary school are offered to shed further light on this phenomenon, which appears to have life-long and deep effects on those who are able to participate in elementary school musical theatre.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to those elementary school teachers who give of their time, energy, and enthusiasm to provide children the opportunity to sing, dance, act, and perform through the art of musical theatre. The gift you give will be cherished for a lifetime.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When adults are asked to recall memorable experiences from their elementary schooling, many will recount—often in vivid detail—their involvement with musical theatre. As I was collecting data and writing this thesis, people would often ask about my area of research and the progress of my work. When I told them of my interest in elementary school musical theatre most people would invariably respond with a recollection of their own experience of being on stage. This happened with family members, acquaintances, and total strangers. Regardless of whether or not they were participants in the study, recollections of rehearsing and performing were shared with spontaneity and in great detail.

In one such encounter, during an academic meeting unrelated to my research, the topic of my thesis came up. Without hesitation, a middle-aged male professor from another institution piped up, "No kidding! You know, I will never forget the time when I was in *Androcles and the Lion.*" This professor proceeded to describe the romantic scene that he performed as a soldier in the production. He told of the girl, whose name he could still recall, and how he had fretted about performing the kissing scene in front of his peers. He described his thoughts and feelings before, during, and after the performance, and used body language to demonstrate the movement of his hand during the fateful kiss. This simple gesture, he told, "sent the audience into a fit of laughter and applause" for which he had carried guilt and regret ever since. In fact, he had carried this remorse for having caused embarrassment to the girl for more than twenty-five years. He then told of how he had recently, at a high-school reunion, met up with this woman for the first time since their final performance. He described how he nervously approached her, his body trembling with anxiety. After awkwardly re-introducing himself after a quarter century, he apologized for his actions of so many years ago. In a voice of disbelief, he told me how the woman responded with

laughter. Of course she remembered the performance, but she had no recollection of humiliation or embarrassment, only feelings of pride and accomplishment at having taken part in the production.

This is but one of many anecdotes that have been revealed through this process, and is indicative of the vividness of the recollections for each individual performer: A surprising degree of vividness given the length of time that has often ensued since the actual performance. These anecdotes suggest that musical theatre seems to be more salient than many other aspects of elementary schooling. Indeed, as one participant in this study noted, "I do not remember what I learned in Grade 3 English or Grade 6 math—but I remember the words to songs from *Anne of Green Gables*, what I wore in *Alice in Wonderland*, and singing 'Climb Ev'ry Mountain' in front of my friends for the first time."

The power of these kinds of recollections propelled me to conduct research on the phenomenon of musical theatre as it was recalled by adults long after their experiences in elementary school. This research is guided by a phenomenological perspective—that is, it was designed to describe the meaning of lived experiences, and to explore how human beings make sense of a phenomenon, both individually and as shared meaning (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). The further along I moved with the data collection and the more people I spoke with, the clearer it became that elementary musical theatre was a phenomenon worth investigating.

Personal Experience with the Phenomenon

Musical theatre requires community collaboration; indeed it is this feature of collaboration that forms the core of my own childhood musical memories. My recollections of being both on- and off-stage during rehearsals and productions are also vivid. In fact, when I remember my elementary school years, I recall each grade by the musical production in which I participated.

I was fortunate to be raised in a supportive home, by parents who encouraged my participation in a variety of extra–curricular activities. I was very involved in the arts from a very

early age—I was enrolled in dance, piano, and voice lessons in addition to a number of other activities. And I loved school. Not only did I enjoy learning outside of school, I took great pleasure in attending elementary school every day. I felt accepted and successful, both in and outside of school. My childhood memories are positive, and the wide variety of experiences provided me with many such memories. And yet my experiences in elementary musical theatre hold a very unique and important place in my memory as an adult. It is this sense of the value and importance of the phenomenon of elementary school musical theatre to me that has led me to study the extent and nature of this valuing in others. Through this study I sought to learn if other adults have had similar experiences, and how their memories and experiences have affected their lives as adults.

As a child I loved to be on stage. My earliest memories are of performing on the fireplace mantel, tapping my toes, singing along to records, and perfecting my curtsy. In kindergarten I played the role of Mother Rabbit in the early primary spring production of *Peter Rabbit*. I vividly remember standing at stage left, stitching my embroidery prop, and mentally preparing for my entrance onto the stage. I can still remember my costume—the brown fuzzy suit with the floppy ears, and the matching bonnet and apron of red and white cotton. The lyrics to my solo songs, along with all of the other songs in the play, are fresh in my mind. My fellow characters, their lines, costumes, and actions are alive in my memory. In fact, my recollections of the *Peter Rabbit* production are among the strongest memories of my childhood.

After Kindergarten I moved to a new school where a very committed music teacher, with the support of others in the school and community, provided the students with opportunities to participate in musical theatre. These productions played a large and important role in the school community and form the core of my childhood memories. Throughout my eight years of elementary school I participated in five major productions—*Oliver, The Music Man, The Wizard of Oz, The Sound of Music,* and *Mary Poppins*, along with other holiday and seasonal productions on a smaller scale. I recall different aspects of each production. In *Oliver*, I remember entering the

dark gymnasium, as one of many children in a processional, carrying a bowl and singing. I remember auditioning for the role of Amaryllis in *The Music Man*, a part that required exaggerated movement when playing the piano. I remember feeling embarrassed during the audition, and the disappointment of not getting the part remains with me today.

I remember the smell and the feel of the make-up on my face as a member of the Lullaby League in *The Wizard of Oz*; the endless rehearsals, the detailed choreography, and absolute joy of being a member of the von Trapp family as Louisa in *The Sound of Music*. In *Mary Poppins* I can still feel the disappointment in not being cast as the lead role. I also remember the feel of the white gloves that I wore on my hands as Mrs. Banks, the 'Votes for Women' sash that I wore across my chest, and the spotlight shining on me as I performed "Sister Suffragette." In this performance, more than others, I remember all of the work that went on behind the scenes, the community members who helped with rehearsals, costumes, make-up, sets, props, and advertising. I also remember the cast and crew celebration that took place the day after the last performance, and the sense of community, belonging and accomplishment that I felt, as we all gathered together to watch ourselves on video.

The sense of pride and accomplishment I felt as a child has shaped my goals and aspirations in adulthood in profound ways. My professional experience as an elementary school teacher has provided me opportunities to direct school musicals, concerts, and choirs. This has been my way of giving back to the children in hopes of providing them with a taste of the performing arts that were so important to my own elementary school years. Planning, casting, rehearsals, and advertising for the musical all took place in addition to my full-time teaching position as a primary teacher. While musical theatre is not part of the formal curriculum, it is through these endeavors that I witnessed the development of self-esteem, discipline, character, cooperative skills, and motivation in my students as they advanced and improved the diverse skills necessary to create a musical theatre production.

Definition of Key Terms

Musical theatre is a form of theatre combining music, songs, spoken dialogue and dance. The story is communicated through the dramatic communication of words, music, movement and technical aspects (props, lighting) as an integrated whole. It is the coming together of individuals, ideas, movement, language, and the arts.

A *school musical* is a musical theatre production that is planned, rehearsed, and performed by students of a particular school, and in most cases is organized by the staff and parents of that school. *Musical skills* in the context of musical theatre include choral singing, solo singing, dance, group performance, improvisation and interpretation. *Life-related skills* include the ability to work in a group, being imaginative, the ability to express thoughts, creativity, the willingness to take risks, and the ability to solve problems independently and with others. *Lifelong learning* is defined as continued interest and investigation in learning and personal growth. *Carryover* indicates the retention and use of specific skills and knowledge that have been learned earlier in life. And finally, *lifelong influence* specifies the lasting capacity of a past experience to cause an effect in indirect or intangible ways.

Context for the Research

The conviction that arts education is to be valued for non-arts purposes is widely held, and often used in an instrumental way to promote the value of the arts in schools. There is a research base that supports this belief, but also one that contradicts it (Winner & Hetland, 2000). Either way, the belief in such ancillary purposes has added a new aspect to arts education in the past few decades. While this belief can result in funding and support to arts programs, it brings with it a discouraging rationale to those who value the arts for its aesthetic and personal value to learners. Three complex roles of the arts—as subservient to other academic subjects, complementary in their promotion of academic competencies, and significant in its own right—compete for the foreground (Bresler, 1995). In the background, one conviction is undisputed among the scholars

who write about these issues: the arts have a place in the education of the young (Burton et al., 1999; Davis, 2008; Eisner, 1999; Hetland et al., 2007; Jensen, 2001; Upitis & Smithrim, 2003).

In the past two decades, the role of arts in schools has been overpowered by instruction and testing in language and math. The perspective of the Ministry of Education and Training (1998) on the arts and student development is evident in the current Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: The Arts (1998) which states:

> Education in the arts is essential to students' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. Through the study of music, visual arts, and drama and dance, students not only develop the ability to think creatively and critically, but also develop physical coordination and the ability to work both independently and with others. In addition, the creative and practical work encourages students to express themselves in both verbal and non-verbal ways, and can enable them to discover and develop abilities that can prove to be rich sources of pleasure later in life. (p. 5)

Clearly, this document places the arts in an "ancillary role" (Eisner, 1999, p. 154) because of its emphasis on the non-arts benefits of studying music, visual arts, and drama. For the most part, the arts are considered fun, less rigid, and of marginal importance in schools. The arts are often used as a transition from work to leisure, are taught at the end of the day or week, are used as rewards before holidays, and to amplify school events or performances (Bresler, 1994; Giles & Frego, 2004). Despite these ways of trivializing the arts, Canadian arts education has been resilient in the face of numerous challenges, including severe cutbacks, a conception of elementary teachers as generalists, the arts as a generic field, and the traditional skills-based view of music teaching (Hanley, 2000). And, despite the dearth of formal support for musical theatre, it also continues to thrive.

When I have asked people about their elementary school musical experiences, they have described significant experiences in their schooling. And yet they have also explained how, when they were in school, musical theatre existed in a supplementary role, as an extra–curricular option.

This tension sparked my interest, and it was my intention to investigate why, if musical theatre is so valued and important to those who have participated in it, it has been placed in an ancillary role in our schools.

Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to investigate the long-term effects of participation in elementary school musical theatre productions. The study aimed to explore the common and unique themes that emerge from adults recalling their childhood experiences, and how these experiences affected the development of musical and life-related skills. These skills include the ability to work in a group, willingness to take risks, and the ability to undertake and solve ill-defined problems (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 1999; Jensen, 2001). This research considers the extent to which these themes and features are long-lasting, that is, what adults in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and beyond remember of their experiences with school theatre, and how they might attribute some of their present habits and views to those experiences.

In order to achieve these research goals, the phenomenon of elementary school musical theatre was examined from the perspective of individuals who had taken part in musical theatre in years past with the aim of describing the long-term effects of participation in elementary school musical productions. The research questions are as follows:

1. What common and unique themes emerge from adults recalling their childhood experiences in elementary school musical theatre?

2. How have these experiences affected the development of musical skills?

3. To what extent has participation in elementary school musical theatre affected the development of life-related skills for the participants?

While established bodies of scholarly literature and research exist for both musical and visual arts education, research is less developed in the field of musical theatre. Scholars in theatre arts education suggest that new research in this field should explore the potential of the performance

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arts in a changing educational landscape; the potential of the performing arts to transform school

climate and teaching; and music in the context of theatre and dance (Burton et al., 1999; Flood,

Heath, & Lapp, 1997; Seidel, 2002). The present research touches on all three of these themes.

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into six chapters. The present chapter, Chapter 1, introduces the

study and provides a space for me to set aside my own experiences with the phenomenon. In

Chapter 2, I review the findings of prior research and literature related to involvement in musical

theatre in elementary schooling and contemporary arts education. Here I outline what musical

theatre offers in terms of Elliot Eisner's (1999) three levels or tiers of arts education outcomes. I

then present the long-term impact of arts experiences and schooling, discuss how participation in

musical theatre relates to Erickson's (1968) notion of generativity, and describe the nature and

quality of learning in musical theatre.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology that underpins the research and the specific methods

used to collect and analyze data. The phenomenological approach is detailed and the approaches

used to enhance the trustworthiness and overall quality of the study are described.

The findings are presented in Chapter 4, beginning with the data collected from the eighty-

four questionnaire participants. The quantitative data are presented in the form of descriptive

statistics. Next, the six interview participants are introduced individually. This provides the reader

with the opportunity to learn about each person through descriptions of their experiences in

elementary school musical theatre.

Five core themes and qualities that are connected with the elementary school musical theatre

experience are presented in Chapter 5. Using the data collected from the six in-depth interviews,

each theme is presented independently. Illustrative quotes taken from the questionnaires are used

throughout this chapter to further demonstrate the significance that elementary musical theatre has

had for the participants. The chapter closes with a synthesis of meanings and essences of the

experience for the six participants. In the final chapter, I discuss the findings and the limitations of the study. I summarize the research findings and draw implications for the long-term effects of involvement in musical theatre and for the role that musical theatre can play in the elementary school curriculum and the lives of elementary school students.

CHAPTER 2

RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, I review the findings of prior research and literature related to involvement in musical theatre in elementary schooling. Because of the lack of scholarly work focusing directly on musical theatre, and especially the long-term effects of taking part in musical theatre, four bodies of related literature are examined. First, I define arts education in historical and contemporary terms. Second, I outline what musical theatre offers in terms of Elliot Eisner's (1999) three levels or tiers of arts education outcomes. Third, I present the long-term impact of arts experiences and schooling, and discuss how participation in musical theatre relates to Erickson's (1968) notion of generativity. The chapter ends with a description of the nature and quality of learning in musical theatre. Three related types of learning are explored: situated, collaborative, and embodied.

Arts Education in Context

The arts in elementary education refers to dance, drama, music, and the visual arts. While each of these academic disciplines has its own distinctive identity, traditions, skills, and practices, the umbrella of "the arts" provides a unifying term for these kinds of learning experiences.

Since the formation of the common curriculum over one hundred years ago, arts educators have struggled for their disciplines to be taken seriously. They have been both "marginal and vulnerable, often shifting in chameleon like ways simply to survive" (Wolf, 1992, p. 945). As a result, arts educators have become increasingly articulate about the arts as a distinct form of knowledge. At various times in the history of arts education, different reasons have been given to justify the arts having a place in the classroom. The resulting programs have ranged from the creative—letting the child's creativity unfold without interference from the teacher, to the

historical—prescribing a body of content based on history, to the academic—focusing the

program on the formal elements of the particular arts area, or what is commonly termed art for

art's sake (Saskatchewan Learning, 2006).

Like all arts, music and drama have much to offer in terms of schooling and curriculum.

While the academic outcomes—singing, reading notation, and performance skills—are important,

perhaps even more important are the ancillary outcomes associated with arts experiences, such as

cooperative and problem-solving skills, increased self-confidence, and resilience. In this section I

will first explore the benefits of music and arts education as detailed in scholarly literature and

research.

Three Tiers of Arts Education

Eisner (1999) presented a three-tiered structure through which we can perceive and sort

through the various arts-centered and ancillary ends that might be expected from arts education.

The three levels or tiers are as follows; (a) arts-based outcomes, (b) arts-related outcomes, and (c)

ancillary outcomes of arts education.

Arts-based outcomes refer to the outcomes that are directly related to the subject matter that

an arts curriculum was designed to teach, such as learning to read standard musical notation,

presenting a soliloquy, or critically responding to works of art. Arts-related outcomes are those

that require creativity and an understanding and perception of aesthetic features in the general

environment, outside of school settings. These might include noticing and identifying aesthetic

configurations in cloud formations, or hearing cacophony during rush hour in the city. The

ancillary outcomes pertain to the transfer of skills that may be employed in the perception,

creation, and comprehension of the arts to non-arts tasks. Such outcomes include the effects of

music on student performance in math or reading. Other ancillary outcomes might include the

development of a sense of responsibility to the community, commitment to a high level of

engagement and performance, and the development of self-confidence.

Arts-based Outcomes

In this section I use the term arts-based outcomes as they relate to formal schooling, that is, learning that occurs in the arts themselves, regardless of whether it gets transferred or applied to other contexts. Teaching for arts-based outcomes involves the intertwined processes of creating, performing, and appreciating—processes that Smith-Autard (2002) argues are inherent within creative learning and activity. She advocates for the use of open-ended problem solving and directed teaching in order to develop arts-based outcomes in formal settings. These three areas, where arts-based learning is typically assessed are outlined below; (a) appreciation, (b) performance, and (c) creativity.

Appreciation. The term appreciation is often linked to issues of approval, admiration, positive reception, enjoyment, pleasure, and, by implication, their opposites (Barrett, 2007). When used in relation to arts experience, appreciation takes on a cognitive aspect, as it relates to understanding, to the capacity to grasp, to comprehend, to be aware, and to make judgments in aesthetic contexts (Barrett). As a result, many of the empirical investigations surrounding musical appreciation have been conducted by researchers in the psychology of music, where research has suggested that even young elementary-aged children are able to understand and respond to music concepts and terminology. While they may not be able to verbalize these responses, psychologists have ascertained that music concepts can be taught to very young children. Accordingly, researchers working with children have attempted to measure perception, cognition, preference, and response to various musical stimuli through a range of secondary indicator strategies. These include eliciting verbal or written accounts, kinesthetic responses, and graphic representations during or after listening experience (Fung & Gromko, 2001; Kerchner, 2001). Other researchers have observed respondents' actions and attention during listening (Gromko & Russell, 2002; Sims & Nolker, 2002) and found that appreciation and focusing skills can be directly taught.

Some empirical studies have explored children's perceptions about theatre for young audiences (Burton, 2002, Schonmann, 2002). Such studies show that understanding the essence

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of the artistic and the aesthetic that are the object of appreciation can help us strengthen arts education practices. Schonmann (2007) argued that appreciating theatre is an active process that develops the ability to grasp questions of application, generalization, and symbolism. These arts-based abilities can be taught to students in formal school settings through the use of the language of theatre, with its own symbols and conventions for expressing multiple realities, experiences, and cultures.

While these studies shed light on the abilities of children to distinguish and appreciate artistic stimuli, based on instruction, the empirical conditions are often artificial. For example, in the Gromko and Russell (2002) study cited above, children were studied individually. Each child was observed as he or she listened to culturally unfamiliar music with only researchers in the room. Although these decontextualized studies do not tell us if the learning is sustained or whether it transfers to arts-related outcomes, they do show that appreciation, an arts-based outcome, can be taught and enhanced in formal learning settings.

Performance. The performing arts involve perceptual skills (e.g., the exchange of nonverbal cues between performer and audience), cognitive skills (e.g., memory, decision making, pattern recognition), motor skills (e.g., coordination, timing, movement), and reading skills (e.g., reading standard musical notation, theatre scripts, and choreography notations). As such, these perceptual skills provide a rich domain for the study of both cognitive and motor skills (Lehmann & Davidson, 2002).

In general, musical skills or abilities are best understood in an inclusive fashion, as a combination of specific cognitive processes, emotional experiences, musical experiences, motivation, musical preferences, attitudes, and interests (Gembris, 2002). A major study that involved several musical skills was conducted by McPherson (1995), who designed some performance measures and investigated 101 children of two different age groups with regard to a variety of musical skills. These skills included playing by ear, playing from memory, sight-reading, performing rehearsed music, and improvising. The results of the entire sample of trumpet

and clarinet players showed strong positive correlations among the skills—the better one played by ear, the better one would played rehearsed material. While this study does not extend to other instruments, the correlations suggest that there is a close association of different musical skills.

In a recent study of the mechanisms that allow us to learn to dance, Grafton and Cross (2008) trained participants for five consecutive days on dance sequences that were set to music videos in a popular video game context. They spent half of the daily training; physically rehearsing one set of sequences, and the other half passively watching a different set of sequences on video. Participants were scanned with fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) prior to, and immediately following, the week of training. The researchers found that learning to dance by effective observation was closely related to learning by physical practice, both in the level of achievement and in the neural activities that support the organization of complex actions. Overall, these results suggest that learning by observing and physical learning lead to the same quality outcome. This strong link between learning by doing and learning by observing suggests that early exposure to dance might enhance this link through consistencies between the training methods. Unfortunately, as with the studies related to appreciation, the simulated empirical conditions of the aforementioned studies do not allow for the investigation of continuation or transfer.

Creativity. Creativity involves both process and product. Creative thinking can be defined as a cognitive process that is connected to the creation of a tangible object (Hickey, 2002). An expanding body of research that focuses on creativity or creative thinking in music and visual art has been published in recent years. Some examples include Barrett (1997), who investigated children's invented notations in musical composition, and Rostan (1997), who examined the relationships between age and creativity in visual arts. However, there is a paucity of empirical studies in theater and dance, possibly due to their later entrance into formal education as curricular subjects (Hickey, 2002).

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In a study that examined the effect of multiple arts experiences on creativity, Gibson (1989) compared the development of creativity skills between two groups of Grade 6 and 7 students. The first group was instructed in music improvisation and the second received multiple arts instruction (music, visual arts, and movement). The results, as measured by standardized tests, indicated while that both groups experienced an increase in musical and general creativity, the gains were greater for participants in the multiple-arts group. Similar findings have been reported by Luftig (2000) in an investigation of an arts infusion program on creative thinking, academic achievement, affective function, and arts appreciation.

Another area of research in creativity examines the hypothesis that several components must converge for creativity to occur. This area of research, termed *confluence* (Hickey, 2002) approaches creativity and creative thinking by examining the relationships between the individual, the artistic domain, and the social and cultural contexts. One empirical study that examined creativity in this way illustrated ways in which peer social processes influence creative productivity (Claire, 1993). This qualitative study described how student creativity in three fifth-grade classrooms was enhanced by mutual and supportive peer interactions during the production of creative work. These kinds of peer interactions are an integral feature of musical theatre, and therefore it can be inferred that students' creativity may also be enhanced by taking part in musical theatre.

As with all arts-based research, there is a need for more contextual approaches to the study of creativity in the arts with multiple collections of data over time to provide a rich and longitudinal picture of creativity development. While the findings of arts-based research are helpful, there are few studies that make clear connections to applications in the classroom. In order for the findings of arts-based research to be applied, they must be clearly linked to practical teaching and passed on to the educational community in order to increase the growth and development of arts-based outcomes in our students.

Arts-Related Outcomes

In some cases, the distinction between arts-related and ancillary outcomes are unclear. For the purposes of this review I was initially guided by Eisner's use of the two terms. However, some outcomes that are usually regarded as ancillary, such as risk-taking, are arguably arts-related outcomes as well. Based on my own experiences, both as a participant in musical theatre and as a teacher, I suspect that arts-related outcomes can occur both in and outside of school. Unlike Eisner, I am not limiting the construct of arts-related outcomes to out-of-school applications.

There is a research base in arts-related outcomes of arts education that indicates that the arts positively affect many facets of arts learning. Some reported benefits include increased metacognition (Hallem, 2001), increased motivation and sustained attention (Posner et al., 2008), benefits to working and long-term memory (Jonides, 2008), and the development of general cognitive and attitudinal habits of mind (Hetland, Winner et al., 2007). These four areas of arts-related learning are outlined below.

Metacognition. Recent research on musical practice has focused on metacognition, that is thinking about one's own thoughts, and the strategies that musicians adopt in their preparations for performance (Da Costa, 1999; Ericsson et al., 1993; Hallam, 1994, 1997). Hallam (2001) used semi-structured interviews to explore the development of metacognition and performance planning strategies in novice to professional level musicians. Twenty-two professional musicians and fifty-five novices were interviewed about their practicing. The novices were also tape-recorded learning and performing a short piece. The professional musicians demonstrated extensive metacognition in relation to their preparations for performance encompassing technical matters, interpretation, and issues relating to learning itself, including concentration, planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Although there were similarities in some of the strategies adopted for their practicing, there was also considerable variation among the musicians as practice and preparation depended on what each individual musician felt was necessary to maintain standards of performance. Some prepared by going over the repertoire in their minds, some sat at the piano

and imagined themselves performing, some rehearsed the pieces from beginning to end, while others played material that was not part of the performance.

The findings of the study indicate that musicians learn to learn and that musicians share a common knowledge base that enables them to assess the requirements of a task, identify difficulties, recognize errors, monitor progress, and take appropriate action to overcome problems. Hallam (2001) recommended that students of music acquire a musical knowledge base prior to, or concurrently with, specific learning and support stages. She also suggested that while basic mastery is acquired as automation is developing, repetition may be the most effective means of practicing. Once students have established rudimentary skills, they can be encouraged to "learn to learn" (p. 37).

Motivation and sustained attention. In a recent three-year study, Posner, Rothbart, Brad, Sheese, and Kieras (2008) studied how training in the arts can influence other cognitive processes through the underlying mechanism of attention. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires administered to adults and observations of students aged two and one-half to seven years of age, in randomly assigned control and experimental groups. The findings led the researchers to formulate a general framework for viewing how arts training changes cognition. Their framework emphasized that there are individual differences in interest and motivation toward the arts and that an interest in a performing art can lead to a high state of motivation. The researchers suggest that this heightened motivation produces the sustained attention necessary to improve performance. Further, the development of sustained attention can lead to improvement in other domains of cognition. These findings demonstrate that the development of sustained attention can be developed both through formal teaching and personal interest. However, the research did not examine the extent to which these skills can be transferred to other areas, or whether they can be sustained in the long-term.

Working and long-term memory. A recent study on musical skill and memory explored the effects that training in music and in acting have on both long- and short-term memory skills

(Jonides, 2008). The two-part study was conducted with college-aged participants and examined both music and theatre arts. The first study compared 22 college-aged participants who were well-matched demographically but who differed substantially in musical experience. Eleven of the study participants had at least ten years of musical experience, and practiced at least ten hours of music per week at the time the study took place. The other eleven had studied an instrument for less than a year in their entire lives and were currently playing music. The second study compared twenty-one actors trained in live theatre performance with twenty-four demographically similar control participants who did not participate in theatre. Verbal tests for both long-and short-term memory functions and fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) were employed to collect the data.

The findings suggest that in the case of musicians in the study, it is not that their memory is better than the non-musicians. Rather they applied strategies of rehearsal to maintain information in memory more effectively. This is similar to the findings related to the actors in the study whose memory for verbal materials was not more advanced than the non-actors. Instead, they applied strategies for extracting semantic themes from verbal material, and these strategies resulted in better memory for the material in question. The development of this particular skill in the arts led to heightened use of effective strategies for memorization, which in turn led to better memory. The results indicate that rehearsal is a way to teach attention and memory strategies and that perhaps this arts-related outcome can be specifically taught in arts experiences.

General cognitive and attitudinal habits of mind. In a recent study, Hetland, Winner, Veenema, and Sheridan (2007) explored how students learn to think as they confront the challenges of creating art in studio instruction. They found that arts programs teach a specific set of thinking skills rarely addressed elsewhere in the curriculum. The researchers identified general cognitive and attitudinal dispositions—what they call "studio habits of mind"— fostered by arts education: (a) the development of craft, (b) engagement and persistence, (c) envisioning, (d) observing, (e) expressing, (f) reflective self-evaluation (which includes developing critical verbal

skills), (g) stretching and exploring (which includes learning to adjust to mistakes), and (h) understanding the art world (p. 5).

The eight habits of mind were drawn from their observations of typical studio art education activities in the classrooms of five teachers from two exclusive American schools. In both the pilot urban high school and the private boarding/day school, all students received more than ten hours of instruction in the arts per week. The teachers were designated by their respective principals and agreed to participate in the study, which involved monthly videotaping of selected classes in Grades 9 through 12, followed by extensive interviews between the teacher and the researchers.

The findings of the Hetland et al. (2007) study indicated that when students were learning craft, they were also being taught a variety of other kinds of important skills and attitudes necessary to the arts. While the findings support Eisner's art-related outcomes, Hetland and Winner did not indicate whether these habits of mind might transfer to non-arts classrooms or to ancillary outcomes in the general environment beyond.

Ancillary Outcomes

One of the most common forms of empirical research in the arts focuses on what Eisner (1999) calls the "ancillary outcomes of arts education" (p. 154). Researchers report, for example, that arts learning (a) fosters cooperative, focused behaviour, problem-solving, the development of fair-minded citizens (Jensen, 2001); (b) leads to an improvement in spatial and verbal skills (Hetland, 2000; Vaughn, 2000); and (c) develops emotions and a sense of connection (Davis, 2008). One of the more involved American studies of this type was conducted by Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (1999). They explored the impact of arts learning opportunities on academic success for 2,046 public school students in Grades 4 through 8. The study involved students and staff at 12 schools in New York, Connecticut, Virginia, and South Carolina. A mixed-methods approach to data collection was implemented, including questionnaires, perception scales, and

inventories to provide quantitative data, and qualitative interviews, observations and document analysis.

Burton and her colleagues found significant relationships between rich in-school arts programs and the creative, cognitive, and personal competencies needed for academic success. The results showed that students in "high-arts" groups performed better than those in the "low-arts" groups on measures of creativity, fluency, originality, elaboration, and resistance to closure (Burton et al., 1999). These capacities are central to arts learning and are the kinds of capacities that I will be looking for in the present research. The "high-arts" students were also more cooperative, more willing to display their learning publicly, and more likely to think of themselves as competent in academics. Like the work of Hetland and her colleagues described earlier, these researchers conceptualized the arts competencies (the interweaving of intuitive, practical, and logical modes of thought) as "habits of mind," and found that these habits of mind were accompanied by increased ability to exercise imagination, express thoughts and ideas, and take risks. As a result of the positive outcomes of arts education, they concluded by calling for the arts to become curriculum partners with other subject disciplines in ways that would allow the arts to contribute in rich and complex ways to the learning process as a whole. The present study will therefore examine if these kinds of positive outcomes were also reported by adults who engaged in musical theatre during their elementary schooling.

In a parallel Canadian study, Smithrim and Upitis (2005) examined the effects of a program entitled *Learning Through the Arts* (LTTA) on student achievement in mathematics and language, attitudes toward school, and the use of extracurricular time. Unlike most other studies of this type, the LTTA national research included control schools, accounted for the effects of socioeconomic status on achievement, and used both qualitative and quantitative instruments to collect data from a sample of more than 6 000 students, their parents, teachers, artists, and principals. Significant findings of this three-year study included that the increased involvement in the arts did not take away from achievement in mathematics and language. Additionally, the findings suggested that

involvement in the arts contributed to engagement in learning. The researchers found that art activities motivated children, referring to the emotional, physical, cognitive, and social benefits of learning in and through the arts. Artists involved in the study also observed a wide variety of benefits to students engaged in the arts, including the development of arts-based skills, exploration of curriculum topics through the arts, and laying the foundation for a lifelong love of the arts. The data indicated that activities outside of school, such as music lessons and reading for pleasure, had a positive impact on student achievement in math and language (Upitis & Smithrim, 2003). These findings relate to the current research in that they include a range of benefits of learning in and through the arts—benefits I will be looking for in the data for the present study.

In a study of the transfer of individual self-regulation processes from arts to academics, Baum, Owen, & Oreck (1997) drew attention to the important differences between the environments of the arts and academic classes. Self-regulation included paying attention, using feedback effectively, problem-solving in a curricular context, self-initiating, asking questions, taking risks, cooperating, persevering, being prepared, and setting goals; important processes and strategies for successful learning. The researchers visited several classrooms to observe how a sample of students who were identified as talented in dance, music, or theatre used self-regulation in typical academic settings. They found that many of the students who were self-regulated during arts lessons demonstrated few self-regulation skills in other academic environments. These findings are significant in that they illustrate how the arts can provide particularly rich and effective opportunities to enhance and develop a wide range of self-regulatory behaviours. They also indicate that the self-regulation does not necessarily transfer to non-arts tasks, a finding aligned with much empirical research on self-regulation (Bandura, 1976; Zimmerman, 2000). The current research will consider whether any of the short-term effects, such as problem solving, taking risks, cooperating, persevering and setting goals are present in the long term.

Oreck, Baum & McCartney (1999) present ancillary outcomes using the results of a two-year longitudinal study that examined the impact of prolonged arts involvement on young people with

interest, aspirations, and talents in the arts who did not have the resources to develop their talents. The researchers focused on the development of talent and the impact of the arts instruction on the work habits, attitude, choices, self-identity, and future opportunities of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Twenty-three participants, aged 10–26, were selected for the study from a pool of more than 1900 students and program graduates. Their skills in music and dance ranged across three stages of development: (a) elementary, intermediate, and high school, (b) college, and (c) professional or semi-professional careers.

A multi-method data collection was implemented, involving extensive interviews with students, family members, art instructors, current and former teachers, as well as observations and data on academic achievement. Verbatim statements provided powerful accounts of the benefits of artistic talent development. The results indicated that involvement in the arts contributed to the development of personal qualities and behavioural indicators deemed to contribute to student success, including resilience, self-regulation, and general habits of practice, focus, and discipline. The researchers concluded that the skills and discipline gained, the experience of intense instruction and performance, and the connections formed with peers and adults helped most participants achieve success both in and outside of school. This contradicts the findings from the previous study, as these findings suggest that self-regulatory skills can transfer between the arts and other academic endeavours. The findings related to the formation of strong personal relationships will be examined in the current research.

Further literature conveying the benefits of arts education is found in an extensive account of a teacher-researcher's experiences at the Hennigan School in Roxbury (Boston) in 1984–1985 (Upitis, 1990). The Hennigan School, an inner-city elementary school, was selected by the Learning and Epistemology Group at the Media Lab of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for a long-term research project. Over 250 students were involved in the project, which brought significant changes to the school including the acquisition of over 100 computers, various

computer programs, as well as the addition of over thirty graduate students and researchers, with whom the students interacted, learned, and shared.

In the music program at the Hennigan School, students engaged in active exploration and creation of sounds, music making, improvisation, and composing with traditional instruments, found objects, and music technology. Verbatim accounts, photographs, and student-generated artifacts provided vivid descriptions of student learning and supported the themes of trust, risk-taking, community, peer interactions, formation of identity, and ownership of creative process and product that are found throughout the study. The school's production of the *Mary Poppins* musical resulted in a sense of pride, ownership, accomplishment, and community for the young students involved in the process. Here again, the kinds of outcomes that were reported in the short-term were predominantly ancillary and arts-related (Upitis, 1990). However, Upitis also reported arts-based outcomes such as a ten-year old boy learning to sing on pitch by taking part in a lead role in the school musical. This study suggests that musical theatre has the potential to engage students in all three types of arts outcomes identified by Eisner (1999). However, while this study showed that the effects of musical theatre encompass all three of Eisner's outcomes, there was no longitudinal data reported. The kinds of outcomes that were reported in the short-term are the kinds that I will be looking for in the present research where the long-term outcomes are the focus.

In her discussion of positive musical development O'Neill (2006) noted that the development of confidence, character, commitment, connection, and contribution are key components of music education—"ancillary outcomes" in Eisner's terms. These beliefs and values are part of a complex and interrelated system whereby they cannot exist without one another. Confidence is a complex and changeable belief in one's ability that is linked to specific situations and contexts and is heavily influenced by feedback, self-esteem, sense of direction and control (O'Neill, 2006). Character refers to the qualities that guide our decisions. It is rooted in our values and as such the development of character is a life-long process. And it is closely tied to commitment—taking

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responsibility for one's actions and meeting the needs of others by fulfilling obligations that contribute to others. Connection, or a sense of belonging, is developed through social experience. The development of positive relationships and respectful interactions with both peers and adults will contribute to this connection. Involving oneself in valued cultural art forms to benefit the common good in communities is how O'Neill characterizes contribution. All of these components are applicable to musical theatre, both for the children and adults involved. In the current research, I will be examining whether these components are long-lasting for the adults who participated in elementary school musical theatre as children.

There has been an ongoing debate over the aims of education since the earliest days of schooling, a theme I will return to in the final chapter. If, as Ralph Tyler (1994) has said, "the American public school is responsible not only for educating citizens to develop and maintain a democratic society but also for engendering in individuals the desire to continue their education throughout their lives" (p. viii), then carryover from schooling and lifelong influence and learning are important aims of education—even if unstated or ancillary.

<center>The Long-Term Impact of Arts Experiences and Schooling</center>

Because of my emphasis on long-term effects of participation in musical theatre, I now turn to an examination of the research on lifelong learning and transfer or carryover effects from the original experience. Studies in adult perceptions of music education have been investigated as they pertain to lifelong learning and to the carryover and influence of music skills and knowledge further in life. Charles Leonhard (1958) stated:

> The ultimate criterion for judging the success of musical learning lies in the kind of habits that are developed. Does the learner develop the habit of pursuing musical learning further on his [*sic*] own? Does he [*sic*] habitually put to use in his [*sic*] living the musical learning that has accrued from his [*sic*] education in music? Does he [*sic*] share his [*sic*] musical ability with family and friends? Does he [*sic*] habitually participate in music with increasing

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pleasure? Does he [*sic*] constantly seek to refine his musical behavior? Does he [*sic*] seek

opportunities to play and sing with others? Does he [*sic*] have a record collection? Go to

concerts regularly? Support community and school music programs? The answers to such

questions as these reveal the extent to which the music education program is affecting the

lives of those who participate in it. (p. 332)

These questions, asked in 1958, are still relevant today. Certainly one measure of value in arts

education is the influence an arts education has on any future involvement with arts.

Adult Perceptions of Long-Term Impact of Arts Involvement

Several studies have addressed issues of carryover and lifelong influence in music, using

convenience samples including audience members, community choirs, and adult learning

situations (e.g., Bowles, 1991; Richards & Durrant, 2003). These samples offer the perspective of

adults who have an interest and involvement in music. Their self-perceived influences and

motivations often included private or public music instruction, but family music experiences

appeared to be critical in decisions regarding music participation, music study, and music support

throughout life (Bowles, 1991).

In a case study aimed to understand why some adults believe themselves to be non-singers

and to determine the realities of a practical solution for self-perceived non-singers, Richards and

Durrant (2003) explored a distinct group of adults who enrolled in an adult education class in

order to learn how to sing. Their research was qualitative in nature and aimed to gain insight into

participant beliefs, perceptions and interpretations.

Participants were members of the *Can't Sing Choir*, a course offered at a London adult

education college. The course description on the college prospectus (as cited in Richards &

Durrant, 2003) reads:

For those who really feel they can't sing or pitch a note properly. Learn the elements of pitching and voice production, and experience the pleasure of singing in parts—all those things you felt were beyond you. (p. 78)

The choir consisted of an undisclosed number of singers, the majority of whom were female, varying in age and background. Multi-method data collection strategies were employed by the researcher over the course of seven months; participant observations, questionnaires, and interviews. The findings of this study demonstrated that developing self-confidence was critical to development in singing. Such improvement could be developed over time, with practice, and in the context of safe, supportive environments characterized by a caring and humane teaching style.

The results of these studies indicated that the primary motivation for participation in musical activity in adulthood was related to the love of singing, making music, or the beauty of music for personal enjoyment. Although the acquisition of skills was important, it was not the primary motivator for the adult music participant. It is possible that the same finding will occur in the present research, that is, one purpose of the present study is to determine if adults who took part in musical theatre as elementary students recall less about skill development and more about the love of taking part in the enterprise itself. In other words, the arts-based outcomes may prove to be less important or memorable than the arts-related and ancillary outcomes.

A recent study by Turton and Durrant (2002) investigated how adult individuals remembered and regarded secondary school singing experiences. This study offers the perspective of individuals who may or may not have had interest or involvement in music as adults. Twenty participants took part in structured interviews during August 1999. The findings of these interviews led the researchers to conduct a survey using the structured interview questions on a stratified random sample of 60 participants: 15 males (20 to 30 years of age), 15 females (20 to 30 years of age), 15 males (30 to 40 years of age), and 15 females (30 to 40 years of age) in order to attain a variety of participants.

Results from this study indicated that most participants believed that singing contributed to their personal confidence and a sense of shared identity. Also, they expressed a desire for vocal training and development, rather than just having a sing-along. Many who responded that they "could not sing" were influenced by an event in the past, an act of being separated from others, feeling different or centered out in ways such as being chosen for a solo or not being allowed to join the choir. It is striking that the only question with *no* differentiation among subjects was, "Do you think singing is something worth doing in school?" (p. 46), for which every respondent replied "yes." The data revealed that adults were united in their view that singing opportunities should be provided in school, despite many of their own negative memories of such experiences. This type of response is also one that I will look for in the current research.

Generativity

As noted previously, despite the lack of curriculum mandates and other types of formal expectations and support, musical theatre has a long and continuous history in elementary schools. Teachers are not mandated to organize musical theatre productions and yet something compels them to do so. Perhaps it is because teachers see the benefits of musical theatre in all of the ways Eisner suggests that they are willing to give up free time to provide the opportunity for their students. Further, parents and community members who have themselves participated in such activities promote and encourage youth to become involved in musical theatre. Both teacher and parental involvement can be linked to Erikson's (1968) theory of generativity.

Generativity refers to the way in which human beings have always strived to make a difference, leave a legacy, to create something to be remembered and to be passed on to future generations. This term is used to describe the need for humans to guide and establish the next generation. The concept of generativity was introduced by Erikson (1968) in his theory of the human life cycle. According to Erikson, "generativity vs. stagnation" is the seventh of eight stages of human life—the stage associated with the middle adult years. At its core, generativity is

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about caring and educating young people by assuming the role of the responsible adult. It aims to guide and foster the development and well-being of individuals and social systems that will outlive the self, through parenting, teaching, and mentoring. Generativity is also about being a responsible citizen, a contributing member of a community, a leader, an enabler (Erikson, 1968; McAdams & St. Aubin, 1998; O'Neill 2006).

In the final section of the literature review, I characterize the particular quality of learning that occurs in musical theatre. I make the argument that the reasons for the longevity of musical theatre, despite the lack of formal support, and the contributions to generativity and carryover are based, in part, on the ways in which musical theatre is pursued.

The Nature and Quality of Learning in Musical Theatre

As noted in the introductory chapter, musical theatre offers a form of learning in which students act, dance, sing, learn to tell a story, and interact with one another in rehearsal and on the stage. This is in contrast to other forms of learning in which students are often involved wherein they develop an understanding of abstract knowledge, take part in extended periods of seat work, and are encouraged to become independent thinkers. Musical theatre requires a number of additional skills, including the coordination and creation of sets, costumes, props, and lighting design. Students who are not acting on stage may be scriptwriters or play roles as musicians and dancers. Memorization of lines and action are essential to the process—even for those members of the cast who are not speaking the lines. In this final section of the literature review, I will describe how the nature and quality of the learning that is involved in musical theatre can be categorized. Three types of learning are relevant to this discussion; situated, collaborative, and embodied knowing.

Situated Learning

Situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) occurs as a function of the activity, context, and culture in which it takes place. The two main principles of situated learning are: (a) knowledge

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needs to be presented in an authentic context, that is, settings and applications that would normally involve that knowledge; and (b) learning requires social interaction and collaboration. In situated learning, students become involved in "communities of practice" where certain beliefs and behaviours associated with each community of practice must be acquired. As the learner moves from the periphery of this community to its centre, he or she becomes more active and engaged within the culture and may eventually assume the role of full participant or expert. This process is what Lave and Wenger (1991) call "legitimate peripheral participation" (p. 20).

Although the benefits of learning in authentic contexts have been established (Lave & Wenger, 1991), situated learning is not widely practiced in elementary schools due to the practical difficulties of placing students in authentic settings (Andersen, 2002). Musical theatre, however, provides the opportunity to create "as-if" worlds (Greene, 1995, p. 320) within the school that can foster situated learning. Additionally, the magnitude of musical productions—the costumes, the tickets, the rehearsals, the make-up, the detail—make the experience "real" for the children. This was noted by a cast member of *Mary Poppins*, who, when asked, "What do you think it is about the big play (*Mary Poppins*) that makes it so much fun?" replied, "You get the whole story. It's not fake" (Upitis, 1990, p. 92). The "realness" of musical theatre certainly correlates with situated learning.

The social interaction and collaboration of situated learning are also evident in musical theatre, and these aspects will be developed in more detail in the related section on collaborative learning. The interdependence of the performers is a key aspect of theatre. Musical theatre requires social interaction between the cast and crew, the children and the adults, the school and the community. It is collaborative in nature: not only do the arts come together, but so too do the people. Elementary musical theatre involves students, teachers, musicians, parents, on stage and backstage, in the audience and in the community—acting, singing, learning, building, advertising, and selling tickets.

A further link between situated learning theory and musical theatre is the role of the teacher. Unlike traditional teacher-centered approaches to instruction, theatre arts in education strives for a more student-centered approach by shifting the teacher to a role that is supportive rather than leading. Situating learning in an authentic context does not necessarily bring the expectation that learners will shoulder the full expectations and responsibilities of a professional. Instead, the learner needs to be able to be involved in "real" (i.e., socially valued) work at a developmentally appropriate level (legitimate peripheral participation). By structuring the nature of the frame and roles, the teacher allows learners to make a legitimate and valued contribution at their own level, whether peripheral or central in the sense that Lave and Wenger (1991) describe.

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of approaches in education that involve the social nature of learning. It requires collaboration amongst peers who are engaged in a common task. Collaborative learning has its roots in social constructivist theory, and has been associated with Vygotsky's (1978) belief that students are capable of performing at higher levels when expected to work in collaborative situations than when asked to work individually. In this type of learning group members are interdependent in the performance of their task and must interact in order to complete it. The essential element that defines true *collaborative* learning is the generation of shared meaning amongst pair or group members through an iterative discussion process (Webb & Palinscar, 1996). Musical theatre clearly nurtures and facilitates this type of learning. Working collaboratively requires social skills such as active listening, talking, compliments and constructive criticism, taking turns, reaching consensus, and conflict resolution (Webb & Palinscar). These skills are embedded in all aspects of musical theatre when students are communicating their ideas and feelings to peers, thinking and talking about individual or shared experiences, suggesting and trying out new ideas, reflecting on and changing ideas, and helping others.

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Collaborative learning is also related to the notion of social learning established with Bandura's (1976) work on the significance of close social ties for learning. Social learning theorists claim that people learn from one another through actions such as observation, imitation, and modeling—all of which are present in musical theatre. Another aspect of social learning involves learning through imitation. The learning that occurs is influenced not only by the behaviour of the adult or model, but also by how the learner perceives the negative or positive response of the adult to his or her behaviour (Bandura, 1976).

Embodied Knowing

Embodied knowing refers to those experiences that engage the body, senses, emotions, and imagination as well as the intellect. The notion of embodiment reflects a change from the mind versus body dualism to that of the mind and body as one entity. Musical theatre is a form of embodied learning requiring commitment and engagement physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. The embodied experience of musical theatre involves educating the child, not only from the "neck up" (Powell, 2004, p. 193) but involving the whole body. In rehearsals, students warm up their bodies, enhance their sensory awareness, and these exercises also serve to promote group cohesiveness (Upitis, 1990). In a report on creative drama and young children, Pinciotti (1993) maintained that engagement in drama integrates mental and physical activity, engaging the whole child in improvisational and process-oriented experiences. Dance educator Ann Dils (2008) described how all of these forms of knowledge intersect in dance. She writes:

> At its boldest, then, dance literacy reconfigures the dance curriculum as a set of
> interconnected knowledges through which we understand the body and movement, how these
> operate in various dance traditions, and what meanings they might hold for us as individuals
> and societies. As an activity in which people participate as doers and observers, dance
> conceived of as a literacy might spill over into many subject areas with any number of
> outcomes: individual physical, creative, and intellectual accomplishment; improved problem

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solving skills in individual and group settings; improved observation and writing skills; critical understanding of the body and dance as social constructs; social integration; historical and cultural understanding; and sensual, critical, intellectual, and imaginative engagement. Dance underscores the importance of bodily experience as an integrative agent in all learning. (p. 107)

The inherent power of arts experiences as channels for embodied learning has also been articulated by Bresler (2004). The simultaneous incorporation of thinking, feeling, seeing, acting, knowing, and creating offers embodiment as a compelling way to rethink how children learn, teachers teach, and schools are organized. Throughout Bresler's book, the arts are portrayed as natural instruments for embodied knowledge, although Davidson (2004), in her chapter of the book, concludes that while "the school arts curriculum, of all curricular areas, has the potential to enlarge our understanding through the interaction of the body-mind" (p. 210), she warns that this is an all "too rare and misunderstood experience in contemporary elementary schooling" (p. 210). Musical theatre is one of these occasions in elementary schooling in which embodied learning can occur and, like other forms of embodied learning, such as outdoor education and athletics and team sports, it is interdisciplinary by nature.

Summary

In this review of literature on contemporary arts education I have identified and critiqued the several bodies of literature related to musical theatre. Using the structure of Eisner's three tiers of arts education outcomes, the literature reviewed has provided context for the current study. The literature on the long-term impact of arts experiences and schooling informs the methodological design and the instruments of data collection. Erickson's notion of generativity and the learning related to the nature and quality of learning in musical theatre provide frameworks for analyzing the data.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology that underpins the research and the specific methods used to collect and analyze data. First, I discuss the qualitative nature of this study and how phenomenology informs the research design. Next I outline how Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenology procedures guide this study. I then detail the components of the method: (a) participant selection, (b) pilot study, (c) data collection, and (d) analysis. The chapter ends with a description of the approaches used to enhance the trustworthiness and overall quality of the study.

A Phenomenological Approach

The focus of qualitative research is to interpret and understand a phenomenon from the perspective of those participants who have experienced it (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997; Patton, 2002). The nature of this study must, therefore, be qualitative, for I seek to understand the elementary musical theatre experience from the perspective of individuals who have taken part in musical theatre in years past.

This study takes an approach to qualitative researching that Patton (2002) describes as "exploratory research" (p. 139). He notes that this approach is appropriate in new fields of study where little work has been done and little is known about the phenomenon. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), an exploratory study aims to discover significant themes, patterns, and categories in participants' meaning structures.

A phenomenological perspective informs the research design. Phenomenological studies describe the meaning of lived experiences and explore how human beings make sense of a phenomenon, both individually and as shared meaning (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002).

Phenomenology aims at gaining a deep understanding of the essence or the underlying meaning that several individuals attribute to lived experience. It has also been described as the study of how humans describe and experience a phenomenon through their senses (Husserl, 1913), and the study of the lived experiences of persons (van Manen, 1990).

> Lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research. The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence— in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive reliving and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience. (van Manen, 1997, p. 36)

Moustakas (1994) described phenomenology as the description of *what* humans have experienced and *how* they have experienced it. He stressed that phenomenological studies describe the essences of these lived experiences, rather than providing explanations or analyses. Despite various definitions, phenomenologists agree that a rich, full understanding of any human phenomenon requires a deep, probing examination of people's lived experiences (Creswell, 2007; Husserl, 1913; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990).

Transcendental Phenomenology

There is no single way of applying phenomenology in research studies. One approach is termed transcendental or psychological phenomenology (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994), Husserl founded transcendental phenomenology, an approach which later became a guiding concept for Moustakas. Transcendental phenomenology places more emphasis on a description of the experience of participants, and less on the interpretations of the researcher. In fact, with this approach, the researcher sets aside personal experiences as much as possible, and examines the phenomenon from a new perspective, to the extent possible. Hence, "transcendental" means "in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34). Also, with this approach the researcher relies on intuition and

imagination to obtain a picture of the experience (Creswell, 2008). The following section outlines the design and analyses procedures of this study and details who they relate to transcendental phenomenology.

Research Design

Participant Selection

In phenomenological research design, the inquirer collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon. This approach to selecting participants is termed "purposeful" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 126) or "purposive" sampling (Patton, 2002, p. 40). As Patton (2002) suggested, qualitative researchers generally agree that understanding a critical phenomenon depends on choosing the participants well.

Participants for this study were recruited through personal distribution of a questionnaire, much like the method adopted by Kuehnle (1984) in a similar study in which long-term memories of elementary teachers from a wide range of the population were collected. For the study reported here, I approached potential participants, ranging in age from about twenty to eighty years, in two Ontario communities. The first community is a mid-size city located in Southeastern Ontario. The second community is a town of approximately 15 000 in central Ontario. Participants were sometimes approached individually. This approach was used on the street, in coffee shops, retail stores (clothing, furniture, book, and dollar), offices, grocery stores, pharmacies, butcher shops, libraries, pubs, and art exhibitions. I also approached groups of people in settings such as barber shops, elementary school staff rooms, fitness clubs, curling rinks, and fire stations. For example, when I entered a barber shop and saw several men having their hair cut or waiting for the barber, I addressed the group by asking if any of them had ever been in a school musical theatre production while in elementary school. A recruitment script (see Appendix A) was used to ensure consistency of approach. This form of maximum variation sampling was selected in order to diversify the sample by age, gender, education, and occupation. It also limited the sample size and

geographical region. In personally recruiting participants, the aim was to have each age group represented by both male and female participants, with a minimum of five participants for each of the age categories (a) 20–29, (b) 30–39, (c) 40–49, (d) 50–59, (e) 60–69, (f) 70–79, and (g) 80 and over. For the most part, the people I approached were intrigued by the question and took the time to listen to my request. With almost every yes, came a smile and a story. In very few cases, the individuals simply indicated that they were not interested in speaking with me.

Participants were also recruited through snowball sampling (Patton, 2002), an approach used to locate information-rich participants. This method of selection involved individuals providing the names of people who they believed had participated in elementary school musical theatre productions and who would be a valuable participant in the study.

By the end of the participant recruitment phase, 392 individuals were approached. Of these, 134 individuals had taken part in an elementary school musical, and all but five agreed to fill out a questionnaire. Eighty-four questionnaires were later returned, a response rate of 62.7%.

At the end of the questionnaire participants indicated whether or not they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Forty-one of the respondents indicated their willingness to be interviewed. To the extent possible, I tried to diversify the range of potential interview participants by age, gender, education, and occupation. I collapsed the age groupings into three (20–39 years, 40–59 years, and over 60 years), and looked for an assortment of occupations, educational levels, and responses to their experiences in school musical theatre, in order to gain multiple perspectives and experiences—individuals with positive, negative, and neutral experiences, individuals who continued to be involved in the arts, and those who did not. No men over the age of sixty consented to take part in an interview, so two men were selected from the 20-39 year age group. Two alternate participants were selected in case one or two of the initial six selected could not be interviewed. One alternative was used, as the original male participant in his twenties moved away at the end of the school year.

At the end of this participant recruitment process, I selected six participants; three female, and three male. Their occupations included those of lawyer, construction worker, retail business owner, elementary school teacher, student, and retired entrepreneur.

Pilot Study

Miles and Huberman (1994), as well as Yin (2003), encourage the routine use of pilot procedures to test interview questions, participant selection, coding themes, analysis and verification procedures. For this research, the questionnaires were piloted with twenty graduate student peers and personal contacts during the last week of December 2007. The pilot provided an opportunity to assess the clarity of the questions, the detail of the responses, and the time taken to complete the questionnaire. The interview questions were assessed again more formally during a pilot interview on February 28, 2008 with a participant who had completed a questionnaire and who had indicated that she would be willing to assist with the pilot study.

Ethics Clearance. Prior to contacting potential participants, I applied for and received ethical clearance from the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at Queen's University in December 2007. Questionnaire participants gave informed consent as part of the questionnaire itself (see Appendix B). A Letter of Information and two copies of a Consent Form were distributed to participants who were interviewed (see Appendices C and D).

Data Collection

Four data sources were used to collect data: (a) questionnaire, (b) field log, (c) semi-structured interviews with focal participants, and (d) field notes taken during the interviews. Data collection began with the distribution of the first set of questionnaires during the last week of December. Questionnaires were distributed in the two communities for a three-month period.

The Questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed with both closed and open-ended questions. Closed questions focused on demographic and educational information, elementary musical theatre experiences, and the long-term effects of participation. Open questions focused on

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the long-term effects of participation and current perceptions of the value of musical theatre in elementary schooling (see Appendix B). As detailed above, the questionnaires were distributed personally in public settings. Completed Consent Forms were returned in a self-addressed, stamped envelope that I provided. The address used on the envelope was addressed to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research at the Faculty of Education in order to keep my home address confidential.

The distribution and collection of questionnaires was an ongoing process. Completed forms continued to arrive by mail, and I continued to approach individuals in hopes of obtaining 100 completed questionnaires by April 2008. By the beginning of May 2008, I stopped recruiting participants as I had received 84 questionnaires—enough to select six varied interview participants.

Field Log. Throughout the recruitment stage of data collection, I kept a field log to document the continuous field work, a chronological record that detailed specific dates, places, and persons involved in the study. Entries were recorded using a system marking the week, day, and site. For example, W5, D1, S2 is week five, Monday (Day 1), at the second site. In this field log I also kept a record of the on-going ideas, decisions, and personal reactions I had throughout the study. Some of these ideas altered the content of the questionnaire. For example, after a morning of distributing questionnaires, I made a note about a butcher I had met who had participated in elementary musical theatre, but declined a questionnaire. In my log I recorded that:

> He mentioned that he went to school in [small rural village], and that he was 59 years old.
>
> He said that he went to school in a one-room school house, and that concerts/plays etc were
>
> held in the church so that there would be room for the audience. (W3, D1, S1)

After approaching individuals in a community more than three hundred kilometers away,

I noted that:

> In this rural community, only two individuals who seemed to be over the age of 60 had
>
> participated [in a school musical]. At least twenty individuals commented that they went to

school in a one-room schoolhouse with no opportunity for musical theatre productions other

than Christmas pageants involving recitations and choral singing with no costumes. I wish

now that I had included a rural/urban question on the survey—to distinguish between the

communities in which the elementary schools were located. I have a feeling that most

would've been urban—especially with participants who are in the 40+ age range. (W3, D5,

S2)

These two entries led to the addition of a question on the first page of the questionnaire, where the

participants checked off a box to indicate whether their elementary school was located in a rural

or urban setting. This is the version that appears in Appendix B.

Interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe qualitative interviews as "a way of finding out

what others feel and think about their worlds. Through qualitative interviews you can understand

experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate" (p. 3). The purpose of the

interviews in this study was to elicit further memories and significant experiences related to

participation in school musical theatre, including the name of the musical production, musical

skill development, personal development, and long-lasting implications. As discussed in a later

section, the interviews also added to the trustworthiness of results from the questionnaire data.

As noted previously, participants who were willing to take part in interviews indicated so at

the end of the questionnaire. Interview participants were selected purposefully to represent a

range of ages, gender, and both the positive and negative memories of school musical theatre.

Semi-structured interviews with six participants were conducted in March, April, and May 2008.

These interviews were used to elicit further memories and significant experiences related to

participation in school musical theatre and allowed for the triangulation of results from the

questionnaire data. Specific musical theatre information, musical skill development, personal

development and long-lasting implications were explored through these interviews (see Appendix

E).

In preparation for the six in-depth interviews, a pilot interview took place during Week 9 of the study. The female participant, aged 30-39, indicated her willingness to participate in an interview on a completed questionnaire. She was selected for the pilot interview because of her age and gender as many of the questionnaire participants were females in their thirties. She was also chosen because I felt that her musical and professional experiences as an adult would make her insightful on the topic. The interview, which lasted twenty-four minutes, took place in the participant's living room—a location where the participant was comfortable and at ease (Berg, 2004). After the participant had read the Letter of Information and signed two copies of the Consent Form, she agreed to begin recording. Background information about the participant was not incorporated into the interview questions because the questionnaire that was used as the initial exploratory tool for data collection provided sufficient data regarding the participant's demographic and educational information.

In preparation for the pilot interview, I created an interview protocol, including a standard introduction followed by a list of carefully worded, open-ended questions, as are typically used in a standardized, open-ended interview where the "exact wording and sequence of questions are predetermined" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2005, p. 351). As this interview was used to pilot the questions for upcoming interviews with six other participants, one of the aims was to assess the quality of the wording for each of the questions. It is important to assess the clarity of the wording because it is essential for each respondent to have the same understanding and interpretation of the questions (Johnson & Weller, 2002). The standardized, open-ended interview approach was combined with the more adaptable interview guide approach, "offering the interviewer flexibility in probing, and in determining when it is appropriate to explore certain subjects in greater depth, or even to pose questions about new areas of inquiry that were not originally anticipated in the interview instrument's development" (Patton, 2002, p. 347). As a result of this combined approach, I was able to modify questions throughout the pilot interview, and to reflect on changes in thinking as the participant's perspectives and concerns were explored and examined.

Field Notes. Another data collection method that enhanced the descriptions gained from the interviews was the use of field notes. I used a journal to document the thoughts, feelings, and observations that I experienced during each interview. These were later used to enhance my analysis of the findings and to ensure that I was bracketing myself from the data collection, for if the researcher affects the participants, then the participants will also affect the researcher. The field notes were a way to reflect on how the interview progressed and to make observations on the setting and the participant's behavior. As well, writing observations allowed for reflection on personal meanings and understandings acquired from the interview. When the participants were sharing some of their experiences I found myself recollecting some of my childhood memories and I had to guard against allowing my own feelings and interpretations to affect the participant's comments.

Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), descriptive statistics are used to summarize, organize, and reduce large numbers of observations. They focus on "what is" with respect to the sample data. In this study, a nominal measurement scale was used to describe the sample and summarize some of the data collected with the questionnaire. This resulted in categorical variables, and the findings are reported as frequencies in each category. No inferential statistics are used in this study.

A spreadsheet was created using Microsoft Excel to aid in the organization and interpretation of the data. As the questionnaires were returned, the data were entered into the spreadsheet, and organized by (a) demographic information, (b) education and occupation, (c) importance of elementary school musical theatre productions, and (d) long-term effects. The types of data, as well as the scales used for each of these sections, are now discussed, followed by a discussion of how the data was analyzed.

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Closed-form questions provided categories to indicate the gender and age of the participants, as well as whether their elementary school(s) was located in a rural or urban setting. Participants used open-form responses to indicate the number of elementary schools they attended, the provinces in which they attended elementary school, and the population of the school(s).

The level of education attained by the participants and their parents was obtained through a check-list format, while the current and previous occupations held by the participant were indicated through open-form questions. Information regarding the number of musical theatre productions the participant was involved in, the ways in which he or she was involved, and whether participation was mandatory or optional was included in the questionnaire. Participants were also asked to indicate what they remembered when recalling their experiences; sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and other.

Participants were then requested to indicate how their musical skills were developed through participating in elementary school musical theatre. The specific skills listed were choral singing, solo singing, dance, group performance, improvisation, and interpretation. Responses were indicated on a four-point Likert scale. Options included "not at all", "some", "quite a bit", or "considerable."

A second four-point Likert scale was used to determine to what extent participation in elementary school musical theatre productions affected the participants'; (a) creativity, (b) ability to work in a group, (c) imagination, (d) ability to express their thoughts, (e) willingness to take risks, (f) sense of community or belonging, (g) ability to solve problems on their own, (h) self-esteem, (i) musical skills, and (j) ability to solve problems with others. This list reflects the full range of arts education outcomes identified by Eisner (1999) as discussed in the previous chapter. The response scale included "not at all", "some", "quite a bit", and "considerable."

The final two closed-form questions asked participants to indicate whether they had taken part in music or drama since elementary school. If they had, they were asked to report the nature of their participation. The options included choir, band, singing, theatre, play an instrument, and

other. If the participant indicated "other" there was an open-form place to elaborate. The data

analysis for these components was completed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics,

including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize findings and answer questions

(McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). These findings are presented in Chapter 4.

Open-ended questions were included in the latter part of the questionnaire to provide an

opportunity for participants to respond to the following questions: (a) What aspects of being

involved in musical theatre seem most meaningful or valuable to you now? (b) In what ways did

your experiences in elementary musical theatre influence who you are today?, and (c) What would

you say to an elementary school musical director who feels that they do not make a difference in

children's lives?

As the questionnaires were returned, each set of responses to the open-ended questions was

transcribed into individual Microsoft Word text files. Each of these files was then transported into

ATLAS.ti software to facilitate the coding and analysis of the data. The analysis of this set of

datum was conducted after the analysis of the interview transcriptions. These verbatim accounts

were coded only by whether they could be used as an illustrative quote for the study, some of

which appear in Chapter 5.

Qualitative Data Analysis

In qualitative research the development of a manageable classification or coding scheme is

generally the first step of the analysis (Patton, 2002). In contrast, specific and structured methods

of analysis are provided for phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

Moustakas has reviewed several approaches to phenomenological analysis, and his modification

of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen approach has been used in this study (Moustakas p. 121). This

approach is outlined below, with both an overview of the steps and how they have been

implemented in the current study. The Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen approach involves the following

steps: (a) *epoche* or personal bracketing, (b) significant statements, (c) meaning units, (d) textural description, (e) structural description, and (f) the essence of the phenomenon.

Epoche or personal bracketing. Epoche is a Greek work meaning to "refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). In this initial stage, the researcher begins with a full description of his or her own experience of the phenomenon. This is done in an attempt to set aside the researcher's personal experiences so that the focus can be directed to the participants in the study. Bracketing is an opportunity to become alert to personal conceptions of the phenomenon under investigation before formal data collection occurs. For this study, bracketing involved my personal reflections on participating in elementary school musical theatre productions (as I have experienced them). I included a description of my experiences in the introductory chapter.

Significant statements. This stage of analysis involves the researcher finding statements (either in the interviews or from other data sources) about how individuals experienced the phenomenon. These statements are all treated as having equal worth and are compiled into a list of separate, non-repetitive statements. I began this cyclical process by listening to the audio file of the interview in its entirety in order to "get a sense of the whole" (Patton, 2002, p. 440). Next I transcribed the digital recording into a Microsoft Word text file (see Appendix F). This process provided me the opportunity to immerse myself in the data, and in turn offered the experience to generate emergent categories.

Meaning units. Here the significant statements are grouped into larger units of information called *meaning units* or themes. Willms, Best, Taylor, Gilbert, Wilson, Lindsay and Singer (1990), and Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that researchers start their coding with some general themes derived from related literature (etic codes) and then add more themes and subthemes as they analyze the data (emic codes). Following this advice, the data were then considered using etic terms based on the findings of Upitis (1990) regarding the role of the school musical production in students' experiences in inner-city schools. These themes included trust,

risk, community, peer interactions, formation of identity, and ownership of creative process and product. Based on the literature discussed in Chapter 2, an additional set of themes related directly to learning in the arts include skill development in choral and solo singing, ensemble performance, improvisation, performance, choreography, and interpretation.

Once the data were transcribed, I re-read the interviews several times until I felt that I had sufficient understanding of each participant's implied meanings to cautiously analyze the data. Each data segment within the transcript was considered separately, and throughout each pass of the data, I thought about the participant, and what he or she was talking about or describing in that segment. The code list was then consulted and if an appropriate code was not there, open coding (Charmaz, 2002) was employed to create a new code (emic) that reflected, more precisely, the subtle meanings of what the participant had actually said. For example, I was originally using the theme "community" for all data involving a sense of community and/or belonging, but I reorganized the themes to differentiate between "community", "belonging", "friendship", "family involvement" and "community traditions." One segment was often assigned several themes. After three passes through the data, patterns and relationships were noted.

Inter-rater reliability. In order to increase reliability and to expand and enrich the analysis, a doctoral student with extensive musical training served as a second reader and coder. A short training session took place in order to increase trustworthiness. The coding of the texts was assigned to this individual so that I could determine whether the meanings and experiences investigated were shared between coders and whether both individuals would apply the same code to particular segments of text. Krippendorf (1980) suggests that the coders should be in agreement at least seventy percent of the time. This high level of inter-rater agreement is advocated to provide evidence that a theme has some external validity and is not the result of the investigator's personal bias (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

Table 1

Inter-rater Reliability

Transcript	Code	Researcher's Codes	Second Reader's Codes	Calculated Inter-rater Reliability $CR= \dfrac{2M}{N1 + N2}$	Percentage
P7	Audience	9	9	$\dfrac{18}{18}$	100%
P23	Musical Skills	2	3	$\dfrac{4}{5}$	80%
P109	Teacher Involvement	12	10	$\dfrac{20}{22}$	90.9%
P122	Gender	12	13	$\dfrac{12}{13}$	96%

where M = # times the two coders agree: N_1 and N_2 = # of coding decisions each coder made.

Using *ATLAS.ti* the second reader read and analyzed the data for four of the participants. Upon the coding of the first four transcripts, I calculated the inter-rater reliability between myself and the second reader on a different code for each participant to determine the extent to which we agreed on the coding of the content. For each code our agreement was 80 percent or higher, so together we determined that she did not need to code the final two transcripts. Upon completion of the coding we resolved together, through discussion, any differences that arose in the coding or in the interpretation of the data.

Textural description. In this stage of the analysis the researcher writes a description, including verbatim accounts of what the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon. Upon completion of the coding, I re-read both the questionnaire data and interview transcriptions. Using verbatim accounts and data from the questionnaires I compiled a textural description of each participant which will be presented in the following chapter. A composite textural description of all the participants follows the six individual descriptions.

Structural description. Here the researcher writes a description of how the experiences happened. This involves the researcher reflecting on the setting and the context in which the phenomenon was experienced. Structural descriptions are presented as the interpretations in Chapter 5.

The essence of the phenomenon. In this final stage of analysis and representation, the researcher writes a composite description of the phenomenon, incorporating both the textural and structural descriptions. This passage is the "essence" of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study. The essence of the phenomenon is described in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

Approaches Used To Enhance the Validity and Trustworthiness of the Study

The use of the questionnaire as the initial exploratory tool presented a number of strengths in exploring the long-term significance of musical theatre for a diverse group of adults. The questionnaire (a) provided standard questions and uniform procedures for all participants, (b) provided time for subjects to think about their responses, (c) allowed for the development of some interview questions after a first analysis of questionnaire results and, (d) ensured anonymity. However, the inability to probe and clarify the open-ended questions was a limitation of this method.

The inclusion of semi-structured interviews with six participants presented a separate set of considerations regarding the validity of the findings. It was important to ensure, to the extent possible, that the participants and the researcher had a shared sense of meaning for concepts and experiences discussed. This was accomplished through constant checking with the participants throughout the interview to see if, indeed, our meaning was shared. In particular, if I had doubt about how a participant was using a concept, I probed further to clarify. Indeed, a strength of the interview approach is that it allows the researcher to probe and clarify responses and to include nonverbal behaviour in observations.

A number of strategies were used to enhance trustworthiness. The use of questionnaires, interviews, and field notes allowed for overall triangulation in data collection and analysis. The use of a digital audio recording provided accurate and complete records of the interview sessions. The inclusion of verbatim transcripts of the audio recordings of the interviews provided literal statements and quotations of participants to illustrate meanings and increase validity. Finally, throughout the study, negative or discrepant data were actively sought, recorded, analyzed and reported in order to provide variants to emerging patterns and themes.

In addition to the strategies already described to enhance validity, I also combined a number of documentation strategies to monitor and evaluate the impact of my subjectivity. First, as indicated earlier, I kept a field log to document the continual field work, as well as a chronological record that detailed individual dates, places, and persons involved in the study. Secondly, by recording the ongoing ideas, decisions, and personal reactions I had throughout the study, I was able to engage in a process of reflexivity and bring this understanding to my analysis and implications. I also maintained a record of data management techniques including codes, categories and themes to assist in the monitoring of data validity.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the methodology which underpins the research and the specific methods used to collect and analyze data. The phenomenological approach was described and the approaches used to enhance the validity and trustworthiness were discussed. In the next chapter I present the results of the data analysis beginning with the questionnaire data and followed by the interview data.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS – THE PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of this study is to describe the experience of participation in musical theatre in elementary school and the meaning that adults make of their experiences. There are three sets of results reported over two chapters. The results in this chapter were formed around the participants' descriptions of their lived experiences of elementary school musical productions. They are organized first around the eighty-four participants who completed questionnaires, followed by the six participants who were selected for in-depth interviews.

The first section provides results of the analysis of the questionnaire data. First the descriptive statistics collected from the quantitative questionnaire data are detailed below. These have been organized by: (a) demographic information, (b) education and occupation, (c) elementary school musical theatre participation, and (d) importance and long-term effects of participation. In the following section, each of the six interview participants is introduced individually through the presentation of textural descriptions of his or her experiences in elementary school musical theatre. In the next chapter I will present the core themes and qualities that are connected with the elementary school musical theatre experience.

Quantitative Questionnaire Results

Demographic Information

During the data collection phase, I approached a diverse range of individuals. Many were interested in the study, and approximately one quarter of those approached had participated in an elementary school musical production. Of the participants who took and completed a questionnaire, more than half were between the ages of twenty and thirty-nine. Almost two-thirds of the respondents were female. The number of male and female participants in each age group are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Gender and Age of Questionnaire Participants

Gender	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	*Total*
Male	10	12	7	1	0	1	1	32
Female	16	17	7	5	4	3	3	52
Total	**26**	**29**	**14**	**6**	**4**	**4**	**1**	**84**

Education and Occupation

Information pertaining to the level of education attained by the participants and their parents was obtained through a check-list format. Some participants checked only the highest level attained, while others checked all applicable levels of education. The results of this check-list are shown in Table 3. In general, the participants exceeded their parents in the level of education attained. Participants also indicated their current occupations. Some of the occupations listed were; sales representative, teacher, student, consultant, lawyer, musician, retired, truss designer, writer, property manager, potter, heavy equipment mechanic, inventory manager, urban planner, accountant, vice-principal, server, day care owner, tour director, librarian, leasing specialist, sales clerk, educational assistant, registered nurse, office manager, mining engineer, human resources, pharmaceutical salesperson, fitness instructor, correctional officer, farmer, cashier, figure skating coach, consultant, dental administrator, and baker.

Table 3

Level of Education Attained

	Participant	*Participant's Mother*	*Participant's Father*
High School (no diploma)	3	12	15
High school graduate	54	49	45
Some College (no diploma)	10	7	1
College Diploma	25	20	19
University (no degree)	10	2	1
University	39	18	15
Graduate or Professional	26	10	11

Elementary School Musical Theatre Participation

An individual may participate in musical theatre in a number of different ways. The

questionnaire data revealed that fifty-eight of the eighty-four participants were members of the

chorus, fifty-six had supporting roles, and thirty played the lead role in an elementary musical

theatre production. Seven participants were involved in set design, ten helped with costumes, and

three were members of the lighting crew. Eleven respondents indicated that they were involved in

other ways including stage direction, make-up, writing, directing, band, and stagehand.

The participants also indicated the number of productions they were involved in, ranging

from one to more than eight. The results of this response are shown in Table 4. Participants also

indicated whether their participation was optional or mandatory. Some selected both optional and

mandatory if they were involved in more than one production. Overall, 21 indicated that their

participation in the musical theatre production was mandatory; 63 indicated that participation was

optional.

Table 4

Number of Elementary Musical Theatre Productions

Number of Musicals	*1*	*2-3*	*4-5*	*6-7*	*8+*
Male	8	11	8	1	2
Female	9	24	8	6	4
Total	17	35	16	7	6

Importance and Long-term Effects of Participation

The significance of participation in elementary school musical theatre was examined through

the responses of participants relating to how the participants perceived the development of their

musical and life-related skills as a result of participation in elementary school. Data revealing

whether or not participants continued to participate in the arts after elementary school are also

included in this section.

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Participants indicated how their musical skills were developed through participating in elementary school musical theatre using a four-point Likert scale. The results of this question are presented in Table 5. More than two-thirds responded that they experienced "quite a bit" or "considerable" development in group performance. Choral singing skills were also perceived to have been developed "quite a bit" or to a "considerable" extent by more than half of the respondents. Both choral singing and group performance, musical skills that are developed in collaboration with others, were perceived to have been more developed through musical theatre than other, more independent skills of solo singing and interpretation.

Table 5

Musical Skills Developed Through Elementary School Musical Theatre

Musical Skills	*Not at all*	*Some*	*Quite a bit*	*Considerable*	*No Data*
Choral Singing	4	28	29	16	7
	5%	*33%*	*35%*	*19%*	*8%*
Solo Singing	25	23	13	9	14
	30%	*27%*	*15%*	*11%*	*16%*
Dance	22	29	15	5	13
	26%	*35%*	*18%*	*6%*	*15%*
Group Performance	0	22	30	26	6
	0%	*26%*	*36%*	*31%*	*7%*
Improvisation	28	22	16	7	11
	33%	*26%*	*19%*	*8%*	*13%*
Interpretation	23	26	23	3	9
	26%	*31%*	*28%*	*4%*	*11%*

A second four-point Likert scale was used to determine to what extent participation in elementary school musical theatre productions affected the participant's life-related skills. The results of these responses are shown in Table 6. More than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that participation in elementary school musical theatre developed their sense of community or belonging either quite a bit or considerably. This was almost matched by the development of self-esteem, willingness to take risks, and the ability to work in a group.

Table 6

Life-related Skills Developed Through Elementary School Musical Theatre.

Life-related Skills	Not at all	Some	Quite a bit	Considerable	No Data
Creativity	9	30	33	8	4
	11%	*36%*	*39%*	*10%*	*5%*
Ability to work in a group	1	28	38	13	4
	1%	*33%*	*45%*	*15%*	*5%*
Imagination	7	30	29	14	4
	8%	*36%*	*35%*	*17%*	*5%*
Ability to express your thoughts	16	29	24	8	7
	19%	*35%*	*29%*	*10%*	*8%*
Willingness to take risks	5	23	38	14	4
	6%	*27%*	*45%*	*17%*	*5%*
Sense of community or belonging	5	19	34	22	4
	6%	*23%*	*40%*	*26%*	*5%*
Ability to solve problems on my own	27	29	15	7	6
	32%	*35%*	*18%*	*8%*	*7%*
Self-Esteem	6	21	40	14	3
	7%	*25%*	*46%*	*17%*	*4%*
Musical Skills	14	24	26	15	5
	17%	*29%*	*31%*	*18%*	*6%*
Ability to solve problems with others	19	32	19	8	6
	23%	*38%*	*23%*	*10%*	*7%*

Of the eighty-four participants who completed the questionnaire, sixty-seven had participated in music or theatre activities beyond elementary school, sixteen had not, and one did not respond. Of the sixty-four who have participated in further musical endeavours, thirty-two were in a choir, sixteen in a band, thirty-two continued singing, thirty-six were involved in theatre, and twenty-seven played an instrument. Twenty-six participants indicated that they had been involved in other arts or arts-related activities. The activities listed were dancing, teaching, conducting, improv group, public speaking, sound technician, master of ceremonies, choreography, set design, model, song-writing, production, and recording.

Qualitative Interview Results—The Six Participants

In this section, each of the six interview participants is introduced individually. Using data

collected from the questionnaires, and many direct quotations from the interview transcripts, these

descriptions provide a comprehensive understanding of how each participant experienced the

phenomenon of elementary school musical theatre. I organized the data the participants shared

with me in terms of: (a) their demographic and educational background, (b) their lived

experiences of elementary musical theatre and the context of their experiences, (c) how their

participation in elementary school musical theatre affected and continues to affect the

participants, and (d) the meaning they made of their elementary school musical theatre

experiences. The chapter concludes with a composite textural description of all six participants.

In preparing the transcripts for inclusion in this thesis, particular conventions were

implemented. The quotes used from the transcripts have been edited for narrative smoothness and

clarity. All names, places and nationalities have been changed for the sake of confidentiality and

anonymity. Five participants chose pseudonyms and one allowed me to select a name for him. For

ease of reading and understanding, I have deleted many superfluous words such as 'um' and 'you

know' and some repeated words. Square brackets indicate where I have added to the quote for

clarification of meaning. Two asterisks denote where quotes have been combined from different

places in the transcripts. Three dots signify that the participant paused during the conversation

before continuing.

Edgar

Demographic and educational background. Edgar is a male in his fifties who practices law in

central Ontario. He is married and has two daughters enrolled in post-secondary institutions. Born

in the United States to a university-educated mother with classical voice training and a high-school

educated father, Edgar moved to Canada early in his childhood. He attended three different

elementary schools in the province of Ontario, both in rural and urban settings. Edgar was raised

in an arts-rich home where music was valued. Outside of school he took part in piano lessons and church choirs. In the interview he noted that his mother played the piano and that his father was

not very musical, at least he thought he wasn't, but my mother was musical. We had a lot of music in the house. I grew up listening to *Guys and Dolls* and *South Pacific*, and they [parents] used to go down to musicals and tour New York City all the time… they liked musical theatre. (P7, 79)

Lived experiences in elementary school musical theatre. Edgar was a shy child who did not enjoy school. He participated in two musical theatre productions in elementary school, the first in Grade 6 when he played the role of Marley the Ghost in the school's production of *The Christmas Carol*. He recalls this experience saying:

The fondest memory I have is being Marley in Grade 6 because I think it was probably very unexpected of me to do such a thing, and you know, people liked it. It got some laughs and so that was a good feeling. And people would comment on it afterwards and I thought it was fun. (P7, 95)

Edgar attended a different school in Grade 7, specifically for intermediate students in Grades 7 and 8. At this school he participated in a student-produced musical theatre production that combined all three Grade 7 classes. During the interview he recalled that he had, "a very minor part" in a musical called, "*Springtime in Canada* or something like that, I can't exactly remember. The approach was kind of a Lucy Maud Montgomery version of 19th century life in Ontario, so it was supposed to be historical" (P7, 44). In both experiences Edgar's participation was mandatory, although in the class-based performance it was not mandatory that he perform. Instead each student was required to help on or off-stage. Rehearsals and practices for both of Edgar's musical theatre experiences took place within the school day. Performances were held in the evening for parents and the community.

Long-term effects of participation. When speaking of how his experiences in elementary school musical theatre may have had lifelong influence in his life, Edgar spoke of self-confidence and risk-taking:

I can't help but think that that opportunity or the opportunities to perform contributed to self-confidence, to the realization that I can stand in front of a group of people and do something and I'll survive (laughs)… I had good feelings about those experiences so I'm sure it must have contributed to my confidence to be able to get up in front of people and address them, certainly not all by itself, but it had to be a contributing factor. (P7, 167)

He also noted that his, "willingness to take risks, to say, I'm going to do something and it might not go over exactly the way I thought but that, really, if you don't take a risk, nothing will ever happen. I would say [musical theatre] contributed" (P7, 183).

In terms of continued interest in the arts, Edgar informed me that he has been a professional musician for the past five years. He commented that:

As far as I'm concerned, musical theatre is art, and the point of art is communicating, one person to the other, to the extent possible. I think that the most important element of being a human being is to be able to communicate from one person to the other in what ever way you can possibly do and I think the arts do that in a more important way than any other medium. I think the arts are important and I think musical theatre is important. (P7, 198)

Meaning of participation. For Edgar, who did not enjoy elementary school, participating in musical theatre provided a positive experience:

I didn't like school you know. To me, to the extent that I've become educated it's in spite of school not because of it. I have a great resentment and spite for the public school system (laughing). I don't like it, I think it's negative. I didn't like my general experience with it, and I think it was mean-spirited and ill-suited to the task named. But I did enjoy that experience [musical theatre] . . . I remember it as a good experience, notwithstanding my other views about public school. (P7, 123)

Lenny

  Demographic and educational background. Lenny is a male in his thirties who is married with an infant son. He works as an inventory manager, and as a health and safety assistant for a general contractor. Born and raised in rural Ontario, Lenny attended one large elementary school, one high school, and has received a college diploma. Lenny grew up in a supportive home. He did not take any musical or arts training outside of school but he remembered that, "my dad had over eight hundred albums. Growing up I listened…everything under the sun. He had a great love of music and a great love of albums so I always listened to music when I was a kid" (P23, 132).

  Lived experiences in elementary school musical theatre. Lenny participated in two musical theatre productions in elementary school and his memories of the experiences are positive. In both instances, involvement with the production was mandatory although students were not required to perform on stage. Lenny recalled that in Grade 7, for the performance of "*Pirates of Penzance* I was actually not in the play, I was in the lighting crew, because I was nervous and scared to be on stage" (P23, 42). He noted that while he is "not a shy person by trait" he is when, "it's in an intimate group, where I know all the people, and I could be embarrassed and people that I would talk to again would actually remember it and remember me." He remembers thinking, "I'm not going to embarrass myself, I'll just do the lighting" (P23, 77). He recalled that his reluctance to be on stage surprised his parents because, "they thought, well, Lenny is putting on a show all the time, why wouldn't he want to [perform on stage]"? (P23, 50)

  After being part of the stage crew the first year, he made the decision that the next year he would audition for a performance role. He attributes some of this decision to the support of his parents, who, "both said to me afterwards, you know, if you don't try how are you gonna know. It's O.K. to succeed or fail but if you never try it, then you're gonna sit and wonder, so why not give it a shot next time" (P23, 77).

  The next year Lenny auditioned for a role in *Alice in Wonderland* and played the role of the Cheshire Cat. He felt that this role was well suited to him because:

The Cheshire Cat is kinda silly and…he doesn't make any sense and he's just kinda goofin'

around. I guess [he's] the comedian of the whole show of Alice in Wonderland because he

comes in and out and just basically disrupts everything. The Cheshire Cat is basically

nonsensical and says nothing that makes any sense at all, which frustrates Alice on her way

to try to find her way out, right? That's part of why I thought it was fun because I had to act

serious, but basically be, dry humour, so that's why I thought it was fun. And even the song

that he sings, there's no actual English word in it. To me it seemed to be a good fit. (P23,

105)

Long-term effects of participation. For Lenny the long-term significance of his elementary

school musical theatre experiences lie in his appreciation for the arts as an adult and in his

willingness to take risks. In discussing the arts in his adult life he shared that:

I think [elementary musical theatre] affected me greatly. It's opened up my mind to cultures

and I've been to plays, operas, my wife and I went and saw the *Blue Man Group*. I know

friends of mine that think it's absolutely ridiculous, but to be honest I had fun, and it was a

good time, and I think that anything that you can do to open up your mind to anything else—

you never know what you're missing. You know, some of my friends, good friends are

gonna miss out on it and they're not gonna think they are so it's not gonna affect them

adversely but it might affect their kids if they give them that mentality—oh that's sissy

like—or whatever. I just think that any time you close a door just to close a door it's a bad

idea and I think that being in that musical and being forced to be in that musical basically

opened my eyes. Because basically I was a male chauvinist kid who was a jock who played

every sport imaginable…And that one teacher I had, and doing musicals, and being exposed

to certain things helped me grow as a person and realize you know, the light literally came on

one day, well you know, it might be horrible, but how do I know? (P23, 125)

Lenny also noted that the musical theatre productions, "taught me about music and helped

with self-esteem, working as a team, creativity, enhancing the ability to remember and

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responsibility by learning lines" (P23, 156). He also learned about "building stage sets, working lights at the right time in the right spot." After the experience was over he "felt better about myself knowing that I tried something that I wasn't too sure about and accomplished it. I think all it can do is make you a better person" (P23, 156).

Meaning of participation. During the interview Lenny commented that the musical theatre experiences that he had in elementary school were important because it helped in "opening up a culture and I think opening up kids' eyes." He noted that:

> Everything that you do in school is important, but I think in this case [musical theatre], it was something different, it was outside of the norm…for me, in school, some of the most important things I did had nothing to do with the education that was provided…I think when you do certain things like musicals they [teachers] guide you the best they can but at some point you're the only one who can control the results. So you try hard and you do your best…I think that forcing kids a little bit to put them out there, to make their own choices at times is an excellent thing and I mean, I think you set them up to succeed, but if they fail a little bit, I mean they can learn from that. (P23, 125)

Vander

Demographic and educational background. Vander is a female in her sixties. She is married with two children and two grandchildren. Before retirement she worked as a successful entrepreneur who owned her own execusuite and wedding planning company. Born in Holland, Vander's biological family was separated at a very young age and her mother re-married when she was a year old. She recalled:

> Our household was not a happy home, it was a very tough place to grow up in for a girl because, especially because I was not the child of my father. And so I had very little accolades from my father. My mother was overprotective of me and my father of course mostly ignored me, which was very hurtful for me. (P49, 76)

Vander attended two different elementary schools in Holland, the first until Grade 4, and then a second for Grades 5 and 6. After completion of Grade 6, Vander's family moved to a rural farming community in central Ontario where she was bussed to school. Her parents, both high school graduates, pulled Vander from school prior to completing her high school requirements so that she could work in a nearby town. In adulthood she went back to do adult education and earned additional high school credits. She has also taken courses offered by local universities.

Lived experiences in elementary school musical theatre. Vander participated in three musical theatre productions, two in Holland, the other in Canada:

> In Holland you put on a lot of plays. They are very big on the arts. They were then, and they're even bigger on it now. So in elementary school you put on a lot of plays. For Christmas for instance, there's always something but then, the higher you get up in the grades the bigger the plays are. The performances are huge and everybody comes, and everybody wants to see it. So they're very supportive of that kind of thing. (P49, 56)

Vander has strong memories of only one of the productions in Holland, when she was in Grade 4 and she played the role of a king:

> I remember being chosen because I had long blonde hair and I remember the teacher saying that she wanted someone with long blonde hair and she wanted me. I remember her coming into the class and saying that she wanted me. Now, I was a very shy, very, very shy child. I was very excited and then at the time of the play, I can't remember much of what I said or how I said it except that I just felt I was in my element. I just really enjoyed it. ** I wasn't nervous at all. I loved every minute of it. (P49, 44)

In Canada, Vander was involved in one other musical theatre production. During the interview she talked about how she borrowed a costume from a neighbour and how taking a bus was an issue for rehearsals:

I was bussed in, actually I lived in a small town and I was bussed in to a larger town for

school, that's where I was in that play. And they waited, the busses waited when we had

rehearsal** I would be running to make the bus, obviously, but you know he [the bus driver]

would maybe wait ten or fifteen minutes so that I could still go [home on the bus]. (P49, 84)

Long-term effects of participation. For Vander, the musical theatre experiences had two

significant long-term effects. The first is depicted in her account of her siblings today:

Being really shy, [musical theatre] pushed me forward. And now my two brothers have a

panic disorder, and my sister lives with eleven cats and a dog, and never leaves. So that's my

family. I'm the only one that has traveled all over the world. My sister has lived in this trailer

park for a long, long time and now they're building behind her and she's deathly afraid that

they're going to be cutting her off. So she called me up and she said, "I know you're not

afraid of anything so you can come and see what's really happening, and can you go and talk

to them because you know I can't." So the three of them are very much afraid and I'm the

only one that's not. So, you betcha, you betcha [musical theatre] helped! (P49, 164)

A second long-term impact is seen in Vander's continued involvement in the arts as an adult.

In talking about what she has taken from musical theatre into her adult life she noted that "I think

maybe it just opened that little door inside of me that said there was such a thing as art and it was

beautiful" (P49, 156). Since her years in school she has acted in community theatre and helped

out with sets and costumes. She listed her artistic interests as an adult stating:

I've done many things let me think, I knit, I sew, I paint, I make furniture out of willow. I'm

a photographer, I have lots and lots of pictures, I've collaged them, I've done dried flower

arrangements, huge, like when I say huge [stretches out arms] they are like that…and then

decorated them with dried flowers. I've renovated lots of houses. (P49, 188)

Vander also talked about how:

The musical [in Canada] showed me that there was this other thing, this other art, this other

atmosphere that was creative, that was meaningful for me, you know, that fed my soul. And

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so, in all the years since then, I love music. I love music, very rarely do I not have music on. I especially love piano music. (P49, 156)

She spoke of attending concert series in the large city where she once lived and how as an adult she has "always surrounded myself with artistic people because I feel a kinship with them. I think it [musical theatre] was a turning point for me, being involved was a light in a very dark place" (P49, 156).

Meaning of participation. The lifelong influence of participating in elementary musical theatre was two-fold for Vander. The opportunity provided a positive outlet:

For me, the struggle was the home front, it [musical theatre] was just total joy for me. ** It was such a big part of my life. I mean, for me it was like, you know I won't tell you my life story but really, for my sister and I, for my step-sister and I, we lived in a fantasy world because that was our safety, so, and now, you had a whole new fantasy world that you could live in, that you can not imagine on your own, you know. The whole story of the musical, the story of it, and practicing the singing in your room, and all of those things, so you could live in something else other than what was real. (P49, 100)

In terms of the importance that Vander placed on her participation she noted that "for my soul, it [musical theatre] was the only thing that was important" (P49, 128).

Vander's participation also boosted her confidence which she "really badly needed." When she looks back on the experience now she thinks that having the opportunity to learn that "I could be in front of people, and I could be somebody else, and that someone wanted me to play that part" was instrumental to her self-confidence (P49, 44).

Olivia

Demographic and educational background. Olivia is a female in her thirties who teaches elementary school. At the time of the interview, she and her husband were expecting their first child in a few months' time. Olivia was born and raised just outside of a small city in eastern

Ontario. She attended two elementary schools in rural settings with less than 300 students. Olivia participated in many sports activities both in and outside of school, and continues to coach and play team sports as an adult.

Lived experiences in elementary school musical theatre. Olivia participated in three musical theatre productions during elementary school. In all three productions, her participation was optional. Her first production in Grade 3 was a school-wide production of *Peter Pan,* in which her part was "a very small one. I was an Indian, I'm not sure if that's the most politically correct term, but I remember singing some songs in Peter Pan and coming up on stage for a relatively short period of time" (P109, 33). Olivia's next two experiences were smaller class-based productions. In Grade 5 she remembered:

> I wrote a play, based on my grade five teacher who had a friend who would come in and sing
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> songs with us, and he wrote his own songs. So using his songs that we [our class] wrote and
>
> that we performed in class, I wrote a play based on those songs, to connect it together. I was
>
> part of that particular musical [on stage], I was the narrator, but I also was the author of play.
>
> (P109, 33)

She recalled that:

> In Grade 5, the story, or the play was called *Messy Max* and…it wasn't an assignment or
>
> anything like that, I think I just came home and started writing a script, and it incorporated
>
> the songs that my grade five teacher's friend had written so that it would all connect into one
>
> another. And I was the director too I guess. I ran auditions for the different roles, and I'll
>
> never forget it. It was a very small rural school, and I took over, like the front kind of hall
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> area and closed off the doors, and I was able to call people down for auditions. I was able to
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> cast who I wanted and the rest of my classmates were part of the choir would sing the songs.
>
> And I could probably say from a selfish standpoint, I put myself in the narrator role, because
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> I didn't want to star in it but I didn't want to be just in the choir. I wanted to have some sort
>
> of role, so I put myself there. (P109, 45)

Again in Grade 7, Olivia authored and directed the class production, but this time with a different teacher. She recalled:

I think what happened is that the teacher remembered the play from Grade 5, and I want to say that Mr. Brown approached me and said, "Would you be willing to write something up?" and I said "sure no problem" and then, again, I opted to not necessarily star in it. I believe in that one, I really tried to incorporate everyone, like I think it was kind of like a whole class thing, like everyone was up there so everyone had at least like one line or two. And it was something to do with holiday time so that every kid had the opportunity to say something about the holiday season. Um, but I incorporated it into the script. Yeah. That's what I did. (laughs) (P109, 53)

Long-term effects of participation. As an elementary school teacher, Olivia is very involved in sports and coaching students. She is quick to note that "I don't play an instrument, I can't read music, the only way it's transferred into my life is based on my profession" (P109, 157). As an elementary school teacher Olivia has played a role in three musical theatre productions:

I have held a few different types of roles. So set design was a very important undertaking for a couple of performances at my previous school and I took probably, maybe five to six students, and they became my, like my set design team, but I also would have my entire class, perhaps help and make different parts for the set design, because artistically, I felt at that stage, that's where I could give more to help the production, because I would not be able to play a musical instrument, I would have any knowledge in that kind of realm. And so recently, I just finished a production of *Alice In Wonderland* where other teachers wanted to do the set design, so I backed off that and I helped out with more of the drama aspect. And would take two or three different scenes and go through practices with the kids. But I did not have anything to do with the music. It was strictly the drama, like the dramatic production of certain scenes.** I also held the role of kind of being a backstage helper, so I was waiting

kind of off in the wing, being able to guide students, like to come on- and off-stage, and just

holding the curtains and also making sure that the crew knew O.K., you need to take this

prop out. (P109, 189)

Later in the interview, Olivia also recalled that she had participated in drama in her teacher

education program and that the experience has allowed her to feel as though she can "talk to kids

and give them pointers because I know what it's like to be up on stage. Like I know that feeling of

the bright lights shining down on you, and who's in the audience and things like that" (P109,

213). In her teacher education program, Olivia had to take an elective course and she chose drama

as her elective. She recalls the performance being "a parody based on our experience in our B.Ed.

program, and it was a humorous one, it was funny, but we took on different roles, and I loved it.

Absolutely loved it" (P109, 213). She also noted that she doesn't think that she would have

participated in that elective course had she not had experiences in school musical theatre and

other leadership activities.

Meaning of participation. When recalling what her involvement meant to her as a child,

Olivia noted the sense of pride and accomplishment that she felt not only as an individual, but as a

collective as well, "I still remember that feeling of, this is really neat, this is our class, and it's my

script, and it's being performed, and it was a neat feeling" (P109, 89). She also spoke of the

opportunity to experience the arts given that she has different interests:

different abilities and different attributes… sports may have been my number one thing, but

[through musical theatre] I also felt that I could also be successful in a musical performance

realm. Not necessarily singing a solo, but with writing, or directing. I could be a part of it**

There's lots of ways to be involved. (P109, 125)

Christian

Demographic and educational background. Christian is a single male in his twenties

who is currently enrolled in post-secondary studies. Raised in a suburb of Toronto, he

attended two urban, Catholic elementary schools. Outside of school Christian participated in community choirs and musical theatre productions.

Lived experiences in elementary school musical theatre. Christian's elementary school provided three opportunities for involvement in musical theatre, all of which he took part in. Participation was mandatory in Grade 8, but students in Grades 6 and 7 could audition for a role in the performance. He recalled that his school did not have a music teacher, "and then this lady, who was the special ed teacher came to our school, but she also did musicals and things like that, so she started the school on musicals, and she did these three sort of musical montage things." The first opportunity was more of a "pre–recorded tape thing, ** essentially, it was a lip-synching thing" which he recalls was "not very good" (P122, 37). Then in Grade 7 the teacher "moved away from the lip–synching and we started dancing, and singing to this accompaniment, and the same thing for the Grade 8 production" (P122, 37). Christian told of some of the numbers and sketches that he was involved in:

Once I was singing this song, I don't know who sings it, but *Calendar Girl*, that was mine. All by myself. So I was the lead for that one, that was in the fifties and sixties part of it, and in the seventies or eighties we did the *Flashdance* stuff, and you know, things like that. So, it wasn't like they were distinct roles, like you know, you are this character in this musical, but they had to pick people to sing solos and stuff though. (122, 45)

As a child interested in the arts, Christian found that musical theatre, as an add-on to the curriculum was a negative experience for him. His passion for the arts was nourished outside of school, and despite the negative memories, Christian appreciated the opportunity to showcase his talent, in spite of the social ramifications:

I found, because I also was able at that time, to compare it to other experiences outside in the community where I was doing choir and musical theatre and different productions and things like that in which I got a more genuine sense of what it was like to be part of a group that really wanted to do a musical. You see, so I mean it might be a little bit different than some

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other people's stories about elementary school musicals, when it's "oh that was such a great

experience." For me it wasn't necessarily such a great experience because in comparison to

other experiences that were so much better, I could see that this wasn't that great. ** But

when I look at just an elementary school experience and the musical training and the arts

creativity that we did, at least it was an attempt. But again this is not a trained music teacher

doing it, it's just somebody who's coming into the school as a special ed teacher who says

there isn't any music happening at this school, we need to do something for these students.

(P122, 53)

The negative memories that Christian shared were linked to his talents and experiences in the arts

outside of school, and the lack of arts education in the school prior to these musical montages:

I remember in the Grade 8 production, because I guess there was no music at the school,

throughout all of our years, people in my cohort weren't very musically inclined or didn't do

much in that area, whereas I was doing a lot extra-curricularly outside of the school, so they

gave me a lot of the roles, so I was basically singing the most (laughing) in the Grade 8

production, it was like the Christian show, it was horrible you know? To just be the only kid

up there but uh needless to say that's how it sort of happened. (P122, 45)

He continued by sharing that:

It was a little bit horrible in a few senses because I mean, part of a musical experience is to

feel like a whole chorus and team in doing it, but when it's sort of like well here's clearly the

kid who knows how to sing and that can dance, even if not great but better than us, and has

experience at it, well then he just gets deemed doing these roles all the time and there's more

of a separation rather than a collection, you know rather than a collective. (P122, 49)

Long-term effects of participation. Christian attended an arts high school upon graduation

from elementary school where he participated in a number of musical theatre productions. He

was quick to note however that his enrollment in this specialty arts program occurred despite his

elementary schooling experiences:

If I was to think about um, my elementary school experience and my outside experiences, if it was strictly elementary experiences I wouldn't have gone on into the arts [after elementary school] you know? But because I knew that sense of community and that there were other people who, other boys who liked doing these kinds of things, and girls, that that existed somewhere and that I enjoyed it then I could follow through with [the arts]. (P122, 97)

After high school, Christian abandoned the arts:

In some ways I so wish I was in the arts now. But what ended up happening was, I was in the arts high school and graduation came and I was choosing programs for university, and a lot of my friends chose arts-based programs and were doing Bachelors of Fine Arts everywhere and that was really cool. But I never auditioned for any of those or did any of that. Instead I went into the sciences in undergrad at U of T and it was just, it really extinguished any sort of art pieces or abilities that I had, opportunities to be part of the arts at that point. So, after doing a Bachelor of Science it's hard to get into the arts in some way. (P122, 216)

Despite having left the arts in terms of his schooling, Christian has begun to slowly re-enter the world of the arts. He has joined a school choir "as a step towards reconnecting" with the arts and once he is "a little more settled in terms of a community I think I'll try and tap into some sort of community [theatre]" (P122, 220).

In discussing what he has learned from his elementary musical theatre experiences that he has carried with him into adulthood, Christian noted that:

The musical process is a long one that you need dedication for, perseverance, dedication and commitment to something. And the notion of struggle, because a lot of times it is quite difficult to get where you want to go with the production and you know, and there is a lot of work that needs to be done that's beyond the actual song you're singing or the number you're working on. You know, you need further skills that you need to find and learn to contribute to that production. (P122, 201)

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Meaning of participation. For Christian, the aspects of involvement in elementary musical theatre that seem meaningful or valuable to him as an adult are complex:

> I think um maybe there was some . . . satisfaction in being able to do what I did, like have, quite literally a stage to perform on…when that wasn't the case in the six years before [Grades] six, seven and eight. So . . . that was, I guess meaningful in some ways. And I think maybe looking back it was meaningful to have me be given that opportunity for the other students as well. Because if you think about it, if up until Grade 8, and you're whatever twelve years old by then, you haven't seen a guy perform and be involved in the arts, that's really problematic to the kind of people we're educating, you know? In my view. And so I guess it opened up a space of hopefully, of thinking more towards acceptance of people and interests outside of sports. I don't know that it did or not, but hopefully it does. (P122, 181)

Lucy

Demographic and educational background. Lucy, a woman in her fifties, is a divorced mother of three children. Born and raised in rural Ontario, Lucy attended a one-room school house until Grade 3, and then a four-room school for the remainder of her elementary schooling. She noted that there were not many children in the one-room school "in my class there were three, in one other grade there were only two, so, you know, I don't know how many there would've been altogether in the school, maybe twenty-five or thirty kids" (P88, 51). Raised in a musical household, Lucy's mother played the piano for community performances, her father played the violin, and the family sang in various church choirs. She and her sisters competed in singing competitions in music festivals and she remembers how when they were "little we did plays in the living room all the time, that was usually on Sunday afternoon and mom and dad encouraged us. I remember us even doing it in the summer time for the neighbours and we charged tickets" (P88, 170). Lucy worked from home as a farm wife while she was married, and since her divorce she has worked as a retail store owner and operator in a small village in central Ontario.

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Lived experiences in elementary school musical theatre. As a student in the one-room school house, the only musical theatre opportunities were Christmas pageants which Lucy noted were "always the nativity" (P88, 51). She recalled that:

My mother did costumes, and the fellow that actually worked on our farm who was very creative, made these wonderful, great wings of cardboard and painted gold leaf and so, you know, one of my older sisters was named Mary and so she got to be Mary (laughing) but the whole school was in it and we all sang and I think maybe one year I got to be the, like a little angel or something like that…they stood up high on some kind of platform. I remember you didn't dare get dizzy cause I wore these huge big cardboard wings [spreads her arms wide]. We just sang for all the people that came to watch, which would be our parents. (P88, 51)

Lucy described her school as a gathering place or centre for her community and spoke of how the building was used for such performances:

We only had one room and then the furnace was downstairs and we had a piano and there were washrooms and cloakrooms, and that was it. So they somehow made a stage and some curtains, and my mom would play the piano. I remember also too, sort of concerts but I don't think I was in them. I think it was more my dad played the violin but that might have been when somebody was retiring or something. (P88, 59)

Long-term effects of participation. Lucy enjoys music and drama as an adult and speaks highly of musical endeavors outside of schools. She noted that for her, the long-term significance of performing in front of others was:

The team thing, and not letting people down, and the excitement of getting there, being able to do it, and even like, keep practicing and sticking at it. All those sort of values that are also related. That's almost more than the actual singing. Yeah. And it's presenting yourself, it's standing up, that kind of thing. (P88, 110)

She has also encouraged her children to become involved in musical theatre along with other extracurricular activities noting that "it was sort of up to, to me as a parent to encourage them or

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assist them or give them the tools" (P88, 122). She noted that because her children had more opportunities than she had as a child that:

> I think for my kids, there was a much bigger impact than for me. I mean, what I have is fond memories and I guess they stood me. But you don't think of it the same way. But I can see, with my children, how it has impacted. How they have become more self–assured. I can see the benefits of the experiences. (P88, 174)

Meaning of participation. Lucy appreciates the opportunity to get in front of an audience and the community building that can be accomplished through musical theatre. She noted that it is:

> Showmanship and being O.K. with people laughing at you, and having an audience. It's feeling good enough about yourself to know they might be laughing at what you're doing, or at you, but your self–esteem is strong enough to be able to go off and do it. Yeah, so I think that definitely, anything that puts a social group [together], that teaches them to belong, to work together, and to achieve, that helps. You know bringing each other along. (P88, 174)

At the same time, she also recognizes that this can be accomplished through other extra-curricular activities such as the Science Fair and Public Speaking.

Composite Textural Description

The following section provides a synthesis of the six participants' textural descriptions. The organization remains the same.

Demographic and Educational Background

Each participant attended elementary school in Ontario, and only Vander attended elementary school outside of the province. Four of the participants attended elementary schools in rural communities; Edgar and Christian were raised urban areas. Five of the six participants attended public schools, Christian attended a Catholic elementary school. In terms of post-secondary education, five of the participants had high school diplomas. Vander was unable to complete high school due to family decisions. Four have university degrees, and Lenny has a

college diploma. During their childhood, three of the six participants were involved in arts activities outside of school. All but Vander were raised in homes with supportive and involved parents. At the time of this study, four of the six participants were married, Christian had never married, and Lucy was divorced. Four of the six participants have children, Olivia is expected to have given birth to her first child by the time this study is complete.

Lived Experience of Elementary Musical Theatre

All of the participants were involved in three or fewer musical theatre productions during elementary school. Each participant took part at every opportunity, and did not turn down the chance to join in. All six participated willingly, although for Christian, Edgar, and Lucy there was one instance when their participation was mandatory. Each participant performed on stage, although Lenny was involved in the lighting crew for one performance, and Olivia also held the role of author and student-director.

All but Christian had positive memories of their experiences in elementary school musical theatre. Christian was the most involved in musical theatre outside of school, and struggled most with the in-school program. All six saw the value of the arts in elementary education.

Long-term Effects of Participation

The long-term effects of participation in elementary school musical theatre can be seen in three ways: (a) through the continued interest and involvement, and the expansion of skills in the arts, (b) through the retention and use of specific knowledge and skills, and (c) through lifelong influence—when participation has caused an effect in indirect or intangible ways.

Continued interest in the arts was noted by Edgar, Lenny, Lucy, and Vander. All spoke of their appreciation for the arts as adults. Expansion of skills in the arts has occurred for Edgar who now considers himself to be a professional musician, for Christian who has recently re-entered the arts by joining a school choir, and for Lucy and Vander who continue to be involved in artistic

communities as adults. Olivia has carried over the knowledge and skills she learned in elementary school musical theatre to her students as they rehearse and perform musical theatre productions.

In terms of lifelong influence, both Edgar and Vander spoke of increased self-confidence. Lenny and Edgar noted a willingness to take risks and try new things. Christian spoke of learning about perseverance, dedication, and commitment. Christian and Lenny both noted that learning to struggle and to overcome has benefited them in adulthood.

Meaning of Participation

In reflecting on the meaning they made of their elementary school musical theatre experiences, all six of the participants spoke of opportunity. For Olivia and Lenny, two individuals with no experience in the arts outside of school, the musical theatre experience provided their only opportunity in performance arts. Lenny noted that the experience opened his eyes to the arts, and both Lenny and Olivia commented that the experience provided a means to explore other areas outside of sports and academics in which they could develop skills and experience a sense of accomplishment and pride.

For Edgar, musical theatre afforded a positive and enjoyable experience in an otherwise dull elementary school experience. Likewise for Vander, the experiences offered a solace from an unhappy home. Both Lucy and Christian spoke of the opportunity to perform, a stage on which to showcase their talents. However, where Lucy also spoke of the occasion to build a sense of community, Christian noted that his performances were valuable in that they opened the eyes of his peers.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the data collected from the questionnaires and introduced the six interview participants, presenting the descriptions of their lived experiences of elementary school musical productions. In the next chapter, I will present the core themes and qualities that are connected with the elementary school musical theatre experience.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS – THEMES OF THE PHENOMENON

In this chapter I describe the themes related to the phenomenon of musical theatre as experienced by the participants who were interviewed as well as by those who filled out the questionnaires. These themes and qualities are based on an analysis of the underlying dynamics of the musical theatre experience.

I begin the chapter with a brief discussion of memory and its complex relationships with emotion. Then I examine the five core themes and qualities that were revealed through the analysis: (a) core feelings and bodily awareness, (b) influence of time and space, (c) gender roles, (d) community, and (e) valuing the arts as adults. Supporting comments taken from the questionnaires are interspersed throughout the chapter in text boxes. The chapter closes with a synthesis of the themes and qualities of the experience.

Memory

The relationship between emotion and memory is complex, but generally emotion tends to increase the likelihood that an event will be remembered later and that it will be remembered vividly (Brown & Kulik, 1977; Christainson & Safer, 1996). Three types of memory were recalled during this research; (a) autobiographical or recollective memory, (b) involuntary memory, and (c) episodic memory.

In Chapter 1, a story was told of a man who shouldered throughout his adult life, a negative memory of a high school musical theatre production. As the story revealed, another cast member recalled the same event with positive emotions. This anecdote reveals how emotion can have a profound impact on memory, and how the same event can be remembered differently by two individuals. Autobiographical or recollective memories involve a person's capacity to recollect a particular episode from their past (Baddeley, 1992; Brewer, 1986). This may involve reliving the

individual phenomenon of a particular event or reports of salient memories. Scholars agree that

autobiographical or recollective memories are constructed. This is not to say that they are either

accurate or inaccurate, rather they are not retrieved as a whole. Instead, various components of the

memory (e.g., imagery, emotion, narrative language) are retrieved separately and then presented

or told as a whole (Neisser & Fivush, 1994; Rubin, 1996). Despite that research indicating the

limits of recall, the data in this study are important because there is not a more reliable tool for

exploring long-term memories.

An involuntary memory (Proust, 1992) occurs when cues encountered in everyday life, such

as a particular scent or sound, evoke recollections of the past without conscious effort. This kind

of memory was described by participants in their recollections of the phenomenon, which are

presented in the next section of this chapter.

Episodic memory involves a type of mental time travel that allows people to consciously re-

experience past experiences (Tulving, 2002). When the participants recalled specific events,

times, places, and associated emotions, they were using their episodic memory. Examples of these

memories are also described in the next section.

Overview of the Core Experiences with Musical Theatre

Analysis of the participant responses uncovered a number of core experiences with the

phenomenon. These core experiences were clustered into five themes: (a) core feelings and bodily

awareness, (b) influence of time and space, (c) gender roles, (d) community, and (e) valuing the

arts as adults. These themes are now explored in detail, highlighting both core experiences and

individual variations on the themes.

Theme 1: Core feelings and bodily awareness

Two dimensions made up the theme of core feelings and bodily awareness: (a) episodic memories, and (b) the role of the audience.

Episodic memory. By episodic memories I refer to those salient sensations, emotions, and personal associations that participants shared in vivid detail. For some, the memories stemmed from a particular performance. For others these episodic memories were associated with a rehearsal or a particular costume. Regardless of the source, each participant was quick to recall at least one moment that stayed with them throughout their adult lives.

As a child wearing white flannel bunny ears, miming "picking berries for our tea," I sang the lyrics I still know (P128, Female 40s).

Many episodic experiences were visual. Lenny remembered seeing his friends and teachers in the front rows of the audience and the technical aspects of the performance. He recalled seeing "the smoke in front of the lights [and] the dust comin' down through the light beams" (P23, 168). Lucy's strongest memory was the visual recollection of the costumes and the sets for the productions in her one-room school house. She shared that, "most of all [she remembered] these wonderful wings with this gold gilt, they'd store them at our house . . .

The fondest memories that I have from elementary school are linked to musicals and music performance. I looked forward to rehearsals and I loved performing. It was something that I felt truly good at. Musical theatre impacted me greatly. I continued with music and theatre in high school, and I studied vocal performance in university, which led to performance in opera/theatre both at school and in the community. Everything I do in my career is rooted in my experiences in childhood (P2, Female 30s).

and these great big cardboard props, [and] this wonderful set that was used year after year after year" (P88, 158). She also recalled the work that went into setting up the "big velvet curtains" (P88, 160), noting that she would never forget the sense of awe she felt at such a spectacular sight.

> Of all experiences in elementary school, musicals were the highlight *by far!* (P5, Female 30s).

Other episodic memories were associated with specific costumes and props. Edgar's most vivid recollection was of the "metal lunch boxes and chains that [he] had to rattle" (P7, 99) during his role of Marley in *The Christmas Carol.* Vander noted that her costumes consisted of articles of clothing that she borrowed from her neighbours because her family was "very poor [and she] didn't have anything". In particular, she explained how she borrowed a pair of black, high heeled shoes and forced her feet into them because:

> By gosh, everybody else was wearing high heels [laughs] . . . we were supposed to dress a certain way . . . I remember getting ready and walking down that hall and my feet just being so sore [laughing] because they were so tight. (P49, 180)

The participants also described specific smells that they associated with particular moments. Edgar's memory of rehearsing and memorizing his lines was encapsulated in the smell of script. He recalled that the script was printed on yellow and blue coloured paper and that "the smell of the Gestetner paper" takes him back to the rehearsals and memorizing his lines at home (P7, 107). Christian's most vivid memory of his childhood musical theatre experiences is the smell of the stage. He described the moment that he noticed the scent:

> I was in *Joseph* and I remember we had finished a show or [we were] in the middle, at intermission, and the curtain came down and everybody was leaving the stage. And I remember, I smelled the smell of the stage and it had such a distinct smell, and in that moment I took note of it. Everybody was leaving the stage so it was emptying out and the lights were sort of dim, and the curtains were drawn so it was almost quiet. Maybe that's why I was attuned to the smell of it. And to me, that's the smell of *Joseph* [laughs], you know, so now when I'm out and I smell something that's like that, it brings me right back to it, boom. And I remember thinking at that time, this is pretty cool to be where I am, doing what I'm doing. It's funny that it's encapsulated in the smell of it, but it is. (P122, 205)

Vander described a number of episodic experiences that had to do with audio memories, specifically voices singing. These memories included the musical director, the lead actress, and Vander's role in the chorus when she recalled standing on stage, singing in the chorus, and how "wonderful that sounded. [I] almost got lost in it, the sound of all those blended voices together" (P49, 180).

I believe music education benefits children in ways far beyond the acquisition of skills. Music education develops discipline, creativity, teamwork, courage, individuality (and so much more), while helping to encourage an appreciation for the arts that will hopefully be enjoyed throughout life (P127, Female 20s).

A final type of episodic experience described by the participants was associated with kinesthetic memories. Lenny specifically recalled the feeling of sweaty palms before he went onto the stage for the first time (P23, 113). Olivia described her memory of being on stage referencing specific bodily reactions such as "the heat of the lights on [her] face," her "heart pounding before the curtains opened" and "definitely feeling flushed" (P109, 101). She recalled that once she had performed her part, and when the focus and attention moved to others she felt:

> Like (phew) O.K. now I can breathe. It was certainly an all-encompassing feeling, that sound, and light, and temperature. I remember feeling (laughs) really warm at the start and then you cool down and you're like, O.K., things are gonna be alright. (P109, 101)

Role of the Audience. The second dimension which makes up the theme of core feelings and bodily awareness is the role of the audience. For Edgar it was the applause. He recalled how, as Marley, "[he] would rattle [his] chain and moan or whatever, [and] people would laugh and clap and that felt pretty good" (P7, 150). He continued, "[when] the people laughed, I didn't feel I was being laughed at, I felt like I was being laughed with more or less and maybe that wasn't true (laughing). But uh, anyway so that's what I remember" (P7, 120). Lenny also remembered the applause he received as the Cheshire Cat, as he recalled with some measure of pride, "I pulled it off and they clapped" (P23, 234).

For Olivia, the recollections were of "looking out to the crowd or the audience, and slowly being able to focus in on certain people, like my parents or teachers or other community members who I knew well" (P109, 416).

In one performance Vander "didn't even notice the audience." She said, "when I came off the stage my mother was sitting sort of at the front row, and I was very excited and . . . I was saying to her, "did you see me, did you see me?" (P49, 55). She also remembered a remark made by an audience member as relayed by her mother, who told her that the people next to her thought she

> Performing in front of a live audience is an addiction. Hearing the audience laugh, gasp or applaud is a high. I learned I had this addiction at a very young age (P26, Female 40s).

was much older than she was, which gave Vander "a boost of confidence" (P49, 55). During a later performance, when Vander was somewhat older, she remembered the audience, noting that, "the auditorium was absolutely full" (P49, 526).

For Christian, the memories of the audience were more complex. He explained that unlike his experience with peer audiences, adult audiences did not result in negative feelings because "afterwards they always say great show or whatever so, they're like supportive. They have a different perspective when they look at it" (P122, 165). However, he noted that during one performance, he "wasn't fine with singing falsetto in front of particularly the guys" (P122, 164). He remembers that "right before the show I was like, "Oh God, I have a sore throat and I can't sing in my falsetto, I just have to take it down a couple octaves you know (laughs)." But [his music director] said, "no, no, no, sing in the falsetto" (P122, 164). He sang in falsetto, and recalled a strong performance and. more importantly, that he wasn't ridiculed by his peers.

Theme 2: Influence of time and space

This theme emerged as the participants shared their general elementary school experiences in musical theatre outside of the performances themselves. This included how the participants perceived their teachers' abilities and involvement in musical theatre, and the time that was spent,

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both during the productions and in preparing for the performances. The specific dimensions included in this theme are (a) physical space and time, (b) teacher abilities and involvement in musical theatre productions, and (c) the place of the arts in the formal curriculum.

Physical space and time. The amount of time allotted to musical theatre within the school day, and the physical space available for rehearsals and performances played a role in the level of musical theatre that was offered in the elementary schools. The participants all recalled rehearsing in classrooms and holding performances within the school walls, making the best of the physical space provided.

> Musical productions do make a difference in children's lives. We talk about developing the "whole child" and being aware of offering programs that address Multiple Intelligences—musical theatre does that. Anyone willing to put in the tremendous amount of extra work and time required to mount a production should be applauded LOUDLY! (P21, Female 50s).

For Lucy, the opportunities in her rural schools were limited. She noted that, "where I lived was rural, rural, rural because that's where one room schools were. In my class there were three grades and there would've been altogether maybe twenty-five or thirty kids in the school" (P88, 58). She described the physical space as follows:

> We only had one room and then the furnace was downstairs. We had a piano and there were washrooms and cloakrooms and that was it. So they somehow made a stage and some curtains and my mom would play the piano. (P88, 59)

In rural settings such as the one described by Lucy, the opportunity to present musical theatre productions limited to Christmas pageants and concerts.

> Any experience, beyond the normal humdrum rigors of everyday life that you can give a young person, can only enrich their lives (P82, Male 40s).

As Cochrane (1981) has also discovered, the performance arts were valued in rural schools despite the lack of resources. Lucy recalled having a music teacher who

visited the school to prepare the children for singing competitions and special occasions. She commented on the lack of resources for the performance arts, noting that other than a set of triangles that were used for performances, they "didn't have any instruments or anything like that" (P88, 63). Lucy also noted that the one-room school was "a centre for . . . gathering. [Performances] would have either been at the school or at the church. You know, those would be the only places that this kind of activity would have happened" (P88, 59). Although the remaining five participants attended larger schools in larger communities, their perceptions of the influence of time and physical space in elementary schools were similar. The amount of time that the teachers and students spent both during school hours and outside of the school day was a common topic in the interviews. For some participants, the issue of whether students walked or took the bus to school was thought to have played a role in the lack of time that was spent outside of school in preparation for productions. However, regardless of how participants arrived at school, rehearsals for all six participants were held during school hours. Christian recalled, "We'd have to rehearse during lunch hour or recess or something like that right? So it was really a time crunch. So we'd get together in a room, we'd have to push all the desks aside" (P122, 117). He was clear to note these limitations of time and space that they faced

> I appreciate music and drama, and feel that no life could be full without both. Seeing teachers in action outside of the typical classroom environment gave me a heightened appreciation of their work and professions, inspired me to become an educator (P96, Male 20s).

were attributed to the fact that although the teacher wanted to provide this opportunity for the students, she probably didn't "want to give up every prep period to do it" (P122, 121). Olivia, who told of closing the doors in the front hall area of the school so as not to disturb the other students, echoed this sentiment. She remembered that these rehearsals happened "sometimes even during class time. We would be dismissed to go and rehearse" (P109, 105).

Teacher abilities and involvement in musical theatre productions. Edgar recalled that a music teacher assisted his Grade 7 teacher, who served as director for the musical productions. He attributed this to the fact that his teacher was "not really a musical guy" but that he was "one of those few teachers that thought it would be a real growth opportunity for the kids" (P7, 131).

> I would say that a (good) elementary school musical director can definitely change a student's life in a positive way. My experiences in elementary school were all positive, contributing to who I am today (more than 30 years later!) (P26, Female 40s).

Christian recalled a similar experience. He explained that, "we never had a music teacher at our school. And then this lady, who was the special ed teacher came to our school. She started the school on musicals and did these three sort of musical montage things" (P122, 37). He continued:

When I look at just an elementary school experience and the musical training and the arts that we did, at least it was an attempt. At least it was an attempt, but again this is not a trained music teacher doing it, it's just somebody who's coming into the school as a special ed teacher who says there isn't any music happening at this school, we need to do something for these students. (P122, 57)

Lenny, Olivia, and Vander recalled working with teachers with musical training. Olivia described her teacher as "very eccentric, very musical . . . and completely like an art kind of guy" and noted that he played a variety of instruments, including the guitar. She told that although he provided the students with an "amazing opportunity at such a young age, overall when it came to like the other subject areas, [he was] not so efficient, and not so great, and a lot of students didn't really like him" (P1, 110). Olivia's parents told her, later in life, that if she had been placed

> Musical theatre experiences in elementary years made me happy, and positive, and creative. They empowered me. They let me dream big (P128, Female 40s).

in that particular teacher's class again, they would have elected to move her out of that school "because he was just so out there" (P1, 113).

Vander remembered the music teacher who taught the students the songs for the productions.

She recalled that this teacher, "had a magical voice, she had a beautiful voice. And I was just awed by that" (P49, 112). Lenny also remembered his teacher fondly, as "probably my favourite teacher of all time." He noted that this teacher was skilled not only in music, but also in athletics, and "volunteered a lot of time to provide a cultural thing that can help [students] grow" (P23, 128).

> As a musical theatre director you have made a "quiet difference" in those children who may be otherwise lost in "daily school curriculum". The *ARTS* make a difference! (P9, Female 40s)

The place of the arts in the formal curriculum. The participants articulated their perceptions of how the arts fit into their school day, and where they have been placed in the formal curriculum today. Edgar was clear to state that he felt that "musical theatre and the performing arts are the most important part, not just performing arts, but arts in general, are the most important part of education and of life" (P7, 198). In a tone of disbelief he told of one particular event when the principal of a high school addressed parents and community members stating that the school needs to "look at the job market and design our courses [accordingly]" (P7, 199). Edgar continued, warning that:

> It seems like today theatre is on the back burner which really upsets me. I'm disappointed that my children won't get the same opportunities (P29, Female 30s).

> Public schools [have] basically resigned themselves that they're training schools, they're really not about education and they're not about the arts . . . we're not teaching anything about appreciating the aesthetics of poetry, or painting, or literature. We're teaching [students] how to go out and become grunts and earn a living. (P7, 175)

Lucy thought that the lack of musical theatre opportunities in schools today was "probably related to money and budgets, but also about [teachers] going the extra mile and the heart of education (sighs)." She definitely saw a distinction between "the old and the new ways" of education and noted that today, with "the newer ways, you're losing a lot. They're losing a lot" (P88, 138). Vander's comments echoed Lucy's as she noted that:

Education isn't enough. In the education system you have the child for so many hours . . . those hours are important ones, when the soul needs to be filled with something. And it's not just about writing, it's not about the head, that's the easy part. It's about the whole person, creating the whole person. (P49, 196)

She continued in this vein by commenting that she would much prefer to see academic programs cut in the schools because "today, kids learn stuff on the computer and the learning for children is so accelerated in comparison to when [she] went to school" (P49, 197). She continued by describing how, when she was a student in elementary school there was time for play, when the students simply

> The impact of a musical extends far beyond a strictly musical benefit. For some children this is perhaps their major exposure to teamwork, their only chance to experience being (and performing) in the "spotlight" (P60, Male 40s).

"went outside and just played" (P49, 198). She cautioned that:

We need to think about what education is really all about . . . what it is that a child needs now in order for them to become human beings that are not only productive in society but also experience joy so that they can enjoy the here and now. (P49, 200)

Lenny shared this perspective about the importance of the arts in school. He noted that while "everything that you do in school is important," musical theatre, "because it was something different, outside of the norm" was more important. He explained that some of the most important things [he]

> It taught me most of all that goals can be met and not necessarily out of reach if you are persistent and try your best (P13, Male 30s).

did in school had nothing to do with the [formal] education that was provided" (P23, 121). He continued:

I think that musicals and team sports are huge in helping children build their lives and in helping them figure out morals, ethics, sportsmanship, and fair play, coordination, cooperation, and you know self-esteem, getting out there. (P23, 176)

Olivia explained that a "musical production allows children in elementary school to have a different outlet, and to really be that star. [She thought that] sometimes kids surprise themselves with their abilities and their skills, so it's about kind of giving different opportunities" (P109, 221). Christian agreed, but warned that:

We need to create a culture within our schools that enables that and that we can't just have sort of appendages thrown into the curriculum. We can't just add in a cultural sensitivity workshop or a musical theatre class . . . it helps, but again it's not going to get at the systemic, cultural, social problems that exist in our schools. (P122, 224)

Theme 3: Community

The sense of belonging and community was woven through many of the descriptions and stories given by the participants. In its most basic form— being a part of a group—the participants noted, "I felt more a part of the community than I had before" (P7, 95), "I was part of a big thing" (P49, 124), "you're working within a group and keeping each other motivated" (P109, 165) and "everybody has to work together in a kind of a small little community to get it done" (P23, 89). Lucy claimed that an important lesson of musical theatre was that it taught the children to belong, to be "part of a team, a social group, to work together, and achieve" (P88, 174) noting that "all those sort of values that are also related with [musical theatre] are almost more than the actual singing" (P88, 110). Christian noted that although the audition and casting processes were selective, the musical theatre productions themselves were "very much community building, and quite supportive, like you're a part of this production, it's a really good thing. You work together and everybody's committed to the rehearsal process, the whole thing" (P122, 108). He was also careful to point out, however, that:

> The community is definitely the most valuable aspect that comes from participating in music theatre. You meet great people that become lifelong friends (P53, Male 20s).

Musical theatre is very personal. Even though we talk about the community, the collective,

and the ensemble . . . you're still up there performing and you've still got to smile and act and do things even though you're amongst all these other people. So there's still a very individual element to it. (P122, 207)

One particular collaborative recollection was described by Lenny, who told of the supportive nature of his peers during and after performances. He recalled that although some students suffered from nervousness, and mistakes occurred during the performances, the students who were on stage "didn't miss a beat and picked [each other] up" (P23, 156). What he found most extraordinary was that "afterwards, people weren't going to other people giving them accolades so much as going to the people who maybe missed a line and telling them how great they did" (P23, 156), an incident he found "phenomenal."

> For musical students, this is a great chance to work on skills, and for non-musical students, this is perhaps the only chance they will get to be a part of a large-scale musical production and reap the benefits of that experience. It is a great chance for a school to work on something together that rewards themselves and the community in general. If possible, the whole school should be involved in some way (P126, Male 20s).

The ability of musical theatre to bring children together was also noted by Vander who touched on the sense of togetherness that she experienced as a child as a result of her involvement. She described the unity that forms among a group of children who spend time practicing together, suggesting that such practicing can lead to a feeling of togetherness that some children don't have at home. For Vander, this was of particular importance, because as a child she often felt that she didn't belong either at home or at school. With musical theatre she believed that she and the other children were all "in the same boat and together they made this beautiful sound, this beautiful thing" (P49, 196). She elaborated on this sense of

> The impact of a musical extends far beyond a strictly musical benefit. For some children this is perhaps their major exposure to teamwork, their only chance to experience being (and performing) in the "spotlight" (P60, Male 40's).

belonging, noting that she couldn't "imagine that there's a child who would not be affected by being part of [a collaborative learning experience]" (P49, 196).

Lenny also touched on the sense of togetherness that he experienced as a child involved in musical theatre. He explained that there were always "classes and cliques" in schools, and he believed that one of the important aspects of musical theatre is the ability to bring different children together. He noted:

Maybe they would never talk to one another because this kid has black hair, and this kid doesn't dress nice enough, or this kid dresses too nice, or whatever the reason might be. [Musical theatre] brings them together and makes them equals, just for that period of time. I'm not saying you're going to make best friends out of people who are complete opposites but you might happen to gain some respect for one another. (P23, 176)

This sense of community was contradicted by Christian, whose strengths and experiences in the performance arts isolated him from his peers in elementary school. He commented that although part of a musical theatre experience is to feel like a team, and to be a part of the whole group, there is the possibility for some children to experience further separation from their peers

> I think in general musical theatre helped me to learn to stretch my boundaries and try new things even though they seem challenging or scary (P55, Female 20s).

rather than a sense of a collective. He described how his choice to be involved in theatre affected his sense of belonging:

Here's this kid who's been doing this outside of school, never been recognized for these skills or this work that he does in the elementary school, and finally there's an opportunity to showcase it. But in showcasing it you realize that it's really quite out there compared to what other people are doing, you're still different from most of the kids in the class, you know, most of the kids auditioning. (P122, 93)

The isolation from his peers that Christian experienced as a result of his involvement in the musical theatre productions was linked to his gender. The societal expectation for boys to

participate in so-called "masculine" activities such as athletics, and to avoid involvement in so-called "feminine" activities such as singing and other arts activities is widely noted in North American culture (Harrison, 2001; Koza, 1994). Although he experienced further isolation from his male peers, Christian continued to participate in the musical theatre productions.

Theme 4: Gender Roles

The role of gender was discussed more by the male participants than the females. Perhaps this is due to the fact that, as Christian recalled, "girls that danced weren't considered out of the norm. Whereas a guy who comes in and sings, or dances, or acts is really out there comparatively to these other kids" (P122, 93). For the participants, gender was influential, not only in the students who participated in the musical theatre productions, but also in the teachers who led them. All three female participants had female musical directors, as did Christian. However, Lenny and Edgar had male musical directors. The implications of the gender of the adults are demonstrated in the following narratives.

Edgar recalled that his teacher "was not really a musical guy" (P7, 131). He said that he thought his teacher felt that musical theatre "would be a real growth opportunity for the kids, I think he thought that the opportunity to perform would assist in the kids growing or the kids being educated in the broad sense, you know, not just reading, writing, arithmetic" (P7, 131). The notion that this man was not really a musical guy and the fact that Edgar's involvement in elementary school musical theatre was mandatory made his involvement and peer acceptance easier.

Through musical theatre you have the power to open a child's eyes to a world of opportunity that they may otherwise not have had the opportunity to explore. I found something that spoke to me through music and theatre and without having been exposed to it at an early age, I may not have had the courage to venture out and try it later in life. It also revealed to me my passion and boosted my self-esteem and confidence, knowing there was something I was good at and that others could acknowledge this as well (P53, Male 20s).

Lenny recalled his "favourite teacher of all time" whom he depicted as "passionate about classical music, and passionate about operettas, and passionate about plays" (P23, 128). He told how this teacher volunteered his time to produce musicals with students not only at Lenny's elementary school but also at other schools in the community. He continued to describe this man, noting:

> And what's funny is that he was the perfect teacher for it because he was also an athlete. He was you know, the best bordonball player I've ever seen, still to this day. And he was great at volleyball, basketball and he was our coach in some of the sports. So I think it made it kind of easier for the guys to go, you know, it's O.K., cause he's excellent in sports and he can do it [musical theatre]. You know, kids have that mentality [gender roles] whether it's in them or whether it's given to them by males around them . . . but I think that was one of the reasons that made it easier for everybody to just go, you know, it's O.K. to do it [be involved in musical theatre]. (P23, 128)

This mention of how the male teacher's athletic abilities made it easier for the male students to join in the musical theatre productions was echoed by Christian, who noted that it's more acceptable, as a male, to be part of athletics than musical theatre. "If I'm part of a sports team I'm gonna be making connections with guys [and] that's acceptable" (P122, 148). During the interview he realized for the first time that while he attended elementary school, only female teachers were involved in musical theatre. He exclaimed, "They've been female. Why aren't the males doing it? What message does that send by virtue of who's doing it? That's huge, that's huge!" (P122, 173). During the

> Elementary musical theatre ignited my love of performance (P56, Male 20's).

interview, the importance of male directors emerged in his thinking. He noted that when he attended the arts high school, "there were males always directing the musicals, and the music, all parts of it . . . in my high school it was fairly even, male-female. It did make a difference, it really did. I hadn't thought about that, but yeah" (P122, 173).

Throughout the interview with Christian, the implications of gender roles, specifically for a young male who has an interest in the arts, continued to surface. He noted that in some ways it was a positive experience to be able to say, "here's what I do", and in other ways it was like, "here's what I do and none of you are doing it and I kind of feel like the lonely man out" (P122, 93). He continued to discuss how a male participant in musical theatre was much more likely to be accepted by his female peers than his male peers. He said that he "didn't develop any further relationships with guys by being a part of the musicals, but [he] developed closer relationships with girls" (P122, 145). Christian also discussed how it was his involvement in the arts outside of school that led him to pursue the arts in high school. In comparing his experiences both in and outside of school he explained:

> If it was strictly elementary experiences I wouldn't have gone on into the arts. But because I knew [of] that sense of community and that there were other people, other boys who liked doing these kinds of things, and girls, that it existed somewhere and that I enjoyed it then I could follow through with [the arts in high school]. (P122, 97)

Christian had a positive outlook on the meaning that his involvement may have had for his peers, noting that in hindsight, it may have been meaningful for others in that it provided his peers the chance to see males in the performing arts. He explained that if by the time students leave elementary school they have not yet been exposed to males in the performing arts, or in the arts, it is "really problematic to the kind of people we're educating" (P122, 181). He hoped that his participation "opened up a space of thinking more towards acceptance of people and interests outside of sports" (P122, 181).

Theme 5: Valuing the Arts as Adults

Two dimensions made up the theme of valuing and appreciating the arts as adults: (a) appreciation and involvement, and (b) generativity.

Appreciation and involvement. As discussed in Chapter 2, one measure of value in arts education is the influence that such experience has on any future involvement with arts. The two participants who are not involved in the performing arts as adults, Lenny and Olivia, were careful to note that while they are not involved in the creation of music, drama, dance, or visual arts, they appreciate and enjoy these arts disciplines as adults. Lenny attributed his appreciation to his experiences in elementary musical theatre, saying:

It's opened up my mind to cultures. I've been to plays, operas, my wife and I saw the *Blue Man* group. I know friends of mine that think it's absolutely ridiculous, but to be honest I had fun, it was a good time. I think that anything that you can do to open up your mind to anything else, you never know what you're missing. (P23, 125)

Olivia was quick to state, "I have absolutely no musical training whatsoever [laughs], but I still have a definite appreciation for music" (P109, 173). She continued saying that, "looking back I have always wished that I had learned how to play the piano, definitely piano. And, if not even, like a guitar or something like that. I think it's a very worthwhile skill to have" (P109, 225).

Edgar, Lucy, and Vander spoke of how their arts experiences in childhood had carried over into the adult lives. Edgar mentioned that he became a professional musician in adulthood, and Lucy noted her continued involvement in the church choir and community theatre. Vander recalled that as a child she always felt that her home was ugly, not in how the home looked, but rather it was the atmosphere that was ugly. She said that as a result of being surrounded by ugliness, she has "always looked for beauty in everything" (P49, 156). She believed that her musical theatre experiences in both Holland and in Canada showed her that, "there was this other thing, this other art, this other atmosphere that was creative, that was

Besides giving me self-confidence, musical theatre made me really listen to and appreciate music. It also gave me a hobby for the next 50 years as I joined singing and dance groups and performed for the public. There is nothing like applause for boosting your ego and making you feel good (P34, Female, 60s).

meaningful for me that fed my soul" (P49, 156). She explained how this has transferred into her life today and how as an adult, she has surrounded herself with artistic people because she feels a kinship with them. She attributed her fulfillment in adulthood to her musical theatre experiences

> If you don't think music is important you must not have a *soul* (P84, Male 80s).

stating, "it was a turning point for me, being involved [in musical theatre] was a light in a very dark place" (P49, 156). She described the many artistic endeavours that she has been involved in as an adult. These included knitting, sewing, painting, furniture construction, photography, wedding planning, collage, drama, and set design.

Christian told how at the time of the study he was not involved in the arts, although "in some ways I so wish I was in the arts now" (P122, 216). He described how after high school he "never auditioned for any [arts programs]." Instead, he went into the sciences which he believed "really extinguished any sort of art pieces or abilities that I had, opportunities to be part of the arts at that point. After doing a Bachelor of Science it's hard to get into the arts in some way" (P122, 216). Later in the interview, however, he recalled:

> In elementary and then in high school I was enrolled in private vocal lessons and then in university when I was in my Bachelor of Science I still took vocal lessons because it was a low-commitment type thing that I could manage amidst exams on calculus, so it was still a connection to [the arts]. (P122, 220)

He also described his recent involvement with a school choir as "a step towards reconnecting" (P122, 220).

Generativity. This appreciation and involvement in the arts as adults described in the previous section is closely related to Erickson's notion of generativity that was described in Chapter 2. Throughout the interviews, five of the participants brought up their desire to guide and foster the development of younger generations either through parenting, teaching or mentoring.

The value of having opportunities in the arts at a young age was declared by all six interview participants. This was an issue of special importance for the older participants, who explicitly

discussed their desire to provide arts opportunities for youth. Olivia and Lenny, both beginning

new families, spoke of their desire to provide arts opportunities to their children. Lenny explained

that he and his wife have already discussed the variety of experiences and opportunities that they

would like to provide for their young son. He noted that, "it's kinda silly, he's only six months old

> Musical theatre has helped me to raise my daughter in an environment that fosters imagination and creativity (P20, Male 40s).

but we made the decision we'd like to expose [him] to everything and let him decide what he wants to do, if it's financially feasible" (P23, 148). This included musical theatre, music in general, sports, and other experiences in the arts.

Olivia's comments were in a similar vein. She and her husband had discussed the opportunities they would like to provide their

young daughter, who was not yet born at the time of the study. She explained that, "music is

certainly nothing that we want to force on our child, or children, but we definitely would love to

be able to give that opportunity, because we both have a definite appreciation for music" (P109,

173). This desire to provide opportunities in the arts extended into Olivia's professional life. As

an elementary school teacher she has tried to include the arts in her students lives to the extent

possible.

Lucy and Edgar also spoke of the importance of the arts for their children, who were grown

at the time of the study. Lucy told how, as a parent, it was up to her to encourage and assist them,

and to give them the tools to succeed. She spoke of the opportunities that her children had in the arts, sports, and specifically musical theatre. She also spoke of the generativity demonstrated by her children's teachers in their desire to provide opportunities for the children, noting that "it's the commitment of the teachers and the parents . . . their want and willpower to do it before the children have the opportunity" (P88, 122).

> Today, I volunteer at the local theatre with my children (they usher) because I want them to see the value of live theatre, including musicals (P38, Female 40's).

Edgar explained that "there was no musical theatre when [his daughters] were in elementary school, which was a great disappointment to us" (P7, 175). When they were in high school he recalled that, "whatever they did was embarrassingly bad and shouldn't have been done in the first place" (P7, 175). As a result of the lack of performing arts in the schools, Edgar told how his wife "put together some sort of medleys of songs from various musicals and the girls participated in that from time to time" as a way to provide more arts performance experiences for his daughters (P7, 175).

Vander told of how she'd "love to work with kids that had the same type of upbringing [as her] and to help give them confidence" (P49, 226). She mentioned that she had a wealth of knowledge that she would love to be able to give, but believed that there was no opportunity for her to give back to children in the schools. She explained that because her children did not live nearby, she would "love to volunteer and just give back to any child" (P49, 226).

She described the benefits of a system that might utilize grandparents who have some

> Musical theatre has helped make me more outgoing and confident. I was also able to help with productions with my own child and grandchild (P57, Female, 60s).

experience in the arts, or who "would like to help . . . and to have them come and volunteer as part of the education system. It'd be good for everyone . . . it would be great for the grandparents too. And there are older people living, who don't have any children, and so they'll never be a grandparent and so this would be a way for them to contribute" (P49, 238).

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the five themes derived from an analysis of the data related to the phenomenon of musical theatre as experienced by the six interview participants. The participants vary in their experience with the phenomenon, and yet each expressed value and meaning in their memories of elementary school musical theatre. The emotional and social impact of their participation has transferred into their adult lives.

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In the final chapter, I will summarize the essence of the experiences. This summary will lead to a discussion of the implications for the long-term effects of involvement in musical theatre, and for the role that musical theatre can play in the elementary school curriculum and the lives of elementary school students. I will close with recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

I began this research with the anticipation of gaining a better understanding of how adults remembered their experiences of elementary school musical theatre. I had initially hoped to learn about the long-term effects of participation in terms of the musical and non-musical skills developed. The research has revealed, however, that the most significant meanings and implications of their involvement in elementary musical theatre had almost nothing to do with the skills developed in the arts, such as vocal production or the ability to interpret a theatrical text, but rather with an increased sense of community and self. For this reason, I open the chapter with a discussion of some of the unstated purposes of schooling, for it was the unstated purposes of school musical theatre that most often came to the fore.

In the second section of this chapter I revisit the five themes, providing my interpretations of those themes as they relate to the literature reviewed in the earlier chapters as well as additional literature, including studies related to gender and the arts, and literature on character education. In the third section of the chapter I identify areas for further research. The chapter concludes with overall implications about the role of elementary school musical theatre in shaping adult lives.

The Purposes of Schooling

There are many stated and unstated purposes of schooling in contemporary Western societies. These purposes include the transmission of knowledge; socialization and acculturation; selection and differentiation of children according to ability and age; creating a sense of social responsibility, and the development of the individual (Egan, 1996; Harmon & Stokes Jones, 2005; Noddings, 2005). Woven through these purposes of schooling are various debates surrounding curriculum, including the selection of knowledge to be taught and ways of teaching that a society

deems as most important. Indeed, curriculum can be viewed as a reflection of the elements that a society consciously, or even unconsciously, values. According to Kliebard (as cited in Cox 2007):

The established curriculum rarely, if ever, represents an explicit or even conscious consensus as to what knowledge is most valuable. Rather, its expression is the outcome of a complex interplay of competing values and traditions as signified by different interest groups and, at least in part, reflecting the meanings they attribute to social, political, and economic conditions. (p. 159)

I have already explored Eisner's (1999) three-tiered structure to describe the purposes of arts education. Given the five themes that were revealed, his more general discussion of the null curriculum is also relevant. By null curriculum Eisner (1994) referred to what is *not* taught in schools. He also observed that learning is shaped by the climate of a school, including the norms, values, and attitudes of teachers and students. There are also unstated expectations about what is valued and expected, and importantly, about what is not. Eisner argued that students also learn in the absence of particular disciplines or learning experiences, or through the haphazard teaching of certain disciplines. When disciplines are absent or poorly taught, students learn the powerful message that these subjects, ideas, and experiences are not of value. In the previous chapter, there were several instances where these observations were made by the participants. Edgar, one of the participants, discussed two aspects of the so-called null curriculum when he made comments about the lack of arts teaching in schools and about how poorly the arts were often taught. Christian also discussed the null curriculum when he noted that although his elementary experiences were not of high quality, the musical productions were at least an attempt to bring the arts to the students.

An additional unstated purpose of education has been termed the hidden curriculum (Anyon, 1980; Apple, 1971; Apple & King, 1983; Eisner, 1988). The hidden curriculum refers to the messages communicated by the organization and operation of schooling apart from the official or stated curriculum. The messages of the hidden curriculum deal with the norms, values, and social

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expectations indirectly conveyed to students by styles of teaching, unarticulated assumptions in teaching materials, and the organizational characteristics of educational institutions. There were numerous such messages conveyed indirectly and directly by the utterances of the participants. For example, Christian indirectly spoke of the hidden curriculum when he questioned the underlying meaning of having only females directing musical theatre and of the social ramifications of taking part in the arts as a young boy. The messages of hidden curriculum may complement or contradict each other as well as the stated curriculum. An example of a contradiction is the prominent display of athletic trophies in the hallway near the school's main office—but no similar recognition for debate, music, or scholarship. This demonstrates a hierarchy of valued accomplishments that places sports ahead of academics; and yet physical and health education do not receive the time or attention of mathematics and languages.

Against this background discussion of the unstated and often unanticipated purposes of schooling, I now re-examine the five themes reported in the previous chapter: (a) core feelings and bodily awareness, (b) influence of time and space, (c) gender roles, (d) community, and (e) valuing the arts as adults.

<div align="center">The Five Themes Revisited</div>

Core feelings and bodily awareness

The research on embodied learning described in Chapter 2 was directly related to the first theme. Time and again, the participants recalled experiences that engaged their body, senses, emotions, and intellect. Olivia spoke of how she played multiple roles as a student, performing on stage, as a scriptwriter, and playing a role in the overall direction of the production. As a result, not only was she engaged intellectually but emotionally and physically as well. This simultaneous incorporation of thinking, feeling, seeing, acting, knowing, and creating offers embodiment as a compelling way to rethink how children learn, how teachers could teach, and how schools might be organized. Looking back at that particular experience, Olivia described it as being a unique and

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remarkable experience to have at such a young age, and noted that it was one of the most meaningful experiences of her elementary schooling.

Another aspect of core feelings and bodily awareness, discussed in the previous chapter, is that of the relationship between emotion and memory. In Chapter 5, I cautioned that the recollective and episodic memories of the participants could be misleading in some ways, where events are remembered differently by individuals. But it is also true that these recollections were vivid and enduring. In some cases, particular events had been thought about, told and re-told over a period of many years. It is likely that events were remembered due to their emotional importance and are, therefore, in some sense, important memories even if others remember the same events differently. Christian's episodic memory of standing alone on the stage after a performance illustrates the relationship between memory and emotion. That defining moment was encapsulated in the smell of the stage—a smell that has triggered emotion and vivid memories of an experience long since passed.

Influence of time and space

In her book *The one-room school in Canada,* Jean Cochrane (1981) explored how for decades, these small schools were the backbone of rural Canada. The book examined how, from the early 1800s to the 1960s, one-room schools brought education to the children of remote areas and provided a focus for a community's social life through Christmas concerts, plays, and recitals. Of all the participants, Lucy had the most to say about how music was performed in rural environments, given her own history of schooling, which took place in a one-room and a four-room school. Like Cochrane, she emphasized the role of the Christmas concert in forming community and providing the students with a means of artistic—albeit predictable—expression. Although the Christmas pageant was typically made up of a series of hymns and recitations, as Lucy revealed, even this limited form of musical performance had a lasting impact on the students involved.

In fact, some scholars have argued that school buildings, by their very architecture, favour the teaching of "so-called core subjects—subjects like mathematics and language—over subjects like music, art, dance, and gardening" (Upitis, 2004, p. 21). In a related study, Upitis and her colleagues conducted interviews with teachers, and found that teachers simply couldn't do more with the arts because of the limitations of school buildings and grounds. Teachers frequently indicated that they would like to do more with the arts curricula but were unable to because it was difficult to find enough time to use the gym or because studio or performance spaces were simply not available (Upitis, 2001; Patteson, Upitis, & Smithrim, 2002). The participants' experiences echoed these findings. Olivia described rehearsing in the hallways and the front entrance of the school. Christian told how he and his peers were required to move the desks to the side of a classroom during recesses in order to have space to practice choreography. In my own experience as an elementary school musical director, I can relate to these experiences. In most cases, more time was spent preparing a space to be used for than was used for the actual rehearsal.

Gender roles

The theme of gender emerged from the data in strong and consistent ways: in terms of the gender of the teacher and the students and in terms of the arts disciplines themselves. I have already commented on the hidden curriculum issue surrounding the prevalence of female musical theatre directors. The following quotation reinforces the notion that students experience gender in deeply emotional ways. Christian stated:

Musicals demand the participation of boys for male roles right? They demand it but they don't necessarily get [the turn out]. Sometimes they do, sometimes they do if you have the right sense of community, because there's nothing to say that a boy can't sing and dance and do those skills or learn those skills. But they need to be willing to take a huge risk in terms of the social factors that go along with that in order to say 'o.k. I'm stepping up to be the lead in this production'. So how do you, in a school environment create that sense of risk-taking,

vulnerability, allowing the student to come out say ok, I can do this, I can learn this, without it being forced. Because in your questionnaire you mentioned is it, is it mandatory or voluntary and so often it's mandatory. And even if it's not mandatory, it's mandatory by virtue of the fact that we need a male in this role and Johnny, please just do it, you know? And being a part of it [musical theatre] can be further socially stigmatizing . . . in my opinion right? I mean for males (P122, 137).

Given the lack of research on elementary school musical theatre, it is not surprising that there appears to be no research on the topic of gender and musical theatre in the elementary years. However, the issue of gender and music is often researched and anecdotal evidence also suggests that there are well-established gender associations in the arts. Data collected in the LTTA study, involving elementary-aged children from across Canada, indicated that by the age of six, thousands of boys do not like to sing or dance (Upitis, Smithrim, Patteson, & Meban, 2001). The longitudinal data also showed that the boys' enjoyment and interest in the arts continued to decrease over time—a finding that was linked to their perceived lack of arts-related abilities. This could be related to the prevalence of female teachers in elementary schools and in the arts. As noted by Lenny, having a male musical director who was also an athlete made participation by male students more acceptable.

The effect of gender role models in instrumental music contexts has also been investigated by researchers (e.g., Abeles & Porter, 1978; Delzell & Leppla, 1992) who have demonstrated that North American children, at least, associate gender with musical instruments. Their findings suggest that there is a masculine-feminine continuum of instrument choice and that these stereotypes influence children's instrument preferences. Similar findings were reported in a Canadian study investigating the role of gender in high school choral programs (Hanley, 1998). The researcher noted that singing was viewed by the participants as a feminine activity and boys who engaged in singing were feminine by implication.

This is problematic because related literature also reveals that conformity becomes

increasingly important to children as they age. Hoffer (1992) noted that individual preferences and interests are affected by conformity "almost to the point of uniformity in terms of dress, use of slang, and preferences in music" (p. 720). This point was echoed by Edgar, who explained that he did not participate in musical theatre after elementary school because of the "cool factor." Instead, he found it more socially acceptable and rewarding to form a garage band with his male peers.

Community

It became apparent in the analysis of the results that Eisner's (1999) ancillary or arts-related outcomes were the most salient for the participants, including those who completed the questionnaire as well as those who took part in the extensive interviews. The notions that Eisner described are linked to what is often called character education. Indeed, the question of how to develop good character is not a new one. Aristotle, Kant, Piaget, and Locke all sought effective methods to foster good character in young people (Salls, 2007). The debate continues in our contemporary system.

A primary debate surrounds the place of character education in public education—and whether it even has a place in schools at all. A secondary debate concerns the position and worth of character education; that is, whether the development of good character and values should be a primary or ancillary aim of education. In the 19th century, character education was approached through classroom discipline, the teacher's example, and the daily school curriculum. The Bible was the sourcebook for both moral and religious instruction. Cultural moralism was also developed through patriotism and productive citizenship, defined in terms of civic virtue and social-vocational competence (McKillop, as cited in Tomkins, p. 3). Character education was thus embedded in early schooling, although not as a named or direct curriculum subject. Like the arts, it was present, but in the margins.

Around the turn of the century industrialization and urbanization led to increasingly divided lives—the separation of work, leisure, and home. Success became based on skill, efficiency, and social competence. Schools responded to this changing social norm by broadening the curriculum to include subjects such as Canadian history and geography, physical education, nature study, art, and music as well as social and vocational skills. The dichotomy between the more valued (academic) and less valued (Arts) disciplines became wider as schools prepared individuals for specific roles and duties in society (Sutherland, 1979; Tomkins, 1984).

During this time, art and music continued to exist as less prominent subjects in elementary schools, where vocal music was seen to provide good mental discipline, and to promote moral development and religious participation (Johnson, 1968). Character education also began to shift further into the background as educators began to doubt the place of traditional forms of character education in schools. New youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts and 4-H clubs emerged, emphasizing elaborate codes of conduct and using group processes to foster good behaviour. Character education was beginning to be incorporated in new aspects of social life (Salls, 2007).

In recent years, character education has become more prominent in Ontario schools. For example, in a 2006 symposium entitled *Finding common ground: Character development in Ontario schools, K-12,* the Ontario government indicated that character development is a foundation of the public education system and the cornerstone of a civil, just, and democratic society. The document also states that because Ontario's population is becoming increasingly diverse, there is a growing need to find common ground on the values shared. The authors of this publication stated that effective character development ought to be embedded in the total life of the school and community and that is must be intentionally infused in our policies, practices, programs, and interactions (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 2006). Musical theatre appears to provide a rich context for this sort of development. As Vander observed, she experienced a sense of belonging and being a part of something beautiful when participating in musical theatre. This was especially important for her as she described feeling different and

removed from her peers because her home life was so ugly and hurtful. Musical theatre provided Vander a sense of unity and togetherness that she had never experienced before.

Given the results of the present research and the nature of school musical theatre, it is not surprising that the evolution of the curriculum area of character development is closely linked to the history of arts education. In the early days of public education the arts were included in schools by way of singing hymns and national songs to promote moral development, religious participation, national unity, and good citizenship (Tomkins, 1984). Not coincidentally, these purposes match those described by Cochrane (1981) in the historical overview of the one-room school in Canada. In these early days, then, the arts were not seen as the primary academic subjects, but as a means to other ends. That is, the subject hierarchy that exists today has a significant history.

Throughout the history of character education—and as echoed in the examples provided by the participants in the present research—a sense of belonging is integral to positive learning spaces (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Schaps, 2002). When there is a strong sense of community, connectedness, or belonging in a school, students become surrounded by a caring community.

The notion of caring in schools (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 2002) is also prominent in contemporary character education. In her work, *The challenge to care in schools*, Nel Noddings (1992) suggests a radical change to the current educational setup. In her view, today's schools should be organized around themes of caring. This idea has been prompted by the fact that our public schools have not reacted to social changes over the last twenty or more years, have put too much emphasis on achievement, and are largely ignoring the full range of human capacities. A profound experience for Lenny, as described in the previous chapter, involved his peers giving praise—but not to the students who had performed well. Rather, his observation was that it was common for him and his peers to praise and support those who had perhaps missed a line, or suffered from nervousness. The caring nature that was demonstrated by his peers is only one

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example of how musical theatre provides a valuable means of incorporating character education into elementary schools.

During the interview Christian noted that the process of being involved in a musical theatre production is lengthy and he listed some of the qualities and characteristics that he believed were fostered and developed his participation. These included dedication, perseverance, commitment, cooperative skills, and the notion of struggle: all important aspects of character education. Musical theatre incorporates, therefore, both the arts disciplines and aspects of character education. This dual function should earn it a valued place in schooling.

Valuing the arts as adults

In the previous chapter, Edgar expressed his disappointment in the lack of musical theatre opportunities that his children had in elementary school. He told how his wife stepped in and provided experiences for their daughters outside of school-based activities. This is related to the findings of the *Learning Through the Arts* research, in which the researchers found that parents who were involved in the arts were more likely to have children involved in arts activities as well (Smithrim & Upitis, 2005).

The results of some of the studies reported in Chapter 2 related to long-term influence in adults reported that the primary motivation for participation in musical activity in adulthood was related to the love of singing, making music, or the beauty of music for personal enjoyment. This sentiment was echoed by both Vander and Lucy who participated in community arts as adults. Lucy enjoyed singing in the church choir and Vander has surrounded herself with artistic people for the beauty and creativity that they bring to her life.

The purpose of this research was to explore the long-term effects of participation in elementary school musical productions. To that end I have investigated the following three research questions:

1. What are common and unique themes that emerge from adults recalling their

   childhood experiences in elementary school musical theatre?

2. How have these experiences affected the development of musical skills?

3. To what extent has participation in elementary school musical theatre affected the

   development of life-related skills for the participants?

In terms of the first question, the data have revealed five common themes recalled by adults who

were involved in elementary school musical theatre experiences. Unique themes also emerged,

such as the occasional negative experience associated with judgments made by peers. While one

of the research questions was formulated to explore the effect of participation in school musicals

on the development of musical skills, based in part on Eisner's three-tiered classification, the

evidence indicated that this was not a salient or long-lasting feature for the participants, even

though each participant demonstrated an interest in the arts as an adult. The final question, dealing

with life-related skills, yielded rich data, as did the first question. Musical theatre experiences in

childhood affected the development of life-related skills for all participants who were interviewed

for this study. One has to only think about how Vander's life was influenced by the phenomenon

to know the power of musical theatre experiences in a child's life.

Implications for Further Research

Five new lines of inquiry have emerged for further research. First, this research did not

situate musical theatre with other aspects of elementary school, and it would be interesting to ask

participants what they remember about other areas such as math, language, or physical education

to explore whether other aspects of school generate episodic memories and lifelong impact.

Second, related to the topic of memory, it would also be interesting to corroborate elementary

school events by asking other people who experienced the same incident to share their memories.

A third line of inquiry would be to investigate elementary school teachers who direct school

musicals, to explore and understand what drives teachers to do this with their students.

A fourth area that might be contemplated for further research is the differences in urban and rural experiences. Although I added this question to the questionnaires, it was too late in the study to gather substantial data. Finally, the findings also suggest that there is a gap in the literature surrounding the interaction between gender and taking part in musical theatre.

One of the reasons that the findings were so revealing is that the data collection process enabled me to speak with a wide variety of people. Future research on this and other topics could benefit from a similar cross-generational approach.

Concluding Thoughts

Participants in this study talked about how little the arts were valued when they were at school, but at the same time, described how some of their most meaningful school experiences involved the arts. Their praise of the arts was not for the skill-building or, in Eisner's (1999) terms, arts-based learning. Rather, they valued the unstated, hidden, and ancillary outcomes, including the cultivation of caring and capable citizens—unstated aims that other researchers have also identified as being addressed through the arts curricula (Eisner, 1999; Noddings, 2002).

This tension between what is valued in schools and what is valued over a lifetime is one of the central findings of this work. It corresponds, for example, to the tensions between useful and ornamental knowledge, required courses and electives, the individual and the community, mind and body, public and private, the core curriculum and its complements, the basics and the frills (Grumet, 1995; Vallance, 1985). The participants in this study did not find these tensions to be in contradiction in their experiences with musical theatre. Instead, they found them to be complementary, adding richness to their lives, not only in their school-aged years, but long after into their adult lives.

The longevity of this influence can be seen not only through the participants of this study, but also in the schools where musical theatre continues to flourish. An example of this was shared with me by a woman who once directed two musical theatre productions at an elementary school

where no such productions had occurred before. She shared with me an email that she received from a teacher at that school over a decade after she had left. The email told of how the students at that the school had just performed their fifteenth play. The woman exclaimed, "Can you believe that what you started fifteen years ago has continued all these years?" She continued to explain that the musical production was the only activity that had remained over the years, even though other new activities had been introduced at the school in the same year that the first musical was produced.

This is but one example of the staying power that musical theatre holds. It is valued by the participants and the teachers, and yet so often, musical theatre is not included in schools. Musical theatre is seen as an indispensable part of the curriculum for all students who choose to take part in the experience. This suggests that participating in musical theatre during one's elementary years should, in fact, be considered part of the core curriculum of school.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello. My name is Holly and I'm a Master's student at Queen's University. I am conducting a survey on musical theatre. Did you ever take part in a school musical during elementary school? [If yes] Would you be willing to fill out this survey?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am conducting a research study about adult perspectives of their elementary school musical theatre experiences. I would appreciate your participation in completing this questionnaire. This study is part of my Master of Education work in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University.

This questionnaire will take 10-15 minutes to complete and you may submit your completed form using the addressed and stamped envelope provided.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary and there are no known risks associated with participating. You may choose to not answer any given question or you may choose to withdraw completely and not return the questionnaire. By submitting a completed questionnaire, you give your consent for your responses to be included in the research study and related publications. Individual survey responses will be seen only by those working on the research study (myself and my supervisory committee members). Upon completion of the research, your data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about this research exercise or you would like a copy of the data analysis, feel free to contact me, Holly Ogden, at 7ho@queensu.ca. You may also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Rena Upitis (613-533-6212; rena.upitis@queensu.ca) with any questions about the research. For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Education Research Ethics Board (EREB@queensu.ca) or the Chair of Queen's University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Stephen Leighton (613) 533-6000 x 77034 (greb.chair@queensu.ca).

Thank you for your consideration of this request,

Sincerely,

Holly Ogden

Part One: Demographic Information

1. **What is your gender?** ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. **What is your age?** ☐20-29 ☐30-39 ☐40-49 ☐50-59

   ☐60-69 ☐70-79 ☐80+

3. **How many different schools did you attend from grades K-8?** _____

4. **In what provinces did you attend grade K-8?** _____

5. **Approximately how many students attended your elementary school(s)?** _____

6. **Were the schools located in rural or urban settings?** ☐rural ☐urban

Part Two: Education Information and Occupation

7. **Please mark an X in each box that applies:**

	Your education	**Your Mother's**	**Your Father's**
High School (no diploma)			
High school graduate			
Some College (no diploma)			
College Diploma			
University (no degree)			
University			
Graduate or Professional			

8. **What is your current occupation?** _____

9. **Please list any occupations you may have had prior to this:**

_____   _____   _____

Part Three: Elementary School Musical Theatre

10. **How many musical theatre productions were you involved in?**

☐1   ☐2-3   ☐4-5 ☐6-7   ☐8 or more

11. **In what way(s) were you involved in the production(s)? Check all that apply.**

☐chorus ☐supporting cast ☐lead role ☐set design ☐costumes ☐lighting ☐other
(please specify) _____

12. **Was your participation in the musicals optional or mandatory?**

☐optional   ☐mandatory

13. **When remembering your experiences, which of the following do you remember (mark as many as apply)?**

☐sights   ☐sounds   ☐smells   ☐tastes   ☐touch ☐other _____

14. **Please mark an X in the box that applies. What musical skills did you develop through participating in elementary school musicals?**

	Not at all	Some	Quite a bit	Considerable
Choral Singing				
Solo Singing				
Dance				
Group Performance				
Improvisation				
Interpretation				

15. **Please mark an X in the box that applies. To what extent did participating in elementary school musical productions affect your:**

	Not at all	Some	Quite a bit	Considerable
Creativity				
Ability to work in a group				
Imagination				
Ability to express your thoughts				
Willingness to take risks				
Sense of community or belonging				
Ability to solve problems on my own				
Self-Esteem				
Musical Skills				
Ability to solve problems with others				

Part Four: Long-Term Effects

16. **Have you participated in music or drama since elementary school?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

In what ways?   ☐choir ☐band ☐singing ☐theatre ☐play an instrument

☐other (please specify) _____

17. **What aspects of being involved in musical theatre seem most meaningful or valuable to you now?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. **In what ways did your experiences in elementary musical theatre influence who you are today?**

_____

_____

_____

19. **What would you say to an elementary school musical director who feels that s/he does not make a difference in children's lives?**

_____

_____

_____

Part Five: Follow-up Interview

20. Would you be willing to participate in a 60-minute interview?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If you responded **YES**, please provide your e-mail address and/or phone number below.
The interview will be held at your convenience. It will concern your memories and significant
         experiences related to participation in elementary school musicals. The interview
would require approximately one hour of your time.

Thank you very much for participating in the survey and for considering this interview request.

Contact Information:

First Name: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INFORMATION

The Long-term Significance of Participation in Elementary School Musicals

My name is Holly Ogden. I am a Master's student in the Faculty of Education, Queen's University. I am writing to request your participation in research about adult perspectives of their elementary school musical experiences. The ultimate goal of my Master's thesis research is to enhance perspectives on musical theatre in elementary school settings and to provide new research in this area. This research may result in publications of various types, including journal articles or other professional publications. This research project has been cleared by the Queen's University General Research Ethics Board.

In the first part of the research project, questionnaires were distributed to a diverse group of 150 individuals in two Ontario communities. You filled out one of these questionnaires. In the second part of the research, I would like to conduct interviews with six participants to elicit further memories and significant experiences related to their participation in school musicals. You have been selected based on your questionnaire responses and your willingness to participate in an interview, as indicated on the bottom of your questionnaire.

The interview will be conducted at a location of your choice and will last a maximum of one hour. The interview will be audio taped. The taped interview will be transcribed and then the tape will be destroyed. All electronic files will be password protected. None of the data will contain your name, or the identity of your place or work. Paper and audio data will be secured in a locked cabinet in and confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible. A pseudonym will replace your name on all data to protect your identity.

In addition to the questionnaire and interview, I will collect photographs, recordings and other artifacts which I ask you to bring to the interview or will arrange to collect at another time.

I do not foresee risks in your participation in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any questions you find objectionable or uncomfortable. You may withdraw at any time without negative consequences, and may request the removal of the data from the study.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at Queen's University, (613) 533-6000 x 77417, or by email at 7ho@queensu.ca. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Rena Upitis (rena.upitis@queensu.ca or 613-533-6212). If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, please contact the Education Research Ethics Board at ereb@queensu.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Steve Leighton, (613) 533-6000 x 77034 (greb.chair@queensu.ca).

Yours sincerely,

Holly Ogden
Master of Education Student
Faculty of Education,
Queen's University

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

Interview Participants

o   I agree to participate in the study entitled The Long-term Significance of Participation in Elementary School Musicals, conducted through the Faculty of Education at Queen's University.

o   I have read and retained a copy of the Letter of Information and the purpose of the study is explained to my satisfaction.

o   I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

o   I understand that my participation will take the form of an interview at a location of my choice and that the interview will last a maximum of one hour.

o   I understand that the interviews will be audio taped and that the taped interviews will be transcribed and then the tape will be destroyed.

o   I understand that, upon request, I may have a full description of the results of the study after its completion.

o   I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of the study.

o   I understand that confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible by appropriate storage and access of data and by the removal of my name from the data.

o   I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time and that I may request the removal of all or part of my data without negative consequences.

o   I am aware that I can contact the researcher, Holly Ogden, by telephone at Queen's University, Faculty of Education at (613) 533-6000 x 77417, or by email at 7ho@queensu.ca. I am also aware that for questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, I may contact the Education Research Ethics Board at ereb@queensu.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Steve Leighton (613) 533-6000 x 77034 (greb.chair@queensu.ca).

Please sign one copy of this *Consent Form* and return to Holly Ogden.
Retain the second copy for your records.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORM AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Participant's Name (Please Print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____   Telephone Number: _____

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. During your time in elementary school, which musicals did you perform in?

2. What roles did you play? *[Were the roles that you played well suited to your personality? What did you like about your role?]*

3. How would you describe your family's involvement in musicals as you were growing up? [*To what extent did your family's interests in music affect your involvement in school musicals*?]

4. Were your friends in the musical productions as well? *[If not, why do you believe they were not?]*

5. From the initial data that has been collected from the questionnaires, more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that participating in an elementary school musical affected their *SENSE OF COMMUNITY OR BELONGING* quite a bit or completely. How does this response relate to your experience?

6. Did the audition process affect your decision to participate?

7. Other than performing, what other aspects of the experience do you remember about musical theatre?

8. Were there any aspects of the school musical that caused you to struggle?

9. Relative to other subjects or activities, how important would you say the musicals were for you?

10. Why do you think your school put on musical theatre productions?

11. Which musical skills did you develop through your experiences in musical theatre?

12. To what extent did the musical skills and knowledge that you learned transfer or carryover into your adult life?

13. If any, what aspect of being involved in musical theatre seems most meaningful or valuable to you now?

14. From the initial data that has been collected from the questionnaires, more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that participating in an elementary school musical affected their SELF-ESTEEM and their WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS quite a bit or completely. How does this response relate to your experience?

15. To what extent did the non-musical skills and knowledge that you learned in musical theatre transfer or carryover to your adult life?

16. What are your strongest memories of being involved in musical theatre? *[What sensations do you remember experiencing when you were performing?]*

17. Please describe a particular story or event that happened in your musical theatre experience.

18. Why did you agree or desire to participate in this study?

19. Is there anything that I didn't think to ask you, that I should have?

SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTION

Participant ID: P7

Interview Name: Edgar

Interviewee Category/Subgroup: P7–M50

Site/Location: Boardroom in participant's place of work

Date of Interview: March 20, 2008, 3pm.

Interviewer ID: IC1

Transcriber: Holly Ogden

Duration: 22m52s

##IC1##

So, before we begin the interview I'd just like to confirm that you've read and signed the informed consent form.

##P7##

I've read and signed the informed consent form.

##IC1##

And that you understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary

##P7##

Yes

##IC1##

And that you may refuse to answer any questions, and that you may withdraw from this study at anytime.

##P7##

Yes

##IC1##

O.K., so the purpose of these questions is to help me explore the long-term (if any) the long term effects of participation in elementary school musical theatre.

O.K.

And so I'm going to be asking questions about your experiences and how your experiences affected the development of your musical skills

O.K.

And to what extent your participation in these musicals affected the development of your non-musical skills, so more life-related skills.

Alright

Um, so during your time in elementary school, which musical theatre productions did your perform in?

Um, I performed in a musical production of, A…Christmas Carol

O.K.

In which I played Marley the ghost….and um, also in a uh, a musical production that was written by our class in, well, with the assistance of the teacher, in grade seven I guess that was, the Marley the ghost thing was grade six, and then I had a very minor part in, you know I've racked my brain and I can't even think of what it was called, something in grade eight where I was a, you know, a very minor part, and it was something about uh … uh… springtime in Canada or something like that, I can't exactly remember . It was kind of a, the approach was kind of a uh, Lucy Maud Montgomery version of, you know 19th century life in Ontario, that kind of a thing.

Interesting

So it was historical, supposed to be historical.

O.K., so it kind of tied in maybe with what you were learning at the time

That's right

Oh, well that's interesting, and there were songs?

Oh yeah, yeah it was a musical.

That's fun. And so, when you played Marley, was that, do you think that role was well suited to your personality?

Well I think that if you talk to anybody, not that I'm a professional actor but you hear actors say all the time that uh, they're, even though they're on stage and performing that they're really introspective, shy people and that, uh, the opportunity to uh be someone else or put on a mask you know as it were, gives me the opportunity to do just that, you know, to come outside of themselves and I think. I, I that was my experience because I think I was kind of shy as a kid, and you know with Marley, you have all these chains you're rattling and you know you're moaning and so and so it's fun, you know

And was that part optional or mandatory for you?

I think it was picked for me.

O.K.

I think we were just told you're gonna be this, you're gonna be that and that was it.

O.K.

That's my recollection anyway

How would you describe your family's involvement in your participation in the musicals? Like to what extent did they...

I don't think they participated at all except they came and saw them and you know, they were appreciative and clapped and said you know, great show [Eddy] or whatever, and that was about it (laughing as he says this). But, and I think that's partly, you know, this is the late 1950's early 60's. Uh, parents were not expected to, you know, I don't think participate as much as they do now in their children's lives at school. That was a whole different part of your life. At least that's my perception anyway, compared to my experience with my own children.

Did your parents have interest in music?

Sure, yeah, my mother was, my mother was a classically trained singer and she played the piano. My father was not very musical, at least he thought he wasn't, but uh, yeah my mother was musical, we had a lot of music in the house. Musical theatre. You know, I grew up listening to uh, Guys and Dolls and South Pacific, and we…uh, I was born in Connecticut actually and they used to go down to musicals and tour New York city all the time so they were, you know, they liked musical theatre, and uh, so….

O.K.

We enjoy it

O.K. so you said earlier that your part was chosen for you so it was sort of mandatory. So were your friends involved in the musicals as well?

Yeah, the whole class was in it, in some capacity or other, you know it's, you know, when you're a kid people tell you to do things and you don't question it too much, you just do it.

O.K., and in high school were you also in musical theatre in high school?

Um, no. I think that was sort of a coolness factor. I was involved in you know, garage bands and that kind of thing, that, no, I think I thought that was kind of a nerdy thing to do and I didn't do it. I probably should have did that, but didn't

I can relate to that. So from the initial data that I got from the questionnaires that's come back, over two-thirds of the people that responded said that a sense of community or belonging, un, musical theatre…provided them a sense of community or belonging either quite a bit or completely. So would that have been the same for you?

Well,...yeah…I mean I think uh, certainly in the uh…well the one I have the fondest memory of I guess is the Marley, being Marley in Grade 6 because I think it was probably very unexpected of me to do such a thing, and you know, people liked it. It, you know, got some laughs and so that was a good feeling. And uh, you know it was… you know people would comment on it afterwards and whatever and yeah I thought it was fun. So I would say yes it was, you felt more a part of the community than I had before. I hadn't thought of it in those terms but I guess that's true.

O.K., so when you're thinking back of being Marley, do you remember your costume, like do you remember what you felt or what you, or what you wore?

Yeah, the main thing I remember is what I wore, is a bunch of metal lunch boxes and chains that I had to rattle, I'm sure you know the story of the Christmas Carol, Marley was the ghost and you rattle chains and you moan, you know, so I remember doing that. The uh…the…the people laughed at that, and I, I didn't feel I was being laughed at, I felt like I was being laughed with more or less and maybe that wasn't true (laughing). But uh, anyway so that's what I remember. What I wore I'm not exactly sure. Probably rags or something.

So did you have to audition, ever?

No, there were…well not that I recall. No, I just remember the teacher telling us who was going to be who.

O.K. so other than being on stage for the performance, what do you remember? Do you remember rehearsing or…

I remember memorizing the lines, and um, this is um…I guess I'm getting of topic here. One of my big (clears throat) problems with…I think kids in public schools should have to memorize poetry and they don't have to do that any more (laughing) I think that would be uh, a very important thing for them to do, just both culturally, and and uh, from a skills point of view. And you don't have to do that any more. We had to do that, in those days and, and uh, so it wasn't a lot different than that, you know, you had to memorize a certain number of lines of poetry every semester, that was just the way it was. Here pick this, this or this and that's it. And so, uh, it was partly. It went to a credit towards that. You could count that for your poetry, and uh…but there was quite a bit of memorization and of lines. And the script was on these, they used to have like a stetner machine, the yellow or, or blue sort of coloured things, I can remember those. We got our lines, we got our scripts and we exactly memorized those and uh, so I remember doing that, and I remember the…you know, I think smell is the most associated with memory or more associated with memory than a lot of other senses. I can remember a lot of the smell of the stetner paper and the uh…you know we had rehearsals and people would memorize their lines. Sorry I remember memorizing, or having to memorize them, you know, just being in my room trying to remember them or practicing with my mother, these lines. You know, actually I forgot that. My mother, I guess helped me, you know [*yeah*] memorize these lines, so.

O.K., so when you rehearsed at school was that during recess time or would it have been after school, do you think?

No, it would have been in school.

In school time.

Yeah.

O.K. were there any aspects of being part of these productions that caused you to struggle?

(sighs) Not that I recall. Not that I recall, I don't think so, I um, I don't think I was unduly mocked by my friends or anything (smiling) because they were in it too.